



***"If we would open their prison doors...we must first learn to bind up the broken-hearted."
(Science & Health with Key to the Scriptures, 366: 30-31).***

The mission of this committee, as stated in its Bylaws, is: "...to share the healing and regenerating truths of Christian Science with inmates and/or patients in local, county, state, and federal penal, correctional, juvenile, mental health, veteran, and other institutions in the state of Missouri" (Article II.1).

Excerpts from Institutional Committee Weekly Fruitage Reports:

Entertaining Angels

Five women attended the session, but a sixth, who was working in the conference room, kept stopping to listen and comment. We began with Psalm 91: "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." We looked at Mrs. Eddy's definition of angels, and at what she says about them in her short article "Angels" in *Miscellaneous Writings*. The women were very receptive to the idea that God is always giving us our daily bread in the form of ideas/angels, who lead us to light. From there we talked about the need to guard thought, and to repent, or rethink, and change our thoughts. Holding thought steadfastly to the enduring, the good, and the true brings those qualities into our experience. True prayer results in right action. One of the women was very clear on the fact that you can't fool God by saying one thing and doing another. The women shared freely, loved what they were hearing, and mentioned how much they appreciated the feeling of God's love for them at all times. They were so receptive to truth and appreciative of our Pastor, eagerly took copies of both the Bible and *Science and Health*, along with a printout of this week's Bible Lesson. One woman asked if she could take copies for a friend.

The Refining Process

One new gentleman asked a question about prayer. We had a good discussion based on Matthew's version of Jesus' instructions about prayer. They were helped by the thought of closing the door and seeking to feel their unity with God and thought in accord with God. I shared Elise Moore's example of baptism that pickles or transforms us as we submerge ourselves in truth. One new person then asked if I believed in a physical hell. One of the regulars jumped in and spoke of Luke saying the kingdom of heaven is within and that he thought that like heaven, hell was also something within thought. The new person quoted several Scriptural passages about hell, the wailing and gnashing of teeth, and fire for eternity. Two others shared very insightful comments about God being a consuming fire as in the pillar of fire and the burning bush, and that we did not need to fear this fire. The emphasis of the fire was on the destruction of bad thoughts not bad people. I was deeply touched by how two of the men sought to explain the refining process that removes any impurities and leaves the image of God.

Blessing Our Enemies

We began by reading the passages from the Sermon on the Mount included in the Lesson, and both gentlemen, one a regular and one a fairly new attendee, talked about how they have struggled with obeying that command in the midst of the pressures of jail life. Both agreed that it was right in theory to bless all enemies but how to do that blessing was the real question. So we spent the session delving into the account of David and Saul and looking at what it was that allowed David to bless his enemy. As they listened to some of the backstory from earlier chapters in I Samuel from Moffatt's translation, they were struck by the contrasts between Saul's "self-willed" blindness (which they compared to some of the self-willed blindness in their daily encounters) and David's humble, prayerful trust in God's good will. They found inspiration in the fact that David's refusal to kill Saul resulted from a lawful respect for Saul's God anointed position, which allowed David to be "still" and know that God's good will was the only power in that situation. One (who had earlier said how hard it is to love your enemies) related this to an experience in which he had had to deal with an unfair boss at work and ended up helping the boss out when his car broke down. Both loved the way the account in I Samuel brings out how natural it is to obey God's law. The one who had attended only a few times in the past asked to keep his copies of the Bible and *Science and Health* and also loaded up on *Sentinels*.

Freedom from Suicidal Urges

One of the women had attended Fujiko Sign's lecture and shared how grateful she was for what it taught her. Most came with their Bibles and an earnest desire to learn more of their relationship to God. One shared how turning to gratitude freed her from suicidal urges. We discussed the Bible story of the loaves and the fishes and how it illustrates that God meets our need in every circumstance.

