

CLIFFORD STAMP AND ROSALIE MAAS

“Without a parable
spake he not unto them”

No. 10

The pearl of great price

The house on the rock

The forgiving lord

The good shepherd

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORS
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POOLE, DORSET, BH13 7JD, ENGLAND.

First published in 1983

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BOOKS BY CLIFFORD AND DAISY STAMP:

(published by The Foundational Book Company Limited)

How Divine Love Meets the Human Need

Revelation and Demonstration for You

A Scientist Opens His Bible

Satellites, Science, and Peace

The Man for All Men

BY ROSALIE MAAS:

(published by The Foundational Book Company Limited)

The Bible for Everyman

At the Start of the Day (written under the pen-name of Faber)

FOREWORD

“Without a parable spake he not unto them” (Matthew 13:34). This series of booklets took shape from ideas which were given to the authors by Principle as they studied the parables of Jesus, those masterpieces of a master teacher and demonstrator. Through them they learned of the true Science of being and its direct application to human living. The ideas which unfolded proved outstandingly kind and persistent in their persuasiveness and very much alive with freedom and happiness as well as with the imperative demands of Principle on its student. Because they also proved fruitful as they were assimilated, they are now made available in a spirit of sharing. They are not final nor mandatory; there is no question of telling anyone else what to do. Nevertheless the ideas recorded will by the very nature of their origin lead the reader to truths which will define themselves in ways unique to his own individual manner of thinking. As Mrs Eddy puts it, “In the scientific relation of God to man, we find that whatever blesses one blesses all, as Jesus showed with the loaves and fishes, — Spirit, not matter, being the source of supply” (S&H 206:15-18).

From the infinitude of the Mind which gave them it is clear that the parables have many meanings other than those presented in these booklets. May these particular interpretations be as helpful to the reader as they have been to those who had the privilege of entertaining them.

The following abbreviations of the titles of writings by Mary Baker Eddy are used in this series of booklets:

S&H	<i>Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures</i>
Mis.	<i>Miscellaneous Writings</i>
Ret.	<i>Retrospection and Introspection</i>
Un.	<i>Unity of Good</i>
Pul.	<i>Pulpit and Press</i>
Rud.	<i>Rudimental Divine Science</i>
No.	<i>No and Yes</i>
Message 1900	<i>Message to The Mother Church, 1900</i>
Message 1901	<i>Message to The Mother Church, 1901</i>
Message 1902	<i>Message to The Mother Church, 1902</i>
Hea.	<i>Christian Healing</i>
Peo.	<i>The People's Idea of God</i>
My.	<i>The First Church of Christ Scientist and Miscellany</i>
Chr.	<i>Christ and Christmas</i>
Po.	<i>Poems</i>

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The pearl of great price

(Matthew 13: 45, 46)

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

The emphasis is on the one pearl and its supreme value, and this of course represents divine Science. Our realization that Science is indeed the pearl of great price leads to our willingness to lay down all preconceived notions which were not wholly scientific and thus to purchase the joy of pure Science expressed in our life.

Unless the merchant in this parable of the pearl had throughout his career valued the lesser pearls in his possession, he would never have reached the point where he could recognize the one supremely valuable pearl and where his one desire was to sell all the less beautiful pearls in order to buy it. And so it is with any individual seeking Truth: unless he values the pearls gained from his spiritual longings and experience, he is not in a position to discern the pearl of great price or to give up all the concepts he has previously most cherished, in order to make it his own.

Many people who have been brought up with beliefs about Christian worship and life which have been very precious to them — they have been real pearls as far as they were concerned — have gladly relinquished them all when they have discovered Christian Science. They have “sold” all that formerly satisfied them, in order to “buy” the pearl of great price through understanding — “understanding, dearly sought, With fierce heart-beats” (Chr.53:16). They would agree with Mrs Eddy that Christian Science “is the pearl priceless whereof our Master said, if a man findeth, he goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth it. Buyeth it! Note the scope of that saying, even that

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Christian Science is not merely a gift, as St Paul avers, but is bought with a price, a great price; and what man knoweth as did our Master its value, and the price that he paid for it?" (Mis.252:31-5)

Anyone who is sincere in his desire to find the ways of good will be given those pearls which will equip him, as they did Mrs Eddy, for a higher discovery of God's allness. Without knowing it she had always been seeking the pearl of great price. She had led a life of unselfish devotion to good, dedicating herself to Christianity and the Bible and to healing through the best means she knew. All this led her up to that point of revelation where she glimpsed "Life in and of Spirit; this Life being the sole reality of existence" (Mis.24:17-18). Having come upon this pearl of great price, which all the lesser pearls in her possession had enabled her to value, she gave herself singlemindedly to its purchase. (See S&H 471:23-31.)

After her healing, which followed the inspiration of this revelation and which had come about through reading the words of Jesus to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee," she spent three years seeking the solution of the problem of Mind-healing, as she put it; she searched the Scriptures and "devoted time and energies to discovering a positive rule." She says, "I knew the Principle of all harmonious Mind-action to be God, and that cures were produced in primitive Christian healing by holy, uplifting faith; but I must know the Science of this healing, and I won my way to absolute conclusions through divine revelation, reason, and demonstration" (S&H 109: 11-12, 14-15, 16-22).

Many individuals have been healed through a sudden illumination, but then the shadows and the night have closed in upon it. Mrs Eddy, like Jacob, would not let the light go until it fully blessed her in its universal Science. Searching the Scriptures and above all the words and works of Jesus from her new standpoint, she found confirmation of what she had glimpsed when she was healed. Everything strengthened that original glimpse until it took form in rules and laws of the presence of God to the elimination of everything in opposition. That was Science, the pearl of great price. Whether you take Science in its divine definition as "the atmosphere of God" (No.9:26) or in its

human definition as quoted by Mrs Eddy from Webster (“knowledge, duly arranged and referred to general truths and principles on which it is founded, and from which it is derived”), its one theme is the allness of Spirit and the nothingness of matter. Mrs Eddy discarded everything else for the joy of paying the full price for the attainment of Truth. When she had once glimpsed the truth of perfect God and perfect man, perfect Principle and idea, she gave up all the lesser pearls of her previous learning.

She laid aside all the humanitarian methods of helping mankind which were pearls she had previously purchased and valued as being of the finest quality. She now saw that their basis was, first, the admission of error and then the attempt to overcome that error through good Christian effort. This had to be left behind in order to devote all her thought and endeavour to the realization of the one pearl of pure spiritual reasoning, unhampered by any admixture of belief in materiality. “It demands less cross-bearing, self-renunciation, and divine Science to admit the claims of the corporeal senses and appeal to God for relief through a humanized conception of His power, than to deny these claims and learn the divine way” (Ret.54:5-9). It was not toil-some to Mrs Eddy, but a matter of joyful consecration to the one supremely valuable ideal.

A pearl is created by friction inside the oyster. This points to the truth that the real pearls of life are not formed through easy living. They are not necessarily the outcome of moral goodness and may come into being from hard necessities. When an individual has travelled a rough path and then seen that which gives him clear-cut answers and the perfect provision of everything he has always longed for, he recognizes the pearl of great price and goes all out for it.

He who was called a “friend of publicans and sinners” was aware that among their number were those who would value the pearl he had, because they had already gained some pearls of understanding of life along the rougher paths, and this had given them some appreciation of real values. This was outstandingly so in the case of Mary Magdalene. The hard facts of life had driven her to make a living out of being a harlot, but if she had been merely a harlot, with her only

desire to make money out of men, she would not have been the Magdalen. Her profession was only a necessity of living with her, and she was led up to seeing the real way of meeting her necessities of life and seeing the real necessity of living. She had worked in an area of experience where there could only be pain, sorrow, and disappointment and so these frictional qualities must have caused her to long for and thus be able to recognize that which was exalted above such things. When at last she heard of and found herself near an individual of "undoubted goodness and purity, who has since been rightfully regarded as the best man that ever trod this planet" (S&H 364:1-3), she recognized the pearl of great price. Then she demonstrated how much her experience had prepared her not only to recognize it, but also to give up everything for it, including her source of income, and go through all barriers, the chief of which would have been her self-condemnation. The earnest student needs to recognize this barrier and dismiss it immediately with a conviction that a perfect Principle can only have a perfect idea as its expression. All such barriers were thrown down by Mary at the feet of the man who represented the purest and loveliest pearl which has yet been found by men.

Unless we see the value of the pearl of great price, we shall cling to the pearls we already have, because they will still seem to us a nice string to hang around our neck and so we shall have no wish to exchange them.

The rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-22) exemplified that state of thought which is unwilling to sell its "goodly pearls" for the one pearl of great price, because it has not discerned its value. He "went away grieved" when Jesus advised him to sell all that he had (all his pride in human goodness, symbolized by his obedience to the Commandments) and "give to the poor." He was not ready to give up all his lesser standards and leave them to those who believe they need to think in terms of poverty because they cling to process and improvement from an imperfect basis. The whole teaching of the Christ seemed too explosive to the good human standards which the young man represented at that time. The Christ standard admits no process towards perfection, and Jesus saw that this rich young ruler was qualified

to follow that absolute standard, although he did not choose to do so. We can liken him to anyone who clings to the belief that a man cannot be healed until he improves, for instance, in his expression of love. That is a "goodly pearl," but the pearl of great price demands the taking up of the challenge of seeing that he is already loving *now*, because he is wholly spiritual now and wholly expressing spiritual qualities. Is it not our educated belief in process and in human goodness on a material basis which prevents instantaneous healing being more common in our experience?

This is a parable which makes clear Principle's preparation of its child for the reception of its supreme gift. It cuts right across every walk of life, every vocation, every seeking, every desire, every form of honesty, thoroughness, and love, and shows that all those who have some spiritual gleams and glimpses of the infinite, whether born of spiritual culture or of the pangs of necessity and longings, will have some pearls of character and understanding and will be led to discern the pearl of great price, or divine Science.

Two arguments which may present themselves should be watched against. First, an individual may feel that he has not sufficient "goodly pearls" in his character-formation and his understanding to qualify him to recognize the pearl of great price and, secondly, that even if he did recognize it, he would not be prepared to stir himself to purchase it. The facts are that *everyone* has the "goodly pearls," for everyone reflects and expresses intelligence, love, understanding, and so forth. These are the "goodly pearls." If anyone has not discovered that he has these pearls, he can do so at once by being honest with himself and realizing that God made him and therefore made him complete in all the qualities of manhood and womanhood. Secondly, he can admit that not only has he these qualities but also by every true instinct wishes to improve their expression, so that he does not fall into the unhappy and disappointing position described by Paul, "the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do;" he will be helped not to do so if he acknowledges that all the qualities he has in character are spiritual and spiritual alone and also that his whole being longs to see a higher and better expression of those qualities in his

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daily living, to the benefit of himself and all who come within the radius of his cognizance. Everyone by instinct recognizes and is drawn to the pearl of great price, the ability to express Science in its perfection and through this expression to have it demonstrated here on earth. These things are not in the hands of man to have or not to have. They are mandatory with Principle and Principle's expression of itself, and for true happiness and health a full acceptance of these facts has to be made and a full response to all that they require.

In order to possess the pearl of great price we have to exchange the lesser "goodly pearls" whose standard has previously seemed sufficiently high. The concepts of human kindness we have cherished hitherto must now be relinquished for a higher ideal; "there must be a change from human affections, desires, and aims, to the divine standard, 'Be ye therefore perfect'" (Mis.50:20-22). For instance, we may always have felt that we have a loving nature and that we feel for others. This can be exchanged for response to the higher demand that our love is shown in seeing only perfection. We cannot truly love someone if we admit imperfection. The only true understanding of another is *spiritual* understanding, the understanding of the other individual as perfect because he is Principle's expression of itself. The exchange needed in every case is the upvaluing of spiritual qualities from the level of their good human activity into the exactness of their divine requirement.

"Seek Truth, and pursue it. It should cost you something; you are willing to pay for error and receive nothing in return; but if you pay the price of Truth, you shall receive *all*" (Mis.342:24-27).

If through love of the spiritual any man increases the value of the pearls which are his, he will be led to the ability to have the same Mind "which was also in Christ Jesus" — to approximate a perfect expression of a perfect Principle. Mrs Eddy was able to exchange her many "goodly pearls" for a very high sense of the perfect expression of a perfect Principle — as near as one can get to it in the flesh. She points out that John the Revelator saw "a new heaven and a new earth" while on our plane of existence. Through his love and pursuit of the truth which his Master had taught him, he was led to the "out-

of-this-world” experience which enabled him to see that “new heaven and new earth” where harmony reigns and there is “no more sea” of turbulent thinking. Anyone who has even glimpsed such a thing is willing to give up all other forms of reasoning except that which proceeds from perfect Principle and perfect idea.

At that point a man does not possess the pearl of great price, but this pearl of consciousness possesses him. He is possessed by the Christ Mind, the Mind which embraced Jesus’ mind, outlook, and understanding until he could say to Philip, “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” because he had learnt how to be fully embraced by the divine Mind to the elimination of everything else.

He who longs to discern and be able to buy the pearl of great price will be encouraged by seeing that it is not a question of waiting inertly for final admission to the precincts of holiness, but of actively admitting the presence of pure spiritual good and building up such admissions and the realizations of what they mean in an ascending purposefulness, until ultimately all consciousness is directed that way and ceases to be able to be directed in any other way.

“When loving, we learn that ‘God is Love’ ” (Message 1902, 8:6-7). If it is through loving and learning what love is that we discern the truth that God is Love, this applies to all the other synonymous terms for God. The important point for the student to accept is that he has the “goodly pearls” and needs only to bring them out and polish them through usage. This in itself can give him a true sense of wealth, such as the merchant obviously had. It enables him to discover that he can exchange all lesser ideals for the one ideal of supreme value — Spirit’s onliness, matter’s nothingness, and the perfection of Principle and idea. That pearl is his, because it is him, and he knows it if only he will allow himself to do so.

Any individual who recognizes what it means to be a good man or, better still, a good Christian Scientist and longs to attain to this can realize that in his longing he is actually looking at himself and what he already is, for the saying “What thou seest, that thou beest” is true. All that such an individual has to do is to break down the distance defined by his longing and see that he is not looking at himself “out

there," but being told by Principle to recognize that desirable self as already here and to enjoy the realization of this fact, working out *from* it instead of *towards* it. That is what the Master taught and practised, for this is the Science of being.

There are certain simple rules to be gathered by the student from this parable. One is to recognize that he has the goodly pearls of genuine character, such as kindness, love, joy, and so forth, and let nothing suggest to him that he has not. But having accepted that he has these pearls, he like the merchant should burnish them in readiness for the exchange for the pearl of great price — in other words, practise in his daily life to the best of his ability all that is defined by those goodly pearls and do so more than he has ever done before. This activity will reveal to him the value and the certainty of the presence of that pearl of great price — divine Science — and will also equip him both to understand the demands it makes on him and also fulfil those demands.

The house on the rock

(*Matthew 7: 24-27*)

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

These words of Jesus are found at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, “that divine digest of Science” (Rud.3:15). He was clearly distinguishing not those who hear spiritual teaching from those who do not hear, but those who hear and fully identify themselves in living practice with what they hear from those who, although hearing, cognize it only as a beautiful subject which is very true and wonderful and go no further.

We may think of a rock as something solid and static, but physical scientists today would maintain that it is a living, moving structure, and to Jesus it was certainly not a solid inert lump. He went much further than the advanced modern physicist because he did not hold on to the rock as matter at all; he let that go and saw it only in its spiritual significance as a symbol of the stability of Principle expressing itself in activity.

The theme of activity is introduced at once when he speaks of everyone who “heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them.” He follows this with a picture of a man building his house or consciousness on a structure that is rocklike. The emphasis is first of all on understanding his teachings and then acting upon them.

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In Luke's version of this parable (6:47-49) Jesus speaks of "a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock." He had to dig deep to find the rock. To understand the teachings of the Master we have to dig deep, in the sense of studying what he says, in order to arrive at a rocklike, well-founded understanding of the Truth and Science on which it is based.

The earnest student may feel that he is not equal to this requirement. This is untrue, for every man is a reflection of the same one Principle and that Principle in reflecting on itself has every individual equal to its own realization. Therefore such a student is wise to throw out at once any opposing suggestion and set out on the basis that he can be what he already is — an expression of Mind in the reflection of intelligence. With this approach, if he begins to search the Scriptures and the writings of Mrs Eddy, he will soon find that he is fully equipped to dig deep, as the parable requires, and he will find for himself the rock of joyous activity. No longer will he be satisfied with mere surface readings of the great truths taught and enacted by the Master and by the discoverer of Christian Science. The parable gives a clear warning to those of us who miss the opportunity of profiting by these truths through playing around on their surface without an attempt at understanding. If we accept Jesus' teachings in a soothing way which leaves us self-complacent, this acts in a soporific manner upon the intellect, so that when problems arise — when the rain descends and the floods come and the winds blow — we have no stability or true understanding, but only a faith, and a blind faith at that. This is certain to lead to that faith being swept aside and destroyed. Our house of consciousness is built only on sand and cannot withstand the stresses imposed by the tides of general human thought.

