

Notes on: The Church Manual by Blanche Hersey Hogue

The article was published in The Christian Science Sentinel dated September 10, 1910, prefaced by:

TAKE NOTICE

The article by Blanche Hersey Hogue, in the Sentinel of September 10 is practical and scientific, and I recommend its careful study to all Christian Scientists.

Mary Baker Eddy.

“Scientific” is not a vague word. It means that the article is consistent with all Mrs Eddy’s writings, and is susceptible of proof.

Paragraph 1.

“The rules of the Manual make possible right action through groups of individuals...” Notably “groups” is in the plural. The present tendency of Boston is to weld Christian Scientists into one electronically fed blob.

One notes the equal ranking accorded the Bible, Science and Health, and The Manual.

“...promoting the best possible form of church organization.” This does not preclude the best form changing over time.

Mrs Eddy wrote in the Sentinel of September 12, 1903 that “it will increase the spirituality of him who obeys it.” So it will not tend to increase merely his political or material organizational skills. One notes the word “obeys:” has the Boston board obeyed the last By-Law on page 105, “Amendment of By-Laws”? It has amended the 89th edition several times, and the membership has largely concurred.

Mrs Eddy’s article “Obedience” (Mis pp. 116-120) defines that requirement

Paragraph 2.

This lists various components of “right organization.” These were right at the time. In the Journal of August 1890 Mrs Eddy wrote that about fifty years would pass before Christian Scientists would be able a) to recognise who Mrs Eddy is, and b) to handle malicious animal magnetism in the right way. How inappropriate it is that the Boston board has obscured Mrs Eddy by various means including the promotion of Gillian Gill’s biography, and has kept from the field works on how to handle correctly malicious animal magnetism. With these understood, the church organisation would recover its upward path in obedience to the Church Manual.

“Great reforms, indeed, are going on...” These appear largely to have ceased.

“...the inward and spiritual understanding, which is itself being quickened by the law and order and discipline of right organization.” Note “quickened.” This shows spiritual understanding develops from adherence to the Manual. Not from *changing* the Manual; not from ignoring the final By-Law which is incorporated in every deed of trust for land in Boston. For example, the office of Pastor Emeritus was removed from the Manual’s list of officers from 1911 to 1924, making it easier to justify appointing other officers without, where required, the consent of the Pastor Emeritus.

Paragraph 3.

“It is best for the Christian Scientist at present that he is not allowed to live for himself.” Note “at present.” How long is this to continue? For ever? Clearly there is scope for evolution, rising higher. Is he bound to serve for ever an organization that is manifestly increasingly corrupt? Is he gagged on the topic of the flouting of the Manual and Mrs Eddy’s deeds of trust? Is “excommunication” an approved method of silencing him?

“Within the ample boundaries of the Christian Science organization etc.” Does this mean the surrendering of his own will to other human wills? No! It means surrendering it to God and God’s guidance. The Christian Science organization, because it has not evolved according to the Manual, is governed by human will – in Boston, and branch churches through the worship of Boston which breaks the First Commandment. Article XXIII Sections 1 and 3 (pp. 70-71) apply.

Paragraph 4.

First sentence: quite. Article VIII, Section1 (p. 40) “...mere personal attachment...” – see such with respect to the board of directors, lecturers, teachers, commanding a degree of *personal* obedience rather than adherence to God and His anointed messengers Christ Jesus and Mary Baker Eddy, their sayings and writings.

“...until in some fair day by-laws to provide for such consistent Christian behaviour shall no longer be necessary.” Will this fair day come in a flash? Or will it come by *obedience* (see Mis 116-120) and through evolution as a result of *obedience*?

“...shall go to his brother alone...” obviously a) stops political bickering and knifing, and b) gives opportunity for the destruction of sin.

Paragraph 5.

“...church organization so vital...an important point to protect.” That is why Mrs Eddy wrote and upheld the Manual as it is written. This allows church organization to evolve according to God’s law,

not to be ostensibly ossified, but actually altered by human law, which is what the board of directors has sought to do since 1910.

“...lukewarm attitude toward church organization.” Under the board of director’s regime and the field’s refusal to study and obey the Manual, has not branch church organization been interfered with foolishly? E.g. non-members taking office in branch churches, reading rooms (which are very important) being run by non-members, and individuals taking matters into their own hands.

“...to be cheerfully in his place at meetings whenever possible...” Apathy sometimes results in branch members reducing their meetings and leaving matters to their board to decide. At this time it might be worth considering removing boards and having church members run the branch church directly.

“...guard zealously our love for organization, even in its present incomplete form, that we may not hinder its growth into greater beauty and utility.” What here stands against the evolution of church organization according to the Manual? Does it not imply such evolution away from materiality and towards spirituality? “...its present incomplete form” implies it must develop towards a more complete form; “greater beauty and utility” implies it is at present deficient. Mrs Eddy approved and commended this article. She must have approved and commended this meaning – not a political structure dominated by Boston and maintained in defiance of, for example, pages 70-71 of the Manual.

Paragraph 6.

“Indifference to organization...” Seeking its evolution consistent with the Manual is not indifference. Indifference is ho-hum let us see what the directors come up with next year.

“So long, then, as the Leader...sees there is need for organization to establish Christian Science, no student may fancy that he has rightly ‘outgrown’ organization.” Quite. So no student should abandon the Christian Science church and withdraw to a corner. That is what various Christian Scientists did in Mrs Eddy’s time, such as Clara Choate and Sarah Crosse, and Mrs Eddy saw this was a mistake. Mrs Eddy established Christian Science and left it with the Deeds of Trust and Manual in unity with the last By-Law (XXXV Sect. 3 on p. 105) forbidding amendment or annulment incorporated in all the deeds for land in Boston. So amendment or annulment breaches those deeds. Nothing in the above extract suggests the organization should not evolve according to those Deeds of Trust and the Manual. Historically it is an irrefutable fact that successive boards of directors have altered the Manual, all of which except one (noted above) have not been rectified. They have gone further and stated they alone interpret it, and that any inconsistencies of interpretation by them over time are inconsequential. (Board Resolution of August 6, 1993, signed by Olga M. Chaffee, Clerk of The Mother Church, and Marcia E. Levin, Notary Public on August 6, 1992.) How could one tear up the Manual – the ultimate indifference to church organization – more thoroughly than that?

Paragraph 7.

Quite, quite. Last sentence: the church militant is the materially organized church in its early stages; the church triumphant is the result of its evolution into the spiritually organized church which ultimately must result in the destruction of all the world's sin.

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