

Fear Not

By Janet Horton

A talk given by Janet Yarlott Horton

October 11th at THE LEAVES Annual Meeting

Readings: Bible: Ps. 23: 1, 4 Ps. 27: 1, 3, 5 Ps. 53: 5 (to 1st :) S&H 586: 11 Def. of FEAR 391: 29
Prose Works: Ms. '01: 7: 18-28 My. 160: 1 Un. 20: 5-14

For me there were a number of footsteps in learning not to be afraid. I had to understand, literally, the “Footsteps of Truth.”

At 12 I was still so painfully shy, I seldom looked another human being in the eyes. I was very small – the size of third graders in seventh grade. One day I heard a fellow student tell a guy I had a crush on him. He laughed and said, “Girls who are walking encyclopedias should remember, reference books are never taken out.”

I cried that night. After realizing feeling sorry for myself accomplished nothing, I began to pray about the situation. I was learning a lot in Sunday School, but I wasn't really applying it. It came to me I needed to study the Psalms, the book of Isaiah, and I began to read “Footsteps of Truth.” For over six months I studied and prayed every single night with these.

One night I asked God if I could be at least as tall as the second smallest girl in my class. As I was thinking about this request, I rationalized that I was asking it because I felt self-conscious that my tininess often resulted in people staring at me. At that point I received a much-needed rebuke. I heard a voice say very firmly and very pointedly, “This is nothing more than selfishness!” I pondered it, because it was the last thing I would have thought to be the cause of my shyness. However, as I listened and opened my thought, I sensed I needed a critical awaking and recognition. I thought to myself, “Well, if you think people are looking at you all the time and critically evaluating your modest dress, etc., then you *do* think you're the center of attention more than you really are. That is a form of selfishness and an exaggerated form of self-importance that isn't accurate.” That was my first step – when I realized that fear often includes some form of selfishness and self-centered, confined focus.

This Bible passage, “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary” helped me realize I didn't need to be embarrassed about being intelligent (Isa. 50:4). God had given me the intelligence for a purpose, and I knew it would have something to do with comforting people in need.

It was then I realized how far I had come in thought. I had obviously made many footsteps in grasping the Truth. At the end of the school term I was elected Vice President of my class, cheerleader, and Class Student Council Representative.

I cried with joy that night and thanked God. The fear of people was gone, and my preoccupation with myself had dissolved. Through the study of the Bible and the chapter in Science and Health, the heavy veil of fear had been lifted.



In the center courtyard, Ground Zero, at the Pentagon on 9/11, I saw vividly that fear is a selfish emotion. We never thought about that we hadn't eaten, rested or had a drink of water. Every thought was directed at meeting the needs of the next casualty or fireman. There was a total unity of effort for those whose needs were great.

The only man I prayed with that day who didn't seem to calm completely once we prayed was preoccupied with watching the medical team. He kept repeating in a fearful manner that he could see what they were doing but he couldn't feel his legs. LTC Ward had jumped from a second story window. He was on his back on the cement below because he couldn't move his legs after the impact. However, he selflessly used his arms to break the fall of his co-worker who had been pushed out the window when the fireball was rapidly expanding through their office area. It came to me to speak to him with more authority. Marion had said he was a Baptist, so I reminded him that I knew he would be serious about praying. He then yielded to the Scriptural assurance of Rom. 8:38, 39 "...I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." His fear melted away and he calmed. Then we were told there could be a second plane headed for the Pentagon and we must evacuate. As we lifted him onto a stretcher some dried leaves poked him in the back of his legs. When he cried "OUUCH", we realized he was feeling his legs and we all raised our arms in the air, rejoicing in unison.

I am equally persuaded fear is a form of doubting and that it dishonors God, because it implies that you don't think God is any of the "omni's." It would imply you're entertaining the doubt that our heavenly Father-Mother isn't that "great" or that "good". Or that he's not really present to protect us at *all* times.

I'd like for us to look at why it is intelligent and honorable to God, and downright wise, not to be afraid and not to yield to any suggestions of fear. The Bible references the phrase, "fear not" or don't be afraid over 200 times. That says to me that it's absolutely central to the message of the Bible.

