

FAITH AND REASON – FRIENDS, NOT ENEMIES

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD.”

Isaiah 1:18

Faith and reason are often portrayed as rivals, locked in a constant struggle. Some assume that faith begins where reason ends, while others treat reason as a threat to belief. Yet the historic Christian tradition has consistently rejected this false choice. Properly understood, faith and reason are not enemies. They serve different roles, but they work together in the life of Christian discipleship.

Christianity has long taught that reason is not the judge of faith, but its servant. Francis Turretin (1623-1687) carefully explained that Scripture alone determines what is to be believed. Reason does not decide whether God’s word is true. Instead, it helps us understand, explain, and defend divine revelation. Scripture reminds us that we are to “take every thought captive to obey Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5), bringing our thinking into willing submission to the truth God has revealed.

Reason functions instrumentally, not authoritatively. We use reason to draw conclusions from Scripture, to see how biblical truths fit together, and to avoid contradictions. Jesus himself reasoned from Scripture when he defended the resurrection, showing that faith is not irrational or careless with logic. Christian belief is received in faith, but not a blind faith.

At the same time, Christianity does not rest on human reasoning. Some truths of the faith surpass our full comprehension, though they are never illogical or impossible. There is an important difference between what is *incomprehensible* and what is *contradictory*. God’s revelation may exceed our understanding, but it never violates sound reason.

For this reason, philosophy and careful thinking can serve theology when used humbly. They provide helpful categories, expose inconsistencies, and prepare the mind to receive greater truths. Reason is refined by faith, and faith makes proper use of reason.

In everyday faith, we trust God’s word first, think carefully about what he has said, and worship him with both heart and mind.

How can reason strengthen your faith without replacing trust in God’s revealed word?