

Individual Progress: The Basis of Church Progress

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I realize there are some here who are not so well acquainted with Christian Science and came because they're interested in hearing more about Christian Science. But for most us, we're here because we're already committed to Christian Science, we love it deeply and we love our church and its mission. We want to do all we can to make its mission more effective and to help others experience its benefits.

What draws people to Christian Science? If I were to ask you what does Christian Science have to offer, I'd probably get a variety of answers. You might say physical healing. You might say moral strengthening. You might say guidance in your lives or answers to problems in relationships or business. In each instance you'd be right. You might approach it another way and say that Christian Science offers a satisfying

explanation of God. Makes God knowable, a God to be loved and trusted. You'd be right in this. You might also say that Christian Science gives a feeling of belonging. You come together in the church and in your contact with other Christian Scientists and you feel a unity of thought. Not always, but at least there's an underlying purpose that you're all committed to. You might see Christian Science as a way to help your immediate community and help with broader world problems. All of this describes what Christian Science has to offer.

Now let me ask you this. Is what Christian Science has to offer so much different from what people desire who are not Christian Scientists? Don't people generally look for ways to improve their health? Don't they try to improve their character? Don't they work to resolve problems in relationships and in their finances? Don't people look for a clear concept of God, and if they reject God, don't they still look for

some explanation of life? Don't people also seek a unity of interest, a sense of belonging, --whether it's a family, a church or to join with others who have similar interests? And isn't there a very strong thrust today toward solving broader world problems like war, pollution, hunger, crime? Isn't there a commonality of interest in progress that's shared by pretty much everyone?

Why do we feel these universal impulses to improve? Isn't it because there's an underlying reality, an ideal perfection, that's always pressing to come through? I attended a talk on philosophy one time over at our university. The speaker was talking about reality. He defined reality as the sum of all the various viewpoints that people have. From my background in Christian Science, I had a different concept. So I asked him, "But isn't there a reality, a basic truth, that exists independent of human opinions?"

I don't think my question changed his thought a whole lot! But what about human opinions? Can we just discard them in Christian Science because they don't coincide with absolute truth? Human opinions reflect the present perception of reality. Sometimes these perceptions are more enlightened. Sometimes they seem pretty dark. But if each human viewpoint is a misstatement or mistaken view of perfection, then they do point to the fact that there's an absolute reality behind the misstatement.

Can we believe there is one reality of God and His creation, man? Yes, we can. That reality exists regardless of misstatements or misbeliefs or errors about it. Does that reality describe everyone on this planet? Yes, it does. So whether we're thinking of black or white or any other shade, of male or female, old or young, geographic, financial or educational factors -- each person in their true being represents a reality that transcends the apparent material

differences. Now, does that mean we can ignore these material differences? No, we have to deal with them. If we don't deal with them rightly, they'd separate us from each other. Differences can divide or they can represent the wonderful quality of originality and variety. Which is it to be? Are we going to see the richness of diversity so that all mankind can be drawn together by it, or are we going to allow differences to divide and isolate us? Doesn't it depend on our view of reality?

Why are we talking about this in connection with church progress? Isn't it because we seem to be separated from other members of humanity due to material and mental differences? So what I'd like to do this evening is explore what Mrs. Eddy has to say about the oneness and unity of man. This will bring out the fact that man is not a plurality, not a lot of separated beings, but is the compound expression of God --one though individual in variety of expression.

When we understand the fact of man's oneness, we can break down the barriers between individuals. We'll also understand our motive for wanting to progress in church growth. It's not to get more members for the sake of getting more members. We want to see the church grow because the church presents the truth of God and man. And since man is one and infinite, growth is a progression toward the spiritual fact of that oneness and completeness. It's a progression toward fulfilling what we really are.

There are three areas that are directly impacted by the oneness of man: first, our communication with each other. Second, is our ability to relate to each other with greater harmony and affection. And third is our ability to heal. I'm going to speak of these a little later because they relate directly to the progress of our church.

