

Twelveacres' 2011 Annual Meeting Address

In My Father's House are Many Mansions

A talk given for Twelveacres' Annual Meeting at First Church, Los Altos — November 6, 2011

What if you were looking for a place to live and received the following invitation:

Dear Friend,

Please come and live with me. I have tons of room and the rent is affordable—my free gift. My place has everything you need and it is yours for life. It is available right now and very easy to find—the way is brightly lit.

Our theme today, “In my Father’s house are many mansions”

(John 14:2) is just such an invitation. Of course, you may be thinking, “I already have a house and I’m not in the market right now.” Well, this particular offer is so much more than a search after bricks and mortar. Jesus words are an invitation to dwell in the atmosphere of purity, peace, and plenty—to live where there is no limit to your satisfaction and joy. Today I will explore this theme and talk about the Father’s house: its location, the house rules, getting rid of unwelcome guests, profound living within and the way—paved with faith, not gravel.

Let’s start with finding out where this house is located. Well, it couldn’t get any closer. Conveniently, it is right where you are. Now, if you don’t see a giant structure in front of you—I assure you it’s there. It’s there because it is consciousness. The house with many rooms is the abiding awareness of God’s all-presence and all-power—the Christ consciousness. The Christ is not the kingdom of heaven somewhere else—it is the kingdom of heaven right where you are.

So there’s no great distance to travel. There’s no great outlay of money, no time to wait, and no chance you’ll miss it. God is where you are and what you are seeking. He is the very nearest thing to you at all times—never out of reach—never too busy. You can always bring Him to you instantly by declaring that He is with you.

Our theme today is from John 14 and is part of Jesus’ farewell discourse to his disciples. A few verses later in this same farewell address, Jesus describes the potential of your residency in the Father’s house like this “He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do:” (John 14:12)

What a promise! Dwelling in the mansion is to possess a living faith. What does this faith look like? It looks like the spirit of the Christ—it looks like Love. The following two examples are, of our own Twelveacres residents exemplifying that Christ consciousness. The compassion they showed and the truth they expressed healed a friend and a manager.

A woman was experiencing an allergic reaction and the Christian Scientist reassured her that the divine Mind alone had the power to govern and that this Mind was communicating thoughts of health and well being. The woman had her healing and attended class the following day.

Here’s another: a manager of a home was exhibiting symptoms of a heavy cold and sneezing a lot. The Christian Scientist compassionately came up to him and said “Sneezing does not belong to you!” The manager was soon healed.

Healing is effortless, immediate, and native to the spiritually minded. No advanced training required, no educational achievement or special gift necessary. Everyone has equal access to God, equal access to truth, equal access to divine Love—there are no prerequisites, no hierarchies, no standing in line. Isn’t this a house with many mansions? A place where the door is always open and the welcome mat always out. No special pass needed to enter the Father’s house—only the acknowledgement that it is present and possible.

“The divine Mind alone has power to govern,” said our resident “And this Mind is communicating thoughts of health and well-being.”

What a reassuring statement of absolute Truth. God, the divine Mind, is ever imparting Himself to the mentality of mankind. This Mind is comforting, governing, and sustaining man. The Mind of Christ is an infinite pantry of right ideas. This is the only God with us—the only God we have, and our best friend.

Here is a stunning testimony from a 1955 Journal. It is the healing of a woman who had a large, incurable, internal growth and had been given only 18 months to live. She had recently been introduced to Christian Science and at first she deteriorated rapidly. She became totally blind and was almost completely paralyzed—then one night, when she was having great difficulty breathing she heard her husband earnestly tell the practitioner, “If Christian Science heals my wife, I’ll be the best Christian Scientist you have in your organization.” The practitioner replied, “Don’t say that—if Christian Science is not the truth, you don’t want it, even if it heals her. If it is the truth you want it, even if she is not healed.”

The patient said later that, when she heard those words, she realized that what she really wanted was, “to know God better—to know Him as He actually is, to know the truth.” And in that moment of deep spiritual conviction the fear of dying left her. As the practitioner was leaving he asked his patient to be very obedient and to repeat over and over these words from *Science and Health*: “There is no power apart from God,” and to let in, no other

thought (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy, p.228:25). She resolved to do just that and obediently and with much effort repeated that line again and again and again as she was assaulted by physical sense testimony—waves of pain, total blindness, and near total paralysis. “There is no power apart from God.”

“So the battle went on,” she said, “until suddenly I saw the truth that if God is All, then it is true, there is no power apart from God. My heart was fairly singing—I did not think of living or dying. I thought of the truth.”

