

Science and Health and the Church Manual

Jesus: Pentecost: Mary Baker Eddy: Today

W. Gordon Brown

PART I SCIENCE AND HEALTH

The Christian Science Textbook Lieth Foursquare

It was in the revision published in 1902 (the book's 226th edition) that Science and Health, for the first time, conformed structurally to the pattern of the foursquare mother city, because its first sixteen chapters were, at this point, arranged in an order that related them to the city's "four equal sides" - that is, to the order of "the Word, Christ, Christianity, and divine Science" (S & H 574-575). Four chapters made up each of the four sides, and therefore it could be said of the book, in 1902, that, like the holy city itself, it too lieth foursquare.

This order of the chapters remained the same in the book's final rendering in 1910, and so constituted the form in which it was ultimately bequeathed to the world. This means to say that from this point onwards it pertained to the spiritual and scientific workings of the world's own reality.

Thus the first four chapters accentuated the Word, the first side of the holy city; the second four chapters accentuated the Christ, the second side; the third four accentuated Christianity, the third side; and the fourth group of four chapters accentuated Science, the fourth side.

But why four chapters for each of the four sides? Because the city itself, like the divine identity of the human race, is one and indivisible; because, in their respective presentations of the divine Science of man, both textbook and city must be found to be "woven into one web of consistency without seam or rent" (S & H 242:25).

Thus the Word, in order truly to be the Word, must be seen to reflect in itself all the qualities of the Word, Christ, Christianity, Science; the Christ, in order truly to be the Christ, must reflect in itself the qualities of the Word, Christ, Christianity, Science; and so on with Christianity and with Science. In this way the textbook itself was furnished with a foursquare total of sixteen scientifically ordered and related chapters, so that with "Glossary" and "Fruitage" as its seventeenth and eighteenth chapters, the book was brought to its logical close.

In purely technical terms, the main body of the book might therefore be described as follows: Underlying the first chapter, "Prayer," is the Word essentially in its own aspect as the Word; underlying the second chapter, "Atonement and Eucharist," is the Word in its office as Christ; underlying the third chapter, "Marriage," is the Word as Christianity; and underlying the fourth chapter, "Christian Science versus Spiritualism," is the Word reflecting Science.

Then the four "Christ" chapters. The unmasking of animal magnetism in the fifth chapter is the work

primarily of Christ in its aspect as the Word; determining the sixth chapter, "Science, Theology, Medicine," is Christ in its own office as Christ; Christ in the aspect of Christianity underlies the seventh chapter, "Physiology," and Christ as Science the eighth chapter, "Footsteps of Truth."

The ninth chapter, "Creation," is the first of the four "Christianity" chapters, and is determined by Christianity in the, aspect of the creative Word; the tenth chapter, "Science of Being," by Christianity as the Christ; the eleventh chapter, "Some Objections Answered," by Christianity purely as Christianity; and the twelfth chapter, "Christian Science Practice," by Christianity in the aspect of Science.

The four "Science" chapters start with the thirteenth chapter, "Teaching Christian Science," the determinant of which is Science as the Word; in the case of the fourteenth chapter, "Recapitulation," the determinant is Science reflecting the Christ; the fifteenth chapter, "Genesis," is determined by Science reflecting Christianity; and the sixteenth chapter, "The Apocalypse," by Science purely in its own aspect as Science.

With its chapters arranged in this orderly scientific pattern, the main body of the book (we see today) takes the form of a spiritually foursquare - indeed a spiritually mathematical - matrix, or womb, wherein the student's identity in the likeness of the Father-Mother God is divinely moulded and formed, and whereof, humanly, it comes visibly and demonstrably to birth.

Patterning, in this way, the workings of the holy Mother City, the textbook, as the means of man's unfolding spiritual education and growth, thus supersedes the objective symbol of a Mother Church organization, whose purpose was to prepare for its own scientific reality to appear in comprehensible textbook form.

And therefore it was that, also around 1902, when Science and Health appeared for the first time in this foursquare matrix form, the Mother Church Manual incorporated in its By-laws some 29 so-called "estoppel clauses" which required Mrs Eddy's approval, either verbally or in her own handwriting, for the election of church officers, as well as for certain vital functions of church administration. These estoppels, foretelling the church's eventual self-dissolution as an outside controlling mother, Mrs Eddy resolutely declined to delete from the Manual, despite official protests, and despite repeated advice and requests from the church's professional lawyers.

A foreseeing wisdom was profoundly at work. Its purpose was that, in the event of the passing of Mary Baker Eddy, the Mother Church would not come to be ruled by a fallible human hierarchy, and therefore would not be tempted to function as a dictatorial ecclesiastical power.

This did not mean to say however that the Mother Church, as conceived by Mrs Eddy, would end or pass away. Its early function of disciplinary parental control alone would be no more. The Church itself, like the body of Jesus before it, would, as the representation of the body of mankind, be spiritually translated - resolved from symbol into idea - and in this way ascend to its eternal origin, its ultimate status, in God. In the words of Jesus, it would have "finished the work" which the divine Mother Love had given it to do, and would be "glorified." The senses thereafter would see it no more.

In its place, in the human picture, the branch churches of the Church of Christ, Scientist, which the Mother had led to spiritual independence and spiritual self-government under God alone, would reflect within them, individually and responsibly, the Mother's ongoing purpose, and would no longer

look for this to come to them from outside. Their foursquare textbook, elucidating the "inspired Word of the Bible," and teaching the spiritual origin and ultimate of man, would henceforth be their "sufficient guide to eternal Life"(S & H 497:4).

For as long as churches were humanly needed, these branches would constitute the world-wide Christian Science church (including The First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston - the Mother Church's original and only title in its legal Deed of Trust), and so represent "the man whose name is The BRANCH," who would "grow up out of his place" and "build the temple of the Lord" (Zech 6:12).

Published by
Gordon and Estelle Brown
England 1988
© Copyright W. Gordon Brown 1988
ISBN 0 904320 05 7

Printed by Villiers Publications Ltd 26a Shepherds Hill, London N6 5AH

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