

**EVOLUTION OF THE
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH
ORGANIZATION**

W. GORDON BROWN

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Abbreviations used in this booklet to certain of the writings of Mary Baker Eddy and certain of the books of the Bible are as follows:-

S&H Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures
Mis Miscellaneous Writings
Ret Retrospection and Introspection
Peo The People's Idea of God
My Miscellany

Exod Exodus
Isa Isaiah
Zech Zechariah
Matt Matthew
Gal Galatians
Eph Ephesians
Heb Hebrews

This brief spiritual survey of the story of the Christian Science movement investigates only the basic theme of the relationship between its textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, and the Church organization. Subjects such as the Metaphysical College, the Publishing Society, the Deeds of Trust, etc., etc., which are not included, naturally take their place within the perspective mapped out by these two foremost topics when the story is treated in greater detail.

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Resolving the problem of organization in connection with the Christian Science Church is vital to everybody because the issues it raises relate not merely to Christian Scientists but to the freedom and peace and well-being of mankind.

Let us approach this crucial subject in the spirit of "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa 1:18). Let us try to enter into open-minded communion with the determining divine Principle behind the whole mighty revelation and development of the spiritual idea of God in this respect. It is never a question of what some person, or group of persons, thinks about an issue such as this, or what their opinion regarding it is; nothing matters but what is true in Principle, and therefore in the sight of God. What is the *truth* regarding the organizing of the Christian Science Church? This is the only thing that concerns us. What is the real spiritual meaning of the footsteps Mary Baker Eddy was impelled to take and the instructions she gave? If only we will listen to the interpretation of impersonal divine Principle by fearlessly investigating Mrs Eddy's own written word on the subject, and also by turning to the authority of the Bible for elucidation and confirmation, then surely the truth will begin to be made plain to us; controversies will gradually be cleared up, because we shall be thinking from the standpoint of the governing Principle itself, which alone has any real value.

With the highest possible motives, and in keeping with the scientific spirit of these "latter days," is it not essential that we should employ fearless, heart-searching questioning and analysis in a matter such as this? When the children of Israel journeyed through the wilderness God fed them with manna. The Hebrew meaning of the word "manna" is "what is it?" It was imperative for the Israelites to be continually asking the question, What is Truth? What is Principle? What is the demand and interpretation of Principle at

each and every step of our journey and in respect of everything we think, say, and do? The children of Israel were not allowed merely to be unthinking followers of someone else's sense of Truth; they had to understand and demonstrate Truth for themselves. So must we all, in our journey through life, be independent thinkers and questioners, otherwise we shall make very little progress, because there will be little understanding and therefore little demonstration.

From this standpoint, and in this spirit, therefore, let us courageously, impersonally, honestly, lovingly consider certain salient issues regarding the founding and development of the Christian Science church organization.

Discoverer and Founder — Understanding and Demonstration

Understanding and demonstration are the two indispensable soaring wings of the unfolding spiritual idea. In the case of the mission of Mary Baker Eddy these two wings are manifest in the pure spiritual *revelation* which she recorded in the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, and in the pure spiritual *demonstration* which is signified by her *church organization*. With both she was divinely impelled, and the one was inseparable from the other. As the teachings of the textbook unfolded throughout its many revisions, so changes in church administration took place accordingly.

Touching the complementary relationship of the textbook and the church we recognize immediately the two fundamental offices of her career — those of Discoverer which corresponds with revelator, and of Founder which corresponds with demonstrator. What we are approaching through an understanding of these two offices is the idea of *divine government* — government on earth as it is in heaven, the government of the human by the divine, divinity in control of humanity, the coincidence of the human with the divine.

Without human footsteps substantiating a revelation there can be no true founding of an idea. For instance, Columbus discovered America, yet other explorers had landed on that continent before. The reason Columbus is credited with being the discoverer

of America is that he was a founder as well. Unlike his predecessors he founded a colony. If an idea is to be established in human consciousness it must not only be revealed, it must also be demonstrated and lived. Discoverer and Founder are thus the two principal offices of Mary Baker Eddy's career.

The climax of her revelation came with her interpretation of the foursquare holy city that comes "down from God out of heaven," as described in Revelation 21. This city symbolizes the true identity of generic man, the spiritual reality of the human race, the world as divine Principle knows it and expresses it. It is "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11:10). This heavenly "city" must of necessity set itself up and operate on earth. The revelation must found itself.

How is this founding accomplished? Through spiritual demonstration and proof. The great fact regarding the founding of Mary Baker Eddy's church organization is that it is type and symbol of the way in which divine revelation solves the problem of organic life, or body. "Spiritual teaching must always be by symbols," she writes in *Science and Health* p. 575:13, when she is interpreting the meaning of the city foursquare. What she presented to the world through the founding of her church was a working illustration of the way in which pure spiritual revelation solves the problem of mortality. The way, as exemplified by Jesus, is the way of universal Love. This means that the revelation of what Life really is impels the self-sacrifice of the organic sense of life. The usual way with material organizations, however, is self-perpetuation and not self-sacrifice.

This relationship, then, between revelation and demonstration accounts for the two offices. Once these were brought to birth and firmly established as one spiritual happening — two complementary aspects of the workings of one idea — Mary Baker Eddy's purpose was accomplished. Divine revelation shows itself to be the solution to the problem of mortality in proportion as it dissolves, through translation, the myth that life is organic, or that it is a thing of personal sense and time. "Organization and time have nothing to do with Life," declares Christian Science (S&H 249:19). In proportion as the revelation of Truth pours itself forth to human consciousness it accomplishes simultaneously the dissolution of the

mortal sense of life, or the time factor. Otherwise a religious abstraction is being entertained, and the human problem is as adamant as ever. Unless humanity finds itself transfigured and healed by the self-revelatory workings of the divine idea, it is not the divine idea that is appearing.

