

CLIFFORD STAMP AND ROSALIE MAAS

“Without a parable
spake he not unto them”

No. 11

The true ploughman

The wise and foolish virgins

The necessity of right relationships

The vine and the branches

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BOOKS BY CLIFFORD AND DAISY STAMP:

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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)

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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 the 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 true ploughman

(*Luke 9:62*)

“And Jesus said . . . , No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” In this brief verse, with its vivid parabolic illustration, Jesus gives a clear indication of how to ensure a direct path and speedy progress in Science, through facing up to the subtleties of the arguments of mortal mind.

The preceding verses relate a series of encounters with three individuals; each encounter concerns following the Master. The first man came himself to Jesus and said, “Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest”. Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head”. There is no let-up for the Son of man, on a continual course “outward bound”. No periods of inaction are available to such an outlook. “The song of Christian Science is, ‘Work—work—work—watch and pray’ ” (*Message 1900, 2:7-8*); it requires constant alertness. Jesus was pointing out that the Son of man is engaged in the strenuous journey of finding how to experience his true being as the Son of God, and therefore following the Master could not be regarded as anything but a vigorous forward movement, leading to wonderful possibilities whose very nature could never be attained through any form of ease or sensualism. In business, sport, and in fact in every activity in which man is involved it is in the areas where difficulties have been faced up to and overcome that he has found his true and heavenly reward — the kingdom of heaven.

So with this first individual Jesus showed the path to be a straightforward and direct one, going ahead continually in response to spiritual leadings, never even having the opportunity to remain static

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and evade the challenges presented by errors of belief.

Jesus now said to another man, "Follow me", but here the response was, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father". Jesus answered, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God". He knew that one of the strongest temptations, especially to an earnest student, is to indulge in the habit of looking back to find causes for the error which has apparently obtained in his own performance or experience, or in that of others or even of the world in general. Such a habit is something like resurrecting débris in order to try to bury it! This subtle claim is and must be unscientific, because it enhances rather than diminishes error, by giving it a cause, a father, and it does not bear good fruit in thought and life.

Mrs Eddy writes, "If you believe in and practise wrong knowingly, you can at once change your course and do right" (S&H 253:18-19). In doing this no one needs to stay back with the wrong course and examine it minutely under a microscope; he is best advised to see at once its total unreality and recognize that its claim to existence at any time is not valid in Science.

Jesus shows that the Scientist's work, instead of making a reality of error, even if he feels that the error lay in the past, is to "preach the kingdom of God" — that is, declare Truth now and here to himself and others. No one really preaches effectually unless he lives today what he declares of the divine presence and power, and he cannot do that if he is always trying to get rid of some past mistake or identify its so-called cause. These words from Hebrews have the same theme: "let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works".

When Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matthew 9:2), his message was, in effect, "Don't look back any more. The error never had any real existence in Truth, so if you try to cling to it as true, it will only continue to hold you in bondage in mind and therefore in body. Rejoice that it never had entity and not only that you are the son of God now, but also that you have never fallen from that status. That is the truth which makes you free".

Before he healed the man born blind, Jesus rebuked his disciples for this very error of looking for a cause or father for the problem. They asked, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). Jesus' answer was emphatic: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him", and he went on to heal the man of the whole belief that he had been born blind, so that he "came seeing". Jesus could be likened to an expert ploughman cleaving one straight furrow under Principle's direction. His words reveal that to him the error was never there, for as far as he was concerned the only thing present was Principle and its idea, God and His perfect expression of Himself, named man.

Mrs Eddy wrote: "Christian Science is absolute; it is neither behind the point of perfection nor advancing towards it; it is at this point and must be practised therefrom. Unless you fully perceive that you are the child of God, hence perfect, you have no Principle to demonstrate and no rule for its demonstration. By this I do not mean that mortals are the children of God,—far from it. In practising Christian Science you must state its Principle correctly, or you forfeit your ability to demonstrate it" (My. 242:5-14).

A third individual then came to Jesus and said, "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house". Jesus' reply here was, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God". The Master was laying bare another temptation which may assail the student—the conviction that he must not only bury with full ceremony the so-called cause of the apparent faults in his life, but also hold back in order to bid detailed farewell to all the types of thinking which he has previously dwelt with in his home, his consciousness. The argument that this is a right procedure may try to recommend itself as sound, sincere reasoning, but Jesus dismissed it, since it must mean thought being immersed in egotistical self-analysis and putting off again and again the moment of being fully awake and open to the path of good immediately in front of it. The path is certainly straight and narrow, directly ahead, and narrow in the sense that the indi-

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vidual is closely listening to and following Principle and its mandates, as well as experiencing its joys and certainties. But if anyone is taking this path, he simply has no time to spend on minute self-improvement, which is actually an acknowledgment of imperfection as having had reality at some time and so is inadmissible in Science. "Mortals are not fallen children of God. They never had a perfect state of being, which may subsequently be regained . . . Mortality is finally swallowed up in immortality" (S&H 476:13-15, 17-18).

Looking back to misconceptions and mistakes, therefore, however subtly attractive to human earnestness, Jesus condemned. He even said that anyone who has set his hand to the plough, the plough of Science and the furrow it forms of consecrated conscious thinking based on Principle and its perfection, allowing nothing else to control it — anyone who has put his hand to this plough but then looks back in the manner described is not fit for or able to enjoy the kingdom of God. That kingdom is heaven, harmony, and harmony includes no element inharmonious or condemnatory in the least degree.

The Master is uncovering habits of thought which would dissuade the individual from focusing thought and endeavour on that which lies in front of him. When someone sets his hand to the plough of Science and follows it as it turns up the soil of goodness in man — making that soil ready for the further sowing of the spiritual realizations of perfection which the great Sower is always disseminating — he has to be awake to the temptations and tendencies which would interfere with the direct line of accomplishment.

Human thought may cry out at the dynamic demand of Principle revealed here by Jesus, but human thought can never, under whatever guise, make real or possible in the realm of Science any form of error which requires improvement out of itself. Instant dismissal of it as real, and dismissal also of everything to do with the past, is essential for advancement in Science. If error ever had a cause, then it would be real. And if error could be improved out of itself to make truth, then again it would be real; and once it is granted reality, no one can make it unreal with any finality. Heaven under this régime would become impossible of attainment; the best we could ever hope for

would be an eternity of improvements, never reaching our goal, and that is the ultimate slavery exacted by mortal mind's outlook.

