

LYNN HOUSE OF POTOMAC VALLEY



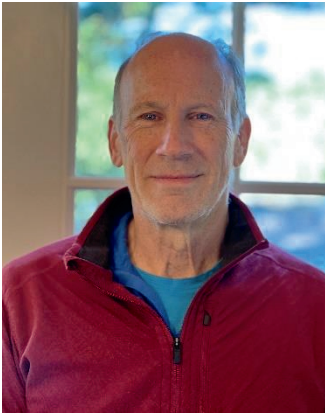
*"Behold, today hath need of thee..."*

An inspirational talk given by  
John F. Cochran II, C.S.

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About John F. Cochran II, C.S.—

A few years after discovering Christian Science in graduate school, John learned about Christian Science nursing. This was an immediate fit, and he began an almost 30-year ministry in one of the Christian Science nursing facilities, serving as



a *Journal*-listed Christian Science nurse and in other capacities. Then he felt called to go into the full-time public practice of Christian Science where there have been many opportunities to blend an ever-growing understanding of Christian Science with his experience as a Christian Science nurse.

John is engaged in a variety of branch church activities, especially appreciating the outreach of the Reading Room and the enthusiasm of Sunday School students towards the truths of Christian Science.

In our time together we are going to be looking at two basic ideas — why we should love and care for each other and how we can do this.

#### SELF-CENTERED APPROACH

Now isn't it generally accepted and acceptable — in fact considered natural — to frame or filter our involvement in opportunities from the point of view of "what's in it for me?" This certainly seems to be the current approach for a significant part of our society and the world. Would it be fair to call this attitude "self-centered," even though it may include one's immediate family or larger family, like ethnic group, political party, or social media connections? How is this approach working for our community, our nation, the world? How are things going, for the collective well-being? I think the general consensus is that things are not going so well. Isn't much of what we hear from all parts of the globe decrying the inharmony, injustice, divisiveness, and deteriorating condition of many things?

The obvious questions are: "Is this state of the world occurring by chance? Maybe a fluke? A temporary 'blip' in the system? Or perhaps there's a natural tendency towards degradation?" Others might categorize this state of affairs as punishment from a wrathful God who doesn't like what's happening. But are these the only choices? What might a spiritual approach — a deeper, soul-searching — reveal? Perhaps this outward sense of things could be the inevitable outcome of a general, global attempt to perpetuate a consumptive, self-absorbed, material-based sense of living and being. In any case, is a model centered on "self" sustainable? Isn't the outward evidence of

clashes and calamities indicating this is not a healthy approach to life and relationships? There are historical examples of empires and nations that have tried to exist this way, and they invariably fail. Of course, predicting the future based on current trends is not always accurate; at the same time, being alert to destructive tendencies can be an important barometer or even a wake-up call to a needed course correction. Again, we can ask questions like: "Why are we here on this planet, in relationships with each other? Is the fundamental purpose of life to maximize the material benefit to ourselves and those in our chosen circle, irrespective of cost to others, both now and in the future?"

#### PAUSING

Framing things this way, the answer seems obvious; yet how often do we take the time — in the rush of day-to-day, chock-a-block activities and demands — to question the direction we're heading? If things seem to be going okay as we're heading downstream — focused and multi-tasking — we might forget or ignore the fact that, like the salmon, we need to be heading upstream.

Stopping what we're doing — "pausing" the action — can be really important and beneficial. Pauses for gratitude throughout the day; pauses for self-examination when there's a rough spot; pauses for quiet communion, sometimes when it seems least convenient.

Well, that's what we're doing today, right now. We're taking a "pause" from the hustle and bustle of the day-to-day to reflect a little more about the idea: "Behold, today hath need of thee."

So what do you consider to be some of the outstanding “needs” of today, considering the words “needs” and “today” in a broad sense. Would it be fair to say that caring, affection, and love are needs of today? This sounds simplistic, and these certainly aren’t a panacea. Yet wouldn’t our society and the world benefit greatly from a more generous serving of these?

