

The Way
We
See It.

Our approach to the history/doctrine discussion is to emphasize that historical theology is an understanding of the apprehension of truth in historical context, not a bending of truth to fit historical context. The press of historical circumstance might corrupt a particular wording or force an expression that would not concur with all facts but it should not "create" portraits of "truth" which would need to be altered or given up later. In this sense the doctrine originates in historical context but does not come from it. The doctrine is from the word which, due to the press or opening of history, is suddenly seen in greater precision. History may bring something to light which was otherwise obscure but our contention is that it does not make it ...simply enables it to be eliminated. We could never find the doctrine in history...but history may help us see it in the Word.

Character of
the Bible.

We should note that we approach this entire subject from the point of believing the Bible to be the Word of God, plenary inspired, free of error in fact, judgment, etc., as intended in the discussion of the writers. We hold it as both infallible and inerrant in the present phase of things. We do not argue these particular points at this time in this course...it is our basic working position. But it is why we look for the doctrines in Scripture feeling that what is found there is true as the author of it all is Truth.

4. The Nature of Doctrine

In the light of these notes, we may well ask: "Does doctrine change?" The word "develop" is used by some but this does not overcome the total question. If doctrine changes or develops, how can we feel sure that what we now teach or believe will be equally teachable or believable in a few years?

DOCTRINE
and
Change

Our concept is that doctrine (or doctrines) do not change in their essence but that the understanding of doctrine changes and that consequently the expression of it may change a bit a t times also. It is not the doctrine that changes, it is our grip upon it which at times is more sure, at other times less sure. If our grip is sufficiently insecure, a new statement may seem almost like a new doctrine. My contention is that if we could disassociate ourselves from history and look at the Scriptures in a total structure form, we would be able to see all the doctrine in Biblical perspective. Since we cannot do this, we are compelled to see them emerge in historical perspective with what may at times seem like change.