



COVER ARTICLE

'The Christ is all, in all'

A conversation with Christian Science teacher Janet Clements

By Suzanne Smedley

From the November 2011 issue of *The Christian Science Journal*

Almost 20 years ago, Janet Clements began “modestly” in the Christian Science healing practice, setting aside several hours a day to pray for the world—for those who were homeless, for children who were abused, for people who were ill, and for those at war. “I embraced the world in Christly love, until I had a sense of peace,” Janet says. “That love is the heart of our life.” At that time, she shared an office with another Christian Science practitioner, and her practice began to grow.

Today, Janet has her own office for the full-time practice in Evanston, a nearby Chicago suburb. And she is a Christian Science teacher.

Before entering the practice, Janet had a career in advertising and journalism, working for a large advertising agency in Chicago. Later, she taught at a branch of the University of Maryland, then worked for a large conglomerate of magazines in Texas, where she had grown up and attended a Christian Science Sunday School.

In those days, “church” (in Lubbock, Texas) was an all-morning event, Janet recalls. “We went to Sunday School at 9:30, and then church at 11:00. I took note that whenever I came out of church, I felt really happy—really, really good. I glimpsed early on that Church is an inspiration and a joy.”

Janet begins our conversation recounting the beautiful healing that brought her family into Christian Science.

Janet Clements: In high school my mother was diagnosed with an enlarged heart and was told she would need to take medication for the rest of her life. She took the medication for a while and then stopped after she graduated from college, because she didn’t want to be dependent on it forever.

When my mother moved to Chicago to find a job, she roomed with a woman. One day the woman said to her, “Would you like to go to church with me?” My mother came from a very small town in Iowa, where both of the churches were Lutheran, so she thought for sure the church would be Lutheran. But it was a Christian Science church. She told me that after the service, she thought, “This is what I’ve always believed.” So she took up the study of Christian Science and came to understand that there was a law of God “written” in her heart (see [Jer. 31:33](#)). That law was supreme, perpetually regulating the whole of her being in perfect rhythm. Later, for a job-related requirement, she had to have X-rays of her heart, and it was perfect in every way. She was completely healed. She was a very dynamic and energetic woman with boundless energy.

Naturally, that healing brought tremendous freedom to my mother, so she took me and my brothers to the Christian Science Sunday School.

Janet, you have an office for your Christian Science practice in a Chicago area storefront, which gives you lots of opportunities to talk with people. What are you learning from your interactions?

I’ve discovered that the more I cherish the universality of the Christ, and of Christian Science, the more I see that there are no barriers to anyone, anywhere, from experiencing the blessings of the healing Christ. It’s very interesting—the times I have clearly seen this, someone will invariably walk through the office door, whether it is someone next door or from halfway around the world. Whether they are Jewish, Catholic, Muslim, or claim to have no religion at all.

The Christ makes known to us what the Father knows. It reveals to us, in a way we understand, the facts of our true, spiritual being as God knows them. The Christ presents the spiritual idea of Love—the truth that we are loved of God, cherished of God. No one is ever separated from, and no one is ever denied access to, the Christ, which illuminates human consciousness with divine Truth. And Truth is accessible to everyone, everywhere, just as the principle of mathematics is available to somebody who lives in North America just as readily as in South America.

What about the billions of people on Earth who don’t identify themselves as Christian? What is their relationship to the Christ?

In his healing work, Jesus showed us that the Christ is not unique to Christians, because its message and its blessings are universal. Through his clear perception that the Christ was his divine nature, and the nature of all God's sons and daughters, Jesus was able to heal people from all walks of life. He healed the Roman centurion's servant and the Syrophenician's daughter. Later, the Apostle Paul brought out the universality of the Christ when he said, "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" ([Col. 3:11](#)).

The more we cherish the fact that the Christ is the true consciousness of all, the more we will see that nothing can separate anyone from the blessing of its healing activity.

That reminds me of Jesus' words, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" ([John 12:32](#)). It seems to me that being "lifted up from the earth" means having the meekness and humility to see that Christ is "in all."

Mary Baker Eddy wrote: "Christ is meekness and Truth enthroned. Put on the robes of Christ, and you will be lifted up and will draw all men unto you" (*The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, p. [247](#)). As Christian Scientists "put on" meekness and Truth—live them in their daily life—people will see the Christ in Christian Science. They'll come to a Christian Science church service, walk into a Reading Room, open the door to a Christian Science practitioner's office, and read our periodicals. We'll see that the Christ impels all action and is the guiding light in families, in governments, in communications, and in education. Mary Baker Eddy wrote, "Christ, as the true spiritual idea, is the ideal of God now and forever, here and everywhere" (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. [361](#)).