The Bible also teaches us importantly WHY we don't need to fear. And Mrs. Eddy rightly identifies in S&H, "Darkness induces fear...The way in divine Science is the only way out of this condition" (371:14 only, 18). From my study of the chapter on the Footsteps of Truth, it was very clear in my thought, "God is not the author of an evil mind...There is but one primal cause. Therefore there can be no effect from any other cause" (207:8 only; 20-21). The meaning of these ideas became very clear to me when I began my first shift on night security at The Mother Church. The first night after the Security Forman had shown me the rounds, I had to go down dark alleys alone. Doing this in great big Boston seemed daunting.

As I walked the side streets, I thought of Psalms that lauded the power of God to protect us. What came to me was, "Would you be afraid if you met Dave or Rick tonight on your rounds?" Dave and Rick are my two younger brothers whom I dearly love. I wouldn't be afraid of them. Then it came to me, "Who could you possibly encounter that isn't your brother? There is only one God and Father of us all." In the next years, on numerous occasions I had to defuse potentially dangerous situations. I always felt led and protected by the God I knew was that Great!

Sometimes fear wants to suggest *material things* could hurt us or that matter has power to interrupt our harmony or well-being. (S&H 445:5-8; S&H 380: 28; S&H 381: 8-9, 28.)



In 1976, I found I was absolutely terrified by the thought of going into the tear gas chamber in my Army Basic Training for Chaplains. I prayed about what to pray about. I studied the Bible story of the fiery furnace and Moses' experience with a bush that burned but wasn't consumed. I also studied the chapter on animal magnetism. I studied the passages for two months, often as many as three times a day.

It was the most amazing period in my life. I learned how lovingly the Hebrew slaves faced the fire and how Moses was obedient. These holy people realized there was no need to be afraid. No so-called power exists to nullify the power of God's law of harmony; the goodness of Spirit is an unopposed power.

Perfect strangers would come up to me and say, "I don't know why I'm saying this to you, but would you tell me about Christian Science." I forgot why I had started the study. After six months, I knew every phrase of the passages and applied their truths in my life.

It wasn't until I was walking into the gas chamber that I remembered why I had begun the study. The exercise is to learn confidence that the mask protects you, if you keep it on. --- So, they make you take it off! You're required to say your name, rank etc. to force you to inhale the gas. I was in the last group. We had all the prior service men who helped the cadre. The cadre Majors threw a lot more gas crystals on the fire and the gas cloud became very thick. They warned our group, "You thought you were going to get off easy but we're really going to get you."

I was immersed in the joyous thought that I'd done my prayer and I'd get to do this now! I had no sense of fear. I simply thought about the passage, "Mind-science is wholly separate from any half-way impertinent knowledge" (S&H 103:12-13). I knew God governed the universe as divine Love and he never had ordained a law to harm or afflict His children. I felt God's presence. I felt like I was looking down on the experience, wholly separate from any sense of being in the chamber. I felt a clarity of thought – that my Life was "hid with Christ, in God" (Col 3:3).

When we removed our gas masks, even the prior service guys were choking and blinded by the amount of gas. They were literally in a pile attempting to get out the door. I stood still and calmly stated all my information. Once the instructors had pulled the men apart, they were able to get the door open. One of the Majors walked back into the chamber. He stared at me standing quietly, unmasked. I was reveling in gratitude. He said, "Humor me and go outside?" Outside he asked if I was praying." Joyously I replied, "Yes!" Then he asked, "Are you a Christian Scientist?"

He said he'd never had a class when not one person got ill." I was so grateful that the fear in the situation had been nullified. It not only stopped the erroneous sense of the gas being toxic to breathe, but it removed the erroneous premise that people had to get ill as a side effect. Having no fear benefits all because it is unselfish.

There is great peace in trusting, seeking, and being immersed in the Truths of the books, the Bible, S&H or Mrs. Eddy's other Prose Works. We must know them up-close and personal. We must frequent the sanctuary of Truth they offer regularly. Joel 2:21 "Fear not; ... be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things."

There is a close relationship between not being afraid and finding the joy in something. I constantly affirm that I don't have to fear or dread anything that is my duty to do. To even dread assigned tasks is ingratitude and doubt.

My mandatory over 40 Physical at the Pentagon wanted to suggest otherwise. I immediately reversed the erroneous premise as spurious reasoning. I put my foot down affirming with certainty that each stop would be a place to acknowledge God's love. I was immediately struck by how kind each person was, whether they



were taking my blood or giving me an EKG, etc. The stops became a series of explanation on CS – on why I basically had no medical record as a LTC.