As a symbol, a rock stands for ideas which cohere and form one whole. A few fragmentary ideas isolated from each other or disconnected statements of truth do not constitute a rock. The integration and coherence are vital. Without them there is no rock. Break up a rock and you have sand. Ideas not seen as held together by their Principle become mere sand. In fact, sand is only the rock of Truth continually pounded by seas of mortal reasoning and assumptions until

it disintegrates in our thought.

Anything that is not held together by Principle and Science eventually breaks up. A good thought has to be Principle-affirming or it can be lost. Mrs Eddy brings this out clearly when she says, "Principle is not to be found in fragmentary ideas" (S&H 302:1); "Truth is not fragmentary, disconnected, unsystematic, but concentrated and immovably fixed in Principle" (Ret.93:11-13); "Christian Science, understood, coincides with the Scriptures, and sustains logically and demonstratively every point it presents. Otherwise it would not be Science, and could not present its proofs" (S&H 358:9-13). Where there is Principle, there is Science and proof and everything holds together and demonstrates itself. That is the rock. If there is no Principle, there is no Science and no proof, and that is the sand. No man can build on that sand. The strength of $2+2=4$ in the realm of mathematics is that as a part of that whole it cannot possibly be shaken, dislodged, or become non-operational, and it is the same with every idea in Science.

Mrs Eddy realized that after the original revelation of Life in and of Spirit which came to her it was imperative that she should find the Science which would safeguard that revelation for herself and for others. So is it not plain that we should refresh ourselves continually with the Science which makes a truth true and makes it inevitable and factual to us? Unless we keep ourselves active in that Science, we can lose its beatitudes in awful platitudes and be overwhelmed by any challenge.

In answer to the question "How can I progress most rapidly in the understanding of Christian Science?" Mrs Eddy begins with the words, "Study thoroughly the letter and imbibe the spirit" (S&H 495: 25-28). This parable which closes the Sermon on the Mount indicates the necessity of this twofold activity, for to imbibe the spirit of the letter in any scientific process we must practise what is indicated in the letter.

When Jesus asked his disciples, "whom say ye that I am?" Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus then declared, "upon this rock I will build my church." On the rock of

active understanding he was going to found his church, or "structure of Truth and Love" (S&H 583:12). What he commended was the living activity and certainty based on Principle, Life, stabilized in Principle but never static. Peter's pronouncement brings out the whole tone of this parable: first of all in his recognition that Jesus' teachings were the Christ, Truth, and secondly, that they were active here and now (they were "the Son of the *living* God"). Through watching Jesus, Peter had seen that the *living* God gives man something to *live*, and that is the heart of the matter.

When we live individually the demands of Principle, we find in so doing that that Principle is Love and is truly a live Principle, not the inert foundation of a theory which, however correct, makes no demands on man for its demonstration and proof. Science requires proof, and the proof is us or it is nowhere as far as we are concerned. Mrs Eddy wrote, "I first proved to myself, not by 'words,' — these afford no proof, — but by demonstration of Christian Science, that its Principle is divine. All must go and do likewise" (Mis.338:5-8).

$2+2=4$ is an expression of an arithmetical idea. The child can learn it and declare it and even write it on his paper and think how nice it is, but until he has had occasion to use it in practical demonstration in his own experience and *has* thus used it, he is not certain of its factuality nor is he certain that nothing can dispute it. A great many other children shouting other answers than 4 to $2+2$ could confuse or shake that child's thinking *until* his certainty was based on the conviction of experience. Then no matter how many children made mistakes or voiced them, it would serve only to strengthen his own conviction.

Jesus is saying here that if a man regards the Sermon on the Mount with all its directions and requirements as nothing more than a beautiful expression of Science, it will be quite useless to him when that which is opposed to its positive and beautiful enunciations comes into his life with its challenge. In the same way, if someone accepts the statement, "Love alone is Life" (Mis.388:10), for instance, and sees that the expression of Love gives purpose to life and watches it doing so in the lives of others, but he himself never identifies himself with

its truth and therefore never discovers how it would give life and health to him and also that it is Life itself in expression, then he never really knows it as a truth. But that truth once demonstrated as truth in his own immediate experience will remain with him forever and nothing will be able to assail it. He will know then that he truly knows it, and moreover he will know that it is the all-knowing Mind which is knowing it through him and as him. That is the rock. If he has seen a truth but falls away from it in time of trouble, instead of letting it demonstrate itself, it is a greater fall than ignorance of that truth, for it is the fall of lack of fidelity.

There is hardly a Christian on earth who does not recognize the work of Jesus in its glorious exemplification of good, but what is the benefit of that recognition unless he takes some aspect of the Master's activity, discerns its scientific basis, and then practises it in his own life from the scientific understanding gained from his exemplification?

Jesus shows in this parable that consciousness built on the rock of true activity, founded on scientific understanding, is not affected when the rain and floods and winds come, because it is not only based on Truth, but also active in that Truth. The rain may indicate the first mild suggestions of error, the arguments which dilute Truth to conform to some human or mortal standard. The floods may indicate that when left alone those suggestions can grow into that which drowns Truth, overwhelming our understanding of the spiritual by the apparent greatness of error in the world. The winds may then indicate the unhealthy and destructive angers which overtake an individual who has been slothful and feels the rebuke of this slothfulness, making him feel very far from Truth. "Let us disrobe error. Then, when the winds of God blow, we shall not hug our tatters close about us" (S&H 201: 14-16); when regret and remorse overcome us, it is wise to learn the lesson immediately and not cling to the tatters in our understanding in an attempt at self-defence.

It is good to remember that Jesus revealed that the qualities and strength of his teachings would only be experienced through what he describes here as the rain and also the floods and the winds beating upon those truths in the individual's consciousness and that individual

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finding those truths so true to him that the rain, floods, and winds serve only to prove to him the integrity of what he has learnt — and the joy of it.

With Jesus there was plenty of rain, floods, and winds against him, but they merely made stronger the truth. And so if every day we take what truth we know and make ourselves really know it by practising it — and is there any other way? — then we shall not only be made strong but also experience the joy of knowing and feeling our own individuality, our own purposefulness, our own sonship of the living God. There is no room for emasculation or illusive vision, for dreamy absentness, or insubordination to the laws that be (see Mis. 206:14-15) in any form of scientific process and above all in the Science of being which Jesus taught and demonstrated, the essence of which is contained in the Sermon on the Mount.

If any man through studying thoroughly the letter and imbibing the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount cleanses his thought of selfish and limited human standards (designed above all to preserve “self” in a hostile world), and leaves them behind for obedience to Principle’s standards, based on the oneness of being, he finds himself on a rock of conviction which is unassailable. He feels the unwavering Principle at the back of Jesus’ words and the steady, consistent, unbroken flow of certainties proceeding from that Principle, whatever the storms to which the senses alone bear witness. Unless he sees that the Sermon on the Mount is an imperative command to abandon matter and materiality in all his reckonings and adopt spiritual aims, motives, and methods in its place, he has missed its rocklike quality — rocklike in the stringency of its demands, rocklike in its unshakable rewards. “Every man and woman should be to-day a law to himself, herself, — a law of loyalty to Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount” (Mis.12:12-14).

Anyone who has felt the joy of being a house that, standing on the rock of Truth demonstrated, experienced the rain and the floods and the winds of mortal opinion proving their own inability until they died away will tell you that there is no greater experience on earth and no other way of opening the gates which show men heaven and what it is made of. So we can see that this parable is filled with declarations of

good for those who act on understanding and without procrastination. Faith can become pleasurable, but activity based on understanding brings joy through the satisfaction of realization and demonstration, which is the only joy. Jesus referred to this joy when he said to his students, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Everyone is entitled to this joy, but only as he individually earns it. It is his individual joy, and it has to be individually won.

Thus Truth engrounds me on the rock,
 Upon Life's shore,
 'Gainst which the winds and waves can shock,
 Oh, nevermore! (Mis.397:9-12)

It is Truth which engrounds us on the rock of Principle. For instance, the only way to love our neighbour is to know the truth of his character as the expression of God and to dismiss every false suggestion. In accepting the truth we are accepting ideas which must derive from Principle in order to be true, and so our cognizance of our neighbour is established on a rock which no derogatory views can move or disturb; in fact their rejection only strengthens the truth for us.

"The question, 'What is Truth,' convulses the world" (S&H 223:14), and this statement points to a means of discovering what Truth is. If we look at a flower, for instance, we find that it speaks to our spiritual sense of spiritual qualities which we love and enjoy. This truth of the flower discerned in the spiritual qualities it reveals engrounds us on the rock, on the Principle which evolves those qualities. This truth also convulses or shakes every belief that the flower is material, just as it did for Jesus when he spoke of the spiritual and immortal qualities of the lily of the field, which as matter would be dead the next day. So in the ratio that we accept the truth of anything, we find that belief in a material world is first convulsed and then destroyed. It is analyzed in its ignorance, uncovered in its nothingness, and annihilated, because it never was.