So if suggestions come forward of any error which one has practised and the need to look for the cause of such error, one's only answer should be, "It never took place in Science. I therefore will not give it any reality in my thinking". If the suggestion comes that humanly there is a great deal at home in one's consciousness to which one has to say farewell, again the demand of Principle is to reply, "There is no improving process to perfection. Perfection is present, or there is no Principle and no Science". Let the student dwell with that perfection and let it fill thought to the elimination of all else and it will be found that the other fades out of experience in the face of the growing realization that perfection is natural and here and constitutes his true self; and he finds that true self in the ratio that he sticks to the straight following of the plough in the furrow of human realization. "Hold thought steadfastly to the enduring, the good, and the true, and you will bring these into your experience proportionably to their occupancy of your thoughts" (S&H 261:4-7).

The very endeavour to excuse ourselves from the utter devotion revealed in Jesus' simple words, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" shows that it is error. It sometimes whispers with the same Satanic voicing as was illustrated in Genesis when the so-called serpent of the subtleties of mortal mind whispered, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" and followed with the Satanic reasoning that it is necessary to know evil as something that has existed or does exist in order to handle it. These words of Mrs Eddy should prove thoroughly arresting to the student: "God never said that man would become better by learning to distinguish evil from good,—but the contrary, that by this knowledge, by man's first disobedience, came 'death into the world, and all our woe'" (Un. 14:27-2). Surely it is wise to ponder such statements, of which of course there are many more.

Most human beings are prone to look back to something in the past — to their childhood, to the "good old days" or "the bad old days", or to some period of their so-called history — and the more they do

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so the more real becomes mortal existence. As Mrs Eddy says, "It is well to know, dear reader, that our material, mortal history is but the record of dreams, not of man's real existence, and the dream has no place in the Science of being" (Ret. 21:13-15). The question which concerns us today is not "Was I living rightly yesterday, or years ago?" The only question which counts at this moment is: "Am I living the life that approaches the supreme good?" (S&H 496:10). Am I determined to be a ploughman with my eyes and all my mental muscular ability devoted to keeping behind that plough, following its direction in an untrammelled consecration which will not be diverted from that one purpose, no matter who or what is suggesting otherwise?

The wise and foolish virgins

(Matthew 25:1-13)

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

The first obvious lesson of the parable is the need for continual consecration, but we cannot finally leave it there, because it is so plain that it illustrates far more than appears at a first reading. Great teachers like Jesus and Mrs Eddy, being divinely inspired, covered all the levels of human thinking and embraced the human need for guidance at every one of those levels. Naturally all the parables in the Gospels should be taken initially in their plain, straight lesson and followed accordingly, but the man who spoke them was a man who in his own life admitted no process towards good, but rather the ever-presence of good as the manifestation of his Father or divine Principle.

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Should we not therefore look for the signs of that higher level of thinking where he always held himself, and should we not bear in mind that he said, "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven"?

The story of this parable is that ten virgins take their lamps and prepare to meet the bridegroom. Those who have oil in their lamps are those who have what the Bible calls the "oil of gladness". The definition of "oil" in the "Glossary" of "Science and Health" is "Consecration; charity; gentleness; prayer; heavenly inspiration" (S&H 592:25-26). Those who tend and feed their understanding with the oil of consecration, charity, gentleness, prayer, and heavenly inspiration are always prepared for the midnight call; they are never caught off beat. Those who have the ability, but are not tending it, may find themselves unable to respond immediately when the call comes and are therefore shut out from experiencing the joy of realization and demonstration. If they succumb to the suggestion that they must go away and consecrate their life to the spiritual for a period of time until their lamps are filled with the oil of gladness and inspiration, then they miss the boat. The remedy therefore does not lie in believing that *they* are the source of light and inspiration and that their negligence can consequently affect the issue. They have it in their power to correct that suggestion and to realize that Mind is always fully present and always expressing itself through them without any need of premeditated reasoning. Their negligence can have no effect unless they believe it can and they submit to a belief in a process of "four months" before the "harvest". Jesus himself asked, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest". Consequently he could only have been showing people through this parable that if they believed that inspiration was generated by themselves, then indeed the wise virgins would have the experience of enjoying the bridegroom's presence and those who dwelt with their lack of wisdom would *not* have that experience. But if those called the foolish virgins became wise enough to see where wisdom originates and to admit that they were the

expression of wisdom, then by that very admission they would have a more real encounter with the joy of accomplishment symbolized by the bridegroom. In other words, when the midnight call came which according to mortal standards would be a cry of mortal mind, but would actually be the presence of some phase of the divine Mind awaiting recognition, then those who had proved for themselves that that presence of the divine Mind was their true selfhood would not merely be ready, as the other students were. They would also be furnished with the qualities of instantaneity and of healing through the Spirit rather than through mere argument.

Looked at in this light, the only criticism levelled against the foolish virgins was that they thought they had to *get* oil, either by borrowing it or begging for help from some other apparently wiser individuals, or else through going away to purchase it by turning to the spiritual channels where it can be acquired. This very attitude of "getting" was what caused them to be shut out from the bridal chamber. A reversal of this attitude, based on the teachings of the Master, would not only have ushered them into the bridal chamber, but from that very acceptance of the processes of divinity would have better equipped them to enjoy the fruition of the continual presence of the bridegroom, or the Christ-idea.