In your office window, you advertise "prayer-based solutions for health problems, alcohol and drug addiction, and relationship issues." These seem to be universal issues people are struggling with. What do people ask you when they come in?

They'll ask, "What is this all about? How does it work?" I explain to them that when someone asks me for help, we turn together in prayer to acknowledge the law of God, and that this law is the law of good, governing everything in the universe harmoniously. They are related to this law of God because He has put it in our "inward parts" and written it in our hearts and in our mind ([Jer. 31:33](#)).

They're the embodiment of that law, the expression of its orderly action and pure intent. Realizing that this spiritual law exists and that it is universal and governs everyone harmoniously—that very simple idea—has brought wonderful healing to people.

One day a fellow came into my office to ask about Christian Science. He explained that he had been going to doctors and psychologists and taking 12 pills every day. He said he had been diagnosed with nine illnesses, one of them incurable, and nothing was helping him move forward in terms of his physical or mental well-being. His friends noticed that I had a store you could go to in order to find solutions to problems through spiritual means, and they encouraged him to come in.

He explained to me further that he had a sense of guilt about what he'd done in the past. He just couldn't get beyond this guilt because all his life it had been ingrained in him that he was a sinner, and he thought there was no way to get beyond that.

And so we talked about the law of God—that it was a law of goodness and harmony, and this law governed his being. So goodness was the essence of his true nature. Then we talked about the Christ, and that the understanding it reveals of our true selfhood frees us from a mortal sense of selfhood. As a result, we find healing. We talked along these lines, and then I gave him *Science and Health* to read. I said, "If you have any questions, just call me." He said, "I think I might have to be coming back several times because these problems seem so large." And I said, "Well, I'd be happy to talk to you any time you come in. But, I'll pray for you today, and you take *Science and Health* and read it."

He said he was not taking medication that day, and so I felt I could pray for him without interfering with other treatment. I prayed with a clear sense of his true selfhood as spiritual, and holy and sinless—perfect and complete—and that he was conscious of that true selfhood. And I had a wonderful sense of peace about this young man.

I didn't hear from the man for several months, and then I saw him on the street. He told me that the reason he never came back was that he was completely healed in that one treatment—all his illnesses were gone, so he'd stopped altogether taking the drugs, and he had a beautiful smile on his face. He said, "I embraced the healing and walked forward with grace, never looking back."

What a beautiful illustration of the power of the Christ to transform thought and body. In an age when universal, medical health care is not available to everyone, affordable for everyone, or able to cure everyone, the world has the Christ. It has always been here, within individual consciousness, and can cure all ills.

I love the idea that “the true consciousness is the true health” (*Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896*, p. 298). Well, we have that true consciousness—the Christ reveals that consciousness. The Bible says, “We have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16). So we all have an awareness of our oneness with God, of our oneness with Principle, the source of all health and harmony. This understanding is really the universal health.

When the light of Christ dispels the false belief of sin, sickness, and death—all discord—the so-called problem disappears. Isn't it wonderful that Christ is like an alarm clock that will never turn off? It perpetually awakens our thought to behold perfection.

One would think the whole world would embrace such a comforting and liberating message. But Jesus faced intense opposition when he preached—just as I'm sure he would if he were here today. The opposition is impersonal, but it would have us believe that the Christ isn't here, or that it's impotent to heal us, or irrelevant. We can't be naive about this, can we?

But the opposition is not “out there”—it's what *we think* is out there. And if we think that we're in a material environment, with an audience of many opposing minds with different opinions about this and that, then we're going to bump up against that. But if we take to heart the message of Christ Jesus, the message he conveyed in his 30 or 40 parables, basically about one thing—that the kingdom of heaven is at hand—then our thought shifts to see that our audience is really the children of God. We're all in His kingdom. And, if we're all in the kingdom, then we're experiencing the blessings of the kingdom, and we are connecting with all the children of God. The more we see this, the more people will come to Christian Science to find healing. The more we'll witness the activity of the Christ. So, I think that's part of our prayer—not to be taken in by these worldly suggestions you mention, and to see the universality of the Christ instead.

I love that expression “the activity of the Christ.” One dictionary defines *activity* as “energetic action or movement.” I see not only our individual lives as being impelled and animated by the activity of the Christ, but also the Church.

Absolutely. I'm seeing so much about the nature of Church and its true activity this year.

Jesus founded his church on the Christ. He asked his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" and Simon Peter acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God. And Jesus replied that this understanding of the Christ, the living, animating, pulsating expression of Truth, was what he was founding his church on (see [Matt. 16:13–20](#)).

