

Deduction or Induction?

by Ernest O'Neill

The sermon explores the relationship between inductive and deductive reasoning, emphasizing the role of intuition and faith in understanding truth.

Scripture: Proverbs 20:27, Mark 2:8, Luke 1:46, John 14:26, 1 Corinthians 2:11

Topics: "Human Spirit", "Intuitive Thinking"

Description

Ernest O'Neill discusses the concept of scientific thinking and the debate between inductive and deductive logic. He explores the idea that intuition, described in the Bible as a function of the human spirit conscious of the Creator, plays a significant role in human thought processes. O'Neill delves into biblical references that highlight the ability of our spirits to perceive things beyond the capabilities of our minds, emphasizing the importance of intuition in understanding deeper truths.

Transcript

We think of our modern era as the scientific age. Science, we say, is based on the careful observation of facts on the basis of which we formulate scientific principles. We then modify these principles periodically as observed facts increase our knowledge of the world in which we live. So, we believe Newton watched the apple fall from the tree; then he observed the behaviour of other heavier-than-air objects.

Finally he concluded that such objects must be drawn to the ground by some magnetic force, so he came to posit the law of gravity. Philosophers call this thought-process inductive logic. It has come to be the dominant method of thinking in our century-observing the behaviour of things or people and drawing conclusions from that.

Thus physics, behavioural psychology, political polls, and television programming are dominated by quantifying the activities of things and people.

No Such Thing as Scientific Thinking

However, many philosophers would say there is no such thing as INDUCTIVE logic i.e. arguing from particulars to a general principle. They say there is only DEDUCTIVE logic-arguing from a general principle to particulars. They hold that it wouldn't have mattered how many apples or stones or people or raindrops Newton had observed, those numerous particular occurrences would never have led his mind to formulate the law of gravity. They say there was a 'leap of faith' that occurred from within Newton-a kind of

inspired 'guess'-the hypothesis of a theory, the suggestion of a principle. Then his mind quickly worked down from that principle by deductive logic to the observed particulars; thus the only authentic logic his mind followed was-if the law of gravity is true, this object and that object will behave in this way or that way.

Einstein lends credence to this view of human thought by his remarkable statement that "all ideas come from God"! Moreover, our own personal experiences seem to confirm it: how often we have gone to bed with an unsolved problem and awoke the next morning with the answer. Certainly, many medical researchers and computer programmers would say that they spend much of their time testing out ideas that seem to have synthesized mysteriously in their heads. Often they are simply analyzing or breaking down the synthesis that has unconsciously taken place as they encountered various phenomena.

Thus secular thinkers have little trouble with the idea that we human beings possess the power of intuition. We seem to have an inherent knowledge of things that we come conscious of when faced with problems. This intuition appears to operate at a level deeper than our deductive thinking-deeper than our minds.

The Source of Intuition

This intuition is described in the Bible as a normal function of the human spirit, the part of us that is conscious of the Creator. So, as we mentioned before, Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:11 "what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him" and Jesus "perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, 'Why do you question thus in your hearts?'" (Mark 2:8). Both remarks imply that our spirits are able to perceive things that our minds cannot see. Even the Greek tenses used to recount the Magnificat (the song of praise uttered by Mary when she was told she would bear Jesus) highlights the fact that our minds simply try to understand later what first is perceived by our spirits: she says "my soul MAGNIFIES the Lord, and my spirit HAS REJOICED in God my Saviour" (Luke 1:46-47). Our souls (Greek 'psuche' which includes mind, emotions, will) acts only after the important perception has occurred in the intuition of our spirits.

Einstein had this ability. Our mothers often have it. You probably have had some experience of it. But it seems only to become normal 'modus operandi'-the everyday way of life-in people who are personally related to God, the Creator. Why is this so? Let's discuss this in the next article.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-o'neill/deduction-or-induction/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net