

HELP US TO HELP EACH OTHER, LORD

Talk for Midland-at-Home - October 17, 2020

By Kat Collins Booth

Many thanks for the introduction, Jackie. I'm honored that the board of Midland at Home has asked me to share some thoughts with you today.

Now perhaps, more than ever, how vital it is that we help one another! I'm sure that each of you has a story or two to tell of how you've helped family, friends and neighbors to make sure they are well cared for. Your acts of kindness are just what the familiar hymn titling this talk is all about.

Help us to help each other, Lord,
Each other's cross to bear;
Let each his friendly aid afford,
And feel his brother's care.

(The Christian Science Hymnal, No. 105:1)

So how can we best help each other? We start with prayer. As Christian Scientists, we are a small but mighty force in the world today, and our prayers bless the world daily and are expressed in the way we reach out to support each other with love.

The Bible story of the Shunammite woman and Elisha [2 Kings 4:8-17] was an inspiration to me as I thought about this talk. I find their mutual respect and support to be a great example of helping each other. As Elisha travelled through her area often, the woman thought to build him a furnished room to use on his visits. He greatly appreciated this and one day while he was resting on the bed in that room, he wanted to do something for her in return to express his gratitude.

Here are his words from the Message Version of the Bible: [2 Kings 4:13] *"You've gone far beyond the call of duty in taking care of us; what can we do for you? Do you have a request we can bring to the king or to the commander of the army?" She replied, "Nothing. I'm secure and satisfied in my family."* I love her reply. The King James Version words it, *"I dwell among mine own people."* And the New Living Translation puts it this way *"My family takes good care of me."* She is content. She feels safe and happy. The story goes on that Elisha did come up with the perfect gift--the promise of a son.

We are dwelling among our own people—our church family --and we should make room in our hearts to love and care for each other so that we all feel content, safe and secure, and free and eager to rely upon Christian Science to meet our needs. We have a UNIQUE health care system in Christian Science, largely unknown to the world--

we need to cherish it, use it, and see to it that no one wanting to rely upon it is left alone, especially when issues of health and well-being arise.

We are blessed with a world-wide family in The Mother Church; and many avenues of support are found in The Church Manual by Mary Baker Eddy, whose rules and bylaws she says are designed to “maintain the dignity and defense of our Cause.” [frontispiece]

The Manual includes Christian Science nurses and practitioners who are a foundational source of help for our fellow beings as well as all the avenues of our church outreach that provide opportunities for growth in Christian Science. You don’t have to be a member of The Mother Church to appreciate the guidance it provides for daily living. If you are a member, you surely pay attention daily to the Manual’s instructions.

Today I’d like to focus on two Manual bylaws, the bookends or first and last sections of the chapter on Discipline--Article VIII, “Guidance of Members.” This Article opens on page 40 with Section 1, “A Rule for Motives and Acts,” and closes on page 49 with Section 31, “Christian Science nurse.” These two bylaws are tightly woven together for me, and I’d like to share some thoughts about them because they relate so deeply to helping each other. I know many of you are very familiar with one or both of these bylaws, but let’s consider them more closely together:

First, A Rule for Motives and Acts: “Neither animosity nor mere personal attachment should impel the motives or acts of the members of The Mother Church. In Science, divine Love alone governs man; and a Christian Scientist reflects the sweet amenities of Love, in rebuking sin, in true brotherliness, charitableness, and forgiveness. The members of this Church should daily watch and pray to be delivered from all evil, from prophesying, judging, condemning, counseling, influencing or being influenced erroneously.”

And next, other bookend in the Manual is Section 31, Christian Science Nurse. “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.”

Christian Science nurses especially strive to be obedient to this bylaw, but by heeding it, all Christian Scientists can find in it the hope and the opportunity for the highest fulfillment of the Rule for Motives and Acts. As we do this, the world can better perceive that the care we give is practical and proper, based on our clear understanding and loving application of Christian Science.

