



# HOUSTON VISITING CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSE SERVICE, INC.

November 2021

## Thanksgiving and Trees

The season of gratitude to God, which in the United States we celebrate as Thanksgiving in late November, is fast approaching! This end-of-harvest holy day puts me in mind of the bountiful lessons I have learned from trees.

This one, for instance: Isn't it amazing how the meek-but-mighty tree sturdily stands its ground, unmoved by seasonal changes and varying weather conditions? During the pause in its growing period, a deciduous tree remains firmly rooted, undisturbed when its leaves change color and fall off. Do trees worry over their disappearing canopy and naked branches? No, they instinctively know that green shoots will unfurl in the spring. This annual cycle of dormancy followed by new growth hints at the eternity of divine Love. Her gentle presence, peace, power, and perfection may seem absent for a time, but, in truth, Love *never* leaves us. (No pun intended!)

The natural phenomenon of trees resting between renewals reminds us that life is not meant to be spent ruminating over our imagined winter woes—grumbling about our bare branches. Rather, when we look up and see a tree's denuded limbs, it prompts us to practice patiently trusting God. Just as the tree calmly awaits inevitable new buds, so we serenely, expectantly wait for Spirit to form in us fresh spiritual ideas that guide our daily thoughts and deeds. As our Christian Science textbook assures us, "When we wait patiently on God and seek Truth righteously, He directs our path" (*Science and Health* 254:10-12). Our path of gratitude.

Gratitude was a daily staple in the farm house where my grandparents raised me. Like all grandmas of yesteryear, mine was a first-class cook. I can still taste her delicious Thanksgiving Day dinners—topped off with made-from-



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scratch pies. And, like all country folk, my grandmother loved nature. Trees were among her favorite teachers.

As a Christian Science practitioner, Gram often shared metaphysical truths with me. Whenever she related those treasures to nature, I listened extra-closely. Once she remarked that world thought misapprehends age. It believes that men and women are fallen mortals who eventually descend into inactivity, disability, uselessness, despair. And yet, she observed, no one thinks of trees as declining with age—getting decrepit, waiting to die. Rather, we associate trees with advancement, with continual growth.

“A tree,” Gram would say, “grows ever deeper roots and spreads its branches ever wider, providing us with more shade each passing summer. That’s how I want to live my life. With deepening roots that represent a foundation of love—reflecting divine Love—for family and friends. And with broadening branches that represent expanding thought imbued with that same divine Love, embracing, encircling, and transforming the globe.”

Every day is Thanksgiving: We thank God for loving us. Every day we are like trees: God enlivens and grows and preserves us. Every day we wait patiently for God to direct our steps and give us spring-green thoughts. Likewise, our *Journal*-listed Christian Science nurse, Susie Petersen, is thankful to God for the opportunity to serve her fellow followers of Christ. Like a firmly-in-place yet flexible tree, she patiently awaits and graciously responds to every call for practical care. Her healing touch is solidly based upon extensive training and experience—not human problem-solving, but divine reality-seeing.

A Song of Thanksgiving  
Christian Science Hymn 374:3  
John Randall Dunn

We thank Thee, Father-Mother,  
For blessings, light and grace  
Which bid mankind to waken  
And see Thee face to face.  
We thank Thee, when in anguish  
We turn from sense to Soul,  
That we may hear Thee calling:  
Rejoice, for thou art whole.

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“Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee”  
*Christian Science Hymn 324*