

## GOSPEL OR GOSSIP

There's a story that the devil was having a yard sale, and put many of his best tools out to sell. One item was a much used wedge, with a fabulously high price tag. When asked why this shabby item was so expensive the devil replied, "this wedge represents discouragement, and I use it on everyone." When asked how effective it was, he replied "Oh, it works extremely well. However, it is ineffective on the man with a grateful heart."

Over the past few weeks, as it has been my turn to metaphysically support El Dorado Vista's development activity, and as a result prepare this message, it has become clear that it is time to unmask the wedge of discouragement, disguised as gossip, and replace it with reliance on the Gospel.

The meaning of the word Gospel is good news, and it's interesting that the meaning has not changed in the many years that the word Gospel has been in use. Within the Gospel we have Christ Jesus' instruction to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out demons. However, the word gossip has a much more interesting evolution (much like gossip itself). A gossip was originally someone who stood up with a person being baptized into the Christian faith, which we would call a godparent today. As time went on, the word became associated with a good-sipper, someone who sat next to you at a place of entertainment and picked up tales, and later spread them from house to house.

Much of what has been uncovered over the recent development activity has been stories of the good-sipper variety. Most of these stories ultimately land on my desk, phone line or e-mail box, and frankly, if I did not know El Dorado Vista so well I'd be discouraged too. Fortunately, Christian Science has given us tools to heal this mental clammer. I'd like to talk about my favorite tool, the fan.

In Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, page 586, Mary Baker Eddy defines the word "fan" as "Separator of fable from fact; that which gives action to thought." On page 466 she says, "The Science of Christianity comes with fan in hand to separate the chaff from the wheat. Science will declare God aright, and Christianity will demonstrate this declaration and its divine Principle, making mankind better physically, morally, and spiritually."

A fan, as used in Biblical times (and still today), separates the useless chaff from the necessary wheat. For all those involved with El Dorado Vista – certainly our patients, but also our nurses, staff, Board, and the community we represent and come into contact with – we expect to see this declaration of God aright visibly manifest. We can expect to see mankind made better physically, morally, and spiritually. This is the result of the Science of Christianity lived and demonstrated.

As active, practicing students of Christian Science, we know how to handle the lie of animal magnetism. It is first handled mentally before we even say a word or enter into a discussion or debate. We never make it personal, never attach it to a person or an organization. We always start with perfect God and perfect man. We handle fear in whatever form it may present itself. We reject each lie presented, and replace them with the absolute truth in each instance. We maintain this position of rejecting and replacing until we realize and recognize perfect God and perfect man expressed. And we know our treatment is effective and cannot be compromised because it is God based.

What we are being asked to do is live according to the Gospel, not gossip. There may be times when we could do better, and as we put the Gospel into practice we will improve as needed. By the way, that's why they call it practice, because we continue to strive for mastery, in this case mastering our proficiency in understanding the Science of Christianity.

As challenging as situations might seem, each step is a preparation for future growth and activity. We may not know what that future growth and activity are at this time, and we don't really need to see ahead to the next 40 years at this moment. El Dorado Vista has not reached middle age, slowing down or tiring out – and neither have any of us. El Dorado Vista is, like us, fulfilling the gospel message to “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) as we have been studying in this week's Bible Lesson.

Is it a choice between Gospel and gossip? In the absolute, there is no choice, and for that my heart is full of gratitude. Then let us stand on the rock of the Gospel message, with fan in hand, and go forward.

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