



in
GOD
we
TRUST

STEVE HAM

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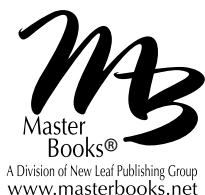
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*This book is dedicated to my family —
Trish, Sarah, and David.*

*May we all truly put our trust in God
for generations to come.*

Contents

Foreword by Ken Ham.....7

Section One: The Substance of Authority

1. Loose Hinges: The Lack of Authority..... 11
2. Hard to Believe: The Need for Authority 21
3. Counterfeit: False Authority 31
4. Authentic: The Real Authority 43
5. Axiom: A Basis of Authority 59

Section Two: The Authority of God

6. Authority and God the Father77
7. Authority and God the Son 93
8. Authority and God the Holy Spirit..... 107

Section Three: Authority in Christian Practice

9. I Want It Now: Authority in Christian Living 127
10. Worship through a Torn Curtain: Authority
and Worship 145
11. Taking Back the Family: Authority and the
Christian Family 163
12. Order in the House: Authority and the Church..... 183
13. Tell the Nations: Authority and the Mission
of the Gospel..... 205

Appendix: Confirming the Confirmable.....225

Foreword

by Ken Ham

Why write another book on biblical authority? Surely hundreds of books on the accuracy and authority of the Bible have been written over the years — and many by renowned scholars.

But this book is different — yes, very different. While it deals with biblical authority, it is written against the background of this “scientific age,” one in which many people in the church have succumbed to the secular teachings of our day — particularly in relation to evolution and the age of the earth. It is my contention that many Christians have wittingly or unwittingly adopted these pagan philosophies of our time that have compromised the clear teaching of the Scripture, thus undermining the inerrancy of the Bible . . . and consequentially the authority of the Scriptures.

As a result, the great majority of believers in the Church today can’t offer a defense of our faith because they have either not been taught how to defend biblical authority or have compromised with secular views. Both have caused many Christians to lose their way.

We live in an era of history when we see the collapse of the Christian worldview that once permeated the thinking of the Western world. Why has this happened? What is the fundamental, foundational reason for this collapse?

Stephen Ham gets to the heart of the matter in this powerful challenge to God’s people as he unravels the Church’s basic problem: a lack of belief in biblical authority. This loss has occurred because of a strategic error in approaching and understanding God’s Word.

You see, instead of letting God’s Word speak for itself and becoming the foundation for a Christian’s thinking in every area, believers have been unlocking a door over recent decades that has allowed fallible man to become the authority, not the Bible. We have

already seen recent generations of Christians pushing that compromise door even further. In this book, my brother purposes to:

- (a) Greatly illuminate the average Christian's thinking in what God Himself teaches us concerning how to understand and use the revealed Word of God.
- (b) Expose the true nature of why biblical authority has been undermined — and what needs to be done to have it restored.
- (c) Provide insight into God's authority that is so prominently displayed in His very character.
- (d) Practically show how God's authority and the authority of His Word impacts Christian living, family, worship, how church is conducted, and how we communicate His good news of salvation.

Many Christians simply do not realize that they don't have the high view of Scripture they think they have. Furthermore, they also do not realize the ground they have given up to the enemy. As a result, they have lost potency in their Christian lives.

This book not only will challenge every Christian concerning their view of the authority of the Scriptures, but will teach them (in detail) about the only approach to God's written Word that a consistent born-again Christian should have.

I praise the Lord that Stephen and I were brought up by a father who never knowingly compromised the Word of God. By instilling in us a high regard for God's infallible Word, our father enabled us to stand unwaveringly in a secularized culture that has invaded and weakened the Church.

I pray this book's fresh approach to biblical authority in this skeptical age will strengthen Christians as they do battle in a spiritual warfare that has already taken a terrible toll on our Western nations, and sadly including the Church.

