

# “Christian Science Nursing: An Eternal Gift and Healing Power”

By Christine Hein

Director of Christian Science Nursing at Tenacre Foundation in Princeton, N.J.



As I was praying about what to share today, God said, “Share what you love most about Christian Science nursing and what you’ve been able to make your own, and apply with healing results.” What I love most about Christian Science nursing is that it is of God. Just look at definitions and synonyms for “nurse,” and you’ll

see it right away. It comes from the verb, “to nourish or raise up a child.” The nourishing idea is that of a mother nursing her suckling babe. Definitions of nurse include, “to cherish, to hold as dear, to embrace, to foster, to treat with tenderness and affection, to warm, to comfort.” Also, “to promote the growth of” and “to give strength.” If that’s nursing, then God has infinite claims on it! Nursing is spiritual, a divine idea; it’s therefore immortal, eternal and universal. It’s God, divine Love, embracing Her own vast creation in infinite, unchanging warmth and care.

So, Christian Science nursing must be forever, and to me this fact is confirmed by Mrs. Eddy’s statement in *First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany* about the *Church Manual*, “Notwithstanding the sacrilegious moth of time, eternity awaits our Church Manual, which will maintain its rank as in the past, amid ministries aggressive and active, and will stand when those have passed to rest.” (230:1) I don’t believe Mrs. Eddy could have written the By-law for the Christian Science nurse, if it weren’t for the fact that nursing was an eternal idea of God!

Another proof that Christian Science nursing starts and ends with God is that nursing is all about love. I recently had an “Aha” moment about this. I was reading and pondering the definition of God in the glossary of *Science and Health*. In it we read that God is “all-loving.” When I got to that word, I stopped short; I thought that this not only means that God loves everyone totally, purely and with no strings attached; it also means that His Love is the only Love there is or ever will be, and He alone does all the loving! And because God is Love, and we reflect Him, we love. We nurse. It’s that simple. It’s that natural. The wonder of feeling God’s love fills our hearts to overflowing, and that’s when it reaches others. In my practice, the times I have been able to help others most have been when I have felt the comforting, strengthening grace of God taking care of me. I love the original Greek meaning of the word “grace: ... the divine influence upon

the heart and it’s reflection in the life.”

There are names for God that we find in our theology that remind us of God as a nurse. What are some of these that come to mind? I think of “Mother,” “Shepherd,” “Father,” “Friend,” “Comforter,” and “Abba” which means “Daddy.”

And our theology is full of passages that describe a cherishing, nursing God. What are some of these that come to mind? Here are some I love:

- “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (*Deut.* 33:27)
- “The Lord will cover him all the day long, and he will dwell between His shoulders” (*Deut.* 33:12)
- “...he kept him as the apple of His eye” (*Deut.* 32:10)
- “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.” (*Ps.* 91:4)
- “The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing” (*Zeph.* 3:17)

God loves us with complete and utter abandon....If God had a refrigerator, all our pictures would be on it!

These are such tender statements of God’s care for us. And you know what? It’s our job to let God love us and take care of us. It’s our job to be His dear “little ones,” his children. He has made us to be so! Even just thinking about that word, “child” makes me feel the love God has for me and for His other children. There’s something about it! I was once in a management class, and we were asked to come up with a personal mission statement that would be a touchstone to work with in guiding and influencing everything we did as managers and leaders. It would be one’s reason for being. I decided to ask God what my reason for being should be, and the answer came right away, “to be my child.” I was in awe of the answer and of the love that came with it. How perfect, how practical, how simple and true! It would be my touchstone for everything! Not just in my role as a manager, but in everything, and it has made all the difference in my healing ministry as a Christian Science nurse. Being His child keeps me humble, listening, receptive, eager and expectant; it removes burdens and brings joy. And it reminds me that I have a divine Parent enabling me to do His will. As Mrs. Eddy says in *Miscellaneous Writings*,

*(continued on next page)*

# An Eternal Gift and Healing Power” *continued*

“Let us be faithful and obedient, and God will do the rest.” (158:19)

Another aspect of true nursing that I love is that it is unconditional. In Christian Science nursing we are presented with false pictures. When someone does not feel well, they don’t always act like themselves, and it is understandable that they sometimes come across in ways they ordinarily would not. They may be facing fear, doubt, suffering, sadness, criticism, thoughts of disease and discouragement, and these may characterize their expression for a time; this is “the poor suffering heart” that “needs its rightful nutriment, such as peace, patience in tribulation, and a priceless sense of the dear Father’s loving-kindness” (*Science and Health* 365:31). A wise and alert Christian Science nurse will not be offended at this dear one. They will not react, judge or criticize, and they will not gossip. They are too busy being about their Father’s business as spiritual witnesses to fall for that! They know that to be Christian, compassionate, and kind is proof of their sacred calling to this holy work.