As a Christian Science nurse, I can tell you I have found the Rule for Motives and Acts to be a constant source of inspiration and direction. Rules aren’t meant be suffocating like the Pharisees would make them. They couldn’t abide Jesus breaking

their misconstrued rule about healing on the Sabbath. But rules can be a blessing and a comfort.

Take traffic rules, for example—of course we have to be alert that someone might be breaking the rules, but by and large we feel comfortable and safe driving because we know in great measure people know and obey the rules—their motives and acts in driving include the safety and well-being of all.

When we turn to the Rule for Motives and Acts, we find that we can best help each other by thinking and acting rightly—and that does take discipline. In *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, Mary Baker Eddy writes (p. 254:10–13), “You will reap the sure reward of right thinking and acting, of watching and praying, and you will find the ever-present God an ever-present help”.

The Apostle Paul vehemently expounded on how useless good deeds are without the right motive of love in 1 Corinthians 13, third verse in the New Living Translation reads: “If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing..”

You know when you fly, you’re directed to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others in an emergency. So, our own metaphysical work is key to being able to help each other. Another analogy is that you could be an accountant and do hundreds of tax returns, but if you don’t do your own, the I-R-S will catch up with you and not give you a bit of credit because you helped so many others...

A Christian Science nurse knows there’s no benefit to oneself or to the patient if thought isn’t in the right place. The Rule for Motives and Acts helps us be sure we are working from the highest standpoint.

So, let’s dive into this rule. It starts:

Neither animosity nor mere personal attachment should impel the motives or acts of the members of The Mother Church.

This opening sentence in the chapter on Discipline gives us the very basics of Christian fellowship. It’s a two-sided coin, isn’t it, animosity and mere personal attachment? —they both leave God out of the picture, presenting man as mortal, and that works to divide us. When we think about helping, or not helping someone, we need to check what’s driving us.

St. Paul warns that animosity or hatred is one of the manifest “works of the flesh” that will leave us out of the kingdom of God! It is fear OF another, dislike of their “otherness”—they’re not like us.

Personal attachment on the other hand pretends to be love, so it may be less obvious. It is often fear FOR another, thinking we know what’s best FOR another, controlling another, being a helicopter parent or a busybody.

So, we aren’t to be impelled-- meaning urged forward-- by personal sense, but we don’t sit idly—we are to act at God’s direction—humbly and with a listening ear.

The next sentence in the rule:

In Science, divine Love alone governs man;

I find I need to visit this line over and over again each day especially for our country right now. “Divine Love alone governs man.” We need to trust that and know that what is truly meeting the need is divine Love as says a favorite truth for many of us voiced in Science and Health [494:10-11]: “Divine Love always has met and always will meet every human need.”

Divine Love alone governs man!

Next in the rule:

a Christian Scientist reflects the sweet amenities of Love

This is so key, such a beautiful phrase— “sweet amenities.” Mrs. Eddy uses the phrase one other time in No and Yes (45:19) where she says, “This is woman’s hour, with all its sweet amenities and its moral and religious reforms.” Doesn’t the word “sweet” just make you feel comforted?

This is so key, such a beautiful phrase— “sweet amenities.” Usually when we think of amenities, we think of what goes along with a resort—a pool, a hot tub, shampoo, chocolate on the pillow. I hadn’t really given deep thought to what sweet amenities are, so I did a little research online: I got a laugh out of the Southeast Football Conference listing “5 Sweet Amenities” at its colleges’ football facilities. *State of the art camera systems, lockers, indoor practice fields, restaurants and covered parking spaces.* As the article notes, “it’s the little things that can make a difference to a football program.”

Well, it’s sometimes the little things that can make a difference in our support of each other. The definition of amenities includes “*elements of comfort and convenience*” and is also defined as “*etiquette and good manners that promote smoothness or pleasantness in social relationships.*”

So, what are those sweet amenities of Love? What is essential spiritually to make life easier and more pleasant? How do amenities “Well, if clean water is a necessary amenity, wouldn’t the living water provided by the Christ be a sweet amenity of Love? And might we reflect that sweet amenity by offering a cup of cold water to our fellow beings? Might Jesus washing the disciples’ feet be a sweet amenity that we reflect in our tender care of each other? If good roads are a public amenity to get us where we need to go, might Christ “the way” be a sweet amenity of Love that we reflect by following his footsteps and being an example to others?” And kindness is perhaps the sweetest of all in promoting pleasantness in social relationships.

