

# Inspired Views

An Annual Meeting talk précis, a testimony of healing, an article on caring for our children

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## Mary Baker Eddy & the Necessity for Change

A summary of a talk given by Brad Stock, Fern Lodge Administrator and Christian Science Movement historian, for Arden Wood's 2023 Annual Meeting.

The following key points are an outline of Brad Stock's talk for Arden Wood's 2023 Annual Meeting. Brad urges readers to ponder these ideas in Mrs. Eddy's writings and in the periodicals or early workers' reminiscences. Suggested readings are in italics.

### Mrs. Eddy in 1894:

During a very busy time, Mrs. Eddy took time to pray about a needed change. After **three weeks** of "almost ceaseless prayer," she took a radical step. She abolished personal preaching and ordained the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* to be The Mother Church pastor.

*We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, Expanded Edition,*  
Vol. 1, p. 252

### Stages of Progress:

Mrs. Eddy was willing to make drastic changes if they were God-directed and better enabled her to fulfill her mission and defend the Cause. She repeatedly confronted the world's *best practices* and defied cultural norms. In this, she followed her leader, Christ Jesus.

Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures (S&H)*, 18:10

*We Knew Mary Baker Eddy, Expanded Edition,*  
Vol. 1, p. 278

Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellaneous Writings*, 99:1-2

Mrs. Eddy was practical and did not try to change everything in one leap. She moved step by step, separating tares from wheat, the temporal from the eternal, the cultural from the absolute. She frequently ignored the views of clergymen, attorneys, businessmen, and turned to God for guidance, establishing new standards of practice based on the divine.

Eddy to Noyes, Jan. 26, 1889,

Mary Baker Eddy Library (MBEL) #L05441

*S&H*, 255:1-6

*S&H*, 233:1

*S&H*, 281:30-1

*S&H*, 323:32-2

*S&H*, 13:2-3

*S&H*, 506:11

*S&H*, 66:14

### Progress for Arden Wood:

In 2022, Arden Wood's trustees announced that they would reexamine organizational norms, traditions, and best practices, including the current building's role. Historically, these things seemed to define Arden Wood, but its mission was never defined by a building or human best practices. Arden Wood is truly defined by its mission, and in order to progress, all who support Arden Wood must be willing to yield to God-inspired change. True progress requires us to be willing to give up mortal history, traditions, and norms, be willing to give up all for Christ.

*S&H*, 547:25-27

*S&H*, 588:7

Mary Baker Eddy, *Message for 1901*, 35:4-6

*S&H*, 141:4

*Misc. Writings*, 117:27

### Mrs. Eddy & 1889:

In 1889, Mrs. Eddy faced an organizational crisis. Rather than taking control as a personal leader, Mrs. Eddy resigned as pastor and left Boston. She closed her college and association and disbanded the church organization. In essence, she turned her back on *human* organization and focused on her mission. After rewriting *Science and Health*, she prayed about how to reorganize the Christian Science movement on a more spiritual basis, and in 1892 her prayers were answered. She promptly made the needed change, reorganizing The Mother Church and entrusting its business to a Board of Directors that would be governed by the *Manual* bylaws. In 1908, she added a new bylaw that set forth a standard of practice for Christian Science nursing. How might that bylaw exemplify Mrs. Eddy's view of the *Manual* (see *Miscellany* 230)?

*Manual of The Mother Church*, 19 (compare to page 17)

*Manual*, 128-135 (Deed of Trust creating The Mother Church Directors)

Mary Baker Eddy, *Miscellany*, 230:1,9

*Manual*, 49:7-16

### Arden Wood's History & Future:

In recent months, Arden Wood's staff has explored the facility's origins in the 1930s:

- **Arden Wood was part of an expansive network**— The Christian Science Benevolent Association. It was not a stand-alone facility and was literally an activity of church.
- **Arden Wood was dedicated to a broad sense of Christian care and healing.** Arden Wood’s staff was committed to seeing each guest’s spiritual identity. The staff expected healing, whether a guest came for nursing or for rest and study.
- **Arden Wood was likely open to non-church members.** Anyone was welcome, so long as they turned wholeheartedly to Christian Science for healing.
- **Arden Wood was a global facility.** *The Monitor* called Arden Wood “truly international,” and the Directors said that “support” for its construction came from “widespread sections of the globe.” One early article on The Christian Science Benevolent Association predicted that it would “spread ultimately over the civilized world.”

