

Jointly Maintained Christian Science Reading Room



Notes from the field

I love to think of all God's children as being at work together in one field, progressively discovering the vision prophesied in Revelation toward a full resolution of the false material concept presented in "Genesis II." I love to know every healing and demonstration as prophetic, filling out both our individual and shared perception of the seamless garment. Perhaps somewhat like the ozone! This was a vision which came to me the other day while walking back to my car, considering the value and significance of joint activities - as an opportunity to demonstrate our unity in common purpose under one perfect ideal. But most significantly, to know that our true sowing to the Spirit admits of no gaps or turbulence, but continues as it always has in ways "higher than [ours]" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Am I the only one who thinks of law books when looking at a wall of our bound volumes? Human law works heavily on precedent, and we have plenty of that, but more than experience we have inspiration - even the light "which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). I cherish the order of understanding our leader affirms: "The divine Science taught in the original language of the Bible came through inspiration, and needs inspiration to be understood" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 319:21-23). Along these lines I have been praying not so much to be available for the needy, so-called, but the inspired - whose girding in the certainty of Science will bless the world. To this end I'm delighted to introduce a sister and a brother in Christ I got to know over the past month, from whom I received welcome permission to share. Likewise I salute with affection all who contribute to our common field in all ways and conditions.

Meghan Dunn



Salvation & Song

Lorraine was one of the huddled figures sleeping in doorways that our Reading Room attendants invariably see each morning when walking from the parking lot at Third Church of Christ, Scientist on Hope Street to our sheltered tower in the Bonaventure. Her story and spirit are a light on a hill that cannot be hid.



After several years in her extremity, grace found its opportunity by the hand of a Catholic nun involved in a service organization under the auspices of her church, who woke Lorraine up one fateful morning to tell her it was her last day living that way. Her word was with power. It was. Since that day over twenty years ago, Lorraine has continued to awaken more and more to her priceless value as God's daughter and to help others do likewise - in ministering to other women coming out of similar circumstances, serving God and man as a caregiver in a more general capacity, and in blessing the world with her joyful art and beautiful and easy, generous voice.

What a blessing it was to hear her in the Reading Room one afternoon! What began as a guitar lesson gave way to a session of praise - I just strummed some chords and she sang straight from the abundance of her heart. I was sure that if there were a room full of crying babies she would have put them all at ease! The scene did apparently draw at least one individual's attention, who lunged with hunger for a copy of the Sentinel in the rack I'd affixed to our door. Being in an awkward position to reach with the door propped wide open, I was grateful for the opportunity to greet our passer-by with a smile and a couple of the hard-to-reach Sentinels.

Lorraine found out about us from our ad in the Los Angeles Downtown News, which has generously and enthusiastically supported this enterprise over the course of many years for a fraction of the going cost for advertisement. Though she initially had difficulty finding us, she was happily welcomed by my fellow church member and Reading Room worker Kathy Leech, whose quiet joy and great patience drew our new friend to our testimony meeting that week. We are now well-acquainted as sisters in Christ, learning more together about the glorious import of the scientific sense of the gospel and our living, loving and knowable God.

Fear not: for I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

Isaiah 43:1

Human Law and the Logic of Christ



Courtesy the Art Institute of Chicago, to The Christian Science Monitor.
Rejoicing in the Law: From a Painting by Todros Geller

"Rejoicing in the Law"- originally published in the Monitor Home Forum, 1932

Winston Sanks recently arrived in L.A. to study at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, having most recently studied law at Pepperdine University. A member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Winston shares a deep appreciation for Mary Baker Eddy and her book Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures. He attended services at The Mother Church while serving in the Air Force and studying International Business at Hult University in Cambridge, and was delighted to find us during his stay at the Bonaventure.

It would be impossible trying to sum up our wonderful conversations – largely centering on the inspired influence of religious thought on human law over the centuries – but a passage from Lyman Powell’s biography of Mary Baker Eddy comes to thought. When I first opened to this description by a college student of his experience bearing witness to the consistent reliability of our textbook, I was thrilled:

“Of course, the average college man finds his religion up against a severe test when he first meets the cold lights of science and the paradoxes of philosophy, and the general attitude of skepticism which is so prevalent among undergraduates. I have seen many of my friends enormously disturbed as they watch the foundations of a none too objective religious background crumble out from under them...I never have found a question which I could not solve in a way wholly consistent with Science - to my complete satisfaction.”
(p. 260, *Mary Baker Eddy: A Life-size Portrait*)

Winston has struggled to find receptivity at universities – even those of Christian persuasion – for the lines of reasoning along which we engaged. The tread of professional practice and press of worldly concerns often tends to a belief that the import of theology may be lovely but is ultimately impractical, leaving the sense that there are two worlds which bear no relation to each other and that no universal ethic exists whereby to interpret and bless the whole round of human experience – in a word: Christ, in Its scientific import so uniquely expressed in Christian Science.