You really can't separate them—the Church from the Christ, or the Christ from the Church. I like to think that, individually, we all have an office in the Christ, a service in the Christ. In other words, an individual way of expressing our spiritual selfhood. We could say that everyone's office in the Christ, everyone's individual expression of their true self, collectively, is the Church—the universal Church. I can see so clearly that nobody is outside of this Church, because nobody's outside of the Christ.

I saw a wonderful little example of that when my son was small. It was the first springlike day after a long winter. And in the afternoon, my son wanted to walk around in our backyard barefoot. So off came the shoes and socks. At some point he then walked down to the front of the yard, across the sidewalk. And as he was walking, he stepped on a large piece of sharp glass that deeply cut the sole of his foot. So I scooped him up in love, took him inside, cleaned up the cut, and put on a large bandage.

In praying about this, I pondered these three ideas stated by Mary Baker Eddy: "1. See what it [animal magnetism] is trying to do. 2. Know that it cannot do it. 3. See that it is *not done*" (Diary, EF113, The Mary Baker Eddy Collection, The Mary Baker Eddy Library). I realized that my son had walked to an area of the front yard where some teenagers had thrown their soda pop bottles. They would regularly toss them into the yard. I saw that the "error" I needed to overcome was the belief that this little one could become the victim of the teens' careless behavior, and that I could be resentful toward them. I saw that in the light of the law of God, good, this inharmonious experience could not have really taken place. Under God's law there are no accidents, and God's law of harmony is supreme. Also, there could be no resentment on my part, if I was cherishing the Christly nature of these teens—seeing them in the Christ-light as mature and thoughtful, rather than careless and indifferent.

You know, the message of the Christ always knits us together in divine Love. In Love, there is no divisive action or separation, only the adhesion and cohesion of Love knitting us together in seamless harmony. I mentally wrapped the teens in this Christly love. And I prayed until the image of the accident disappeared from thought and the resentment melted away.

The next day my son wanted to walk around the yard again and enjoy the sunshine. I thought it would be all right for him to walk in his stocking feet, so I took off his shoes. As I did, the socks came off, and in one sock was the bandage—it had fallen away. I looked at the bottom of his foot. The afternoon before, there had been a deep cut there. But now, there was nothing. No cut, no scar. It was a beautiful little foot, whole and perfect. And never again was a soda pop bottle thrown into our yard.

Not only does the Christ reveal God's love for us, it reveals our capacity to reflect that love one to another. The more every thought we have exemplifies Christly love—the thoughts we hold about our neighbors, about our family members and church members—the more we find that it's a healing balm that purifies human experience, uniting mankind and bringing us an enlarged sense of God's universal family.

Janet, as we know, angels heralded the birth of the babe Christ Jesus. I know that you've been thinking quite a lot about angels recently and their relationship to the Christ.

Yes, you know, Mrs. Eddy defines *angels*, in part, as "God's thoughts passing to man; spiritual intuitions, pure and perfect" (*Science and Health*, p. 581). So angels are the guiding presence of the light of the Christ. God knows all, and this knowing appears to the inspired thought as angels, or God-sent messages. Because God is Mind—the only intelligence—man as His reflection continuously expresses God's thoughts. So angels are always with us.

Throughout the life of Christ Jesus, we see the importance of angels in his experience. When the angel Gabriel came to Mary, and communicated to her the divine plan and purpose that she was called upon to fulfill, she consented to that message of God. Not only did the angel go to her, but to Joseph as well, and to the shepherds. These angels of God's presence completely orchestrated the appearing of the Christ-idea in terms of the birth of Christ Jesus and the Messiah. They prepared and opened the way for the appearing of the Christ.

And these angels continued to stay with Jesus throughout his ministry—during the temptations, in the garden of Gethsemane, and at his resurrection. It was an angel that rolled away the stone at his tomb and shared the message that is still heard around the world, "He is risen" ([Matt. 28:6](#)).

These angels accompany and prepare the way for the joyous reception of every divine idea—which may be manifested in our lives as a new home, a new career, or a new baby.

If angels are spiritual intuitions, or messages from God, how do we hear them?

I think the key is humility. Humility puts aside human opinion, ego, fear, and opens thought to an attitude of listening, of childlike receptivity.

If we are too busy, or if we have fearful thoughts, it's kind of like having static on a radio frequency. We don't hear so clearly. But when we have a pure, humble thought, it's like having a clear frequency. We hear those divine intuitions guiding us. I've found, many times, that these intuitions are counter to human logic. They seem impossible.

