

Faith and Its Source

The Scriptures represent both faith and repentance as gifts of God, yet exercised by men. Since, of course, the unregenerate person believes the things of God to be foolishness; and since he cannot properly understand them; therefore until the Holy Spirit quickens him, he cannot exercise faith, since faith involves knowledge. Thus, the ability as well as the disposition to believe must come from God, and it is in this sense that faith can properly be called a gift of God.

Faith and Reason

We have previously stated that the most crucial problem of apologetics is that of determining the relation of faith to reason. Now it should be noted that reason, i.e., the rational faculty in man, is not to be confused with the process called reasoning. The reason, then, is the intellectual aspect of man's personality (what we sometimes call "mind"). Reason used in this sense is not opposed to faith, except in the unregenerate. But in the regenerate, reason is employed in both the initial and subsequent stages of the understanding of revelation; both in the apprehension of the doctrines of salvation and in the further explication and understanding of the whole system of facts and truths of Scripture. Even the process of reasoning, one of the functions of the faculty of reason, is able to be pressed into the service of God, in order more productively to facilitate the task of reflecting upon the truth revealed in the Scriptures. Thus we suggest a resolution of the faith vs reason problem, not by espousing the formula "Reason plus Faith" (a rationalist approach); nor that of "Faith without Reason" (an irrationalist approach); but rather that of "Faith plus Reason."

CONCLUSION

We have now come the full round. We began by asking, "What is the apologetic task?" In order to select one of the five proposed answers, we have examined three pressing questions.

The first was the question of the effect of sin upon General Revelation. We discovered that an objective General Revelation does exist, that unregenerate men do apprehend it; but that subjectively, they suppress, distort, and pervert it. Therefore a true Natural Theology is impossible to construct, even via the Rational Arguments [on which more later, in our apologetics notes]. Nevertheless, although a sound rational argument is not possible, yet the rationally apprehensible evidences of God's glory, benevolence, power, divinity, wrath, and justice are constantly pouring in upon the unregenerate; and for suppressing these, they are inexcusable. They must be told of their sin and urged to repent and flee to Christ. Although outwardly they may