Within a short time there was a sudden severe pain, and a little later the entire growth passed from her and with it, the blindness and paralysis left as well. She was entirely free in a matter of days

We see, that when this woman realized that her life was Spirit and spiritual, her viewless room—became, a room with a view. An improved understanding of God necessarily includes a changed view of reality. Life in Spirit means safety, immunity, and health. Once you know what the truth is, the flatness of the earth is rounded.

“And o’er earth’s troubled, angry sea” says the hymn,
“I see Christ walk,
And come to me, and tenderly,
Divinely talk.” (Hymn 253:4)

Where human thought finds a troubled sea—we see Christ, the true idea voicing good. Jesus demonstrated this fact and our Science makes it repeatable.

Your Christ home or consciousness, your place of safety and belonging is already established and right where you are. It is infinite. Therefore, it is roomy enough to include you and yours. It has everything you could ever need or want. This is the promise and “The promises will be fulfilled.” (*Science and Health*, p.55).

Now that we have spent some time locating the Father’s house, let’s move on and discuss the rules of the house.

The rules of the house—“God’s law”, says Mary Baker Eddy, “is in three words ‘I am All’” (*No and Yes*: 30). OK, that’s pretty easy—only three words. I AM ALL. These three little words govern all that you know, all that you have, and all that you do. I AM ALL. This perfect law is omnipresent. It’s HERE. It’s functioning right now. It’s *ever* present—ever operative—something you can count on.

In *Science and Health* Mrs. Eddy writes, “In the year 1866, I discovered the Christ Science, or divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love, and named my discovery, Christian Science.” (*SH* 107) Her discovery—the greatest breakthrough of all time—was the discovery of laws—the laws of God.

Now these laws are not located in some dusty book, sitting on a top shelf, in somebody’s back study. No, the divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love are ever with you. We all know that laws or principles enacted and understood do something—they spin planets; they fly

planes—they bake cakes. Right now, the flood-tides of divine Life, Truth, and Love, are, at this very moment, pouring and surging through consciousness, purifying, nourishing, and elevating.

But this isn’t true because we said it’s true. You can’t declare something’s a law and leave it at that. A law or principle has to be provable. If you can prove it—it’s everything and if you can’t prove it, it’s nothing at all. On this point, there is no in between. The principles of flight either work all the time or they have never worked. A principle, when properly applied, has to work in every case or it isn’t a principle. It’s all or—it is nothing at all.

This is why proof is so important in Christian Science. Not because it is an alternative health-care system, or a sure-fire personal pathway to success. No, it is so much greater than that. Christian Science is proof positive that God exists and that the universe is Spirit, and spiritual. It proves that it is His law, and His law alone that govern the universe, including man. Faith healing is physical healing but healing in Christian Science, demonstrates God.

One day I proved how firmly I was held in the grasp of divine Love, God’s perfect law. It was a sunny afternoon, about a year ago, and I was happily riding my bike down a busy street when my front tire hit the curb in a funny way. I found myself suddenly airborne—Cirque du Soliel style. And after some rather impressive airtime, I landed hard and lay sprawled all over the pavement. The traffic around me slowed and people, with eyes as big as saucers, came out of a nearby building to come to my aid. Though I seemed to be quite injured, I knew that I needed to literally take my stand for Good, to take my stand for God, and I immediately got up. I smiled and waved the drivers on, assured everyone that I was fine, and got back on that bike. As I began peddling my way home, I opened up my Christian Science toolbox and went to work.

The first thing I did was to tell myself that I was not afraid. I then mentally insisted that what the pains of sense needed were the joys of Soul. I needed the joy, which comes from feeling God’s closeness and Fatherly Love. Then using Christian Science as my passport, I identified myself as spiritual, and affirmed that I was made in God’s image and that His laws, and His laws alone, governed me.

The following statement from the textbook came clearly to thought, “When an accident happens, you think or exclaim, ‘I am hurt!’ Your thought is more powerful than your words, more powerful than the accident itself to make the injury real.”—*more powerful than the accident itself*—“Now reverse the process. Declare that you are not hurt and understand the reason why, and you will find the ensuing good effects”—*ensuing good effects*—“to be in exact proportion to your disbelief in physics, and your fidelity...confidence in God as All...”(*SH* 397) Two things stood out—“ensuing good effects” and the word “fidelity”. I absolutely knew that I could be faithful and that the ensuing result of this fidelity would be good.

The next 15 minutes were spent in peddling and praying, faithfully watching to keep the door of my thought shut tight against all evidence of a problem. Soul, God, hadn’t been in an accident or fallen off a bike so no part of my spiritual identity had either. Since

I was created in accordance with the first chapter of Genesis in which God saw everything as good, there could be no second chapter fall from grace.

