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 TM Š > Š < • Ž 1 Š < ~ ž • 1 ‘ s tender mercies
 were expressed, and how those tender
 mercies completely transformed thought
 and the outward manifestation? There is
 a story in the Bible that is very similar--in
 the Gospel of John. Jesus was passing
 through Samaria, and his disciples went
 to get some food. While he was waiting
 for them to return, Jesus sat at the well,
 and a woman came to draw water. Jesus
 asked the woman if she would draw him
 some water for a drink. Jews and
 Samaritans did not interact with one
 another. But it is at this point and to this
 woman that Jesus reveals himself first as
 the promised Messiah. What does the
 woman do? She drops her water jug,
 runs into the village and tells the men that
 she has met the Messiah. The men from
 the village come to see Jesus for
 themselves, and invite him to stay several
 days; again, an uncommon act of
 hospitality and care. At the end of the
 visit, they tell the woman that they
 believed he was indeed the Messiah, not
 because of her words but because of what
 they have seen for themselves. Their lives
 were touched by the tender mercies they
 had witnessed and experienced.

One Sunday morning, as First Reader, I
 was making final preparations before the
 service. A friend came into the
 auditorium and sank into a pew. Looking
 at the hymn selections, he sighed and
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 tender mercies hymn today.
 After the service, he told me that the
 entire service was just what he needed
 and he felt so much better and refreshed.
 I was so grateful to see this healing at a
 church service.

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 tender mercies, especially in regards to
 Christian Science nursing. Tenderness is
 sometimes a misunderstood quality. But what
 does Mrs. Eddy say about tenderness? She
 œ Š ç œ *Tenderness accompanies all the might
 imparted by Spirit* i ũ&H p 514:18)

Have you ever thought of our Pastor, the Bible
 and Science and Health with Key to the
Scriptures, as well as Prose Works, the Church
Manual and the Hymnal as the complete set of
 instruction manuals for Christian Science
 nursing?

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 is invited to dinner with Simon the Pharisee.
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 with her tears, dries them with her hair, and
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 neglected these customary signs of respect and
 care for his esteemed guest, yet this woman,
 unwelcomed, performed the acts of hospitality.
 We think about this chapter regarding
 practitioners, but it is vital to a demonstrable
 knowledge of Christian Science practice
 required for Christian Science nursing. It
 could also be said that the woman
 demonstrated proper care.

Each one of us here today is so grateful for
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 Science, including all the activities of the
 Christian Science Church outlined in the
Church Manual. This includes Christian
 Science nursing. Each component of the
 Christian Science movement includes some
 aspect of Christian Science nursing. Christian
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 tender mercies, embracing and enveloping all.
 I think Christian Science nursing is possibly
 one of the most undervalued activities in the
Church Manual.

Make no mistake, as a Manual-provided activity it is vital to the Christian Science movement. If we were not to be benefitted by Christian Science nursing throughout the ages, Mrs. Eddy would not have provided for the activity by by-law provision.

The idea of a complete, final revelation may sound a little limiting, but the depth of that revelation has only begun to be explored... we need to look forward to the advancing demonstration of Christian Science and Christian Science nursing. Mrs. Eddy's final act of nursing for the whole world was the establishment of The Christian Science Monitor. Our newspaper might have changed its form to on-line and a weekly magazine format, but it continues to be fulfilling its mission. The Monitor is not a relic of the past. Its influence is needed more than ever today, and so is our support of its mission. It is no coincidence that The Christian Science Board of Directors requested us to specifically recognize and support both the Monitor and Christian Science nursing this year.

Each one of us has an opportunity to cherish the qualities of Christian Science nursing. What are those qualities? On page 395 of S&H, Mrs. Eddy says that *"The nurse should be cheerful, orderly, punctual, patient, full of faith, - receptive to Truth and Love"*. What should the nurse not be? That question is also answered on page 395: *"An ill-tempered, complaining, or deceitful person should not be a nurse."* It also says that *"Prayers, in which God is not asked to heal but is besought to take the patient to Himself, do not benefit the sick."*

How should a nurse perform his or her activities? On page 396 of S&H, it says *"One should never hold in mind the thought of disease, but should efface from thought all forms and types of disease, both for one's own sake and for that of the patient. Avoid talking illness to the patient."*

Make no unnecessary inquiries relative to feelings or disease. Never startle with a discouraging remark about recovery, nor draw attention to certain symptoms as unfavorable, avoid speaking aloud the name of the disease. Never say beforehand how much you have to contend with in the case, nor encourage in the patient's thought the expectation of growing worse before a crisis is passed."