The Two Translations — the Missions of Jesus and John the Baptist

In order to arrive at a scientific assessment of these two complementary offices, discoverer and founder, let us turn to what are called the "two translations" on pages 115 and 116 of *Science and Health* — i.e. the "Scientific Translation of Immortal Mind," which is followed by the "Scientific Translation of Mortal Mind." The first translation, defining "God," "man," "idea," emphasizes revelation. This relates to the office of discoverer, because here the idea of God and man comes "down from God out of heaven." The second, giving the three degrees of the "physical," "moral," and "spiritual," emphasizes demonstration. This relates to the office of founder, because this shows the impact which revelation makes on the time-space-matter sense of life. The first explains to humanity its eternal divinity and the spiritual reality of the universe; the second explains the consequent translation of the erroneous mortal concept, focussed in organic body. In the story of the founding of Christian Science, the first corresponds to the writing of *Science and Health*, and the second to the whole question of the church organization. What Mrs Eddy did through the symbol of her church was to exemplify the way in which divine revelation solves the life-problem *collectively* and *universally* in Christian Science just as it did *individually* through the demonstrations of Jesus.

In the career of Jesus this same twofold happening is signified by his twofold baptism — his baptism by the Holy Ghost, and his baptism by water (which is the baptism of "repentance," or the baptism of John the Baptist). These two "baptisms" were simultaneous and continuous throughout his career until the last supper, which closed Jesus' "concessions to matter" (see S&H 33:1). Their significance in our present context is that the baptism of the Holy Ghost relates

to the scientific translation of immortal Mind, and the John the Baptist baptism to the scientific translation of mortal mind. With the latter, the belief that the spiritual idea of God can be born organically is repented of and dissolved, and man is found in the image of God as revealed by the first translation. It cannot be stressed too strongly that this dissolution — this spiritual self-sacrifice — is brought about solely by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the activity of the first translation, and not by the employment of human ways and means.

It is spiritually helpful and enlightening to see the textbook revelation and the church organization, not only in relation to these two translations, but also in relation to the missions of Jesus and John the Baptist.

Jesus said regarding his necessity for being baptized of John: "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Mrs Eddy used these same words regarding her own necessity for founding a church organization. She said: "If our church is organized, it is to meet the demand, 'Suffer it to be so now' " (Mis 91:8-10). In *Science and Health*, at the beginning of the chapter "Marriage" (the subject of which involves the question of joining an organic body and multiplying organically), she again uses Jesus' words to John, and adds by way of explanation: "Jesus' concessions (in certain cases) to material methods were for the advancement of spiritual good" (S&H 56:4-6). Mary Baker Eddy's church founding was for the "advancement of spiritual good" on behalf of the whole body of mankind.

If we turn to the Gospels, particularly the Gospel of Luke, we find that Jesus and John the Baptist appear almost simultaneously. They are born practically at the same time, and their careers unfold for a while side by side. It is the same with the Christian Science textbook and the Christian Science church. At the beginning of John's Gospel, John the Baptist is even spoken of as having the same origin as Jesus. The circumstances of their births are not the same, of course, but it is evident from the text that the same divine Principle is responsible for the missions of them both. John the Baptist was essential to Jesus, just as the founding of the church in Christian Science was essential to the divine revelation which Mrs Eddy recorded progressively in *Science and Health*. Certainly in the

consciousness of Mary Baker Eddy both textbook and church were divinely impelled.

Recall, also, what John the Baptist said of Jesus: "He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me" (John 1:15). Think of this relative to church organization on the one hand and the revelation of Truth in the textbook on the other. In their true scientific perspective, the pure revelation of God, represented by the textbook, both precedes and succeeds its own temporal teaching symbol that appears as the church organization. The purpose of a symbol is to prepare the way for the full-orbed appearing of the idea that lies behind it. John also said that Jesus must "increase" whereas he, John the Baptist, must "decrease" (John 3:30). Correspondingly, the understanding of Truth in the textbook should continually "increase" in the consciousness of Christian Scientists whilst the temporary organic symbol should "decrease."

According to Paul, Christ (Christ Jesus) is to his church (all humanity) as a "head" is to its "body" (e.g., Eph 5:23). The two are joined in divine wedlock. The danger with John the Baptist is that he is liable to lose his head! In the Gospel story John lost his head because of his attitude to a "marriage" (see Matt 14:1-11). The "body," or church, without its "head" — its governing Christ-principle — cannot possibly be the true "body of Christ." Hence the need on the part of the church for absolute obedience to its governing head. And hence also the present governmental problems of the human race, which is, in reality, the "body of Christ."

Jesus says of John, "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he" (Luke 7:28). The mission of the Christian Science Church is like that of a prophet; it foretells the establishing on a world scale of the absolute Science of being. In this sense nothing greater was ever born of a woman than the Christian Science Church. But the least idea of the absolute universal Science of being recorded in *Science and Health* is greater than the entire material church organization.

The very high estimate accorded John the Baptist in some contexts of the Bible and Mrs Eddy's writings, and the low one accorded him in others, find their parallel in the true and false

functioning of church organization.

