

A Treasure in Our Midst

*A talk for the Grand Opening of Clearview Home,
A Christian Science Nursing Facility in Delafield, Wisconsin*

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When most people think of treasure, they think of silver, gold, and jewels. There are many kinds of treasure. Treasure could be something material like gold or silver, but it could also be something of great value—a great idea—or it might even be a much loved or highly valued person. The successful treasure hunters are those people who know what they are looking for, and where to look for it. What could be the treasure in our midst? When I say that Clearview, our Christian Science care home, is a treasure in our midst, I am referring to the value it brings to this community. It houses Christian Science nursing, and that supports healing. That is something we all value! The Christian Science nurses who minister to the needs of patients are treasures. They are much loved people. Their whole motivation is to express the love of God in each thing they do. They treasure their patients too. So, you see that Clearview is like a whole chest of treasure! This new building represents more than bricks and mortar. We treasure it because it symbolizes God's love and care for all who seek shelter under His wing.

Christian Science nursing is something I treasure because it has been invaluable in supporting my healing practice. A church friend has graciously allowed me to share her experience with you. She fell at work, and she was taken by ambulance to the hospital. The ambulance crew thought she might have had a stroke and they also expressed fear that she had broken her arm or dislocated her shoulder because she couldn't lift her arm and was in great pain. They immobilized her and hooked her up to all kinds of monitoring equipment. She felt trapped,

but even while the ambulance crew were voicing their concerns, she was actively praying for herself. She called me and asked for help. While I don't normally treat patients in the hospital, because this was an emergency, I agreed to come and help. She had seen a doctor in the emergency room but had not received any medical treatment, and so I felt free to give her the Christian Science treatment she wanted. This treatment is prayer specifically about a particular need in the patient's thought. While waiting for her family to arrive, we talked about how she could never have fallen out of God's care and that in fact she was in God's care at that very moment. An MRI to see if she had suffered a stroke, and x-rays to see if she had broken bones were recommended. She agreed to this so that her family could see that she had not suffered a stroke, or had any broken bones. When all the tests came back negative she was immediately discharged from the hospital. Because she could still not lift her arm, her children did not want her to go home. She

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asked to go to Beacon Haven, the Christian Science care facility nearby. Her daughter-in-law, with no knowledge of Christian Science, asked me what the Christian Science nurses would do for my friend. I explained that the Christian Science nurses would provide nourishment, support her with dressing, walking, and even bathing if she needed help. They would generally watch over her. This sounded good to them because they had feared that my friend would be stubborn about accepting help. After calling to find out if a room was available, we drove to the Christian Science facility. She was welcomed with open arms!

In the meantime, her children retrieved her car and brought some clothing to the facility. My friend stayed there five days, returning home after she could show her children that she could lift her arm again. She is now back to her usual active life, taking care of her house and garden, doing volunteer work, and serving at church. My friend learned a valuable lesson about accepting help. Having the facility available was a huge help to me as I prayed for my friend's healing because it quieted the family's concern, and forced her to focus her thought on healing instead of worrying about how she could cook dinner.

How was the care my friend received from Christian Science nurses different from care at the hospital? Christian Science nursing is a deeply

spiritual ministry. Christian Science nurses provided the obvious physical care she needed, but instead of speculating fearfully about her condition, they calmly and carefully settled things down. Their work is not about bed-pan duty; it's about upholding the dignity of patients.

Christian Science nurses are trained to see that each nursing activity has a spiritual basis. For example, they see cleansing the body as symbolizing spiritual purity and innocence. This requires them to watch their thinking constantly to keep it pure. They strive to demonstrate the qualities of a nurse that are described by Mary Baker Eddy, in her book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: "The nurse should be cheerful, orderly, punctual, patient, full of faith, — receptive to Truth and Love." (p. 395). They also work diligently to keep out negative traits such as ill-temper, complaint, and deceit. Christian Science teaches that God is Mind, the source of all right thinking. They turn to God, *the divine Mind*, to guide their thoughts and actions.