#### TURNING TO THE PASTOR — THE BIBLE

As Christian Scientists, our general practice is to turn to our Pastor — the Holy Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy — to discover answers to the questions that come up in our lives. And the question of why and how to love and care for one another has certainly been a question for all times. Now I’m sure that everyone can say that they “love others” in some way, shape or form. In the comfort of our homes, we can easily talk about loving one another and the need to do this. When we get together with friends or close acquaintances, no doubt we show our caring affection for each other. At church we demonstrate our sense of love, for example, when we usher or teach in Sunday School. And I imagine that all of us can probably think of examples when we helped a stranger — in the grocery store, the post office, or even in a parking lot. Yet I have to ask myself: do these examples of love and caring reach the magnitude that Christ Jesus referred to? Are simple acts of kindness, as important as they are, enough to meet the Christian’s standard?

In a recent Christian Science Bible Lesson, many of Christ Jesus’ parables were included, highlighting what the Master

Christian was trying to tell his followers about their individual and collective responsibility, especially in relationship to each other. Many of these begin with, “the kingdom of heaven is like unto ...” — indicating what kind of behavior is needed to enjoy the fruits of God’s blessings. I found myself laughing when I realized that there was no parable saying: “the kingdom of heaven is like unto the church-goer ....” How often had I thought I’d satisfied Christ Jesus’ standard by being the “good church-goer”? I realized that the simple act of attending church, observing guidelines and participating in some of its activities, was just the starting place for being a true Christian.

Christ Jesus’ command to us is: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:34, 35). So we need to love and care for each other as Christ Jesus did — and that was not just a casual expression of affection or caring by any means. Another commandment to his disciples was this: “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8). This is another pointed example of the need for specific loving and caring action towards each other. As a command, doesn’t this need to be taken seriously? What is interesting, too, is the phrase added onto the end: “freely ye have received, freely give.” It sounds like the price of receiving is giving in return.

Aren’t these commandments power-packed nuggets, hinting at what Jesus’ lifework was all about? Are these



“commandments” optional? In other words, could the disciples “opt out” when the going got tough? They weren’t supposed to. Were the teachings of Christ Jesus — the illustrations of why and how to love and care for each other — for that time only? Or are they for time and eternity?

If we have any doubts about the importance of loving and caring for one another, meeting each other’s needs, let’s recall the Parable of the Goats and the Sheep. This parable is shared with the disciples at the very end of Jesus’ ministry, right before the Last Supper, so no doubt it’s a pretty important message. As you may recall, in this parable the King, acting like a Shepherd, divides the nations of his kingdom into goats and sheep. He then proceeds to praise and thank “the sheep” for meeting his various needs such as giving him food when he was hungry, showing him hospitality when he was a stranger, and taking care of him when he was sick. Quite surprised, this group asks, “When did we do these things for you?” He replies, “When you did these things even to the least of our countrymen, you did them to me” (Matt 25:40).

Then he turns to the goats, and point-blank tells them how they didn’t meet his needs. Astonished, they ask, “We can’t think of a time when there was even an opportunity to help you, let alone when we didn’t.” He fires right back, “You didn’t help me every time you refused to help even the least of your “brothers and sisters” — your fellow countrymen who are among you. After this startling statement, the King condemns this group — the goats — to everlasting punishment, that is eternal damnation.

By the way, did you know that this is the only time the phrase “everlasting punishment” is used in the Bible? It seems this emphasizes how important Christ Jesus felt the idea of caring for each other, by meeting needs, was. And again, this is shared as one of the final messages to his disciples before his crucifixion. Probably a message we ought to pay particular attention to also.

Wasn’t Christ Jesus’ whole ministry about selflessly helping and caring for others? But this didn’t mean that his needs weren’t met. Remember how he told his followers: “Love your neighbor as yourself”? He didn’t say: “... better than yourself” or “... instead of yourself.” Isn’t this indicating the need for thoughtful balance? His life proved that in loving and caring for others, our needs will be met. As we’re realizing that these “commands” require a bit of us, we might think that our “Christian-duties” plate is full — that there isn’t room for any other demands. However, we need to think again, because the “blockbuster” is yet to come. Jesus explains: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12).

“Greater works!” So not only are we supposed to do what he did, but then greater works. Wow! I think we’re getting the message that, in the words of Hymn #6 (*Christian Science Hymnal*): “From duty’s claims no life is free .... “

Given how we’ve focused on Christ Jesus’ message, one might think that he is the chief architect and main proponent of the idea of loving and caring for each other.

