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Excerpts from a talk given at Arden Wood, May 6, 2012

SEMPER PARATUS: "ALWAYS READY"

When Arden Wood first invited me to give this talk, I thought back to when I had been asked to speak at other Christian Science nursing facilities. No two were alike in size or in number of personnel. Yet they all had one overriding thing in common: They all expressed the same motivating spirit.

Like her sister facilities around the world, Arden Wood can be found bending on the same supporting branch of divine Love — always ready to be of Christian service in caring for the invalid, comforting the forlorn, and establishing a heavenly home on earth for the faithful pilgrim. This united purpose in glorifying God's healing power, this readiness to bless others, this unselfed labor of love, is done entirely through spiritual understanding and Christly practical care.

Empowering the work of Christian Science nursing is an all-encompassing truth, as affirmed by our inspired Leader, Mary Baker Eddy: "Divinity is always ready. *Semper paratus* is Truth's motto."¹ This passage from *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* conveys to the world a timeless healing promise.

"This supreme potential Principle"

God is always ready to heal and save because He is constantly being Himself. Were it otherwise, Deity would lose His eternal nature as all-nourishing Love. If at any moment the sun weren't ready to shine — if it weren't ready to emit rays of light — at such a point of "unreadiness," the sun would cease to be itself.

Potentially God knows no end. His possibilities are infinite. "God is Mind, and divine Mind was first chronologically, is first potentially, and is the healer to whom all things are possible,"² Mrs. Eddy writes. To this one all-knowing Mind, the possible is not some indeterminate future prospect. It's already a foreordained conclusion. According to Scripture, "that which is to be hath already been."³ Mrs. Eddy explains, "With God, *knowledge* is necessarily

foreknowledge; and *foreknowledge* and *foreordination* must be one, in an infinite Being. What Deity *foreknows*, Deity must *foreordain* . . ."⁴

Everything relating to God in terms of His possibilities and potential actually exists now as the present fact of spiritual being. Divine law, governing all creation, guarantees this, ensuring that the seed is always in itself. Intrinsic to God's promise is its present fulfillment. Because God is already good, eternally so, He is ever ready to be good. Because He is self-existent Life, He is always ready, willing, and able to preserve within Himself the vitality of what He knows as His idea. *God is always ready to be what He already is!* He affirmed as much to Moses when He identified Himself as "I AM THAT I AM."⁵ Mrs. Eddy says, "This supreme potential Principle reigns in the realm of the real, and is 'God with us,' the I AM."⁶

An understanding of "this supreme potential Principle" in our lives frees us from the world's inbred fear of a future dead-end, arrived at by acute or chronic disease, accidental injury, worldwide terrorism and domestic crime, or natural disaster. Evil presentments cannot catch us off guard, leaving us helpless, if we hold fast to the Mind of Christ, which is ever ready because ever conscious of all that there is to know and be. God, knowing *only* good, foreknows and foreordains everything as *always* good. In Him is no foreboding. In omniscient Mind the unforeseen and unexpected do not occur. That's why the timeless promise of the Bible forever rings true: "Be not afraid of sudden fear . . . For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken."⁷

The divine presence, always at hand

Early one evening many years ago, I was held up at gunpoint. At two critical moments a gun was put to my head and I was told that I would be shot. I guess you can tell that didn't happen — and that suited me just fine! The two gunmen eventually took some money and left, but what stands out to me about the incident was not the loss but the gain — a spiritual gain that has enriched my life ever since.

It's difficult to describe in words what I felt because what I experienced that night was a wordless impartation of the divine presence, instantly at hand to reveal a mental landscape entirely unrelated to a crime scene. Right where danger presented itself, I felt safe. There was simply no fear that needed to be overcome at that moment. The best I can explain verbally about what occurred mentally is that I had an overwhelming sense that I could not lose consciousness.

I didn't have to summon this thought. It didn't "come" to me as from a distance. It was just *there*, all at once. It was the most palpable concept I've ever had—all the more so because its presence was not at my bidding; it was in keeping with God's promise: "Before they call, I will answer."⁸ If that's not a guarantee of divine readiness, I don't know what is!

Now let me be clear: I wasn't floating off on some metaphysical cloud. I was keenly aware of the gun pointed at my head. It was impossible to miss! I fully grasped that if the assailant pulled the trigger, in all likelihood I'd be dealing with what's called "the hereafter." But predominating everything was a conviction not born of this earth that I wouldn't, *couldn't*, lose consciousness. I felt surrounded in a transcendent mental realm. Nothing else mattered.

