

# Earth's Preparatory School

A talk by Daniel L. Jensen, C.S.B. to the staff of The Principia  
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Good evening friends,— fellow students in this interesting, all-important schoolroom that Mrs. Eddy speaks of as “earth’s preparatory school.” The title she’s given to this human experience reminds us, does it not, what we are about, what our life goal is. For right now, and during every minute of our lives, we are in training. This is not a “dress rehearsal.” Our singular, all-important purpose in this human scene is spiritual progress, and we make such progress by solving the so-called problems and challenges encountered in our everyday life. Our heart-felt quest this evening is to expand our understanding of how to make such practical growth in this, earth’s preparatory school.

In considering this subject we necessarily begin with a heightened awareness of man’s immortality, *our* immortality, as ideas of God. Mrs. Eddy fully expected that we would look upon and live our lives from this point of view — from this premise. She tells us: “Life is eternal. We should find this out, and begin the demonstration thereof.”<sup>1</sup>

Without an understanding or acceptance of our immortality much of our discussion will be rather pointless and shallow; for her use of the word “preparatory” implies the preparation for a state of consciousness which knows only good, only the substance of Spirit. We are therefore, or should be, in the process of recognizing our present state of perfection; we should be gaining a consciousness of our (yes, *our*) present immortal life.

Though we have now but a small glimpse of our true selfhood as God’s pure and perfect idea (only “know in part”<sup>2</sup> our perfection) we go forward expectantly, “precept upon precept.”<sup>3</sup> For an acceptance of the fact that we are immortal is what makes our goal attainable and reasonable.

So is it agreed that for the next few minutes at least we be willing to consider everything discussed from the point of view that we are in fact deathless, eternal. O.K.?

This discussion might very well be titled “An Exercise in Willingness,” for underscoring everything we will be considering tonight is a sense of individual willingness. Why? Because everything relating to earth’s preparatory school is based upon our willingness to accept Life as eternal *and to live in a way that confirms this acceptance*. “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”<sup>4</sup> Only from this basis are we willing to accept the rules of earth’s preparatory school as reasonable: to study the spiritual facts carefully, and then see the daily problems and challenges we face not as curses, but as a means of applying these facts. Mrs. Eddy reminds us, “A danger besets thy path? — a spiritual behest, in reversion, awaits you.”<sup>5</sup> So any “danger” that we confront, any “problem,” is

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<sup>1</sup> *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy 246:27-28

<sup>2</sup> I Corinthians 13:12

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 28:10

<sup>4</sup> Galatians 5:25

<sup>5</sup> *Message to The Mother Church for 1902* by Mary Baker Eddy 19:23

not what it appears to be. Rather than inharmony, sickness, lack, loneliness, or fear it becomes, *by reversal*, an opportunity to gain a better sense of accord, health, abundance, peace, and security.

In an article titled "God's Problems"<sup>6</sup> the author states simply:

An able mathematician does not regard a problem in mathematics as a discord or calamity. He does not regard it as being toilsome, burdensome, to be avoided if possible, or possibly as the expression of a hostile intelligence out to attack and defeat him. Instead, he sees that the solving of mathematical problems fulfills his purpose, proving his usefulness and giving him satisfaction.

Take a look at it, folks. It's helpful.

The disobedient or indifferent pupil makes little progress in *any* learning experience. Even so in earth's preparatory school. The intractable, unwilling student (the one who fearfully or stubbornly holds to material life as real) makes little, if any, progress in understanding eternal Life. Such a reluctance to let go of materiality, and the results of such reluctance, reminds one of how monkeys are caught. An opening is made in one end of a coconut shell, just large enough for a monkey's hand. After being filled with cheap trinkets the shell is tied securely to a tree. The inquisitive monkey soon finds and grasps the trinkets in his fist; but he then finds that he can't withdraw his fist through the opening. Of course all that holds him prisoner is his unwillingness to let go of the trinkets. Is there too much of the monkey in us? Are we held in harsh bondage because of our unwillingness to let go of the mere trinkets promised by a material sense of life?

In Exodus we read of Moses' wonderful "willingness."