When I reached home and got off my bike I glanced down at myself and to my (and I hate to say this) surprise—there was absolutely no evidence of having been in an accident. None. I couldn't believe my eyes. It seemed miraculous. That night I went out to dinner and the whole incident faded away into its native nothingness.

Why *does* Truth sometimes seem so miraculous? Mrs. Eddy says in *Miscellaneous Writings*: “Truth is, and ever has been, simple; and because of its utter simplicity, we in our pride and selfishness have been looking right over it. We have been keeping our eyes turned toward the sky, scanning the heavens with a far-off gaze in search of light, expecting to see the truth blaze forth like some great comet, or in some extraordinary manner; and when, instead of coming in great pomp and splendor, it appears in the simpleness of demonstration, we are staggered at it, and refuse to accept it; we are sure that there has been some mistake...” (*Misc.* 469).

So don't be so surprised when your prayers heal you. Expect “ensuing good effects” from your fidelity to Truth. Expecting good is tantamount to continuous treatment. God's universal law is warm, adaptable, loving, intelligent, calm, confident, and orderly. There is no *other* law. Everything you need is present because God is present. The only thing that has gone missing is your understanding of this great fact.

Which leads us right into the next section—getting rid of unwelcome visitors to the mansion of Love. When an uninvited guest or suggestion knocks at the door of thought, make sure it passes through your security system. If you find they have with them a suitcase full of contraband called discord, limitation, poverty, sickness, abnormality, irritation, or failure, refuse entry. Nothing that misrepresents God, Good, should be allowed to enter thought—your heavenly kingdom within. If it isn't freeing, wholesome, or loving,—shut the door tight and give it the boot.

To show you the importance of doing this, here's something that happened at my husband's holiday party last December. A small group of workers were standing around a large platter of assorted sushi talking and eating. During the friendly “chit-chat” one of the young women described, in great detail to her spell bound listeners—how she almost died once from eating lobster. She outlined all the symptoms—the swelling, splotching, breathing and so on and so on and so on and so on.

The man, who brought the platter of sushi, was standing nearby and overheard the conversation. He rushed up to the table and said excitedly “Hold everything! Some of these sushi rolls have lobster in them”. Instantly, the young worker began to manifest every single one of the symptoms she had just so vividly described. But a quick examination of the platter determined that she hadn't eaten any sushi with lobster after all. And, just as instantly, all the symptoms disappeared—just like that! It is interesting that even though there had been absolutely no material cause the actual symptoms appeared. This is a lesson for all of us. What you take

in to be true you are liable to experience. The saying goes, “You are what you eat.” But, a Christian Scientist knows, you are what you think!

But, what should you do if you do find that you are experiencing something that is harmful or hurtful and makes you afraid? Remind yourself of those three little words. I Am All. Know that God, Good, *is* absolutely All—right at this moment. Then with confidence and certainty know that if it isn't Godlike it has no power or authority to occupy your thought or experience against your declarations and resistance. “Resist error...and it will flee from you” (*SH* 406:19). Accept into thought only the information that affirms you to be spiritual—made in His image and likeness. God has given man dominion and decreed that you are entitled to life, health, and happiness.

The last two sections are about faith and I thought I'd begin with a joke.

A man falls over a cliff and as he is falling he manages to grab onto a little twig. Unfortunately, he is still hanging about 200 feet above a beach below.

He calls out as loud as he can, “Is there anybody up there who can help me?” Almost immediately, a voice booms out from the clouds above—“My dear son let go of the branch and I will make your descent gentle and your landing soft.” The man looks down then up and calls out again “Is there anybody *else* up there that can help me?”

Mary Baker Eddy says “The Scriptures require...a living faith” (*Misc.* 196:30). And in *Unity of Good* she writes: “The talent and genius of the centuries have wrongly reckoned...They have not accepted the simple teaching and life of Jesus as the only true solution of the perplexing problem of human existence” (*Un.* 9)—*the simple life and teaching of Jesus*. To many of us, that life doesn't look that simple. His life and teaching might have been uncomplicated but its meaning is far-reaching and his lifework profound.

The disciples were simple fisherman yet they understood the Mind of Christ and knew this was a reason for rejoicing. Those early Christians were called the children of joy.

Years ago, a friend of mine was faced with a staggering list of problems. She called a practitioner and after recounting her list of troubles the practitioner replied—“Sing!” To her amazement it worked. The spell of troubles was broken and she found peace and healing. There is singing going on in the rooms of the mansion and it is the sound of joy.