This is a very important point. Many people confuse Christian Science with Scientology because of the similarity in names and because both encourage a healthy lifestyle. But they are not the same. While Christian Science was discovered in the Bible (not invented by Mary Baker Eddy), Scientology is the invention of science fiction writer, L. Ron Hubbard. Scientology sees thought as proceeding from the brain without any connection to God or Christ. Christian Science gives all power to God, and identifies God as Mind. It honors Christ Jesus as the great example for this understanding of God. Mary Baker Eddy writes: "The foundation of mortal discord is a false sense of man's origin. To begin rightly is to end rightly. Every concept which seems to begin with the brain, begins falsely. Divine Mind is the only cause or Principle of existence." (S&H 262:27-31)

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Here's another question that people ask: Why do Christian Scientists have nurses and facilities when they don't go to doctors? The simple answer is that Christian Scientists don't ignore the human need. Because Christian Science nurses cultivate their spirituality, they are able to address the human need in a way that supports spiritual healing. The "word" nurse conjures up all kinds of images of medical nursing, but the definition of "nurse" actually includes cherishing, tending, feeding, and supporting. Christian Science nurses do not give drugs or medical treatment. That sometimes causes people to think that Christian Science nursing is the same thing as hospice nursing in which the patient has given up all medical treatment in anticipation of death. Christian Science nursing always supports life, and Christian Science prayer treatment is not suspended but *required*. Those coming to a Christian Science facility are choosing life, and the decision to come there shows that they are not neglecting themselves but are taking responsibility for themselves.

Each one of us can take better care of ourselves by expressing those nursing qualities! Take the qualities of thought I listed earlier. They are like clues for us as we seek treasure. If we look at them more deeply, you will see that you already embody these qualities at least a little bit. Perhaps they can be brought out even more if you work at bringing them out.

Let's look at the word cheerful. It has a whole section in the thesaurus that includes: geniality, good humor, light-hearted, optimism, lively, vivacious, witty, contented, happy, serene, comforting, providing peace of mind, smiling, has a mind at ease, able to enliven, raise the spirits, has a glad heart, inspires, invigorates, encourages, refreshes. To the Christian Scientist, these all have their source in God, Mind, and are available to us. The opposite of cheerfulness is discontent. Discontent comes from

feeling separated from good. Cheerfulness affirms man's connection to good. Jesus valued cheer. In fact, some of his last words to his disciples were: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) What did Jesus mean when he said he had overcome the world? He had overcome the human beliefs that seemed to govern people and totally aligned his thinking with God. He was about to face death itself and overcome it. Think of how we can rejoice every time we overcome some world belief.

The word "punctual" has the connotation of precision, promptness, and regularity. The spiritual basis for punctuality is brought out in God's promise: "Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." (Isaiah 65:24) Punctuality is very important in care-giving. Isn't it important to respond to the human need promptly? Isn't it important to be precise in making a bed?

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Patience too is needed. To me patience means that we are confident that God is in control and being comfortable with that. It does not mean waiting around for something good to happen. Good is already present.

The quality of orderliness includes: uniformity, precision, arrangement, method, orderly steps, economy or efficiency of action, having a plan, take charge, see progress, follow rules, appropriate amount of supplies purchased [not wasteful], tidy, clean, business-like. The spiritual basis for order is

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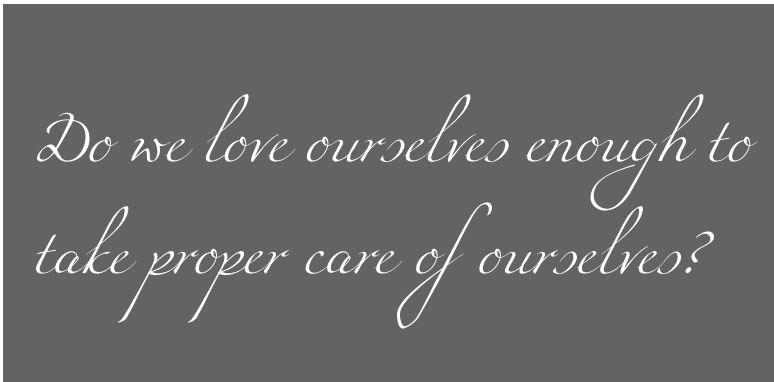
the fact that God is divine Principle. The kingdom of heaven includes order and not chaos. The antonym for order is disorder. No one wants to be cared for in a disorderly, dirty, cluttered space, by disorderly thinkers! It is right for us to be orderly in caring for ourselves including having orderly thinking.

