

## Cups of Cold Water (Matt. 10:42) ... and Twelveacres

A talk given at the Twelveacres' Annual Meeting by Christine Irby Williams of Atlanta, Georgia  
ciwilliams1@live.com

In Twelveacres' Fall 2015 newsletter, there are a couple of accounts of individuals sharing cups of cold water that inspired me. You may recall the examples. In the first case, one of the Twelveacres residents returned home from his day program one day "because he was in great pain. While at the office, [a staff member] brought him a cup of cold water. Immediately, he lifted his head from his knees, smiled, and thanked her. Although he still needed to receive Christian Science nursing, he went on his way comforted by her loving care." The second example occurred at church, when "a resident heard someone coughing, and, without prompting from anyone, she went to the water fountain and brought her a cup of water."

These simple and beautiful accounts are just two examples of what goes on at Twelveacres every day. As I was thinking about them, I was reminded of the true story of a little girl whose parent brought home a brand new baby brother to her. Over the next few days, the little girl asked with increasing fervency to have some time alone with her new baby brother. Finally, the parents agreed to leave them together, but they listened closely to the intercom to be sure all was well. After the sister had shut the door and reached the crib, the parents heard her quietly address the baby, and this is what she said: "Tell me about God; I'm forgetting."

Twelveacres reminds the world about God. It does that with what might be called cups of cold water, which are really Love made visible in many, many ways. Most people know about love. They've heard that God is Love. But when they see the love expressed in examples like the two I cited a few minutes ago — when they receive or witness or even hear about a cup of cold water experience — it's a huge wake-up to them. It's what I call a BFO — a Blinding Flash of the Obvious, often something they already know but they may not have taken as seriously as they now do.

There are many BFOs in the Bible — Moses had several on Mt. Sinai; Elijah had one there, as well; Paul had one on the Road to Damascus. You get the idea. A BFO reminds us of what's most important. It touches our hearts with an obvious and simple truth and stirs our spirit. Twelveacres does this a lot, reminding us of what Paul calls in I Cor. 13 "the greatest" of all things — the "charity" that is powerful love.

In our day-to-day experience, it seems that what a friend used to call "the strategy of animal magnetism" keeps us from focusing on this "greatest" of all things. Ralph Wagers said that "the strategy of animal magnetism is to sub-

stitute the lesser for the greater and get us so involved in the lesser that we lose sight of the greater." We encounter this strategy all the time. For example, has anyone else ever noticed how distractions would pull us away from the really important work of prayer and healing?

The love that Paul talks about in I Corinthians is always a greater work; in fact, Paul called charity, love, the "greatest of these" (I Cor. 13:13). And Henry Drummond, further clarifying Paul's beautiful chapter in I Cor., calls it "The Greatest Thing in the World." While the glitz of the world sometimes distracts us, all of us and most of the world already know that love is "the greatest thing in the world." It's nothing new. But Twelveacres is here, in large measure, to wake us up from distractions and to remind us and the world of the power and presence of that love that is "the greatest thing in the world."

Let's remember today that we are here to help each other realize and demonstrate that there is no excuse for not loving. It doesn't take more time to smile than to frown or look the other way. It doesn't take more time or energy to greet and meet one another with receptivity, love, and the expectation of good. And it doesn't take anything extra to be open to the love that others have to share. It doesn't take a lot of time or energy to give cups of cold water or to receive them — both the giving and receiving are themselves simple acts of love.

I'm convinced that, like the Beatles said many years ago, "All you need is love." Much has been written and sung about love. You may know the old song, "Magic Penny":

Love is something, if you give it away, give it away,  
give it away, / Love is something, if you give it away,  
you end up having more. / Love is something like  
a magic penny. / Hold it close, and you won't have  
any. / Lend it, Spend it, and you'll have so many /  
They'll roll all over the floor.

This song is based in the prophecy of Christ Jesus in Matthew 10:42: "Whosoever [and this means ANY-ONE, no exceptions!] shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you [when Jesus says 'verily,' he's saying, "Pay attention!"], he shall in no wise lose his reward." In other words, when you give love away, "you end up having more"! A hug is a good example, because when you give a hug, you usually get one back!

