

## **Science and Health and the Church Manual**

***Jesus: Pentecost: Mary Baker Eddy: Today***

*W. Gordon Brown*

**PART II CHURCH MANUAL**

**THE SIXTEEN SETS OF BY-LAWS**

### **15. Church-Building**

The fifteenth group of Manual By-laws entitled “ChurchBuilding” concerns the building of the Mother Church edifice in Boston, U.S.A. On a deeper spiritual level it has to do with what this edifice is designed to symbolize, namely, the building, in Science, on a universal scale, of the infinite Christ-embodiment as the indestructible brotherhood of mankind.

Upon the rock of the human and divine coincidence—the oneness of the Son of man and the Son of the living God—“I will build my church,” Jesus said, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18).

What this involves humanly is the orderly building (the orderly birth-giving on the part of spiritual motherhood) of the true idea of the universe including all humanity. It corresponds to the orderly unfoldment of the seven days of creation in the textbook’s fifteenth chapter, “Genesis,” which eliminates the creativity methods (the material building methods) of the race of Adam and Eve.

The building of the Mother Church includes not only the building of the original edifice, called the ‘little’ Mother Church, but also that of the much vaster Mother Church Extension. Hence the fifteenth set of By-Laws concerns the setting up of both these edifices. The two buildings represent together humanity’s progress from “cross” to “crown.” “The modest edifice of The Mother Church of Christ, Scientist, began with the cross,” Mrs Eddy wrote, “its excelsior extension is the crown” (My 6:17).

What the extension typifies therefore is the crowning achievement on the part of spiritual motherhood of extending the idea of individual self-government (won through taking up the cross and being victorious over the need for external mothering) to embrace without limits the whole human race.

We read therefore in Pulpit and Press (p 20) of how “From first to last The Mother Church seemed [past tense] type and shadow of the warfare between the flesh and Spirit...” Note how this relates with the words in the textbook (p 568) that “the divine method of warfare in Science” is that waged by “the true method of creation” in Genesis, as against the false Adam and Eve method. This confirms a correspondence between the fifteenth set of By-laws and the textbook’s fifteenth chapter.

At the same time the fifteenth section of “The Apocalypse” shows the God-bestowed mother-city (the eternal reality behind the symbol of the Mother Church) restored to the source from which it emanates, and where it eternally belongs.

That is to say, what the preceding fourteenth section calls our city (S & H 575:18) becomes, in this fifteenth section, the boundless, limitless, city of our God (577:14), having no temple [no tempus, time, no material organization] therein. Thus at this point the cross is no more, for it has yielded to the ultimate, all-encircling crown.

In other words, the city, body, church, which is man, is none other than the city, body, church of God Himself. And therefore the basic human problem of “organization and time [which] have nothing to do with Life” (S & H 249:19) is now represented as solved. As Mary Baker Eddy once said: “Man has not got a body, God has a body, and this body is man”.

Hence the Manual, spiritually understood, releases humanity from the belief that man originates materially and is personally self-centered, and teaches instead that he originates spiritually and is impersonally God-centered.

## 15. Church-Building (cont.)

So let us quote once more Mrs Eddy's words regarding what she called "the twentieth century Church Manual," when she declared, "Notwithstanding the sacrilegious moth of [organization and] time, eternity awaits our Church Manual" (My 230:1). To understand what this means in terms of humanity's progress from cross to crown (symbolized by the two consecutive phases of Mother Church building) is for the period of "laws of limitation for a Christian Scientist" to be over, and for the church-body, typical of one harmonious human race, to be without boundary or limit.

## 16. Church Manual

The sixteenth and final subject of the By-laws is the Church Manual itself—that is, the Manual in its wholeness from beginning to end. It corresponds to the sixteenth chapter of the textbook, "The Apocalypse," in its wholeness from beginning to end. It also relates to the sixteenth section of this sixteenth chapter, which is the Bible's 23rd Psalm interpreted in the light of Christian Science.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," says the Psalm in its original version in the Bible. Here "the Lord" is the Lord God Jehovah, the God of Adam and Eve in the story of the garden of Eden. Interpreted spiritually in Christian Science, the Lord, as the Shepherd of mankind, is "DIVINE LOVE" (spelt with small capital letters). What this typography seems to indicate is Love (capital L) wedded to love (little l), or Love reflected in love (S & H 575:3, 17:7). In other words, the anthropomorphic Jehovah, who is God supposedly in the form of man, has at this point been transfigured and translated to appear as man in the form of God. Humanity in this case no longer believes itself mortal but understands that it is spiritual and immortal. God and man, divinity and humanity, are thus indivisibly one.

