

The Church—No. 6

Its Authority

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The means of determining whether a church is of human or divine origin and operation is in asking, “What authority is honored?” Man-made churches submit to human authorities. God’s church submits only to divine authority. It appears from history that man’s inclination has ever been to elevate man’s teaching above God’s Word. Jesus spoke of this when He warned the tradition-steeped Pharisees “Ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition” (Mat. 15:6).

Many different types of human authorities are followed in religion, all of which are erroneous, because they are human:

1. Many believe the majority should be followed, but the majority where? In Asia, the Buddhist makes the majority; in Africa, the Moslem; in Utah, the Mormon. The fact is, that while a majority may mean power, it never necessarily implies Truth. The majority will be eternally lost (Mat. 7:13–14).
2. Many trust their conscience or inner feelings but even the way of a fool is right in his own eyes (Pro. 12:15). Inner, subjective feeling often lead us astray; a thing may seem right and be wrong (Pro. 14:12; Acts 26:9). Conscience is a judge of behavior, not our guide.
3. Learned men of the past or present are not the standard of religion. Some “wise” men know not God and do not recognize His existence. They frequently contradict one another.
4. Some accept the religious views of their kindred without question, but as much as we love them, they could still be wrong and keep us from the Truth (Mat. 10:37).
5. Most who claim to be Christians follow the creeds and councils of men which contradict each other and the Bible and which create and perpetuate religious division. The doctrines and commandments of men produce vain worship (Mat. 15:9), whether they be written or oral.

Christ has all authority (Mat. 28:18). We must hear Him (Mat. 17:5).

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