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the bush, . . .<sup>7</sup>

A poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning catches the wonderful significance of this event. She writes:

Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God.  
And only he who sees takes off his shoes,  
The rest sit round and pluck blackberries.<sup>8</sup>

Isn't it true that our human experience has many heavenly signs, many bushes afire, furnishing us with inspiring learning opportunities? But there are few that "see," that "turn aside," take off their shoes, and accept the divine instruction contained in these everyday events. "The rest sit round and pluck blackberries."

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<sup>6</sup> "God's Problems" by Loyd E. Woodruff, *The Christian Science Journal*, March 1973, Vol. 91, page 131

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 3:2

<sup>8</sup> From Aurora Leigh, Book VII, 1, 821; found also in *The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, page 167

We can never forget that our goal, as practicing Christian Scientists, is to attain a constant consciousness of the omnipotence and omnipresence of God. And we must begin our effort by deciding at which altar we will worship: matter or Spirit. If we do not deliberately *seek after* and *strive* for spiritual growth and understanding, then by default the illusion of materiality becomes foremost in our experience. When we drift with the current of mortal mind's materialism, apparently making no choice, we have made a choice; for *no choice is a choice!* Let there be no doubt about this; by neglecting to make a deliberate choice to awaken through spiritual progress we have elected to remain asleep in mortal mind's waking dream, "lulled by stupefying illusions."<sup>9</sup>

A choice for Spirit, of course, doesn't mean that there won't be challenges. A few years ago I spotted this thoughtful announcement of an upcoming sermon on a little church in our neighborhood: "Every miracle started out as a problem." Isn't that true? Every one of our predecessors who made significant spiritual growth had challenges (often severe, demanding challenges); yet they saw them not as stumbling blocks, but as stepping-stones to a higher understanding of and deeper devotion to God! These spiritual leaders were willing to build for eternity. Mrs. Eddy speaks of them as her "noble students" who "build for time and eternity."<sup>10</sup> These students, then and now, struggle, persevere, and by reversal use the "problems" to their advantage. Think how much more we know of reality because of their willingness to do so!

Every important spiritual step in human history has been preceded by the preparation of thought and heart, by attendance in earth's school. For instance, how willing was the army of Israel to stand up to the Philistine champion, Goliath, accepting as they had the power and invincibility of that giant? Can you blame them? Here was a trained warrior, ten-and-a-half feet tall, whose armor alone weighed over one hundred and fifty pounds. Just the head of his iron spear weighed over twenty pounds. That would likely present a rather convincing image of material substance and power to anyone! But David's years of prayer, of spiritual education and problem-solving with his sheep, had given him confidence in the omnipotence and omnipresence of God. Had he not met the lion and the bear as material sense "problems?" And in solving them through reliance on God he had learned lessons — lessons that stood him in good stead when he was challenged by this more difficult, more advanced problem. He had been attending earth's preparatory school, had he not? And what's more, he had been an attentive, receptive, willing, earnest student. He had, through this course of preparation, been growing in his awareness of and absolute trust in God. This proven trust led him to declare:

The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.<sup>11</sup>

Is it any wonder that David declined Saul's offer of armor, explaining that "I have not proved them."<sup>12</sup> To the contrary, his demonstrated, learned trust in God caused him to run forward to meet this giant, proclaiming fearlessly that he was facing him "in the

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<sup>9</sup> *Science and Health* 95:28

<sup>10</sup> *Miscellaneous Writings* by Mary Baker Eddy 264:3

<sup>11</sup> I Samuel 17:37

<sup>12</sup> I Samuel 17:39

name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel."<sup>13</sup> This confidence was gained in his years of spiritual preparation. What a lesson this affords us when we meet our lions and bears, and then our Goliaths.

Have you ever stopped to appreciate the fact that the growth and continuance of Christian Science has been made possible only through the earnest efforts of thousands upon thousands of willing hearts groping their way through earth's preparatory school? Will we do our part in preparing "the way of the Lord?"

As in any school the learning process is an individual one. Some students may have to repeat a lesson, a course, or even a whole grade. On the other hand, another lesson may be so quickly learned that one moves onto other things almost at once. But if someone does linger over a certain lesson, unwilling or apparently unable to grasp its principles or meanings, does it benefit another wiser student, because of human love, to repeat the lesson as well? In a *Christian Science Sentinel* article entitled "Borrowed Problems" Louise Knight Wheatley Cook speaks to this question. Her words seem especially appropriate for you folks, who work so closely with younger and less experienced "students" in earth's preparatory school. She writes:

There seems to be such a thing as doing too much for people, doing too much for the same ones, smothering them with kindness, doing their growing for them, making their demonstrations for them so that they will be saved the effort.