Then there is faith. Jesus valued faith. He often told people that they were healed because of their faith. But was it faith in him as a person, or was it faith in the power of God that he represented? What did he have faith in? Christian Science nurses have faith in God to guide their care-giving. Their faith is in life over death, ability over disability, spirit over matter. In other words, the care they give is not based on faith in material methods but in God's ever-present guidance. When we reflect God's order, we can make even a simple task have a healing effect. For example, food symbolizes the rightful nutriment of love which is always needed. When I was a patient at Beacon Haven, I felt that love when a Christian Science nurse served me the most gorgeous fruit plate I have ever seen. It was tiny bits of fruit made into an edible mosaic. It was so beautiful I took a picture of it and sent it to my family. Their comment to me was "Somebody must really love you!" This did lift my thought and support my healing.

It can be helpful when treasure hunting to look at the example of others. Take the example of Christ Jesus' healing the impotent man who had been waiting thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda. In Bible times, people believed that an angel stirred the water, and that the first person to step into the pool after the water was stirred would be healed. Today we know that the water is stirred by a spring

beneath the pool. It is a natural occurrence but at the time it was seen as a divine act. Jesus could have helped this man into the pool, but he didn't. Why? That would have simply directed everyone's thought back to the mistaken belief that the "moving of the water" was the healing agent. When he told the man to rise up and walk, he was bringing the power and authority of the Christ to lift the man's thought to see that he *could* rise up and go home, which he did. There was no delay for this healing because in Christ Jesus' eyes, the man was already whole. Like Jesus, we can be alert to the human need and look beyond the human picture to see what God sees about the need. We can acknowledge that God's love is already on the scene to help.

Do you have a Christian Science nurse in you? I think you do! Do you love God? Do you [try to] love your neighbor as yourself? Do you want to alleviate or prevent suffering? Do you value punctuality? Are you patient? Orderly? Cheerful? How receptive are you to Truth and Love? Do you have faith in God's power? Would you like to develop more of these qualities? It is possible to grow spiritually and become more orderly, cheerful, and even punctual. Each one of us has the capacity to express these qualities no matter how young or how old we are.



Do we love ourselves enough to take proper care of ourselves?

Let me tell you about my granddaughter Mia. She has just turned three. Before her brother Max was born last month, I had been concerned about how she would treat him, because she would often punch and jump on her baby doll to make it cry. Would she try to make Max cry? But I remembered Jesus loved little children because of their freedom from wrong and their innocence. Goodness and love are

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natural to them. I stopped being afraid, and I love seeing how she watches how I take care of Max! She reminds me to support Max's head properly, and if he is crying, she tells me that he might need his bottle or a diaper change. She tells me how to strap him into his car seat and instead of punching him, she gently tucks his blanket around him while she pats his tummy. She has learned safe handling by watching how her parents handle him, so she knows what is right, but mostly she treats him this way because she loves him enough to care for him properly.

Do we love ourselves enough to take proper care of ourselves? Do we acknowledge that we are God's children? The Bible assures us that God made man in His own image and likeness. Do we treat ourselves kindly? Do we welcome and seek to include the nursing qualities? Do we defend our thinking to keep it free of evil? Since God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, it would be impossible for His image to see evil, voice evil, experience evil or do evil. It is important to handle fear by thinking rightly. Fear is not needed in the sick room. Jesus knew this and said: "Be not afraid!" Jesus challenged the belief in heredity when he told the disciples that the blind man's problem was not caused by the sin of his parents or himself, but that it came up to be healed "for the glory of God." He was not afraid of human health laws, and he even violated

them by touching lepers. He was not afraid of being polluted by the woman with the issue of blood. He commended her for reaching out to him. He was so clear about his spiritual purity that it was the purity that was contagious, and not the diseases. Like Jesus, we can see that problems come up to be healed, and we don't have to fear them. Have you ever had a situation where your right thinking, your honesty, your stand for principle had a positive impact on your work? That was the power of the Christ working in you!