It is imperative to understand the difference between organization as symbol and organization as counterfeit. In the case of the former, translation, progression and life come into expression; in the case of the latter, there is stagnation, frustration and death.

Science and Health and the Church Manual

In order to instruct us in the practical spiritual meaning of the two propositions we have been considering we are presented in Christian Science with two outstanding, divinely inspired documents — two written statements that stem from identically the same source. The one, of course, is *Science and Health* which, as we have said, pertains to divine revelation; the other is the *Manual of The Mother Church* which relates to the founding of the church. Just as Jesus and John the Baptist are shown in the Gospels to have had the same Principle impelling them both, so this is true also of these two books, *Science and Health* and the *Church Manual*.

Mrs Eddy writes in *Miscellany*: "I should blush to write of 'Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures' as I have, were it of human origin, and were I, apart from God, its author" (My 115:4). Of the Rules and By-laws of the *Church Manual* she writes: "The Rules and By-laws in the Manual of The First Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston . . . were impelled by a power not one's own" (Mis 148:8). Mrs Eddy, as their author, was absolutely sure of the divine origin of both. She had this enormously high estimate of her two foremost writings, the Textbook and the Manual.

Two Phases of Church Organization

Before we turn to consider something of the deep practical meaning of the *Church Manual* — what it stands for in terms of the demonstration of Principle — we should examine the history of the founding of the church itself. As we learn from the Manual's "Historical Sketch," and from Mary Baker Eddy's other writings, the found-

ing unfolded through two distinct phases. (These two "church" phases are not related to one another in the same way as the other pairs we have been considering, such as the offices of discoverer and founder, the two baptisms, the two translations etc.) There was the first organization which she started in 1879 and which lasted until 1889, a period of exactly ten years; and there was the second organization which began in 1892, three years after the dissolution of the first. Mrs Eddy dissolved her first central Boston Church in 1889 at the same time as she dissolved her College. Having done so she retired for a period of three years to her home in Concord, New Hampshire. She said of this unexpected, unprecedented step that it was in order "to gain a higher hope for the race." It was essential, she told her followers, for her to have time to revise *Science and Health*. To this end, to use her own words, she must seek "in solitude and silence a higher understanding of the absolute scientific unity which must exist between the teaching and letter of Christianity and the spirit of Christianity" (My 246:11-18). Incidentally, as will be seen by studying the article in *Miscellany* from which the above quotation is taken, what this unity of letter and spirit brings into expression is a state of spiritually democratic self-government, based on what she calls "the Magna Charta of Christian Science." Is not the *Church Manual*, with its provisions for democratic freedom, and which came into being with her second organization, the Great Charter of Christian Science?

After her three years' retirement, during which time *Science and Health* was extensively revised, the second church organization, called specifically "The Mother Church," was formed. This title was not given to the first Boston organization. Here let it be stressed that when "church organization" is referred to in this way in this booklet, the allusion is to the central authoritarian concept of church only, and not to individual, democratically organized "branch" churches. Also let it be stressed that although two church organizations are referred to as if one was separate from the other, this is not strictly speaking true. There is one continuous Church of Christ, Scientist just as there is one continuous Christ-idea, although, in human history, this idea appears through the two distinct phases of Christ Jesus and Christian Science.

Mrs Eddy writes of her first organization (Historical Sketch, Manual p. 17) that it was "designed to commemorate the word and works of our Master, which should reinstate primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing." She says of the second that it was "designed to be built on the Rock, Christ; even the understanding and demonstration of divine Truth, Life, and Love, healing and saving the world from sin and death; thus to reflect in some degree the Church Universal and Triumphant" (Manual p. 19). Thus the second church is much vaster in conception than the first. Whereas the first is concerned chiefly with healing individuals of sickness, the second involves healing the world of sin and death. Of course the second (world healing) necessarily includes the individual healing that was so characteristic of the mission of Jesus, and therefore of the first church, but this is incidental to the church's main purpose.

The question earnestly to be considered today is whether or not a third concept of church is appearing, namely, the Church Universal and Triumphant itself, which the second only reflected "in some degree." The Church Universal and Triumphant must surely be identical with the universal holy city of Revelation 21, appearing not in the form of a teaching symbol but as the reality which lies behind the symbol — appearing not in theory but in fact. The very words "Universal and Triumphant" imply "the structure of Truth and Love," that which "rests upon and proceeds from divine Principle," which is, in part, the definition of "Church" in the Glossary of *Science and Health*.

Returning to the textbook, we find that the founding of the second organization in 1892 corresponds, in the evolution of *Science and Health*, to the publication of the 50th edition. This is always considered to be a very important edition, and the most outstanding of all the revisions. This 50th edition is the revision that was the outcome of Mrs Eddy's three years' retirement from 1889 to 1892. One of its vital new features was that the chapter "The Apocalypse" included for the first time a treatise on the city foursquare. Previously this chapter had dealt only with the subject of the God-crowned woman of Revelation 12. The holy city had been referred to, and its great importance had been heralded, in the 16th edition in a chapter called "Wayside Hints," but it did not become part of the

chapter "The Apocalypse" until 1891. This "Jerusalem above" which Paul calls "the mother of us all" (Gal 4:26), this city of generic man, is the type of the divine reality that lay behind the symbol of the second church organization, called The Mother Church. Later on Mrs Eddy was to write in *Science and Health* that the mother who gives birth to the man child in Revelation 12 "symbolizes generic man, the spiritual idea of God" (S&H 561:22). She was also to declare to the world that when she was no longer present to administer the affairs of her church, her successor as leader of the Christian Science movement would be none other than generic man — "man the generic term for mankind" (My 347:5).

