

PART TWO

Emma Dunn

**Actress, Teacher, Author,
Christian Science Practitioner**

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Reginald Kerry was involved in many business, political, and civic organizations, and he was active in the Christian Science Church, both locally and nationally. He was often invited to speak at large and important meetings. It was through his interest in becoming an accomplished public speaker that he first came to know Emma Dunn.

He had already had training in public speaking, but the day he saw Mrs. Dunn walk across the stage of the Lobero Theater in Santa Barbara to give a lecture on "Reading the Bible Aloud," he knew she had what he had been searching for, for a long time. She proved to be a great guiding light both in his career as a prominent business man and church member, and later in his letter campaign to awaken the Christian Scientists to the need to save the Cause.

During the years that Emma Dunn was both an elocution teacher and mentor to Reg in Science, she was a great inspiration to him. Although she felt he had a mission, she did not live to see the time when his mission was revealed to him.

The broad scope of Mrs. Dunn's talents, coupled with her love for Christian Science, gave her an extraordinary insight into reading the Bible aloud. Her family came originally from England, and she and her brother grew up

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a few blocks from Central Park in New York City. She became a truly great artist in the theater on Broadway and a great Christian Science healer. In her book, "You Can Do It!" Emma tells how the theater was in her case the primary school, and how all she learned through many years of acting converged toward this one point: reading the Bible aloud.

She wrote: "Sir Henry Irving, the famous English actor, was asked to give a list of what he regarded as the hundred best books, and he replied, 'Before a hundred books, commend me to the study of two, the Bible and Shakespeare.' Undoubtedly one reason why Shakespeare has remained so constantly with us is that he has used the Bible so understandingly—he quotes the Bible twelve hundred times.

"Reading the Bible aloud becomes a basic idea in one's general culture—in fact, all other studies fall into line with much less labor when one knows how to read the Bible. I recommend reading the Bible aloud above all other books, as it reveals the faults and idiosyncrasies of the reader, and helps him to awaken to true values in reading. When one can read the Bible aloud understandingly, he can read Shakespeare or any of the great poets.

"Many of the greatest minds made a close study of the Bible. Tennyson studied the Bible daily. Tolstoy read and reread the Gospels, until he knew long passages from memory. Ruskin's mother got him to memorize long chapters of the Bible. To that study Ruskin attributed his style and taste.

"Bunyan and Lincoln saw this. Few men since the age of Plato and Cicero have left such impress on the minds of men as Bunyan and Lincoln. The substance of their thought was robed in a style so noble, that scholars bow before its majesty, so simple that children and the untu-

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tored thrill to its rhythmic flow. They wrote and said what they meant with such perfection that their utterances challenge all imitation.

“Of formal education they had little. The Alma Mater of each was the university of struggle and adversity. But the Bedford tinker’s son and the son of the Illinois rail splitter shared the world’s grandest heritage—the Bible. Of English literature John Bunyan knew nothing. Shakespeare and the Bible were Abraham Lincoln’s library in the primitive log cabin on the prairie of Illinois. The Book of Books was their textbook, their spiritual mentor and the chief source of inspiration in passages so sublime, so fired with the common touch, that they will be read as long as English lasts. How is this?

“Professor Grimm, the great philologist, says that the English language (of which the Bible is the finest flowering) ‘has a thorough power of expression, such as no other language ever expressed. It may truly be called a world-language, for no other can compare with it in richness, reasonableness and solidity of texture. Most important of all, it is the easiest language in which to express spiritual ideas.’

“The Bible cannot be read casually. The substance of the ideas transcends the words, and so demands visualization: ‘the faculty of bringing to life that which we wish to express.’ This does not mean that we are to drag out the words, but to take time at each punctuation to breathe deeply, which gives us time to think what we are reading.” Now, let’s backtrack to the day when Reg saw Emma walk on the stage of the Lobero Theater.

“As a young actress, I often rode on the Sixth Avenue elevated train in New York and saw through the windows the names of stage stars in electric lights, and one night I asked myself, ‘Do you want to be a star like that, and have

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your name in bright lights?’ And without a moment’s hesitation I said, ‘Oh no, I don’t want to be a star. I want to be such an artist, that if I only walk across the stage it will be done perfectly.’ How many of us know how to walk, how to stand, how to sit properly? In many years of teaching balance and poise, I have found few persons who knew the simple art of walking, and yet walking is one of the fundamental expressions of poise.