One of the challenges facing us today is the belief that we are getting old, falling apart and out of sync with what is going on. As if we should be discarded like outdated technology. Man is not a machine, man is not material. Each of us grows in grace and beauty, in spiritual understanding and demonstration. Our experience and practice are deduced just as the childlike qualities associated with youth are necessary. Experience and joy are not competing with one another.

They are spiritual qualities and need to be cherished. Age and blight are not part of anyone's spiritual make up. In Christian Science versus Pantheism, page 10, Mrs. Eddy says, *"All this is accomplished by the grace of God, - the effect of God **understood**. A higher manhood is manifest, and never lost, in that individual who finds the highest joy, - therefore no pleasure in loathsome habits or in sin, and no necessity for disease and death. Sin, sickness, appetites, and passions, constitute no part of man, but obscure man."*

The spiritual growth and study of Christian Science bless and sustain us. They lift us up, not pull us down. These activities of thought and action are not a burden. They are not the same old words repeated over and over, like a chant or charm. The power of God is in operation and the flood tides of Love are open and filling our consciousness.

We are worthy. The adversary, which Mrs. Eddy defines as “...one who opposes, denies, disputes, not one who constructs and sustains reality and Truth.” (S&H p 580:28-30), would taunt us with the claim, ‘you are not worthy, we are not worthy’. That is a lie, a bald imposition. Who said you were not worthy? God has never said it or thought such a statement about His perfect, loved creation. You are not a failure. Don’t ever accept this lie.

A friend of mine, who the world would consider to be of senior years, found herself in a very difficult situation. She had been struggling with a problem of painful walking. Her family was extremely concerned and urged her to have medical attention. She and her family were at an impasse. Because there was a Christian Science nursing facility nearby, the family agreed that she could go there for a while and they would later assess the situation. Because she could not walk or sit in a car, non-medical transportation was arranged to bring her into the facility.

The Christian Science Nurses and staff lovingly greeted her, settled her comfortably into a room, and gave the family a tour. The family left, feeling satisfied that she would be well taken care of.

“Now what?” my friend thought. When the Christian Science Nurse came in to check on her she asked, “Is this where I am going to spend the rest of my days?” The Christian Science Nurse gently reminded her that a Christian Science Nursing facility was a place of active healing, not the Pool of Bethesda where one would wait for the chance to be healed. “Do healings really happen here?” was her next question. The Christian Science Nurse replied, “Of course they do.”

That afternoon was a Gethsemane moment for my friend. On one hand, every possible suggestion of mortal mind tried to raise objections to the possibility of her being healed. On the other hand, her heart overflowed with her life-long love for and reliance on Christian Science, her active participation in branch church work and her desire to continue to care for her family, especially her young grandson.

Mary Baker Eddy says, “*Desire is prayer; and no loss can occur with trusting God with our desires, that they may be molded and exalted before they take form in word and in deeds.*” (S&H p 1:10) The struggle was mighty. Finally, she realized she must argue only on one side, the side of God, good. That was the only side there was. She had spent a lot of effort arguing with error, but very little effort arguing for God.

She also recognized two points. The first was that she had relied completely on the practitioner for her healing, rather than God. The second point was that her relationship with God was primary and her reason for being. Her prayer and study took on a sweetness and freshness. Within a few days she walked out of the facility and returned home in the family car, completely healed. She returned to caring for her family and her branch church work.

Mortal mind would try to make us forget these experiences of healing. How many wonderful healings have each of us experienced? We need to pay particular attention to healings through Christian Science, especially those that take place at a nursing facility or involve Christian Science Nursing. Animal magnetism would suggest that healing doesn’t go on, or that Christian Science does not heal like it did in Mrs. Eddy’s time.

The truth does not wear out, become outdated or replaced by medical technology or theories. Christian Science nursing facilities are where we go to demonstrate life, not places where we go to die. They are places of refuge, but not places where we go to hide. A Christian Science nursing facility is not part of the medical model.

We are the opposite of the medical model, which claims that man becomes "...sick and useless, suffers and dies..: (S&H, p 168:16).

We cannot afford to accept this limited model of man. That is not the man, the image and likeness, which God created. That is not the Genesis One man.

Christian Science nursing is very dear to my heart. You could say that I have a life-long interest in Christian Science nursing, because my mother was a Christian Science nurse for over fifty years.