There is rejoicing going on in the halls and rooms at Twelveacres. As you've heard in today's reports and have read in our newsletters the list of achievements is awe-inspiring. It is truly humbling to hear and read of residents who are talking, standing, or holding a cup for the first time.

One staff member, who I interviewed before the Annual Meeting, told me that when she was first hired to work here she thought, “Oh this is wonderful, I can really help and teach others.” But,

she will tell you now, that after working for a number of years the exact opposite has been the case. She found that the residents have helped her to learn some invaluable lessons. They have shown her, through living faith, what unconditional love and tireless persistence look like. With an unfaltering commitment to truth, they daily tackle and conquer what might be considered insurmountable obstacles and they do it with enthusiasm—rejoicing each step of the rugged way.

This manager also learned that each of us has our own connection with God and our own way of expressing Science. Residents sing hymns or turn to their books in times of trouble and they expect to feel God's loving embrace and to get results.

And while we are on the subject of staff...what a loving group we have. How beautifully they partner our residents and support the effort to rely on God for healing. They exemplify the simple yet profound life of Jesus with their dignity, grace, and patience. We are all grateful for each and every one of them and for all they do. God holds this dear mansion in His powerful hands, guarding, nourishing, and developing all that is good in it, forever.

Now we have reached the last part...the way is not gravel but faith. Here is a lesson I recently learned about practicing faith.

A few weeks ago I went on a bicycle ride in Hawaii. It was an exciting ride down Maui's tallest volcano. The adventure began when a van picked Ed and me up at our hotel at 2:30 in the morning. Our group was then driven up a winding road to the top of Haleakala, which is 10,000 feet above sea-level. The arrival was timed so that we could enjoy a spectacular sunrise...with about 2,000 others. After taking in the first rays of the day our group of 16 was given bicycles for a 28-mile—all downhill—ride to the bottom. We were to travel down the same two-lane road that we had driven up earlier that morning.

Now this is 28 miles of all downhill with some treacherous looking hairpin turns thrown in at the beginning to sort of wake you up—it was still early remember! The consequences of not making a turn as you were descending, we won't go into, but I think you have an idea. You will make a descent alright...

Before we began the ride, our experienced guide surveyed the group in order to choose one person to ride behind him and set the pace for all the others. He slowly scanned the group, carefully checking out and assessing each of our capabilities. After a few minutes of scrutiny, he made a choice—I was the one to have the honor. Now, before you jump to any conclusions, I can assure you,

this was NOT a compliment. Because, the rule is, you can only go as fast as your slowest rider. I was deemed that rider—this was not a good start to a ride I was already afraid of.

So we began. After a few miles and some hairpin switchbacks we stopped for a view. I had a feeling I wasn't going fast enough for everyone's taste. So, I asked our leader what he thought. His reply? A lukewarm—"Well I haven't put you in the sag wagon yet." I vigorously petitioned to be put in the back but he wasn't having it. His advice,—“Follow me and do exactly what I do.”

So, we got back on our bikes for the very longest and fastest portion of the ride, with me, the cowardly lion, still leading the pack. I said a little prayer for guidance and the thought came, “Follow the leader and take your hands off the brakes.” It didn't seem like a very metaphysical response to my heavenly inquiry but I accepted it. I knew I had to show more faith in the talent and experience of our guide. I also knew that I needed to release the iron grip I had on those brakes. So, that is what I did. For the next hour I followed the line of our leader exactly while at the same time constantly repeating to myself, “Take your hands off the brakes.”

I can't tell you what the scenery looked like but my husband said it was magnificent. When we finished the ride the leader walked up to me and with a pat on the back rewarded me with the words, “Way to man-up”.

I have since thought about this experience and realized that the heavenly inspiration that came to me can apply to progress in general. The instruction to “follow the leader and take your hands off the brakes” is what speeds progress and increases faith and confidence.

When we follow exactly the line of the Christ and release old habits, perceptions and opinions, in other words the brakes, our spiritual progress moves forward at a greater pace. And it is spiritual progress that allows us to see that the Father's house, with its many mansions, is big enough to include all and has all that we require. It helps us to prove that the house rule or “I AM ALL” keeps us safe and removes unwanted guests. Through unrestricted faith we discover that the simple life is indeed profound being.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5). This Mind is comforting and governing man, it is sustaining man. Our home has an everlasting foundation and infinite Love conducts its business. There is no limit to its beauty and grandeur. There is but one home-maker, one house beautiful—one builder—one habitation,—“For in him we live, move, and have our being” (Acts 17:28).

Copyright © 2011 Twelveacres.



For copies, please contact Twelveacres