“When we speak of poise, we speak of it, of course, as mental. When we see a perfect physical body which is the result of physical exercise alone, it lacks the poise and grace of the mental—it is rigid. But when the poise comes from within, we see perfect grace. You must start from a mental stillness, which quiets all the physical, and then move from the center—the center being that part of the body just under the bust-line, and on the median. Webster’s definition for ‘center’ is: ‘That part of the body about which all the other parts equally balance each other.’ This would have to be mental—subjective—before it could be objective. Walk as though your legs were swinging from your center, and you will move with grace—remember, that your feet alone could not convey you across the room. The onlooker should never be aware of feet when you walk, but of a graceful balanced appearance.

“Whether you are acting a play, making a speech, giving a sermon, reading the Bible, or just entering a room, the basic principle is the same. Through the years, I have developed a method of teaching the subjective approach (from within). I have taught thousands of students, individually and in classes, from all walks of life—stars of stage and screen, principals of schools, teachers, professors, and international speakers. I have taught in England and Scotland. Many individuals, who have had little or no educational advantages, have become representative

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members of their community through the application of the simple rules in this book.

“I must explain how I came to see the reading of the Bible in this new-old light, the light in which I teach it. I had gone through an experience where no human aid could possibly help me, and so was obliged to turn absolutely to God, and found Him in such a way that illumined the word of the Bible. There is no illumination in the academic approach to the Bible—that is the dead letter. In other words, it is the objective instead of the subjective.

“After this experience I saw the real meaning of ‘subjective’—that once we get rid of the fearful or egotistical sense of self, the Bible ‘reads’ itself. The ideas come through with such clarity, that they need no explanation or interpretation, proving what someone has said, ‘I know the Bible is inspired, because it inspires me.’ I could never think the same about anything I did—I saw that acting and everything else was subjective. I had always acted from that standpoint without understanding it, but now I understood it and could explain it. The reading of the Bible came through inspiration, like everything else I have ever done.”

In her class, Emma always asked this question first: “What is the chief fundamental of the teaching?” and the answer had to be: “Listening—one hundred percent.” “Every faculty of your being will then be brought into coordinated activity by this purpose. This is true receptivity, and you are bound to touch inspiration, which is from the same root as ‘listening,’—not listening with your ears, but with your whole being, like the deer whose life depends on it.

“What is genius but inspiration, or revelation, seeing that which has always existed? Thomas Carlyle says, in

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‘Past and Present,’ ‘Genius is the clearer presence of God Most High in a man. Dim, potential, in all men; in this man it has become clear, actual.’

“Inspiration is the result of a properly focused thought, which comes from an inner stillness, through which the subjective expresses itself. A real idea usually comes in such humble dress, and speaks so softly that we are apt to miss it, unless we know how to listen; but when we understand how to listen, its purpose appears.”

Emma lived what she taught. She was once asked to accompany the Queen of England on the boat crossing from Vancouver to Victoria on one of her trips to Canada many years ago. When they arrived at their destination, the Queen thanked Emma and said that this had been the most enjoyable part of the journey for her, because she had found someone who knew how to listen.

“‘The last heart beat of the amateur must die before the real artist can be born,’ wrote Robert Louis Stevenson. The amateur is busy trying to do something, while the artist is really being the idea. I have never kept a diary or even a ‘notebook’ as many professional people do, but occasionally I jot down a few lines on some subject that interests me. About ten years ago, when the violinist Menuhin had brought to light a ‘lost’ concerto of Schumann, I scribbled down some notes apropos of something he said at the time. When these notes, yellowed with age, were uncovered recently, I was quite happy to see how completely they illustrated the above thesis. ‘I have just heard Menuhin, the young violinist, say of Schumann’s hitherto unpublished work, that at first he could not play it without weeping, but after practicing it each day, he could now play it without emotion.’

“This recalled to me the many different emotional parts I had played, and how some of them affected me. A

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new part always meant weeks of rehearsals, during which time I would let myself go completely, in order to find the very heart and soul of the character. The emotion I felt for the character would at times overwhelm me, and I would have to withdraw and go home. This would happen repeatedly, until I was able to let the idea of the character express itself. Then I could play it without the overwhelming sense of emotion, because I had, to an extent, crystallized the shadings and deepest feelings in such a way as to enable the audience to see and feel what the character was seeing and feeling.