I have to admit that this concept of there being just one man was one of the hardest metaphysical

concepts for me to grasp. But I was able to build on two other concepts of oneness that helped me. The first was the concept that there's just one God. One of the first things I learned as a child in the Sunday School was the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." (Ex. 20:3) I was very willing to trust that there was just one governing power and that power was God. That power was good. It was Love itself. As I began to understand God better I could relate to Mrs. Eddy's statement in Science and Health about God's oneness. She writes, "God is one. The allness of Deity is His oneness." (S&H 267:5) I saw that the only way that God could be infinite was for Him to be all. If there were a second presence, God would no longer be all. For instance, if God is infinite Love, there couldn't be another love in addition to God. God has to be all the Love there is and it has to be without measure. Otherwise God as Love would be limited. Also, if God

is all, there couldn't be an opposite to Love called hate. Hate could only be a hypothetical belief that God was absent. But this absence of God is an impossibility, because the oneness of God means His allness. The Old Testament early declared this truth of God's oneness: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. 6:4)

The second concept of oneness was the concept of God and man as one, though distinct. This came out most clearly when Christ Jesus stated, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) His hearers resisted this statement. They accused Jesus of blasphemy. They said, "...because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God." (Vs 33) Jesus didn't allow himself to be identified as God. He said he was the Son of God. And he gave the evidence for this by pointing to his works of healing. The works showed his unity with God, who was the source of his power, otherwise he wouldn't have been able to do them. But they also

showed his distinctness from God, because it was necessary for Jesus to do these works in order for them to be done. He had explained it this way: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John 5:19) Man can't do anything except that which expresses God, infinite Love and infinite Life. But at the same time, nothing can be done unless man does it. This makes man tremendously important. Mrs. Eddy makes this very clear: "Man is the expression of God's being. 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." (S&H 470:23) God needs man. But she also points out how man needs God. She says, "If man ever existed without this perfect Principle or Mind, then man's existence was a myth." (S&H 470:30) Man is

necessary to God. God is necessary to man. This concept of the oneness of God and man as inseparable and as necessary to each other gave me a feeling of great closeness to God, a unity with God. It also gave an assurance that the oneness of God and man meant that man had to be exactly like God, though distinct as cause and effect.

These two concepts of oneness were reasonable to me: the oneness of God and the oneness, yet distinctness of God and man.

But when I got to the concept of man's oneness, that there's just one man, that seemed more difficult. It seemed that there were many individual expressions of God. That each was necessary for God to be expressed fully. This was correct. I was comfortable with that. But I still seemed to be thinking in terms of a plurality, of many separated individuals.

Then I thought of the term generic. That helped me to understand the oneness of man. Generic means

a type or kind. There could only be one kind of man that God would create. Man would have to be exactly like the source he's drawn from. This was logical and it gave me a partial sense of what the oneness of man might mean.

But it still didn't lift me out of seeing man as made up of many individual, separated people. I needed to get beyond a material level of thought. I had to stop thinking of man as a lot of physical bodies. How could I do this? Mrs. Eddy has a phrase that tells us how. The phrase is "spiritual sense." Spiritual sense is the understanding within us that God has given us. We often associate it with faith, insight, divine intuition. It's what we see beyond the material evidence. Mrs. Eddy writes, "Through spiritual sense you can discern the heart of divinity, and thus begin to comprehend in Science the generic term man." She then gives these details about man: "Man is not absorbed in Deity, and man cannot lose his individuality, for he reflects

eternal Life; nor is he an isolated, solitary idea, for he represents infinite Mind, the sum of all substance."
(S&H 258:31)

The first point was reassuring -- that man is not absorbed in Deity and cannot lose his individuality. If man is one, it might appear that individual man would no longer have a special identity, that he would lose his individuality. But this can't happen because he reflects eternal life. The identity that God has established for you is permanent and cannot be lost.