I think this statement of Mrs. Eddy’s really captures the sweet amenities of Love: “A little more grace, a motive made pure, a few truths tenderly told, a heart softened, a character subdued, a life consecrated, would restore the right action of the mental mechanism, and make manifest the movement of body and soul in accord with God.” [Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896, p. 354:15]

There was a testimony by Stephanie S. Johnson in the August 24, 1998 issue of the Christian Science Sentinel based on “sweet amenities.” She tells of her healing of chronic back trouble. While reading “A Rule for Motives and Acts,” she was struck by the word “amenities”. She writes, “I realized that God does not express Himself with just the bare essentials of being. Rather, He pours forth the whole of His infinite being, and this is evidenced in each of His incredible ideas, by reflection.”

She was healed of the back trouble but had a further blessing when she says she “was still consciously endeavoring to bring this grace of the “sweet amenities of Love” to everything I did, because I wanted to feel this love and not just say words.” A workman was at her house who was disgruntled about being there. She fixed lunch and invited the workman to join her. He was so touched and said no one had ever done that. She recounts: “I had just prayed with my life to let the “sweet amenities of Love” appear in me in all ways. Yes, I am deeply grateful for this physical healing, but even greater is my gratitude for awakening to the necessity and ability to live Love.” There’s such a joy in what we can experience as we reflect the sweet amenities of Love!

The rule tells us that a Christian Scientist reflects the sweet amenities of Love in “*rebuking sin, in true brotherliness, charitableness, and forgiveness.*”

How do we reflect “sweet amenities” in rebuking sin? It is rebuking sin in ourselves and anywhere we perceive it. This is not personal—sin does not belong to anyone—it’s error, a lie, and we must detect it and rebuke it mentally—we can’t get caught up in what we perceive as the sins of others. Jesus tells us we need to consider the beam in our own eye before we begin worrying about “the very small particle in another’s eye” [Matthew 7:3, based on classic Amplified Bible.)

Our ability to rebuke sin in another might require us to willingly receive rebuke! Mrs. Eddy says, “During many years the author has been most grateful for merited rebuke. The wrong lies in unmerited censure, — in the falsehood which does no one any good.” [Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures 9:2] No one wants to be criticized, but if we are truly led of the Spirit to say something to another, we must do it from the standpoint of blessing, not injuring.”

We reflect the sweet amenities of Love in true brotherliness,

1st John [4:20-21] asks, “he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” Jesus wanted us to serve those he called “the least of these my brethren” to offer them food, drink, shelter, clothing, to visit them in prison or when sick [Matthew 25:35-40]—that’s the depth of love he expects of his followers.

A favorite parable in Christian Science nursing is the familiar story of the Good Samaritan [Luke 10:30-35] because the Samaritan actually took human steps to meet a need. He was willing to get his hands dirty. The individual in need had been robbed and beaten and left for dead.

The first person to come along was the priest. We condemn him for not stopping. But he may have been in a hurry to get to the Temple for the service and if he touched

this man, who might have even already been dead, he would be rendered unclean and unable to perform his duties. Maybe he was a First Reader who hadn't quite finished preparing the Benediction and had to get to church on time. He couldn't leave the congregation hanging! What would they do if he were late?

And the Levite, the next person to come along, also avoided the injured man. He didn't want to be rendered unclean by touching him and he had duties to perform. Maybe he was an usher, and he needed his suit clean and the church had to be unlocked for the service—no time to stop!

The Samaritan was a most unlikely character to aid the stricken man—the Jews and Samaritans were not on friendly terms. In fact, the hearers of Jesus' parable would have been shocked... But perhaps in addition to the teaching on who was a real neighbor or friend, part of the purpose of Jesus' parable might be to show that help can come in surprising ways! Sometimes that surprise may be how God sends us each other!