Whether any one of us is a wise or foolish virgin, the call comes to go up higher. The midnight hour when the bridegroom arrives indicates the end of one phase and the beginning of a new phase with all its opportunities of demonstration and joy. When the call comes, the response is either "I'm not equal to this, I'm not prepared, I feel quite inadequate" or else the very good and in itself wonderful response, "Yes, I can help, because I have kept close to the spiritual and have consecrated myself to study". But it is open to every individual to recognize that he can at any time fulfil the purpose set before him. Whatever he is called upon to do, he is already prepared to fulfil, not because of any human ability, but through natural spiritual reflection. If this were not so, we should not have a Mind continually manifesting intelligence. "Man is God's image and likeness; whatever is possible to God, is possible to man *as God's reflection*. Through the

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transparency of Science we learn this, and receive it: learn that man can fulfil the Scriptures in every instance; that if he open his mouth it shall be filled — not by reason of the schools, or learning, but by the natural ability, that reflection already has bestowed on him, to give utterance to Truth” (Mis. 183:12-19).

The foolish virgins thought they were caught out, but no one can be caught out in Science, since whatever we meet, Principle has prepared us to meet. That is the perfect operation of the perfect Principle.

If through ignorance our oil is not of a lasting quality and our lamps go out and fail us, we can still have instant recourse to the facts of Science. So whilst we must not disregard the necessity of buying oil, it is also true that if through our neglect or through lack of time we have not purchased oil, we still have entry to the world in which Jesus lived — the availability and immediacy of good. We can, without time or the necessity of study, but with a clear understanding of what man is as the expression of God, enjoy immediately the blessings open to such a being. “Mind is not necessarily dependent upon educational processes. It possesses of itself all beauty and poetry, and the power of expressing them . . . Eloquence re-echoes the strains of Truth and Love. It is due to inspiration rather than to erudition . . . If one believes that he cannot be an orator without study or a super-induced condition, the body responds to this belief, and the tongue grows mute” (S&H 89:18-20; 88:26-27; 89:14-16).

So the rule is to consecrate our lives to learning and living the requirements of Principle, but realize that even with all this and with the best we can do, we may well feel caught out by a lack of oil in meeting a particular situation. Therefore whether we have not studied at all or studied a great deal, our only line of relief and certainty is to accept the teaching of Jesus as to the full presence of perfection. If we do this, we have thrown ourselves down at the feet of that Love which gives the whole atmosphere of Science; and we are at once blessed in the ratio of our falling wholeheartedly into the arms of this fact of divine Love and its ever-presence in the expression of itself as ourselves and all mankind.

When the foolish virgins turned to the wise and said, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out", the wise virgins replied, "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves". In those words they spelt out their own limitations. If we feel that through time and consecration we are better equipped than someone else, we are indulging in a mild form of malpractice. We are also forgetting the Master's declaration, "ye shall be brought before governors and kings [that is, anything in human experience which tries to dominate and rule your thinking by its apparent authority] for my sake . . . But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you". Again, when Jesus taught in the Temple, we read that "the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me".

The wise virgins were prepared, so we must give credit where credit is due, but they relied on that preparedness. If at any time circumstances caused them to neglect their studies, they would automatically place themselves in a position as hopeless as the position which *they* felt the foolish virgins were in, for if we think wrongly in any degree of someone else, we throw the door wide open for that wrongness to become applicable to ourselves.

The foolish virgins shut the door on the bridegroom through self-condemnation. Consecration to the spiritual does not make anyone more spiritual, but only more aware of the spirituality he already has. The so-called foolish virgins had spirituality, but had allowed a false teaching to tell them that there were times when they had not. The so-called wise virgins recognized their own spirituality, but were parochial and selfish and believed what could never be true — that good was finite and so there was not enough oil for them *and* the others (although the spiritual always grows by sharing). In one sense they represented a mistake of reasoning as much as the others, who thought that they had not got spirituality. In both cases the truth was

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that they had it "pressed down, and running over". The lesson is that on the one hand we should not condemn those who think they do not have what in actual fact they must have as children of the same Parent; and on the other hand we should not congratulate ourselves on our spirituality if we have lost its whole import by making it finite and being possessive about it. We all need to recognize our present spirituality and therefore that we have sufficient for every requirement. That sufficiency means too that we have all we need in order to share and give without any possibility of depletion.

The Master's saying, "whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance", rebukes the sense of a process towards perfection, and he underlines the danger of believing in a process when he goes on, "but whosoever hath not [that is, *thinks* he has not], from him shall be taken away even that he hath". Naturally this does not mean that we have no need to study all that Mrs Eddy says, for we certainly do need to do this, but the best attitude to have when studying "Science and Health" and the other writings is to regard them as telling us where we already *are* and what we already *have*, in all its detailed magnificence. You have to be in London and know you are in London in order to enjoy a guidebook to London.

Both groups were virgins in this parable, and that term may have been used to indicate not only purity of thought but also inexperience of the world's challenges. The number "ten" introduces a tone of morality, as in the general interpretation of the ten Commandments, and both groups of virgins had the moral sense that man needs time and process in order to fit himself for perfection. The so-called wise virgins were tainted by an egotistical opinion of their own qualifications, which caused them to condemn those not fulfilling their limited conditions for perfection. To them purity was represented by the accumulation of the letter. What was important to them was the oil, the acquisition of understanding, but this state of thought needs the love which that oil should have generated, so that the need of another individual is immediately seen and met.

Those who consecrate thought to the spiritual through study and even more through daily admissions of the presence of good in all

things do have the joy of the continual coming of the bridegroom in fresh revelation, but they are mistaken if they believe this to be the only path which leads to revelation. A child who has never studied at all will often accept or express truths both profound and filled with joy and healing. No man can outline how Principle will work, but every man can admit that Principle *is* working in the activities of good all the time and decide for himself that he will adopt every means available in order to feel and know that this is true, thereby experiencing the benefits which await him as a result.

What makes it true that a newcomer to Science more often experiences an instantaneous healing than does a so-called advanced student? Only the ability to accept and receive without a belief in time and process. Oh, to be flexible enough to be willing to accept perfection now!

It was the clear recognition of the equality of all men in their perfect expression as ideas of Principle which provided Jesus with his supreme understanding of every man, no matter where the individual believed he was. To him there was no one above or below the datum line of perfection, and Love had to have its largesse in order to be Love. That which is infinite can have no touch or sense associated with finity. "All" has never heard or known of lack, and the nature of every idea derives from the Mind which is All-in-all.