While it's true that this is the central theme of his lifework, the idea of loving and caring for each other is a main theme throughout the whole Bible. I've just chosen to highlight Jesus' ministry as a primary and clear example of this idea. Let's look at a couple other citations in the Scriptures so we have a good sense of the universality of this theme.

The first is a wonderfully clear statement from St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians —

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.*

(II Cor. 1:3, 4)

Here's the second:

*Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*

*... Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy*

*soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not.*

(Isa. 58:6, 8–11)

This last citation, although it might sound like something Paul would share, is from Isaiah in the Old Testament. In fact, a general study of the Scriptures reveals a long tradition of expectation regarding caring for one another, having its roots in Judaism. And this fact was something which Christ Jesus consistently alluded to.

#### TURNING TO THE PASTOR — SCIENCE AND HEALTH

Now let's consider how this same idea of loving and caring for one another is represented in Christian Science. Here are a few passages from *Science and Health*—

*A Christian Scientist occupies the place at this period of which Jesus spoke to his disciples, when he said: "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Let us watch, work, and pray that this salt lose not its saltiness, and that this light be not hid, but radiate and glow into noontide glory. (SH 367:17)*

And:

*The test of all prayer lies in the answer to these questions: Do we love our neighbor better because of this asking? Do we pursue the old selfishness, satisfied with having prayed for something better, though we give no evidence of the sincerity of our requests by living consistently with our prayer? If selfishness has given place to kindness, we shall regard our neighbor unselfishly, and*

*bless them that curse us; but we shall never meet this great duty simply by asking that it may be done. There is a cross to be taken up before we can enjoy the fruition of our hope and faith. (SH 9:5)*

Another is —

*Ask yourself: Am I living the life that approaches the supreme good? Am I demonstrating the healing power of Truth and Love? If so, then the way will grow brighter “unto the perfect day.” Your fruits will prove what the understanding of God brings to man.(SH 496:9)*

Like Jesus, Mrs. Eddy has grand expectations of students of Christian Science. She writes:

*Now, as then, signs and wonders are wrought in the metaphysical healing of physical disease; but these signs are only to demonstrate its divine origin, — to attest the reality of the higher mission of the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world. (SH 150:12)*

Again, wow! We’re supposed to “attest the reality of the higher mission of the Christ-power to take away the sins of the world.” Sounds like we need to get going and get good at helping one another in our own Christian Science communities, because there’s another super important job waiting for us.

#### HOW DOES CHURCH FIT IN?

Now we’re going to go in a slightly different direction. Let’s look at the concept of “church” in Christian Science. Of course, most of us are familiar with the definition of “church” in the glossary of *Science and Health*:

*CHURCH. The structure of Truth and Love; whatever rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle.*

*The Church is that institution, which affords proof of its utility and is found elevating the race, rousing the dormant understanding from material beliefs to the apprehension of spiritual ideas and the demonstration of divine Science, thereby casting out devils, or error, and healing the sick. (SH 583:12–19)*

It’s pretty clear that a principle function of church is caring for one another, meeting each other’s needs.

Continuing to connect the dots between church, caring for one another, the teachings of Christian Science, and healing, let’s consider the By-Law “Christian Science Nurse,” which is in the *Manual of The Mother Church*:

*Article VIII Guidance of Members ... Christian Science Nurse. Sect. 31. A member of The Mother Church who represents himself or herself as a Christian Science nurse shall be one who has a demonstrable knowledge of Christian Science practice, who thoroughly understands the practical wisdom necessary in a sick room, and who can take proper care of the sick.*

*The cards of such persons may be inserted in The Christian Science Journal under rules established by the publishers. (Man. 49:7–16)*

Now let’s remember that the *Church Manual* is for all students of Christian Science. What’s more, this By-Law is not tucked away in its own “Christian Science Nurse” section, but it has been placed in Article VIII (Guidance for Members) along

with the “Rule for Motives and Acts,” the “Daily Prayer,” and “Alertness to Duty.” This indicates that the By-Law “Christian Science Nurse” is relevant to all Christian Scientists. This relevance is made even clearer in the context of the following from *First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany*: “Of this I am sure, that each Rule and By-law in this Manual will increase the spirituality of him who obeys it, invigorate his capacity to heal the sick, to comfort such as mourn, and to awaken the sinner” (My. 230:10). We’re seeing how church, Christian Science, loving and caring for each other, and healing, are all linked together.

