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# THE CONSISTENCY THAT IS IN CHRIST

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**The** writer who said, "Consistency is a paste jewel that only cheap men cherish," turned a neat counterphrase on a well-known saying, but he did so at the expense of a truism, a truism which has been expressed endlessly, but never more powerfully than in Paul's "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Hebr. 13:8). This word consistency may seem to have contradictory connotations, but in its truly scientific sense it means being right and going ahead accordingly. Happily the Christian Scientist can know too much to waste time and effort on what Ralph Waldo Emerson called "a foolish consistency." As a disciple of the Master he can increasingly shape his demonstration of Christ into that sameness, that undeviating practice of the truth he proclaims.

This spiritual radicalism became to Isaiah a voice behind him saying (30:21), "This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." Immutability is a quality properly attributable to God, but the deific changelessness is not a static condition. The undeviating goodness of God as expressed in His works, man including the universe, must also be an infinite variation, and endless newness which testifies not to fixity, but to the ceaseless motion of Mind. The returning spring means not only revival but origination. Divine origination is the crying need of individuals and movements. Consistently growth comes not out of death, but out of the spontaneity of Life, God.

The great inconsistency of the ages has been the attributing of the finite to the infinite. Brahmanism holds that the world of matter is unreal, illusion, yet that Brahma or Deity made it; hence that the only escape from the illusory external world is absorption in Deity. Such impersonalization would inevitably bring about obliteration, and such impersonality, if attainable, would be oblivion.

Inconsistencies, as in Brahmanism, have in all ages plagued man-made religions and philosophies. To conceive of a universe in which both good and evil exist is to make God the author of evil, Truth the producer of error. Zoroaster set forth a dualism of a good spirit, or God, and an evil spirit, or devil, both accepted as real, but in constant conflict, an inconsistent teaching, inasmuch as it advanced the proposition that one phase of reality can destroy another. Only in Christian Science do we find a sure ground of consistency, a ground whereon the reality, existence of good, repudiates error by preclusion of it. Only in Christian Science can one consistently deal with the finite as a falsity, not a fact.

On page 583 of the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," Mary Baker Eddy defines Christ as "the divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error." This definition is consistent with the lines in the Preface to that same book, where she describes the healing works of Christian Science in these words (p. xi): "They are the sign of Immanuel, or 'God with us,'—a divine influence ever present in human consciousness and repeating itself, coming now as was promised aforetime,

To preach deliverance to the captives [of sense],  
And recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised."

Consistent also are references in Science and Health to Christ as the spiritual idea, the spiritual idea of sonship, the indestructible man, immortal manhood, the true idea of God, the offspring of Spirit, and many others.

In "Rudimental Divine Science" Mrs. Eddy says (p. 7), "The infinite and subtler conceptions and consistencies of Christian Science are set forth in my work Science and Health." These more subtle conceptions and consistencies are not grasped by casual or sporadic reading of the textbook or by mere excerpts pried from their context. Rather are they arrived at only by relating and reconciling all statements to the basic truths of Christian Science, and by conscious effort to know and manifest more of the divine nature, the unity of God and man, one's true being and selfhood. The subtler conceptions thus grasped dispel seeming ambiguities and inconsistencies and maintain the unfailing consistencies of the text with true conceptions of its meanings.

To grasp these subtler conceptions and consistencies one must seek always to measure all amplification, both in Science and Health and in our Leader's other writings, to the foundational facts of divine Science. These facts stem from the basic allness and oneness of God and man; the unity, yet the distinctness, of cause and effect, Mind and man, Principle and idea. Science and Health repeats again and again the necessity to resolve all existence into the unity and distinctness of noumenon and phenomena, God and His thoughts.

The simplicity that is in Christian Science, then, is in the truth that whatever exists must be in the category of either God or man, Principle or its idea. The correct understanding of the terminology of Christian Science is determined by the facts of being, not by words. When Christ Jesus said (John 14:6), "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me," he showed plainly that in the unity of being, God is primary and man is the derivative, and that to know man, one's real self, is to know God, the Father, whose reflection is man, the son.

The author of Science and Health wrote for all states and stages of human consciousness. So even the more casual and superficial reading of her writings will inevitably meet for every reader the requirements and possibilities of the moment. The most obvious meanings are both preventive and curative of error. The further the study and practice, and study and practice cannot rightly be divorced, the more subtle are the meanings, yet the more crystal clear and simple. The deeper things of God and man are contained in Science and Health and are accessible and available. The deeper the spiritual waters of Truth, the more limpid they become. And in those depths is easiest and safest navigation. There is no danger in the subtler conceptions and consistencies.

A certain author prefaces his book with the statement that of all words he most dislikes "consistency." But surely that must have been because he had not drunk deep enough of the inspiration which reveals the deep things of Principle and the simplicity and consistency that are in Christ. A foolish consistency is the slave of precedent. Not so was Christ Jesus, who followed precedent only when it was based on Principle and under highest right. He had little respect for the traditions of the elders, which too often perverted judgment.

Christ Jesus never deviated from strictest ethical standards of thought and conduct based on Principle. He looked for no relief from matter, material remedies or methods, or from mortal mind. He stood always for spiritual radicalism and for conduct consistent therewith. His course in all

contingencies was never appeasement or compromise with error, but an intelligent, balanced progressivism, in which he held himself to what our Leader has described as radical reliance on Truth. His demonstration of Christ was complete, and he is our example.

On the cross Jesus knew that to prove the supremacy of Christ over pain and injury, and even death, was far more important to him and to humanity than was any temporary easement he might have had by drinking the pain reliever offered him by his executioners. He knew that yielding to material means and methods invariably is at the expense of spiritual understanding and growth. Jesus drank the cup necessary to demonstration, but not the stupefying cup of appeasement or concession. As followers of Christ Jesus, shall we not strive for the same sense of spiritual values he displayed at all times, and shall we not glory in the simplicity, the humility, and the consistency that are in Christ?

If we follow Christ consistently, we shall find that we can demonstrate Christ as surely as Jesus did, and ultimately as completely. We shall find that in proportion to our consistent adherence to the ethical and spiritual standard set up and held up by our Master, we also shall prove that, in the words of Jesus (John 3:34), "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto [us]."

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