

a. The Authority of the Fathers (probably should be under the material on page 36 ff but one is not always able to organize this stuff as carefully as one would wish so...)

The concept is the force given to the "universal" fathers...those recognized throughout the church world. 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 of less significance although most of us are interested in finding in them what will support our views...and dismissing the other things as the "teachings of men!"

b. The Authority of the body politic.

The key phrase is:

"QUOD UBIQUE, QUOD SEMPER, QUOD AB OMIBUS CREDITUM EST."

Rather freely translated: "What everywhere, what always, what by all has been believed.."that is the decisive teaching and authority of the church

## 7. The resultant position by 325

Of this subject, two observations are pertinent:

a. There was a generally understood character about the Scriptures (as we tabulate them) being the decisive voice in the church. There was a pronounced tendency to be "biblical" in the study of doctrines and the pronouncements of teachings. Biblical patterns of truth were more impressive and more clearly a guiding edge in the theological discussions. Many major doctrines had not yet been settled and there was some uneasiness about the place of our own rationale.

b. There was a lack of formal pronouncement. The problems that would later call for more exacting study in the authority role did not yet exist and there was in effect a great appeal to a general understanding that did not require credal appointment.