

the Holy Spirit, then the revelation is progressive in that it unfolds God's on-going will for us. It continually shows us what is true of God and His dealings with men. But if the development hypothesis is correct, the ideas in the Pentateuch and God's dealing with men are purely humanistic and have developed as contrived programs about God, devoid of divine sanction and really not better light on spiritual truth. Under the developmental idea, the advanced ideas of God are late no matter where they occur in Scripture and the ideas of advanced concepts are simply those in which God is thought of as acting as God...rather than a backwards projection of man and his weakness. It is assumed that God in early society had to be represented in primitive and/or henotheistic ways.

In other words, to the developmental hypothesis man does not receive a revelation about God, he creates an idea or revelation about God. He does this regarding his own need and situation. The picture is only vaguely accurate and consequently has little real value beyond the immediate developed area. Man "discovers" God and interprets him in the light of his need. Thus modern liberalism creates the sort of God it wants and...bitterly true, even then does not believe in him.

So in this section of our course we are trying to show that the developing ideas are not necessarily so and that if we do not make the documentary divisions there is no ground for them. It is pretty heavy water...working in an area where the swords of dimness cut our vision and where the naive mind wonders every now and then why it is studying this stuff in the first place. Our analysis will follow the two chief areas of developed religious ideologies: the concept of the development of religious ideas and then that of religious institutions.

(2) The Development of Religious Ideas

A religious idea is a concept of thought regarding supernatural ideals or objects. In critical analysis this material is seen as developing in three stages:

--the Pre-prophetic: events growing before the coming of the Prophetic cult and the material dates prior to about 800 AD and is largely J and E in source.