Mrs. Eddy's further description of the oneness of man also removes the fear that man could lack companionship. This is where she assures us, "...nor is he an isolated, solitary idea, for he represents infinite Mind, the sum of all substance."

If man represents infinite Mind, this must mean that he is aware of all that the divine Mind is aware of. Man is consciousness -- unique, special, original. His unity with others then is on the basis that as the

reflection of Mind, he includes all other individual expressions in consciousness. All other individual expressions have this same capacity of inclusiveness, even while maintaining the unique identity that divine Mind has imparted to them.

How does this concept of the oneness of man relate to Jesus' command that we love one another? If man is one, how can we love each other? Let's answer this by asking another question? What does it mean to love someone else? Isn't the highest love to see them in their true nature as God has created them? That means to see the other person as including all the happiness, health, intelligence, abundance, affection that God expresses in man?

At present we seem to see others as mortals with physical bodies and varying temperaments. Doesn't this view separate us from others? And doesn't this view also present them as separated from the spiritual qualities that God has imparted as their real identity?

Jesus' command to love each other leads us to experience what we really are.

It's significant that the command says to love your neighbor as yourself. If you love your neighbor as yourself, you will be just as kind to your neighbor as you would be to yourself. It's the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

At one point when Jesus cited this command to love your neighbor as yourself, a lawyer challenged him. He asked, "...And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29) Jesus responded by telling a parable about a man who was robbed and beaten. Two members of the man's own church passed him by. A third man stopped to help him. It's the parable of the Good Samaritan. When Jesus finished, he asked the lawyer which of the three was neighbor to the man who fell among thieves. The lawyer had to concede, "...He that shewed mercy on him." (Vs. 37)

Wasn't the Samaritan acting as he would like someone else to have acted if he were in that position? First, the Samaritan didn't draw any dividing lines of nationality or religion. Second, he met the man's need.

Doesn't this describe the true character of church? The broad definition of church has to be whatever helps the individual resolve human problems with the power of God. Mrs. Eddy underscored this when she wrote in part of her definition of church, "The Church is that institution, which affords proof of its utility." The Samaritan was expressing church when he met the man's need right where he was. And how did he meet the man's need? Wasn't it by expressing spiritual qualities. He expressed them on the moral level, but these moral qualities are derived from a higher source, from Spirit, God. He expressed mercy for the man who had been robbed. He saw his need and he made every effort to help him. He expressed

practical wisdom and intelligence in binding up his wounds and putting him on his own beast. This required energy, a quality that counteracts apathy or indifference. Finally he took him to an inn where he offered to pay for the man's care. This was the quality of generosity. He did what was appropriate under these circumstances.

In a literal sense we may not find ourselves in the same position as the Samaritan, but in another sense we do find ourselves in that position. We're constantly surrounded by situations where people are in need, where they've been robbed of some valuable possession in their life --whether it's their health or happiness or peace or affection or their feeling of worth. What has robbed them? Isn't it their own false beliefs that they are less than the full expression of God? To the degree that a church can convey the message of man's wholeness as God's creation, to that degree the church is fulfilling its role. Mrs. Eddy

indicates that the true concept of church elevates the race and she explains how: by "...rousing the dormant understanding from material beliefs to the apprehension of spiritual ideas." (S&H 583:14) The effects are seen on the moral and physical level as in the parable of the Good Samaritan. The man's needs were met and an elevated concept of humanity was expressed -- mercy, intelligence, energy and generosity. But behind these moral qualities lay the reality of God and His creation, the one perfect, spiritual man. The mission of church is primarily a spiritual one. It will show the effects of this spiritual progress in higher moral values of humanity and in physical healing, but these effects are valid only as they stem from seeing God as the only source and substance of our being.

