

OBJECTIVITY VERSUS SUBJECTIVITY (FAITH OR FEELING?)

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. A Strong Attack Upon Biblical Christianity Has Come Out Of The Philosophical Background Of Existentialism, supported by Soren Kierkegaard, A Danish Philosopher-Theologian, And Jean-Paul Sartre, A French Atheist.

1. It has caused some to throw faith in God out the window as an antiquated relic of no value to the intelligent mind.
2. It has caused some to take their Christianity "cafeteria style" - only what seems good to them personally is digestible.
3. It has caused some to rely upon their feelings for their authority rather than the written Word of God.

B. Definition Of Terms.

1. Objectivity - Existing, belonging to the sensible world, facts. "Expressing or involving the use of facts without distortion by personal feelings or prejudices." (Web.)
2. Subjectivity - (Antonym of objectivity) - "Relating to or determined by the mind as the subject of experience...lacking in reality or substance." (Web.)
3. Our faith is objective - it is based upon the truth of God's Word.
4. Our feelings must be educated by the standard of truth to be valid. (Rom. 10:1-3)

C. Pentecostalism Has Its Roots Deeply Entwined In The Soil Of "Subjectivism" - A Feeling Is Better Than A Word From God!

II. AIM.

A. To Reaffirm That The Word Of God Is Our Absolute,

All-Sufficient Guide Into All Truth.

- B. To Expose The Error Of A Subjectively Oriented Religion.

III. *OUTLINE.*

A. FALSE PHILOSOPHY ABOUNDS IN OUR WORLD.

1. Some people are speaking of our day as the "Post-Christian Age." This phrase is indicative of the modern intellectual drift away from Biblical theism and New Testament Christianity.
2. Four basic types of philosophy of religion.
 - a. The empirical - This philosophy holds that man can have no true answers to his religious questions except those that come through one or more of the five senses as he "observes" (experiences) the physical world.
 - b. The idealistic - Those who hold this view believe that religious truth can be ascertained by exercising one's own intellectual powers. This view leans heavily upon man's feeling and logical powers.
 - c. The romantic - A philosophy which has had a great impact upon "theological thinkers" of our day to the extent that it leads many of them around by the nose. Basically stated, this philosophy advocates the proposition, "THE HEART OF MAN HAS REASONS WHICH HIS MIND KNOWS NOT OF." Some conclusions drawn from this view:
 - 1) Rejects that truth is objective and acceptance of it is subjective.
 - 2) Truth is changed by the mental state of mind.
 - 3) Whatever seems to be true to an individual is truth.
 - 4) Be yourself and do your own thing.

- 5) There is no objective truth to which one must conform in order to be in a right relationship to God. The Bible is rejected as the absolute, inspired, inerrant and authoritative Word of God.
 - 6) This view leads one to substitute his "OWN FEELINGS" in the place of GOD'S WORD.
 - 7) One's feelings then become his "authority" for his action. (The implications of such a view are many and monstrous.)
 - 8) Emotional experiences become the "crucial" thing in religion.
 - 9) One who follows the romantic approach as the philosophy of religion, will almost certainly claim some type of emotional experience (such as hearing "a still, small voice" or "speaking in tongues" or "visions," etc.) which to him certifies that he is both God's child and a faithful one.
 - 10) Since this philosophy has been so widely accepted in our country today, it is not surprising to observe the "tongue speaking phenomenon" as claimed by many groups and accepted by some of our own brethren.
 - 11) A revolt against reason.
- d. The supernatural authoritarian - This is the "only" right approach to religious truth. It recognizes that God is ultimate reality, that truth is absolute and attainable, etc. (To be studied in detail in this outline.)

B. FAITH VERSUS FEELING.

1. Religion based upon feeling is defined as existentialism, subjectivism, or the romantic philosophy of religion. This concept is in opposition to Biblical New Testament Christianity.
2. Feeling says:

- a. That Christianity cannot be the unique, distinctive, true religion of God.
 - b. It could only be true for those who find it to be meaningful or helpful in their own subjective experiences.
3. Faith answers:
- a. One must accept God's particular message, the gospel, to be saved and avoid condemnation. (*2 Thess. 1:7-10*)
 - b. Only when one acts in harmony with God's exact will is he acceptable. (*Matt. 7:21*)
 - c. The system of Christianity is a revelation from God and is unique and true. Anything which differs from it is untrue and wrong. (*Gal. 1:6-17*)
4. Feeling says:
- a. The Bible is not the absolute, inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word of God. To the existentialist, his feelings constitute authority.
 - b. In a "praying through meeting" in Bald Knob, Arkansas, the people begged God for assurance. The question was asked, "Where do you find this in the Bible?" The answer, "We don't need the Bible, we have the Spirit."
 - c. "I don't care what the Bible says, I know that I'm saved because I feel it in my heart."
5. Faith answers:
- a. Read the Bible. (*2 Pet. 3:16; Eph. 3:3-4; 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Thess. 2:14-15; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1, 6; 1 Thess. 5:27; Col. 4:16, et al.*)
 - b. Correctly interpret the Scripture. (Using the normal rules of language understanding, for example, people all over the world read *Readers Digest* in various translations and draw the same conclusions from it. So, also, we should be able to reach the same conclusions

from Bible study).
(2 Tim 1:13; 2:15; Titus 2:1; 2 Pet. 3:16)

c. Form convictions from the Scripture.

- 1) Faith. (Rom. 10:17)
- 2) Eternal life. (1 John 5:13; John 20:30-31)
- 3) Complete Christian life style. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

d. Defend our convictions.

- 1) Truth is defensible. (John 8:32; 17:17; Phil. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:15)
- 2) Jude 3; Gal. 1:6-10; Rom. 16:17-18.

e. Everything we believe and practice must be found in the Bible. We can never accurately say, "I don't care what the Bible says, I can feel in my heart." (Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

6. Feeling Says:

- a. That morality is relative. Since the Bible is non-authoritative then the individual determines his own moral standard, his own right and wrong.
- b. Thus, all conduct, including adultery, murder, stealing, lying, etc., may be subjectively justified.

7. Faith answers:

- a. Works of the flesh are contrary to the fruit of the spirit. (Gal. 5:19-24). "Morality is to faith what fruit is to a tree."
- b. Entrance into God's Kingdom is dependent upon obedience to God's moral code. (1 Cor. 6:9-11)
- c. Situation ethics, no matter in what robe it is clothed, is naked and wrong. Morality is attached, to a degree, to spirituality

and only reaches its goal in relation to Christ. Love without God in view, is not true love, thus is not the supreme motive for moral behavior. (Cf. *Matt. 22:37-39; 1 John 4:7-21*)

8. Feeling says:

- a. There is no such thing as absolute knowledge in any area, religion included. Man cannot reason to honest, logical, solid conclusions.
- b. The things which we observe cannot be used to deduce the being of God.

9. Faith answers:

- a. *Psa. 19:1.* "The heavens declare the glory of God."
- b. *Rom. 1:19.* "That which is known of God."
- c. *Rom. 1:20.* "The things that are made."
Paul's argument is to prove the existence of God.
- d. *John 8:32.* "...ye shall know the truth."
- e. *John 17:17.* "...Thy Word is truth."

C. SUPERNATURAL AUTHORITARIAN RELIGION IS OBJECTIVE AND THE ONLY RIGHT ONE.

1. It is objective because of Apostolic authority.

- a. *Matt. 16:18-19; John 14:26; 16:12-13; Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:20.*
- b. Jesus made it clear that He would use the Apostles to bring truth into the world; that it would be completely given to them and that they would be the standard of right or wrong since they would be speaking His words.

2. It is objective because we have a revealed written all-authoritative Word which is God's supernatural revelation of Himself.

- a. Read to know. (*Eph. 3:3-4; 1 John 5:13*)

- b. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3-4.
3. Truth is attainable. (John 8:32; 17:17)
 4. Jesus Christ is the Son of God and only Savior. (John 20:30-31; 8:24)
 5. The church is the body of saved men. (Acts 20:28; Eph. 2:13-16; 5:26; Acts 2:47)
 6. To reject God's Word is to reject God. (1 Sam. 15:22-26 cf. Matt. 7:13-21)
 7. A proper faith brings with it the joy of an educated heart. Right faith produces right feelings.

IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. Each Christian Must Face The Indisputable Fact That Our Young People Are Growing Up In A Society Which Is Being Influenced Greatly By This So-Called, Subjective Or Romantic Philosophy. This Influence Is Seen In Various Forms; Literature, Television, Music, Art, Photography, Etc.
- B. It Is A Subtle Danger Which, Unless It Is Understood And Rejected, Could Cause One To Reject His God, His Son And His Word - The Bible.
- C. The Only True View Of The Proper Approach To Religion Is That Which Recognizes That God Is Ultimate Reality; That Truth Is Both Absolute And Attainable; That The Bible Is The Absolute, Inspired, And Authoritative Word Of God; And That Jesus Christ Is The Savior; And That The Church Is The Saved.