At the debriefing, the Pentagon Clinic assembled a panel of Doctors. They couldn't fathom how someone 40 years old could have no medical record. The nutritionist began asking what I ate for breakfast, lunch, etc. She was shocked, saying I had a cholesterol reading of 131, unheard of for someone my age. She asked how that could be. I explained that I never fear nor worship my food.

They pressed me for not having immunizations. They knew from my record I'd been in so-called contagious regions. They suggested I'd be a danger to others. I shared that I'd been in Korea on the DMZ and worked directly with Koreans. I'd been in the Balkans and Germany and had no ill effects. I challenged that spurious reasoning also. I asked them if they believed that the other Americans who were all vaccinated would be protected by their vaccinations. They reluctantly admitted that should be the case. I pointed out that no other nation required vaccinations. Everyone had a choice. They admitted their reasoning was spurious. I pointed out I'd been protected by prayer because I didn't share their fears. "There were they in great fear where no fear was" (Ps. 53:5 (to 1st)). The head Doctor asked if I could get her a copy of Science and Health. Dan. 10:19 "O man, greatly beloved, fear not:" Dan. 6:16 "Daniel, Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee."

I've found every Biblical passage to be instructive on so many levels. People sometimes argue over what is THE correct interpretation of a verse. Ideas are infinite. Mere human words can't confine the true meaning they attempt to voice.

A little Sunday School student was being bullied. He had obediently read the Bible Lesson. The Golden Text was, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12: 32). When the bully came at him at recess the next day, he turned wholeheartedly to the assurance he didn't have to be afraid. However, he remembered the verse as, "Fear not little *flop*..." He had grasped that he didn't need to be afraid. The Father was right there to give him the victory. He united the boy in his thought with God. He felt no fear, only love, and asked the boy to be his friend. The boy agreed and that ended the bullying.

Technically he didn't get the words right. But God had supplied the right idea and assurance of His presence and that included the boys in his loving embrace. There was no fear when he grasped even a portion of the spiritual idea. The Scripture was indeed written on his heart. He had studied it, listened, and obeyed what he was led to do. His trust of Scriptural authority made his way harmonious and fearless.

Adults may also face situations that would claim there are people we have to be afraid of. The Bible starts us out right. Heb. 13:6 "...we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Isa. 51:7 "Hearken unto me...fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their reviling's."



When a Colonel attempted to bully me at Ft Sill, he put me at a position of attention in front of his desk. He demanded in a very menacing tone, “Why aren’t you at home having some man’s babies?” It seemed he wanted to shock me. I stood very quietly for a moment to let him feel the impact of the silence. He had spoken so loudly he offended his secretary. She got up and stood in the doorway looking very angry. It was probably one of the most offensive things a man could have said to a woman. I had a choice to make. I chose to trust God had a better way. I knew I had no need to fear this encounter, because God was instructing us both. I prayed and listened. It came to me he needed to hear the absolutely last answer he would’ve expected. And divine Mind spelled out exactly what that answer was. With an authoritative but soft tone I said, “What if—I told you that I couldn’t have children?” You could see the shocked expression on his face. He looked very embarrassed. After a very quiet moment, I said, “What if—I told you that I was so grateful for the life God gave me, that I decided to dedicate it to ministering to soldiers rather than lying around feeling sorry for myself?” He slid down in his chair even more embarrassed. He softly dismissed me to report to my unit.

During that year and a half, the Colonel struck terror in nearly everyone’s heart other than mine. Several times I had to tell him things he didn’t initially want to hear. Yet, when I was due to rotate to Korea for a new assignment, the Colonel called me to his office. He wanted to read me what he had personally written on my final evaluation. This took a Pentagon, Department of the Army level, exception to policy. As a leader two ranks above my boss, he was only supposed to review my evaluation. Much to my surprise it stated that in his career he had never encountered such a natural and insightful leader. It was a glowing report. He then insisted he needed to apologize to me for what he had said to me the first day. I kept insisting he didn’t need to, but that only made him more agitated. Finally, I said firmly, “No Sir, you don’t need to apologize!” Exasperated, he asked me, “Why not?” And then I said, “Because all I said to you was, ‘What if?’” He broke into a smile, chuckled, and said, “Well, I guess I deserved that too!”

Psalm 119:40 states, “So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust thy word.” It would be so easy in those times someone truly seemed mean-spirited to return like for like. But we humble our human nature to the more divine nature God put in our hearts and we are all blessed” (I John 4:18).