Ken Ham

President, CEO, Answers in Genesis/Creation Museum

Section One

The Substance of Authority



Chapter 1

Loose Hinges: The Lack of Authority



Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that for which he has no grounds for professing to believe.¹ — Thomas H. Huxley

Faith indeed tells what the senses do not tell, but not the contrary of what they see. It is above them and not contrary to them.² — Blaise Pascal

Imagine having a mind so able to reason that by 12 you had already worked out Pythagoras' theory on your own. Imagine by age 16 having published your first paper on mathematics and having it acclaimed as the most valuable and powerful contribution to mathematical science of your time. Imagine still being in your teenage years and having designed an intricate machine that would be essential to the development of modern calculators and computers. If you would desire such a mind, you desire the mind

1. www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Thomas_H._Huxley.
2. www.thinkexist.com/quotes/blaise_pascal/3.html.

of one of the greatest philosophers, mathematicians, scientists, and theologians of the 17th century — Blaise Pascal.

Pascal was the son of a chief tax officer, and it was for his father that he designed and built a calculator to help him in the computation of tax returns. From a very early age, through his father's connections, Pascal was exposed to a circle of philosophers known as the Mersenne group. It wasn't long before Pascal was participating in group discussions on his own terms and subsequently became a brilliant mathematical scientist. In 1647, possibly some of his greatest work was completed through his experiments on vacuum. Pascal discovered that pressure applied to a confined liquid is transmitted undiminished through the liquid in all directions (as in the mercury in a barometer). It was also during this time that Pascal invented the syringe. Other achievements included his work in the area of probability, which led to the development of the famous *Pascal's triangle*. Pascal's probability work has been used (among others) in insurance and actuarial calculations.

The year 1654, however, marks the most amazing thing that would happen in Pascal's life. This phenomenon he referred to as the "night of fire." It was the night of his salvation in Jesus Christ. After his death in 1662, Pascal's housekeeper found something sewn into the pocket in his jacket. It was a piece of parchment and a faded piece of paper with Pascal's written account of his own night of conversion. What a night it must have been. Pascal wrote:

In the year of grace, 1654, on Monday, 23rd of November, Feast of St Clement, Pope and Martyr, and others in the Martyrology. Vigil of St Chrysogonus, Martyr, and others.

From about half past ten in the evening until about half past twelve.

Fire!

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,
Not of the philosophers and scholars.

Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace.

God of Jesus Christ.

“Thy God and my God.”

Forgetfulness of the world and of everything, except God.

He is to be found only in the ways taught in the Gospel.

Greatness of the Human Soul.

“Righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee,

But I have known Thee.”

Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.

I have separated myself from Him.

“They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters.”

“My God, wilt Thou leave me?”

Let me not be separated from Him eternally.

“This is eternal life, That they might know Thee, the only true God, And Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”

Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ.

I have separated myself from Him:

I have fled from Him,

denied Him,

crucified Him.

Let me never be separated from Him.

We keep hold of Him only by the ways taught in the Gospel.

Renunciation, total and sweet.

Total submission to Jesus Christ and to my director.

Eternally in joy for a day’s training on earth.

“I will not forget thy words.”

Amen.³

3. www.theopedia.com/Blaise_Pascal, from Emile Caillet and John C. Blankenagel, translators, *Great Shorter Works of Pascal* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1948).

It is said that Pascal was converted on the night that he was reading of Christ's crucifixion. What a night it must have been for him to carry the record of his salvation experience in his pocket for the remaining eight years of his life. From the time of his conversion, Pascal's one priority was Jesus Christ and the study of God's Word. He was greatly influenced by the writings of Augustine and held strongly to the doctrine of salvation by grace (not works) comparable to another theologian of his time, John Calvin. It is also well documented that Pascal believed the Bible to be authoritative. He believed in a real Adam, and a perfect creation ruined only by mankind's sin. There is little doubt in my mind that Pascal had a strong and reasoned faith impacting a fervent heart of worship for his Savior in whose presence he now abides.

Pascal not only left a legacy in relation to his mathematical and scientific contributions but also a legacy of love for our Lord and Savior.