We all have times when we must discover the nurse within. Last month, we had such an experience. My husband and I were up at our cabin in northern Wisconsin, when he had an accident with a chainsaw. Who was the first Christian Science nurse on the scene? It was my husband! He lifted his thought, assessed the need, and took appropriate action by coming to the door to ask me to help with a bandage. Who was the next Christian Science nurse on the scene? It was me. I had to lift my thought, assess the need, and take action to clean and dress the wounds. It required much more than a simple bandage however, and I was grateful for divine guidance. This proved to me that God is a "very present help in trouble." (Psalms 46:1)

Both of us were applying the truths of Christian Science in meeting this challenge. I cherished his spiritual wholeness, and rejected the idea that he could be chopped up by the chain saw. I'm sure that he was knowing that he could not be harmed for doing his duty. Mrs. Eddy tells us "Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need." (S&H 494:10) Have you ever wondered how divine Love can meet the human need if God doesn't know about an accident? We, as God's beloved children, can never be separated from our divine parent. God, Love, can't know evil, but God does know good. God knows that this good is always available. What God knows, man can know. We can be grateful that God

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is not impressed with evil. Where we see a human need, God sees what is true, and when man taps into what God knows, the human need is met. This was certainly true in this situation. Looking back now, we are really grateful for the protection my husband experienced when the chainsaw bounced on his knee several times, and that throughout this experience, he was free of pain and could continue working.

Because he was eager to get back to his work cutting up a downed tree, the initial bandaging was minimal. He was able to finish his work and the biggest casualty of the day was his work pants that were chewed up and had to be trashed. That night, I took more time to clean and bandage the wounds. It was clear to me that expert help was needed. The next day, on our way back to Minneapolis, I called Beacon Haven, and asked if we could stop there on our way home to have a Christian Science nurse do a proper dressing on his knee. They were ready when we got there. After removing the bandages that I had applied, they remarked that I had done a good job with a very complex situation. In fact, they said they saw a nurse in me and would welcome me in the next beginning nursing class in the fall. That certainly made me feel better. They showed me how to dress this kind of wound. The technique they demonstrated reinforced the concept of wholeness that we prayed about. We went back to the facility several times to have the dressing changed and each time it was evident that healing was taking place. Both of us were so grateful to have someone help us who had lots of experience, and the skill to handle this nursing need.

The biggest treasure in our midst is Christian Science. Each one of us has been given the gift of Christian Science. We each have the option of accepting this gift and using it. There are so many ways to do this! We can study the Bible and the Christian Science textbook. We can pray and apply

what we learn in all the situations we face in life. We attend church, and take class instruction. My hope is that I have helped to awaken the Christian Science nurse in each of you. As we practice it, we find the treasure of Christian Science nursing in our own lives. We can (and must!) learn to take better care of ourselves by spiritualizing our thought and actions—nurturing the nurse in ourselves. This will be a blessing to us, our families, our church and our whole community.

When thinking about God’s gift of love and care for us, I can’t help remembering how excited my grandson John was when he realized that the Christmas gift he was unwrapping was something he *really* wanted. He became a shredding machine ripping off the wrappings! The ribbons holding the wrapping were a challenge and his mother finally came with a scissors and cut them. Then John grabbed the box and ran around the room holding it high and shouting for joy. Can we be as excited about this gift we have been given?

We might think that Clearview is a lovely gift for someone else. We might be willing to support it because we want it to be available for others. But if we, or someone we know, needs care, we can remember this treasure in our midst. The *Church Manual* provides for Christian Science practitioners and Christian Science nurses to assist us. Christian Science nurses are here to help us (if we need help!) unwrap the treasure of Christian Science healing. Remember, you have a treasure in your midst right now. Hallelujah!



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