

Is Faith Against Reason?

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Voltaire, the famous skeptic of Christianity, once said that he would never debate a Christian because “You can’t reason with a prophet.” Today this sentiment is widespread. Faith and Reason never had a healthy relationship. Tertullian, the second-century thinker, asked that famous question, “What has Jerusalem to do with Athens, the Church with the Academy”? He said, “I believe because it is absurd: it is certain because it is impossible!” The crisis between Faith and Reason cannot be overlooked if one wishes to embark on a spiritual journey.

It is imperative that we critique many false views of faith before we affirm the right one.

The Challenge from Scientism

Scientism is the belief that “Whatever cannot be tested by science is not true.” Faith cannot be tested by science, therefore, it is not true. An untestable Faith is not rational. Without any doubt, the above assumption dominates the minds of many individuals today. To suggest that only what can be proven by science is true is not provable by science. The trouble with this theory is that it’s self-refuting and untestable. This is not a confirmed belief but an unproven dogma. Science is useful in many areas but not in all areas of life.

Sir Arthur Eddington, the British astronomer and mathematician, used a famous analogy to illustrate the fallacy of Scientism. He spoke of a fisherman who concluded from his fishing experience with a particular net that no creature of the sea is less than two inches long. Other fishermen disagreed with him, arguing that many sea creatures were under two inches and they simply slipped through the holes in his net. But the fisherman is unconvinced. He protested, “What my net can’t catch isn’t fish.” He accuses the unbelievers of having prescientific, medieval prejudices.

Science doesn’t have an absolute net to catch all realities. Science can only examine the physical universe but the metaphysical is beyond the reach of

science. Realities such as mind, freedom, value, moral, dignity and God are outside of science's purview.

The Challenge from Postmodern

Postmodern insists faith has no ground in reason. Faith is personal and subjective and has no objective ground. Postmodernism claims faith is not a theory for debate but a personal experience to encounter. There are no objective truths to speculate or rational concepts to debate.

From a realist point of view, why would any sensible person pay any attention to the prophets of postmodernism when they offer no evidence to support their dogma? If the postmodernist wishes to play the game, they need to play by the rules of the game. A faith that makes no sense is no better than nonsense. The foundation of postmodernism is subjective, relativistic, irrational, and unlivable. It has no logical legs to stand on. It is the emperor without any clothes.

The Challenge of Fideism

The Fideist, along with the pietist and mystic, believes faith is not a matter of reason but a personal commitment. Faith is viewed, not as a matter of the mind, but as a matter of the heart. Faith is a leap in the dark. Christianity, they argue, is not about human reason but divine revelation. Christians are called not to defend the faith but to proclaim the message; not to win the mind but to move the heart. They use Charles Spurgeon's famous analogy, "How do you defend a lion? Open the cage and let the lion defend itself."

Fideism sounds spiritual but it's the enemy of truth. It's not biblical, logical, or realistic. It has no biblical support. It offers a mindless message. It provides a faith without reason. Rather than renewing the mind, it rejects the mind. If faith is a road without reason how do we avoid false faith? How do we distinguish the worship of Moloch (Amos 5:26; Acts 7:43) from that of Yahweh? The French philosopher Pascal was right, "There are two equally dangerous extremes to shut reason out and to let nothing else in." Fideism leaves us struggling in the sea of subjectivism, wondering in the wilderness of uncertainty, and suffering in the valley of despair. Wisdom tells us faith without reason is blind and Reason without faith is empty. Rationality is part

of humanity and to hold an irrational faith is to go contrary to our natural human nature. If common sense makes good sense, why seek nonsense?