We sometimes hear it said, rather sadly: "My problem is not working out. I have been struggling with it for so long: but try as I may, it does not seem to move."

Perhaps the thing which needs to be done in some cases is to see that this problem which never seems to work out was never ours.

There is this, too, to be remembered. If this thing which has grown to be such a load to us were returned to the one to whom it belongs, it might cease to be a load at all, and become instead only a glorious opportunity wherein the recipient of it finds his wings, and rises to mental heights undreamed of before.

Let us with gratitude remember that whenever anyone really wishes to enter the kingdom of heaven, he will just walk in of his own accord. The first and most important questions to be considered are these: Does he really desire to enter? Is he really ready to take the necessary steps which he and he alone, must take?

If he does this not and another one undertakes to carry his burden and do his work, the duty will not be accomplished. No one can save himself without God's help, and God will help each man who performs his own part. After this manner and in no other way is every man cared for and blessed.<sup>14</sup>

Now, we may wonder at times why error appears to us in the particular form and fashion that it does. Why can't we be given another kind of problem, more like the one that Joe has? Perhaps the analogy of a leak in a dike might offer helpful insights. Would we ask why the leak appeared when and where it did? We know that water has no intelligence to choose the place or the time of the leak. It simply acts in response to

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<sup>13</sup> I Samuel 17:45

<sup>14</sup> *Christian Science Sentinel*, Vol. 26, page 884

the so-called laws of hydrostatic pressure, seeking the path of least resistance. And when water does flow through a break it merely reveals a weak spot in the structure that needs strengthening. As we reinforce the dike where the leak occurred, it becomes even stronger than it was before.

Likewise in our human experience, the incessant arguments of material-mindedness seem to be exerting pressure on our mental defenses, constantly testing and probing. And when an error or inharmony appears in our experience it should be treated as a mental "leak" whose only purpose is to point to where our spiritual defenses need strengthening.

Often there is a temptation to "probe" mortal thought in an effort to understand why this problem came to us, and why it came at this inconvenient time. Such mental probing as to the material *why* of error is of no use. In fact, it is counter-productive, and only tends to focus thought on the apparent substance and reality of the erroneous suggestion, on the "leak." It starts us out on a psychological witch-hunt, looking for a *cause* in matter or so-called mortal mind; but there is none. There is a wonderful article by Allison W. Phinney on this specific point in the May 1987 *Christian Science Journal* entitled, "Finding the real cause — why you or someone else can be healed." In this he refers to Mrs. Eddy's statement, "Cause does not exist in matter, in mortal mind, or in physical forms."<sup>15</sup>

Remember: matter is a mental illusion, and there is no cause or basis to an illusion, a ghost, a mirage. All we need to know is that it does not exist. So when a break, a leak in our mental defenses, reveals itself (appearing as material discord, a human problem) by reversal we use it as a means of strengthening our spiritual defenses. We will then be stronger and more effective for having encountered it — just as the dike is stronger after a weak spot has been discovered and repaired.

Now I'd like to speak of a ploy of mortal mind that can undermine our efforts and limit our results. *How do we assess or grade our schoolwork?* How do we determine whether or not we're learning our lessons? What is our standard for measuring success? Can we take outward appearances — physical health, material riches, worldly success, even human happiness — as a true indicia of spiritual accomplishment?

Consider this carefully for a moment: aren't material standards used to judge demonstration more often than not? And what a misleading thing that is — it's based on a wrong premise and has us strive for an unattainable goal. And how subtle it is; so be alert, for if you're not you'll find yourself using Christian Science in order to reach material goals. You'll begin watching matter, and trying to restore or accumulate it through metaphysical means.