In the words of Mary Baker Eddy, the Shepherd of the 23rd Psalm, the provident Pastor of all mankind, is none other than the church's "dual and impersonal pastor, the Bible, and 'Science and Health'" (Mis 322:10), conceived of now in conjunction with the Church Manual. Hence the words (My 251:29), "Adhere to the teachings of the Bible, Science and Health, and our Manual, and you will obey the law and Gospel."

The matrix structure of the Christian Science textbook, holding within it the Key to the original meaning of the Scriptures, and signifying the indestructible reality behind the symbol of the Mother Church, is, ideally, at this point, subjective to the understanding of the individual Christian Scientist. No longer is he being dictated to by an ecclesiastical organization imposing upon him laws of limitation. He has accepted the holy city, the mother of us all, as the outpouring source of his own and his world's everlasting life, and therefore he does not want.

Says the By-law in question: The Manual "is adapted to The Mother Church only." Its womblike structure is "uniquely adapted to form the budding thought and hedge it about with divine Love." It is designed, that is, to raise the infant thought to the status of mature manhood, or to the point of active unity with God, represented by the spiritually self-governed, spiritually independent, branch church.

And thus there is brought into being "the man whose name is The BRANCH," who "shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord" (Zech 6:12). For, according to Isaiah 11:1, the Branch grows not from a Mother stem, but from the same roots in the divine Principle, Love, that the Mother herself came from.

In other words, the provision in the Manual is that the Christian Science branch church, standing for individual and collective self-government under God, shall reflect in itself without boundary or limit, all that the God-empowered, universal Mother is, always has been, and always will be, in the timeless reality and royalty of her being.

To the end of fulfilling this God-inspired purpose, the final By-law of all, under the heading, "Amendment of By-laws," sums up the necessity for obedience to the Manual as a whole. It reads: "No new Tenet or By-Law shall be adopted, nor any Tenet or By-Law amended or annulled, without the written consent of Mary Baker Eddy, the author of our textbook, SCIENCE AND HEALTH." To obey this final By-law is, clearly, to obey every By-law throughout the book, including each one of its estoppel clauses.

## 16. Church Manual

Thus, with the passing of Mary Baker Eddy, the Mother Church, as an outside ruling mother, becomes necessarily self-dissolving, and, in its legal status as The First Church of Christ, Scientist, represents, in consequence, “the man whose name is The BRANCH.”

We can but marvel therefore that, in 1903, this final, imperative By-law was, in its entirety, included in the several legal Deeds of Trust which Mrs Eddy gave to the four directors of the original Trust Deed of 1892 (not to the five specified in the 1902 Manual) empowering them to acquire the land for, and to build, the Mother Church Extension.

For then would the human law of the land, in the form of these several Deeds of Trust, be itself compelled to put into operation the law of God demanded by the Church Manual. Divine law and human law would, in this way, become one in coincidence, with the result that the release of mankind from ecclesiastical despotism would be enforced by civil law. And thus would be fulfilled Mrs Eddy’s prophecy made in 1898 that the Manual would come to be “regarded as law bylaw.” No wonder she wrote (also in 1903) in the article dealing with the twentieth century Manual, “Of this I am sure, that each Rule and By-law in this Manual will increase the spirituality of him who obeys it, invigorate his capacity to heal the sick, to comfort such as mourn, and to awaken the sinner” (My 230:10).

Here the By-laws end, for the church, typical of the body of universal humanity, is now represented as translated out of “organization and time” which “have nothing to do with Life”—out of a temporary sense of “laws of limitation for a Christian Scientist”—into the “eternity [which] awaits our Church Manual” (My 230:1).

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[Previous Section](#)

[Next Section](#)