Great ideas

What have Athens to do with Jerusalem?

This is an old question that revolves around the stoic philosophy and requires to determine the relationship between man and God. Tertullian had experienced the tension between the two movements and placed a question in the right context. This is more of questions for addressing the link between Christian faith and philosophy. It is thus important to determine what is philosophy in a true sense. The purpose here is seen as an attempt to discourage philosophy only that is based on anti-Christian principles. The arguments that have a motive of evaluating Christian beliefs are deceptive and wrong. These philosophical teachings are thus misleading people by promoting anti-Christian ideologies.

Paul has stressed on the Colossian believers and their faith. His purpose was to warn them against wrongful teachings. “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8)[[1]](#footnote-1). This statement reflects that people who care about their religion must have faith and use their knowledge for preventing themselves from taking influence from such wrongful teachings. Faith demands more sense for identifying the corrupt motives and agenda of such groups. Such philosophy can be seen as elemental spirits of the world, lacking any religious or sound basis. It has been used for misguiding people and deviating them from their faith.

The philosophers are deceiving the followers by using their anti-Christian philosophy. The argument also claims such philosophy as self-deluding with a negative agenda or mission. The philosophical tricks are used for disconnecting people from their Christian beliefs and religion. They are capable of blinding the eyes of the followers and take them to the wrong path. This suggests that the need for identifying the power of such philosophical ideas and protecting self from the danger of falling for it. The false teachers of Colossae have focused on attacking the preachings of Christ. The question is warning both the teachers and the people who have changed their faith due to the flawed philosophy. The question is also referring to the place of Athens that gave birth to many philosophers. Athens is thus used for symbolizing philosophers who aimed at challenging the faith of Christians.

Paul has also used empty deceit for interpreting the role of such groups. The reason for using empty deceit is to criticize the general rule of philosophy in which everything is based on assumptions. It is thus claimed that anything that is started from a non-spiritual standpoint will lead to similar conclusions. So, actual logic will be missing in this process of inquiring phenomena or nature. Everything proved in philosophy is based on assumptions that lead to the same conclusions. The warnings provided in the debate are stopping people from falling for the philosophical traps. The empty deception is not powerful or adequate to transform the beliefs of the Christians having strong faith in God and Christ's teachings. This is used for criticizing the Christians having weaker faith and exhibits a high likelihood of changing their beliefs.

The question reflects the need for identifying the difference between faith and philosophy. It further leads to the question of which one is stronger. The general claim against philosophy is that logic cannot prove the invalidity of a Christian faith or teaching[[2]](#footnote-2). This makes philosophy flawed and least useful when it is aiming at examining religion. The laws and regulations explained by philosophy is also a weaker attempt for challenging the faith of the people. This reflects that followers of Christianity are already familiar with nature and its laws[[3]](#footnote-3). Those laws and principles cannot be rejected on the basis of philosophical logic.

The deeper message conveyed in the question is that people must focus on the real truth, explained to them by Christ. It is important for the people to stick to their faith and follow the teachings of Christ rather than believing on the philosophers. This states that dualism of faith and reason must work in a way that promotes the relationship of the Christians with God. Such reason doesn't challenge the Christina faith because it is not relying on anti-Christian principles. Logic in itself lives inside the spiritual realm and people who are following Christian beliefs are well aware of it. God has given us a mind to think so people must consider ways of strengthening their beliefs by searching the true logic. This also reflects that a true logic will never mislead people or challenge their faith related to God or Christianity.

The question of what Athens has to do with Jerusalem deals with the relationship between faith and reason. True logic is the one that will convince people to accept God and the laws of nature. While the philosophy that is prevailing for changing Christian faith is flawed. The philosophers of Athens had attempted to use their philosophy for finding the reason behind the creation of nature and its law. The logic had caused many people to doubt their faith. The question was used for evoking the faith of Christians and warning them about the implications of such philosophies.

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