This prophecy, like most prophecy, involves both a demand and a promise. We see this often, as in prophecies

like these:

- Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
- Behold, I have set before you an open door...
- Verily, verily, ...he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also. (It turns out that the word “shall” means “must”/demand and “is able to”/promise, so this last phrase is both a demand and a promise!)

Love works as both demand and promise. You may have heard about what I call “Hokey Pokey love.” The Hokey Pokey is about putting our whole selves in, turning ourselves around; and “that’s what it’s all about!” Well, we are commanded to love God with ALL our heart, soul, mind, spirit — this is putting our whole self in! When we do this, it turns us around! And “that’s what it’s all about!” Then we love our neighbor as ourselves. What a wonderful expression of Love’s love.

Jesus told his disciples on the eve before his crucifixion: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). Do you see the promise and the demand in this prophecy? All men will know, if you love one another.

We don’t generate love. God is Love. But Mary Baker Eddy tells us that “The talents He [God] gives, we must improve” (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy 6:6-7). How could we possibly improve on anything God gives? It turns out that the word “improve” means “put to use.” So we must put love to use; we must learn to utilize, invest, it in our day-to-day activity.

Like a “magic penny,” then, the love of Love is powerful. It’s simple! It’s easy. And it’s really big! But one must make the choice to love instead of letting other things crowd out our divinely natural loving-kindness.

The bottom line of Christianity is love. “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another” (John 13:35).

Jesus asked Peter three times after the crucifixion, Do you love me? When Peter insisted each time that he did, Jesus told him to prove it by feeding the lambs and the sheep. Wasn’t he telling Peter to care for them, including giving them cups of cold water?!

Our Leader tells us that “What we most need is the fervent desire for growth in grace, expressed in patience, meekness, love, and good deeds” (S&H 4:3-5). This is not rocket science. It’s just not letting the “lesser” crowd out the “greater” of love. What are some examples? Simple things like:

- holding a door
- offering a helping hand (like the friends who let down a man through the roof so that Jesus could see and heal him)

- letting others go first
- listening carefully to others and to angel directions
- saying “thank you” in words and deeds
- giving others the benefit of the doubt
- yielding and waiting
- asking for a helping hand (which gives another the opportunity to express love)

One of my favorite statements in *Science and Health* is familiar to many of us, “Millions of unprejudiced minds — simple seekers for Truth, weary wanderers, athirst in the desert — are waiting and watching for rest and drink. Give them a cup of cold water in Christ’s name, and never fear the consequences” (S&H 570:14-18).

Our land needs cups of cold water. Our government needs cups of cold water. Politicians need cups of cold water. Our world needs cups of cold water. Our neighborhoods need cups of cold water. Strangers we meet on the street, in the marketplace, need cups of cold water. Rich people and poor people (which “tear or triumph” may have “harmed”), young people and more mature — all need cups of cold water. Our church needs cups of cold water.

The scientific spiritual truth of one perfect God and His perfect spiritual man is the love — the cup of cold water — that Christian Scientists can offer the world today.

If you were in a hot and arid desert, wouldn’t you love to have a cup of cold water to quench your thirst? “Material existence, the false belief of life in matter with its fear, sickness, despair, may be likened to a desert” (Rita Hays Hornbeak, *The Christian Science Journal*, October 1993). Lots of cups of cold water are needed! Twelveacres is giving some, and each of us can, too!

We have so many opportunities to serve, giving cups of cold water along the way. Rita Hays Hornbeak continues along these lines: “Before we can share, we may need to come out from under some personal wrappings. Are we wrapped up in our own world, diligently applying Christian Science to solve our own problems, while expecting the world to take care of itself? Or expecting other Christian Scientists to do this important missionary work? More love for our fellow man will prompt us to forget ourselves to a degree and stir us into appropriate action!”

There are many examples of this in the Bible. You’ll remember these, right?

