

5. The Eastern Religions

There are several classes of eastern religions and the space in this syllabus does not permit taking them up in detail. Among the mysterious groups the authority was found in astrology and the mystery rites; in the more pragmatic cultures such as Zoroastrianism, the authority lay in the writings and teachings of the cult; in militaristic religious groups such as the Mithraists, the authority was in the power of achievement...the strength of arms.

6. What is obvious, in a conclusionary sense, is that there was no one-world concept of uniformity with regard to authority. Appeal to the supernatural in an undefined sense was the best understood authority although there were just enough empiricists to keep the level from being universal.

C. Authority in the Early Church

1. The Development of Doctrinal Expression

a. Some problems

In summary form, the early church faced these problems in coming to doctrinal definitions:

- the status of being illegal
- the far-flung nature of the empire
- sub-culture persistence
- the difficulty of communication
- the lack of any prior example of "how to"
- the shortage of theological definition
- the innovative nature of the "new theology."

b. Early Credal Forms

Basically the early church relied on spoken and signalled confessional points for early identification within the community.. Of the fragments that remain we note these:

(1) oral expressions

- the homologia

the term describes a "like saying" or a "one word" used to define the aspect of belief. The "Pauline Homologia" is found in 1 Cor. 12:2..."Jesus is Lord," while the Johannine homologia is seen in 1 John 5:1, et al, "Jesus is the Christ." The idea that different concepts are represented is not exegetically sound.

For a more thorough reading of this section see Neufeld: The Earliest Christian Confessions, Grand Rapids, W.B. Eerdmans, Co. 1963