This way of living — of discovering ideas emanating from the Principle of perfection and then emphatically adopting those ideas in

our lives and in our cognizance of everything — does indeed enground us on a rock, against which none of the so-called reasoning of mortal mind can prevail. To live as a spiritual being through expressing spiritual qualities of character empowered by the Principle from which they spring is to live in a world where everything which symbolizes those qualities will surround us in everlasting evidence of the truth that we *are* solely spiritual and live solely in a spiritual world.

So an individual's rock is his living of ideas which are born of Principle and are therefore Principle-empowered, Principle-sustained, and in themselves have continual fruitage.

There is nothing hard or depressing in this work, and the more one does it the more one becomes accustomed to it. Then the movements of thought along the paths of Science become unlaboured and winged with inspiration beyond the human comprehension of the individual. The worker in Science finds that his work brings him into rapport with the divine activity forever going on; it takes him into a position where the divine embraces his thinking and carries him forward into realms impossible to man on his own, but natural when he has joined that heavenly flow. This indicates that his own efforts and impulses towards this end were in themselves created by that same heavenly source.

The rock of Truth is not just solid conviction or a stoical outlook that endures the storms; it is inspiring conviction. A man on that rock of Truth "upon Life's shore" is not merely standing his ground against storms, but is so inspired that he is unaffected by any attempts at opposition — he can just smile at them as he goes forward with Truth. He is not trying to *make* himself unshakable. He is no longer even shocked by the winds and waves, because they are not real to him. It is the living Truth that is real to him.

The great point of this parable is the promise that it implies. The purpose of true Christianity is not just to make you into a good man, but into the real man, and to give you the reward of this in the impregnable strength of manhood which cannot be shaken by the buffetings of this physical and human world, spelt out here as the rain, the floods, and the winds. Its purpose is to make Truth so real to you

that nothing of earth's experience can touch the certainty of your conviction, and finally the negatives of this earth's experience no longer exist for you. Your house, your consciousness, is not just something so stabilized in Truth that it stands up against all the attempts of error to shake it, but is a consciousness so convinced of the unreality of error that no error exists for it to stand up against. Man is not here to stand with strength against error, for he is equipped with the strength of reason and revelation whereby he sees that there never has been error. His strength is not in standing up against it, but in finding that it never existed to stand up against.

Building all our reasoning on Truth and conforming all our actions to that Truth, we shall find that Truth will grow and grow to us and the lie of anything existing in opposition to it will diminish until it exists no more. This applies to the student in every scientific process on earth and so it should surely be held in mind by the student of divine Science, even whilst he obeys the process given him in this parable and enjoys the growing strength of his conviction as it leads him on to that wonderful point where Truth is not only real to him but where error has become so *unreal* that it no longer exists. Jesus' fidelity to Truth led to the resurrection and culminated in the ascension. As it says in Isaiah, "This is the way, walk ye in it."

The forgiving lord

(Matthew 18: 21-35)

“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”

Peter's idea of forgiving “seven times” was all right as far as it went, but to Jesus it was insufficient and incomplete. Many a good Christian has had the nobility of character to forgive another man, through great compassion or through understanding his point of view or through seeing that he could not really have meant it, or something of the sort; but in doing so he is still holding the possibility of sin as a reality, because he is still seeing his friend as a physical being of flesh, blood, and bones, possessed of a mortal mind and therefore continually liable to sin and error. Is not that actually malpractice? It is certainly not Science and was not good enough for the Master. Can we be knowing the truth of anyone while there is still any ingredient of error in our thinking?

Jesus wanted to rouse his active student, Peter (and all men) to see that he must allow his sense of the allness, oneness, and perfection of the nature of God to be followed out in all its implications to convince him that there is no matter and no mortal mind out of which to create a sinner or produce a sin to forgive. God is Spirit, and knows only the spiritual, which includes no element of matter to produce or introduce sin.

It is helpful to bear in mind that the term “matter” is used in a special sense in Christian Science, not just to refer to so-called material substance, but also as a name for the entire dream that there is “intelligence, substance, and life in non-intelligence and mortality”

(S&H 591:9-10). However much this dream tries to impress itself on us, it is still unreal, a myth, a lie, never a *living* error. It is "that which mortal mind sees, feels, hears, tastes, and smells only in belief" (S&H 591:14-15).

We cannot forgive sin until we see that in the Science of being there has never been sin in us or anyone else or indeed any sin whatever; and in order to see that, our understanding of the completeness of the infinite, as symbolized by the "seven" and first illustrated in the story of the seven days of creation, must be carried through until we have proved to ourselves that this means that there can be nothing in opposition to Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love. There can be no mortal mind in opposition to the divine Mind, no matter in opposition to Spirit, and so on with all the terms for God revealed to Mrs Eddy. Then we can see that there is no place for sin to originate and therefore it has never had reality. When we realize that sin is non-existent from Principle's viewpoint, we can then properly eradicate it from our thought with regard to any attempt to identify it with ourselves or any other individual. That is the only way in which sin can be "Christianly and scientifically reduced to its native nothingness" (S&H 572:5-6).

If, for instance, we said of a friend, "He is such a loving individual, but I wish he wasn't so impatient [or so mean, or whatever it may be]" and we felt a sense of warmth and compassion towards him because of his loving character and yet we left to lie idle that thought about impatience or meanness being part of his nature, we might have forgiven him Christianly in a limited sense, but we would not have reduced the sin scientifically to its native nothingness. To fulfil the requirements of Mrs Eddy's statement we need the large, loving outlook of the good Christian, but this must be lifted above the normal interpretation of the word "Christian" into its natural completeness in Science by the annihilation of any thought which could suggest that impatience and meanness exist even as possibilities in that expression of God called man. Then and only then have we reduced sin to its native nothingness both Christianly and scientifically. That is why Mrs Eddy follows her statement with these words: " 'Love one another'

(I John,iii.23), is the most simple and profound counsel of the inspired writer" (S&H 572:6-8). Love must be complete or it is not worthy of the name. Would a good housewife say she had spring-cleaned a room if even one corner had been overlooked?

Jesus could not have used the phrase "seventy times seven" casually, for the Gospels make it clear that he employed such numbers as 3, 4, 7, 10, and 12 with a keen awareness of their spiritual implications. He was not only underlining the thoroughness of the work required for true forgiveness, but also showing the tools with which to do that work. The "seventy" combines the "seven" and the "ten". The "seven" stands for the complete sevenfold nature of God which Jesus understood; this was first symbolized in the Bible at the beginning of Genesis and has been defined in our age by Mrs Eddy in the seven synonymous terms for God. The "ten" was used throughout the Bible as a symbol of practical application. The ten fingers of the hand denote just this, and the Ten Commandments reveal how divinity and its requirements are to be made practical on this human plane. Jesus saw the need for the "seven" to be substantiated in human thought, and in this age we can do it by applying through reason the revelation given by the seven synonymous terms for God, so that we find it expressed in human experience. The "seventy" thus symbolizes a process of thought which lifts the "seven" beyond any superficial or merely theoretical interpretation to living, practical reality. This was depicted by the beloved disciple John when he wrote, "That which . . . our hands have handled . . . declare we unto you." And the phrase "laying on of hands" really stands for bringing the divine to the human, so that we see the human from the divine standpoint as it really is. This is the touch which touches human experience not vaguely and with a vague sense of the spiritual realm, but radically, effectively, and with healing.

To illustrate: if it appears that someone has wronged us, the only way to forgive him — to cleanse thought scientifically of the claims of materiality — is to see what it actually means that he is the expression of God — the expression of Mind, Spirit, Soul, Principle, Life, Truth, and Love. Merely *saying* that he is the expression of God is not

enough. If we say that he is the expression of the divine Mind, this must carry with it the full acknowledgment that right here and now he is the expression of intelligence in every direction of his being; he understands others and finds unity in ideas because as the idea of Mind he knows that there is only one Mind, and that Mind is infinite and the same for all. As the expression of Spirit he is pure, clear, and wholly spiritual in his nature, pure in all his reasoning and deductions — such an estimate goes far beyond the human sense of spirituality. As the reflection of Soul he is not pushed about by the testimony of the human senses, but has the joy and certainty of Soul in all his thoughts and feelings. As the idea of Principle he loves Principle and is Principled in all that he is and does. As the expression of Life he is alive, immortal, deathless, with no element of self-destruction anywhere in his being. As the man of Truth he loves Truth and responds to and represents Truth in every aspect of life; if the claim is that he has spread lies about us, this is no more than a belief which tries in vain to contend with the fact established in him by Truth itself. And he is loving, not because of any human reason, but because Love itself expresses itself to others through him in a way that is unique.