“I still felt deeply as the character, but Emma Dunn was well out of the way, and everything the character expressed was true—nothing overdone. In other words, the idea called the character was complete in itself and expressed this perfection, when there was no one to interfere, no one to add self-pity or uncontrolled emotion. When the actor is lost sight of as personality, and we are conscious only of the character, this is to me the perfect sense of artistry.

“To be emotional, I call this playing or reading ‘with the mood’—objectively, but to act or read ‘against the mood,’ without adding self-pity or uncontrolled emotion, really means acting or reading subjectively. The principle of going against the mood is used not only in tragic scenes but in scenes of high exultation, as in the film of ‘Henry V’ in the scene after the victory in France, when Sir Laurence Olivier, as the English King, says, ‘We’ll then to Calais; and to England then, Where ne’er from France arriv’d more happy men!’ The average actor would have been carried away by the emotion of the scene, and so played it literally—objectively—exuberantly; but Olivier played the scene in the utmost quiet and balance. It was a different rhythm, tempo and balance to anything he

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had expressed in the play—he allowed the audience to do the exulting.

“I have used this similar rule of ‘going against the mood’ in teaching students how to read certain passages in the Bible, particularly the tragedy in Gethsemane, which appears in the book of Matthew. The 26th Chapter of Matthew, Gethsemane, is perhaps the most tragic chapter in the Bible, so a reader could take no better example. I have seen an entire audience droop under the false reading of this chapter, particularly the verses 36-39. The average reader reads with the mood, and so brings out all the human suffering. The inspired reader reads against the mood—looks right through the suffering into the light, and so lifts the thought and feeling of the audience. This is accomplished not by any attempt to put lightness into the voice, which would be artificial, but to understand that only light is present.

“Someone said, ‘Teach me to distinguish between sentiment and sentimentality,’ admiring the one and despising the other. When we read with or in the dark mood of the Bible, it is sentimentality. When we read against the mood, it is sentiment, which always sustains and uplifts. When a singer chooses a sad selection, and sings it as though he believed in the generally accepted sense of sadness, he depresses the audience. All true art plays against the mood. Webster’s definition of the word ‘sad’ is: ‘Satisfied; steadfast; faithful; trustworthy; fixed in mind; determined; resolute; serious; sober; hence wise, prudent.’ I know you see that this is contrary to the generally accepted sense of sadness.

“I saw an old film of Rudolph Valentino the other day, and although it was far from being a good picture, even when it was produced years ago, still it was easy to see why his work holds audiences even today. He was the

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‘smoothest’ of his day. He knew how to ‘underplay’—which means how to be the character, while those around him were overacting, because they were busy doing instead of being.

“Once you have acquired the fundamentals of the teaching, which include pausing at each punctuation, and breathing on the first word following every punctuation; stretching a word with two different vowels appearing together; these are the tools, the equipment only, the rest is ‘you,’ and you can express whatever you can envision. You will be amazed, as you see what can be accomplished by the understanding of ‘Thought Quality in the Voice.’ It can paint the picture without a brush, it can tell the whole story without the story book, because it is the result of visualization—the faculty of bringing to life that which you wish to express.”

Emma taught Reg to read with “visualization.” He would illustrate this method of reading by saying in a low and poised voice, seeing every word, “Can you see down here this tiny little ant,” and, in a fuller tone with amazement, “And over there, this big mountain all covered with snow?” He would explain, “You saw the tiny little ant, because I saw it, and you saw the big white mountain, because I saw it. Now, if you see what you are talking about, your audience will see it too, and no one will walk out.”

Reg said Emma got one of the many parts where she played mothers on Broadway, under the direction of the great producer Richard Mansfield. For the audition, each actress was given a doll and a few lines to say. Mansfield had already auditioned one hundred actresses, when Emma’s turn came up. She took the doll in her arms, and holding it close to her bosom, said to the doll in a soft and tender voice, “When I look at you, I see all the little heads that never touched my breast. Oh, my dear, how sweet

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you are!” “Stop right here, there’ll be no more auditions. I have found the mother,” Mansfield said. Reg would explain. “All the other actresses had said the words to the last row—it was purely objective, but Emma was looking at the baby and spoke to it subjectively.”