Another compelling statement our Leader makes about the relationship between church and caring for each other is this: “Our church is built on the divine Principle, Love. We can unite with this church only as we are new-born of Spirit, as we reach the Life which is Truth and the Truth which is Life by bringing forth the fruits of Love, — casting out error and healing the sick” (SH 35:19–25).

Again, we can see the natural relationship between the idea of church and the idea of healing. Now, can we go one step further and ask if there’s a “natural” relationship between a branch church and a Christian Science nursing facility, such as Lynn House for instance? I think we could say there is. One example is that some of you here today are on the Lynn House Corporate Board, which is made up of representatives from area branch churches. Also, the By-Law “Christian Science Nurse,” which is a cornerstone for Christian Science nurses and Christian Science nursing facilities, is in the *Church Manual*, and as we mentioned before, it

was written for all Christian Scientists. So, in the same way we saw the natural relationship between the idea of church and the idea of healing, then we can recognize the natural relationship between a Christian Science nursing facility and church (both the concept of church and the branch church) and the healing mission of Christian Science.

#### THE CARING NATURE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING FACILITIES

Until this point, we’ve been considering why we need to be willing to love and care for each other. Now it’s time to see how this can happen. One obvious way is through the care provided by a Christian Science nursing facility. And let’s be sure we understand that the nursing, nurturing care a Christian Science nursing facility provides is much more than just physical care-taking. Christian Science nursing facilities understand their larger mission as coming out from the *Church Manual* By-Law “Christian Science Nurse,” and therefore their mission reflects and includes church. This enables these organizations to take their rightful place in Christian Science communities as a broad and deep resource to help meet needs and support spiritual growth and healing.

Let me share a story that a friend told me recently that illustrates a larger sense of the mission and purpose of Christian Science nursing facilities. This is not specifically about Lynn House, although it certainly could have been. A woman was caring for her husband and contacted the nearby, small, “home-town” Christian Science nursing facility from time to time to ask questions about meeting care needs, choice of care products, etc. This was a big help to her! At one point she



and her husband decided to take a little car trip. Somehow, during their travel the woman significantly injured her foot. She was able to continue driving, and they were very grateful to arrive at their destination without further incident. However, in the next few days her foot seemed to get worse. Even though she was able to take care of the wound, when it came time to return home, it didn't seem wise for her to drive.

Not sure what to do, she decided to call the "home-town" Christian Science nursing facility for advice. A Christian Science nurse lovingly answered the phone. After they had spoken for a little while, the Christian Science nurse reassured the woman that all would be well and that she would get back to her promptly with some ideas. Soon the woman got a call back saying that the Christian Science nurse and a local church member would be happy to come and bring the woman and her husband home. Needless to say, the woman was amazed and filled with gratitude because they had traveled a significant distance from home.

When the Christian Science nurse and church member arrived, the Christian Science nurse expertly attended to the woman's wounded foot, while giving some tips on how to take care of it. The woman and her husband rode back in the Christian Science nursing facility vehicle while the church member drove their car. This was such a special experience for the woman! What's more, the Christian Science nurse continued to visit the woman, taking care of the bandaging and helping around the house, until this support was no longer needed.

Isn't this a beautiful example of how a Christian Science nursing facility represents itself as that tender resource, meeting the human need right where it is! And this is the mission and purpose of Christian Science nursing facilities. So as we think about these facilities — these "sanctuaries for healing" — let's be willing to explore the different ways they can and do support the Christian Science community.

And as they support both us and our loved ones, let's support them, by calling on them when needs arise and by helping meet their needs — from volunteering in various ways, to serving on the Executive or other Boards, to providing business and consulting support, to making financial contributions, etc. Here's this beautiful passage about cooperation and mutual support from St. Paul:

*Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality....*

(II Cor. 8:11–14).

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

Let's look at other examples of loving and caring for each other outside of Christian Science nursing facilities. Here's where we discover things the rest of us can do. This can get a little "tricky" as the rubber hits

the road. When we start to realize that each of us has a part to play in loving and caring for each other, then resistance can start to show up. So, one of the first things needed as we begin to explore this idea is to accept its validity, and be willing to give our consent — to yield to divine prompts to help each other.