Well then, how *do* we reason in regard to a Christian Scientist who has a physical problem? Are we discouraged or embarrassed by it? Do we judge our own or another's demonstration by the physical condition? Robert Peel speaks of this very specifically, and warns of it, when he writes in *Years of Authority*:

... there was a danger that Christian Scientists might come to believe that physical health *of itself* was a sign of grace, i.e., that a well body was more acceptable to God than a sick one. [Mrs. Eddy's] statement, "The healthy sinner

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<sup>15</sup> *Science and Health* 262:31

is the hardened sinner," was enough to shatter such an assumption. Yet experience had shown her that some naturally robust Christian Scientists were strongly inclined toward a kind of health snobbery, believing themselves spiritually superior to other Christian Scientists (herself, for instance) who might labor at times under severe physical disabilities. Kimball who, despite his extraordinarily active life, experienced occasional periods of acute suffering, wrote with some relief that Mrs. Eddy had told him "we would all be tested and that we might be glad that our temptations came in the way of sickness rather than sin."<sup>16</sup>

We might also find ourselves grading our schoolwork according to material standards in the area of supply. Do we, for instance, feel somewhat self-satisfied when our savings account is overflowing; or critical of another in opposite circumstances? In reference to a so-called demonstration of *prosperity* Peel refers to Mrs. Eddy's commendation of an article by Alfred Farlow (our first C.O.P.) that appeared in a leading business magazine. It said, among other things:

Sometimes individual prosperity is not rightly grounded, and like a house with inadequate foundation, it must therefore be taken down and rebuilt. . . . That which is not rightly done is a misdoing, not a real accomplishment, and, painful as the ordeal may seem to the one concerned, the sooner there is an undoing and a redoing, the better. What appears to be loss under such circumstances is not loss but gain. If our riches are not fittingly acquired they are not really ours, and the sooner we lose them and learn our actual situation, the better.<sup>17</sup>

The irrelevancy of using *material standards* to judge *spiritual accomplishments* becomes obvious when we see that many very materially-minded individuals may appear to be more physically robust than their more spiritually-minded counterparts, and even more prosperous — as for instance the Mafia or some godless-appearing celebrities. But are we really seeking material health and wealth of themselves? Do they satisfy? What makes them secure?

Haven't we all seen instances where people have turned to medical means for healing and, as a result, appear to express a material sense of health? Clearly these aren't expressions of God's doing, or of progress Spiritward.

Suppose we were both in an algebra class. At first we were given all the theories, and so forth; and then we were given a problem that we had to work out that night and turn in the next day. Well, I lean over and say to you, "Did you notice that the answers are in the back of the book? There's a ball game this afternoon. Come on, let's get the answers from the book and go see the ball game." But you say, "No, no, I want to learn this; you go on." So I say, "O.K." I copy my answer from the back of the book, and you spend all afternoon in order to get your answer. The next day we each hand in the same answer — nobody knows the difference. And we each receive the same grade. The next day I say, "Come on, there's a swim party this afternoon. I've got the answer already; we can turn it in." "No, I think I want to learn this." Well, this goes on day by day by day, and by the end of the month there's an exam. I look down at that paper and my gosh, it's like Greek; I don't know what they're talking about! So I lean over to you and say, "Come on, be a good guy and give me the answers on this." You look at me and

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<sup>16</sup> *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority* by Robert Peel, pages 212-213

say, "I'm sorry, I can't do that; I've got a different set of problems than you." And there I am. I'm stuck. I fail the test and I have to take the course all over again.

Now up until the day of the final my paperwork looked like it was correct. I had all the right answers, even good grades. In a sense it *was* correct! And when you struggled and worked out the problem and came up with the same answer that I had, my approach seemed pretty satisfactory, and pretty easy. But had the short-cut profited me in any way — any way at all in terms of growth, or understanding, of progress or confidence? Won't this lack of understanding, at some point in my experience, inevitably limit my experience and my accomplishments?

So the goal isn't simply to attain physical health, or material wealth, the perfect companion or career (all the world's right answers). But a gain in spiritual understanding, confidence in truth, and dominion will be reflected in the "right answers" (as surely as they are in math). For they are the side-effects of that spiritually mental gain which makes them real and lasting, joy and health-giving.