The essence of the experience is captured in Mrs. Eddy's statement: "Remember, thou canst be brought into no condition, be it ever so severe, where Love has not been before thee and where its tender lesson is not awaiting thee."⁹

"Love . . . been before thee." In other words: *semper paratus* — God's readiness evident in His omnipresence, His everywhere-ness.

Love's "tender lesson . . . awaiting thee." Again, *semper paratus* — God's readiness evident in His omniscience, His all-informing wisdom.

The lessons of Love awaiting me that night have multiplied in the days and years since. That's the way of Truth. It keeps unfolding. And hence my necessity to keep learning — and if need be, re-learning — Love's tender lessons by applying them every day to each aspect of my life.

Proving a part of the whole

So what are some of these life-lessons? Here's one. The day after my encounter with the gunmen, a strange sensation came over me: I felt guilty that the incident had occurred in the first place. Why hadn't my prayers earlier that day been sufficient to prevent the whole thing from happening?

Then I remembered Jesus' safe deliverance from a mob intent on casting him off a cliff.¹⁰ I couldn't picture my Master second-guessing himself: "Where did I slip up in my understanding that I was manhandled by a mob?" Instead, he made quick use of his God-given dominion. *Semper paratus* was Jesus' motto, too. Like Father, like Son. Jesus was always ready to master a lie by proving the truth.

We have no indication that our Master's Christly example caused those in the mob to replace the hate in their hearts with love. Nonetheless, their malice was *thwarted*—and a victory on the side of good was won. Jesus remained safe in "the secret place of the most High,"¹¹ unharmed by his assailants, who literally lost sight of him as he passed through their midst and went his way. Their wicked design, although put into play, did not pan out. Jesus succeeded in holding crime in check.

Not to be overlooked is this statement by Mrs. Eddy: "Science both neutralizes error and destroys it."¹² Let's never discount the power of Truth to neutralize error in the process of destroying it. To keep evil from escalating, to lessen its impact, to alleviate suffering of any kind, is no small thing. To start the work of lessening evil by the power of good, modest though our efforts may seem at first, is the sure way to accomplish the ultimate destruction of all that bedevils mankind. To be faithful over a few things makes us ready to master greater things.

"Christian Science must be accepted at this period by induction," Mrs. Eddy explains. "We admit the whole, because a part is proved and that part illustrates and proves the entire Principle."¹³ On certain nights, for example, we view from earth's limited perspective only a portion of the moon, and we call the phase we see a quarter moon or a half moon. Yet thanks to the part we see, we're confident that the whole moon is up there in all its majesty!

"A proper preparation of heart"

Another lesson of divine Love awaited me. The fact that my encounter with the gunmen was unexpected didn't mean I was unready to meet the challenge. To be always ready, to be "instant in season, out of season,"¹⁴ is to be prepared mentally, whatever the circumstance.

The Bible says that "the preparations of the heart in man . . . is from the Lord."¹⁵ A heart so prepared is a heart purified, cleansed of fearful, willful, sensual impulses, and made ready for healing. Mind you, for those who resistingly kick against

the pricks, preparation of thought may be long and hard in coming, but that doesn't mean the spiritual ultimate is any less certain for everyone.

One afternoon after I had enjoyed a walk around Boston, my legs and arms started to ache. By evening I found myself having to use an umbrella as a walking stick to help me get about. After calling a practitioner to support my own prayerful efforts, I spent a sleepless night, during which aggressive symptoms of swelling, pain, and fever seemed to mock every truth I was affirming. By morning I couldn't get out of bed on my own. That's when I called a nearby friend, who's a Christian Science nurse, to come and assist me. With his strong arms and an available wheelchair, I was able to be lifted out of bed and moved about the apartment.

Fearful thoughts came fast and furiously. The next couple of days were bleak indeed. But in the gloom a light shined. I remembered and rejoiced in my earlier experience when I had felt so tangibly God's surrounding presence right where the gunmen threatened harm. Every demonstration we have in Science echoes down the corridor of time because the eternal verities demonstrated in any experience have perpetual power to renew and re-inspire us, and others.