Sometimes the physical senses want to claim you are in physical danger, or there are times that good isn’t the principle of harmony promised. Yet, Mrs. Eddy assures us, “The still, small voice of scientific thought reaches over continent and ocean to the globes, remotest bound. “The inaudible voice of Truth is to the human mind, ‘as when a Lion roareth.’ It is heard in the desert and dark places of fear” (S&H 559:8).

In 1977 I was at a Chaplain Retreat in Arizona. For the morning Physical Training (PT), some chaplains were going to run up a small foothill in the desert. None of us were desert people. The male chaplains cautioned me it was too far for a girl, but I explained I’d been running up to nine miles with my infantry unit. So we all took off running. After three miles we weren’t any closer to the mountain, and we realized it was probably much farther. We were a considerable distance from any populated areas.

When I run long distances I pray. All of a sudden, I was alone wondering where the guys went. I realized about 15 wild dogs were surrounding me. The coyotes would growl and circle. When the lead dog moved in the others would close in tighter. I immediately thought how much I loved dogs. I never remember feeling any sense of fear. The Bible Lesson had been about those who went into Canaan. Some gave an evil report and said it was a land that devoured its people and was inhabited by giants. But Caleb gave a good and true report. Right where the men he journeyed with saw a dangerous situation, Caleb saw a land that flowed with milk and honey and felt the people could possess it. I’d been “praying without ceasing” during the run. I did sense gravity to the situation as the coyotes closed in. I recalled Daniel in the lion’s den. Daniel’s heart was pure and he had no fear, animalistic tendencies, nor hate in his heart or mind for the lions to feed on.



I turned away from the picture in front of me and prayed to hear the still small voice of God's Word. It came to me to "get down." So I got down on one knee. When I knelt the lead dog laid down. Then all the coyotes laid down on their little haunches, and became very attentive. Next it came to me to speak directly to the lead dog. What happened literally was an example of "Preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

I started, "In the beginning," with Genesis 1. I told them God created the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that therein is. He divided the light from the darkness. And He created every creeping thing upon the earth. He saw everything He had made, and behold it was very good. And Mrs. Eddy's concept in S&H, that "all of God's creatures are useful, harmless, and indestructible..." seemed most assuring (514:28-30).

I said to the lead dog, "You have a purpose but it's not to harm me. And I have a purpose, and it's not to harm you. You need to be about your Father's business, but it's not here. And I need to be about my Father's business, but it's not here." Then I said, "You need to go now." I waved my hand upward and then pointed out into the desert. The lead coyote popped up and took off. And the rest of the pack followed him.

Then I realized the men had seen the dogs coming and had sprinted ahead and climbed a brick wall. Others were up a couple of nearby trees. When the dogs left, they climbed down and began to "fess up." Some admitted they had been holding anger and resentment and didn't think women should be in the military and some said women shouldn't be in the chaplaincy. Others said they didn't think Christian Scientist should be chaplains. The seemingly ravenous thought had no voice or authority in the end. A number of the male chaplains left remarking that this was the most amazing thing they'd ever seen. One man remarked that if I could preach to wild dogs and they'd listen ...well, maybe soldiers would too." We all got a big laugh out of that and it took the edge off the events.

God had brought all the right elements together. Often events he uses defy every predetermined expectation we have. When I shared this experience with the other women chaplains, they were very incensed the men didn't come to my rescue. I told them that God was protecting us all and it was probably better that they didn't needlessly endanger themselves or escalate the situation through human will. I reassured them God guides us all. Then one of the women asked if I thought I was in more danger from the dogs on the ground or the "dawgs" in the trees. Everyone laughed. I assured them that I knew I was in no danger from the coyotes on the ground or God's children in the trees. Ezek 34:28 says, "And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid."

Keeping close to our books, The Bible and Mrs. Eddy's writings, and listening to the guiding intuitions of our Heavenly Father-Mother keep us close to the Rock of Ages, Truth, divine.

Mis. 113:24 "Divine Love is our hope, strength, and shield. We have nothing to fear when Love is at the helm of thought, but everything to enjoy on earth and in heaven."

'01 2:25 "Only a firm foundation in Truth can give a fearless wing and a sure reward."

Chaplain (Col.) (Ret.)
Janet Yarlott Horton
hortonj@csp.com