

False Standards of Authority

John Isaac Edwards

Let’s take a look at some false standards of authority that many people appeal to in religion:

Conscience. In religious matters, many people just let their conscience be their guide. Conscience is that which tells us whether we are doing right or wrong, based upon what we have been taught. Personal experiences and feelings can lead one astray. Solomon said, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12). Paul was guided by his conscience (Acts 23:1), but did many things which were religiously wrong. He said, “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth” (Acts 26:9).

The Wisdom of Men. Men can be wrong! Our faith must not be in our own thinking or in the wisdom of others. Paul penned, “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God” (1 Corinthians 2:5). God’s ways and man’s ways are different. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). Paul wrote the Corinthians, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God...” (1 Corinthians 1:21). Jeremiah exclaimed, “O Lord, I know that the way

of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). This will eliminate all man-made creed books that about every denomination has. God’s only creed is the Bible!

The Majority. The majority of people can be wrong. Just because the majority may do a thing does not make it right. Remember how many were saved in the ark? “...few, that is, eight souls...” (1 Peter 3:20). The Lord said, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). The way to heaven is the way of the minority! The Lord’s people have always been the few (Deuteronomy 7:7).

Parents. Many want to follow tradition handed down by their parents. Belonging to a church simply because one’s parents did is going by a false standard of authority. Jesus declared, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me...” (Matthew 10:37). Christianity is an individual thing. You must examine the Bible for yourself and do what it teaches. Paul was involved in religious error because he followed tradition. He said, “...I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it...being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers” (Galatians 1:13-14).

The Law of Moses. Many fail to realize that the law of Moses is not our standard of authority in religion today. It served its purpose and has been done away. The law was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come (Galatians 3:19). Christ is identified as the seed in Galatians 3:16. Thus, the law was to last till Christ. Colossians 2:14 affirms, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” This is the reason we do not keep the Sabbath, burn incense, offer animal sacrifices, and do other things they did under the law of Moses. It was the death of Christ that took the

law of Moses away and put into force the New Testament (Hebrews 9:16-17). The Old Testament is still beneficial for us today. We learn how God deals with people and receive many moral lessons from it (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11). It is inspired of God and we believe what it says. We just do not live under the same specific laws they did.

False standards of authority keep people from understanding the Lord’s will for us today. The standard of authority is Christ’s will, or the New Testament. In the judgment to come, we will be judged by the gospel of Christ (John 12:48; Romans 2:16).

God’s Will Can Be Understood

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Many think that the Bible cannot be understood, but we are commanded to understand it.

Paul wrote, “Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ” (Ephesians 3:4). “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17).

Do you think God would give us a book to read, believe, and obey and then make it too difficult to understand?

When God’s word was read in Old Testament times, it was understood. “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading” (Nehemiah 8:8). If Timothy could know the scriptures from a child (2 Timothy 3:15), surely we can come to know and understand them as well!

This does not mean that the Bible reads as a first grade reader. It simply means that with study we can understand what God expects of us without some special anointing of God.

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*The Bible
Is Our
Only Guide!*