As we raise our view we see that truly to love one's neighbor as oneself means we have to love that neighbor as having the same measure of God-derived

selfhood that we have? Let me illustrate: If I affirm that I'm the full manifestation of God --and that's the definition of man from the Glossary: "...the full representation of Mind" (S&H 591:6); and if I'm going to love you as myself, don't I have to love you as having the same degree of infinite, spiritual selfhood from God that God has given me? God does not withhold any of His nature from His creation. He can't. Otherwise he wouldn't be infinite. God is infinite. So is His creation. The scientific statement of being tells us this: "All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation." (S&H 468:10) God can't be partial. He can't bestow more on one than another. His manifestation is infinite like Himself.

The qualities that manifest God are not abstract. They have identity, character, specific individuality. That identity is individual man. That identity is what you and I are in our real being right now. Because this is the fact of our being right now, we have the power

to dispel anything that would deny our true God-given identity, that would try to separate us from expressing any of God's qualities. Therefore, we have the power to dispel anything that would try to divide us from each other. What a sense of safety and what a sense of warm unity this gives us!

This view of man as one spiritual consciousness, individually expressed, may seem pretty far from the way we see ourselves in our everyday life. But what are the choices? Do we accept the material picture of ourselves as physical mortals with varying opinions and subject to ups and downs in our bodies, our emotions and our finances? Or do we align ourselves more consistently with the spiritual qualities that show forth God's nature? If that's our desire, how can we accomplish it?

I could say, "Read what has been written in the Bible, in Mrs. Eddy's writings, in Christian Science literature." This would be helpful and Mrs. Eddy does

answer the question, "How can I progress most rapidly in the understanding of Christian Science?" by saying, "Study thoroughly the letter and imbibe the spirit." (S&H 495:25) But what makes this effort effective? Is it a communication from the written page? Is it the words we hear someone say? Words are symbols. What are they symbols of? The words I'm referring to here are symbols describing the truth of God and man. They're accurate symbols. So they help us become aware of spiritual truth. But what gives these symbols their substance? Isn't it the fact that they're recording what God has already imparted to man? All the words in the world won't make something true that isn't true already. But if it is true, then the words can help us to experience it.

What does this tell us about communication? Doesn't it tell us that communication is already established and complete? Science and Health describes communication this way: "The

intercommunication is always from God to His idea, man." (S&H 284:31) What does God communicate to man? Doesn't He impart His own nature? The communication of God to man isn't like some sending station relaying a message to a receiving station. The impartation from God is what man is. God's impartation to you is the substance of what you are. It's not something separate from you. It's an awareness and an experiencing of all that expresses God.

This is a very precious communion. You become aware of God through His impartation of His nature and therefore you become aware of your own identity as this direct impartation. It's equally precious to be aware of others as the direct impartation of God. Since you're the reflection of divine Mind, you're aware of all that Mind knows. That's a tremendous awareness! You're aware of all that Mind knows about you. You're aware of all that Mind knows about

every other individual expression of God because you reflect infinite Mind.

Humanly we can scarcely conceive of such an awareness, but we can see that this awareness is the basis of true communication. We could put it this way: Communication with others is a mutual awareness of what God has imparted to us both. If you want to understand another person and you want them to understand you, it has to be on the basis of realizing what God has imparted to you both. "The intercommunication is always from God to His idea, man." Then the communication is accurate and it produces healing.

This is the way a Christian Science treatment works and why it's effective. When a person asks a practitioner for help, the communication is established by the patient opening thought to the ideas of Truth. The practitioner responds by also being aware of the ideas of Truth that God imparts. This impartation

corrects and replaces whatever the wrong concept is that the patient is experiencing, and to human sense the condition is healed. But the healing is actually a mutual awareness on the part of both the practitioner and the patient of the true selfhood of man that God has created. Each is expressing that selfhood in a special way but including the other because man is one and is not divided into separated entities.