I do not believe one can possibly heal while judging. If you think of a judge in a courtroom, what is he doing? He is considering and weighing evidence from two sides. We are all familiar with “Lady Justice” the blind-folded figure holding the scales of justice. There are two sides being weighed! A Christian Science healer works from a totally different premise. There is only one “side”...God is All. He is the only reality. Man is His perfect creation. Shall not the Christian Science healer, standing firmly on this Rock, judge righteous judgment? And “shall not the Judge of the earth do right?” (*Gen.* 18:25)

A friend recently shared with me that when an individual calls upon a Christian Science nurse, he sees it this way: They are spiritual ideas coming for recognition. That’s all that’s going on!

“A spiritual idea coming for recognition” was beautifully illustrated in an article titled: “We’re just going to love her.” *Christian Science Sentinel* July 22, 1985. A woman wrote of her family’s first meeting with her son’s future wife.

“Well, what do you think of her?” I asked, though I was really eager to voice my own opinion. “We’re not going to think about her,” [my husband] declared. “We’re just going to love her.”

I’ll never forget that night .... We were being asked to do God’s will by obeying [a] Christly demand: ... “Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” ... To stifle mere human opinion and to love is surely righteous judgment.

My first healing experience as a Christian Science nurse is an example of the healing effect of judging righteous judgment. It was early on in my ministry as a Christian Science nurse, when I was working in a Christian Science facility. I was asked to help a patient get out of

bed and then with a bath. Before this I had only helped in small ways such as delivering a meal. The thought of helping her with anything else was daunting to me. I actually was afraid to help her because she was in such pain that she would scream when touched, and she would become verbally abusive. Although I knew in theory that these things were no part of her, I still shook when I even needed to set a tray of food in front of her because she would glare at me.

The morning I was to help her with the bath, I really prayed for myself. I knew that it was my own fault if I couldn’t see the individual that God had made, and I asked Him to help me. I gave myself a Christian Science treatment confirming the truth of God and man, and their relationship one to another. I also treated my thought specifically about the false fears and judgment I needed to overcome in this case. I prayed, as Mrs. Eddy writes in *Miscellaneous Writings*, “not verbally, nor on bended knee, but mentally, meekly, and importunately.” (127:7) And I gained my peace. I knew that part of working out one’s salvation includes helping others, and that I could do so with love, and without fear.

The time came for me to help this individual. I greeted her with a loving smile, and she glared at me. When I started getting the lifting machine, she screamed, and I started shaking. I reached out to God with all my heart, “Help me, dear Father, to see what you see!” Immediately I heard the words, “Divine Love, redolent with unselfishness, bathes all in beauty and light!” (*Science and Health* 516:9) I felt for the first time the Love that is God, totally enveloping me in this Love, and I was healed! This Love was redolent with unselfishness! God loves us so much. His angels meet our need exactly! It was not lost on me that the word “bathes” was in His message. God was bathing that patient in beauty and light – and me too! In *Miscellaneous Writings*, Mrs. Eddy writes, “When angels visit us, we do not hear the rustle of wings, nor feel the feathery touch of the breast of a dove; but we know their presence by the love they create in our hearts. Oh, may you feel this touch, — it is not the clasping of hands, nor a loved person present; it is more than this: it is a spiritual idea that lights your path!” (306:23)

As I bathed the patient, this touch was the only touch I felt. And the patient felt it too. Love was right there and everywhere, bringing joy and light! There was no room for anything else! I couldn’t help but smile a reassuring smile, and this time it reached her – because of the Love behind it. She didn’t scream; she smiled and looked at me as if to say, “What has happened?” It was a holy experience for both of us. When I was finished and had settled her comfortably in her chair, she smiled and thanked me.

Because of this healing experience I was better. And the patient was better. She was in less pain, and stopped reacting in fear. She was able to do more for herself. Her

*(continued on next page)*

# An Eternal Gift and Healing Power” *continued*

character softened too. She would thank all the Christian Science nurses when they did anything for her.

I learned from this experience how a Christian Science nurse plays a role in healing. I wasn't praying for the patient, but for myself. I was working out my own salvation, and in so doing the patient experienced healing, too. As Mrs. Eddy says, "...all whom your thoughts rest upon are thereby benefitted." (My. 210:2)

In *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy writes, "If the Scientist has enough Christly affection to win his own pardon, and such commendation as the Magdalen gained from Jesus, then he is Christian enough to practice scientifically and deal with his patients compassionately; and the result will correspond with the spiritual intent." (365:15) This, I believe, is what I experienced in this healing.

I'd like to share another healing that has been foundational in my experience as a Christian Science nurse. Have any of you ever had to deal with the belief of fear of lack when providing others with Christian Science nursing? I have. Yet, as Mrs. Eddy assures us "...rest assured you can never lack God's outstretched arm so long as you are in His service." ('01 1:1) And in *Science and Health* she writes, "Giving does not impoverish us in the service of our Maker, neither does withholding enrich us." (79:29)

Back in the late 1980's I was working at a Christian Science nursing facility as the Director of Christian Science Nursing. We had an on-going need for more staff. And we were not admitting new patients because of fear associated with this belief. We had a long waiting list. Those seeking admission were radically relying on Christian Science, and we had rooms available, but we were not admitting them. When we heard that some of these individuals had gone to hospitals because we felt unable to welcome them and they needed care, it was a wake-up call for us to handle this belief of lack.