I have taken time to pay the proper respect to the work and life of Pascal before touching upon the one thing that I believe has been a thorn in his legacy for over 300 years. In 1670 Pascal commenced work (an unfinished work) on his thoughts (or *Pensees*). This was an apologia for Christianity and was composed of a series of short essays. I am by no means concerned about his whole work, but I do not acquiesce with the part of this work for which Pascal is best remembered. You may have heard of it already: "Pascal's wager."

In a nutshell, Pascal's wager goes something like this: God either exists or He doesn't and the choice is ours. If God does not exist, then we lose very little by believing He does (in fact, we can live enriched lives believing so). If God does exist, we stand to lose an awful lot by believing He doesn't and we stand to gain considerably by believing He does. Therefore it is a good wager to believe He does. Pascal said himself, "I should be much more afraid of being mistaken and then finding out that Christianity is true than of being mistaken in believing it to be true."⁴

4. Ibid.

I wonder if right now as you are reading these words you are agreeing with Pascal. I wonder if you are saying to yourself, Yes, that statement makes sense to me. Why would you disbelieve God on that probability? And while Pascal's statement may have some merit (in relation to the consequences of being wrong about Christ), I would wager that this is not the only reason Pascal came to faith in Jesus Christ.

If I had a mind like Pascal and a heart for the Lord as fervent as his, I wonder if I would appreciate being remembered this way. Imagine being remembered most for making a statement that concedes that to believe in God is to live on the basis of a probability. If this were the basis of our faith, I wonder how we would respond to such issues as tragedy or loneliness. I wonder how we might defend our belief to those whose chief aim is to question the very faith by which we live our lives. To me, Pascal's wager is a loose hinge. In my house, doors open and close only on the strength of the hinges that attach them to their frames. If your hinge is something like Pascal's wager, then I ask you, what else is holding firm the door of your heart of faith? What is your faith hanging on? Is it hanging on a probability? Is it hanging on a family tradition of going to church? Is it hanging on emotion or something that simply makes you feel good about yourself? Is it hanging on a hope that your life might get better because you simply believe? Is it hanging on some dim prospect of taking some sort of control of your life?

Last year two of my closest friends (Terry and Julie) faced a tragedy that many people, including my wife and me, have faced. They lost a child through miscarriage. They had been trying all of their married life for some years to have a child, to finally become pregnant and then lose their baby. To place extra pressure on the situation, at the time of the miscarriage, Terry was overseas with me on a ministry tour with Answers in Genesis. In fact, Terry and I at this time had also split up on tour. Terry was staying in Cincinnati and I was in Los Angeles with my brother Ken while he was doing a television interview. He and Julie were apart, alone, and hurting

beyond description. Furthermore, they had only been Christians for around two years, and if anything was going to be a faith-shattering event in their life, here it was. While I was desperately sorry for them in what they were going through, I was also totally confident in the strength of their hinges. I was a witness at their conversion and was now witnessing people who were able to reason on the basis of biblical authority and trust in their Savior with confidence. Terry would tell you that he became a Christian because the evidence confirming the authority of the Bible is overwhelming. Terry and Julie both knew and understood why there is death and suffering in this world, and while that does not magically take away the hurt of loss, it allowed them to hope with confidence in a glorious eternal future. Blind faith has no answers. Blind faith lets you down. Authority matters and it matters a great deal.

Dr. Richard Dawkins and many atheists like him attack the Christian faith. They most often attack at the point of least authority, and usually that means wherever they can find blind faith at work. Pascal's wager is basically a blind faith theory. In his book *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins has something to say about Pascal's wager because it is something that Christians often bring up to him as a defense of their belief. If you bring up Pascal's wager to an atheist such as Richard Dawkins, how might he answer your argument?

There is something distinctly odd about the argument, however. Believing is not something you can decide to do as a matter of policy. At least, it is not something I can decide to do as an act of will. I can decide to go to church and I can decide to recite the Nicene Creed, and I can decide to swear on a stack of Bibles that I believe every word inside them. But none of that can make me actually believe it if I don't. Pascal's wager could only ever be an argument for feigning belief in God. And the God that you claim to believe in had better not be of the omniscient kind or he'd see through the deception.