Evidence of God's Love

As I waited for someone to arrive, I prayed with the idea from the Bible Lesson: "'God is Love.' More than this we cannot ask, higher we cannot look, farther we cannot go" (p. 6). I felt a strong conviction that this truth would bring someone to the conference opportunity. After about fifteen minutes, two women came in--both newcomers to Christian Science. I shared with them that the two books on their chairs were the pastor of our church and that this week's Lesson Sermon was on Love. We looked at the *Quarterly* together and then at a copy of a printout of the Lesson. The women were very interested in the way the citations from the Bible and *Science and Health* correlated and asked if the *Quarterlies* were available to keep; they seemed genuinely interested in using them for study. We looked at several passages from the Lesson together in response to their questions. David's love for Saul and Jesus' exhortation in Matthew to love your enemies were helpful to both women. They asked good questions, including one about how to tell when God is answering our questions and prayers. We talked about angels as God's thoughts, spiritual intuitions that we can recognize by the love they create in our hearts, as Mrs. Eddy writes. We also shared the Bible passage on love from I Corinthians 13, which I had brought with the J.B. Phillips translation in modern English on the same page. Both women commented several times that earlier in the day they had been reading the very passages we were talking about and how that was evidence of God's love. They seemed very grateful for the time we had together and took almost all of the literature.

Spiritual Transformation

The regular attendee testified to the fact that he loves to come to Christian Science services and conferences because he feels the people who come are really loving and living the Word of God. He said the friend who invited him to

come over a year ago had been in the jail for four years and that Christian Science had transformed him into a kind and caring man. Those who had known this man on the streets were frightened of him until they saw how he had changed while in jail.

Changing Course

Because all four attending had been coming to our services (though two were new to conferences), there was a strong sense of fellowship already in place as the conference began. The parable of the sower and the seed lead to a discussion of some of the "course changes" that had prompted them to take a Bible-based, rather than a street-based, approach to things. One said that he had found an old group of friends when he first got in jail and then found himself mentally standing outside of himself asking the question "Is this really the way I want to live." For him the "seed" had been a family member who had steadfastly followed the Bible. That example had been enough to prompt him to start going to services in the jail and ultimately find Christian Science as a result. Another said that the seed had been attending church occasionally as a child, which he said he had thought was a complete joke, especially given everything else his family exposed him to at a young age. He said his actions on the street had been without remorse, but landing in jail made him start to question everything, and he realized that those brief experiences in church had given him a glimpse of something different, which also ended up leading him to our services. They loved the hope that this passage from the end of the Bible Lesson offered them when thinking about the past: "The eternal Truth destroys what mortals seem to have learned from error, and man's real existence as a child of God comes to light" (*Science and Health*, p. 288). They also loved the account of the centurion and the fact that this man, whom Jesus praised as having the

"greatest faith", was Roman, not a Jew. Even though he did not have the "right" upbringing, what he did have were the qualities of compassion for his servant and humble authority in his work--a good and honest heart.

Feeling God's Presence

The men asked many questions, including how to live with others who have selfish, war-like ways--such as keeping track of the number of those they have killed as if it were a sport. These men all agreed they could follow the teachings of Christ Jesus, and as we read a part of the Bible Lesson, they acknowledged ways they could do this right where they are. We read an article by Nate Talbot from a recent *Christian Science Sentinel* about handling hatred, and they saw that understanding that God is Love and living that love brings healing. At one point the man next to me said, "I feel the Holy Spirit is right here with me." I knew just what he meant, for I too had felt God's presence helping me address their questions and concerns. We spoke of angels, God's thoughts coming to us all the time, and the need to be listening for these thoughts. I reminded them that they are lights in their community and to not allow evil of any kind put their lights out.

"Conflict Resolution: a Spiritual Approach"

John M. Tyler, CSB

Hall Street Medium Security Prison

Sponsored by First Church of Christ, Scientist, St. Louis

Twenty men attended the lecture, the majority of whom were new to Christian Science. John Tyler gave them many good ideas that they could put into practice immediately--such as applying spiritual sense to discern the truth about their fellow man and being ready to forgive others through this discernment. He also introduced the men to *Science and Health* and answered questions. Afterwards, three men came up to talk with him at length.