How does this relate to attracting people to our church services and lectures so they can benefit from this healing Christ, Truth? Two major obstacles seem to stand in the way of communication. First, the public generally is mainly unaware of Christian Science, or, at least, has a very inadequate concept of it. As long as we think of people as separated beings, each with a separate mind, commonly called a brain, we'll have the problem of very limited communication. But we know that ideas do not originate in a brain. Where did the great concepts of justice and affection

and mercy and loyalty come from? Not from a human brain. They're concepts that have always existed and they're the expression of one infinite Principle or Mind existing independent of time or material events. If God, divine Mind, is the origin of these great concepts, wouldn't it be equally true that God must be the origin of every other right and worthy idea? God's ideas make up the consciousness of man. They are the consciousness of man. There's nothing apart from the consciousness of all of God's ideas. These ideas make up the entirety of creation. They're infinite, ongoing and ever-present. Can there, then, be any unawareness or absence of communication in the oneness and allness of God and His creation, man? Isn't this the fact that gives power to what we humanly call communication? If man in reality is totally aware of the ideas of Mind, wouldn't this truth empower the effectiveness of our Manual provided means of communicating Christian Science to the

world, -- our church services and lectures, our publications and the electronic extensions of these? Total awareness of Mind's ideas translates itself humanly into the most effective and creative ways to communicate Christian Science, including one-on-one communication. But underlying it all is the fact that Mind's ideas are fully known to all. That fact overcomes the material belief of material separateness and unawareness that would try to impede our communication. The ideas of Truth make up the true consciousness of everyone on this planet. We communicate with others by starting with this fact.

Beside the claim of unawareness, a second obstacle to communication is the resistance people have to a new idea. This resistance is based on what they've become educated to believe. People tend to keep thinking the way they were brought up to think. How do we break down this barrier to communication? Firstly, let's agree that communication is not my

getting you to think what I want you to think, or your getting me to think what you want me to think.

Communication has to be to think what God wants us both to think. Then we're at one in our understanding. We don't forfeit our individual identity by thinking what God wants us to think. We become educated -- literally, led out of the false beliefs about our own identity and the identity of each other. We find then a higher identity in each other that transcends cultural, religious, economic, racial differences and uplifts them and opens the way for real spiritual identity to become apparent. Then we're really communicating.

The oneness of man bases our ability to communicate with each other. It also bases our ability to express harmony and affection for each other. When we look at members in branch churches and the relation of individual members to The Mother Church, we find a great love and appreciation and devotion. But we also find some astounding instances of just the

opposite. What causes a lack of harmony and love? So often it's judging and criticizing the actions of others. Does this mean we're simply to approve of others actions, whatever they are, just to keep harmony?

What did Jesus say about judging? He said to his critics, "Ye judge after the flesh; I 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." (John 8:15,16)

Jesus rejected judgment when it's based on material evidence alone. Instead he affirmed his oneness with God: "I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." Jesus was not evaluating from the standpoint of his own human opinion, independent of God. He was one with God, with divine Mind. This means he would be seeing as God sees, seeing all creation as the emanation of divine Mind. Would this make him oblivious to the faults that mortals needed to correct? No, it would make these faults stand out even more

clearly. But seeing as God sees would also give him the power to see that these faults were not a part of reality or a part of the individual's true being.

The Bible says this about Jesus' mission, "God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

(John 3:17) If we do see faults or shortcomings in others, we can follow the master by doing as he did. We can dedicate ourselves to seeing others as saved from these faults, not condemned by them.

I recall one Wednesday evening when I was serving as First Reader. A member of the church stood up to give a testimony. She was a somewhat slight, quiet little person and I have to confess that I was feeling we wouldn't be hearing anything very stirring. She began by saying, "I've just been reading an article entitled, "What are we seeing in church?" Boy, was I healed quickly! And I sure felt an instant appreciation for that dear member. I've thought back

many times on that question, What are we seeing in church? And it always makes me appreciate my fellow members even more.

