

# 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

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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.