- Naaman’s wife’s maid, who suggested that Elijah might be able to heal him of leprosy, and his servants, who encouraged him to listen when pride seemed to block his receptivity (II Kings 5:1-14)
- Abigail, who met the furious David and kept him

from an encounter with her husband that might have ended unhappily for them all (I Sam. 25:3-35)

- Job, who was healed when he prayed for his friends (Job 42:10)
- Jesus who, among many other examples, touched Peter's mother-in-law's hand and she was healed immediately! (Matt. 8:14-15)
- The friends who let a man in need of healing down through the roof to Jesus (Mark 2:3-12)
- Peter and John, who spoke to the man at the temple gate, saying, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee" (Acts 3:1-8)

Mary Baker Eddy followed suit. There are so many accounts of her loving-kindness — of many of the cups of cold water that she gave. Here's one that I love; it's in *Mary Baker Eddy, Christian Healer, Amplified Edition* (pp. 212-213): "...I was in a seven passenger car going to Hyde Park, Boston, to a [Christian Science] lecture. Soon after we started the woman in the front seat turned around and said she wished to tell us of a woman who lived in Concord, New Hampshire. This Concord woman was paralyzed on one side, she had not a penny in the world, and her home was so unhappy she felt she could no longer live in it. So she decided to leave home and never return. As she left her yard she looked up the street and saw a large concourse of people. Out of curiosity she followed them, they were the ten thousand on their way to Pleasant View. When they arrived this woman was on the outskirts of the crowd, so far away that she did not even hear the sound of Mrs. Eddy's voice when she spoke. When Mrs. Eddy turned around and returned to the house[, to] this woman[']s helplessness, hopelessness, and despair was added this fresh disappointment at not hearing what she knew must have been a very important message to have attracted that size crowd. She turned around with tears flowing freely down her face to return to Concord. As she walked along ... she saw a team of horses coming. She stood idly watching them, and as they approached she recognized the woman in the carriage to be the same one who had spoken from the balcony, so she waited to see her at close range. As the carriage passed Mrs. Eddy leaned forward and looked at her. No word was spoken, but the woman was instantly healed. She returned to her home and found the home condition healed. This was the end of the story. We all sat spellbound and overwhelmed at the wonderful healings of Mrs. Eddy. All was quiet for a while, then the woman who sat beside me spoke up and said very quietly, 'And I was that woman, and I have lived happily in my home ever since.' Then she added, 'Never before nor since have I seen the love and compassion in any human face that I saw in Mrs. Eddy's when she leaned forward and looked at me.'"

We may not have had an encounter like that with Mrs.

Eddy. We may not have known any Bible characters face to face. But we've all been touched and healed by love. And we've all reflected love to bless others. Are you thinking about times when you've given or received love and you've witnessed its healing power? I hope so!

And we must not forget to love ourselves! A dear mentor/friend of yesteryear often reminded me to take care of myself, to offer myself a tub of hot water on a cold or difficult day, along with a cup of cold water and the scientific statement of being! She used to tell me, "A hot bath and the scientific statement of being will heal anything!"

When we are challenged, we have opportunities to give love by receiving love! The word "challenge" means to "stop and prove one's identity." When we have a challenge, it's not an indication that we're doing something wrong or that we're bad Christian Scientists! I've often felt that way, but it is just not so! Jesus says that the storm beats in the same way on the house built on the rock as on the sand! Noah's ark was storm-worthy; it wasn't its fault that there was a storm! And neither is it ours.

Challenges are actually gifts! Our Leader says that Love forces us to accept what best promotes our growth (see S&H 266:10-12)! There's a paragraph in *Science and Health* where Mrs. Eddy bares her soul and gives us a peek into some of her own challenges, ending with a very familiar statement about love. Think about the context here and of what she's telling us about how we learn about universal Love: "Would existence without personal friends be to you a blank? Then the time will come when you will be solitary, left without sympathy; but this seeming vacuum is already filled with divine Love. When this hour of development comes, even if you cling to a sense of personal joys, spiritual Love will force you to accept what best promotes your growth. Friends will betray and enemies will slander, until the lesson is sufficient to exalt you; for 'man's extremity is God's opportunity.' The author has experienced the fore-going prophecy and its blessings. Thus He teaches mortals to lay down their fleshliness and gain spirituality. This is done through self-abnegation. Universal Love is the divine way in Christian Science" (S&H 266:6).

Now, let's remember that cups of cold water are not always delivered in nice crystal or sippy cups that make it easy to drink! Sometimes cups of cold water are splashed in our face. In my family, we recognize the need for these splashes every once in awhile, and we call them "the cold water treatment."