Had the Master had a mind which could have interpreted this parable as we usually do, then to be consistent he would in the incident of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:1-12) have had to praise the Pharisees, who had at least some glimpse of the spiritual and the requirements of the moral; and he would have had to condemn the adulterous woman, who appeared to have no oil in her lamp. But Jesus levelled the whole thing out onto the Christ plane where every valley is exalted, every mountain of egotism brought low, and all are led to the fact of reality that each one is perfect now, without the need of processes towards that perfection. As this levelling came into expression, the woman was lifted up and the Pharisees given the touch of true humility. Both she and they entered the bridal chamber in the way which was right for **them**.

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The parable ends, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh". If you watch rightly by watching Truth above all, you know that the Son of man is always with you and that you need only watch that you do not accept as real the arguments of mortal mind. Then without your knowing the day or hour the Son of man (that is, the spiritual idea applicable to your requirement at that time) *will* come to you.

Too often we close the door on the bridegroom either through sloth or through a conviction that our progress depends on the amount of study we do. Study we should, but not with our eye on the amount of oil it will give us, but only because of our love of it and the joy it gives us. If at any time we believe that our lack of study has caused a lack of oil in our lamps, we can silence this reasoning of mortal mind with a better understanding as to who provides the oil, for it is certainly not ourselves.

Again, we sometimes close the door by saying, "I haven't a hope, I have only just started and I don't understand clearly. I can't possibly grasp ideas of God". What the Christ says is, "I do not know that sort of argument. You are perfect now and have the oil now and therefore watch, so that whenever the suggestion comes that you haven't the oil, you say, 'Liar, you are talking to Mind and not to me'. 'It shall be given to you in that same hour what ye shall speak.'"

The bridegroom is always present and asking of you only the alertness to receive and accept. All the limits went for Mrs Eddy when she experienced what she called "the heart's bridal to more spiritual existence". "When the door opened, I was waiting and watching; and, lo, the bridegroom came! The character of the Christ was illuminated by the midnight torches of Spirit. My heart knew its Redeemer. He whom my affections had diligently sought was as the One 'altogether lovely', as 'the chiefest', the only, 'among ten thousand'. Soulless famine had fled. Agnosticism, pantheism, and theosophy were void. Being was beautiful, its substance, cause, and currents were God and His idea. I had touched the hem of Christian Science" (Ret. 23:13-24).

Is not the deeper lesson from the story of the ten virgins twofold?

The vine and the branches

(John 15:1-8)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

What Jesus said in these verses constituted his highest impersonalization of his work. His disciples could not abide in him personally, but only in the Christ Mind on which he drew. He knew that if they saw that all the qualities they loved in him came from his “branchliness” to the vine, they would be able to find for themselves those same qualities through their own individual “branchliness”. That would cause them to love him truly and also to love one another, as he commanded them to do, for immediately after using this illustration of the vine he said, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you”.

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“I am the true vine.” Jesus must have been referring to the whole Christ — the entire realm of ideas established in Principle and emanating from Principle — and not to himself as the human Jesus. There is no limit to the infinitude of that Christ realm. This was the same Christ as he referred to when he said to his disciples just before the human Jesus disappeared to material sense, “lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20); he did not mean that the individual Jesus would stay with them, but rather the Christ Mind which he individually expressed.

The Master very much wanted to show his students that the one presence they would always have, and the only one they would always have, was Principle’s expression of itself. Never Principle itself — that they would not have. If anyone imagines he has that, he is merely leaning on something he *calls* God.

Nobody draws on Principle itself, any more than he does in mathematics. We know that Principle is there, just as the mathematician knows that the principle of mathematics is there, undeviating in expression and purpose; the student of mathematics works all the time with the Christ of mathematics, with some phase of the effect of the principle. To take another illustration: when we say “Spring has come”, we are looking at the Christ of spring, as it were, but no man knows what spring is in essence or why it has come or why there are seasons. Nature does not make the seasons: it responds to something beyond itself. No one can define Principle itself. “Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live” — in other words, it is impossible to define Principle in itself. Even the definition of God in “Science and Health” can only show the Christ of Principle — not the infinite One itself. “Our highest sense of infinite good in this mortal sphere is but the sign and symbol, not the substance of good” (Un. 61:17-18).

Principle and its Christ cannot be separated. Christ is all that is or ever will be known of Principle. The Christ of Principle is all there is of Principle as far as we are concerned. “He that hath seen me [the Christ expression or manifestation] hath seen the Father.” Christ is God in that it is the only known appearance or expression of God.

That is why Mrs Eddy refers to Christ, Truth. We may think of Christ as something separate from God, but the only thing we can know about God is Christ. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him."

It is true that Jesus had always so closely identified himself with this Christ that he rightly thought and spoke of them as one, but nevertheless we have to differentiate between the individual Christ as expressed by Jesus and the whole Christ on which he drew — that is, Christ, Truth, God's whole expression of Himself. Jesus himself distinguished clearly between himself as a human being and himself as the expression of the Christ. His sense of it was so poised, so certain, so exact. For instance, he said, "Ye judge after the flesh; I [as the human Jesus] judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me [I see to it that I judge from the point of view of Principle through the Christ ideas which Principle gives me]". He was called Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ for the very reason of his close association with and expression of the Christ of God. He was not called Jesus God.

The Christ is the whole realm of ideas proceeding from Principle, expressing Principle. The human Jesus adhered to that Christ until the entire range of his thinking was embraced by it and it translated him out of the Jesus appearing. When he used this analogy of the vine, the time was fast approaching for the relinquishment of the dual appearing, through his resurrection and then his ascension to the one being of whom he could say, "lo, I am with you alway". All this is made clear in "Science and Health", especially on pages 332:9-334:30.