My heart yearned for such spiritual renewal. When times get tough, the battle-tested Christian gets rededicated. Out of weakness comes a strength that's made perfect. "The honest student of Christian Science," Mrs. Eddy says, "is purged through Christ, Truth, and thus is ready for victory in the ennobling strife."¹⁶ To be ready for victory, to be prepared to receive what Christ is always ready to impart — healing — my thought needed to be purged of discouragement and foreboding, among other things.

For hours on end I listened to recordings on Christian Science. The truths I heard turned my attention to Mrs. Eddy's bracing statement: "Every day makes its demands upon us for higher proofs rather than professions of Christian power. These proofs consist solely in the destruction of sin, sickness, and death by the power of Spirit, as Jesus destroyed them. This is an element of progress, and progress is the law of God, whose law demands of us only what we can certainly fulfil."¹⁷

Although tempted more than once to search for signs of progress in matter — how the body felt, looked, or functioned — I resolved to gauge my progress in terms of thought, in accord with a divine law that demanded of me only what I "can certainly fulfil." Up until then,

I had been employing the word "can't" a lot more than the word "can" in my mental and verbal vocabulary: "I can't walk"; "I can't sleep"; "I can't stop worrying and wondering what's wrong."

Of course, a semantic change of speech from "can't" to "can" is no guarantee of progress. Words in themselves are only as correct as the thought behind them. Merely to assert "I can do all things" might be more about self-will than the divine will — more indicative of positive thinking than spiritual-mindedness. St. Paul got it right when he said: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."¹⁸ The apostle's qualifying phrase "through Christ" is at the heart of every successful endeavor. Through God's Christ, the might of divine Mind, each of us is able to express a can-do spirit. Or as Mrs. Eddy once told a student, "I can' is the son of 'I am.'"¹⁹

After a few days of being confined to bed or a chair, I took my first baby steps, but to me at the time they felt like giant mental strides. "Who remembers," Mrs. Eddy asks, "that patience, forgiveness, abiding faith, and affection, are the symptoms by which our Father indicates the different stages of man's recovery from sin and his entrance into Science?"²⁰ The kind of symptoms we look for — material or mental — indicates the kind of healing we're seeking. The mental symptoms of recovery from sin are equally the signs of recovery from sickness because the same Principle of divine Mind-healing applies to both errors. These mental symptoms signify a preparation and purification of the heart.

After a week or so, I gratefully released the nurse and the practitioner from my case. I could manage to do my own work, both practically and prayerfully. I was healed. And by that I mean, I was made better both morally and spiritually, and therefore physically.

Seldom in life-experience does the human yield to the divine without a struggle. Any of us who have wrestled long and hard with some mesmeric error — be it pain, sin, grief, or fear — know what it's like, despite our earnest efforts, to feel at times almost overwhelmed by it. It's precisely when the world of matter would claim success for itself and defeat or delay for us that we most need "Jesus Christ, and him crucified."²¹

The Bible says of Jesus' struggle at Gethsemane: "Being in an agony he prayed more earnestly."²² Our individual experiences will never equal the Master's supreme ordeal, but we each can and must follow his example and pray "more earnestly" in our own moments of anguish. To me,

this Bible passage has double meaning: We're to pray, *more earnestly*. And we're to *pray more*, earnestly. Whichever way we do it, we're to do *more* of it!

May you and I prove worthy of the love and trust our Leader has placed on all who seek to follow her as she followed Christ. In a very real sense, these words of hers are a prayer for each one of us: "May God enable my students to take up the cross as I have done, and meet the pressing need of a proper preparation of heart to practise, teach, and live Christian Science!"²³

"Study thoroughly the letter"

Another way God is preparing each of us to be "ready for victory in the ennobling strife" is by the renewing of our minds through His inspired Word as found in the Bible and *Science and Health*. To be spiritualized, thought must be dematerialized. The Science of Christ educates us out of what the world has wrongly learned. All education requires study and testing. In preaching Christ to the Jews in Berea, St. Paul said that they were more noble than others because "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."²⁴

A daily search of the Bible helps to prepare us for the demands of each day. The Leader of Christian Science referred to her followers as students of this Science for good reason. She expected them to *study*—and to do so daily and comprehensively. She said that the most rapid way to progress in understanding Science is to "study thoroughly the letter and imbibe the spirit."²⁵

Sometimes I think the letter gets a bum rap. When allied with the spirit, the letter of Science is a friend, not a scold. It lifts up a standard for the people that delineates precept upon precept. As such, the letter of Science needs to be studied thoroughly, understood wisely, and applied correctly. The correlation of the letter and the spirit signifies that the Principle of this Science is exact in its defined nature, without ever being stereotyped or formulaic.