With this kind of understanding of the art of reading and speaking, it is no wonder that when Reg was First Reader in the Santa Barbara Christian Science Church, the church was filled, and hundreds of testimonies of healing were reported. His name had come up several times for election as First Reader, but he always requested that it be not considered, because he was just too busy. One day, while attending another meeting where readers were to be elected, his name was once again written on the board. He got up to remove his name, but it was as if a hand passed in front of him and pushed him down in his seat, where he was immobilized, until he realized that he had been elected First Reader. He went to see Emma in utter amazement and told her what had happened. She said that this was a task that he had clearly been given, and that she would stay with him and help him through. He went down to Los Angeles for a lesson every Wednesday; then they would have dinner at Musso Frank, and he would return to Santa Barbara. She also came up to Santa Barbara on the Greyhound Bus every Saturday to check his reading at the church for Sunday. She did this for the three years that he was First Reader. She passed on one week before he finished his term.

Emma Dunn was not only a great artist, but she was also an outstanding Christian Scientist. After Mrs. Marquette and Madge Tackaberry left, Emma became for Reg the next link in “the chain of scientific being,” sharing with him her deepest understanding of Christian Science. When she lived in Santa Monica in an apartment over-

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looking the ocean, she would stand looking at the ocean with her arms wide open and say, "This is all me." This understanding of man as "the compound idea of God, including all right ideas," this sense of infinity where nothing is impossible, gave her the dominion that made her a truly great healer.

Emma shared with Reg many of her experiences in Christian Science. While she was having class instruction in Christian Science, the teacher sent the pupils home one day saying, "Your assignment for today is to go and heal someone." Emma remembered that she had an aunt who was very ill, and so she decided to go and see her. She took the train to the end of the line and started to walk. It was winter and there was a lot of snow on the ground. Suddenly along came a wagon of coal pulled by a horse, and sitting way up high was a big black man. He stopped and asked her if she wanted a ride to wherever she was going. She nodded, and as this big black man picked her up and put her gently on the seat, she looked into his face and saw the Christ. When she got to her aunt, the aunt was healed.

Another time, Emma was having problems in her home with her husband and children, so she accepted a part in London at Covent Garden, when after a while she noticed a growth on her neck. The growth became so large that she could no longer work, and she went to see a practitioner, Mrs. Porter. She told Mrs. Porter why she was in England, and Mrs. Porter said, "Emma, I'm going to tell you a story." She told her the story of her teacher who went to see Mrs. Eddy in Boston, because he had a case that did not want to yield. In the conversation, Mrs. Eddy asked him: "What is your patient's occupation?" He answered, "He is a retired army officer." Mrs. Eddy then said, "Handle hate." "Oh," he said, "this man is the most

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loving individual.” Mrs. Eddy repeated, “I said, handle hate,” and the interview was over. The teacher returned to London, not knowing what he was going to tell his patient. When he saw him, he asked him, “Do you hate anyone?” “Oh no,” said the army officer, “when I came into Christian Science, I learned to love everyone.” The teacher did not know what to say next, when suddenly he asked, “Does anyone hate you?” “Oh yes,” the army officer answered, “you see, many people hate me, because I have sent many men to their death.” “Stop right here,” Emma said to Mrs. Porter, “you don’t have to say anymore. I see, the hate and the hater are one. If I believe that someone hates me, I believe in hate. I love my family, but I believed they hated me, so I believe in hate.” Emma got up to leave, and Mrs. Porter offered to call a cab for her, but Emma said she wanted to walk back to the hotel. And as Emma walked through the streets of London, it is as though a hand came over and removed the growth which fell into the gutter. She had been healed.

