



Destination: class instruction

Lynn A. Gray Jackson

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For those actively studying Christian Science, there usually comes a time of deep, serious inquisitiveness. This is not a period of doubt about the healing power of God, but of exploring how such healing takes place and how one can better apply spiritual understanding to bring about healing. During this time in one's life, class instruction in Christian Science is a very natural step to take.

To the three Hebrew captives, however, it didn't matter how many times the music played, how often they heard it, how loud it was, or how close it seemed — they never ever bowed down.

Class instruction shows us how to deal with life's conflicts in a Christly manner. By presenting pure, undefiled metaphysics it teaches us to help and to heal ourselves, our families, and our communities. The Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mrs. Eddy are the textbooks from which the teacher instructs and the pupils learn.

If our desire is really to seek God more closely and learn more about Him, we can ask ourselves, How can I accomplish this successfully? Perhaps the best answer is in Mrs. Eddy's own words. In *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany*, she writes of class instruction, "Students who are ready for this step should beware the net that is craftily laid and cunningly concealed to prevent their advancement in this direction."¹

This "net" that has been "craftily laid" and "cunningly concealed" is animal magnetism, a supposed power acting against God, good. It's not enough just to beware of the tendency of the carnal, or mortal, mind to resist whatever would spiritualize thought—including class instruction. The need is to prevent its suggestions from halting our advancement in this direction.

Our protective prayer will eliminate any doubts or fears that would keep us from pursuing our desire to gain a clear and correct understanding of God. Such preventative prayer does not allow circumstance, disease, inconvenience, or apathy to take hold in our thought.

Prayer done before a problem arises has two main ingredients: the spiritual intuition to foresee the suppositious threats of mortal mind and the spiritual assurance and trust that understands God's ever-presence as All-in-all. The great need is to remove the belief that something could occur that would keep us from our God-directed place. We do this by understanding that God, Truth, is All and that man is included in this allness. Such spiritual understanding leads to the demise of inharmony, as Truth removes whatever error of thought would hold us back. Truth's presence and power constitute a healing force within individual consciousness. It is the animus of peace, happiness, success.

Of course we don't need to *expect* something bad to occur to keep us from our rightful place. Truth, which has guided us thus far, will continue to direct and protect, support and govern us.

For those who have been accepted by a teacher for class instruction and for those still seeking a teacher, daily prayer can keep one from wandering off the highway of God, good. We have every spiritual right and reason to pray not to be sidetracked and to be divinely guided by God.

Relying on Truth to keep us on the mental reservation of right motive and spiritual advancement allows us not only to take class instruction but to complete it successfully. Class instruction teaches obedience to the one God and a just and proper sense of Him. And in *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy declares, "The only guarantee of obedience is a right apprehension of Him whom to know aright is Life eternal."²

This right apprehension, taught in class, heals and attracts others to Christian Science and gives us a desire for a higher, holier understanding of God. It protects, guides, governs, loves, and heals. This right apprehension of Him is what you desire, and you cannot be kept from it.

In the Biblical account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we are told that the king made a decree saying that "at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sack-but, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up."³ To the three Hebrew captives, however, it didn't matter how many times the music played, how often they heard it, how loud it was, or how close it seemed—they never *ever* bowed down. They refused to worship or obey anything or anybody except the one, good God. (They certainly had "a right apprehension of Him"!)

The result was that their spiritual understanding saved them from the fiery furnace and also opened a community to the trust and worship of the one God. This correct understanding of God was truly "Life eternal" to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Often the suggestions that would keep us from attending class require us—like the Hebrews—to clarify our priorities. Perhaps a family activity has suddenly risen or there is a business question that would seem to interfere. Lack of funds or time, or a recurrence of a physical problem, may tempt us. Or there may be straightforward protests from a family member who doesn't feel this spiritual step is necessary. Circumstances may imply that it's very inconvenient for us to be away just then. No matter what form these suggestions may take, we can turn wholly and trustingly to God, divine Mind, to meet our responsibilities in the best way—a response that is certainly a perfect preparation for class instruction.

In this day let us go forward like one of the faithful disciples who stood by the clear teachings of our Master. As we spiritually advance and emulate Christ Jesus' words and works, we bring peace, health, joy, and goodness to those who need our help. Like the master Christian, we too can go about our Father's business and know that nothing but God, good, can have power over us.

Accepting the opportunity for class instruction brings more than spiritual advancement and spiritual growth. It also opens our lives up to the good that God is always giving us and enables us to reach out and to heal a world that urgently needs this Christly touch.

¹ *Miscellany*, p. 241. ↑

² *Science and Health*, p. vii. ↑

³ Dan. 3:5. ↑