Here on earth we each have a dual appearing — our Christ selfhood which is spiritual, perfect, and ever present, and our highest human selfhood, which is an interpretation of that Christ in a limited language. Just as Jesus continually held his Son of man in heaven, so we have continually to lay claim to the perfection of our Christ selfhood even while we are still feeding and clothing ourselves materially. What Mrs Eddy says of Jesus can apply to any one of us: "The real

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Christ was unconscious of matter, of sin, disease, and death, and was conscious only of God, of good, of eternal Life, and harmony. Hence the human Jesus had a resort to his higher self and relation to the Father, and there could find rest from unreal trials in the conscious reality and royalty of his being, — holding the mortal as unreal, and the divine as real. It was this retreat from material to spiritual selfhood which recuperated him for triumph over sin, sickness, and death” (No. 36:12-20). Like the Master we can have continual recourse to our spiritual selfhood and draw what Christliness we want from the vast resources of the Christ represented by the vine, on which he also drew. In the ratio that we follow his example in this, we lose the dual appearing and find, as he did, the unity of our spiritual identity.

“My Father is the husbandman.” We may think that Jesus should have said, “I am the vine, and my Father is the rootings, the Cause”. But he did not — he said, “my Father is the husbandman”. According to our normal reasoning the husbandman has no relationship to the vine other than to tend it, but how essential that job is. What Jesus was emphasizing throughout this passage is the importance of the Christ as being all that we know of Principle; the only thing we ever know of Principle is its expression, but we know the *presence* of Principle not only in its expression but also in the way in which Principle is husbandman to that expression.

In any sphere of life where there is Principle-reflecting activity an intelligent student in that realm would admit that the principle itself remains forever unseen and indefinable, but at the same time he would tell you of his certainty of its presence. He knows its presence, first, through the ideas which express it, from which he draws his inspiration, and secondly through its continual shaping of those ideas as they appear to him individually, trimming them to the shape which is essential for their principled expression. He feels himself compelled to conform his expression of the principle according to the lines pointed out by that principle. He is constantly aware of the ever-watchful eye and hand of the husbandman, so to speak, keeping its ideas on course, and he knows that he has to accept the corrections

of that husbandman. If he is fruitful, he feels the praise of the principle, but he is also pruned to enable him to bear more fruit or better fruit; there is no musician or artist who has not felt an impelling force pushing him on to something better in his own line and asking more than he has previously given in devotion to it and expression of it. If he is not fruitful and has no results which are principle-expressing, that unfruitfulness is cut away. Whenever anyone produces a distorted branch through going outside the principle, the husbandman causes that distortion to be rejected. The husbandman is perpetually present as a tutor, and a stern tutor if this is necessary to remove unwanted dead material. Any man who tries to stay with the dead stuff is temporarily cut off from the vine — he has come outside the vine and its purpose and is cut off by not abiding in it. He is outside the principle by not being principled.

Mrs Eddy felt the husbandman continually by her side. She called herself "a scribe under orders" (Mis. 311:26), with the husbandman shaping the words, the sentences, the paragraphs, and the chapters in her writings. The ideas she presented were all drawn from the Christ of Principle, but the husbandman saw to their expression. With Principle as the husbandman the expression of Truth in her writings was bound to be brought to the point where it had not only strength and clarity, but also all the warmth and appeal which would win the hearts of men.

The husbandman by which we all know Principle's presence is so close, so real, that we cannot miss it. If ever we try to express ourselves outside of Principle, Principle manifests its husbandman aspect by showing that this bears no fruit and through that showing causing it to be cut out of our experience. The more we advance, the more instantly we are aware of the presence of the husbandman. We feel Principle's presence with us as we learn to express its idea through our own understanding. If we as a branch of the Christ of Principle do not conform to what we are, then our Father the husbandman cuts us out — that is, we lose the strength of reasoning which proceeds from the vine of Principle. Then we have to start again in right relationship to Principle, and if we do this, knowing that it is the

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husbandman aspect of Principle showing us how to do it, we are glad to receive the necessary directions as we see and feel the upward path unfolding.

“My Father is the husbandman.” Jesus was perfectly clear that he was not the husbandman, he was not God. Although human thought may confuse itself over this issue, it is obvious that any student master who is also a master student does not put himself in the position of God. He says to his students, “All that I stand for is the ideal of this subject. That is what is important. Forget me personally and keep your eyes on what I am conforming to”. Mrs Eddy said, “Follow your Leader, only so far as she follows Christ” (Message 1902, 4:3-4). Jesus did not want to be deified or considered to have a special position aloof from his students; he made it plain that what he stood for and taught was where their thought should be focused. He was a “divine student” (S&H 117:16), as much as were his disciples, so in that sense he was like a master sitting among the other students; but what he was teaching was the Christ and it was there that their thought had to be centred — not on the human Jesus, who according to the Scriptural record went to sleep in the boat on the lake, was sometimes weary, sometimes angry, and so forth.

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” Anything in our thinking derived from the testimony of the senses will prove fruitless and will be cut away. By what? By the very fact that we are the branches of Principle’s expression of itself, the vine. That truth, which is established and is active through us and as us, will throw off all our attempts at being anything else. It will clean out the resistance and obstinacy which mortal mind has tried to educate in us.

If anyone keeps in contact with the principle through its expression, its manifestation, in any science, he will find that it is purging him, clarifying and refining his conception and realization of it and enlarging his ability to accept it. It does not only purge him in what he has, but also increases his capacity to accept, which is one of the prime needs if there is to be greater fruitfulness. As he goes on in any

science, he has to accept, but as he goes on, he accepts even the advanced ideas with increasing ease, because he is more in rapport with it. Therefore any of us can realize the extent of our branchliness by the very fact of the improvement being produced in us both as regards understanding and readiness of acceptance.

Jesus recognized the right of the individual to be taught directly by Principle, and he did not try to step into Principle's shoes. He was saying here, in effect, "If you abide in the Christ, you will receive what you need from Principle to clarify your thinking". Knowing that his Father was the husbandman, he let Him be so. He was saying to his students, "If you look at the Christ and you abide there, Principle through your individual Christ will correct you according to your unique ways and necessities". The issues were so impersonal with the Master. He never tried to enter the mentalities of his students and manipulate or rule them. He was there to show them the Christ and to show them that if they abode there, they would bear much fruit and would also be continually cleansed. But all the time he left the individual free. That was why he could later stand without condemnation on the shores of Galilee and let it come clearly to the disciples that they had not been abiding in the vine and therefore were not experiencing fruitage. With his usual loving method he invited them to use their ability to cast their nets on the right side — to reason with ideas from Principle — and as soon as that ability was reawakened and they did as he said, they received the reward. (See John 21:1-6.)