Over many years, this expansive vision for The Christian Science Benevolent Association dimmed, and Christian Science nursing increasingly was viewed as a physical, nonreligious activity. In the 1970s and 1980s, however, The Mother Church initiated reforms that would again ground Christian Science nursing on a spiritual foundation. During these years of reform, the decision was nearly made to construct a new Arden Wood. The Mother Church Directors, however, decided to renovate the existing facility and gift it to the Northern California field. Arden Wood was now an independent corporation. *(For details of these events, which foreshadow the 2022 decision of Arden Wood’s trustees, see the Sept. 1973 Journal.)*

“Benevolent Association Home on Pacific Coast Progressing,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, Aug. 2, 1929, 3

“Items of Interest,” *Christian Science Sentinel*, June 1, 1929

Montgomery, “The Holy Ghost,” *Sentinel*, Nov. 10, 1917  
 “Church in Action,” “Benevolent Associations studied: Local committees established while The Mother Church plans to withdraw,” *The Christian Science Journal*, Sept. 1973

“From the Directors: An important statement on Christian Science nursing,” *Journal*, May 1988


### Mrs. Eddy & Philanthropy:

In 1901, Mrs. Eddy published an article which suggests that philanthropy never leaves us where it finds us, for benevolence is always progressive—it promotes positive change. Christian Science nursing is benevolent, for it is (in its ideal form) pure, unselfed giving. Thus, everything Mrs. Eddy says about philanthropy is true of Christian Science nursing. As she says in the article, “Divine Love reforms, regenerates, giving to human weakness strength. . . .” (*Miscellany*, 287). This benevolent form of care is transformative—it brings healing. As we experience more of God’s care and learn how to reflect that care back to our brothers and sisters, we will demonstrate care that is divinely inspired, divinely impelled, divinely empowered. We will witness Love’s changeless care for all and will change whatever needs to be changed humanly.

*Miscellany*, 287

*S&H*, 322:3-9

*Misc. Writings*, 50:27-3

*S&H*, 589:8 

You can watch a replay of the full Annual Meeting on our website: [ardenwood.org/events/event-archives](https://ardenwood.org/events/event-archives)

Or you can watch Brad's talk here:  
[https://youtu.be/w2ppNR3w\\_xo](https://youtu.be/w2ppNR3w_xo)

## Testimony—Patient’s View

While on a road trip at the height of Covid, I was taken unconscious to a hospital that was 700 miles from my home. Because of the aggressive nature of my condition, I was intubated and put on ventilators. The doctors gave me little chance of survival. I have no memories of this or of anything that transpired over the next two months.

Although I was unconscious, Christian Science and my deep commitment to its teachings carried the day. Despite all predictions, I improved enough for the ventilators to be removed and to regain consciousness. The first call that was made on my behalf was to my practitioner. I was able to converse with her, and we even sang “Shepherd Show Me How To Go” (*Christian*

*Science Hymnal*, 304). The nurses gathered in my hospital room wept when they heard me sing and saw my joy.

The doctors informed my practitioner and my family that that there was no hope of full recovery—that I would be permanently damaged and unable to function on my own or perform basic tasks, such as feeding myself.

When my relatives and church family heard this, they began constant, prayerful work for me. Their prayers denied these diagnoses and prognoses as illegitimate and not divinely authorized. They actively knew that I couldn’t be separated or divorced from clarity and innocence as a child of God. Defying

all predictions, I kept improving—enough to plan to move me to a local rehab center.


When moving day arrived a glitch appeared: the hospital refused to release me because of an aggressive urinary tract infection. My practitioner was called, and within 20 minutes, the doctor reported that tests were negative and that I was suddenly talking with clarity. The doctor expressed gratitude for the prayerful work. After 40 days in the hospital, I was taken to a care facility and some memory began to return.

Just one week later, the wonderful efforts of a Christian Science visiting nurse enabled me to move to Arden Wood. I was making huge progress and could walk with a walker, verbally communicate with dear friends, and enjoy eating without assistance.

When I first arrived at Arden Wood, I discovered my eyeglasses were missing, but surprisingly, I could read and enjoy TV

without them. I never found the glasses, which I had worn for over 50 years. I have not needed them again!

I had daily treatment and visits from my practitioner and truly wonderful supportive care from the CS nursing staff. A few weeks later, I stopped using a walker. After six weeks, God told me I was ready to go home, and a friend drove my car and me back to Oregon. Everyone at home was amazed and thrilled to see me, and they all acknowledged the prayerful work done by so many.


I am now driving, cleaning my house, serving at church in various capacities, including being a substitute reader. I climb stairs daily, feed myself regularly, and am singing, walking, and jumping for joy. Even today, a year and a half after being taken to the hospital, neighbors and people in my town are amazed by my healing and so grateful to see me as myself. My gratitude knows no bounds. — CS 

## Testimony—CS Nurses' View

Arden Wood CS nurses were very much ready metaphysically to welcome this patient to the “Father’s Kingdom” where there is no night, human hypothesis, or judgment. CS nurses sprang into action, providing right nourishment and meeting her mobility needs. The progress was immediate—she started eating normal food. CS nurses instructed her in the use of a mobility aid. Within a few days, the CS nurse only stood by to help with personal care as needed. Within two weeks, the patient was doing most things for herself and enjoying all the activities in our Sheltered Care program.

After three weeks at Arden Wood, we received a frantic phone call from the nurse in charge of her case when she was in the

hospital, warning us that this patient had a highly contagious disease, that she should be quarantined, and that our CS nurses should wear full protective gear when working with her. We were surprised by the document faxed to us, which stated that her full recovery was impossible. That was not what we were witnessing. The registered nurse was in disbelief of what we reported to her of the patient’s progress and activities. Both the patient and the CS nurses were untouched by the belief of contagion.

