

teachings of men more important than the Book itself. Neither view is correct and such extremes are to be avoided. In particular there are three mistaken ideas about men in the role of teachers:

1. Some have held that *the* church is the *only* teacher of the Bible and alone has the power to make the proper views. This idea stresses that all other teachings and views are wrong. Protestants see this as the view of the Roman church, but it also occurs among Protestants. In spite of all talk about "private right of interpretation," many Protestant societies will honor only the teachings of their own formal councils. It is not a contention that such statements are wrong, but only that it is a mistake to think the teaching of any group of men to be as authoritative as the Word itself.

Some persons uninformed about the course of history, actually believe that the church made the doctrines. It is to be hoped that those who say such things say them in unintentional ignorance. Men are the teachers of the Word, but they do not (and did not) make the Word. Their teachings are not to be confused with what the Word actually says, and ultimately the teachings of every man must be judged by it. While the character of the Word requires teachers, it also provides the standard to which those teachers must adhere.

The reader should note that the Bible appoints no infallible human interpreters, and one should be very suspicious of any group claiming to be such. It does establish criteria for determining whether a man teaches falsely or not. Specifically, his words must agree with the whole framework of Scripture: he must be an acknowledged believer in Jesus Christ and proclaim Him in his teachings, and his teachings must portray God's glory and proclaim God's will. Such teachers are not limited to any one ecclesiastical body or to a particular theological view in Christendom.