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Jesus was saying, in other words, "I have shown you the right channels for your flow of thought and you have felt the cleansing which this brings". All the time he was giving them the cues for their safety and sure progress after he had left them.

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." There is no fruitage through personal opinions, but only through dwelling with Principle's ideas and abiding in their truth.

Nature teaches that a branch maintaining a flow from the vine all

its life expects to form fruitage as a result of its branchliness, and it is obvious that if it were cut asunder from the vine, it would be nothing; if it is not cut asunder from the vine, its fruitage is assured. The lesson is: keep constant contact with the vine, the whole Christ, Principle's whole expression of itself; and this is done in a straightforward manner by entertaining only ideas traceable to Principle and to Principle alone.

Take the idea expressed by "I love you": you lift it into the quality of a branch of the vine by realizing that the love you feel is not of your making, but given you by Principle; it flows from Principle and you recognize it as flowing from Principle and passing through you as you. You realize that your true purpose in life is to be this branch through which Principle has its fruitage and by which it is glorified.

"I am the vine, ye are the branches." Jesus himself as Jesus was as much a branch as each of the disciples; he abode in the Christ and for that reason bore fruit. Because of his own continual experience of this, he knew and taught that it was equally true for his disciples and for all men — there was no doubt about the Science of it. He drew on the whole manifestation of God to express his own Christhood, and we are in the same position. Because we *are* branches, we must keep that truth alive in our consciousness. We do this by recognizing the source of our branchliness, which is the Christ, the whole Christ, defined by Mrs Eddy as the "divine manifestation of God" (S&H 583:10), and by drawing from that Christ, Truth. Thereby we abide in the vine as branches of it.

The vine and its branches are one and are equally important, although they have distinct functions in their unity. We are branches maintained by that vine, for we are inseparable from it. The vine is God's expression of Himself and we are part and parcel of that expression, but we can realize this only by maintaining a ceaseless flow of ideas from that Christ, Truth. The Christ is the whole realm of consciousness which emanates from Principle and we can entertain that consciousness as our own and as us. In other words, we can keep our thinking filled with ideas which are Principle-based and Principle-endowed. Keeping our minds filled with ideas derived from this vine,

this whole expression of God, we are the branches; and we are fruitful in the ratio that those ideas are reflected by us to the exclusion of anything which does not proceed from the vine.

At the point at which he was speaking Jesus had not fully attained to the Christ. He was still conscious of himself as a branch drawing everything from the vine, but by becoming a perfect branch (that is, wholly expressing the vine, the Christ), there became no difference between him as a branch, or Jesus, and the vine itself, the Christ Mind which he expressed. He was finally the same as the vine, and that was at the point of the ascension. This must be our aim, and it is an activity which can go on in our experience continuously in growing measures of ascension above the material.

When we abide in the vine with complete fidelity and naturalness and even the need for symbols goes, then we too shall be able to say, "I am the vine", the Christ consciousness individually expressed, and to all the ideas we have we shall be able to say, "ye are the branches".

This Christ consciousness, this whole expression of Principle, is as available to us as it was to Jesus. It was only his whole fidelity and consecration to that consciousness which differentiated him in experience from ourselves, but even so, we can here and now let ideas derived from this divine source possess our thought, and we can develop this until there is no room for any theory based on the senses; at such time we shall have the same Mind "which was also in Christ Jesus". It is as possible for the individual to entertain ideas solely based on Truth, in increasing measure with increasingly good results, as it is possible for a mathematician, starting with the ideas of simple arithmetic, to develop them in increasing measure in the realm of the science of mathematics and with increasingly good results. It is a matter of the acceptance, not the manufacture, of ideas divinely established and already present. They become more and more attractive as we grow closer to them through the devotion and spiritual determination so clearly demonstrated in the life of Jesus.

If you spoke to any thinking, faithful student of any of the human sciences, which in their symbolic expression do symbolize the divine Principle, he would tell you that as he went on he became more and

more attracted to the ideas given to him and that his study became less and less arduous and increasingly inspirational. If this is so in the experience of men when they become servants of any scientific process, how much more must it be so with us in relation to the Science of all being, since our whole natural selfhood is indeed a branch of that vine of infinite goodness radiating from Principle.

“He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” The vine stands for the idea of perfection, and you just where you are at this and indeed in every moment are a branch of that idea. If you want to be fruitful in the realm where you need such fruitfulness (for instance, in healing), it is essential to remain with the true idea of yourself, your Christ selfhood.

In mathematics the principle has its Christ, which is the system of mathematics, and you as a student accept that you must remain in that vine here on earth. Even a child expects and receives fruitage immediately in mathematics. His sums come right in proportion as he abides in the vine of mathematics, and so he is blessed with health and harmony in that sphere. Getting his sums right is his present interpretation of the ideal of mathematics, and then as he becomes more and more devoted to the mathematical idea, he goes on to its more advanced metaphysical aspects.

Jesus had already said to his disciples, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father”. What he was saying was that he who understands the Christ on which he drew will do the works that he did (healing the sick, raising the dead, and so on) and will also do “greater works” — not greater than Jesus, but as he proceeds along the same Christ path as Jesus followed he will do the greater works which Jesus himself has gone on to do as his “I” has gone higher and higher in the Christ realization. And so we shall come to the point where, like Jesus after the resurrection, we have outdistanced the need to heal the body in order to express consciousness in the realm of ideas, uncontaminated by anything human. This is the Shekinah to which Mrs Eddy refers when she says that “the

anchor of hope must be cast beyond the veil of matter into the Shekinah into which Jesus has passed before us" (S&H 40:32-2).

We accept this quite naturally in mathematics. The small child forms his numerals distinctly and neatly and gives this much time and attention. Later he may just scrawl them, and later still as he advances in mathematics he does not have them in a physical form in front of him at all. Later still he does not even have those same symbols in a mental form to express his consciousness of mathematics.

