

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Faith: “A Crutch for the Weak” or Brilliant Deduction?

By Alan Hitchen

Introduction: No one who has read the stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in his famous character Sherlock Holmes or watched a show on forensic science has any doubt about the **great power of deductive reasoning**. With it people see what others can't see and succeed where others fail. The power of deduction lies in **its amazing ability to go beyond the five senses**. Because time moves, what we see and hear, touch, taste or smell can only give limited information. The crime scene no longer holds all the answers since the criminal has left. Yet inferences and logical conclusions can recreate what could have been easily seen just moments earlier. The detective using inference and logic can recreate the events with hair, skin, footprints, blood, etc.

Logic and inference have created all our appliances and technology. They have **allowed us to teach history and science** to children. They have **changed medicine into an amazing science** where multitudes of things previously unknown are now easily understood. They have **enhanced our lives** in ways impossible to imagine a few generations back.

While for centuries people saw lightning strike, someone deduced that this force could be used as a source of energy. For centuries people could see, hear and think. But only in the last century did some deduce these things could be reproduced. Through deduction we now have a computer, camera, CD, DVD, and tape recorder. **Everyone extols the inventor, doctor, lawyer or detective for their astute and accurate use of logic and deduction.**

Yet an **amazing paradox occurs when the Christian uses logic and deduction.** There can be no debate that exactly the same methods are used to conclude God created the heavens and the earth, Jesus is the Son of God or all Scripture is given by inspiration. Yet when people use logic and deduction to see these things, few today will praise that effort. In fact, most people feel a need to mock or scorn. Using derisive terms like “gullible,” “superstitious,” or using “a crutch for the weak.”

God called the logical conclusions based on deductive reasoning faith. **A believer takes facts and deduces conclusions just like Sherlock Holmes.** Faith is the “*evidence of things not seen*” (Heb. 11:1) Think about it! That is exactly what any good forensic scientist does. When the inventor, doctor, or lawyer finds faith it is brilliant. Why should it be any less for the Christian? God revealed that those who see his invisible attributes in the material creation are only making the proper deductions based on what he left behind as evidence.

“For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse” (Rom 1:20-21).

It is deduction that allows us to see invisible attributes of God in the things that are made. While the criminal does everything possible to erase his presence, God left things so he could easily be found. This evidence is so clear that there is no valid excuse to miss it. Just as a lawyer “*sees*” invisible things based upon deduction we “*see*” God's eternal power through deduction. Just as a doctor diagnoses an “*invisible*” illness through deduction we “*diagnose*” God's “*invisible*” divine nature in the things that are made. While most people only see a material creation, the Christian using deduction sees God.

How can the man who sees God in the evidence left behind in the creation be a fool and the detective who finds the criminal in the evidence left behind be a genius? There is no difference in the method. Both use pure deductive and logical reasoning. When a prosecutor and defense attorney do not agree about the guilt or innocence we do not scoff at their methods, we look at the facts and draw our own conclusion.

Scientists and Christians are looking at the same facts, using the same methods yet drawing different conclusions. Yet many today are not interested in debating the facts like lawyers in a trial. When the method is identical, and the detective is praised but the Christian mocked it is simply a sign of bias and prejudice. How can it be wisdom for the detective to infer from evidence and the Christian be “gullible” and “*leaning on a crutch*” using exactly the methods?

God himself has revealed how easy it is to see him every day and every night.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world” (Psa. 19:1-4).

When we see what is so obvious, we are only using the wisdom of deductive logic. While the world may mock and scorn, God will praise us in the last day. ■

Is There a Divine Pattern For The Church?

By Keith Sharp

We must surely realize our need for such a pattern. No reputable contractor would attempt to construct a building without a blueprint. Even the most talented seamstress realizes the need for a pattern. This is because the tasks they undertake are difficult. Of how much more infinite difficulty is the task of the church, which is “***the pillar and ground of the truth***” (1Tim. 3:15)?

Indeed, concerning man’s entire relationship to God, Jeremiah could cry in all truth, “***O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps***” (Jer. 10:23). You need divine guidance.

And we can know assuredly there is such a pattern. Paul commanded young Timothy: “***Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus***” (2 Tim. 1:13). The word “***form***” means “*an example, pattern...the pattern to be placed before one to be held fast and copied, model...*” (Thayer). This is a plain declaration that there is a pattern. This form, according to the inspired writer, consists of “***words, which thou hast heard of me.***” These are apostolic words. But, the apostles’ words are God’s words, received by revelation from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-13). These words were written down by the apostles and constitute the New Testament, which we can read and understand (Eph. 3:1-6). The term “***sound***” is defined thus: “*to be well, to be in good health . true and incorrupt doctrine*” (Thayer). These are words that are conducive to spiritual health. Being the words of God, they are true (Jn. 17:17). But we dare not corrupt them.

If one were to add a pinch of arsenic to wholesome wheat flour, death would result. If one adds a pinch of opinion to the wholesome apostolic words, damnation will result (Gal. 1: 6-9). Thus, the divine blueprint for the church consists of the sum total of everything the New Testament says about the church, nothing more or less. Equipped with this pattern, we “***may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work***” (2 Tim. 3:17, ASV).

The aged apostle enjoined an obligation to this pattern. He commanded Timothy to “***hold fast***” the form. The words “***hold fast***” mean to “keep,” “retain” or “be consistent with.” Under the Old Covenant, if one brought into service to God that which was unauthorized, punishment was swift and severe (e.g. Lev. 10:1-2). Under the New Testament we must “***do all in the name of the Lord Jesus***” (by His authority, Col. 3:17), lest we be without God (2 Jn. 9-11) and thus lose our hope of life eternal (Rev. 22:18-19). Indeed, there is a divine pattern for the church, the New Testament. Will you not lay aside human opinion and by faith be conformed to the divine pattern? ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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