Both the "woman" of Revelation 12 and the "city" of Revelation 21 are symbols of the spiritual identity of *the human race*. Hence the second organization (The Mother Church) was designed to heal and save "*the world* from sin and death."* It was a type of the self-sacrificing "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of *the world*"* (John 1:29). Mrs Eddy wrote that "from first to last The Mother Church seemed [note past tense] type and shadow of the warfare between the flesh and Spirit, even that shadow whose substance is the divine Spirit, imperatively propelling the greatest moral, physical, civil, and religious reform ever known on earth" (Pul 20:14). Its warfare was the warfare between spiritual and organic methods of birth-giving, between spiritual and organic means of propagating the idea of God, between control by divine Principle and personal control, between spiritual self-sacrifice and material self-perpetuation.

Because the revelation of the holy city had already appeared in this 50th edition of *Science and Health*, the symbol that taught the living demonstration of this*revelation, namely, the Mother Church organization, could be formed. And let us realize that there can be no proper dissolution of the symbol unless the revelation itself, active in the understanding of Christian Scientists, brings about that dissolution; leaving only the substance of the revelation as the reality behind the symbol. Otherwise there is a vacuum. Remember the words of John the Baptist: "*After* me [church organization] cometh a man [generic man] which is preferred *before* me: for he was *before* me"* (John 1:30).

*italics added

No wonder Paul describes the holy city, the "Jerusalem above," as "the mother of us all," and as the "freewoman" in contrast to the "bondwoman" (see Galatians 4). This idea of the "city," or consciousness, of generic man being "the mother of us all," was thus revealed in *Science and Health* before the organic symbol was formed — that is, before the founding of the Mother Church organization.

All this helps us to understand the *modus operandi* of the entire founding mission. The first church organization, which Mrs Eddy herself dissolved in 1889, founded Christian Science upon the life-work of Jesus. It has this never-to-be-forgotten characteristic that it was founded upon Jesus' demonstration of *Life*, and therefore on the laying down of the organic sense of life. Christian Science having been thus founded, we come to what emphasizes Christian Science itself, namely, the second of the two organizations, where the keynote is "the structure of *Truth and Love*"* (S&H 583:12). Truly the holy comforter, divine Science, is "the development of eternal *Life, Truth, and Love*"* (S&H 588:7).

The transition is divinely natural and inevitable. Jesus' mission accentuates the work of the individual, while that which comes after him has the accent on the collective and universal — that is, on the world. In Jesus we see the individual dissolving, through translation, the organic concept of body, and thus solving the mortal problem. Christian Science teaches exactly the same translation and solution but on a world scale. Therefore, in the matter of church organization, which is always the symbol of organic body, Mrs Eddy was impelled to dissolve the first organization herself individually in order to present an example to the second organization of what it must do corporately in its relation to all the world.

Let us recapitulate. In the two phases of the Christian Science church organization, the first relates specifically to the mission of Christ Jesus, the manhood of God; the second relates to the mission of Christian Science itself, the womanhood of God. Jesus' mission culminated in the resurrection and ascension when he showed the dissolution of the organic sense of body, demonstrating what body really is. Upon that demonstration of the true idea of body, Christian Science must be founded, or else it is not Christian Science.

*italics added

This dissolution through resolution, this solution of the problem of organic life, this process of translation instead of death, is the living Rock upon which Christian Science is based. Stemming from this foundation, the same demonstration of inorganic, indestructible life will take place on a collective and universal scale in terms of the body of mankind as a whole. Thus the second organization specifies the world-healing mission of Christian Science itself once it has been founded upon this Rock.

No longer "under the law"

The first organization was an institution chartered under the law of the land. Not so the second, however. The second had the Manual. The first did not. The Manual came into existence for the first time in 1895 to administer the affairs of the new Mother Church. The Manual founds the Christian Science Church not under the law of the land but under the law of God — the law that resurrected Jesus from the grave and dissolved all mortal confines. Mrs Eddy wrote of the steps that led up to the second organization: "The foundation on which our church was to be built had to be rescued from the grasp of legal power, and now it must be put back into the arms of Love, if we would not be found fighting against God" (Mis 140:21-24). She wrote in the October Journal of 1892: ". . . All loyal Christian Scientists will be pleased to know that we can have and hold church property without going back to outgrown forms of church organization . . ."

So let us be clear about the way in which these two church phases relate spiritually to the mission of Jesus and to the outcome of his mission. Paul writes in Galatians of how "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal 4:4-5). The first organization was, as it were, "made of a woman, made under the law." But its purpose, in the hands of Mrs Eddy, was "to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." When she had dissolved it, therefore, and was in the process of forming her second organization, she records how she rescued the new

church's foundation from the grasp of human legalism and put it under the law of the motherhood of Love.

Because Jesus' dissolution of the organic sense of life brought to humanity (in Christianity) freedom from the belief of being "made of a woman, made under the law" (even as Mrs Eddy taught symbolically through the dissolution and reorganization of her church) Paul, in his epistle, goes on to rebuke the Galatians severely for having put themselves back "under the law" again. He says: "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" The Galatians had resisted moving forward spiritually and had put themselves back under the rigid and highly organized Jewish interpretation of the Old Testament law. So Paul challenges them: "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman . . . Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage . . . and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all . . . So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free" (Gal 4:9-31).