Through this flow of spiritual reasoning we have made a practical demonstration to ourselves of what the “seven” means in his character-expression. We are thereby left with a wonderful concept of the whole being of that particular individual. The “seven” which he reflects has become real to us, and through this “laying on of hands” we can genuinely accept that it is true that he is wholly spiritual. Jesus said, “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.” And so if we come forth from the seven synonymous terms for God and see what it means in the earth-scene that man is the expression of this sevenfold nature, we then “go to the Father” again with a much truer sense than before of both God and man.

This is only an outline of the tremendous challenge involved, but it is the work of man here in this preparatory school of earth, with all its claims and all its symbols based on those claims. The phrase “until seventy times seven” indicates that when man has done this work, he

has emphasized for himself the integrity and purity of the sevenfold nature of God and consequent sevenfold nature of man and the universe. Through taking up the challenge of Truth he has made Truth true and unchallengeable as far as he is concerned. Accepted rightly this work is stimulating, joy-giving, and above all has a healing effect, for it expels error from every corner of thought and therefore is the only true forgiveness for oneself and for all whom one's thought embraces. Human consciousness thereby loses itself as human consciousness and becomes the expression of Principle, or Principle's expression of itself, which is true manhood and womanhood.

It must have been Jesus' devotion to the detailed activity of good covered by his requirement to Peter which so equipped him every moment of his day that he could address the paralyzed man with that powerful, all-encompassing statement of Truth which freed him: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matthew 9:2). And as we understand this, we glimpse too that vision of perfection and its active elimination of all that would oppose it which took hold of Mrs Eddy's consciousness as she read those words and the flood-tide of scientific revelation lifted her to that realm where, as she tells us, she saw "Life in and of Spirit; this Life being the sole reality of existence" (Mis.24:17-18). This revelation so possessed her consciousness that all else was dispelled and she was healed of an injury which, prior to this, had been pronounced fatal. She tells us in this passage that she rose, dressed herself, and ever after was in better health than she had before enjoyed.

"Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid

hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Christendom has misinterpreted the Master's teaching in this parable, which follows his statement to Peter, and has missed its Science. The story of the forgiving lord and his servant shows that if we think of ourselves as sinners, owing something to Principle through our sins, but forgiven by a kindly God who lets us off, we still have sin as reality. The result is that we react to sin in our brother man as reality also and consider penalty inevitable. The whole belief of sin and penalty goes on repeating itself, until we learn from our perfect Principle that there is nothing in that Principle and its infinitude — no matter and therefore no mortal mind — out of which to create either sin or sinner.

Mrs Eddy makes plain Jesus' teaching on this subject on page 67 of "Retrospection and Introspection," when she writes, "The sinner created neither himself nor sin, but sin created the sinner; that is, error made its man mortal, and this mortal was the image and likeness of evil, not of good. Therefore the lie was, and is, collective as well as individual. It was in no way contingent on Adam's thought, but suppositiously self-created. In the words of our Master, it, the 'devil' (*alias* evil), 'was a liar, and the father of it'" (lines 18-25).

Principle "forgives," not by admitting a sin as real, but with the thoroughness of its whole system precluding all error because all space is filled with Truth. Principle is always saying, "I am All" and "I AM

THAT I AM." Thus it is forever annulling everything that mortal mind would say of man. Principle is not static, but active — not active against evil, but so active in good that this does away with evil. Light never contends with darkness, but just reflects itself and so there is no darkness. True forgiveness means erasing the claim that there is anything to forgive. If Principle is always going on, always expressing itself through its idea, then the claim that something unlike Principle ever really happens is a lie and should be thoroughly cleared from our thinking. "The law of Life and Truth is the law of Christ, destroying all sense of sin and death. It does more than forgive the false sense named sin, for it pursues and punishes it, and will not let sin go until it is destroyed, — until nothing is left to be forgiven, to suffer, or to be punished" (No. 30:2-6).

There is no mortal mind because there is no mortality in opposition to the infinite, eternal, and immortal, and so there is no effect of mortal mind in any direction or in any way. It has no "space to occupy, power to act, or vanity to pretend that it is man" (Mis.173:18-19). If we see that, we are left only with Principle's mandate and Principle's manifestation.

Having banished belief in any source for evil, we can then cut out belief in everything which could issue from such a source. The theory of forgiveness lies in seeing that there can never have been anything unlike Principle. The practice of it involves living the specific truth which contradicts the lie. Living the truth is what closes the door on the error. It is necessary for complete healing, because by living the specific truth we are wiping out that which previously enabled the undesirable quality to find identity in our consciousness. If we see for our friend the unreality and indeed the impossibility in Science of some error and live the reality of its opposite in all our thinking about him and in our whole attitude towards everything to do with him, as well as in our own life, then, like Jesus, we are not holding error "by affinity nor by infirmity" (Un.57:15-16) and again like Jesus we can say in some degree, "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." In proportion as we live the truth, we find the dream vapourized in the true somethingness of what we are living. By living the

real, we find the real and it is real to *us*.

Mrs Eddy says, "material history is drawing to a close" (No.45:27), and it can do so for anyone through the growing strength to him of the spiritual idea, not in its past but in its present, for its impelling purpose in the "now" is what constitutes its real history, without beginning or end. If we will allow errors to "serve as waymarks to the one Mind" (S&H 267:24), those waymarks will dissolve into their native nothingness, and only the one Mind and its manifestation will be left. And so forgiving "seventy times seven" entails taking up the specific truths and living them in detail, in order to see demonstrated the nothingness of the errors. This is going beyond the letter into the spirit. The letter shows us what to do, the spirit comes when we do it. We enter into what has been shown us and become at one with it and then the spirit of the thing possesses us and we have the joy of its fulfilment.

Paying Principle what we owe involves paying our best attention to coming as much as we can into the consciousness which is Principle's and being that consciousness in our consciousness. By doing that, we are at peace with ourselves, because we are conscious that we are doing what is right; irrespective of the amount or quantity of that right, we know that we have the quality right, and this sets us at rest. Even a dog knows when it has stolen a bone from the larder, because of its innate sense of what is right and what is not, and no man can avoid his perception of what is Principled.

"Paying our debts" to Principle means paying back Principle's language to itself through understanding. If we admit that some evil has no place in Principle, no origin in Principle, and we accept Principle's idea, we are "paying back" Principle in its own coin and currency. The language of Principle contains not a single element of finity, error, or of anything to be forgiven, and what we owe to Principle is the acknowledgment of this.

Human compassion recognizes error and has pity. Principle sees no error and spells out *its* compassion in words such as those used by Jesus to the paralyzed man, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." He was saying, in effect, "None of that stuff ever be-

longed to you, or you would not have suffered under it, so have the joy of realizing that it was never you, for that gets rid of all the suffering." There is no stronger evidence of man's perfection than the fact that the truth inherent in him cannot be satisfied with an error, but pursues and evicts it until it is cleared out completely, thus demonstrating that he is by nature and by instinct perfect. Otherwise there would be no suffering. Truth does not make the suffering; it is our expression of Truth which will not allow us to express anything but Truth, and so eradicates any suggestion of, belief in, or indulgence of any quality other than that which is true and real. Dis-ease in error proves that it is no part of us, because if it were our native element, we would be at ease in it.

Forgiving "seventy times seven" is like a good housewife not stopping until every speck of dirt or dust has been dealt with and yet in the process enjoying herself. Therefore like Paul we can "take pleasure in infirmities," for they show us something which does not belong in our mentality or character and just has to be shaken out. A good housewife is grateful when the dust is shown up in some corner, so that it can be removed and a clean atmosphere established; the whole activity gives her happiness.

So we can take pleasure in finding out what never could have been us or anyone else and therefore was bound to make us uneasy. It shows itself up in the dis-ease or suffering and makes it plain that it is not us; and as we see clearly that it was never us, because it never happened, since it was not God-made and, as the Scripture tells us, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made," the dis-ease itself deserts us. Our consciousness of God and of what we are "torments" us if we depart from what we know man is by nature and by instinct and by everything. The error has to be exterminated. Truth cannot be satisfied with anything less.

The parable shows that if we can understand how Principle operates to forgive us because it sees nothing wrong in us as its idea or expression, then we must go on to reflect Principle by seeing nothing wrong in others. If we fail to do this, we are bound to suffer, just as any departure from Principle in any one of its expressions, whether it

be in mathematics, music, or any other sphere, leads inevitably to trouble. Principle forgives us everything because it sees nothing to forgive, and we must reflect that same state of mind or attitude towards everything in our experience, or else we cannot receive the benefit of what Principle is doing for *us*. If we allow something in our mind which is apart from Principle, different from Principle, we suffer for it. Suffering is not enjoying the state of mind which Principle *is* enjoying and thereby not being our true and natural selves. It is not Principle that punishes, but we who punish ourselves if we are not being like Principle in our outlook.