"If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." The claim of the serpent (and its strongest weapon) is that it can separate us from the vine, and cut us off from our branchli-ness. It suggests that each of us is an entity of our own making. "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Let the serpent convince us of that and we are no longer abiding in the vine but are out on a limb all alone. We must watch therefore that we never allow ourselves to be separated from the vine and never lose sight of the fact that Love is as fully wedded to its own spiritual idea as we are to Love. We need to be alert to this because right through the piece the serpent is saying, "Ye shall know more, ye shall know it of yourselves". We cannot know anything of ourselves. We can only know ideas of Principle. We can feel our true selfhood and the joy and strength of it when it is Principle's own knowing that we are conscious of. Jesus was aware of this when he said, "I and my Father are one" — one in quality, not quantity, because he also said, "My Father is greater than I". His natural sense of closeness to God made it natural for him to see all mankind as close to God and close to each other.

"And men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Mankind eventually uncovers the withered branches, that is, the fraudulent theories, teachings, and methods of healing which are not based on Truth, and will have nothing more to do with them. For instance, Mrs Eddy predicts that just as men have rejected the doctrine of the predestination of souls to damnation or salvation (once widely accepted), so the time will come when the belief "that both matter and mind are subject to disease, and that, too, in spite of the individual's protest and contrary to the law of divine Mind" will

be to all others as “evidently erroneous” as it was to her (see S&H 150:18-26).

In the light of this we need to make sure that we keep to the straight truth of Spirit’s onliness, for the challenge which this presents and the acceptance of it means that our thinking will never wither for lack of inspiration and will thereby always have an appeal to mankind. In all walks of life man responds to Truth — clean, direct, demanding — for this is the substance of which he is made. Interest wanes the moment there is a departure from the standard spelt out in Mrs Eddy’s words, “Truth is real, and error is unreal”. She follows that with words which constitute a warning similar to that given by Jesus: “This last statement contains the point you will most reluctantly admit, although first and last it is the most important to understand” (S&H 466:15-18).

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” This was not just the personal promise of a loving Master, but the declaration of a scientific spiritual fact, namely, that if anyone abides in the Christ of Principle, that is, in the true ideas of God and man, then when he has a specific need, answers will come from this Christ Mind in the form of a flow of spiritual conviction whereby he will find that the need is met. “When a hungry heart petitions the divine Father-Mother God for bread, it is not given a stone, — but more grace, obedience, and love” (Mis. 127: 11-13). Suppose you wanted health, for instance. Through abiding in the Christ, Truth, an influx of Truth would come to you, revealing as present the very health for which you longed, ready to take the place of some lying suggestion. In other words, when we abide in Truth, Truth so abides in our consciousness of it that it reveals the truth of our well-being with a clarity and conviction which expunges any belief to the contrary.

In mathematics we all accept without difficulty that we can ask what we will and be given it as long as we are abiding in mathematics and using its system. So it should be equally natural to see that if we are abiding in the Christ and what it says to us through its ideas, the same thing applies in that realm.

If we are abiding in the Christ, what we ask for will not be something material or based on self-will. If a man lives in Buckingham Palace, he does not ask for a box of matches and a few sticks to light a fire, but for something in keeping with where he is dwelling. So if we are abiding in the Christ, what we ask for will be the Christ nature. We shall ask for a continual expression of our true Christ selfhood and ask that our state of consciousness through conforming to the Christ will be such that it will naturally express itself in all that is right and lovely to us and to others. If all we are asking for is the expression of our Christ selfhood, then the human manifestation will certainly reflect this, and that reflection will include everything that gives us and all those in the radiation of our experience happiness and certainty. Mrs Eddy saw that "happiness would be more readily attained and would be more secure in our keeping, if sought in Soul" (S&H 60: 30-31), and our desire for a greater expression of the Christ is truly a Soul-inspired desire. In the Lord's Prayer Jesus showed us one of our needs in the words, "Give us this day our daily bread", and it is wise to note the wonderful interpretation of this in "Science and Health": "Give us grace for to-day; feed the famished affections" (S&H 17:5).

The beloved disciple John wrote, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us", and the best thing we can ask for is to acknowledge, feel, and know this love so that it possesses us and we "let this Mind be in [us], which was also in Christ Jesus". If we accept that God loves us, that "Love is wedded to its own spiritual idea" (S&H 575:3), we are bound to reflect and express that Love and so bear much fruit and glorify Love. In the book "We Knew Mary Baker Eddy: First Series" (page 74) Abigail Dyer Thompson recalls Mrs Eddy saying to her in conversation, about her healing work: "I saw the love of God encircling the universe and man, filling all space, and that divine Love so permeated my own consciousness that I loved with Christlike compassion everything I saw. This realization of divine Love called into expression 'the beauty of holiness, the perfection of being' (Science and Health, p.253), which healed, and regenerated, and saved all who turned to me for help".

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As we abide in Principle, and Principle in us, we have the will of Principle, the will of Truth, because of that abiding in the Christ. We could not have any other will whilst abiding in that Christ, and so when we ask what we will, we ask only what Principle is willing for us.

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” Jesus accepted the responsibility of glorifying Principle by doing the works of Principle and found the true joy of living in his response to that acceptance. So it was natural to show his disciples (and us) that all must do the same and thereby receive the lasting joy which no man can take away. The healthy child of healthy parents wants to do that which will bring honour to his parents and has no more genuine happiness than to hear them say, “Well done”. Man is the same in relation to his Principle.

It is not true that Principle is not dependent on man. Principle is as dependent on its idea as the idea is dependent on Principle. Their interdependence is made plain in this statement from “Science and Health”: “If there ever was a moment when man did not express the divine perfection, then there was a moment when man did not express God, and consequently a time when Deity was unexpressed — that is, without entity” (470:24-28). This being so, we have the responsibility, and the ability, to glorify Principle in everything we do, which is best attained by producing the fruits of expressing Principle in our life — just as a vine bearing fruit through its branches is what brings a sense of glory and reward to the husbandman. There can be no better feeling for anyone in any Principle-impelled activity than to feel that he is responding to Principle to the best of his ability, in such a way that Principle itself is glorified and made known as Principle to those who experience the results of his responsiveness. There can be no greater reward to a man than to know that he is doing this work and that Principle is conscious of him doing it.

