

Science and Health and the Church Manual

Jesus: Pentecost: Mary Baker Eddy: Today

W. Gordon Brown

PART II CHURCH MANUAL

Metaphysical Structure

Turning now to the *Manual* itself, in its relationship with the textbook, *Science and Health*, our thought focuses on the spiritual translation of the organized sense of church (therefore of the organized sense of body) into the immortal "structure of Truth and Love," that both underlies and determines the temporal human symbol.

By organized church as symbol, is meant of course the form the church took when it was administered by Mary Baker Eddy and shown to be self-dissolving; it does not refer to the self-perpetuating (therefore self-destroying) counterfeit into which the church has seemed to decline since her passing.

Is it by chance, one asks, that, in the *Manual's* preliminary pages, the extract from the letter in *Miscellaneous Writings* concerning the *Manual's* "Rules and By-Laws" (Man 3) is enclosed by its author in a regular geometric square, or is this just a typographical device? Is not the reason for it the fact that the By-laws themselves, constituting the main body of the book, are seen to be arranged under precisely *sixteen headings* which, we now realize, form the familiar foursquare matrix pattern; and is not this deliberate square enclosure, which surrounds the letter, designed to hint at this very fact.

The wonder is that, in this sixteenfold form, the By-laws correspond with the system of laws that govern the foursquare city itself as these are found in, and are taught by, the foursquare textbook. Arranged in this pattern they point to the Scientist's release from restrictive organizational boundaries, or from what Mary Baker Eddy herself called "laws of limitation for a Christian Scientist" (My 229:26). Because of the state of thought of her followers at the time, she was reluctantly compelled to impose these laws upon them.

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As we see from a glance at the Table of Contents, the *Manual* consists of four main departments, the first three very short, the fourth one very long. They are: first, the Christian Science *Tenets*; secondly, an *Historical Sketch*; thirdly, the *List of Church Officers*; and fourthly, the extensive section dealing with the *Church By-Laws* themselves in their sixteen different categories.

The question arises, can there possibly be a connection between these four main sections of the *Manual* (Tenets, Historical Sketch, Church Officers, By-Laws) and the four chapters that make up the Key to the Scriptures in *Science and Health* ("Genesis," "The Apocalypse," "Glossary," "Fruitage"), where the spiritual idea of church is unfolded as the living expression of brotherly love.

Remember therefore that, in the textbook, the Tenets open the door to what church really is, as found in the four chapters of the Key to the Scriptures, while in the *Manual*, with its four main sections, they do the same thing regarding membership of the organization.

TENETS

Inasmuch as the order of the *six Tenets* can be seen to relate with the first *six days of creation* at the beginning of the Bible, the Tenets and the chapter "Genesis" have in common this fundamental scale of scientific values, and because of this may be said to point to the first side of the holy city, the creative *Word*.

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HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Historical Sketch is in two distinct parts, relating to the two main phases of Mary Baker Eddy's work as discoverer and founder of Christian Science — that is, with her two consecutive phases of church organization. The major part of the chapter "The Apocalypse" (devoted as this is to an elucidation of Revelation 12) is said by the author (S & H 559:32) to relate specifically to her own founding footsteps. In this case, the *Historical Sketch* and "*The Apocalypse*" have in common the story of the foundations which she herself laid, and can be said therefore to point to the second side of the holy city, the *Christ*, as the rock on which the church is built.

CHURCH OFFICER

A vital factor regarding the seven Church Officers is that when these are translated out of being a governing hierarchy of persons into the essential elements of Principle's government of its own church-body, they relate with the order of the seven synonymous terms for God as we find them unfolded in the "Glossary". This particular sequence: Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit, Life, Truth, Love (S & H 587), comprises the terms in their Christianity order (as distinct from their Word order on page 465, and their Christ order on page 115); and therefore it is that the list of *Church Officers* and "*Glossary*," having this order in common, point to the third side of the holy city, *Christianity*.

BY-LAWS

Inasmuch, fourthly, as the foursquare statement of the By-laws stands for the solving of the problem of organic church (and therefore for the healing of organic body), and inasmuch as the textbook itself is that which has healed every one of the 84 cases of sickness listed in the chapter "Fruitage," therefore it is that both the *By-Laws* and "*Fruitage*" point to the process of bodily healing, and, correspondingly, to the fourth side of the holy city, which is the putting into practice of a demonstrable *Science*.

Accepting as self-evident the meaning and purpose of the *Tenets* and the *Historical Sketch*, let us focus our attention first on the list of *Church Officers*, and then on the sixteen sets of *By-Laws*, as comprising our main concern with the Church Manual in this particular study.

List of Church Officers

According to Paul, what really governs the church body (the membership of which is man in the universal sense) is not a group of persons as such but the body's own Christly "head" — the capitalized Godhead itself, represented in Christian Science by the capitalized, synonymous terms for God, specifically in their "Christianity" order. For this is the order which relates particularly to Principle's own governmental system, that rules, regulates, and administers the church body, which is man.

The seven officials who are called upon to implement this government humanly, in the form of a church organization, are (1) Pastor Emeritus (2) Board of Directors (3) President (4) and (5) the church's First and Second Readers (6) Clerk (7) Treasurer.

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