Dr. Dawkins also says:

We are talking about a bet, remember, and Pascal wasn't claiming that his wager enjoyed anything but very long odds. Would you bet on God's valuing dishonestly faked belief (or even honest belief) over honest skepticism?⁵

Ask yourself a question right now. How are your hinges holding up? How would you answer Dr. Dawkins if he were standing in front of you right now? I can tell you how I would answer: "I agree with you, Dr. Dawkins [in light of Romans 1:20]. It's a loose hinge and it's time that Christians repented of the loose hinges that we release on society and show that we have a God who truly is the authority and that the evidence in this world confirms it. In fact, the evidence confirming the authority of Scripture is overwhelming, and this is a discussion I would like to most passionately pursue. Further to this, I have found the hinges on the doors of evolutionary faith to be very loose indeed."

At this point it is possible I have already lost some readers. First, how dare we agree with Richard Dawkins on anything, and second, we all have different types of faith and some of us just love Jesus because we do. Some of you may also rightly say that regardless of reason, it is Christ alone who saves. But to say that we do not require a reason for our faith is to say that 1 Peter 3:15 does not apply to you. Peter says very clearly in this verse: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." The question is, are you prepared to say that this Scripture does not apply to you? If not, do you have the reason and can you answer the questions this world throws at you? The truth is that we are not going to be able to answer every single question on the spot, but that also means the training never ends.

5. Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Transworld Publishers, 2006), p. 130–131.

I believe that God would want any one of us to be able to respond with real answers to Dr. Dawkins or any of his atheist colleagues — not to win a debate or to put them in their place, but so that we might remain firm in the Lord and defend His glory, and so that He might open their hearts to salvation through His marvelous authority. A great coach once said that in training, his team's physical exertion is tougher than what they will experience on the actual game day, so they can know with confidence they are truly fit for it. I believe in relation to 1 Peter 3:15 we should be applying the same tactic for this world. Every Christian should be training to answer our toughest critic so that we can witness to our neighbors, friends, colleagues, and families with confidence. We should remember at the same time that this verse says to answer with meekness and fear, and this, too, should be part of the training.

Before we close this first chapter, I think it would be a good idea to test ourselves. How would it go if we were challenged by this world in relation to our reasons for believing in Christ? The questions might take you by surprise, but they are all legitimate questions being asked in our culture, and they all have strong, authoritative answers if you are prepared to do the training. Here is a quick test list for starters:

Who created God?

How can the Bible be credible about origins when evolutionary science shows otherwise?

How can there be a loving God with death and suffering in the world?

How could all the animals fit on that ark?

How could a virgin give birth?

If we only come from one man and one woman, where did all the races come from?

What if Jesus was only wounded when He was put in the tomb?

What if someone stole His body from the tomb?

How come there are no human fossils found with dinosaurs?
What about the da Vinci Code?
How can you know the books in the Bible are the right ones?
Why can't other religions lead to God?

Well, this is a short list compared to the many more questions being asked in the world today. If you have trouble answering any of the questions above with accuracy and honoring biblical authority, then you have some training to do. We all continue to have some training to do to strengthen our hinges. Regardless of answering the world's questions, who among us can hope to have a true relationship with God on the basis of a wager, blind faith, or a false promise? It's not just about defending the faith or even simply about winning the lost, but it's also about an intimately relational worship of the God we can truly call Father.

Throughout the remaining chapters of this book we are going to journey together in considering if this even matters. We are going to look at some of the consequences of rejecting the authority of Scripture and what authority really does mean. We are going to see how a true understanding of biblical authority can be applied to our Christian walk and how understanding God's authority can have real relational impact between God and us and also with others. Hopefully, we will also see the impact that an acceptance of God's authority can have in how we deliver His good news of truth to a lost world.

It is my prayer that this book might open for you a new world in His Word. I pray that you may also come to the understanding that in relation to your faith in God and in living a life of true worship, authority does matter.