Significantly, Mrs Eddy closes her chapter "Animal Magnetism Unmasked" in *Science and Health* with a quotation from this same epistle to the Galatians, which she calls Paul's "great epistle." (The whole of the passage, *Science and Health* 106:6-29, is of great significance. The American nation declared its independence from a dictatorial mother country, and Mrs Eddy explains how Christian Science too "has its Declaration of Independence.")

Organization is of the nature of "the bondwoman" only if it seeks to perpetuate itself instead of being willing to resolve itself. This applies to neither of the two phases of Mary Baker Eddy's church organization, as conceived by her, because she provided, in both instances, for their material dissolution. It is therefore in the holy city, the "mother of us all," whose status is that of the "freewoman," that the Church of Christ, Scientist finds its true identity.

As we have said, the church also finds its identity in the reve-

lation which is *Science and Health*. Spiritually understood, *Science and Health* (with its main body of sixteen chapters) and the city *foursquare* are one, namely, "the divine body of . . . Principle," which is Mary Baker Eddy's estimate of the Christian Science textbook (see S&H 559:25). The holy city, the "mother of us all," where the body of mankind is under the government of the divine Principle, Love, and where it finds in Science its wholeness and its health, is the reality of being to which the textbook testifies, and to which the proper functioning of the church organization leads.

And thus when both *Science and Health* and the church are spiritually understood, the temporary organic symbol lays down its life for the reality behind the symbol. The symbol is no longer needed once it has accomplished the work for which it was instituted, namely, that of exemplifying the workings of the idea, and therefore of preparing the way for the idea itself. Humanity then participates in the living reality of the idea and finds itself to *be* that reality.

During the three years from 1889 to 1892 when Mrs Eddy, having dissolved her first organization, retired from the Boston scene, there was no centralized authoritarian church in Boston. The members still held services, but their church was no longer a ruling authority. It functioned like other Christian Science churches that were springing up all over the United States at that time and which came to be called "branch churches." Mrs Eddy's retirement pointed to the fact that what Christian Scientists must aim for is democratic self-government under God, whereby they depend upon no human agency outside of themselves to govern them. Zechariah prophesied: "Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; . . . he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord" (Zech 6:12).

The period of the first organization (including the three years' interval that followed its dissolution) was an exemplary period, just as the mission of Jesus (brought to fulfilment in the resurrection and ascension) was an exemplary mission. Significantly, Mrs Eddy referred to her church, following the dissolution, as "this spiritually organized Church" (Ret 44:30). Ideally it involved individual and collective self-government under God. It represented "the man whose name is The BRANCH." It pointed to the divinely natural resolution

of the dilemma which was to face her followers in 1910 when she was no longer present in person to administer the affairs of The Mother Church. For by 1910 she had made it impossible for The Mother Church to function any longer as a centralized authority without her personal presence. That is to say, as a reading of the Manual shows, she incorporated into its By-laws some twenty-five clauses ("estoppel clauses" as they have since been called) which prohibit the continuing election of vital church officers without her personal sanction, given either verbally or in her own handwriting. At the same time she demanded that *all* By-laws be resolutely obeyed.

The question which Christian Scientists must surely pray to have answered is, why did Mrs Eddy formulate her church's constitution in such a way as to cause The Mother Church, as such, to be irrevocably self-dissolving at her passing? If God wanted the church to continue as if she personally were still at the helm, when in fact this was no longer so, why did she not provide for the removal of the offending clauses and so save her followers their awful uncertainty and dilemma? Did she carelessly forget regarding so supreme an issue? Or did she take her stand knowingly, conscientiously, purposely? Surely the answer must be the latter. It is said that several years before her passing her students brought lawyers to her to try to persuade her to change the prohibitive wording of the By-laws. They asked her in effect what would happen to her church when she was no longer present if the estoppel clauses remained. Mrs Eddy's reply was that God had told her to frame the By-laws in the way she had and that this was how they must stay.

Had Mrs Eddy at that time openly declared either the deeper meaning of the textbook, or her provisions for the church, her followers might have obeyed the letter of what she said without having grown to understand its spirit. This would have been disastrous. As it is she left these truths to reveal themselves spiritually (and therefore safely) in God's own way. Mrs Eddy wisely left the Christian Science movement to the providence of God. No church vacuum need ensue at the passing of The Mother Church. Self-governing branch churches would continue to function "in consonance with The Mother Church Manual" (Manual 72). Once they had served their useful human purpose they too would be free

to dissolve themselves in accordance with the Mother's example (see Mis 358:30-7). "The man whose name is The BRANCH" (not MOTHER) would thus arise to "build the temple of the Lord."

Spiritual Interpretation of the Manual's Provisions

In very general terms, let us now turn to the Manual itself. In the Christian Science Sentinel of December 17th 1904 the statement was made that the purpose of the rules contained in the Church Manual was to aid Christian Scientists in becoming a law to themselves. But how can a Christian Scientist be a law to himself if he allows himself to be governed, and his understanding determined, by an outside human authority, even though this authority earnestly believes that it is Principle's appointed executive? Spiritually understood, the Manual puts into effect the workings of the law and authority of God; and once Christian Scientists are knowingly governed by this law and are understandingly subject to this authority, they *are* a law to themselves. Neither shall they say any more 'lo, here,' or 'lo, there,' for the kingdom of God, revealed by their textbook in its order, its Science, and its system is 'within them,' and not outside.

It is not our purpose here to consider such rules in the Manual as forbade Mother Church members to haunt Mrs Eddy's drive or stroll by her house, etc., but rather to seek to understand, honestly and prayerfully, the great dynamic law of Principle that underlies the Manual *as a whole*, and which has power to solve the crucial problem of organization, or body. What do the Manual's provisions signify comprehensively in terms of divine Principle? This is the issue which concerns us.