It's loving to stop like the Samaritan did, to keep an eye out for our fellows at church or to help those who can't get to church because homebound or because there is no church nearby. We have practitioner help, Christian Science nursing, care committees, friendships, Midland at home... so if you need help, CALL—it doesn't diminish your reliance on Christian Science for healing.

You know, during some denominations' church service prayer requests are submitted, and members are asked to pray for each other. We also do that in Christian Science church services, but in a more impersonal way—the Manual says silent prayer in our services should be for the congregations. We pray and support each other specifically through church that way.

Sometimes we might feel we need to hide our troubles thinking we don't want to give the problem reality. Or maybe we're ashamed that we haven't worked something out. Our beloved leader advises us: "If students do not readily heal themselves, they should early call an experienced Christian Scientist to aid them. If they are unwilling to do this for themselves, they need only to know that error cannot produce this unnatural reluctance." (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures 420:4)

The hymn says, "help us to help each other, Lord." Sometimes we're the ones helping, sometimes the ones being helped. We're blessed in either position—grateful for care received, grateful to be to help. And if it's more blessed to give than to receive, remember if you need help, you may be providing someone else the blessing and opportunity to give! Don't underestimate the help we can give each other—we could be entertaining angels unawares!

Mrs. Eddy tells us, "We should measure our love for God by our love for man; and our sense of Science will be measured by our obedience to God, — fulfilling the law of Love, doing good to all; imparting, so far as we reflect them, Truth, Life, and Love to

all within the radius of our atmosphere of thought.” [Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 12:28]

The next reflection of the sweet amenities of Love is in **charitableness**

Charitableness implies generosity of spirit, thinking the best about another. It means benevolence and kindness--philanthropy, giving to those in need. In the article “Taking Offence” in *Miscellaneous Writings* we find an exhortation to go forth into life “with a charity broad enough to cover the whole world’s evil, sweet enough to neutralize what is bitter in it...” [p 224:23-25]

Financial charitableness is a good thing, of course, but the apostles Peter and John didn’t have silver and gold- they brought forth healing and that was the best gift the man could have received—let’s remember to be charitable in our expectation of healing!

And last on the list of the ways we reflect the sweet amenities of Love is in forgiveness.

Do you know that the word forgive is at the very center of the Lord’s Prayer? Like the Shunammite, we should be able to feel safe and loved dwelling among our own people We come to church knowing forgiveness is there as needed for all of us. Self-righteousness and resentment have no place in our church, in our lives. Mrs. Eddy urges, “MY BELOVED BRETHREN: — If a member of the church is inclined to be uncharitable, or to condemn his brother without cause, let him put his finger to his lips, and forgive others as he would *be* forgiven.” [Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896, p. 129:2–5]

The members of this Church should daily watch and pray to be delivered from all evil,

This is the ultimate of how we can help each other—watching and praying. When I was 14, I joined The Mother Church. My parents weren’t active church members, so it was a dear Sunday School teacher who encouraged me to join. My high school years were enjoyable and free of the common temptations to smoke, drink or use drugs, but my brother had a really hard time of it. I asked myself sometimes why? We grew up in the same family, why was it so different for him? I knew he hadn’t taken the rules of Christian Science to heart.

What came to me was that aligning myself with the Mother Church was a protection to me. Many members were watching and praying, defending themselves and their fellow church members around the world from aggressive mental suggestion. Those prayers reached and touched me, and I was blessed and forever grateful. So, our prayers for each other really are felt.

Miscellany records “What our Leader Says.” In part it reads: “Good thoughts are an impervious armor; clad therewith you are completely shielded from the attacks of error of every sort. And not only yourselves are safe, but all whom your thoughts rest

upon are thereby benefited.” (The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 210:7)

We’re watching and praying to be delivered from all evil. This Rule lists some of those evils, prophesying, judging, condemning, counseling, influencing or being influenced erroneously. That last word, “erroneously,” applies to each of these six concerns:

prophesying.