As we know, this is no small thing. At this point that serpent of old can subtly try to convince us otherwise with arguments like: “This doesn’t really seem like a good idea. You already have way too much to do. Besides, do you know what the need really is? And what makes you think that you could help anyway. This is better left to others, more qualified.” Sound familiar? Aren’t we tempted every day and throughout the day with this kind of back-door, restricted, limited reasoning?

As we yield to the divine will — give our consent, as Christ Jesus did — don’t we find that resolutions come to us naturally?

Members of a small branch church realized that needs of some of the church members and attendees weren’t being met adequately, but they weren’t sure what to do. They gave their consent to listen, and decided to pray, as a group, about the situation. Then they came together to talk about it. At first, arguments surfaced like: “Oh how would we be able to do this?” and “What if the situation goes on for a long time?” or “If I get involved, I’ll probably be in over my head and won’t know what to do.”

Then a brave soul asked the question: “Mary Sue, don’t you like to cook? Would you be willing to make some soup for the Arnolds?” Then: “Fred, you’re tall. Would

you be willing to help the Jones re-arrange things in their kitchen cupboards so they’re easier to reach?” “Betty, when you go grocery shopping, would you be willing to pick up a few things for the Smiths from time to time?” Pretty soon church members saw how the simple abilities Love had given them could provide much needed help for others.

And it was not a stretch. It all started with saying: “I will listen for Thy voice ....” These are simple activities to us, but they can be so helpful to those in need. Here are some other examples — helping someone get to church; reading the Bible Lesson together (either in person or over the phone); making a friendly phone call to touch base. Divine Love already has the answers. Our job is to listen and obey.

Aren’t these wonderful yet uncomplicated examples of how God, Love works in our hearts and minds to bring about support for others and contribute to healing? Can we admit, here and now, that there are plenty of things we can do? Of course, not everything is ours to do, but we can and must be willing to at least say “yes” to exploring possibilities.

Besides this, helping others can be fun, freeing us from self-imposed limitations — and it can be amazingly rewarding, finding “one’s own in another’s good.” (Mis 127:13). Let’s defend ourselves against being bullied into feeling a sense of fear, concern, or burden about helping others. Last week’s Christian Science Bible Lesson was a marvelous and powerful antidote to the temptation to believe these kinds of lies of the carnal mind. As we’ve seen, once we give our consent, we open our hearts and minds to the

tremendous, infinite inspiration of Soul, Spirit that provides here-to-fore unseen creativity and resourcefulness.

Speaking of the Christian Science Bible Lessons, have you noticed how they seem to be calling us to action? By the time we get to the final sections, the “baton” has been passed from Christ Jesus, to his disciples, and then to us. In fact, in the recent Bible Lesson on the subject of Everlasting Punishment, one of the key themes was: “there is no punishment, no penalty for those called to this caring-for-each-other ministry, no matter how severe seem the circumstances.”

“YEAH, BUT . . . “

One could say: “This all sounds good in theory, but how does it play out in actual life? Can it really work to the point where we rise above the challenges to reach solutions that benefit and bless all?”

I remember once when I was invited to share some inspirational ideas with a group, like our event today. It seemed like a right idea that could help support the mission of the organization that had asked me and those that would tune in. I had a rather full schedule at the time, but I heard divine Love whisper, “Say yes” – so I did. Although the commitment was some time off, soon the ideas flowed. Shortly after this, another similar invitation came in for a couple weeks before the first commitment. After a bit of internal struggle, the answer came clearly that this was a wonderful opportunity to contribute to a unique and worthy cause.

As the time approached for the first event, many new demands came out of nowhere. Though it didn’t appear there

was going to be adequate time to prepare, everything fell beautifully into place for a harmonious event. The only problem was that this hadn’t left much time to get ready for the second engagement. When I started to “ramp up” preparation, all kinds of things tried to distract me and pull me away from this important work. Putting out these suggestions was quite a job.

Then a week and a half before the event, I learned I had misunderstood the plan for giving it. All of a sudden I needed to be finished quite a bit earlier than I had expected. As I prayed, thoughts came that there couldn’t be any penalty for being willing and for following divine guidance. With this I felt a calm assurance that there already was an answer that would bless everyone. My “job” was to pose the question about the possibility of an alternative production method. The team said they would think and pray about it.