A need for greater progress in our metaphysical understanding and practice may indicate a need for more of the spirit or the letter or both. Our Leader never expected her followers to choose just one or the other. She expected us to embrace both (see *Miscellaneous Writings* 195:5). Through consistent prayerful study, an honest seeker of Truth will always be able to find in the Bible and Mrs. Eddy's published works the answer to any question, the solution to any problem,

that daily life requires of him. And in this way, a seeker is prepared to share his findings with fellow seekers, as the Bible enjoins: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."²⁶

The textbook declares: "Truth is revealed. It needs only to be practised."²⁷ Revealed Truth, as fully stated in *Science and Health*, doesn't need to be rediscovered or reworded or enhanced. It needs only to be studied and lived in accord with the unity of the letter and the spirit of Truth revealed to Mary Baker Eddy. As "a scribe under orders,"²⁸ she expressed in words what Mind's angelic thoughts elucidated to her receptive consciousness. Just as no one can rightly take Mrs. Eddy's place as Discoverer, Founder, and Leader of Christian Science, so no one can augment her work as author of the Christian Science textbook. The writing of *Science and Health* was a divine charge that was hers alone to fulfill as God's messenger. The letter of Science, in its inspired wording, was designed by the author to stand the test of time.

Martha Wilcox, a household member during Mrs. Eddy's final years, was eyewitness to an instance in 1908 when our Leader studiously worked to find the precise wording to express the spiritual import of her meaning. Mrs. Wilcox states: "[Mrs. Eddy] wrote almost constantly for three days. She consulted the dictionary, the grammar, studied synonyms and antonyms, and when she had finished, she had these two lines to add to *Science and Health*. I marveled at her perseverance and the time she consumed in writing two lines. But she had worked out a scientific statement for Christian Science students that would stand through the ages."²⁹

The passage that took our Leader three days to finalize takes only ten seconds to read but a lifetime to fathom—to study, ponder, and assimilate in daily practice. The passage is this: "Christian Scientists, be a law to yourselves that mental malpractice cannot harm you either when asleep or when awake."³⁰

"Examine yourselves"

The necessity to be a law to myself was by far the most important lesson that grew out of my encounter with the gunmen. No sooner had I resumed my normal routine than I sat down to watch a favorite TV show, a police drama. That night the show depicted multiple shootings and killings. I was revulsed! Everything in me cried out for the

sacredness of individual life. But what shocked me most, to my very core, was the self-awareness that previously I had complacently watched this TV show with little or no mental protest in response to similar scenes of violence.

Since then, I've been more selective in what I see. I say this not in some "holier-than-thou" way. I assure you, I'm no ascetic. I'll still watch a good dramatic program that contains some violence, but I'm far more mindful, even as I'm watching, that what I'm seeing does not square with the immortal realities of divine Life. And that definitely holds true for many of the commercials I see on television today. A remote control with a well-worn mute button is a dandy tool, but one's mental control, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,"³¹ is indispensable.

In a material world filled with mixed dreams of pleasure and pain, a Christian Scientist needs to stay spiritually alert. Mrs. Eddy states: "Watch, and pray daily that evil suggestions, in whatever guise, take no root in your thought nor bear fruit. Ofttimes examine yourselves, and see if there be found anywhere a deterrent of Truth and Love, and 'hold fast that which is good.'"³²

In Science, terms such as watchfulness and self-examination have a common theme. We're to be awake to the various modes of evil — to the sins, fears, temptations, or negativities — that would aggressively claim to be a part of our lives, operating in us, on us, or around us as hidden sin, unspoken fear, latent sensuality, fatalistic gloom, evil plottings, to list just a few of the secret methods of iniquity. Thankfully, Mrs. Eddy saved us the time of having to calculate the manifold ways of mental despotism. She summed them all up in a single term: animal magnetism.

This term is used specifically to define the lie of evil *in action*, expressed as ungodlike thinking and doing, and described figuratively in the Bible as Satan "walking up and down" in the earth.³³ Arriving at the sum total of the "walkings" and workings of iniquity is like adding one illusive error to another and to another and to yet another, and then coming up with one fat zero!