What is prophesying? There’s a lot of prophesying going on these days—*if the opposite candidate wins it will be an apocalyptic catastrophe. If you have these symptoms, this disease will appear. This situation is going to bring bad results. With this condition, you’ll never be able to... (fill in the blank).* Medical commercials are full of threatening prophecies. We won’t be helping to each other if we’re fearful of what’s ahead and prophesying erroneously.

To me, hope represents a right sense of prophesying. That’s what we should be conveying. Mrs. Eddy writes about hope... ever prophesying thus: The human mind will sometime rise above all material and physical sense, exchanging it for spiritual perception, and exchanging human concepts for the divine consciousness. Then man will recognize his God-given dominion and being.” (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, p. 531:8). Isn’t that a prophecy worth listening to?

Sometimes as a Christian Science nurse I am asked by a patient, “Have you ever seen this condition before” or “have you ever seen this specific thing healed?” The question behind the question is “is healing possible here?” Of course, it is, but we’re not looking to matter to find our hope--every need for healing is individual—it can’t duplicate another’s though we’re grateful for testimonies that inspire us. Jeremiah gives us a true prophecy. This is from the Common English Bible: “I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

judging,

John 7:24 tells us to “judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” Isn’t righteous judgment striving to look out from God’s point of view?

Of course, it’s a human failing to judge in a negative sense—thinking “This person isn’t doing anything right (read, isn’t doing it my way).” Don’t mentally diagnose what someone should be doing, what disease they have, why they are suffering. Let them turn directly to Christ the judge who will tell them they are whole! The book of Job is all about misjudging, isn’t it? —Job’s friends were convinced he had to have done something wrong, otherwise why would he be suffering?

I do like the way they started out. In Job 2:11+13, we read: “Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place... to come to mourn with him and to comfort him... So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him:

for they saw that his grief was very great.” 7 days and 7 nights without speaking a word! That takes a lot of compassion, free of judging. Of course, it can be helpful to voice the truth when the time is right, but so often the need is just for that silent deep support.

Eventually, though, the friends felt they had to put in their two-cents worth of opinions, full of platitudes. Their heads overtook their hearts as they pushed the scholastic theology that says Job was suffering, so he must have sinned. They did not stray from that premise!

Sometimes Christian Scientists adopt that false theology. If one is suffering, one must have sinned. Mrs. Eddy tells us that fear or ignorance might be the cause [Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures 411:20-21], so let’s “Let Truth uncover and destroy error in God’s own way, and let human justice pattern the divine.” [Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures 542:19–21]

Our desire of course, is to support others and encourage them in their reliance on Christian Science, but we always need to let them work through their own answer. If they choose a temporary or even permanent turn to the medical, for example, that’s their right and we should not judge, but continue to love unconditionally—they are still part of our family! Mrs. Eddy wrote that she always felt, “...that all are privileged to work out their own salvation according to their light, and that our motto should be the Master’s counsel, ‘Judge not, that ye be not judged.’” [Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, p. 443:8]

Next posture to be avoided is **condemning**,

Once we get into judging, condemning is right behind. Jesus said simply to the adulterous woman, “Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more.” The Christ brings out the pure state of man, condemning the sin, but not the sinner. We are required to do the same, to look for redemption for ourselves and support the redeeming Christ in others experience, finding our own in another’s good.

Rather than condemning, we should be building each other up. Galatians 6:1 tells us (Contemporary English Version), “My friends, you are spiritual. So, if someone is trapped in sin, you should gently lead that person back to the right path.” You know when Jesus was having dinner at the Simon the Pharisee’s house and the sinful woman came in to wash his feet, Jesus said to Simon, “Seest thou this woman?” as he forgave her and commended her for the hospitality Simon failed to provide.

“Do you see this woman?” Do you think maybe he was asking Simon to see her spiritually as he did? We love the statement: “Jesus beheld in Science the perfect man, who appeared to him where sinning mortal man appears to mortals.” A practitioner pointed out to me, if you see sinning mortal man, what does that make you? A mortal!

