



HOUSTON VISITING CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSE SERVICE, INC.

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New Year's Resolutions or Revelations?

The world generally regards each new year as a time to begin afresh by resolving to exercise more, eat less, work harder, make more money—you get the picture.

Early one January, while the topic of New Year's resolutions was being bandied about by my colleagues at the water cooler, my mind was elsewhere, planning the pre-dawn business trip I was to take the next day.

It was a 5:45 a.m. flight, as I recall. I was preoccupied with calculating the exact minute I needed to leave the house . . . worried about arriving at the off-site airport parking lot in time to take the shuttle to the terminal . . . obsessing over getting through security . . . fearful I'd be delayed by a long line of fellow travelers. Frayed nerves? Knotted stomach? What, *me*? No way. I was simply being conscientious, I rationalized.

Next morning, I made good time to the parking lot, boarded the shuttle in pitch darkness, and plopped into the seat nearest the exit. Though outwardly patient while other passengers boarded, inwardly I was chafing to get going.

A bulky guy bounded up the shuttle steps. I said a subdued "Good morning" as he passed by. He took the seat directly behind me and returned my greeting with a joyful exuberance that was both startling and refreshing. Somehow, it calmed me. He said he was excited to be going to work. "I love people. I'm a janitor at the airport, so I get to meet all kinds of folks. I'm a people person, ya know?" he reiterated then added, as an afterthought, "I'm retired."

"What did you retire from?"

"I was a long-distance hauler. Drove a truck for 25 years."



Photo by Tim Mossholder on Unsplash

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Every word he spoke sounded so warm, so loving, so jubilant! I don't recall what else we talked about, but his joyous outlook on life and my smile in the darkness are indelible.

"This is my stop," my new friend announced merrily. As he stepped off the shuttle, he wished me a "safe and good trip" and a "God bless!" before disappearing into a sea of airport employees heading to their respective jobs.

That sweet interchange happened years ago. I can't tell you which city I traveled to that day, but I've always remembered that stranger in the darkness. Every so often, whenever I feel a bit harried, I stop whatever I'm doing and reflect upon the love he beamed with—a selfless love that lifted my foreboding, freeing me from worry, doubt, fear.

My resolution that year, as in previous years, was to be a better person—calmer, kinder, gentler. Yet here it was only January and already I was a failure, trying to control every detail of that business trip just so I'd look good in the eyes of my boss.

Eventually, I came to see that my New Year's resolutions had been feeble attempts to exercise human will. That janitor, I realized, hadn't needed to *resolve* to be a better person. He *naturally* bubbled over with love—active, living love. What a revelation this was to me.

The inspiration that sparked my revelation was divine. It emanated from the light we call Spirit, a name for God. Divine light destroys darkness with Truth and Love. Mary Baker Eddy explained the effect of divine light this way in her seminal work, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*:

Eternal Truth is changing the universe. As mortals drop off their mental swaddling-clothes, thought expands into expression. "Let there be light," is the perpetual demand of Truth and Love, changing chaos into order and discord into the music of the spheres (255:1–6).

My airport shuttle friend had helped me "drop . . . swaddling-clothes" of anxiety and accept the pure light of Love. All of us students of Christian Science respond to "the perpetual demand of Truth and Love" by subjugating our own maneuverings and substituting human resolutions with divine revelation—"the music of the spheres"!

Practitioners of Christian Science are here to support us whenever we believe ourselves engulfed in "chaos" and "discord." And just as they identify us as God's purely good children, so, too, does our *Journal*-listed Christian Science nurse, Susie Petersen. She recognizes God's perfection in her clients, who may need to feel the same love I felt all those years ago in the darkness before the dawn, thanks to one joyful janitor.

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Christian Science Hymn 324