Unconditional Love

A newcomer asked how she could find healing in the wake of a broken romantic relationship that had left her feeling hurt, mistreated, and inept. We talked about the importance of seeing ourselves as complete and not needing someone else to fill a void or need. We worked with the 23rd Psalm to see that the most important need is a better understanding of God's goodness and constant care and our inseparable relationship with Love as our guiding shepherd. She asked me how I would define *effulgence*, and I said I think of a shining, beaming light. She said that's what she felt when she walked in--being embraced in an unconditional love. I told her that was the Christ-spirit--blessing all--a tangible and a healing agent for good. We talked about how we can see the spiritual, eternal nature of good that is impartial and can be felt through all and everywhere we go. What followed was a sweet interchange between the three of us as we talked about the nature of love and identified God as Love, unchanging, eternal, and reflected by all. She had said that she felt so inspired, as it validated the way she truly felt about loving impartially, without resentment and seeing God's man. Both had said they had read some of *Science and Health* and liked what they read and were looking forward to reading more and returning for the next session. The inmate who had come before encouraged the newcomer to feel a sense of strength, peace, and progress.

Sharing Christian Science

Since I was one on one with this man, he shared that he is writing a book about living a Spirit-based life. He spoke of wanting to let go of the past totally rather than reliving some of the bad decisions he had made. He wants to continue to be a good role model for the young people in his

life including the young men in his pod. Some of them try to insult him and challenge him to react to them. He said he is glad he can remain calm and stay focused on being God's reflection. He told me he first learned of *Science and Health* when he found it on a shelf in the prison he was serving in for fifteen years. This was back in 1989 when he first read some of it. He is known as *the preacher* in his pod when they have prayer circle time, and he gives sermons that include ideas from Christian Science. With newcomers to the group, he doesn't mention Christian Science until they ask, "Where did you get those ideas." Then he introduces them to *Science and Health*.

Universal Truth

Both of these men had attended one or more of our meetings, but not often. What made this discussion so special was that both shared insights they'd reached on their own--insights that were so in tune with Christian Science that they were beautiful confirmations of the universality of truth and the oneness of Mind. One said some pod-mates had tried to discourage him from attending our services, and his response was that we had a book that tells you how to reach Jesus' frame of mind. He couldn't see anything but good in that. He also said he couldn't find any support in the Bible for the doctrine that Jesus is God. The message he gets is that Jesus is the Son of God. We looked at Jesus' expectation that his followers would be able to do the works that he did. We also discussed the importance of being able to see spiritually, and before I got around to pointing it out, the other man had found the definition of "eyes" in the Glossary and appreciatively read it aloud to us. He was delighted to get his own copies of the Bible and *Science and Health*, which he had not taken in the past.

Unfailing Faith in God

The woman had attended one conference previously and loved what she had learned about the Lord's Prayer. She is having an inspiring, transformative time while in jail, spending most of her time reading the Bible; she knows she is a new person. Even the officers comment on how she has changed in appearance, temperament and attitude. She is profoundly grateful for her spiritual transformation. Like many others she wants to carry this newfound freedom and dominion to her life outside the jail. We talked at length about the parable of the tares and the wheat. Also, I shared with her how bank tellers are trained to detect a counterfeit by becoming so familiar with real money that the counterfeit is readily recognized. We likened that to knowing God and knowing ourselves as His own child, which then allows us to be alert to counterfeit suggestions about ourselves. She has seen healing for herself and others and attributes this healing in her experience to her unfailing faith in God.

God's Laws in Action

The women shared some of the details of their challenges, after which we shared the Lord's Prayer and its spiritual interpretation, going through it line by line and discussing how it meets every human need, and how it was specifically meeting their needs. It was heart-warming to hear how they encouraged each other. Because these women are facing incredibly tough challenges, we talked about how in mathematics, when you have a hard problem to solve, you start by learning the simple rules of addition and subtraction, etc. As you work and learn, the problem begins to yield an answer. So it is with the application of spiritual law. Apply what you understand, and eventually the whole problem yields. Our closing prayer for putting God's laws into action

was Philippians 4:8: "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things."

Witnessing Progress

We started with the 91st Psalm with an emphasis on understanding the first verse. They were so appreciative of the importance of dwelling in the secret place of the Most High. I referred them to Mrs. Eddy's statement from *Science and Health*: "Clad in the panoply of Love, human hatred cannot reach you" (p. 571). They liked examining what this means and how they can stay safe in the full armor of Love. As one of them read the definition for God, he said I wish they would broadcast that over the loud speaker for everyone to hear. I reminded him that he could share what he is learning with receptive hearts. I have been watching this group of men who are seriously studying Christian Science grow, and they are supporting each other even after one of their strong leaders left the jail. They acknowledged that all that they do is for the glory of God. It is so good to witness this progress and sincere desire to be good.