The Manual had never been made a humanly legal instrument. Having rescued her church from "the grasp of legal power," as she put it, it is scarcely likely that Mrs Eddy would put its constitution back under the law of the land. Yet, in 1910, a few days after her passing, it appears that this is what her officers did. Faced with their humanly insoluble dilemma, the church authorities took the Manual to lawyers for their legal interpretation. If the Manual

were obeyed The Mother Church could no longer function as a ruling mother on account of the absence of Mrs Eddy. That such an outcome should have been her intention after all those years of labour on its behalf seemed unthinkable to the church members then even as it does to the majority of them now. The lawyers agreed. Of course The Mother Church must continue to function without Mrs Eddy just as it functioned with her. The estoppel clauses must be waived, they said. Mrs Eddy did not realize what she was doing. No other course is open. The Board of Directors must accept full responsibility and administer the church themselves as if they always had the consent of — indeed, as if they *were* — its Pastor Emeritus. But this was impossible, except in the most bureaucratically legalistic sense. Mrs Eddy was a divinely inspired, evolutionary administrator, and no person, or group of persons, could possibly take her place.

With its Manual interpreted legalistically, the Mother Church had no alternative but to become a static regime. Further development was denied it because, under the Manual, such development was the province solely of Mrs Eddy's leadership. Surely it was not the Founder's intentions that her church should, in this way, become moribund? On the contrary, her provisions for it were those of translation, resolution, and life.

Now, if no spiritual development takes place relative to the church — or if the church "increases" its organizational enterprises rather than "decreases" them — this means, correspondingly, that no spiritual development is taking place regarding the understanding of *Science and Health*, for the two work hand in hand. An increase of organizational activities as an apparent substitute for advancing spiritual vision is what is causing so much concern amongst so many Christian Science church members today.

Even so, who dares to say that he would have acted any differently if faced with that 1910 situation? No one was personally to blame. The decision to be made was one of unparalleled ecclesiastical difficulty. But over the years, in the light of continuing revelation, the intentions and provisions of divine wisdom and Love are becoming increasingly clear.

The fruits of the early legal alliance were inevitably reaped. At the famous Christian Science Litigation, which ended in 1921,

this same law of the land, represented by the Full Bench of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, finally gave the Christian Science Board of Directors absolute control over the entire Christian Science organization. Henceforth no voice could be raised in opposition, or could question the Directors' decisions, without risk of being excommunicated from the church. As the years went by only a few men and women were able to take their stand against this ecclesiastical control. The document that had never been made a legal instrument, which operated solely as the law of Principle, had been interpreted on a humanly legalistic basis like the constitution of any other human organization.

In the practice of human law, the ideal of all documentation is non-ambiguity of meaning. Wording must be susceptible of no misunderstanding, and therefore of no personal alternative interpretation. To the lawyers, nothing could have been more ambiguous, or more impractical, than the way Mrs Eddy left the wording of her Mother Church Manual. Interpreted by divine Principle, however, the meaning is not ambiguous at all. The Manual means what it says as surely as it says what it means; and this, ironically, is what human law requires regarding its own legal documents!

Surely, sooner or later, Christian Scientists must reexamine this whole situation, prayerfully and analytically, in the further light of Principle. But in view of Mrs Eddy's own words, and with almost sixty years of history to observe and learn from, what other conclusion can we come to than that, in 1910, the church, unwittingly, was taken out of "the arms of Love" and put back into "the grasp of legal power"? The persecutor of the "structure of Truth and Love" was determined to "hold Spirit in the grasp of matter" (see S&H 28:1-8). But if Spirit is all and matter is naught, as Christian Science teaches, such a situation is untenable. Surely government by divine Principle must inevitably reinstate itself.

The Rod of God in the Hand of the Christian Scientist

The word "manual" is from the Latin root "manus," meaning "hand." Throughout the Scriptures "hand" is a symbol of

power. "The hand of the Lord" signifies the spiritual power of Principle, the power of demonstration. In considering the founding of the revelation of *Science and Health* through the setting up of the church organization we are concerned with the exercise of spiritual power — that is, of proof, or demonstration.

In the Bible there is a relevant incident that took place in the experience of Moses, the lawgiver of the children of Israel, when he was being fitted for his mission. God gave Moses an instrument of authority and power to enable him to deliver Israel from Egypt. Moses was asked, "What is that in thine hand?" [Note, "in thine hand."] He replied, "A rod." Then God commanded: "Cast it on the ground." When Moses did so the rod became a serpent. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." The command continues: "Thou shalt take this rod in thine hand . . . and Moses took the rod of God in his hand" (see Exod 4). Armed with the rod of God, Moses presented Israel's case before Pharaoh and freed her from Egyptian servitude.

Moses' "rod" was an instrument of divine discipline for administering the law of God, and therefore for handling (making nothing of) the serpent, or animal magnetism. Its purpose was to demonstrate the government and authority of the I AM THAT I AM, the Principle, the I, the Ego, of the universe. This order of, first, the revelation to Moses of the one I AM followed, secondly, by his use of the rod, corresponds once again to the order of the two translations, the two baptisms, the two offices of discoverer and founder, understanding and demonstration, *Science and Health* and the Manual.

