

But there is, in the period we are seeing, no community oriented individual who denies the authority or the divine character of Scripture. It is assumed to be the guidance of God but how it is to be understood is another matter.

## 2. The State

The authority role of the state is rather obvious from Milan on down. It will pay for the conclaves (in most cases), enforce the decisions, punish the rebels and those out of step with the decrees. But even this situation is subject to change due to the progress or regress of the world of that day.

### a. The Eastern Church..

The Eastern Empire continued in some form until 1453 although it lost territory, power, and personnel progressively during that time. By the time of the Islamic overthrow it was just something of a shell. But from Nicaea onward it was the power behind the church. Theodosius (380) did reunite the empire but it could not be held that way and was soon divided again. It had many great leaders..Justinian is perhaps the best known..and in a real way the Emperor was head of the church although the religious leadership centered in the episcopate of Constantinople. The eastern church became increasingly dependent on the state and this did not bode for its better condition.

### b. The Western Church...

The Western Empire crumbled bit by bit until overrun finally by the barbarians in 476 AD. An onlooker would have to watch as:

- 410, Visigoths sacked Rome
- 412, Goths retook most of France
- 413, Vandals and Franks 'in Italy
- 420, Roman rule in England ended
- 425, Vandals subdue Rome on a raid
- 451, Attila the Hun marches on the Italian peninsula
- 476, Ostrogoths end western empire.