For instance, when the angel came to Mary and told her she was going to have a child, Mary said, basically, "This isn't logical. How could this happen?" But the angel assured her, "With God nothing shall be impossible" ([Luke 1:37](#)). I think we all have these spiritual intuitions. They're little niggings, little thoughts, that come to us to do certain things. When we've listened to those angels and done exactly what they've said, we see the blessings of them.

In the first chapter of Genesis it says that God gave man dominion. One definition of *dominion* is "legions of angels." One legion is a large military force, so one could interpret it as meaning we've been given legions of angels—a mighty force of divine ideas to guide us.

What role do you see that angels play in Christian Science treatment?

Since angels are spiritual intuitions, or guides, they guide the thought of the Christian Science practitioner and patient during Christian Science treatment. They uncover things that need to be uncovered in the thought of the patient. They reveal things that need to be revealed. They counteract fear and discord, and lift thought above the mortal picture of disease, or whatever the problem seems to be, to the truth of being. So angels lead us in our prayerful treatment.

For example, the characteristic of the Michael angel is spiritual strength. Mrs. Eddy writes, "He leads the hosts of heaven against the power of sin, Satan, and fights the holy wars" (*Science and Health*, pp. [566–567](#)). So we might say the "Michael treatment" might be to take up and defeat the arguments of the physical senses, thought-by-thought, step-by-step.

About the Gabriel angel, Mrs. Eddy writes, “Gabriel has the more quiet task of imparting a sense of the ever-presence of ministering Love” (ibid., p. 567). So we might say, the “Gabriel treatment” establishes a sense of peace, with the great fact that divine Love alone is real, and there is no sin, sickness, or death. The Gabriel of His presence leaves the field to God and says, “God is Love.” And in that infinite Love there’s nothing but the manifestation of that Love. This treatment goes right to the standpoint of accepting the perfection of the patient right here and now. All of these angels reveal our immediate access to the harmony of heaven.

You have an example of this, don’t you?

Yes, this was a healing I had not too long ago, actually. It was a hearing problem. There was constant ringing in my ears. It never stopped. As I was praying about this, I discovered that the word *obey* comes from *audio*, “to hear.” And a definition of *obey* is “to submit to the government of” (Webster’s Dictionary, 1828). And I thought, “Well, when we obey and align with God’s plan and purpose, we’re hearing clearly.”

And so every day, I started with this prayer from Psalms: “Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee” (143:8). My pure desire was to hear that lovingkindness of God and to obey His divine direction each day.

I also found something very interesting when I looked up the word *sound*. It can be defined as “that which results when two or more entities connect together,” such as two hands connecting, when we hear a clap. Sound is really the evidence of any idea connecting with another idea.

I thought, “This is a different way of thinking about hearing. Hearing, then, is the awareness of ideas connecting.” And I thought, “Well, God, Spirit, does the connecting of His ideas, and God hears the harmonious sound of the connection of His ideas. We’re reflecting the hearing of Mind. We’re reflecting the harmony of Mind. So sound is not in matter but in God, and God orchestrates and directs the sound of the universe by directing the connection of His ideas that result in harmony. So sound isn’t random, it’s the evidence of harmony.”

So as I began, first off, to obey God’s direction, and to discern the actions and connections that God plans—to really listen for His guiding angels, consistently through the day—it brought a complete healing. My ears are completely free of any ringing, and I hear perfectly in every way. It’s wonderful

to be still and listen for God's angels. They sing to our consciousness the glorious facts of the harmony of our being. And we can hear those angels wherever we are.

One last question, Janet. What compelled you to leave a career in business and go into the Christian Science practice?

Well, I think I always wanted to be in the practice. Ever since I was very little, an angel intuition told me I would someday. I thought it was just a matter of when it would unfold. Then, in the midst of a successful career, I had a kind of life-changing experience. It made me deeply consider what life is about, and I began an in-depth study of the source of life—God, who is eternal Life.

As I did, I took to heart the first tenet of Christian Science: “As adherents of Truth, we take the inspired Word of the Bible as our sufficient guide to eternal Life” (*Science and Health*, p. 497). My study lasted a couple of years, and I got a very clear sense of Life. What I learned compelled me to go into the practice.

Boiling it down, I saw that life is about loving God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. Life is really about loving. That was Jesus' simple message to the man who asked him, “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” ([Luke 10:25](#)).

Loving impartially and universally is really what the public practice of Christian Science is all about. And the wonderful thing I glimpsed was that I had all of God's love with which to love everyone in the universe for eternity. What a wonderful gift—a gift we all have!