"Watch your thoughts"

According to a Bible scholar, "No commandment appears more frequently in the New Testament than that to watch."³⁴ The Master charged his disciples at Gethsemane: "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."³⁵ The disciples' failure on that occasion to keep their watch makes Jesus' command

no less imperative for us today. His admonition remains the same for all time: "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."³⁶

Daily watchfulness acts like an alarm system in our house. It alerts us to any mental intrusion of evil, whether the intruder comes in the guise of our own thoughts, another's thinking, or popular opinion voiced by mass media. A successful watch detects and eliminates any "deterrent of Truth and Love" in our thought.

Subtlety is evil's "m.o." By alerting the public to the furtiveness of evil-thinking, Science takes away error's only hope of success at evil-doing. A watchful Christian Scientist, by keeping guard over his or her thoughts, is always ready to prove that a lurking error is just as impotent as a blatant one. For example, if a friend met you on a street corner and naively blurted out, "You poor thing, you look worn out; you must have had a hard day," no doubt you'd be quick to recognize and reject this aggressive suggestion knocking so frontally at the door of your thought.

But what if your friend saw you walking by on the other side of the street and *silently* thought the same thing? Would you be left defenseless? Can the inaudible suggestion succeed where the audible one fails? Not if *semper paratus* is the divine motto you live by. Mrs. Eddy assures us: "The audible and inaudible wail of evil never harms Scientists, steadfast in their consciousness of the nothingness of wrong and the supremacy of right."³⁷

The mere knocking of error at our mental door isn't what puts us at risk. Jesus, too, heard the mental poundings of temptation, but he did so without sin. The danger lies in our accepting into consciousness a false concept *as our own thought*. "The issues of pain or pleasure," Mrs. Eddy says, "must come through mind, and like a watchman forsaking his post, we admit the intruding belief, forgetting that through divine help we can forbid this entrance."³⁸

A watchman is responsible solely for keeping his own watch. Jesus could not do it for his disciples at Gethsemane — and they certainly were of no help to him! So when it comes to successfully handling mental malpractice, you and I are responsible, not for what someone else may be ignorantly or maliciously thinking — or for what the whole world may be fearfully thinking — but for what you and I individually choose to think. We have our Leader's instruction: "If the error which knocks at the door of your own thought originated in another's mind, you are a free moral agent to reject or to accept this error; hence, you are the arbiter of your own fate, and sin is the author of sin."³⁹

The beauty of this statement lies in the freedom true self-government gives us. As *free* moral agents, we don't have to wait for others to stop thinking wicked thoughts, or sickly thoughts, or fearful thoughts before we can experience the saving power that comes from our own spiritual understanding, expressive of the one all-knowing Mind. He who is a law to himself is never made hostage to the group. Jesus' ascension proved that individual salvation is not held back by the collective material-mindedness of the world. Otherwise, our immaculate Master would still be waiting around for the rest of us to catch up to him!

Let's go back to that street corner one more time. What if, after your friend left, you were suddenly overcome by fatigue? Right then — before you take a single step more — right then, at the initial point of temptation, is when and where Jesus told his disciples to watch and pray.

Standing at the street corner is symbolic of standing at a mental crossroads. If you take the apathetic approach, you'll end up agreeing with the temptation of fatigue by unwittingly arguing for it: "My friend was right; I've had a hard day"; or "I didn't get much sleep last night; no wonder I'm so tired"; or "I must have stayed out in the sun too long." The world calls this kind of reasoning logical and says that looking for a material cause to explain a material effect is the educated thing to do.

But Christian Science says that it's unnatural for anyone to think this way because no one *in his right Mind* would ever advocate anything contrary to his true nature as the perfect reflection of God. So, in point of fact, sickly or sinful thinking is a hypnotic imposition that would use us as error's sounding board. Our Leader states: "Unless one's eyes are opened to the modes of mental malpractice, working so subtly that we mistake its suggestions for the impulses of our own thought, the victim will allow himself to drift in the wrong direction without knowing it. Be ever on guard against this enemy. Watch your thoughts, and see whether they lead you to God and into harmony with His true followers. Guard and strengthen your own citadel more strongly."⁴⁰

If, while still at the street corner, you keep guard of your mental citadel by Christly watchfulness, your prayers will alertly treat the problem of fatigue, not as a physical condition caused by lack of sleep or too much sun, but as false mental suggestion. Through spiritual perceptiveness you may detect that, in this instance, the aggressive suggestion passing itself off as the impulse of your own

thought first entered your consciousness *disguised* as the impulse of your friend's spoken or unspoken thought.