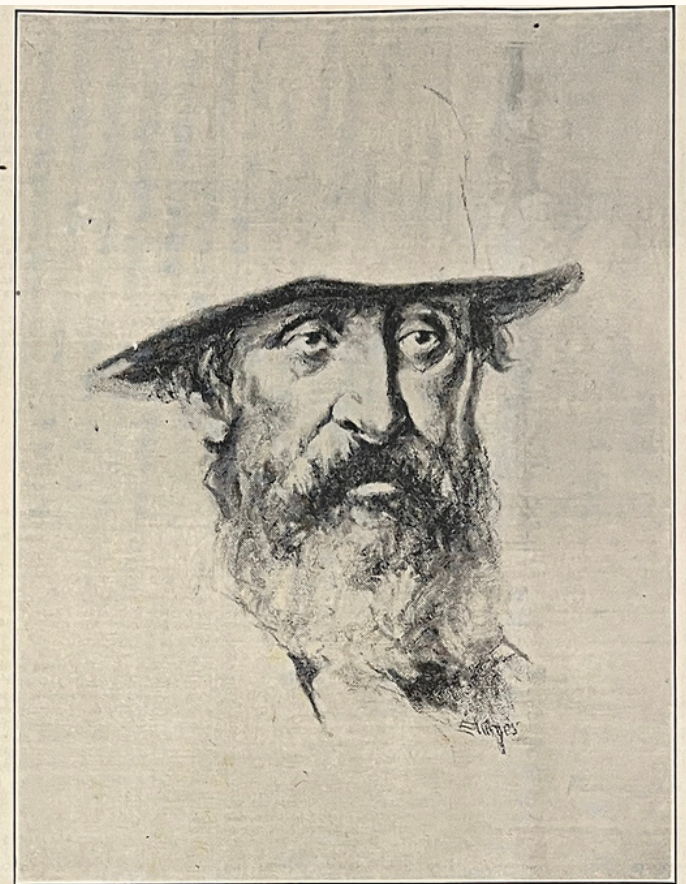
Then, if the wisdom you manifest causes Christendom or the disclaimer against God to call this "a subtle fraud," "let your peace return to you."

Mary Baker Eddy, *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. 150:29

In Closing...

You may have gathered a clue from the artwork on the previous page: Did you know the Downtown Bonaventure Reading Room houses bound volumes of historic Monitors from as early as the turn of the century? I had a blast (gingerly!) turning their pages one afternoon - you're naturally more than welcome to come do so, too.

Please enjoy this small sampling of some items I enjoyed! So much rich material, but I've decided to narrow it down for now to some more of the elegant and poetic, featuring the work of former Monitor staff artists - both from a 1932 issue.



Drawn by Staff Artist for The Christian Science Monitor

The Hermit of Walden

I
Ah, if her streets were silver, her houses gold,
We should not treasure more that little town
Which had this man to foster, guide, and hold,
And was his "morning-robe and study-gown."
Thence came his mastery of ax and saw,
And there he gained the might of that iron pen
That still subdues the heart to an ancient law
And shall yet shape the thoughts of future men.
Beside that little river winding slow
Across the water-meadows that he knew,
Who has not heard the shout of the young Thoreau,
Or seen him dipping by in his birch canoe?
We shall not lose the memory of him
Till Concord crumbles to the river's brim.

II
We shall not soon forget that there has been
One man among us, though still known to few,
Eager, alert, and modern, yet serene,
Subtle, profound, yet simple as the dew;
One man no weight of custom could dismay,
No laughter daunt, who left our goals behind
And held straight forward on his lonely way,
Loving his life to the very core and rind;
Who sought no little prizes—fame or pelf—
But the great guerdons beauty and peace bestow,
Holding still converse with his inmost self
Through summer noons and winter's driving snow.
Not soon shall we forget this quiet man,
Strong, gentle, wise, deeply American.

ODELL SHEPARD.

This Home Forum piece features both a poetic and an artistic rendering of the beloved American Henry David Thoreau. While the artist went unnamed, these first lines are Odell Shepard's:

*Ah, if her streets were silver, her houses gold,
We should not treasure more that little town
Which had this man to foster, guide, and hold,
And was his "morning-robe and study-gown."*



TYPICAL SOVIET COBBLER'S SHOP

Sketch of Two of the Independent Shoe Menders Who Still Do Good Business in the Russian Capital. This is the Last of a Series of Pictures, Drawn by Fräulein Erna Plachte, Which The Christian Science Monitor Printed From Time to Time, Giving the Artist's Impressions of People and Places, as Sketched in the Highways and Byways of Soviet Russia.

Special to The Christian Science Monitor

MOSCOW—These shoemakers, plying their ancient trade in the open air, are the representatives of a class that is declining, but is not altogether extinct under Soviet conditions—the class of individual handicraftsmen. In former days the "kustar," the hand artisan, was an important figure in Russian economic life. The tailors, the shoemakers, the locksmiths and similar classes contributed much to the total volume of national production.

Today, however, the tendency is to bring these handicraftsmen into "artels," or producers' cooperatives, where they work a fixed number of hours and are paid according to a regular wage scale, instead of being dependent upon individual customers. This tendency is in line with the general Soviet policy of bringing all the economic activities of the country under some form of state regulation or control.

Some handicraftsmen, like the figures in the sketch,

still cling to old habits of work. They are subjected to some discrimination, as compared with their colleagues in the arts, in the matter of taxes and food supply, but they keep their old freedom of working more or less when and how they choose, and they have no lack of customers, to whom they can pass on, in high prices, the taxes which are levied on them.

In Russia today, with the acute shortage of many of the everyday objects of general use, there is always a demand for the services of the man who can mend or repair anything, from a worn-out shoe to an unhinged door. Some of the handicraftsmen display considerable ingenuity in making their limited stocks of raw material go as far as possible. So a shoemaker to whom the writer took a pair of shoes for resoling instead of putting on entire new soles, simply fastened irregular patches of leather over the places which showed signs of wearing thin.

This piece tells the story of Soviets maintaining their craft and living during times in which artisans were gathered under "artels" which tended to homogenize standards and production - a challenge which seems to present itself on other fronts as well - certainly with the advent of technology as it may pertain to artists in our time, and all over the world. I am reminded of this wonderful line from the poem *Desideratum* by Max Ehrmann: "Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time." The above story indeed testifies to the fact that "a man's gift maketh room for him.." (Prov. 18:16)