Jesus instructed:

. . . seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.<sup>17</sup>

Now let me give you a little everyday experience that will serve as an example of why we cannot let matter slip in and become our goal. Let's say you have prayed and prayed and thereby established a clear, receptive state of thought while looking for a new house. Then you find it (or more accurately, a more spiritual sense of home is revealed to you) — a cute white house with a white picket fence and two and one-half baths. Just what you wanted! Now up to this point your spiritual model of "home" (not a material house) had been before thought quite clearly and consistently. So much so, in fact, that it had cut out all suggestions of shortages, competition, neighborhoods, price ranges, and the like. But once you are at the point of submitting an offer to the seller what's inclined to slip into thought and replace that spiritual model? That's right, a very specific *material* model (a cute white house with a white picket fence and two and one-half baths). Suddenly this becomes your model, your goal. And what occurs the instant this matter model replaces the spiritual one in thought? Don't questions like this begin to appear at once: "Gosh, I hope they accept it." Or, "Maybe we should have offered more. Someone may outbid us." And so on, until finally you are literally pleading, "Dear God, please get us that white house with the white picket fence and two and one-half baths!"

Well let's say that you finally hear that they have accepted your offer. Your rejoicing hardly begins when you become aware of a whole new set of worries. "Now, if they only approve the loan application." And "I hope the interest rate doesn't go up." Or "I've been hearing that money is getting tight." And so on: one worry after another, including the "termite inspection."

Now, why do these anxieties and uncertainties suddenly appear, when before the offer had been submitted you had felt so assured and expectant? When you stop and think, you see that the serene mental condition had prevailed only when there had been a spiritual model before thought! Well, what's the lesson here for us? Doesn't it behoove

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<sup>17</sup> Matthew 6:33

us to be alert, and not to let these spiritual facts slip from view or become dependent on matter, even for a moment? For if they do we can be sure that progress from that moment on will become a hurried, uncertain process — all accomplished by blood, sweat, and tears.

Mrs. Eddy sets forth so plainly the need to turn from material evidence (be it good or bad, reassuring or frightening) and find security in the unchanging evidence of Spirit:

The facts of divine Science should be admitted, — although the evidence as to these facts is not supported by evil, by matter, or by material sense, — because the evidence that God and man coexist is fully sustained by spiritual sense.<sup>18</sup>

We've been talking about the standard by which we grade our schoolwork in earth's preparatory school — whether material testimony or spiritual evidence tells us "how we're doing." This concept relates to the subject of physical health as well. Turning to medical means for healing is comparable to the math student who, rather than working out the problems found in the textbook and gaining in an understanding of the principles involved, has turned to the back of the book and copied the answers. At some point down the road won't this approach inevitably limit this one's accomplishments and make clear the need to retrace his steps?

I'd like to take a moment here and address this subject of healing in Christian Science, particularly as it relates to bodily ills.

This is a rather select audience. Your involvement with Principia attests to your dedication to spiritual healing. We all understand, to some degree, the nature of God and man (spiritual man); something of the claims of mortal mind; the forms of animal magnetism and how to defend ourselves against them — the fundamentals of Christian Science treatment. We've experienced healings and other wonderful demonstrations through the practice of Christian Science. Yet who among us can say that we are absolutely immune to the persuasions of the erring senses, and the confusion, doubt, fear, anxiety, grief, and suffering that they often occasion? Since *sense testimony* appears to play such an important role in our effective practice of Christian Science may I take a moment to illustrate its delusion.

Mrs. Eddy was very much aware of the difficulty of seeing through sense testimony. In order to clarify its *mental* nature she required her students to put the words "*belief of*" before any reference to the particular claim. She also offered an analogy of sorts: "Sleep and mesmerism explain the mythical nature of material sense."<sup>19</sup>

The effects of hypnotism were very well known in her day. Almost every vaudeville show included a hypnotist, whose demonstrations allowed people to see that a mental suggestion could appear to cause a physical condition. In her textbook our Leader writes:

Under the mesmeric illusion of belief, a man will think that he is freezing when he is warm, and that he is swimming when he is on dry land. Needle-thrusts will not hurt him. A delicious perfume will seem intolerable. Animal magnetism thus uncovers material sense, and shows it to be a belief without

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<sup>18</sup> *Science and Health* 471:13-17

<sup>19</sup> *Science and Health* 428:28-29

actual foundation or validity. Change the belief, and the sensation changes. Destroy the belief, and the sensation disappears.<sup>20</sup>

And of course she offers the vivid proofs that mental belief governs the body in the experiences of the English woman who was “disappointed in love” and never aged, of the so-called cholera patient, and the fatal results of the experiment performed on the condemned criminal by the Oxford students.

