

# CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSING— A CURATIVE ART

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**MY INTRODUCTION** to Christian Science nursing came the summer before my sophomore year in high school, when I took a job at a Christian Science nursing facility on Saturdays. After some training, I was ready to perform basic tasks such as making beds, helping patients get around, and assisting them where I could. The atmosphere was not depressing for me, but rather, uplifting—charged with inspiration. People were living Christian Science. Each patient and nurse at the facility was praying from the basis that there was one Mind, or God, and they expected healing to result. I was in awe of this.

Early on, when I felt I might not be up to the job, my Sunday School teacher encouraged me to look at the work from a spiritual perspective, to think of it as an opportunity to love, and to begin learning how to heal in Christian Science. She reminded me I could start by seeing the patients as God's loved children. I could grow into understanding that, actually, they all were His likeness, as it says in the Bible. And I could begin to realize that, because they were made in God's image and likeness, they were already perfect and healthy.

That weekend work at the nursing facility was such a wonderful experience for me that I returned for several summers. I completed a nurse's aide training program offered by the nursing facility, and was taught how to give additional basic care to the patients—bathing, simple lifts, assistance with meals, helpful conversation, and so on. I loved being useful. In my third year of college, I began to assess my life, and asked myself, "What are you doing in college?" That's when I knew I wanted to be a Christian Science nurse.

It has been over 35 years since then. And through many years of home, camp, and facility nursing, I've been learning that the key to maintaining a healing nursing practice is to quickly reject the false picture of suffering, disease, or limitation I see in front of me, and, in prayer, replace it with the true view of my patients' Godlike individuality.

This spiritual seeing, bearing witness to the perfection of God's creation, is how Christian Science nurses support the healing prayer of both the patient and the Christian Science practitioner, who provides the specific spiritual treatment. Spiritually witnessing the patient's God-given health and wholeness, is the way Jesus cured those

who asked for his help (see for example *Science and Health*, pp. 476–477). It brings the breath of healing to a sickroom. As the Discoverer of Christian Science, Mary Baker Eddy, put it, "Holding the *right* idea of man in my mind, I can improve my own, and other people's individuality, health, and morals . . ." (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883-1896*, p. 62).

I had proof of this when a patient at a Christian Science nursing facility where I worked lost her mental balance, and began talking and behaving irrationally. I went to the patient's room, and after an hour of gently affirming aloud what I knew to be spiritually true about her, I helped her with a shower. Soon after, she spoke to a Christian Science practitioner on the phone, and I felt free to go home.

But at 4:00 a.m., I received a call informing me that the patient said she was passing on. I quickly returned to the facility, and for the next two hours, while the practitioner continued her prayer, I sat at the patient's bedside, sharing ideas with her on the spiritual facts of her life as God's loved child. When I left, the patient was completely in her right mind. I saw clearly that my role had been to listen to the healing thoughts God was giving me, to love that patient's true, God-given identity.

#### BEARING WITNESS TO THE PERFECTION OF GOD'S CREATION BRINGS THE BREATH OF HEALING TO A SICKROOM.

My nursing practice has expanded into teaching Christian Science nursing in fresh ways. Last year, three young mothers living in remote areas of California began driving two to four hours to meet with me monthly at one mother's home, for a weekend of nursing classes. These women also commute to our nursing facility once a month, to work with other experienced Christian Science nurses. Also, an answer to my prayer to make Christian Science nursing more accessible worldwide has been teaching individuals from South America in our bilingual nursing program, where they learn Christian Science nursing while improving their English.

I've learned something important since those early days of my nursing career, when I grew in seeing the perfect man and woman right where imperfection seems to be. Anyone who loves his or her neighbor, wants to help those in need, and practices the teachings of Christian Science can become a Christian Science nurse.