

In My Father's House are Many Mansions
A talk given at TwelveAcres in Los Altos
on Nov 6, 2011

What if you received the following letter?

Dearest Child,

Please come live with Me. I have tons of rooms, affordable rent and a free gift for you. My place has everything you need. Best of all, it is guaranteed for life. Everything is ready and the path is plainly lit.

Love, God

Our theme today, "In my Father's House are Many Mansions" is just such an invitation - an invitation to dwell in the atmosphere of purity, peace, and plenty. To have a home where there is no limit to beauty, grace, health, art, and joy. This verse, from John 14 is part of Jesus' farewell discourse to his disciples. His powerful words were meant to comfort, guide, and inspire all of us.

Today we'll explore this theme and talk about the Father's house: its location, house rules, how to get rid of unwelcome guests, profound living within and a path paved with faith not loose gravel.

To begin you will need to find this house. So, where is this house located? It couldn't be 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 is there. It is there because it is within consciousness...the Mind of Christ. The house with many rooms is your abiding awareness of God's all-presence and all power. The Christ is not the kingdom of heaven somewhere else - it is the kingdom of heaven right where you are.

So no great distance to travel, no great expense of time and money, no chance you will miss it. God is where you are, so no need to wonder where He is. God 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! You

will never reach out to Him in vain, and best of all, He is not just where you are, but what you are seeking. God, good, is absolutely all at this very moment. This is the Mind of Christ. It is the only Mind you have or could ever want.

A few verses later in the same farewell address, Jesus describes the potential of residency in the Father's house: "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).

Here are two "works", or testimonies, to illustrate what the understanding of God can do:

- A woman was experiencing an allergic reaction and a 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 her class the following day.
- A manager of a home was exhibiting symptoms of a heavy cold and sneezing a lot. A Christian Scientist compassionately came up to him and said, "Sneezing does not belong to you!" The manager was soon healed.

These clear statements of truth quickly healed both problems at different times and in different places. And how are they related? The Christian Scientists who shared them are residents at Twelve Acres who have lived in our homes for many years. They each saw a need and what they lovingly expressed healed a friend and a manager.

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 the house with many mansions? A place where the door is always open and the welcome mat always out. Where you don't need a special pass to enter - only an acknowledgement that good is always present and possible.

How wonderful for that resident to tell her friend that was experiencing an allergic reaction, "The divine Mind alone has power to govern 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 and the only God we have-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 only been recently 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. 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, 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 and seen out playing with her little daughter.

The kingdom of heaven, the house with many mansions, was within her reach. Her viewless room became a room with a view. An improved understanding of God brought with it a fresh dose of true reality. An improved understanding of God must necessarily include a changed view of reality. Life in Spirit means

health, safety, immunity, freedom, eternity, peace and joy. Once you know what's true, the flatness of the earth is rounded.

And o're earth's troubled, angry sea" says the hymn
"I see Christ walk,
And come to me, and tenderly,
Divinely talk."

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 secure place of safety and belonging is already in place and right where you are. It is infinite, therefore roomy enough to include you and yours. It has everything you could ever need or want. This is the promise and the "promises shall be fulfilled."

Now that we have spent some time talking about where this house is located 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' ". OK, that's pretty easy - only three words. I AM All. These three little words govern all that we know, all that we have, and all that we do. I AM All. This perfect law is ever present. It's HERE. It's functioning right now. It's ever present, ever operative and something you can count on.

In Science and Health Mary Baker 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." Her discovery of the laws of God, already operating on man's behalf, may be one of the greatest breakthrough of all time.

Now these laws are not located in some dusty book sitting on the top shelf in somebody's backroom study. No, the divine laws of Life, Truth, and Love are ever with us and always available. We all know that laws or principles that are enacted and understood do something - they spin planets, fly planes, bake cakes. And spiritual laws are, at this very minute, pouring and surging through consciousness uplifting, purifying, nourishing, healing, elevating, and sustaining.

This isn't true just because we have declared it. You can't say something's a law and leave it at that. A law or principle must be provable. If you can prove-it is

everything and if you can't prove it - is nothing at all. There is nothing in between on this point. The principles of flight work all the time or they have never worked. A principle, when properly applied, must work in every case or it isn't a principle. It is all or - it is nothing at all.

This is why proof is so important in Christian Science. Not because Christian Science 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 laws, and His laws alone, that govern the universe including man. Faith healing is physical healing but healing in Christian Science demonstrates God.

I experienced an instance that showed me how firmly I am held in grasp of God's perfect law, even when it looked like I had stumbled right out of it. One a sunny afternoon about a year ago as I was happily peddling down a busy street the wheel of my bicycle hit the curb in a funny way. I suddenly found myself airborne, Cirque du Soliel style. After some rather impressive airtime I landed hard, sprawled all over the pavement - traffic slowed and people with eyes as big as saucers came out of nearby buildings. Though I seemed to be quite injured I knew that I could take my stand for Good, and I immediately got up. I smiled and waved the drivers on, assured everyone that was I was fine and got back on my bike. As I began peddling my way home, I opened up my Christian Science toolbox and went to work.

I began by telling myself that I was not afraid and I mentally insisted that what the pains of sense needed were the joys of Soul. I needed that joy which comes from feeling God's closeness and fatherly Love. I then used my Christian Science as my passport, which identifies me as spiritual, and reminded myself that I was made in God's image and that His laws alone governed me.

A 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" - more powerful than the accident itself, "to make the injury real. Now reverse the process...and you will find the ensuing good effects to be in exact proportion to your disbelief in physics, and your fidelity...your confidence in God as All." "Ensuing good effects" and the

word “fidelity” really stood out to me. I knew that this was something I could do. I could be faithful, stick to the truth and the result would be “good effects.”

