

3. The Confessional Position: The Doctrine of the Word

The Scripture is the record in which is written the acts and will of God for the better establishment of truth in lieu of immediate modes of revelation. It consists of 66 books having God as the Divine source and finds its attestation by the Spirit of God as men wrote it at His direction. It is independent in its authority and complete in application with a perspicuous character uniquely inspired as given in Hebrew and Greek. As its own best interpreter it shows us the perfect will of God and the basis for authority and judgment.

Our question is: since this is nowhere stated as given in the earlier literature of the church, what were the historical grounds that led to this understanding. We will proceed to look at some of these from the earliest times until the present and when you see the acts of history...time and again you will comment that you see why a particular item is expressed in a particular way.

B. Pre-Christian Concepts of Truth and Authority

1. The Older Paganism

In general the authority concept was taken from the idea of power...whoever was the stronger, regardless of how that was attained, was the authority figure. There were no principles or moral codes that uniformly applied. The gods were men in divine form and behaved with all the bad grace of poor men or indecent men (mankind). Occasionally a teacher of some form or moral value asserted himself and as a rule was not well received for the contribution. Socrates is a notable example. In such systems nothing is known about inherent values or worthwhileness for the human experience. Everything is sacrificed to the force of might or power. We will hardly have time to say much in this class but if we did we would note briefly the motifs in:

- a. Babylonian polytheism
- b. Graeco-Roman polytheism
- c. Norse (Teutonic) polytheism
- c. Ancient spiritism

In none of these is there anything even mildly indicative of an absolute standard of authority to which both king and people may apply their credentials. We do eventually meet some legal code (that of Hammurabi, for example) and most communities had rather lengthy and exact civil statutes but the well-being of the individual is hardly a feature and the authority is that of power.