As students of Science, we can discern and see how Principle holds us in its consciousness as perfect beings. Principle never alters in that. If we wish to enjoy the benefit of this, we must have the same consciousness of ourselves and of everyone as Principle has of us. Mrs Eddy gives us our cue as to how to do this in her words, "I will listen for Thy voice, Lest my footsteps stray" (Mis.398:1-2). The moment we listen and conform to Principle's consciousness, we are free from suffering or penalty, just as when we conform to the principle of arithmetic. If we have been calculating wrongly in arithmetic, we simply say, "I am not going to do that again," and we go ahead; we are not held back or penalized from that moment.

So the important thing must be to see what Principle is knowing, and make sure that we know the same. When we see as Principle is seeing, the results are bound to be beneficial. If we join in with the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," we have "the tree of life," whose leaves are for "the healing of the nations" (Rev.22:1,2), and so "all whom [our] thoughts rest upon are thereby benefited" (My.210:10-11).

We must get into the stream — we cannot originate good ourselves, but we can get into the stream, as Jesus did continually. He was *in* the flow of good, surrounded by good, a "gentle beam of living Love" (Po.29:15). So we must first realize and feel that God loves us, acknowledge Principle's love for its idea, and so get right with God, and then see that we love everyone in the same way. Prayer is "the utilization of the love wherewith He loves us," and it is "learning to

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love, and to include all mankind in one affection" (No.39:19,17-18).

To sum up: if we wish to obey the lesson of the parable, we should bear in mind that we cannot truly love, or truly forgive sin, as long as we believe in the reality of matter, for all sin is based on belief in the reality of matter and hence of mortal mind. Both Jesus and the Science taught by Mrs Eddy show us that that is the cardinal point of difference between their method and the methods of the rest of mankind. In the finest religions there is the constant call to practise kindness, goodness, compassion, forgiveness of sin, and so forth, and the finest adherents of those religions obey this call to an extent that is worthy of much admiration, but none of these attributes can be properly practised until men take the "seven" of Spirit's onliness and root out the belief that there is opposition to Spirit called matter and a matter-world. To have a concept of anyone as material is unloving in itself.

Mrs Eddy tells us specifically that the difference between her teaching and that of all others, except Jesus and his apostles, is that "*by knowing the unreality of disease, sin, and death* [all these effects are based on belief in the reality of matter], you demonstrate the allness of God" (Un.9:28-1). The Master was underlining that very point for Peter, and his whole life emphasized it. When he said, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth," he cut out any reliance on or belief in matter as having anything to do with God or man. In that statement there is no matter and no material man. If there is no matter, there is no sin, therefore only by knowing that there is no matter can we know that there is no sin. The sevenfold nature of the one perfect Principle gives us the tools wherewith to confront the false teaching of the ages and dispute its claims by clearly knowing that there is no mortal mind, and because there is no mortal mind there is no matter; consequently all effects attributed to such a realm, such as sin, hate, fear, and so forth, do not exist because that realm does not exist. The "seven" shows us the nature of God and therefore of man as the only reality. The "ten" shows us how to dispense with belief in matter by applying to the human situation the truths given us by this understanding of God and

man. Through this we become convinced of the integrity and completeness of the sevenfold nature of God, thus fulfilling Jesus' requirement, "Until seventy times seven." That is, the work and the demonstration covered by the term "seventy" makes the sevenfold nature of God truly real not only "in heaven," but also here "on earth." "Thy kingdom is come; Thou art ever-present" (S&H 16:31). Using the "seven" in practical demonstration in the "ten" multiplies for us the true meaning of the "seven" — hence the phrase "seventy times seven."

There could be no other method by which to come out of the dream of life, truth, intelligence, and substance in matter and thus get rid of the effects of that dream. In this way, and in this way only, can a Scientist *be* a Scientist *and* a Christian and understand and practise what Jesus meant here. This certainly makes strenuous demands, but how else can the so-called strenuous demands of mortal mind on our thought and attention be obliterated? As Mrs Eddy asks so pointedly of us all, "Will you doff your lavender-kid zeal, and become real and consecrated warriors?" (Mis.177:14-15)

The good shepherd

(John 10: 1-18, 22-30)

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take

it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father . . . And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

In this parable Jesus is showing the way in which he lived and shepherded his thinking and thereby telling us how to operate in the realm of our own consciousness. There is no doubt that we need to shepherd our thinking, and surely it is wise to learn to do so from the great Exemplar?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." In his discourse Jesus speaks of himself both as the shepherd and as the door. The shepherd guides and guards the sheep in their pasturing and must be fully conscious of and know his sheep. They in turn are conscious of him and know him by his character and manner of leading them and also by the protective purposes of his presence. The shepherd is a symbol of what every one of us must become to our own thinking through our individual Christ ability.

It could be said that a door is an opening through which someone enters an enclosed space or comes out from it, and through which he either keeps safe from intruders that which he values or allows it to be lost. It is important to use the door properly. In Jesus' instructions on prayer he said, "enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." "The closet typifies the

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sanctuary of Spirit, the door of which shuts out sinful sense but lets in Truth, Life, and Love. Closed to error, it is open to Truth, and *vice versa*" (S&H 15:3-6).

The Master is indicating here that the only possible door leading to the realm of consciousness or sheepfold of Principle — that is, to thinking which derives from that Principle — is the full admission and absolute certainty that there is only one Being and that this Being is God. If we try to climb up some other way into the realm of intelligent thinking — that is, by the way of admitting that there are two factors operating, namely, Mind *and* matter — then all our reasoning is subject to what Jesus calls thieves and robbers, because being wrongly based it cannot operate in the realm of intelligence, the realm of that sheepfold of Principle, and so is robbed of clarity of reason and certainly deprived of revelation. (See S&H 326:3-11; My.152:12-15.)

So Jesus starts his parable by showing the importance of how we approach life, the importance of approaching it through the door of the complete and absolute admission that there is only one factor, one Being, and that is Spirit or Mind. In order to enter that door we must resolve never to admit the reality of matter and all that that word embraces. This, then, is the essential beginning and how Jesus always began. Such words of his as "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" show that on this basis he conducted or shepherded all his reasoning.

Let us remind ourselves that the term "matter" does not refer simply to a piece of material substance, but to every kind of erroneous thinking based on the belief that there *is* such a thing as material substance. In nearly every moment of our lives there is thrust upon us (through the news or through gossip or even through thoughts appearing to be our own) the story of matter's total inability to produce anything but inharmony, but this very fact proves matter to be untrue, for if it was real it would produce the results of reality, that is, harmony. Therefore daily it is good to watch that we realize what Mrs Eddy expresses in these lines:

My world has sprung from Spirit,
 In everlasting day;
 Whereof, I've more to glory,
 Wherefor, have much to pay. (Mis.vii:17-20)

We should note those words "much to pay" by learning how to pay attention to the voice of the material world only in so far as it causes us to use our understanding of the truth to realize its nothingness and thus learn how to pay it back in its own coin, that very nothingness. We must then see that we abide in the atmosphere of the world "sprung from Spirit."

"He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." The only state of consciousness which can rightly shepherd our thinking is that which goes through the door of acknowledging the spiritual as the only. This brings us into the certainty and safety of Science.

"To him the porter openeth." The full acknowledgment that Principle (in this case the porter) is alone the source of all consciousness opens the door to that vast sheepfold or realm of ideas which radiates from that central point. Once Mrs Eddy had glimpsed "Life in and of Spirit; this Life being the sole reality of existence" (Mis.24:17-18), she constantly went through that door and Principle opened to her the immense area of ideas which we have given to us in her writings, especially the textbook, for the whole of "Science and Health" elaborates that one theme.

"And the sheep hear his voice" — that is, the voice of the shepherd. Our thinking does hear that voice continually and when the basic issues are clear and it is brought into line with what the Christ-consciousness requires, it is healthy and responsive thinking, like the actions of children when they hear the voices of those whom they know to be calling out of them all that is true and lovely. It is natural for thinking to follow the leading of Truth in any direction and it brings an unlaboured and joyous flow of ideas. When we lead our flock of thoughts according to these ideas, we find how responsive is our whole conscious experience.

"He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the

sheep follow him: for they know his voice." A man's thoughts are his own sheep and they are distinctly identified to him if he is shepherding them rightly. They constitute his individual way of thinking. The Christly admission that everything belongs to and comes from Principle and strict adherence to this, allowing nothing else to "climb up some other way," equips the individual to "put forth" his own sheep, to have his own definite lines of thought derived from Principle and to go before them and conduct them. They will always follow this form of shepherding, whereas they will never follow a confused train of reasoning which has as its basis the belief that matter and Mind are equally real and equally causative, thereby distorting, adulterating, or contradicting the purity of Science. "And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." Anyone starting in a way that is foreign to Principle will find that reason flees from him, because the thoughts he tries to entertain have no fundamental Principle to call or conduct his thinking in the order of intelligence.

After giving this illustration Jesus was aware that his hearers did not understand what he meant by it. They did not see that he was referring to the way he shepherded his own thoughts and therefore showing them the way that they could do the same. And so he reiterated, "I am the door of the sheep." That is, his method of thinking and of realizing the truths emanating from the one foundational Principle called God was the only door possible to men if they would have sheep or ideas evolved by that Principle. Mrs Eddy says, "We would enter by the door, And Thou know'st Thine own" (Mis.398: 11-12). By the "door" she means the realization of Spirit's onliness and the reasoning which flows from that basis; such realization and reasoning is natural to us because we are His own. Jesus was able to say of himself, "I am the door" because he was fully identified with this activity throughout his consciousness.

"All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them." All thinking which had gone before him which had in some degree confused the issue by the admission of matter's existence and reality had robbed men of their God-given

right to conscious dominion. "But the sheep did not hear them" — the true thinking of men never hears or obeys arguments founded on false premises. It knows instinctively that there is a way that is nearer to Truth. This passage from "Science and Health" throws light on the reason for this: "A mortal, corporeal, or finite conception of God cannot embrace the glories of limitless, incorporeal Life and Love. Hence the unsatisfied human craving for something better, higher, holier, than is afforded by a material belief in a physical God and man. The insufficiency of this belief to supply the true idea proves the falsity of material belief" (258:1-8).

"I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Through the Christ-consciousness anyone has the privilege and the necessity of entering his own thinking to see that he has a right estimate of himself — that is the going "in" — and also that he is going "out" rightly to the perimeters of his thinking, embracing all others and all other experience; and through this he will "find pasture," or satisfying substantiation of the truth to which he is adhering.

And so Jesus underlines the necessity of going through this door, the door he used in every detail of his conscious thinking. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" — here he stresses that any other method or attempt to enter the sheepfold or realm of Principle's knowing can only lead the individual to a state of thought where clear and healthy thinking is stolen from him, killed in him, or destroyed for him by the very fact of his erroneous approach. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" — if an individual adopts Jesus' method, the method stemming from the Christ of Mind, that Christ which Mrs Eddy defined as "the true idea voicing good, the divine message from God to men speaking to the human consciousness" (S&H 332:9-11), he will have life-giving ideas in abundance.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." In order to be a good shepherd in the guiding and guarding of our sheep we must do as Jesus did in laying down any form of thinking which is not established on the onliness and allness of Principle.

Is there any other way?

“But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” Any form of shepherding thought which has hired itself out to some system of thinking which appears easier because it allows two factors, matter *and* Mind, and regards them as able to co-operate, will always scatter our thought in fear and confusion and flee from the specific challenge of error in whatever aggressive guise it assumes; and that error is actually the outcome and manifestation of the wrongly conducted thinking. Such thinking has no stability in Principle and having hired itself out to the un-Principled must necessarily lack in care for Principle-emanating ideas, or the sheep of Principle.

“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.” Jesus was telling us that we should know our thoughts and ideas as specifically as a shepherd knows his sheep. We should never be casual about them. For instance, we should be so alert and aware about our thinking that we harbour no *sub*-conscious beliefs; whenever a belief that has been lying low in our thought taps on the door of our full consciousness, we are a good shepherd if we deal with it thoroughly and decisively, thereby rendering it powerless to affect us.

By being a good shepherd and conducting all his thinking from the one basis of Mind's allness and matter's nothingness, Jesus knew his sheep, the ideas coming from this basis, and these ideas through his entertainment of them knew him — that is, they identified him to himself in the conscious worth and strength of his true selfhood. They revealed to him his Christ nature, which was the expression of Principle itself. And so if we shepherd our thoughts and ideas as he did, we too shall find that they reveal to us what we are, and in that sense they will know us as much as we know them. In the ratio that we do know them in the purity of their expression of Principle we find that they know us, because they *are* us, and they reveal to us our individual identity.

There is another side to this, in that Jesus was also referring to his

students as his own sheep, and it is good to note that he knew his students, knew their specific individual characters in detail, and because he knew them, they felt the presence of this true knowing and in their turn knew *him* as the good shepherd, the Master. This brings out the importance of truly knowing those whom through human association we say we know and truly studying the true things revealed in their characters. Only in this way shall we truly know them, and only in this way will they feel that knowing and know *us* in our knowing of *them*. This is the spiritual intercourse which brings unity to men and the joy of discovery of goodness which has untold furtherance as its purpose.

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father.” Jesus saw that it was actually Principle’s knowing of him as an individual expression of itself which caused him to know Principle, to be conscious of Principle’s presence in his experience. A musician has ideas given him by the principle of music and through accepting them he becomes conscious of the principle of music and knows its quality. In other words, as the principle of music identifies him through the ideas it gives him, he knows in his turn the principle and its nature. And it is the same with us in relation to Principle. The more we realize that we are Principle’s consciousness of its own perfection, and live as closely as we can to what this requires of us, the more we experience all the blessings of Principle’s consciousness.

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them I also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.” As we take care of and know our own sheep and expect them to be shepherded through response to Principle into the sheepfold of Principle’s knowing, we find that we also have “other sheep.” They are not in our own immediate consciousness of Principle and appear to be of another fold; but as we bring these other sheep into the one fold, they do hear our voice and respond — they cannot help but do so, because they are part and parcel of our consciousness from our point of view. There is only one consciousness, “one fold, and one shepherd,” the Christ-consciousness, and so what we may think of as influencing other sheep for good in our own little sphere

through our own knowing of the truth — for instance, when someone calls on us directly for help — is not really just that. It is much bigger, it is all Principle's activity, Principle's knowing embracing all, and we have entered that one fold and both we ourselves and our patient are blessed thereby.

If we come into line with Principle's knowing and hold the world as perfect because it is Principle's expression of itself, then as far as we are concerned it *is* perfect, and as far as any individuals are concerned who come into the radius of our consciousness, *they* are perfect. They cannot but feel benefited by the radiation of our Principle-governed thinking if they have entered that atmosphere individually and of their own free will.

As we guide and lead our own sheep, it is impossible to have a little, parochial, selfish activity going on, concerned merely with *our* problems and *our* understanding, as if we were separate from everyone else. We are bound to have a world-wide influence and we should regard it as natural. What blesses one cannot help but bless all. Home "should be the centre, though not the boundary, of the affections" (S&H 58:22-23). We do have our own apparent immediate area of responsibility, but we should also have the joy of knowing that our realizations embrace all the realizations of mankind and in proportion as we know this, it will be so. We may interpret this as "helping the world," but in reality we have helped ourselves to see what is already there in all the world — Science, the atmosphere of God.

"One on God's side is a majority" not because what that one man knows is wonderful and will carry the day, but because he has touched what is true, what is true for everyone. And so when we know the truth, or from our standpoint discover it, we have done no more than Marconi when he discovered wireless waves — we have removed the ignorance which only hid a fact of Science already existing for everyone everywhere.

Mrs Eddy once said, "From the interior of Africa to the utmost parts of the earth, the sick and the heavenly homesick or hungry hearts are calling on me for help, and I am helping them" (My.147:28-30). She did not mean that she knew every specific call or gave specific help

in every case, which would manifestly be impossible, but she recognized that any one of us can say, as Jesus did, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" — unto the "me" (the Christ) which enabled him to lift himself up and become one with that Christ-consciousness. To put it another way: if I shepherd my sheep through the door into the one fold of Principle, I am bound to help the whole world, because the truth I know is already in the consciousness of mankind and my knowing of it is only my individual acceptance of it. The very fact that I know it means that everyone else knows it too, for all men are individual expressions of the same Mind, "that Mind . . . which was also in Christ Jesus." He saw that he always had this Mind, but at the same time he knew that everyone else had it too, and he worked so that they should see how to accept this truth. "Them also I must bring" — in other words, them also I must admit as being of the same Mind as I am, enjoying the same consciousness as I am enjoying. Everyone is of the same one fold, even though appearing at first to be of another fold.

We do not have a special Christ belonging to us. Christ is universal. Christ is Truth. Our part is to accept that there is only one Being going on, one stream, one "pure river of water of life" proceeding from Principle continually, and when we get into that stream, we realize that everyone else is in it; and in so far as we do realize this, that is proof that *we* have got into it. No man can enter heaven without having everyone else in heaven, therefore by the admission that everyone is in heaven we enable our own consciousness to enter that heaven, that "divine state of Mind in which all the manifestations of Mind are harmonious and immortal" (S&H 291:14-16).

The only thing that has made Christian Science parochial is the submission of students to parochialism. The evidence of this is that those who expect Christian Science to be expressed on all sides do find it being expressed on all sides. Whatever we are convinced of, we live in and it is all around us and according to the measure of our conviction we find it. Christian Science has not apparently dwindled because of a lack of sincerity in its adherents, but because they have not accepted the Science of it — namely, its universal nature. The

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reason why the multitudes came to Jesus was that “out of the amplitude of his pure affection, he defined Love” (S&H 54:3-4). God’s omnipresence was a common factor of his thinking, and when we see that, we realize that his direct influence on his disciples — the twelve, the seventy, or the two or three hundred with whom he is credited by tradition — played no final part in the magnitude of his influence on the world.

Jesus is saying here that the Christ Mind which he expressed in his individual cognizance of life and its purposes had a much vaster breadth and scope than his direction of his own thinking concerning himself and those in his vicinity and under his tutorship. In fact in the Science of being the recognition of even one truth about oneself is the recognition of that truth for all the world, and such recognition means that the whole world is benefited. There are no boundaries to the universe of Mind, and the truth which we know for ourselves is not finally *our* knowing of it, but our acceptance in our experience of the knowing of Mind, the Mind which is All. Jesus was bringing home this point, showing that the whole universe of consciousness is the consciousness in which we live and move and have our being, and therefore we have sheep which appear to be of another fold, but actually there is only one fold and one shepherd. Whilst we feel that our fold, our manner of thinking, is our responsibility (and it is) and has to be disciplined and directed under the control of our own Christ reflection of the divine Mind, yet scientifically that state of consciousness is interwoven with the whole seamless robe of the Christ Mind, that is, the consciousness of God. And so, as Jesus says, we need to admit that in reality there is only one fold, one Being with its expression called man and the universe. The Christ impressions which we individually accept and experience are part and parcel of the whole Christ expression of the divine Mind. And so when we accept individually the truths of being and bring them into expression in our lives, we are in effect admitting that these expressions must be everywhere and in all consciousness; in that admission we are blessing the world by helping to release it from the lie that every man’s consciousness is *not* the same in quality (although individual in expression) as everyone

else's. The constant acknowledging of this truth of one Mind gives a new dimension to the purpose of thinking derived from Principle and will cause the student to realize the immense worthwhileness of universality, whereby everyone is with him and he with them in the allness of Mind's expression of itself.

Jesus' statement, "I have overcome the world" means that through his overcoming of all suggestions contrary to the allness and onliness of Mind and its expression, he not only could and did experience God's universe of perfection (that is, the kingdom of heaven which is within), but as far as he was concerned his experience of this was so for everyone else; in this manner he knew that he was expressing the Christ of Mind, which is the Saviour of the world. This same Christ of Mind is ours for the partaking in our individual experience through our shepherding of all our consciousness under the guidelines of Principle.

"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Jesus knew that because he was continually laying down every false sense of life which was not based entirely on the onliness of Spirit, he was by that very activity constantly taking up ideas of Life with increasing certainty and clarity as to their immortal purpose. He recognized that Principle demands of every man this same activity and that nothing and no one can interfere with or trespass upon this individual right and perpetual necessity.

The Jews who heard Jesus giving this discourse could not accept it and they asked him if indeed he was the Christ, demanding that he should tell them plainly. He referred them to the works which he was able to accomplish through this shepherding of his thinking by the Christ of Mind, as a result of going through the door into the sheepfold, taking the ideas found by him through this process and leading them to their full realization and fruition in the human scene.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither

shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Jesus is saying that ideas gathered and shepherded by this method will never perish, neither will anything be able to pluck them from their purpose of producing practical results of harmony in human experience (the hand always indicates practical application). And he strengthens his statement by showing that the reason why the ideas which he or any man shepherds cannot be plucked from this practical purpose is not any personal ability, but the fact that they cannot be plucked out of the hand of the Father — that is, not a single idea of Principle can ever be separated from its perpetual purpose of demonstrating the perfection of Principle. Anyone who wishes to see this demonstration in his own experience need only clear his thought of chance and superstitious beliefs and affirm this truth and go on affirming it until any opposing suggestions recede and finally disappear from thought. Jesus said, "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," but you do have to know it and know it as the truth and fully submit to its mandate in all that you are conscious of, until nothing is left which would water down that knowing and it fully possesses your whole consciousness in whatever direction you seek the demonstration of harmony. "Truth is affirmative, and confers harmony" (S&H 418:20-21).

Jesus follows this, and ends his discourse, by saying, "I and my Father are one." He had learnt how to allow the divine Mind to express itself through him in all the intelligence and healing qualities which made him what he was. Therefore it should be obvious that what we see in his individual expression of the divine, which he called the "I" of himself, was in point of fact the manifestation and appearance of the divine Mind. That was why he could say, and could only say, of that "I" of himself, "I and my Father are one."

Throughout this discourse he had made plain *how* he had attained to the ability to say, "I and my Father are one." He had iterated and reiterated the process and the alertness which made him an expression of that Principle. The ultimate for each one of us is "I and my Father are one," and the Master was showing that in proportion as we allow

our thinking to accept and be taken over by Principle's ideas, it becomes the means in our experience of Principle demonstrating itself for us; and we are led to some degree of the closeness with Principle, the sense of sameness with that Principle, which caused him to say, "I and my Father are one."

This parable reveals the immensity of the work involved in having a right approach, a right use of the door, and then a right shepherding of ideas, ideas which indeed exist in the realm of Principle but can only be found and used by men through this Christ method. Any one of us may wish to follow Jesus when he said, "I lay down my life," but we need to note that he did it of himself. He did not attempt the impossible by expecting someone else to do it for him or by mimicking the work of another. What he meant by "my life" was nothing less than the whole realm of daily thinking, for that is our life, so he was saying that we have to lay down every single false concept of life presented by mortal mind in order to take up the true ideas presented by Principle, and thereby show our love for our sheep (our daily thinking), both for our own sake and for that of all others in the one fold of Principle.

It is the simple fact that every man can do this work. Jesus told us so. He said, "He that believeth on me [that is, he who through this work really understands the Christlike thinking derived from Principle], the works that I do shall he do also;" and knowing that it was Principle operating through such a one he was able to add, "and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" — because that "I," that true method truly followed, is always going on to greater realms of Principle's revelation.

If we have the desire to follow the Master in the method which he is outlining, we can see that in order to shepherd our thinking through the door of Principle-deduced reasoning we have sometimes to do what Mrs Eddy indicates when she writes of the shepherd passing his flock into the fold under his "compelling rod" (Ret.80:24). In other words, very often we have to arrest our thinking decisively and not allow it to stray into personal opinions and prejudices, but immediately bring it back into conformity with what is Principled and with common sense

and decency. Do we not all find that neglect of this leads to unhappiness and disappointment with ourselves and others? Every business man — and indeed every man — knows that there are times when he has to be more than stern in disciplining his thinking and bringing it into line with those fundamental principles which are the human reflection of the divine Principle — principles which proclaim the unity of man as the expression of the one Being, beside whom there is no other. As we learn to shepherd our sheep, our thinking, out of the wandering by-paths of human opinions into the direct paths shown us by the Master, compelling our flock to become subject to the Principle he called Father, we are made satisfied and happy.

We look at a shepherd with his flock and think "How lovely!" and what is lovely about it is the atmosphere of peaceful and purposeful activity. Here through this parable we see that that atmosphere is ours for the winning. The student who takes his Christ selfhood and guides his vast flock of thoughts and ideas under the direction of this Christ-consciousness will experience something of that atmosphere. Certainly we must admit that such a thing is well worth while of attainment, even as it is the privilege of all to accomplish it. If we want heaven — and we do — why not go about the means of finding ourselves in it, as the Master indicated in his statement, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" — or as Mrs Eddy puts it, "within the present possibilities of mankind" (Mis.251:19). Jesus' life was a continual invitation to men to join him in what he knew to be true and what he experienced through all the fibres of his being.

When he ended this parable with the statement, "I and my Father are one," it is obvious that he could not have been referring to the personal Jesus, but rather to the Christ consciousness which was his true selfhood and which he had shown that he turned to in order to guide the thoughts of that personal Jesus, both for himself and for others. It is that Christ Mind which is always at one with Principle and which he refers to as the shepherd and the door — and which, as he so emphatically taught, we all have and can therefore all turn to as he did.