Jesus, like a student walking up to take the prize or symbol of his achievements, was able to say, “I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do”, and then going up to take the reward, he said, “And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the

glory which I had with Thee before the world was" — that is, with the original perfection of his being, which he had expressed in the manner of the world and the practicality of which he had demonstrated for himself and for all mankind.

It is a wise man who endeavours to see to it that he has this consciousness, that he truly realizes that his Father or Principle is glorified in his bearing much fruit, and learns how to hear in his whole being what those words meant when they were made articulate to Jesus: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased".

The student should be vigilant to detect the serpentine argument that although he is abiding in the vine, he is not experiencing fruitage. This can only be a claim of mortal mind, because it is impossible in Science. No branch has the power within itself to bear or not to bear fruitage. If it abides in the vine, the impulses for fruitage are from the vine and the branch is only a channel. Mortal mind is a deceiver from the beginning and would deceive us in this matter. It is sometimes well to remember Jesus' words to those he would have loved to save from the false conclusions which were needlessly persecuting them: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it". Let us watch that we do not let this serpent father our thinking through suggestions of disappointment or doubt.

Jesus said, "the Father that dwelleth in me [the Christ consciousness of Principle which dwelt in his consciousness through his entertainment of Principle's ideas], He doeth the works". He also said, "I can of mine own self [as a branch of the vine] do nothing", and "my Father worketh hitherto, and I work" — in other words, the vine, the whole Christ consciousness of Principle, is ever at work, and anyone who maintains constant identification with that vine through having no other thoughts except ideas drawn from this consciousness of Principle cannot help bearing fruit. Under those circumstances it is not within his power *not* to bear fruit. If he stands in the way of his own ability to experience this, by accepting arguments which are

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completely un-Principled because based on mere egotism — arguments that the branch and not the vine is responsible for fruitage — he may not to his experience think that he has had fruitage, but that fruitage will have taken place; and at any moment that he opens his eyes to it he will find that it has taken place.

Anyone labouring under this delusion that fruitage is not his would be helped by heeding these words from “Science and Health”, already quoted: “If you believe in and practise wrong knowingly, you can at once change your course and do right” (253:18-19). And so by being loyal to the truth that Principle *has* fruitage and therefore we *are* experiencing it, since Principle is indeed the Principle of our whole being, any one of us can enjoy what is actually already present.

We must stand up to the claim that we personally can produce fruit *or* stop that fruitage through doing what interferes with it. We have neither the power to produce good nor the power to defer its manifestation or expression. We cannot stop fruitage being formed by Principle through us and for us. We should therefore admit the truth that we cannot hold an argument which could deprive us of the present demonstration of Principle. All false education is against immediacy of fruitage, and through ignorance we may allow this to thwart immediate fruitage. But the fact in Science remains that we are the immediate object of Principle’s understanding, Principle’s consciousness of itself. If we acknowledge this, we shall experience quicker and quicker fruitage, because we shall be allowing what is already true. In stating the tenets of Christian Science at the end of the chapter “Recapitulation” Mrs Eddy uses that word “acknowledge” six times, and so it is surely wise to learn to acknowledge fully and finally the truth of fruitage as the present demonstration of Principle itself.

It is a sound practice to acquiesce in this and to “rejoice that we are subject to the divine ‘powers that be’ ” (S&H 249:8-9) — fully subject to them, so that our only job is to maintain our branchliness. “You have simply to preserve a scientific, positive sense of unity with your divine source, and daily demonstrate this” (Pul. 4:9-11). No other outlook is possible in Science, because there is either one God

or there is no God.

The vine of Principle is constantly spelling out the perfections inherent in Principle. It is saying, "You are well, you are strong, you are immortal, you are loving, you are perfect now". You are the branch of Principle when you accept that vine's declarations and accept nothing else. The proof of your full acceptance is the fruitage that will be yours. If the one liar endeavours to creep in with any other suggestion, it is up to you to do only one thing and that is to look at those statements of Principle and in all honesty make yourself accept them and keep at it until you do accept them. At the point of your full acceptance, you have the fruitage in human experience which they impel. The purpose of all Jesus' parables was to underline what Mrs Eddy saw as the spiritually scientific meaning of the fourth statement of the Lord's Prayer: "Enable us to know, — as in heaven, so on earth, — God is omnipotent, supreme" (S&H 17:2-3). The prayer of the sincere student must surely be to know just that.

The path is straightforward. The student has to ask himself consistently of all the thoughts that come to him, "Are they Principle-based, Principle-empowered? Are they of the nature of Principle? In other words, are they good and perfect? If so, I will dwell with them and they will become my consciousness and in that way I shall become a branch from that flow of ideas which is forever emanating from Principle — I shall become what I am, a branch of the eternal vine. I will be alert to see that I am not led into a state of consciousness which is neither me nor mine". Mrs Eddy tells us, "No doubt must intervene between the promise and event" (Mis. 319:28-29). It is up to us to realize that doubt is a state of thought based on mortal theories and assumptions, none of which are true; it is not a fact of being and is therefore something we can expunge from consciousness through accepting the truth as taught by the Master. From a human point of view truth is also a state of thought, based on the actuality of being and the Science which it evolves; it is that state of consciousness which will allow nothing to abide in it but that which is Principle-founded, Principle-impelled, Principle-empowered, accepted by Principle and therefore by us. We should remind ourselves that

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consciousness is a moving thing, and that unless we keep it moving in the right direction, we may find it moving in the wrong. The loyal student knows that it is only the truth which he must know, and that in so doing he must turn on and extinguish every lie opposed to that truth. Through doing this work he arrives at the position where the reality of Jesus' statement operates in the full experience of his being: "ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". Doubt is not a reality. If we constantly refuse to let it enter our consciousness, then, because it never was anything but an illusion, we shall find that nothing exists to intervene between the promise of healing and perfection and the event of it in our immediate experience. Doubt could not exist to God, where the promise of goodness and its presence are one and the same. Therefore doubt does not exist to man and we realize this as we stay steadfastly in all our thinking in the vine of the Christ consciousness. This is the story of the vine and the experience of those who abide in it.