We have to “see” this woman, this man, this child -- as God sees them, redeemed, not condemned, included and loved, not outcast. Mrs. Eddy tells us “conscious worth satisfies the hungry heart, and nothing else can.” [Message for 1902,

17:24-25]. Let's work to see the true worth of our fellows—isn't that a priceless way to be of help?

counseling,

In Psalms we read, "The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever..." (Ps 33:11) We need to ask for God's counsel and help our loved ones turn to God rather than offering them valueless human opinion.

This is especially important for Christian Science nurses and practitioners, because it would be unethical to put ourselves between the patient and God. We turn thought to Spirit, to Mind, to help someone trust in their own connection—it is God who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working as says Isaiah (28:29)

Influencing.

The dictionary defines influence as "the power to affect or alter by indirect or intangible means; to sway." Spiritually, that influence is grace-- "the divine influence upon the heart." Materially, erroneous influence is animal magnetism.

When we're helping someone in need, we should pray for grace for ourselves and to know that that the divine influence is available to all. It would be so inappropriate to try to influence one or even discuss a strong political viewpoint when they are needing to turn thought Spiritward.

Mrs. Eddy says, "The heavenly law is broken by trespassing upon man's individual right of self-government. We have no authority in Christian Science and no moral right to attempt to influence the thoughts of others, except it be to benefit them. In mental practice you must not forget that erring human opinions, conflicting selfish motives, and ignorant attempts to do good may render you incapable of knowing or judging accurately the need of your fellow-men. Therefore the rule is, heal the sick when called upon for aid, and save the victims of the mental assassins. (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 447:1)

or being influenced erroneously.

We have to know whether it is the human mind or the divine Mind which is influencing us...

We have to be alert to false influences, but pray to be receptive to that divine influence...

When I started college, I didn't go to Sunday School. It was rather turbulent times for our country and for me personally. My brother had gotten in trouble with the law and the stress made my parents consider divorce. A good friend had confided that he was planning to commit suicide on his birthday and the Vietnam war and its protests were raging, especially at my university. I was being taken in by a lot of erroneous influences!

I went for a walk one evening and felt confused and like I couldn't keep being strong for everyone else. In humility I asked God for help to help these others. My prayer took the form of lines from the poem, Love, by Mrs. Eddy:

“Thou to whose power our hope we give, /
 Free us from human strife. /
 Fed by Thy love divine we live, /
 For Love alone is Life; /

That really touched me, I felt a great sense of release and turned my thoughts back to Christian Science. The issues weighing on me lifted and harmony prevailed in my sphere. None of the bad things came to pass.

What’s interesting, is what was going on in the branch church near my university which at the time didn’t have a college-age class in the Sunday School. One member felt there should be a class with a teacher coming prepared every Sunday. Naturally, they appointed her. She worked metaphysically on the idea that Spirit is the only attraction, that there could be no resistance to Truth and that those who needed the class would respond.

She wrote about this in an article in the Journal [The Christian Science Journal, July 1972] and noted: “That Sunday one student came to register for the class. The next Sunday two more registered. By the end of the school year there were ten students in the class.”

That first student was me. And I know her spiritually directed influence reached me and drew me in as I had been praying for guidance. And icing on the cake, the article she wrote about this appeared in The Christian Science Journal while I was taking Class Instruction...

So, you can see how powerful and complete our Rule for Motives and Acts is as we follow it!

Our bookend of the nursing bylaw is also major avenue in our church for helping our fellow Christian Scientists.

Generally, Christian Science nursing requires physical presence to help the patient. It is a hands-on ministry. The Bible has many instances of Jesus or the apostles putting hands on an individual and healing resulting. Early Christian Scientists sometimes did literally put hands on the patients while treating them metaphysically, but Mrs. Eddy realized that even though the intention may have started out as symbolic, it was becoming a form of manipulation.

I like to think that in establishing Christian Science nursing, she gave an avenue for a loving expression of hands on-- a tender ministry. Of course, Christian Science nurses don’t manipulate the body, either. A definition of “hands on” is “involving or offering active participation rather than theory.” and some of its synonyms are “practical, interactive, participatory.”

