The beauty of the teachings of Christian Science lies in...

By Mattie Fey Barber

From the [October 1904 issue](https://journal.christianscience.com/issues/1904/10/22-7) of *The Christian Science Journal*

**The** beauty of the teachings of Christian Science lies in their practical usefulness. We have all our lives read the Bible, which is filled with protecting promises yet they seldom appealed to us only as something that might have met the needs of humanity in ancient days.

An experience given in the Scriptures which particularly appeals to me, is the delivery of the three young men from the fiery furnace. Through our enlightened understanding of God which is brought out by the teachings of our Leader, we know why the flames had no power over them. I have had a clearer understanding of this Scripture since learning of Christian Science.

I was assisting my mother in moving a gasoline stove which had been "lighted. We had often moved it without turning out the blaze, but on this occasion I had just filled the tank and it was too full. I took hold of the stove at the end where the tank was, and in lifting it the gasoline was spilled over on me, falling upon my chest and upper right arm, as well as upon the burning stove. In an instant my clothing was in a blaze. As I wore a cotton garment, the fire made rapid headway. Starting as it did on my chest, it will readily be seen that I soon began inhaling the flames, and my face was burned up to my eyes, my eyebrows were entirely burned off, and I lost a great deal of my hair. My ears were burned almost to a crisp, while, as I discovered later, my face, neck, and chest presented the appearance of a mass of partially cooked flesh,— the skin being entirely burned off. My arms and hands were also badly burned. My left wrist was burned so deep that the cords in it seemed to have been severed; at least my hand, which had been burned black, fell back upon my arm so that one could not get a finger between the knuckles of my hand and the back of my arm. My right hand was not so badly burned, but it, too, was drawn out of shape, so that I could not use it.

Perhaps some can imagine what it meant for a mother to see her daughter in such a condition. Her cries soon brought a great many people into the house, and in her fright she began to throw water on me, and to fight the flames with her hands. I never in my life realized God's presence as I did at that time. Even while standing in the flames, my thought was undisturbed. When I saw my mother about to throw the second pail of water on me I said, "Mother, don't do that; let us know that God is all, that His child cannot be harmed, and I shall be all right." Not knowing anything of Christian Science this seemed very strange to her. I stood firmly by the truth, and declared unceasingly that I was under the protection of divine Love, and the demonstration over the pain was a complete one. I did not suffer even for one moment,—God's allness *was all* to me. Material conditions could not overthrow the government of omnipotent Love, and I was entirely free from suffering.

The horror of the situation seemed to have rendered everybody helpless excepting myself. I was sustained by the Infinite. I discovered a strip of carpet lying upon the floor near me, and picking it up, wrapped it about me, thus extinguishing the flames myself. My mother's hands were burned in her attempt to help me, and it was days before I was able to erase the mental picture that her look of agony had left upon my thought. Her suffering was intense.

After the fire was over, kind friends were ready to help, with, it seemed to me, every known material remedy, all of which I refused, knowing that in Truth I was safe. Seeing that I was entirely free from pain, their attention was directed to my mother, who was nearly crazed with pain. After all the remedies which they brought had failed, they called for flour, molasses, and even soap. I informed them where these articles could be found, but none of them brought relief to my mother.

When my brother arrived upon the scene, he asked me what physician I wanted. I told him that I wanted a Christian Science practitioner, and directed him to where he could find one who lived in another city. A lady came to me and said I had better leave the room before my mother recovered from her pain sufficiently to realize in what a condition I was. This startled me; I had been so busy trying to make my mother comfortable, that I had not thought of myself. A friend accompanied me to my room, and cut off what clothing there was left on me. After she had made me ready to meet the practitioner, I stepped in front of a mirror and saw for the first time that my face was burned. There was no skin from my eyes down below my chest. The first thought that came to me was, "Well, is this really I?" "No," I said, "a child of God could not look like that, and I know I am His child, made in His image and likeness."

About this time the water began to pour out of the burns, which evidenced to me that word had reached the practitioner. To those who witnessed this, it was indeed wonderful. There were large blisters where the skin had not been burned off, and the water came out of these, without their being opened.

When the practitioner arrived, about two hours after it had happened, I was sitting in a rocking-chair, and was indeed glad to turn the case over to her. She gave me, as well as my mother, who had asked for help, a treatment at once. All the confusion in the household ceased. My mother's pain stopped almost instantly, and harmony reigned. That night all the family retired as usual, and slept as though nothing had happened.

The work of healing in this case was remarkable. In a few days the burns were covered with a thick crust, and as they healed and the new skin formed under the crust, it would loosen and raise of itself, and could then easily be taken off, leaving a clean, new skin. A thick crust formed over my face, making it impossible for me to get my teeth apart, only just enough to insert a tube, through which I took nourishment. I was burned internally to the extent that nothing solid could pass my throat for three weeks. When the black crust came off my face, it was healed without a mark or scar. My eyebrows were as perfect as before, and though my jaws had been rigidly set, I could again eat freely. When the black crust came off my ears, they too were perfectly healed, being as fresh and pink as those of a babe.

My right hand was not burned black, but when the dry, hard, yellowish crust, as well as the finger-nails, came off, my hand soon regained its normal shape, and it was entirely free. My left hand was burned deepest of all. No one, without the understanding of Christian Science, would believe that I could ever use it again, but I can. Although burned almost to a crisp, yet it was healed. I have mentioned its falling back upon my arm. My thumb was burned black, and was drawn into the palm so that my fingers were bent over it and embedded in the burned flesh. They were so rigid they could not be raised, even by force. The whole hand, outside of the palm, was completely covered with a thick black crust. It is indeed something to be very grateful for, that we understand the power of Truth to reduce to nought, even such conditions. I lost the nails of this hand also, and after the fingers were released from the heavy crust, they gradually lost their stiffness, and were raised to their normal position.

One day I was looking at my new fingers, when I thought the palm of my hand and my thumb must be healed. The crust on these was so thick, it was not removed when the fingers were freed. I went into a room by myself, took a pair of scissors and began an investigation. The crust was so hard and leathery I could scarcely cut it, but when I had finished taking it off, piece by piece, much to my joy I found my thumb perfectly healed. Not a spot was on it, and it soon regained a more natural position. It was interesting to see my hand straighten after my wrist was healed. It has been slow but sure. Though it is not, as yet, perfect, it is gaining perfection as fast as my thought will allow, and I know that perfection will be the culmination of this demonstration. I have my hand, thanks to the power of divine Mind, for nothing else could have saved it. I have the use of it and can do anything I ever did. I would like to say that my new finger-nails are as perfect as the old ones were, something, I believe, quite unusual, outside of Christian Science.

Quick healing was not the remarkable feature of this case, but the manner in which every law supposed to govern such cases, was annulled and made void was indeed wonderful. At the end of seven months I was ready to take my position in the schoolroom. Every supposed law of matter that presented itself, had been met by the law of God. The most serious condition which arose was that of blood-poisoning. There was a great discharge during this time, but my practitioner met the situation bravely, and one by one these mal-conditions were overcome and I was free.

It would be difficult for one who had been delivered from such a trial to express in words her gratitude. As time goes on, I am impressed more with the thought that we have a God who can and does deliver us from all ills, and our faithfulness to the Cause of Truth can alone attest our sincerity and gratitude. This experience brought to me many lessons, and the spiritual blessings and peace I have enjoyed since, more than outweigh the trial.

To our dear Leader, Mrs. Eddy, I express my sincere thanks, that she has lived near enough to God to be able to become a channel for the revelation of Truth to this age. Principle can protect us in every time of need.

*Mrs. Mattie Fey Barber, Lorain, O.*