But what then? What will you do with the knowledge that the erroneous thought that crossed your mental threshold came to you with a friend's name attached to it? Or, worse, what if that name belonged to a "non-friend" — alias an enemy, so called?

Why, in either case, you'll impersonalize the error! You'll treat it as the nonentity it is. For no matter who error pretends to be — a friend, an enemy, a stranger, or *little ol' you!* — an erroneous suggestion, by any proper name, is just as false and impersonal.

Admittedly, this tempter of perverted mind-power typically takes on the appearance of personality and physicality, but in essence it operates as wrong thought — much of the time as ignorance, sometimes as malice, too often as sin, and almost always as fear thrown into the mix for bad measure! No matter how subtle animal magnetism claims to be, Christian Science, as the law *and wisdom* of God, can detect it and destroy it.

"The curse causeless shall not come"

Because Christian Science is, in fact, God's law of annihilation to all evil, animal magnetism would give the lie to this truth by arguing the exact opposite. In a futile attempt to curse what God has blessed, it asserts that "Christian Science does not heal." Variations on this malevolent theme often attach an adverb to the end of the lie by saying: "Christian Science doesn't heal quickly" or "It doesn't heal permanently."

These broad assertions, or universal suggestions, would seep into one's thinking unawares, like an odorless gas. The unsuspecting person who mistakes error's subliminal influence as his own mental impulse will voice the lie to himself *as himself*: "I don't understand enough of the truth to be healed"; "I'm too old to undo the errors of my past"; "I'm tired of fighting the good fight."

Having unwisely and unwatchfully accepted these lies as his own thoughts, an individual may ignorantly or intentionally communicate them to his fellow non-watchers. And in this way an error is allowed to spread unchecked like a contagion by means of *thought*, spoken or unspoken, written or unwritten.

Here's an example of it in print. A noted Canadian author, writing about Mark Twain's obsessive opposition to Mrs. Eddy and her lifework, rendered this malediction back in 1933:

"[Twain] could not see that Christian Science would come and go, like all other cults and creeds — lose its first hard outline, its combative enthusiasm, and become — respectable; in other words, just a way of 'going to church,' which is for many people an instinct and a necessity. 'Christian Scientists' who call in doctors become like Methodists who dance and Presbyterians who don't go to hell. Mark Twain needn't have worried."⁴¹

The venom in this statement, although written nearly eighty years ago, shows the constant need of Christian Scientists to be ever-watchful in their prayers, ready always to defang the serpent of its poison. The Word of God is always ready to enforce what it has already decreed: "The curse causeless shall not come."⁴² And why? Because our true being as God's offspring is forever blessed and beloved of the Father. Moses reminded the children of Israel: "The Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee."⁴³

"The readiness is all"

The great Bard of Avon voiced a timeless fact of life when he had Hamlet declare: "The readiness is all."⁴⁴ That, my friends, best sums up why we're here today to honor the ministering work of Arden Wood. The measure of that work isn't in the number of patients helped in a year, but in the ever-readiness to be of help year round. That's the true measure by which Arden Wood deserves your unstinting prayerful and financial support.

Those who work at a fire station aren't in the business of wanting more fires so they can earn their keep. Their primary purpose is to be always ready to meet the human need, whether the need is occasional or frequent. The public rightly supports that purpose with its generosity and gratitude. Ideally, the fewer the fires, the better; but no matter, "the readiness is all"!

Arden Wood does not exist in a symbiotic relationship with disease, dependent on the suffering of others for its solvency and worth. Good and evil are not the yin and yang of life. The creative divine Principle alone justifies and rewards what we do right and why we do it. St. Paul is speaking for us all when he says: "By the grace of God I am what I am."⁴⁵

The real value of Arden Wood as an institution is in the individuals who loyally serve and support it. Whose hearts are prepared of the Lord. Who stick to the truth when times get tough. Who study thoroughly the letter of Science and

imbibe the spirit "with all readiness of mind." Who watch their thoughts. Who are alert to the various guises of mental malpractice. *Who are always ready!* Of such our Leader writes: "All God's servants are minute men and women."⁴⁶

To everyone here today and to all those within the embrace of Arden Wood's healing care, may Truth's motto always be your guide: ***Semper Paratus!***

Footnote references on next page

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5. Exodus 3:14
6. *Miscellaneous Writings*, p. 331:26
7. Proverbs 3:25, 26
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45. I Corinthians 15:10
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