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System restore for the new year

By Elise L. Moore

THE OTHER DAY as I was coming around a bend in the road near my house - and thinking some pretty heavy thoughts - I saw something that stopped me in my tracks. A double rainbow, with clear, bright colors, arched above our huge mountains, from one edge of the earth to the other, against the cloudy sky. I stood there, almost gasping at its beauty. I didn't feel heavy-hearted anymore.

I ran and knocked on my neighbors' door, begging them, "You have to come see this!" They were watching a football game, so maybe they were indulging me at first. But when they saw it? "WOW!!!"

As the father in the group went back inside for his camera, I called after him, "Are you sure you can capture it?" I knew that the rainbow was actually an "illusion" - the effect of light refracted through moisture. But when my neighbor snapped a shot, he showed me the rainbow-"captured," in all its splendor, in the tiny window of his camera.

That rainbow reminded me of a splendid one I saw many years ago as I was leaving an older friend's apartment. I'd gone to visit him to ask him to pray with me about I struggle I was having. I was single at the time, but the man I was in love with wasn't. He and his wife were having marital problems before I came along, so I might have justified my position by saying a breakup wouldn't be my fault. But they had a small child and I felt very bad about the whole situation. There seemed no happy way out for any of us.

I don't remember exactly what my friend said to me before we left his apartment and went outside, but his usual message was that no matter what the problem was, there was always hope – not just hope that you'd get what you wanted in the end. If you went to God in prayer with your problem, God would reply in a way you could understand. I knew my friend based his unshakable faith on what he'd learned from studying the Bible, along with another book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy.

There's a lot in those two books about hope - about venturing forward, persevering, trusting God, divine Love, to answer prayers, and then expecting a solution, no matter what. One psalm

says: "I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope" (Ps.16:7-9). And a passage in Science and Health assures the reader, "Spiritual sense, contradicting the material senses, involves intuition, hope, faith, understanding, fruition, reality" (p. 298).

As my friend and I stood there that day long ago after praying together, oohing and ahing over the rainbow, I turned to him and joked, "Just like the one God gave Noah after the flood!" (The story of Noah and the ark is in Genesis, chaps. 7 and 8.) But he didn't laugh. He *was* as sober as ever. "Do you believe that?" he asked. "Will you really accept the promise of this rainbow, as though God sent it just for you?"

My response took all my courage. "Yes," I finally said, "I will."

I mark that decision as the point at which the situation began to resolve itself. The relationship I'd been so concerned about was terminated shortly after that, and I moved away. Over the years, I've come to see that for many reasons, that individual would not have been the right life-partner for me. And I've been very grateful for the marriage and family that eventually did come along. They've taught me so much!

A small lesson, this one from rainbows. But hope? The courage to ask God for help and the determination to confidently wait for His reply? Hope like that is never small. May you take the promise of the rainbow as your own.