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MONTHLY LETTER

Devoted to Spiritual and Philosophical Problems -- by Manly P. Hall

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Dear Friend:

From *Metaphysics*, which is the first grand department of philosophy, we must now pass on to *Logic*, the second major division.

Science has arisen not from the possession of fact but from the need of fact. Fact is finality. To possess it is to possess ultimates of knowledge. As ultimates of knowledge are impossible to man, fact is a term only. To gratify the natural egotism of the human creature, the term fact has been divided into the two terms: absolute fact and relative fact. Absolute fact is acknowledged but ignored, and upon the foundation of relative fact the institutions of modern knowledge have been established.

Aristotle in some cases uses the term science as a synonym for knowledge, for he opposes science to ignorance. Science represents ordered knowledge or knowledge brought under the discipline of the reason. By knowledge is signified that which has been established by the testimony of the senses or

demonstrated by the mind. Ignorance, as the antithesis of science, is the absence of knowledge.

There are three kinds of ignorance. The first Aristotle termed pure negation or the condition of not knowing, which condition is natural to the child and the uninformed. The second form of ignorance Aristotle termed a depraved condition of the mind, as, for example, when the intellect is impoverished by false opinions or accepts untruths as knowledge. The third form of ignorance is compound ignorance. According to Plato and Confucius, a man who knows not and knows not that he knows not is afflicted with compound ignorance. This last form arises from untrained opinions fortified by egotism. Immaturity and lack of opportunity are responsible for the natural forms of ignorance, but the more complex types of mental negation are due generally to perverse doctrines.

Logic is called the doctrine of reasonableness.

THE PRAYER OF CYRUS

"Thou Father Zeus, and Thou Sun, and all ye Gods, accept these sacrifices and thank offerings presented on account of the accomplishment of many and honorable works, and because you have pointed out to me both by sacrificial signs, and by signs in the heaven and by auguries, and by ominous messages, what things I ought, and what I ought not to do. Many thanks are also due to you, because I have also learned your watchful care, and have never in my season of prosperity been high minded above what becomes man. And now I beseech you to give happiness to my children, and wife, and friends, and country; and such a life as ye have granted me, so grant me a like death."

—FROM AN ANCIENT WORK.

It was originally the science of reasoning itself, that is, it established the rules by which men should think. The history of logic is generally divided into two major periods: pre-Aristotelian and post-Aristotelian. Aristotle was the founder of scientific logic and it is upon the premises laid down by him that the modern science of logic stands. To some measure, however, modern logic has been infected by the general tendency to complicate all systems and procedures. In its present state logic is a confused mass of formulae and propositions of comparatively little value to the average layman.

Previous to the time of Aristotle, logic was termed "natural." Natural logic manifests as the tendency towards reasonableness which is inherent to all creatures possessing even the rudiments of intellect. Primitive peoples, the higher animals, and even under certain conditions plants, demonstrate the presence of logical impulse.

We disagree with the somewhat prevalent opinion that that which is logical must therefore be true. That is logical which is consistent with its own premise, but if the premise be false the conclusions which are reached may be logical to the premise and reasonable to the premise but lack fact because the premise was lacking in fact. The value of the logic therefore depends upon the integrity of the premises or elements. For example, we may take the premise: to be rich is virtuous; John is rich, therefore John is virtuous. The logic is all right but the premise is wrong, and the chances are John is not virtuous.

It follows from this example that a certain knowledge of essential values is necessary to the logician. As essential values are metaphysical it follows, logically, that metaphysics is necessary to logic. As the average modern logician is not a metaphysician and has no foundation in metaphysical values, logic becomes a war of words and a babel of formulae.

The tools or instruments of logic, according to Aristotle and the first masters of the science, are Analogy, Induction and Deduction. These philosophical instruments are of the greatest antiquity and are the original footings of the house of learning.

Analogy: is that form of inference which arises

from the comparison of equals or of two particulars of similar import or magnitude. The Hermetic traditions of the Egyptians are exceedingly rich in examples of analogical inference.

Induction: is that form of inference which ascends from inferiors to superiors or which moves from particulars to universals; for example, from personality to principle.

Deduction: is that form of inference which descends from superiors to inferiors or from generals to particulars; for example, from infinites to finites.

It naturally follows that the human mind, when striving for a reasonable position, seeks to equilibrate itself by discovering its relationship with equals, superiors and inferiors. If it accomplishes this equilibrium through an intelligent use of the instruments of logic, that intellect may then be regarded as balanced.

We will now give examples of the three primary logical processes, using a simple formula, but all matters susceptible of logical examination may be subjected to the same treatment.

First, an example of analogy:

- (a) It is wrong for John to steal;*
- (b) for Henry to steal is similar as for John to steal;*
- (c) therefore it is wrong for Henry to steal.*

This is called analogy because the two factors compared—John and Henry—are particulars of comparatively equal magnitude. This inference is susceptible of vast application. An evil which is practiced by one is equally evil to any other that is similar to that one, or in the same category.

Second, an example of induction:

- (a) It is wrong for John to steal;*
- (b) all stealing is similar to John's stealing;*
- (c) therefore all stealing is wrong.*

In this case the inference ascends from particulars to generals. For John to steal is a particular; all stealing is a general or universal. By this process an individual act is established as a measure of universal action. A particular that is evil establishes the evil of a universal of which that particular is an aspect or application.

Third, an example of deduction:

- (a) All stealing is wrong;*

(b) for John to steal is stealing;

(c) therefore it is wrong for John to steal.