There’s a real hands-on story in the Bible in Exodus 17. When the Israelites were fighting the Amaleks, Moses had the rod of God in his hand. When he held it up, Israel prevailed, but when it got too heavy and he let it down, Amalek prevailed. So, his

brother Aaron and assistant Hur “supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other so that his hands remained steady until the sun went down.” And victory was won.

I like to think Aaron and Hur were nursing as they supported Moses. That’s what we can do—as the hymn says, “each other’s cross to bear.” When burdens seem too heavy for someone, we can hold up their hand—support their efforts to hold onto the rod of God which is Christian Science healing.

We think of caring in terms a “lending a hand.” So how can we do that? Now during this pandemic, it’s not so easy to just drop in on someone, even when wanting to be of help, so our lending a hand or being hands-on isn’t always going to be physical presence...it may be a phone call, a friendly note, or help with an errand, but many Christian Science nurses are on the front lines, being there to meet the needs and we can be grateful for their active love!

I worked at The Mother Church right out of college and after a couple of years, it was time to consider my next step. The word humanitarian seemed key in my thought as I prayed for right activity. Mrs. Eddy writes, “A Christian Scientist is a humanitarian; he is benevolent, forgiving, long-suffering, and seeks to overcome evil with good.” (Manual of The Mother Church, p. 46:26)

I thought about community service opportunities and then I was invited to go with a friend who was a Christian Science nurse to a talk at Tenacre. I don’t remember the title of the talk or too much else about it, but I remember a line that hit me squarely: “Christian Science nursing is the most humanitarian occupation on earth.” Lights flashed and I instantly put my efforts into pursuing Christian Science nursing.

There’s a lot more to it than doing good humanity. The first requirement is “a demonstrable knowledge of Christian Science practice.” That’s where we begin and stay in our nursing work. But we also need to express, “practical wisdom necessary in the sickroom” and be able to take “proper care of the sick”.

Mrs. Eddy describes what we may call the sweet amenities of nursing in Science and Health when she says “The nurse should be cheerful, orderly, punctual, patient, full of faith,—receptive to Truth and Love (Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures 395:18-20) Those qualities belong to all of us, even if we don’t devote our career path to Christian Science nursing --we have to be willing to love and care for each other cheerfully, patiently. We dwell among our own people.

One more point to touch on is caring for the caregivers. Those who are helping others, especially family members and friends who are not doing this professionally, need our love and support. It can be non-stop work and it’s definitely a labor of love, though those bonds of love can sometimes feel stretched or even burnt out. If you can help give a break to a caregiver, it can be such a blessing, such a loving way to help. Aaron and Hur were nursing, in a way, weren’t they?

Though a patient may have a lot to deal with, I think we'd agree that anyone who is needing care is going to find healing more readily by expressing heart-felt gratitude for help received—a little can go a long way!

One time when I was going to be the supervising Christian Science nurse, I was just coming on duty when a “difficult patient” was calling “NURSE”. I thought, rather self-importantly, I'll just nip this in the bud and go into her room to straighten her out before I start my shift. I wasn't “seeing this woman” as Jesus commanded, was I? I went in and heard a lot of complaining and though I was trying to be patient, I could feel myself reacting.

I got a grip and decided best for both of us if I left the room for a moment. I stood outside and prayed for humility and to be able to see her as God sees her. After a moment, when I felt at peace and had Love at the helm, I went back in the room. She looked me over and said, “I don't like that nurse that was just in here...” I smiled to myself, “How visible is our thought?” She didn't see the negative in me anymore as I stood before her, and I didn't see it in her. I gently met her need, and she was quiet and cooperative the rest of the shift. It all goes back to how we're seeing each other, doesn't it?

Well, I hope you have enjoyed this little tour through our bookend sections of the Article on Disciple from the Church Manual--the Rule for Motives and Acts and the Christian Science nurse. And I hope this talk has added to your basket of ideas for helping each other—We are so blessed to know that God is caring for us and gives us the ideas we need to offer our friendly aid and feel our brother's care.”

I'll leave you with the 2nd verse of hymn 105:

Help us to build each other up,
Our little stock improve;
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,
And perfect us in love.

God bless you all!