- Nathan gave David the "cold water treatment" after David took Bathsheba for himself. After telling a story about a man who had done something reprehensible, and David responded with scorn, Na-

than declared, “Thou art the man!” That was a wake up, a cup of cold water in the face (II Sam. 12:1-7).

- Mrs. Eddy removed the pillows from behind a woman suffering with pneumonia. The account is documented in *Mary Baker Eddy, Christian Healer, Amplified Edition* (pp. 77-78).
- My husband was given a cold water treatment by his Christian Science teacher many years ago. He was thanking his teacher for his prayerful help with a beautiful and quick healing of a concussion. He said he'd just been “blindsided,” to which his teacher replied immediately and very firmly: “You were never blindsided! Man can never be blindsided — he reflects omniscience!”
- A dear friend of mine got a cold water treatment after a phone call with a church member who had a reputation for being a bit of a busy-body. He told her that he didn't need her help with an upcoming Christian Science lecture at a local prison. When he hung up, he heard a very clear angel message, “That was the lecture!” After praying on his knees, he called her back and invited her to help, which blessed one and all.

Thoughts, looks, prayers, smiles, words, deeds — all of these can be cups of cold water. They're often little things. Hymn 303 speaks of them:

Scorn not the slightest word or deed, / Nor deem it void of power; / There's fruit in each wind-wafted seed / That waits its natal hour.

No act falls fruitless; none can tell / How vast its power may be / Nor what results enfolded dwell / Within it silently.

A whispered word may touch the heart / And call it back to life; / A look of love bid sin depart / And still unholy strife.

Work and despair not; bring thy mite, / Nor care how small it be; / God is with all that serve the right, / The holy, true, and free.

There's a song I came across not long ago about cups of cold water. It goes like this:

Have you lifted a stone from your brother's way / As he struggles along life's road? / Have you lovingly touched some frail, toil worn hand, / Shared with someone his heavy load?

Have you spoken a word full of hope and cheer? / Have you walked with a slower pace, / Till the weary of heart who were stumbling on, / Took new courage to run the race?

Have you held up your light thro' the shadows dark, / So that somebody else might see? / Have you lived with the Christ thro' the long, long day, / Gaining many a victory?

All of these are “little things” that hint at how very BIG and powerful Love and its expression is! When Love is made visible, it is often in these “little” things. They are like a two-dimensional painting of a landscape or a sunrise that hints at and reminds of the multi-dimensional, the spiritual, the real.

We read so many expressions of the superabundance of love, as in “my cup runneth over” (Ps. 23:5), “...flood-tides of Love” (S&H 201:17), “...pouring forth more than we accept” (S&H 2:26-28). That's a lot, and we get to share all that overflow! There's more than we need. It's our nature to give it away, to pour it out, to overflow with it.

Cups are not really “little” things at all. The way I see it, “small” is the new “big,” like slow is the new fast! Right?

Ralph Wagers' point about “the strategy of animal magnetism” reminds us that love, no matter what size or shape it comes in, is the “greater” — even the “greatest” of all! Could giving cups of cold water be among the “greater works” that heal, inspire, awaken, rouse, bless and which Jesus prophesied his disciples would accomplish (John 14:12)?

We need cups of cold water! Our neighbors need them. The world needs them. Our politicians and government need them. Our businesses need them. Our families need them. Our church needs them. Cups of cold water are what Twelveacres is all about. Let's open the flood-gates and “pour in truth through flood-tides of Love.” It's what each of us is called to do. It's what each of us is here to do. Like Esther, we were come for “such a time as this” (Est. 4:14)!

Our Leader has given us a number of prophecies involving both demands and promises, including: “God has appointed for Christian Scientists high tasks, and he will not release them from the strict performance of each one of them” (No 7:18-20). Those “high tasks” are all about cups of cold water!

She also tells us, “Each individual must fill his own niche in time and eternity” (Ret. 70:18). Don't you think that that “niche” is all about giving cups of love, whatever they look like?

So now it's time to close with “Ready, set, bless!”

Ready! Unwrap from personal sense of responsibility, fear, opinion, etc.!

Set! Set your eyes on God!

Bless! Give cups and bottles of cold water. And take one or more as you leave here to remind you of all we've shared!

Freely receive cups of cold water! Freely give them!

Thank you for reminding all you meet of “the greatest thing in the world” with the cups of cold water you give!