These handouts are for personal educational use only: do not copy, cite, or distribute.

3.7 Logic and Western moral psychology

The **deductive model of reasoning** had a huge impact on the Western conception of how the mind works.

Logical principles were understood to be **laws of thought**, and our minds (in the image of God) were understood to work in accordance with these rational laws: mental processes are logical arguments from **premises** (mental sentences called **beliefs**) to arrive at **conclusions** (new beliefs).

This logical model was suppose to characterize practical and moral reasoning as well as scientific reasoning. The rational mind (God's or ours) is capable of both.

Scientific reasoning

1. Principles that are self-evident to reason, hence available to us.

2. Principles are applied to particular situations.

3. We reach the correct scientific conclusions.

Moral reasoning

1. Principles self-evident to reason available in our consciences.

2. Principles are applied to particular situations.

3. We reach the correct moral conclusions.

God and human beings
Since human beings are made in the image of God, both have the same access to moral and scientific knowledge; the difference is that God, infinite and immaterial, is **purely rational. H**e reasons **perfectly**, while human beings have rational minds that are finite and imperfect due to physical, bodily interferences from **the feelings, desires, and needs of the body**; hence we reason **imperfectly**.

(*We can thus see how **mind-body dualism** in metaphysics leads to the Western religious doctrine of **original sin** and its link with the Western inclination in **moral psychology** to assume **psychological egoism.***)