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 the first chapter of Genesis in which God saw everything as good there could be no second chapter or 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? In Miscellaneous Writings we read “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...”

So don't be so surprised when your prayers heal you. Expect ensuing good results all the time from your fidelity to Truth. Expecting good is continuous treatment. After all, God's universal law is warm, adaptable, loving, intelligent, tranquil, calm, confident, and orderly. There is no other law. Everything you need is already 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 Truth and 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 are carrying a suitcase full of unwanted items such as discord, limitation, poverty, sickness, abnormality, irritation or failure, give them the boot. 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 refuse entry.

To show you the importance of doing so, here's an example of something that happened last year at an office luncheon attended by my husband. A group of co-workers was eating selections from a large platter of assorted sushi talking about food and such. During the friendly "chit-chat" one of the young woman 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.

Suddenly, the co-worker, who ordered the platter of sushi, spoke up and said excitedly "Oh, no! 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 revealed she hadn't eaten any sushi that contained the lobster. And, just as instantly, all the symptoms disappeared. Just like that! Even though there had been no absolutely no material cause the actual symptoms appeared. This is a lesson for all of us. Be sure that you watch what you are taking into thought!

But if you do find yourself experiencing things that are discordant, harmful, hurtful, or that make you afraid, remind yourself of those three words. I Am All. God, Good is absolutely all. Knowing this you can with absolute certainty know that wrong has no power or authority to project anything on you. Nothing that doesn't look like divine Love can occupy your experience against your declarations and resistance. "Resist error... and it will flee from you." Accept into thought only the information that affirms you to be spiritual-made in His image and likeness. God has decreed that you are entitled to life, health, activity, faculty, joy, happiness, fulfillment and - dominion.

We need to have a living faith not like the man in this 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 decent gentle and your landing soft." The

man looks down and then up and calls out again, "Is there anybody else up there?"

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...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 teaching profound. It was his absolute faith, honesty, and pure motives that made it overflow with grace and results.

The early Christians were called children of joy. They knew that understanding the Mind of Christ was a reason for rejoicing. 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 jubilation and healing.

Our Twelve Acre residents rejoice daily in expressing God. As you heard in our reports today and in our Newsletters, the list of these achievements is truly awe-inspiring. It is humbling to hear and read of residents talking, standing, or holding a cup for the first time.

One of the staff of Twelve Acres I spoke with before the meeting told me that when she was first hired to work at Twelve Acres she thought, "Oh this is wonderful, I can really help and teach others." But, she will tell you that after working here for a number of years the exact opposite has happened. She found that the residents at the home where she works have helped her to learn invaluable lessons. They have shown her through their living faith what unconditional love, and tireless persistence and unfaltering commitment, look like. They daily tackle and conquer what might be considered insurmountable obstacles, and they do it with enthusiasm - rejoicing each step of the way. Truly they are the children of joy.

She has learned that each of us has their own connection with God and their 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 speaking of staff - what a loving group we have. How beautifully they partner our residents and support their efforts to rely on God for healing. They exemplify the simple and profound life of Jesus with dignity, grace, and patience. We are all grateful for 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 path is not loose gravel but faith. Here is how I recently learned how to practice a little more faith.

A few weeks ago, I went on a bicycle ride in Hawaii. Yes another bicycle story... It was an adventure ride down Maui's tallest volcano, Haleakala. Your day begins when a van picks you up at your hotel at 2:30 in the morning and drives you up a winding road to the top of Haleakala 10,000 feet above sea level. You arrive in time to watch a spectacular sunrise - with about 2,000 others - who have joined you there. After taking in the first rays of sun, your group of 16 is driven to the starting point and given bicycles for the ride back down the road you just came up. Now this is a 28 mile downhill ride to sea level with only 400 feet of peddling and some treacherous hairpins turns thrown in at the beginning to sort of wake you - it is still early remember! The consequences of not making a turn as you rapidly descend, we won't go into, but I think you have the idea. You'll make a decent alright!!

On our way up the mountain the experienced guide has been quietly surveying the group and assessing everyone's capabilities. Before we mount the bikes and begin the descent, he chooses one person to ride behind him and set the pace for all the others. After a few moments of final scrutiny as we put on our helmets and gloves he makes his choice - me! Now you 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! This was not a good beginning to a ride I was already afraid of.

So we began. After a few miles and some hairpin switchbacks we stopped for the view. I was feeling very insecure at this point about my performance and

wondering how I could go fast enough to satisfy the craving for excitement of those stuck behind me. I asked the leader how I was doing and received a very lukewarm - well I haven't put you in the sag wagon yet.

So despite renewed protests to be placed further back, I was again placed in front with the admonition - just follow my line and do exactly as I do. We mounted our bikes for the fastest portion, and I said a quick prayer. Here's was my angel message - "follow the leader and take your hands off the brakes!" I knew I had to let go. I needed to break my iron grip on those brakes and keep my focus on our experienced leader. So that is what I did.

I can't tell you what the scenery looked like on the way down, but my husband who was placed further back said it was beautiful. And at the end of the ride the leader came up to me and I was rewarded with a slap on the back and the words "way to man-up".

I have thought about that incident since then and how sometimes this is exactly what you need to do to progress. Focus on the leader and take your hands off the brakes.

For you and me to find the Father's house, we must focus on Christ and let go of all the things that we are clinging to that are slowing down our spiritual progress. Things like old habits of thought and those little resentments.

Paul said, "Let this Mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." It is this Mind that is comforting, governing and sustaining man. This is the only God with us. The only God we have. The Mind of Christ includes all that you need, all that you know and all that you do.

Your Mansion has an everlasting foundation. There is no limit to its beauty and grandeur and infinite Love conducts its business. There is but one home-maker, one house beautiful; one builder; one habitation, "for in Him we live and move and have our being."