

a. Tradition Defined...and it has a rather basic twofold meaning:

(1) the simple carryover of ideas. An example is found in 1 Peter 1:18 (compounded with "father")patroparadotou...the carrying over of the ideas of the fathers. In this case the carrying over is not salutary although there is no indication that all such carry over is harmful.

(2) delivery of authoritative material. The term is paradosis and you can see it used this way in 1 Cor. 11:2 and Col. 2:8. The first of these sees a carryover that is binding...the second sees a carryover that is purely human and even detrimental.

It simply means that when you say something is tradition, you are not necessarily saying a whole lot until you have qualified the term.

b. The use of the term.

In the Ante-Nicene period, there are three varieties of tradition in view in which the meaning of the term must be individually studied:

---Apostolic Testimony is the tradition concerning what the Apostles said and witnessed about the truth.

---Apostolic Tradition is that concerned with what the apostles taught both in what is later incorporated in the Scripture and in what was assumed to be their independent opinions.

---Secret, church opinion, or the way in which the church viewed matters and interpreted Scripture. This increases in value and usefulness as time goes on and is a means for "defending" the church interpretations against alternate schemes. To know this sort of tradition, of course, one must be rightly connected and taught in the church.

The fathers of the Nicene period apparently thought that what was "carried over" was subject to being confirmed by the Scripture rather than the reverse proportion. But the carried over ideas of the religious community are the keys to the interpretation and use of Scripture so one not only cites Biblical passages but increasingly tells how others have cited them. The result of this by 500 AD if not sooner was something on this line:

REAL AUTHORITY ---Christ

IMMEDIATE DESCENDENT AUTHORITY ---teaching conferred through the Apostles and the resultant Scripture

PRACTICING AUTHORITY ---the ecclesiastical interpreters.

Those interested in further reading on this line will find these works helpful: F.F.Bruce: Tradition: Old and New
D. Theron: Evidence of Tradition