Here we have the example of descent from a universal to a particular. The principle of stealing is accepted as wrong, therefore, logically, all particular examples of theft being similar thereto, must be equally and particularly wrong.

Thus by the three primary inferences, honesty is established as a logical conclusion. All scientific logic must be expressed in threefold formulas as above, but there are numerous ramifications of these formulae which lie beyond the province of our present treatment. It will be evident therefore that logic arises from comparisons and the creation of formulae which establish in reasonableness the matter under consideration.

The three processes of logic, just described, were greatly refined by Sir Francis Bacon who is called the father of modern science, largely because of his emphasis upon the inductive processes of the mind. In this Bacon perpetuated the canons of Aristotle as opposed to the deductive methods of Pythagoras and Plato.

Metaphysically speaking, we may assume that philosophy, *per se*, arises out of the analogical inferences of logic; science arises out of the inductive processes of logic; and religion out of the deductive processes of logic. Theology reasons downward from generals to particulars, making the will of God the law of man and viewing all of the particulars of life as dominated by universal principles. Science, on the other hand, establishes its foundation upon known things and seeks to discover God from inferences based upon particulars; therefore all that science suspects concerning the vastness of the universe extending beyond the physical perceptions is based upon conclusions derived from an analysis of seen and tangible objects. Philosophy occupies a sort of middle distance. It is the rational equalizer. Philosophy recognizes neither superiors nor inferiors in the last analysis but regards all appearances of superiority and inferiority as merely manifestations or aspects of equitable principles.

The science of logic has certain utilitarian aspects. This is more apparently true in the older schools of thought. We live in an age of speculative sciences. The operative arts of the ancients find

small place in modern philosophies. Intelligent living is the application of the various energies of man to their legitimate ends. Speculative science discovers; operative science applies.

The logical processes are the foundations of mental consistency and certain forms of consistency are necessary to rational thought in spite of Emerson's often quoted opinion on the subject. Inasmuch as logic is so closely related to what we term consistency, it may be well to define the word consistency in the terms of classical philosophy.

All thought must have continuity. It must move sequentially along lines of reasonable inference. A rational mental viewpoint does not arise merely from an accumulation of opinions or ideas. The mental life must be planned; thoughts must be built up according to a plan and a law; there must be direction and purpose. Consistency infers reasonable relationships between ideas and actions. It infers an orderly sequence in the process of applying thought to action. Emerson condemned consistency because he felt that it limited and narrowed the viewpoint, imposing certain scholastic limitations upon man's freedom to think. Emerson believed that every man should preserve the right to change his mind. He saw no virtue in binding the mind of unborn tomorrow with the opinions of dead yesterday. In this he was perfectly correct. We too often feel it a sacred and patriotic duty to perpetuate worn out and out-grown beliefs. Progress arises usually from courage of conviction. Very often we must dare to be different in the face of established precedent. For some reason, not altogether clear, the word consistency has come to be associated with mental conservativeness when in reality the word actually infers no such intellectual limitation.

A person may change his mind every day and still be perfectly consistent. He may cling to old dogmas throughout a lifetime and still be utterly inconsistent. A man who outgrows an old belief and grasps a broader concept should not be branded inconsistent because he has changed his mind. He is inconsistent only if he tries to reconcile the new and the old and live a compromise between them. Growth is a process which creates a constant need for adjustment in life and viewpoint. Growth demands an improvement in the entire nature and

not merely an extension of power in some one part of the nature. Inconsistency arises when part of the mind believes one thing and another part of the mind believes another thing and the two beliefs are perpetuated together, resulting in irreconcilable contradictions of thought. When your mind changes, your whole life must change with it. If you believe new things you must live in a new way in harmony with those beliefs. Thus consistency may be defined as agreement or concord, a logical relationship.

Logic is the term peculiarly applicable to continuity of ideas. By use of its principles the intellect moves logically from a premise to its logical inferences; these inferences in turn become conclusions, and these conclusions become new premises. This process continues along logical and, if the logic is correct, reasonable lines. The term consistent should not be applied to this process but rather to the results arising from this process. The term consistent is applicable only to the consequences of logic. For example, through a chain of logic the mind establishes the reasonableness of honesty. We could never say that honesty is consistent or inconsistent, or that the processes by which it is established in the mind are consistent or inconsistent. Honesty is a virtue established by logic, justified by experience and observation, and its desirability is acceptable to the reason. Honesty, however, is an abstract term which must be interpreted by each individual according to his or her personal standard of integrity. Thus honesty gives rise in action to certain

particular codes of personal action. Throughout civilization the standards of virtue and honesty have been subjected to constant change. In Sparta, for example, thievery was a virtue. As we grow and evolve our standards of right and wrong gradually unfold, but all normal persons have a standard of honesty demonstrable by logic. To the degree that we violate our own standards, to that degree we are inconsistent in action. We are not inconsistent because we change our attitude; we are inconsistent because we fail to live up to our standard whatever it may be.

Premises may be logical or illogical but never consistent or inconsistent. Action, based upon these premises, can be consistent or inconsistent but never logical or illogical.

To briefly summarize the uses of logic: By logical means we can order the mental processes we live by. We can establish a justifiable code upon which to found character and which will serve to secure the life of the individual. Energy wasted in useless friction can never be put to any good end. We cannot face life with courage and certainty while we live codes we have never proved to ourselves and justified by a proper intellectual criterion. Having arrived at logical conclusions concerning those spiritual values which are the foundation of our well-being, let us live consistently with these conclusions, bringing our life into a coordinated and harmonious pattern. Think well and live in harmony with your thoughts. Think logically and live consistently.

Yours sincerely,

Manly P. Hall