I called the administrator at another Christian Science nursing facility that had recently experienced a healing along these lines and asked how they did it. She explained that they just knew it was right to admit those that God was leading to their door, so they decided to trust God more with the situation. They prayerfully worked with the story of Moses crossing the Red Sea. They saw that he led the children of Israel forward into the Red Sea BEFORE he knew the water was going to part. Their staff was willing to go forward and get their feet wet and trust God's care for them. They never doubted that the waters would part. And God did provide practical answers for them. As they took new patients in, innovative and creative ideas for meeting their needs came to light. Also, new Christian Science nurses joined their staff. They never looked back, and God always supplied their needs as they cared for these dear ones.

I was so inspired by this demonstration! I knew this was the answer...Trust God! I shared this healing with our staff, and they were equally inspired, willing to move forward with God, knowing it was right that we welcome those seeking admission. Showing "proof of our utility" could not be undermined. We also affirmed that it was the By-law for the Christian Science nurse that was being called upon, not us personally. This encouraged us and enlivened our hearts. We acknowledged that those calling for admission were responding to Mind's direction, and God knew what He was doing!

I called everyone on our waiting list and told them they could come. We pretty much filled the facility in a matter of a few weeks. Each Christian Science nurse was assigned several more guests than ever before. I took a schedule myself, and our administrator served meal trays and answered buzzers. Our feet were getting wet as we moved forward, crossing that Red Sea, but we had attitudes of expectation, and did not doubt that God would part the water. And He did!

The answer came through healing. The patients started having healings. Those who we thought would need a lot of care improved rapidly. One day we would be taking care of someone needing full care in bed, and the next day they would be up in their chair. One woman who I called to tell her she could come to our facility was so relieved at this news, that she was healed on her way to us. She turned her car around and drove home.

Through this experience we realized that God's proper care was healing! We leaned on God as the Nurse, the sustaining Infinite, and witnessed His care for all of us.

From the time we made a commitment to trust God and do His will, we had a steady flow of patients admitted to our facility, and a steady flow of people returning home much improved or healed. I witnessed this for over a year until I left that facility to move to another position. And I have heard that this openness and trust with admitting patients continues to this day.

"Giving does not impoverish us in the service of our Maker, neither does withholding enrich us!" (*Science and Health* 79:29)

This healing effect extends to the Christian Science nurse as well. I was teaching a class once on how to help someone stand up from a sitting position. I demonstrated this lift over and over, maybe fifty times. When the class was over, I could barely walk. I went to my office to be alone to pray. As I prayed, it occurred to me how ridiculous it was to think that I could experience pain by helping others - by unselfed love. I actually laughed, and I knew I'd be alright. I went on with my work there at my desk and forgot about it. A few hours later I stood up to go home, and found I was in no pain. I walked up a long

*(continued on next page)*

# An Eternal Gift and Healing Power” *continued*

flight of stairs effortlessly. The feeling of being tenderly loved and approved of by my Heavenly Father was palpable.

We are here to serve! And God gives us everything, every resource we need, to do just that!

I'd like to conclude with some thoughts on unity and its relation to love.

God has entrusted us with the greatest scientific discovery the world will ever know. The world has need of us. It needs us to be united. It needs us to succeed in healing and saving the world from sin and death, and in living and sharing the truth of God and man.

I love this letter that Mrs. Eddy wrote to one of her pupils

Little children, love one another...you must love all. No matter if they persecute you even, you must love all. But you must love especially the brethren. You must meet with them, cheer them, in their labors, point the way of love to them and show them it by loving first, and waiting patiently for them to be in this great step by your side, loving each other and walking together. This is what the world must see before we can convince the world of the truths of Christian Science. (*Mary Baker Eddy Christian Healer* p. 166):

I'll conclude with a poem that speaks to my heart of the true unity. It's entitled "Love" by Virginia Thesiger.

## LOVE

By Virginia Thesiger

*Let us be quiet together, you and I,  
Gently affirm the truth and nail the lie,  
Know we are in God's spiritual likeness made—  
Nothing can harm us, nothing make afraid.*

*Yes...but until we glow in this true light,  
I will sit up with you, my friend, tonight.  
God fills all space. Around, below, above,  
There reigns the sweet compassion of His love;*

*But till the fear has gone, the pain has fled,  
Here is a downy pillow for your head,  
A sheet pressed smooth, a supper on a tray.*

*Till false illusions fade and drift away  
And as the sons of God we take our stand,  
Let there be soothing word and helping hand,  
Let the intrinsic prayer have outward sign,  
Coincidence of human with divine.*

Reproduced with permission from the May 23, 1977  
issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*  
©1977 The Christian Science Publishing Society

The poem may be found at this link in JSH-Online:  
[https://sentinel.christianscience.com/  
issues/1977/5/79-22/love](https://sentinel.christianscience.com/issues/1977/5/79-22/love)