This is the story as it comes in the Old Testament. But is there not the inevitable parallel in the history of Christian Science? Let us examine the symbolism which the Bible provides. The question is, how many objects is Moses dealing with? Two or one? Is there a rod as well as a serpent, or a serpent as well as a rod? No, there is only ever one thing. Either it is the rod itself or else it is the rod having the appearance of a serpent. What constitutes it a rod in the one instance and a serpent in the other? All there is to the serpent is the rod thrown down — discarded — its disciplinary measures disobeyed,

its spiritual power reversed. In the story of Christian Science it is the Manual abandoned — its divine provisions rejected by reason of its Principle not being grasped. The serpent is a humanly legalistic interpretation of the Manual reversing the interpretation of Principle, and therefore substituting a human sense of law for divine law.

What then is the rod, which thus precedes and succeeds its own appearing as the serpent? The rod is the reverse of everything that the serpent stands for, and therefore is the serpent handled by the tail. The rod is the serpent taken up tail first — translated out of being a serpent. This makes it “a wise idea,” or the idea of wisdom. In divine metaphysics, wisdom is always the specific opposite of the subtle serpent. It is divine “wisdom” which bids Moses take the serpent by the tail (see S&H 321:8-16 and 515:5-10). Mrs Eddy writes of “wisdom’s rod” (Mis 387:20). Wisdom’s rod and wisdom’s Manual are one and the same instrument. The Manual’s Rules and By-laws are edicts of divine wisdom.

What is the symbolism of handling the serpent tail first? If Principle is obeyed — not cast down — there is no serpent to handle. There is only the rod. If the rod seems temporarily to have become a serpent, the way to turn it back into a rod again is to obey divine wisdom and handle it by the tail. To take something by its tail is to take the end from the beginning. In the words of Jesus, it is to let the last be first and the first last. Mrs Eddy quotes this statement, “The last shall be first, and the first last,” in her commentary on the action of the two translations (S&H 116:8). In its highest spiritual meaning this involves the understanding that, in our identity as God’s image, we come forth from divine Principle, Love, (first), and return to divine Principle, Love, (last); and in the course of describing this spiritual circle we solve entirely the problem of organic life by reversing and translating everything that is of the nature of the serpent. The serpent which comes from dust (nothingness) is thus sent back to dust (nothingness), and all that remains is the original God-given rod.

In its application to the Mother Church Manual, handling the serpent tail first surely means obeying the Manual’s last By-law from the beginning. This ensures obedience to the Manual *as a whole*, so that it is not cast to the ground. What is the final By-law at the tail

end of the Manual? Under the title of "Amendment of By-Laws" we read as follows: "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" (Manual 105). In view of the fact that the pure Science and system contained in *Science and Health* is the real power behind the rod, and therefore is the power which handles and reverses the serpent, Mrs Eddy's specific reference to *Science and Health* in this By-law would seem to be highly significant. Only this final estoppel clause (which includes by inference all the others) has been identified with *Science and Health* in this way. The expanding vision today of the wholeness of the structure of *Science and Health* is what enables there to be true obedience to the *Church Manual*.

Supposing that last By-law were obeyed from the beginning, the Manual would be a rod in the hands of Christian Scientists exemplifying to mankind the way out of organizational restrictions and limitations, rather than the way of going deeper and deeper into them. It would illustrate the surrender of personally possessive, authoritarian motherhood in favour of individual freedom and self-government. In other words, it would lead the way to the Promised Land.

But let us be clear that motherhood in the case of Mary Baker Eddy was not personally possessive at all. Like that of the woman in the Apocalypse, it reflected the motherhood of God. Its sole purpose was to educate its child to the point of spiritual self-government, and having done so to retire as an outside agency. It is since her passing that authoritarian motherhood has sought to entrench itself.

In "Footsteps of Truth," in *Science and Health*, pages 226 to 228 show the parallel relationship between the leadership of Moses and the leadership of Mary Baker Eddy.

In line with Moses' liberation of Israel we also read in *Science and Health* of the way in which Jesus raised "the body" from "the grave" by the exercise of "spiritual power" (S&H 313:23-30). He did this by plunging "beneath the material surface of things" and finding "the spiritual cause," even as Christian Scientists are seeking increasingly to do today through the deeper understanding of their textbook. In exercising this "spiritual power" relative to the church

organization, the Manual teaches symbolically mankind's freedom from the confines of mortal body, or the grave.

Spiritual Resurrection

As far as its purpose to heal the world of sin and death is concerned, it would seem today that the organizational body of Christian Science is lying in the grave; and that for the sake of the future of the human race the requisite power to resurrect it is urgently needed. Yet something has been emerging over the last thirty years which one day will be found to be this very resurrection already in process of taking place. This is the inevitable, continuing revelation of Christian Science itself in terms of its universal, nonsectarian Science and system enshrined in *Science and Health* — a revelation that is taking place, necessarily, *outside* the confines of organization.

Since the time of Mrs Eddy's passing, and under the providence of divine Love, two trends in the development of the Christian Science movement are thus seen to have been at work. One is the growing doubt and uncertainty on the part of many church members regarding the policies of organization; the other is the developing understanding — the continuing self-revelation — of the teachings of the Bible and *Science and Health*. Both trends are reaching proportions today which they have not reached before. It would seem that they are converging simultaneously in each other's direction. While a growing disenchantment and a shrinking membership point to organization's inevitable climax, the divine opposite of organization, namely, the structure of spiritual consciousness itself, gathers continuous momentum. The "stone" (the "divine infinite calculus" — "calculus" is from a root meaning "stone") which, until now, the builders of ecclesiasticism have rejected, will inevitably fulfil its own purpose to "become the head of the corner." Prophesying this, Jesus added: "This is the Lord's doing [not man's doing], and it is marvellous in our eyes" (Matt 21:42-44).

