

2. Grecian Philosophy

Many of the bare essentials in Greek philosophy have been sketched on 25-26. In the quest for authority the philosophical Greeks, as opposed to the temple cults, found authority in man's existence. They became humanistic and concerned for the state of man as man. The worship of the body, in some cases, grew from this sort of background. But authority as such depended strictly on the individual teacher and the power of the resultant school. Consequently to many of the contemporary cultures, (persons of the cultures) the ideals of Greece and Rome seemed like rather foolish images.

3. The Old Testament Scriptures

For the Hebrew peoples the great authority was the Word of God...whether written or oral. In some ways their authority was a God of power also, but His power was cushioned with love, moral integrity, and consistent performance. The portrait of God as found in the ancient Scriptures, is about as different from other deity pictures as can be imagined. It was thought that God had called this people out, that His voice governed them and that He gave a Word that should instruct them and the generations that would follow any given point. While most groups had a sacred literature, for the most part it followed the pattern of the polytheistic worship ideology but the literature of Israel fashioned a rule of life that was based on the character and performance of the issuing deity.

a. The origin of the Scripture

We have, of course, only Scripture as a help in this. The portrait however is one of great uniformity. God spake by Moses, as the saying goes. His voice was heard in the mount...He appeared to the Patriarchs...He informed Moses to write...He raised up prophets that would speak in His stead and let the nation know what it ought to know.

b. The test of the Scripture

The prophets could not just make wild statements, however, and hope that things would work out well. Since they professed to speak for Jehovah it was expected their words would be true. To determine this one looked for the predictive items contained therein. If the predictive items came to pass...the word could be depended on as a true word of God. If the predictive items were projected into the vast future, the prophet would specify something close at hand so that the measure of his truthfulness would be speedily known. If the immediate predictions did not come to pass...he was not speaking the truth and those more in the future could be discarded. The discussion of this material in Deuteronomy 13 and 18 makes it abundantly clear that the man who claimed to speak for God had to prove it by showing that he was in control (or in the service of) what only God could do.