

older order came slowly and it is likely that the organizational correspondence took longer to divide than did the theoretical issues. Hence much of the organizational ideal might have carried over on a wholesale basis. This would explain the "eldership" role in the New Testament and the stress laid on shepherding. We do not know these things for sure...we think they may have come from the preceding culture...and the general assertions of discipline and order in Acts do not discourage this.

Theology and Teaching

Theology, as a formal science, developed slowly. The canon was not complete for the early period and the teachings of the Apostles were often supplemented with the ideas of men. An example of this is easily seen in the DIDACHE. The concept of orthodoxy and all that is involved in that came by dribbles and drabs as the early believers were compelled by their environment to determine what the Scriptures taught and so what they believed. In the texts you will read a great deal about the "Pauline Theology", the "Johannine Theology", and the like (in the history texts, that is). The technical aspects of this are more the property of historical theology but do not allow the suggestions of history scholars make you think that Paul and John, et al, held different theologies. In our Christian thinking the theologies are common although the expressions may carry individual emphasis.

Naturally a word for word sameness is not found in the early teaching. The teachers and their works must be seen as complementary expressions. Evangelical theologians do see a distinction in the expression of ideas, be it Moses, David, Paul or John but do not think of them as non-harmonious. Many liberal writers assume they conflict and then spend many pages seeking to resolve the conflicts! But the essentials of understanding on the part of these writers of the revealed Word are held in common. What may appear at a given time to be a variant matter is usually a complementary point or a note of enrichment on a given ideal.

While the character of the literature is fictional satire, persons interested in an imaginative literature will find Calvin Miller's THE PHILIPPIAN FRAGMENT an enjoyable book worth reading at about this point in the course.