Reg turned to Emma in times of great need. One day at the restaurant, a very heavy piece of equipment fell on Reg’s foot. The pain was excruciating, but he managed to go home and called Emma for help. She took up the work immediately. He fell asleep and woke up the next morning, got dressed and went to work as if nothing had happened. He was so ecstatic about the healing, that he thought, “This is going to be a great testimony at the next Wednesday Evening Testimony Meeting!” He worked all day and went home to bed late, but when he got up the next morning, he could not put his shoe on and the pain was unbearable; and a Bible statement kept hammering in his head: “Rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). He crawled to the telephone to call

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Emma, told her what had happened and the Bible statement, and said, "Hell, how can I rejoice, when I've got a crushed foot that's killing me!" She answered, "When you understand this statement, you will be healed." He hung up the phone, went back to the bedroom and tried to get still to listen. Then came the answer: "Oh, I see, I made a reality of this when I rejoiced that Christian Science could heal a crushed foot. I thought it was going to be a great testimony when, in fact, I should have rejoiced that my name is written in heaven, and that I have never left the kingdom." With this realization, he fell asleep and woke up the next day completely healed.

Another time, like Paul, Reg went blind for three days, and when he called Emma for help, she said to him, "The shortest sentence in the Bible is 'Jesus wept.' You are a tough man, but when you learn to weep, you will recover your sight." Not knowing where to start, he thought he would try to find fifty things he could be grateful for. And so he started being grateful for a beautiful wife and children, a nice home, a successful business, friends, and went on until tears were running down his cheeks, and he fell asleep. The next morning he woke up with a vision that he never had before and which never left him.

Emma had great insight and had told Reg, "I know you have a mission; I don't know what it is, but I know you can do it!" The twelve years they shared were a divine preparation for the work he was to undertake in Boston. The preparation undoubtedly included the strength and dominion expressed in her book "You Can Do It!"—ideas she surely must have shared with Reg before she wrote it. She saw so clearly man's infinite capacities for good. She wrote:

"Thomas Carlyle says, 'Genius is the clearer presence of God Most High in a man. Dim, potential, in all men; in

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this man it has become clear, actual.' One dictionary gives a definition for genius as: 'The essential principle of anything.'

"What man has ever had a corner on the principle of mathematics? And no man has ever had a corner on the principle of genius. We have been incorrectly taught to believe that genius was for a favored few. We all use the same numbers and the same alphabet—they belong to all who will utilize them. How much good could we receive from numbers or the alphabet, if we thought they belonged to a person? They are impersonal, infinite, and are here for all to utilize.

"Could you believe, that a simple New England farm woman could begin painting pictures late in life which are compared in quality to those of great masters of the past? Yet it is true, and it proves what I have just said, that no man ever had a corner on the principle of genius, and that the principle is here for all to utilize. I had not heard of 'Grandma Moses' while writing this book, but she so completely epitomizes all I have said, that I felt the book would not be complete without her.

"Mrs. Anna Mary Robertson Moses, now generally known as Grandma Moses, passed her eighty-sixth birthday in the fall of 1946. Eight years ago, she was not even herself aware of possessing a real artistic gift, but today she is acclaimed by the entire world. She is not what the world calls a self-made woman; nor has she learned what she knows from books or from other artists. She painted because she loved to paint, she had to express it, and she succeeded because, as Louis Bromfield said, she had found 'a satisfactory relationship with the universe . . . her small world . . . was at once a cozy and limitless universe which contained the keys to the knowledge of good living and understanding.'

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“The latest tribute to her is a book entitled ‘Grandma Moses—American Primitive,’ including forty paintings with comments, Grandma Moses’ Autobiography, and an introduction by Louis Bromfield. John Erskine, himself a writer, musician and teacher, says in reviewing the book about Grandma Moses: ‘Personally I owe her a great debt. All my life I have believed, and have preached, the doctrine, wherever I could find any to listen, that men and women should use all their talents and should start in to practice even a difficult art, even in advanced years, whenever they are ready. What most of us need is courage to live, courage to be ourselves.’

“But you may ask, why do so many fail? Bromfield says, ‘too many of them are flat in spirit . . . they reveal little inwardness or real warmth.’ This ‘inwardness,’ I think, is but another name for that subjective feeling which I have said so often is the basis of all true expression.

“Any teacher worthy the name knows he cannot give a student anything; he can only remove the clamps of fear and show him—as a great inventor has said—‘There isn’t another man just like you in all the world. All Ford cars are alike; but no two men are just alike. Think of it, there never has been anyone just like you, and there never will be again.’ He adds, ‘Every man should get clear on this idea about himself, he should guard that spark of individuality—it is his only claim to importance.’