Several years ago a hypnotist in a public appearance in southern California hypnotized a young man and suggested that he was “very hungry.” After giving him a large candle that he *said* was a “delicious banana,” he watched the young man chew it up and swallow it. Claiming to still be hungry he accepted a second candle and ate it also. When a third candle was offered to him a man in the audience got to his feet and vigorously objected saying, “Fun is fun, but that man is helpless and you’re filling his stomach with wax that will not digest; it will block his digestive tract and kill him. This is not funny!” The hypnotist calmly replied, “But *he* thinks he is eating a banana, and *you* think he is eating a candle. Actually, he’s not eating anything!” You see, he had hypnotized the audience as well! All the while the young man had been sitting quietly in his chair with his arms crossed, motionless on the platform. Now if this young man had been given a lie-detector test it would undoubtedly have shown that he was telling the truth when he claimed that he could SEE, HEAR, FEEL, SMELL, AND TASTE one banana after another. And every person in that audience could likewise have sworn that *they* could SEE him eating one candle after another. But the entire “happening” had been a mental experience.

Mrs. Eddy makes clear the fact that health must be established through an understanding of man’s holiness, his wholeness. She writes:

It is as necessary for a health-illusion, as for an illusion of sickness, to be instructed out of itself into the understanding of what constitutes health; for a change in either a health-belief or a belief in sickness affects the physical condition.<sup>21</sup>

Robert Peel sheds some interesting light on this concept in *The Years of Authority*:

On one occasion in 1905, Mrs. Eddy called the full Board of Directors and all the editors of the *Journal* and *Sentinel* to Pleasant View to take them to task for a single clause in a *Sentinel* article: “. . . a diseased body is not acceptable to God.” According to Christian Science, she pointed out, a healthy *physical* body was no more acceptable to God as the reality of man’s being than a sick one, since man was God’s spiritual image and likeness.

In this case, there was a danger that Christian Scientists might come to believe that physical health *of itself* was a sign of grace, i.e., that a well body was more acceptable to God than a sick one. Her statement, “The healthy sinner is the hardened sinner,” was enough to shatter such an assumption. Yet experience had shown her that some naturally robust Christian Scientists were strongly inclined toward a kind of health snobbery, believing themselves spiritually

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<sup>20</sup> *Science and Health* 490:31

<sup>21</sup> *Science and Health* 297:7

superior to other Christian Scientists (herself, for instance) who might labor at times under severe physical difficulties.<sup>22</sup>

I trust that it has become evident that we can't, as Christian Scientists, work from the premise of Spirit's allness and matter's nothingness, and then wait for matter to tell us how effective our prayers have been. We can't do this in any area — health, wealth, companionship, career, etc. We must learn to cherish the things of Spirit, and in so doing lay a secure foundation under the good that is permanent, that is God-given.

Now, need "earth's preparatory school" be a grim, joyless experience? No, not unless you are accepting the problems encountered as personal realities, and therefore "unsolvable." If we see this as a schoolroom setting, are we likely to be discouraged, frustrated, angry, shocked, fearful, or irritated over the problems (whatever they may be), fearing they have no solution? Of course not. We may, in fact, find them to be rather uplifting and interesting when we see laws or truths unfolded and illustrated through our (and our fellow students') efforts to solve them. Even so in earth's preparatory school. For the goal isn't simply to attain physical health, or material wealth, the perfect companion or career (the world's "right answers"); but to gain in spiritual understanding, confidence in Truth, and individual dominion. The "right answers" (the healings, the clearer sense of direction, the increased harmony) will accompany this understanding (as surely as they do in math). But they are only a sign of the deeper things that have been gained through our willingness to apply the spiritual facts of being!

We read in Acts where Felix, the Roman procurator, listened to Paul as he preached concerning faith in Christ:

And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.<sup>23</sup>

Are any of us "trembling," but still waiting for a "convenient season" to enroll in earth's preparatory school? I trust it has become a little clearer this evening that we don't get to vote on whether or not we enroll in earth's preparatory school. It's not a question of *if* we enroll. It is simply a question of *when* we enroll. And classes are open twenty-four hours a day!

Thank you!

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<sup>22</sup> *Mary Baker Eddy: The Years of Authority*, by Robert Peel, pages 212-213

<sup>23</sup> Acts 24:25