In the time of the early Christians, some of them had to meet in the catacombs, subterranean tombs, for fear of persecution. They would write comforting letters to each other. We may not be in danger of being thrown to lions today, but there are other lions that can be just as devastating. Condemnation in the media, restrictive government laws, the censure and misunderstanding of others, silent mental attacks. Sometimes these may seem to come from other people. But they don't really. They come from that suppositional other mind that Jesus called "...a liar, and the father of it." He said of this supposed mind, "...there is no truth in him." (John 8:44) Our task is to prove that there is no truth in this false mind that would try to pose as our mind. And we need to be sending mental letters of comfort and encouragement

to our fellow members, telling them of our love for them and assuring them that the threats of the carnal mind can't come in and pose as their mind either? The unity of thought and compassionate support of each other is the love that attracts people to our church. But it can't truly be achieved on the basis of believing in many different human minds. There is one Mind. That is God. In this Mind, every idea exists, blending with and supporting every other idea.

The thoughts that you think constitute your consciousness. This includes the thoughts you have about other people. Your consciousness is your identity. So what you think about other people constitutes your identity, too. Does this mean that you are responsible for the faults and shortcomings of others. No, it doesn't. But you are responsible for the choice you make: You can either agree with the mortal view of others and identify your consciousness with that; or you can follow the path of the Christ as

Jesus did --giving all power to God and realizing there's only one kind of man that God could create. Our entire reason for being is to give ourselves to the reality of man, to fill ourselves with this beneficent purpose, uniting our own consciousness with God and benefitting others by seeing them united with God, too.

We've spoken of how the oneness of man bases our communication and our love for each other. How does the oneness of man relate to physical healing? It relates in the sense that there only one condition possible for man and that condition is not sickness. It's health and wholeness. It relates in the sense that there are not many human minds exerting an influence to support medical theories of disease. There's only one Mind expressing itself in man in his infinite variations, but always maintaining the perfection of Mind. Recently we seem to have been running into an extra amount of mental and legal opposition in regard

to our spiritual approach to physical healing. Yet this healing, that distinguishes the Christian Science church from all others, is the one thing that people deep down want as much as anything else --an assurance that disease or any other condition of the body is not going to destroy them or take away their peace and well-being.

Are we talking here about an eternal physical state of well-being? No, we're talking about the deeper issue of identity. What people are really seeking, whether they know it or not, is an identity that is invulnerable to all the claims and limitations of mortality. The physical healing of Christian Science points to that immortal status of man because it rests on the spiritual fact that God is the entire substance and source of our being and man is the full expression of what God is. To the degree that we realize this, healing comes.

I experienced this in a very meaningful way. My wife Rosemarie and I were completing a three month lecture tour through southern Africa, Australia and New Zealand. It had been long and demanding, but very rewarding. We had just two lectures more in Hawaii on the way home, and I'd scheduled them so we could have one week before the first one, and a second week before the second lecture. This was to give ourselves a little quiet time, along with some happy recreation.

We reached Hawaii on Monday morning, but I'm afraid I didn't get much chance for fun and recreation. By that evening I'd developed a terrific inflammation in my shoulder. I think I'd never experienced such pain and it really laid me out. The condition was such that it actually pulled my shoulder forward out of its normal position. I lay there for two days in excruciating pain and praying the best I could. At that point I seemed able to pray just the very simplest prayer. I thought

about God as divine Mind, the source of my ideas. I thought about God as divine Love, giving comfort rather than pain. I was following the first commandment, realizing the oneness and allness of God, and having no other presence, no other power but God.

I also worked with that familiar paragraph on page 495 of Science and Health which starts out, "When the illusion of sickness or sin tempts you, cling steadfastly to God and His idea." I was holding to God as the all-in-all of being and I was holding to the idea or expression of God as the only reality. The sickness was trying to tell me there was something other than the one perfect idea expressing God. The paragraph goes on amplifying this basic point of God and His idea as the only presence. You know how it continues: "Allow nothing but His likeness to abide in your thought. Let neither fear nor doubt overshadow your clear sense and calm trust that the recognition of

life harmonious -- as life eternally is -- can destroy any painful sense of, or belief in that which Life is not. Let Christian Science, instead of corporeal sense, support your understanding of being, and this understanding will supplant error with Truth, replace mortality with immortality, and silence discord with harmony." (S&H 495:14) To counteract the intense pain, I kept going over and over this passage to keep my thought aligned with spiritual reality.