From my mother's example, as well as the examples of the many Christian Science nurses I've known over the years, I have learned that nursing is both a mission and a ministry, in the truest sense of both words. It is unselfish, spiritually demanding, and rewarding. It is the outward demonstration to the world that Christian Scientists do take practical care of the sick. We don't just leave people alone and hope for the best, sprinkling prayers about like confetti and loudly proclaiming "it's not real, it's not real" without understanding why.

When I was a young teenager, my mother returned to active Christian Science nursing and re-listed her name in The Christian Science Journal. She did private duty nursing at night. My mother assured me that even if she was not available, my Father-Mother God was always present. I could listen for His messages, no matter what was going on around me.

She pointed out how Mrs. Eddy explained that the Christ is the message from God to men, speaking to the human consciousness. I would always know what to do as I quietly listened. Quiet listening did not include panic, screaming or anger; helpful instruction to a teenager! This was another form of Christian Science nursing, the expectation that we can hear and respond to divine Love's tender mercies.

Perfect God and perfect man is the basis of thought and demonstration. All of these are simple but powerful spiritual facts. They have all the power of God's law behind them. And when error confronts you, remember that the word "no" is a complete sentence. Reject the error. Replace it with the truth. Rejoice that you are created in the image and likeness of God. This is not a formula for healing. They are practical, systematic steps for giving yourself and others a Christian Science treatment that can be specifically adapted to particular situations.

I have always loved to read, and particularly like to read mystery stories. Someone once told me that people who like mysteries always want closure; they don't like untidy ends. So it is with Christian Science healing. We don't accept backward steps or unhealed conditions.

Once we have woken up from a dream of life and intelligence in matter, we don't go back to that dream. We are awake and alert, and we love being the loved Child of God.

Another woman (who could be considered to be of quite senior years) called for help one day. Each time she called she was very demanding, telling me exactly what needed to be handled and that I really needed to get on the stick.

One day, when she paused to take a breath, I said, "You know, you reflect the same Mind that I do. What is Mind telling you about your situation? What is God knowing about you, right now and always? She was very quiet, and shortly hung up the phone. I hoped I had not been disrespectful or unloving.

It was quite a while before I heard from her again, and when I did, she said, "You really gave me something to think about. I was always looking for a person to fix me, but I realized it was between God and me. I was so busy talking about my problems, trying to get you to understand how serious and real they are. But I've been a Christian Scientist for a long time, and class taught for many years. I've never been material, have I? I've always been spiritual." Her progress was incredible from that moment on.

I would like to share one final example of tender mercies and Christian Science nursing. A husband and wife were traveling in Europe as part of a tour group. The husband became ill. While they tried to keep up with the tour schedule, they realized more direction for physical care was going to be needed. They were in a country without a Christian Science nurse, and did not speak the language. A practitioner back in the United States was contacted to work for the husband, and the practitioner recommended the wife contact the Christian Science nursing facility in their home area for suggestions for nursing care. The Director of Christian Science Nursing was so loving and tender with the overwhelmed wife. A practical plan of care for the husband was put together. In addition, the nursing staff agreed that the wife could call the nursing facility at any time she felt she needed someone to support and listen. The nursing staff was not giving the wife Christian Science treatment. They were expressing Christian charity.

I hope that during our time together today we have begun to explore the importance of Christian Science nursing and the expression of God's tender mercies. May each church member, attendee and Sunday School student understand and appreciate Christian Science nursing. And may each one of us embrace these statements from the Tender Mercies Hymn, #445:

*"So no matter the need and no matter the threat,
I'm secure in Your love, no fear, no regret.
Can there be a sweeter comfort, a grace more
divine, Than the thought that Your love is here
and is mine?.....Tender mercies are holding me."*

Mary Louise Eck is the product of the Christian Science Sunday School and joined her church at an early age. She held various positions at The Mother Church Headquarters in Boston, and later moved to Arizona. In 1991 she became a *Journal*-listed Christian Science practitioner.

In addition to her commitment to Christian Science public practice and nursing, she has served on the Board of Directors at a Christian Science nursing facility in Arizona, has a full life volunteering at an interfaith pre-release program in a Federal Correctional Institution, caring for her blended family, reading, flute playing, studying the Holy Bible, and... finds time to enjoy needlework and collecting antique samplers.

The topper on this rich ice cream sundae of energy and talent is her current service as First Reader at First Church of Christ, Scientist, Tempe, Arizona.