While the outcome of the decision was still pending, a significant, time-sensitive church project fell into my lap. This seemed different than the other “distractions,” and when I prayed about it, the answer was clear that I should and could take care of it because, as we read in the book of Romans, “... all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28). When I got my peace, I figured that now all would be smooth sailing; but then another production challenge came up.

With just a week left and the talk not nearly as ready as I had hoped it would be, the idea came to me that I could postpone several commitments that

weren't time-sensitive. However, a couple social-type engagements (of all things) kept coming to thought. As I prayed and listened carefully, for some unknown reason it felt right to attend. Although my human sense of organization tried to argue that this wouldn't be wise, the divine prompting prevailed. As it turned out, at these events there was an opportunity to connect with a couple of people who shared about recent challenges in their lives. As they explained the resolutions to these challenges, it was obvious that these were the needed, final pieces of my talk. I was so grateful that Love had "clearly nudged" me, and that I had listened to that voice and not the voice of worry-based human reasoning.

It was interesting that, right up to the point of the presentation itself, challenges continued. But this didn't matter, because I was gaining clarity about the goodness of this activity, and that brought an inner peace that couldn't be shaken. Also, I was gaining a sense of dominion, as I understood more completely that God, good, will and does take care of us when we thoughtfully and prayerfully strive to help and support others. Isn't this something we all have to learn, and probably more than once. How wonderful that we have such terrific examples as Christ Jesus, the apostles, Mary Baker Eddy, and many others — including many of you here today.

#### LESSONS ALONG THE WAY

Another important lesson to learn along the way is that loving and caring for each other shouldn't and doesn't have to be a burden. Yes, there may be challenges, but they don't have to be fraught with concern and a sense of being

overwhelmed. Christ Jesus, the Example for all time, said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28–30).

How could someone with such a tremendous individual responsibility make this kind of statement? Well, Jesus tells us how, right in the middle of that passage: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart...." Meek and lowly in heart. What does this mean? Maybe a great sense of humility. How is this expressed in our lives? The same way Christ Jesus expressed it and spoke about it. It's the willingness of a little child. He said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

So great trust evolves into a willingness to follow the requests of our dear Father-Mother God. Then we're led into the kingdom of heaven, and witness harmony in all aspects of our lives.

So what is this supposed "burden" — this great job — we have to do? Is it that we need to make things happen? Is it taking things into our own hands? Is it ensuring that everyone is happy and satisfied with the outcome, or maybe more freed from the challenges of life? Or is it consenting to "do Thy will" — yielding to the call of the Almighty in every situation. After all, isn't God the source of everything? "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Act 17:28).



Can we see how when we let go of any personal sense of responsibility, and surrender whole-heartedly to divine promptings, that safety, protection and guidance happen naturally. Mrs. Eddy writes: “The rich in spirit help the poor in one grand brotherhood, all having the same Principle, or Father; and blessed is that man who seeth his brother's need and supplieth it, seeking his own in another's good” (SH 518:15–19).

We are blessed — and so are others — as we do this “blessed work.” However, we need to remember that this great blessing that Love has for us won't be realized until we “do the work.” It's like having an infinite supply of money in a bank account. If we never take out any money, the infinite supply won't do us any good.

Now I know many of you are already giving a tremendous amount in helping others. Often we can feel “maxed out” as requests continue to come in. We may even feel worn out or unwell because of human demands on us, and our belief that we need to get everything taken care of. Here are a couple statements from the Christian Science textbook that speak directly to this:

*We should relieve our minds from the depressing thought that we have transgressed a material law and must of necessity pay the penalty. Let us reassure ourselves with the law of Love. God never punishes man for doing right, for honest labor, or for deeds of kindness, though they expose him to fatigue, cold, heat, contagion. If man seems to incur the penalty through matter, this is but a belief of mortal mind, not an enactment of wisdom, and man has only to enter*

*his protest against this belief in order to annul it. Through this action of thought and its results upon the body, the student will prove to himself, by small beginnings, the grand verities of Christian Science. (SH 384:3)*

And:

*Constant toil, deprivations, exposures, and all untoward conditions, if without sin, can be experienced without suffering. Whatever it is your duty to do, you can do without harm to yourself. (SH 385:15–18)*

As we calmly, thoughtfully pray and listen in seemingly stressful circumstances, we'll hear the right answer. It may not always be the one we're looking for or the one we want to hear, but no harm can come to us if we're truly following the divine behest. Why? Because the law of God, the law of good, is always in operation, and this protects, guides and guards us and everything we do.