Rosemarie was praying with me, of course, but I also felt the need to call on a friend there who was a Christian Science teacher to help me. I needed healing, to be sure, but I also had to be ready to give the lecture there the following Saturday.

I had one additional fear. I've been a long-time, avid tennis player. It's been my main form of physical recreation. My fear was that with this shoulder problem -- it was my tennis shoulder -- I might not be able to play tennis again. I confided this to my

practitioner friend. I'm sure she had a few other comments, but I remember her response to that fear. She said, "Mortal mind can't take away your fun." That helped me to rise above the seriousness of it all.

I continued with my prayer. Then about one or two o'clock in the morning on Thursday, the pain was so strong that I couldn't lie there. I got up and walked out onto the balcony. I looked down the beach toward the city of Honolulu which was all lighted up. As I did so, I thought about the contrast between the material approach to healing and the Christian Science approach. The material approach might make some adjustments to matter or inject some chemicals and might bring some relief. But this would be exchanging one material belief about the body for another material belief. And there'd be no guarantee against a return of the problem or different problems popping up, because I'd still be endorsing a material, vulnerable view of the body.

The Christian Science approach, on the other hand, gets at the cause of the problem. Christian Science shows the material body to be a mistaken mental concept, a misstatement about the perfect consciousness that constitutes man's true body as the reflection of God or Mind. Where material medicine sees many types of body with various ills, Christian Science sees only one body, the embodiment of God's qualities. This is the body that is individually expressed, but expressed spiritually and mentally, not materially. The ideas that make up true consciousness are eternal, perfect, harmonious. They're forever performing the function they're designed to perform. If there's an abnormality to human sense, this abnormality is subject to correction by realigning thought with the one true view of body.

As I saw the distinction between these two approaches, I gained a wonderful feeling of the safety of relying on Christian Science. There was no

guesswork here. Perfect, intelligent Mind had established my being. Divine Mind continued to maintain it. There was no influence of medical theories from different human minds, vacillating from one moment to the next and from one case to the next. And most important, my prayers were bringing me into the very presence of God, into oneness with God. They were spiritualizing my consciousness, developing my moral standards and enlarging my mental awareness and ability to help others.

That was the breakthrough. I returned to bed with a great sense of peace and confidence in the holiness of working in Christian Science. I could feel the healing taking place.

It wasn't instantaneous, but it was definite. By Saturday I was able to put on my suit and tie. I have to admit I didn't exactly wave my right arm around during the lecture, and I shook hands afterward in a somewhat reserved manner. But you can believe the

lecture that day had a special inspiration and closeness to God. By the end of the following week when I had to give the second lecture, I was just about completely free. One added bonus to this healing: I found that I had also gained a greater freedom in my tennis playing. After a tough match, I didn't feel the stiffness that one often feels.

We really can't measure the bonuses of Christian Science healing. There are physical benefits, but the most important bonus is that you come closer to God and into closer unity with your own eternal, satisfying God-like being. In a larger sense, this is the purpose of church: To bring each of us into a realization of the wholeness of our being which includes the entire wonderful family of ideas we call man.

This purpose will never cease and you can never be separated from it. It's God's purpose of caring for you and seeing that you reflect Him through every one of His qualities.

Mrs. Eddy perceived this divine purpose. She describes it in Science and Health. Drawing on the Bible she's shown us the nature of spirituality and how we may attain it. In the Church Manual she's given us the organizational means for our own progress and for helping others to progress.

The spiritual ideal as revealed in Christian Science is at work in human consciousness and will continue to enlighten it and uplift it until, in the words of Paul, "...we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:13) That individual progress is what guarantees the progress of our church!