In Alexandria, about 150 BC, this classical usage was modified so that "canon" became a technical term for the work of all models considered a standard impression for measuring the work of others. In that way the term is still used today. We measure any religious writing by the standards of Scripture to determine its orthodoxy or its place in the Christian communion.

In Hebrew idealogy the Rabbis tended to speak of the authoritative (God-given) works as those that defiled the hands. The concept was that the sacred works were so holy that whatever came into contact with them had its imperfections bared. Hence the hands of the holder of these books were shown to be in a state of defilement because of the sanctity of the books. Books that were not deemed to have divine origin did not do this no matter how how their aurhtoity in other areas may have been. This expression of cleanliness became the measure of canonicity. If the work defiled the hands it was sacred and so to be received with a Divine imprimature...if it did not defile the hands, whatever other claims may have been made for it, it was not of the sacred collection.

Thus when we speak of the canon we are affirming the following:

--The authority and divine origin of the sacred books in collected form...

--The nature of the texts as a binding and bound gathering of truth.

--Therefore the authority rests in the books themselves, not in an external action of any sort such as a canonical council, etc. External action grew from suggestions within the books, suggestions of an internal character for which a later demonstration is only a matter of course...the best that men are able to do in such case is to recognize the existing claim and act in accordance.

3. Scriptural Evidence for a Canon

What we mean by this is data within the Bible itself. In this regard we remember that while we think of the Bible as a single book, it is, in reality, a collection of books. It would be strange if we did not find in some of these books some hints as to what should be believed and followed. It is not possible