“No one can express himself just as you do, no one can take your place. Edison, Ford, Carnegie, and a long list like them, all started with slight education, but all saw constructive ideas which they stuck to and worked for, until they were completed, and all had one idea in common: they knew that no man could be a failure except by his own consent.

“The average child is not afraid of making a mistake;

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he welcomes each new experience. Be not afraid of new experiences and they will reward you. Most of the real people we know, have arrived by using their so-called mistakes as stepping stones.

“Edison once said, ‘I constructed 3,000 different theories in the development of the electric light.’ A man who heard this, so the story goes, said, ‘How could you keep on, after so many failures?’ Edison replied, ‘You don’t understand what I have accomplished. I now know three thousand ways that you positively cannot make an electric light bulb.’

“Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties. Lincoln failed twenty-seven times according to the world’s point of view; had he succeeded once, according to the world’s point of view, he would have been sidetracked and so diverted from the great work he did for this nation and for the world. . . . But who could call his life a failure? These were all stepping stones, all part of the preparation for his great task. He once said, ‘I will prepare myself and perhaps my time will come.’

“Then there is that old ‘bugaboo’—the fear of age. We hear men and women say every day, ‘What can I do at my age? No one wants an old person in any position.’ They are right, no one wants a person who spends all his time thinking about how old he is. The world is begging for new ideas, irrespective of age, which the following long list of wonderful achievements proves (all were accomplished by men of 70, 80, and even 90 years of age):

Cornelius Vanderbilt increased the mileage of his railroad from 120 to 10,000 miles after he was 70.

Handel at 72 gave us his greatest composition.

Galileo was 73 when he made one of his greatest telescopic discoveries.

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At 74 Verdi wrote 'Otello.'

Washington Irving at 75 wrote 'The Life of George Washington.'

Oliver Wendell Holmes at 79 wrote 'Over the Tea Cups.'

Gladstone at 83 was Prime Minister of Great Britain for the fourth time.

Von Ranke at 80 commenced the 'History of the World' and finished twelve volumes before he was 91.

John Quincy Adams, after serving as President of the United States, was still in active service at 81, and was leader in the House of Representatives.

Tennyson was 83 when he wrote 'Crossing the Bar.'

And at 91 Michelangelo painted two great canvasses.

"We are so accustomed to hearing of great women in their maturity, but have you ever stopped to think that many of them started their life's work when they were very young? The following women, whose achievements are now well known, all started their work in their twenties or earlier, showing that it is never too early nor too late to begin, and that an idea has nothing to do with time. Just to mention a few:

Anne Lindbergh was still in her twenties when she received the Hubbard Gold Medal of the National Geographic Society for work as co-pilot and radio operator on the 40,000 mile flight over five continents—the first woman so honored.

Amelia Earhart was just leaving her twenties

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when she first flew the Atlantic as a passenger—the first woman to make such a trip. She flew the same ocean solo in her early thirties.

Marie Curie was still in her late twenties when she and her husband, Pierre Curie, began their revolutionary research into radioactivity; she was barely thirty when they obtained radium.

Helen Keller entered Radcliffe College at 20, graduated at 24, although handicapped from infancy by inability to see, speak or hear, having laboriously overcome these obstacles through the courageous and systematic efforts of her earlier years.

Evangeline Booth began her great work in command of the Salvation Army in the United States in her late thirties, but she began to preach in London's worst slums at 14 and at 23 was put in command of the London work.

Florence Nightingale did not give up her great work for the advancement of nursing until before her death at 90, but had begun making her systematic study of nursing throughout Europe at 24, was superintendent of a hospital at 33, became the first war nurse at 34, and was world famous for her work in the Crimea at 35.

Mary Baker Eddy, the discoverer and founder of Christian Science, by the age of twelve had given evidence of great spiritual vision and religious conviction. While still a young woman, her pastor spoke of her as 'an intellectual and spiritual genius.' She was

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45 when she discovered Christian Science, 57 when she founded the Church of Christ, Scientist, and at 87 established the Christian Science Monitor, a phenomenal achievement in modern journalism (see Encyclopedia Britannica).

“These men and women did not run away when the world told them they were too young or too old. They listened for ideas. Each saw an idea and completed it for the love of the doing. There is no other method under the sun that can bring lasting success, but that which is done for the love of the doing.”