None knew so well as Mrs Eddy that Christian Science is the revelation of the identity of man that has never been put into, or held captive by, a mortal body; that this identity can never be pressurized

through, or born of, a sectarian maternal organization. Hence her provisions for dissolving the belief that it can be born in this way, or that it can be propagated through organizational ways and means. (See her references to "organization," e.g. Mis 359:2-14, Ret 45:5-13, Peo 1:1-7, Mis 144:32-7.)

This was Jesus' understanding regarding his own Christ-identity, and regarding the Virgin Mary. To Jesus, identity was never in the body, but was always Soul *outside* the body. (See S&H 467:17-23, "Soul not confined in body," and 510:16-18.) In his case, body was not a confining prison house; in fact it was not matter at all in the ordinary accepted sense. It was a temporal, transitory symbol of body, and as such was subject to translation instead of death. Mrs Eddy writes of Jesus that his "sense of matter was the opposite of that which mortals entertain." His "earthly mission," she says, "was to translate substance into its original meaning, Mind" (Mis 74:13-17). It is exactly the same with Christian Science. To Mary Baker Eddy, Christian Science was never put into a material organization, or body. If it had been it would necessarily die in this body like everything else that is mortal. To Mrs Eddy her church organization was a needful transitory symbol. Once the revelation in *Science and Health* was complete, therefore, once it was fully reduced, as she puts it, to a comprehensible system, or body, of ideas (see S&H 146:31-5), then *Science and Health* itself, *understood in the wholeness of its structure*, becomes the solution to the whole vexed problem of material organization. Material structure is the shadow of which divine structure (or divine system) is the reality.

She said of her "twentieth century Church Manual": "Heaps upon heaps of praise confront me, and for what? That which I said in my heart would never be needed, — namely, laws of limitation for a Christian Scientist. Thy ways are not as ours. Thou knowest best what we need most, — hence my disappointed hope and grateful joy . . . Notwithstanding the sacrilegious moth of time, eternity awaits our Church Manual . . ." (My 229:24-4).

Time, tempus, temple, organic life, organic body, all speak of the same conditions of limitation. "Organization and time have nothing to do with Life," *Science and Health* teaches. "Time" is defined

in part in the Glossary as "Mortal measurements; limits . . ." (S&H 595:17). One of the definitions of "Serpent" is "the first lie of limitation" (S&H 594:4). The reason "eternity awaits our Church Manual," is that the Manual, properly obeyed, puts into effect the teachings of *Science and Health*; it handles and destroys the serpent — eliminates the myth of organization and time — with all its attendant limitations.

"I saw no temple therein" (no tempus, time, organization), John says of his vision of the holy city. Hence the holy city has "no boundary nor limit" (S&H 576-577). The real "mother of us all" is the endless, inexhaustible self-revelation of the Life which is Love, which has nothing to do with organization and time.

According to *Science and Health* 249:18-5, organization and time constitute the Adam dream of mortality, the dream of an "I" apart from God. "The I is Spirit . . . there is but one Ego." Israel could not take one step out of Egypt until Moses had revealed to her what the "I AM" was. The rod then handled the serpentine belief in temporal egoism, and this was her liberation. The above reference concludes with the words: "We run into error when we . . . suppose . . . mortality to be the matrix of immortality." Organization and time cannot be the matrix, or mother, of immortality. Mortality is the matrix only of itself, more mortality. Likewise organization is the matrix only of itself, more organization. It is immortality which is the matrix of immortality, and this is understood in Christian Science through the symbol of the timeless, templeless holy city, the "mother [matrix] of us all." Immortality and the understanding of *Science and Health* are one.

This true idea of motherhood is what Jesus understood and demonstrated individually when he overcame death and the grave, and it is what Christian Science teaches collectively and universally through *Science and Health* and the *Church Manual*.

"The four sides of our city are the Word, Christ, Christianity, and divine Science" (S&H 575). The textbook's sixteen chapters from "Prayer" to "The Apocalypse" pattern precisely the structure of this foursquare mother city — this "matrix" of the Word, Christ, Christianity, Science. While the first four chapters have an emphasis on what is meant by the *Word*, the second four accentuate the *Christ*,

the third four are predominantly the *Christianity* chapters, and the last four emphasize *Science* itself. Surely it cannot be by chance that the By-laws in the *Mother Church Manual* are presented, correspondingly, under *sixteen* main headings (see *Manual's* Table of Contents)?

The title "Science and Health" signifies Science whole, the Science of being in its unfragmentary, indestructible wholeness — man and the universe "every whit whole." In this idea of totality and wholeness lies the Science and system of absolute Christian Science — the cultured understanding, divinely structured and empowered, which is beyond and above all organizational confines. This is the "glory which [Christian Science] had with [its divine Principle, Love] before [the material organization] was" (John 17:5). In this divine system, man is found as God reveals him, unfettered by an organic structure.

For the sake of Principle and the future of the human race, when will Christian Scientists open their thoughts and hearts to the living, unfragmented wholeness of the Bible, the Textbook, and the Manual? As we do this, then, in the words of Paul to the Ephesians, this Science of universal Love will become "our peace," will make "both one," will break down "the middle wall of partition between us," will abolish "the law of commandments contained in ordinances," thus making in itself "of twain ONE NEW MAN, so making peace" (Eph 2:13-15).