Thinking Differently About Relationships

This woman just poured out all of her past mistakes including some very personal issues since it was just the two of us. I spoke with her about the importance of living in the precious present moments that she has been given and that it is not helpful to rehash evil and wrongdoing. I asked her to consider living in the present and keeping her thought open for gratitude and for listening to how she can follow

God right where she is. I encouraged her to continue filling her thought with inspiring ideas from the books she is reading and the music she is listening to. She spoke of reading the chapter entitled "Marriage" in *Science and Health* and that it had helped her to think differently of herself and how she will approach any future relationships. I shared healings that I have had when I went through some rough times and pointed out that Psalms 23 refers to going *through* the valley of the shadow of death but not staying there; she said that was just what she needed to hear.

Relying on Mind

The new man quickly took *Science and Health* and was interested in the comment from one of the regulars that he is half way through reading it, adding: "this book will change your life." Both spoke of how they have been dealing with some challenges by men in their pod because they have a prayer circle that works to live to glorify God in all they do. One man was trying to tear them down saying you act like you are so perfect, and he said I wanted to tell him I have learned that God made me perfect. They both spoke of their progress in thought as they have learned to see the importance of their relationship with God and developing their thought to rely on the one Mind for what they think about situations they encounter. They are learning not to react to how they are treated by their correction officers and others.

Freedom of Movement

One came in complaining that he was having difficulty moving his neck. We dug deeply into the Bible and shared ideas with him. We spoke about knowing our right place with God as the only place we can ever be in. We discussed various Bible stories which all led to having a deep consciousness of our mental position and location: always Spiritward. We saw how this was a way to see that whenever we stray away from God, we are always brought back by divine law, which re-aligns our thought. Our friend with the challenge saw how this related to his problem. He moved much more freely as we parted.

Demonstrating Patience and Self-Control

I began by playing the solo "O Holy Night." Their reverent attention set a prayerful tone for the session. We then talked about the Master Christian, the love he expressed, and how important it is to read and put into practice the Sermon on the Mount. We focused on the Beatitudes and how to practice them. Several shared how they were learning to show patience and self-control around individuals who really were difficult to be around. They spoke of making peace within themselves so they could make peace with others.

Christian Science Joint Institutional Committee of Missouri

Institutions Served

St. Louis City Medium Security Institution (MSI) 7600 Hall Street, Saint Louis, MO

Men: Weekly - Monday, *Church service* 3:30 pm

Women: Monthly - 2nd Thursday, *Group Conference* 9-10:30 am

St. Louis County Justice Center (Clayton Justice Center) 100 S Central Ave, Clayton, MO

Men: Weekly - Sunday, *Church service* 1-2:30 pm; Tuesday & Thursday, *Group Conference* 9-11am

Women: Weekly - Tuesdays *Group Conference* 7-8:30 pm

Youth Development Work-

Missouri Hills Home for Girls

Hogan St. Medium Security for Boys

Missouri Department of Health Psychiatric Center -weekly visits

- We work with approximately 1,500 attendees a year, with 10 volunteers needed weekly. Come join us!

We encourage you to participate in this rewarding and far-reaching work that blesses all!

Branch Churches:

- Please consider appointing a CSJIC Rep from your branch church if you have not already done so.
- Budget a monthly contribution to CSJIC to help cover costs of distributing copies of *Science and Health*, the Bible, Christian Science Periodicals, and the weekly *MyBibleLesson* study guide.
- Consider hosting a Christian Science lecture in a jail.
- Donate new paperback *Science and Healths*, or *Quarterlies* or *Words Only Hymnals*
- Collect newer used periodicals for distribution - preferably less than 1 month old.

Individuals:

- Purchase *Science & Healths* to donate to our CSJIC
- Prayerfully support our work, and check out our website: www.ChristianScienceMissouri.com
- Not sure that you are ready to volunteer in the jail? Come support the work through special projects
- Talk to your branch church representative and consider serving as a volunteer! (Once a month helps fill our current commitments and we are opening doors to work with additional Institutions.)

Contact your local Branch Church Representative or CSJICMO@gmail.com

Brentwood	Andy Mehring	amehring@gmail.com
Clarkson Valley	Melody King	melodiarey@gmail.com
Creve Coeur	Rob Nagel	incenticoinc@gmail.com
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