The patient went home in May with her friend—happy and fully back to her energetic self. 

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## Parenting demands “practical wisdom” and “proper care”

*By Amy E. Sparkman*

When our first child was born, my husband and I felt as newborn to the role of parenting as the child was to the world outside the womb. We’d asked for advice from our parents and friends with children, and we’d read a parenting book or two about establishing a feeding schedule, sleeping-through-the-night strategies, and different stages of childhood development. We felt prepared and ready for this experience. We wanted it, and we had spent the nine months of pregnancy prayerfully cherishing the idea of a child and of being a parent.

But who can honestly tell you how to raise a child and how to parent properly? No one, of course, because it’s different for

everyone. Yet, all parents face very similar issues right from the start and through the years. So, there must be an underlying framework for answering the age-old question of how to parent well. For me, that framework is the Bible because that’s where I learn again and again that God is the one and only Parent and that God is always with us—parenting us as well as our children.

There are watershed moments in all parenting experiences. Often these are moments when we are striving for peace or calm during an emotional storm. The paramount question is always the same: what should (or can) I do to fix this problem? Turning to God as the most resilient, reliable, and ready Source

of answers is an excellent choice. Consider these timeless examples:

**An infant is crying inconsolably.** “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness” (Isaiah 41:10). Feeling our Father’s presence establishes a peace that quiets thought and dissolves rising panic...and the crying ends.

**A toddler is in full tantrum mode.** “And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not” (Luke 4:33-35). Notice that Jesus called out the devil and the man came to himself. Jesus didn’t reason with the devil or coax him to stop acting up, which a parent might be tempted to try. Jesus disassociated the devilish behavior from the child. He knew that man is ever at peace and of sound mind. That clear view is what brings healing. This is one of the finest examples of the matter-of-fact dismissal of inappropriate behavior—the simple refusal to give any power or control to evil and to remain completely unimpressed.

**A child is suffering from an earache, headache, stomachache, any ache.** “For in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). The Bible is full of healings of sickness and disease that stem directly from a conviction that nothing is impossible to God. The Shunamite woman’s son cried out in agony, “My head, my head,” and died in his mother’s lap. Yet her conviction that God was right there enabled her to say, “All is well” to Elisha’s servant. And Elisha’s response was to revive the child. The full story can be found in II Kings 4.


**A teenager is frustrated, angry, disrespectful, and questioning his identity.** We all know the story: Jesus was tempted three times by the devil to believe that God wasn’t all He was cracked up to be and that he (Jesus) could do a better job on his own. But he refused to take the bait: he denied the devil in a straightforward, matter-of-fact put-down of each temptation. As parents, we can do the same. We can counter the devil’s suggestions, separate the behavior from the child and refuse to accept the inaccurate persona. Through this, we can help the teen see himself as he truly is: good, stable,

and purposeful. Different versions of this critical experience in Jesus’ life can be found in Matthew 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4.

**A young adult faces a failing grade or being cut from a team, i.e., anxiety and disappointment.** When Moses was born, in a way he was given a “failing grade,” nearly “cut from the team:” he was destined to be put to death for being Hebrew and a boy. Yet, his mother discerned an unusual way to save him and even to “mother” him as his nursemaid when he became the Queen’s adopted son. The Bible is full of examples of people who faced down adversity. In every instance, strengthening faith and developing a deeper reliance on God proved to be the sources of ideas to resolve tough situations and promote character growth. “I love you! Let’s find a solution” can be an invitation to astonishing changes of course, heart, and attitude in both young adult and parent. (Moses early life story is in Exodus 2:1-10)

**A family faces constant sibling squabbles and endless rounds of the blame game.** Two compelling Bible stories offer dynamic responses to these situations: one is Joseph’s I-o-n-g journey from slavery (because his brothers sold him) through one unfortunate circumstance after another (for which others could readily have been blamed) to his crowning victory when he reunites with his brothers without a hint of blame or hurt feelings. (See Genesis 37-50 for Joseph’s story.) The second story is of the adulterous woman whom Jesus tells to “Go and sin no more” after her accusers slink away from stoning her because they recognize their own misdeeds. (This story can be found in John 7.) Inviting both sides to cast the first stone is a sure-fire way to diffuse tense situations and gain enough perspective to establish terms of reconciliation.

**“Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?”** (Psalms 139:7). There are variations of all these scenarios and many other examples that could be listed. But rather than focus on the specific nature of a challenge, we want to perceive Principle as underpinning and informing all our responses.

Knowing that we are always in the presence and care of God empowers us to listen and adhere to the words of the prophet: “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps 146:10). Knowing God unerringly leads us to the right actions and the right words to meet the specific needs of our children in every instance. Truly, we are all parented—“cared for, watched over, beloved and protected” (*Hymnal*, 278)—by our Father-Mother, God. 



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