## TEMPTATIONS

Often the bewildered question comes: “But I did my prayerful work. Why is this happening to me?” The honest answer — there isn't a good human answer. On the human scene there seem to be many anomalies. Even Christ Jesus and Mrs. Eddy had to endure and overcome tremendous challenges that seemed so unfair. So from their own experience they shared with us that preparation — building on the Rock — is critical, but that it wouldn't prevent all the storms. Some would surely come. And aren't some of the biggest storms related to indignation, discouragement, frustration, anxiety, fear. “Here we are, doing our best to follow the demands of Love, but we keep running into problem after problem.”

When this happens, we can know we're in good company because — like it or not — this is part of the true Christian's spiritual journey. Remember Christ Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount:

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. (Matt. 5:10–12)*

Isn't one of the key words here "falsely"? These lies are temptations to believe that there is a power apart from God, divine Love, and that we can be separated from the love of God. So isn't our role two-fold: (1) to never be tempted into believing the lies; and, the flip side, (2) to always believe in the law and power of good, which is God's law. To the extent we do this, the storms do not overwhelm us, but rather we conquer them.

Speaking of temptations, another one to watch out for is "comparison." We can be tempted to look around and wonder how come we have so much to do, while others seem to have a much lighter load. Weren't both Christ Jesus and Mrs. Eddy very clear about the dangers of making comparisons? Why might that be? For one, this can lead to jealousy and envy and/or criticism and condemnation. These attitudes express just the opposite of what Christ Jesus taught his followers. Any uncaring, unloving sense in ourselves must be detected and eliminated for us to be successful in helping others.

#### EACH ONE'S UNIQUENESS

Another reason comparisons are unfortunate and even counterproductive is

because they ignore the fact that each of us has a unique relationship with our Father-Mother God. Each of us is uniquely important and purposed! So each one of us has our own, unique responsibility to our Maker. Our Leader speaks of this in *Retrospection and Introspection*: "Each individual must fill his own niche in time and eternity" (Ret. 70:18).

We can't do this for others, nor can others do this for us. And we will fulfill our individual obligation to God as we listen for Her direction and pace. Mrs. Eddy so beautifully penned this idea in a verse titled "To the Big Children," which is so appropriate for all of us—

*Father-Mother good, lovingly  
Thee I seek, —  
Patient, meek,  
In the way Thou hast, —  
Be it slow or fast,  
Up to Thee.  
(Po. 69:8)*

In reality, all of us really do love and care for each other, naturally and deeply, in our heart-of-hearts. Why? Because divine Love has "hard-wired" us with this magnificent quality of unconditional love. So we should let nothing keep us from expressing this love with each other. In these times, it may seem like there's not much support for love, care, or affection in the world. So, isn't it that much more important that we show our love, care and support for each other, in the best way we can — each in his own special, unique way.

Each individual has their own, wonderful, unique contribution to make to the grand tapestry of the divine creation.

" . . . Behold, today hath need of thee."  
(Hymn #6, *Christian Science Hymnal*)

Abide not in the realm of dreams,  
O man, however fair it seems;  
But with clear eye the present scan,  
And hear the call of God and man.

Think not in sleep to fold thy hands,  
Forgetful of thy Lord's commands:  
From duty's claims no life is free,  
Behold, today hath need of thee.

The present hour allots thy task,  
For present strength and patience ask;  
And trust His love whose sure supply  
Meets all thy need abundantly.

*Hymn #6, Christian Science Hymnal*

Notes on citations:

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My— *First Church of Christ, Scientist and Miscellany*, by Mary Baker Eddy

Mis— *Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, by Mary Baker Eddy

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4400 W. Braddock Road  
Alexandria, VA 22304

*For additional copies, please contact us at:  
[info@LynnHouse.org](mailto:info@LynnHouse.org) or 703-379-6000*

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