

(3) The Didascalia...later second century and a more detailed summary with greater inventiveness on the living of the Christian life and the pursuits thereof

(4) The Apostolic Confessions, large quantities of materials written perhaps in the fourth and fifth centuries but in the early volumes reflecting tradition and practice certainly as old as the second century. These become very involved and a degree in canon law would be helpful in sorting most of them out.

(5) The Apostles Creed...The essential portions of which may be as old as 150 AD. It seems to have been formulated as a confession to be given by those seeking admission to the church and was likely used at baptism. Augustine seems to suggest that the strict wording of the creed was not always required but that such a credal form of spiritual identification was both necessary and useful. Both Irenaeus and Tertullian offer references to the existence of such a creed although we cheerfully conceded today that the wording has varied through the centuries. This ancient creed has gone through certain changes and we sketch the credal phraseology as point of comparison in a chart on page 35: *Comparison of the Apostle's Creed. Creeds tend to grow and as with textual criticism we often note that the shorter is more likely closer to the original idea than the longer. They also are changed often for the particular likes or dislikes of the group publishing the Creed. Perhaps Augustine's idea for memory is not bad but one must be free to see a word substituted here and there when one goes to another part of the world in Christian service. * 37

Augustine, On the Creed

"Receive, my children, the Rule of Faith, which is called the Symbol or Creed. And when ye have received it, write it in your heart, and be daily saying it to yourselves; before ye sleep, before ye go forth, arm you with the Creed."

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series I, Vol III.

2. The Authority of Men

As the message was carried and preached by men, it becomes obvious that those who gave it will be, to their hearers at least, the voices of authority. In order of relative importance we mention the following classes:

a. Apostles

The Lord had promised to those who sat about Him (John 14) that the Holy Spirit would call to their minds the material He had taught them and that they would be able to give this to others. The Apostles in time became the first (or at least among the first) writers of the New Testament...and some have argued that every New Testament book has an apostle behind it as author. That great authority should be in their hands is evident following a claim such as Paul made in 1 Cor. 14:38..."the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."