

official canon and our text of the total work is corrupt. The first formally stated canon that is substantially like ours (in form) is that of Athanasius ca 367 AD but the emphasis is that the questions had been settled long before that. We think the New Testament canon was complete in writing by 100 AD and complete in acceptance and use by about 200 AD. To understand the complications you must remember the difference in the economy and communication of that age as compared with ours.

c. The Church seemed to follow a concept of canonicity that was molded after the O.T. concept. In the latter, agreement with the law, fulfillment of signs, Jehovah-orientation, etc. seemed to be determining points. In the New Testament these seem paralleled by the concepts of apostolicity, recognition and conformity.

d. You will discover that a large problem in the Biblical authority field was not as to whether the Scripture was authoritative or not, but as to how it should be interpreted. Hermeneutics is a much larger part of our field of study than many of us are aware.

4. The Authority of the Fathers is the concept of the force given to the "universal" fathers very early in the church. Their deeds and knowledge were legendary and it was only logical that great meaning should be attached to their words and expressions. So much of the literature suggested for their age has been lost, however, and the means of transmission of other information has been doubtful...so to most protestant scholars the authority of the fathers is less significant.

Authority
in the
Fathers

5. The Authority of the Church, as a final thought, grew in its scope and contained the idea that if the church agreed on anything it must be significant and binding. The key phrase for this expression of authority came to be:

Authority
in the
Church

"Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est."

(What has been believed everywhere and by all at all times)

D. The Rise of Credal Thinking: expressions of belief and trust.

Early Credal
Forms

1. The Earliest Christian Expressions.

a. Some basic terms: