

Jesus Christ and the Founding of the Catholic Apostolic Church.

Mathew last chapter

The Commissioning of the Disciples. The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Mark Last chapter

The Ascension of Jesus. So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

Luke last chapter

Then he led them as far as Bethany, raised his hands, and blessed them. As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven. They did him homage and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they were continually in the temple praising God.

John last chapter

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He then said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." [Jesus] said to him, "Feed my sheep. Amen, amen, I say to you, when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." He said this signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

(Mathew: ch 16. ver. 14-19)

And Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi: and he asked his disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of man is?

But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of

the prophets.

Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am?

Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.

Why did Christ choose a hierarchic system, rather than a democratic system?

It was His vision of how humans left to their own ingenuity will bring calamity into this world, in spite of all the systems the human kind could think of. In His Wisdom, he knew he could guide the Church better, by choosing the method he did by selecting Twelve Apostles, teaching and training them, and placing Peter as the head of the team.

Did the other Apostles accept Peter's authority?

Except for Judas, who left the Team, the others did accept, as can be seen in the Acts of the Apostles. Ch. 1. Verse 15 In those days Peter rising up in the midst of the brethren, said: (now the number of persons together was about an hundred and twenty:)

Chapter 2. Verse 14: But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke to them: Ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you, and with your ears receive my words.

This is also confirmed by the Early Church Fathers.

Finally, it is the choice God has given to individuals, to accept Him or reject Him. Use the gift of the mind he has given, to search for Truth. Believe whomsoever they think are more credible to them.

Personal biases deflect the mind from thinking clearly. The experts who come on TV and Radio Shows - are they more credible to us than the above Scriptures, the lives of Saints who lived the Faith, and the early followers, among whom the Church Fathers - well educated, and brilliant men have left plenty of written testimonies.

Remember, that Christ warned: "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also"; -

Vested interests feel threatened by the size of the Roman Catholic Church, well publicized by the US networks, and are afraid to lose their cherished and well nurtured niches in the world

- Remember the furor that was let loose after Mel Gibson made his Passion of the Christ and no Hollywood house was prepared to back it?. Not everyone is in love with the Church or Jesus

Christ.

Remember that our flesh is weak, and we tend to find justification for our weaknesses. God's mercy is beyond measure, and we should not doubt it. The worst among humans is a creation of God, and is loved by Him, and the proof is that He sent his only begotten Son to save all of us from damnation.

John Ch. 14. Verse 26

26. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.

The formation of the New Testament canon (A.D. 100-220)

The [idea](#) of a complete and clear-cut canon of the [New Testament](#) existing from the beginning, that is from Apostolic times, has no foundation in history. The Canon of the New Testament, like that of the Old, is the result of a development, of a process at once stimulated by disputes with doubters, both within and without the [Church](#), and retarded by certain obscurities and natural hesitations, and which did not reach its final term until the [dogmatic definition](#) of the [Tridentine Council](#)

The witness of the New Testament to itself: The first collections

Those writings which possessed the unmistakable stamp and guarantee of Apostolic origin must from the very first have been specially prized and [venerated](#), and their copies eagerly sought by local Churches and individual [Christians](#) of means, in preference to the narratives and *Logia*, or Sayings of [Christ](#), coming from less authorized sources. Already in the [New Testament](#) itself there is some evidence of a certain diffusion of canonical books: [2 Peter 3:15-16](#) supposes its readers to be acquainted with some of [St. Paul's Epistles](#); St. John's Gospel implicitly presupposes the existence of the

[Synoptics](#)

(Matthew, Mark, and Luke). There are no indications in the

[New Testament](#)

of a systematic plan for the distribution of the Apostolic compositions, any more than there is of a definite new Canon bequeathed by the

[Apostles](#)

to the

[Church](#)

, or of a strong self-witness to

[Divine inspiration](#)

. Nearly all the

[New Testament](#)

writings were evoked by particular occasions, or addressed to particular destinations. But we may well presume that each of the leading

[Churches](#)

--

[Antioch](#)

,

[Thessalonica](#)

, Alexandria,

[Corinth](#)

,

[Rome](#)

--sought by exchanging with other

[Christian](#)

communities to add to its special treasure, and have publicly read in its religious assemblies all Apostolic writings which came under its

[knowledge](#)

. It was doubtless in this way that the collections grew, and reached completeness within certain limits, but a considerable number of years must have elapsed (and that counting from the composition of the latest book) before all the widely separated Churches of early

[Christendom](#)

possessed the new sacred literature in full. And this want of an organized distribution, secondarily to the absence of an early fixation of the Canon, left room for variations and

[doubts](#)

which lasted far into the centuries. But evidence will presently be given that from days touching on those of the last Apostles there were two well defined bodies of sacred writings of the

[New Testament](#)

, which constituted the firm, irreducible, universal minimum, and the nucleus of its complete Canon: these were the

[Four Gospels](#)

, as the

[Church](#)

now has them, and thirteen

[Epistles](#)

of

[St. Paul](#)

--the
Evangelium
and the
Apostolicum
.

The principle of canonicity

Before entering into the historical [proof](#) for this primitive emergence of a compact, nucleative Canon, it is pertinent to briefly examine this problem: During the formative period what principle operated in the selection of the [New Testament](#) writings and their recognition as Divine?--

[Theologians](#)

are divided on this point. This view that Apostolicity was the test of the inspiration during the building up of the New Testament canon, is favoured by the many instances where the early [Fathers](#)

base the authority of a book on its Apostolic origin, and by the [truth](#)

that the definitive placing of the contested books on the [New Testament](#)

catalogue coincided with their general acceptance as of Apostolic authorship. Moreover, the advocates of this hypothesis point out that the Apostles' office corresponded with that of the Prophets of the

[Old Law](#)

, inferring that as inspiration was attached to the *munus propheticum*

so the Apostles were aided by

[Divine inspiration](#)

whenever in the exercise of their calling they either spoke or wrote. Positive arguments are [deduced](#)

from the

[New Testament](#)

to establish that a permanent prophetic *charisma*

(see

[CHARISMATA](#)

) was enjoyed by the

[Apostles](#)

through a special indwelling of the Holy Ghost, beginning with Pentecost:

[Matthew 10:19-20](#)

;

[Acts 15:28](#)

;

[1 Corinthians 2:13](#)

;
;
[2 Corinthians 13:3](#)

;
;
[1 Thessalonians 2:13](#)

, are cited. The opponents of this theory allege against it that the Gospels of Mark and of Luke and Acts were not the work of Apostles (however, tradition connects the Second Gospel with St. Peter's preaching and St. Luke's with

[St. Paul's](#)

); that books current under an Apostle's name in the Early Church, such as the Epistle of Barnabas and the Apocalypse of St. Peter, were nevertheless excluded from canonical rank, while on the other hand

[Origen](#)

and

[St. Dionysius of Alexandria](#)

in the case of Apocalypse, and

[St. Jerome](#)

in the case of II and III John, although questioning the Apostolic authorship of these works, unhesitatingly received them as

[Sacred Scriptures](#)

. An objection of a speculative kind is derived from the very nature of inspiration
ad scribendum

, which seems to demand a specific impulse from the Holy Ghost in each case, and preclude the theory that it could be possessed as a permanent gift, or charisma. The weight of

[Catholic](#)

[theological](#)

opinion is deservedly against mere Apostolicity as a sufficient criterion of inspiration. The adverse view has been taken by

[Franzelin](#)

(*De Divinâ Traditione et Scripturâ*, 1882), Schmid (*De Inspirationis Bibliorum Vi et Ratione*, 1885), Crets (*De Divinâ Bibliorum Inspiratione*, 1886), Leitner (*Die prophetische Inspiration*, 1895--a monograph), Pesch (*De Inspiratione Sacræ*, 1906). These authors (some of whom treat the matter more speculatively than historically) admit that Apostolicity is a positive and partial touchstone of inspiration, but emphatically deny that it was exclusive, in the sense that all non-Apostolic works were by that very fact barred from the sacred Canon of the New Testament. They hold to

[doctrinal](#)

tradition as the

[true](#)

criterion.

[Catholic](#) champions of Apostolicity as a criterion are: Ubaldi (*Introductio in Sacram Scripturam*, II, 1876); Schanz (in *Theologische Quartalschrift*, 1885, pp. 666 sqq., and *A Christian Apology*, II, tr. 1891); Székely (*Hermeneutica Biblica*, 1902). Recently Professor Batiffol, while rejecting the claims of these latter advocates, has enunciated a theory regarding

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Written by W.J.Pais

the principle that presided over the formation of the New Testament canon which challenges attention and perhaps marks a new stage in the controversy. According to Monsignor Batiffol, the *Gospel* (i.e. the words and commandments of [Jesus Christ](#)) bore with it its own sacredness and authority from the very beginning. This Gospel was announced to the world at large, by the [Apostles](#) and Apostolic disciples of [Christ](#), and this message, whether spoken or written, whether taking the form of an evangelic narrative or epistle, was holy and supreme by the fact of containing the Word of [Our Lord](#). Accordingly, for the primitive Church, *evangelical character* was the test of Scriptural sacredness. But to guarantee this character it was [necessary](#) that a book should be known as composed by the official witnesses and organs of the Evangel; hence the need to certify the Apostolic authorship, or at least sanction, of a work purporting to contain the Gospel of Christ. In Batiffol's view the Judaic notion of inspiration did not at first enter into the selection of the [Christian Scriptures](#). In fact, for the earliest [Christians](#) the Gospel of [Christ](#), in the wide sense above noted, was not to be classified with, because transcending, the [Old Testament](#). It was not until about the middle of the second century that under the [rubric](#) of *Scripture* the [New Testament](#) writings were assimilated to the Old; the authority of the [New Testament](#) as the Word preceded and produced its authority as a New Scripture. (Revue Biblique, 1903, 226 sqq.) Monsignor Batiffol's hypothesis has this in common with the views of other recent students of the New Testament canon, that the [idea](#) of a new body of sacred writings became clearer in the Early Church as the faithful advanced in a [knowledge](#) of the Faith. But it should be remembered that the inspired character of the [New Testament](#) is a [Catholic dogma](#)

, and must therefore in some way have been revealed to, and taught by, Apostles.--Assuming that Apostolic authorship is a positive criterion of inspiration, two inspired

[Epistles](#)

of

[St. Paul](#)

have been lost. This appears from

[1 Corinthians 5:9, sqq.](#)

;

[2 Corinthians 2:4-5](#)

.

The formation of the Tetramorph, or Fourfold Gospel

[Irenaeus](#), in his work "Against Heresies" (A.D. 182-88), testifies to the existence of a *Tetramorph*, or Quadriform Gospel, given by the Word and unified by one Spirit; to repudiate this Gospel or any part of it, as did the

[Alogi](#)

and

[Marcionites](#)

, was to

[sin](#)

against revelation and the

[Spirit of God](#)

. The saintly Doctor of

[Lyons](#)

explicitly states the names of the four Elements of this Gospel, and repeatedly cites all the

[Evangelists](#)

in a manner parallel to his citations from the

[Old Testament](#)

. From the testimony of

[St. Irenaeus](#)

alone there can be no reasonable

[doubt](#)

that the Canon of the Gospel was inalterably fixed in the

[Catholic](#)

[Church](#)

by the last quarter of the second century. Proofs might be multiplied that our canonical

[Gospels](#)

were then universally recognized in the

[Church](#)

, to the exclusion of any pretended Evangels. The magisterial statement of

[Irenaeus](#)

may be corroborated by the very ancient catalogue known as the Muratorian Canon, and

[St. Hippolytus](#)

, representing Roman tradition; by

[Tertullian](#)

in
[Africa](#)
, by Clement in Alexandria; the works of the
[Gnostic](#)
Valentinus, and the Syrian
[Tatian's](#)
Diatessaron, a blending together of the
[Evangelists](#)
' writings, presuppose the authority enjoyed by the fourfold Gospel towards the middle of the second century. To this period or a little earlier belongs the pseudo-Clementine epistle in which we find, for the first time after
[2 Peter 3:16](#)
, the word
Scripture
applied to a
[New Testament](#)
book. But it is needless in the present article to array the full force of these and other witnesses, since even
[rationalistic](#)
scholars like Harnack admit the canonicity of the quadriform Gospel between the years 140-175.

But against Harnack we are able to trace the Tetramorph as a sacred collection back to a more remote period. The [apocryphal](#) Gospel of St. Peter, dating from about 150, is based on our canonical [Evangelists](#) . So with the very ancient Gospel of the Hebrews and Egyptians (see [APOCRYPHA](#)).
[St. Justin Martyr](#)
(130-63) in his Apology refers to certain "memoirs of the Apostles, which are called gospels", and which "are read in
[Christian assemblies](#)
together with the writings of the Prophets". The identity of these "memoirs" with our Gospels is established by the certain traces of three, if not all, of them scattered through
[St. Justin's](#)
works; it was not yet the age of explicit quotations.
[Marcion](#)
, the
[heretic](#)
refuted by
[Justin](#)
in a lost polemic, as we

[know](#)

from

[Tertullian](#)

, instituted a criticism of Gospels bearing the names of the Apostles and disciples of the Apostles, and a little earlier (c. 120)

[Basilides](#)

, the Alexandrian leader of a

[Gnostic](#)

[sect](#)

, wrote a commentary on "the Gospel" which is known by the allusions to it in the

[Fathers](#)

to have comprised the writings of the Four

[Evangelists](#)

.

In our backward search we have come to the sub-Apostolic age, and its important witnesses are divided into [Asian](#), Alexandrian, and Roman:

- St. Ignatius, [Bishop](#) of [Antioch](#), and [St. Polycarp](#), of [Smyrna](#), had been disciples of Apostles; they wrote their epistles in the first decade of the second century (100-110). They employ Matthew, Luke, and John. In St. Ignatius we find the first instance of the

[consecrated](#)

term "it is written" applied to a Gospel (Ad Philad., viii, 2). Both these

[Fathers](#)

show not only a personal acquaintance with "the Gospel" and the thirteen Pauline Epistles, but they suppose that their readers are so familiar with them that it would be superfluous to name them. Papias,

[Bishop](#)

of Phrygian Hierapolis, according to

[Irenaeus](#)

a disciple of St. John, wrote about A.D. 125. Describing the origin of St. Mark's Gospel, he speaks of Hebrew (Aramaic) Logia, or Sayings of

[Christ](#)

, composed by St. Matthew, which there is reason to believe formed the basis of the canonical Gospel of that name, though the greater part of

[Catholic](#)

writers identify them with the Gospel. As we have only a few fragments of Papias, preserved by

[Eusebius](#)

, it cannot be alleged that he is silent about other parts of the

[New Testament](#)

.

- The so-called [Epistle of Barnabas](#), of uncertain origin, but of highest antiquity, cites a

passage from the First Gospel under the formula "it is written". The [Didache](#), or Teaching of the Apostles, an uncanonical work [dating](#) from c. 110, implies that "the Gospel" was already a well-known and definite collection.

- St. Clement, [Bishop of Rome](#), and disciple of [St. Paul](#), addressed his Letter to the Corinthian Church c. A.D. 97, and, although it cites no [Evangelist](#) explicitly, this epistle contains combinations of texts taken from the three [synoptic Gospels](#), especially from St. Matthew. That Clement does not allude to the [Fourth Gospel](#) is quite natural, as it was not composed till about that time.

Thus the patristic testimonies have brought us step by step to a Divine inviolable fourfold Gospel existing in the closing years of the Apostolic Era. Just how the Tetramorph was welded into unity and given to the [Church](#), is a matter of conjecture. But, as Zahn observes, there is good reason to believe that the tradition handed down by Papias, of the approval of St. Mark's Gospel by [St. John the Evangelist](#), reveals that either the latter himself of a [colleague](#) of [e](#) his disciples added the [Fourth Gospel](#) to the [Synoptics](#), and made the group into the compact and unalterable "Gospel", the one in four, whose existence and authority left their clear impress upon all subsequent [ecclesiastical](#) literature, and find their conscious formulation in the language of [Irenaeus](#).

The Pauline epistles

Parallel to the chain of evidence we have traced for the canonical standing of the Gospels extends one for the thirteen [Epistles](#) of [St. Paul](#), forming the other half of the irreducible kernel of the complete New Testament canon. All the authorities cited for the Gospel Canon show acquaintance with, and recognize, the sacred quality of these letters. [St. Irenaeus](#), as acknowledged by the Harnackian critics, employs all the Pauline writings, except the short

Philemon, as sacred and canonical. The Muratorian Canon, contemporary with [Irenaeus](#), gives the complete list of the thirteen, which, it should be remembered, does not include Hebrews. The [heretical Basilides](#) and his disciples quote from this Pauline group in general. The copious extracts from [Marcion's](#) works scattered through [Irenaeus](#) and [Tertullian](#) show that he was acquainted with the thirteen as in [ecclesiastical](#) use, and selected his *Apostolikon* of six from them. The testimony of [Polycarp](#) and Ignatius is again capital in this case. Eight of [St. Paul's](#) writings are cited by [Polycarp](#);
[St. Ignatius of Antioch](#) ranked the Apostles above the Prophets, and must therefore have allowed the written compositions of the former at least an equal rank with those of the latter ("Ad Philadelphios", v).
[St. Clement of Rome](#) refers to Corinthians as at the head "of the Evangel"; the Muratorian Canon gives the same [honour](#) to I Corinthians, so that we may rightfully draw the inference, with Dr. Zahn, that as early as Clement's day [St. Paul's Epistles](#) had been collected and formed into a group with a fixed order. Zahn has pointed out confirmatory signs of this in the manner in which Sts. Ignatius and [Polycarp](#) employ these Epistles. The tendency of the evidence is to establish the hypothesis that the important Church of [Corinth](#) was the first to form a complete collection of [St. Paul's](#) writings.

The remaining books

In this formative period the Epistle to the Hebrews did not obtain a firm footing in the Canon of the Universal Church. At [Rome](#) it was not yet recognized as canonical, as shown by the Muratorian catalogue of Roman origin; [Irenaeus](#) probably cites it, but makes no reference to a Pauline origin. Yet it was known at [Rome](#) as early as St. Clement, as the latter's epistle attests. The Alexandrian Church admitted it as the work of [St. Paul](#), and canonical. The [Montanists](#) favoured it, and the aptness with which vi, 4-8, lent itself to the [Montanist](#) and [Novatianist](#) rigour was doubtless one reason why it was suspect in the West. Also during this period the excess over the minimal Canon composed of the Gospels and thirteen epistles varied. The seven "Catholic" Epistles (James, Jude, I and II Peter, and the three of John) had not yet been brought into a special group, and, with the possible exception of the three of St. John, remained isolated units, depending for their canonical strength on variable circumstances. But towards the end of the second century the canonical minimum was enlarged and, besides the Gospels and Pauline Epistles, unalterably embraced Acts, I Peter, I John (to which II and III John were probably attached), and Apocalypse. Thus Hebrews, James, Jude, and II Peter remained hovering outside the precincts of universal canonicity, and the controversy about them and the subsequently disputed Apocalypse form the larger part of the remaining history of the Canon of the New Testament. However, at the beginning of the third century the [New Testament](#) was formed in the sense that the content of its main divisions, what may be called its essence, was sharply defined and universally received, while *all* the secondary books were recognized in some Churches. A singular exception to the universality of the above-described substance of the [New Testament](#) was the Canon of the primitive East Syrian Church, which did not contain any of the [Catholic Epistles](#) or Apocalypse.

The idea of a New Testament

The question of the principle that dominated the practical canonization of the [New Testament](#) Scriptures has already been discussed under (b). The faithful must have had from the beginning some realization that in the writings of the Apostles and [Evangelists](#) they had acquired a new body of Divine Scriptures, a New written Testament destined to stand

side by side with the Old. That the Gospel and Epistles were the written Word of [God](#), was fully realized as soon as the fixed collections were formed; but to seize the relation of this new treasure to the old was possible only when the faithful acquired a better [knowledge](#) of the [faith](#).

. In this connection Zahn observes with much [truth](#) that the rise of [Montanism](#), with its [false prophets](#), who claimed for their written productions--the self-styled Testament of the [Paraclete](#)--the authority of revelation, around the [Christian Church](#) to a fuller sense that the age of revelation had expired with the last of the Apostles, and that the circle of sacred Scripture is not extensible beyond the legacy of the Apostolic Era. [Montanism](#) began in 156; a generation later, in the works of [Irenaeus](#), we discover the firmly-rooted [idea](#) of two Testaments, with the same Spirit operating in both. For [Tertullian](#) (c. 200) the body of the New Scripture is an *instrumentum* on at least an equal footing and in the same specific class as the *instrumentum* formed by the Law and the Prophets. [Clement of Alexandria](#) was the first to apply the word "Testament" to the sacred [library](#) of the New Dispensation. A kindred external influence is to be added to [Montanism](#): the need of setting up a barrier, between the genuine inspired literature and the flood of pseudo-Apostolic apocrypha, gave an additional impulse to the [idea](#) of a New Testament canon, and later contributed not a little to the demarcation of its fixed limits.

The period of discussion (A.D. 220-367)

In this stage of the historical development of the Canon of the New Testament we encounter for the first time a consciousness reflected in certain [ecclesiastical](#) writers, of the differences between the sacred collections in divers sections of

[Christendom](#)

. This variation is witnessed to, and the discussion stimulated by, two of the most learned men of

[Christian](#)

antiquity,

[Origen](#)

, and

[Eusebius of Caesarea](#)

, the

[ecclesiastical historian](#)

. A glance at the Canon as exhibited in the authorities of the African, or Carthaginian, Church, will complete our brief survey of this period of diversity and discussion:-

Origen and his school

[Origen's](#) travels gave him exception opportunities to [know](#) the traditions of widely separated portions of the

[church](#)

and made him very conversant with the discrepant attitudes toward certain parts of the

[New Testament](#)

. He divided books with Biblical claims into three classes:

- those universally received;
- those whose Apostolicity was questions;
- [apocryphal](#) works.

In the first class, the *Homologoumena*, stood the Gospels, the thirteen Pauline Epistles, Acts, Apocalypse, I Peter, and I John. The contested writings were Hebrews, II Peter, II and III John, James, Jude, Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the

[Didache](#)

, and probably the Gospel of the Hebrews. Personally,

[Origen](#)

accepted all of these as Divinely inspired, though viewing contrary opinions with toleration.

[Origen's](#)

authority seems to have given to Hebrews and the disputed

[Catholic Epistles](#)

a firm place in the Alexandrian Canon, their tenure there having been previously insecure, judging from the

[exegetical](#)

work of Clement, and the list in the Codex Claromontanus, which is assigned by competent scholars to an early Alexandrian origin.

Eusebius

[Eusebius](#) , [Bishop](#) of Cæsarea in Palestine, was one of [Origen's](#) most eminent disciples, a man of wide erudition. In imitation of his master he divided religious literature into three classes:

- *Homologoumena*, or compositions universally received as sacred, the [Four Gospels](#) , thirteen [Epistles](#) of [St. Paul](#) , Hebrews, Acts, I Peter, I John, and Apocalypse. There is some inconsistency in his classification; for instance, though ranking Hebrews with the books of universal reception, he elsewhere admits it is disputed.

- The second category is composed of the Antilegomena, or contested writings; these in turn are of the superior and inferior sort. The better ones are the Epistles of St. James and St. Jude, II Peter, II and III John; these, like [Origen](#) , [Eusebius](#) wished to be admitted to the Canon, but was forced to record their uncertain status; the Antilegomena of the inferior sort were Barnabas, the [Didache](#) , Gospel of the Hebrews, the Acts of Paul, the Shepherd, the Apocalypse of Peter.

- All the rest are spurious (*notha*).

[Eusebius](#) diverged from his Alexandrian master in personally rejecting Apocalypse as an un-Biblical, though compelled to acknowledge its almost universal acceptance. Whence came this unfavourable view of the closing volume of the [Christian Testament](#) ?--Zahn attributes it to the influence of Lucian of

[Samosata](#) , one of the founders of the Antioch [school](#) of [exegetis](#) , and with whose disciples [Eusebius](#) had been associated. Lucian himself had acquired his [education](#) at [Edessa](#)

, the [metropolis](#) of Eastern [Syria](#), which had, as already remarked, a singularly curtailed Canon. [Lucian](#) is known to have edited the Scriptures at [Antioch](#), and is supposed to have introduced there the shorter [New Testament](#) which later [St. John Chrysostom](#) and his followers employed--one in which Apocalypse, II Peter, II and III John, and Jude had no place. It is known that [Theodore of Mopsuestia](#) rejected all the [Catholic Epistles](#). In [St. John Chrysostom's](#) ample expositions of the Scriptures there is not a single clear trace of the Apocalypse, which he seems to implicitly exclude the four smaller [Epistles](#)--II Peter, II and III John, and Jude--from the number of the canonical books. Lucian, then, according to Zahn, would have compromised between the Syriac Canon and the Canon of [Origen](#) by admitting the three longer [Catholic Epistles](#) and keeping out Apocalypse. But after allowing fully for the prestige of the founder of the [Antioch school](#), it is difficult to grant that his personal authority could have sufficed to strike such an important work as Apocalypse from the Canon of a notable Church, where it had previously been received. It is more probable that a reaction against the abuse of the Johannine Apocalypse by the [Montanists](#) and [Chiliasts](#)--
[Asia Minor](#) being the nursery of both these [errors](#)--led to the elimination of a book whose authority had perhaps been previously suspected. Indeed it is quite reasonable to suppose that its early exclusion from the East Syrian Church was an outer wave of the extreme reactionist movement of the [Aloges](#)

--also of

[Asia Minor](#)

--who branded Apocalypse and all the Johannine writings as the work of the

[heretic](#)

[Cerinthus](#)

. Whatever may have been all the influences ruling the personal Canon of

[Eusebius](#)

, he chose Lucian's text for the fifty copies of the

[Bible](#)

which he furnished to the

[Church](#)

of Constantinople at the order of his imperial patron Constantine; and he incorporated all the

[Catholic Epistles](#)

, but excluded Apocalypse. The latter remained for more than a century banished from the sacred collections as current in

[Antioch](#)

and Constantinople. However, this book kept a minority of

[Asiatic](#)

suffrages, and, as both Lucian and

[Eusebius](#)

had been tainted with

[Arianism](#)

, the

[approbation](#)

of Apocalypse, opposed by them, finally came to be looked upon as a sign of

[orthodoxy](#)

.
[Eusebius](#)

was the first to call attention to important variations in the text of the Gospels, viz., the presence in some copies and the absence in others of the final paragraph of Mark, the passage of the Adulterous Woman, and the Bloody Sweat.

The African Church

[St. Cyprian](#), whose Scriptural Canon certainly reflects the contents of the first Latin Bible, received all the books of the [New Testament](#) except Hebrews, II Peter, James, and Jude; however, there was already a strong inclination in his environment to admit II Peter as authentic. Jude had been recognized by

[Tertullian](#)

, but, strangely, it had lost its position in the African Church, probably owing to its citation of the

[apocryphal](#)

Henoch.

[Cyprian's](#)

testimony to the non-canoncity of Hebrews and James is confirmed by Commodian, another African writer of the period. A very important witness is the document known as Mommson's

Canon, a

[manuscript](#)

of the tenth century, but whose original has been ascertained to date from West Africa about the year 360. It is a formal catalogue of the sacred books, unmutilated in the

[New Testament](#)

portion, and proves that at its time the books universally acknowledged in the influential Church of Carthage were almost identical with those received by

[Cyprian](#)

a century before. Hebrews, James, and Jude are entirely wanting. The three Epistles of St. John and II Peter appear, but after each stands the note

una sola

, added by an almost contemporary hand, and evidently in protest against the reception of these Antilegomena, which, presumably, had found a place in the official list recently, but whose right to be there was seriously questioned.

The period of fixation (A.D. 367-405)

St. Athanasius

While the influence of [Athanasius](#) on the [Canon of the Old Testament](#) was negative and exclusive (see *supra*),

in that of the

[New Testament](#)

it was trenchantly constructive. In his "Epistola Festalis" (A.D. 367) the illustrious

[Bishop](#)

of Alexandria ranks all of

[Origen's](#)

[New Testament](#)

Antilegomena, which are identical with the deuteros, boldly inside the Canon, without noticing any of the scruples about them. Thenceforward they were formally and firmly fixed in the Alexandrian Canon. And it is significant of the general trend of

[ecclesiastical](#)

authority that not only were works which formerly enjoyed high standing at broad-minded Alexandria--the

[Apocalypse of Peter](#)

and the

[Acts of Paul](#)

--involved by

[Athanasius](#)

with the apocrypha, but even some that

[Origen](#)

had regarded as

[inspired](#)

--

[Barnabas](#)

, the
[Shepherd of Hermas](#)

, the
[Didache](#)

--were ruthlessly shut out under the same damnatory title.

The Roman Church, the synod under Damasus, and St. Jerome

The Muratorian Canon or Fragment, composed in the [Roman Church](#) in the last quarter of the second century, is silent about Hebrews, James, II Peter; I Peter, indeed, is not mentioned, but must have been omitted by an oversight, since it was universally received at the time. There is evidence that this restricted Canon obtained not only in the African Church, with slight modifications, as we have seen, but also at

[Rome](#)

and in the West generally until the close of the fourth century. The same ancient authority witnesses to the very favourable and perhaps canonical standing enjoyed at

[Rome](#)

by the Apocalypse of Peter and the Shepherd of Hermas. In the middle decades of the fourth century the increased intercourse and exchange of views between the Orient and the Occident led to a better mutual acquaintance regarding Biblical canons and the correction of the catalogue of the

[Latin Church](#)

. It is a singular fact that while the East, mainly through

[St. Jerome's](#)

pen, exerted a disturbing and negative influence on Western opinion regarding the

[Old Testament](#)

, the same influence, through probably the same chief intermediary, made for the completeness and integrity of the New Testament canon. The West began to realize that the ancient Apostolic Churches of

[Jerusalem](#)

and Antioch, indeed the whole Orient, for more than two centuries had acknowledged Hebrews and James as inspired writings of Apostles, while the venerable Alexandrian Church, supported by the prestige of

[Athanasius](#)

, and the powerful Patriarchate of Constantinople, with the scholarship of

[Eusebius](#)

behind its judgment, had canonized all the disputed Epistles.

[St. Jerome](#)

, a rising light in the

[Church](#)

, though but a simple

[priest](#)

, was summoned by

[Pope Damasus](#)

from the East, where he was pursuing sacred lore, to assist at an eclectic, but not ecumenical,

synod at

[Rome](#)

in the year 382. Neither the general council at Constantinople of the preceding year nor that of

[Nice](#)

(365) had considered the question of the Canon. This Roman synod must have devoted itself specially to the matter. The result of its deliberations, presided over, no doubt, by the energetic Damasus himself, has been preserved in the document called "Decretum Gelasii de recipiendis et non recipiendis libris";, a compilation partly of the sixth century, but containing much material

[dating](#)

from the two preceding ones. The Damasan catalogue presents the complete and perfect Canon which has been that of the

[Church](#)

Universal ever since. The

[New Testament](#)

portion bears the marks of Jerome's views.

[St. Jerome](#)

, always prepossessed in favour of Oriental positions in matters Biblical, exerted then a

[happy](#)

influence in regard to the

[New Testament](#)

; if he attempted to place any Eastern restriction upon the

[Canon of the Old Testament](#)

his effort failed of any effect. The title of the

[decree](#)

--"Nunc vero de scripturis divinis agendum est quid universalis Catholica recipiat ecclesia, et quid vitare debeat";--proves that the council drew up a list of

[apocryphal](#)

as well as authentic Scriptures. The Shepherd and the

[false](#)

Apocalypse of Peter now received their final blow. "Rome had spoken, and the nations of the West had heard"; (Zahn). The works of the Latin

[Fathers](#)

of the period--Jerome,

[Hilary of Poitiers](#)

, Lucifer of Sardina,

[Philaster of Brescia](#)

--manifest the changed attitude toward Hebrews, James, Jude, II Peter, and III John.

Fixation in the African and Gallican Churches

It was some little time before the African Church perfectly adjusted its [New Testament](#) to the Damasan Canon. Optatus of Mileve (370-85) does not used Hebrews.

[St. Augustine](#)

, while himself receiving the integral Canon, acknowledged that many contested this Epistle. But

in the Synod of

[Hippo](#)

(393) the great Doctor's view prevailed, and the correct Canon was adopted. However, it is evident that it found many opponents in

[Africa](#)

, since three councils there at brief intervals--

[Hippo](#)

,

[Carthage](#)

, in 393; Third of Carthage in 397; Carthage in 419--found it

[necessary](#)

to formulate catalogues. The introduction of Hebrews was an especial crux, and a reflection of this is found in the first Carthage list, where the much vexed Epistle, though styled of

[St. Paul](#)

, is still numbered separately from the time-consecrated group of thirteen. The catalogues of

[Hippo](#)

and Carthage are identical with the

[Catholic](#)

Canon of the present. In Gaul some

[doubts](#)

lingered for a time, as we find

[Pope Innocent I](#)

, in 405, sending a list of the Sacred Books to one of its

[bishops](#)

,

[Exsuperius of Toulouse](#)

.

So at the close of the first decade of the fifth century the entire [Western Church](#) was in possession of the full Canon of the New Testament. In the East, where, with the exception of the Edessene Syrian Church, approximate completeness had long obtained without the aid of formal enactments, opinions were still somewhat divided on the Apocalypse. But for the

[Catholic](#)

[Church](#)

as a whole the content of the

[New Testament](#)

was definitely fixed, and the discussion closed.

The final process of this Canon's development had been twofold: positive, in the permanent [c](#)
[onsecration](#)
of several writings which had long hovered on the line between canonical and
[apocryphal](#)

; and negative, by the definite elimination of certain privileged apocrypha that had enjoyed here and there a canonical or quasi-canonical standing. In the reception of the disputed books a growing conviction of Apostolic authorship had much to do, but the ultimate criterion had been their recognition as inspired by a great and ancient division of the

[Catholic Church](#)

. Thus, like

[Origen](#)

,

[St. Jerome](#)

adduces the

testimony of the ancients

and

[ecclesiastical](#)

usage in pleading the cause of the Epistle to the Hebrews (*De Viris Illustribus*, lix). There is no sign that the

[Western Church](#)

ever positively repudiated any of the

[New Testament](#)

deuteros; not admitted from the beginning, these had slowly advanced towards a complete acceptance there. On the other hand, the apparently formal exclusion of Apocalypse from the sacred catalogue of certain Greek Churches was a transient phase, and supposes its primitive reception.

[Greek Christianity](#)

everywhere, from about the beginning of the sixth century, practically had a complete and pure New Testament canon. (

See

[EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS](#)

;

[EPISTLES OF ST. PETER](#)

; EPISTLE OF JAMES; EPISTLE OF JUDE; EPISTLES OF JOHN;

[APOCALYPSE](#)

.)

Subsequent history of the New Testament canon To the Protestant Reformation

The [New Testament](#) in its canonical aspect has little history between the first years of the fifth and the early part of the sixteenth century. As was natural in ages when

[ecclesiastical](#)

authority had not reached its modern centralization, there were sporadic divergences from the common teaching and tradition. There was no diffused contestation of any book, but here and there attempts by

[individuals](#)

to
add
something to the received collection. In several ancient Latin [manuscripts](#) the spurious Epistle to the Laodiceans is found among the canonical letters, and, in a few instances, the [apocryphal](#) III Corinthians. The last trace of any Western contradiction within the [Church](#) to the Canon of the New Testament reveals a curious transplantation of Oriental [doubts](#) concerning the Apocalypse. An act of the Synod of Toledo, held in 633, states that many contest the authority of that book, and orders it to be read in the churches under pain of [excommunication](#). The opposition in all probability came from the [Visigoths](#), who had recently been converted from [Arianism](#). The Gothic Bible had been made under Oriental auspices at a time when there was still much hostility to Apocalypse in the East.

The New Testament and the Council of Trent (1546)

This ecumenical synod had to defend the integrity of the [New Testament](#) as well as the Old against the attacks of the [pseudo-Reformers](#),
,
[Luther](#),
, basing his action on dogmatic reasons and the judgment of antiquity, had discarded Hebrews, James, Jude, and Apocalypse as altogether uncanonical.
[Zwingli](#)
could not see in Apocalypse a Biblical book. (Æcolampadius placed
[James](#),
,
[Jude](#),
,
[II Peter](#),
,
[II](#)
and
[III John](#)
in an inferior rank. Even a few
[Catholic](#)
scholars of the
[Renaissance](#)

type, notably

[Erasmus](#)

and Cajetan, had thrown some

[doubts](#)

on the canonicity of the above-mentioned Antilegomena. As to whole books, the

[Protestant](#)

[doubts](#)

were the only ones the Fathers of

[Trent](#)

took cognizance of; there was not the slightest hesitation regarding the authority of any entire document. But the deuterocanonical parts gave the council some concern, viz., the last twelve verses of Mark, the passage about the Bloody Sweat in Luke, and the

Pericope Adulteræ

in John.

[Cardinal Cajetan](#)

had approvingly quoted an unfavourable comment of

[St. Jerome](#)

regarding

[Mark 16:9-20](#)

;

[Erasmus](#)

had rejected the section on the Adulterous Woman as unauthentic. Still, even concerning these no

[doubt](#)

of authenticity was expressed at

[Trent](#)

; the only question was as to the manner of their reception. In the end these portions were received, like the deuterocanonical books, without the slightest distinction. And the clause "cum omnibus suis partibus" regards especially these portions.--For an account of the action of

[Trent](#)

on the Canon, the reader is referred back to the respective section of the article: II.

The Canon of the

[Old Testament](#)

in the

[Catholic](#)

[Church](#)

.

The [Tridentine decree](#) defining the Canon affirms the authenticity of the books to which proper names are attached, without however including this in the definition. The order of books follows that of the [Bull of Eugenius IV](#) ([Council of Florence](#)), except that Acts was moved from a place before Apocalypse to its present position, and Hebrews put at the end of

[St. Paul's](#)

[Epistles](#)

. The

[Tridentine](#)

order has been retained in the official

[Vulgate](#)

and vernacular

[Catholic](#)

Bibles. The same is to be said of the titles, which as a rule are traditional ones, taken from the Canons of Florence and Carthage. (For the bearing of the

[Vatican Council](#)

on the

[New Testament](#)

, see

[Part II above](#)

.)

The New Testament canon outside the Church

The Orthodox Russian and other branches of the Eastern Orthodox Church have a [New Testament](#)

identical with the

[Catholic](#)

. In

[Syria](#)

the

[Nestorians](#)

possess a Canon almost identical with the final one of the ancient East Syrians; they exclude the four smaller

[Catholic Epistles](#)

and Apocalypse. The

[Monophysites](#)

receive all the book. The

[Armenians](#)

have one

[apocryphal](#)

letter

to

the Corinthians and two

from

the same. The

[Coptic-Arabic](#)

Church include with the canonical Scriptures the Apostolic Constitutions and the Clementine Epistles. The

[Ethiopic](#)

New Testament

also contains the so-called "Apostolic Constitutions";

As for Protestantism, the Anglicans and Calvinists always kept the entire New Testament. But for over a century the followers of

Luther

excluded Hebrews, James, Jude, and Apocalypse, and even went further than their master by rejecting the three remaining deuterocanonicals, II Peter, II and III John. The trend of the seventeenth century

Lutheran theologians

was to class all these writings as of

doubtful

, or at least inferior, authority. But gradually the German

Protestants

familiarized themselves with the

idea

that the difference between the contested books of the

New Testament

and the rest was one of degree of

certainty

as to origin rather than of intrinsic character. The full recognition of these books by the

Calvinists

and

Anglicans

made it much more difficult for the

Lutherans

to exclude the

New Testament

deuterocanonicals than those of the Old. One of their writers of the seventeenth century allowed only a theoretic difference between the two classes, and in 1700

Bossuet

could say that all

Catholics

and

Protestants

agreed on the New Testament canon. The only trace of opposition now remaining in German

Protestant

Bibles is in the order, Hebrews, coming with James, Jude, and Apocalypse at the end; the first not being included with the Pauline writings, while James and Jude are not ranked with the

Catholic Epistles

.

The criterion of inspiration (less correctly known as the criterion of

canonicity)

Even those [Catholic theologians](#) who defend Apostolicity as a test for the inspiration of the [New Testament](#) (see above) admit that it is not exclusive of another criterion, viz., [Catholic tradition](#) as manifested in the universal reception of compositions as Divinely inspired, or the ordinary teaching of the [Church](#), or the [infallible](#) pronouncements of ecumenical councils. This external guarantee is the sufficient, universal, and ordinary [proof](#) of inspiration. The unique quality of the Sacred Books is a [revealed dogma](#). Moreover, by its very nature inspiration eludes human observation and is not self-evident, being essentially superphysical and [supernatural](#). Its sole absolute criterion, therefore, is the Holy inspiring Spirit, witnessing decisively to Itself, not in the subjective experience of individual [souls](#), as [Calvin](#) maintained, neither in the [doctrinal](#) and spiritual tenor of [Holy Writ](#) itself, according to [Luther](#), but through the constituted organ and custodian of Its revelations, the [Church](#). All other evidences fall short of the [certainty](#) and finality [necessary](#) to compel the absolute assent of [faith](#). (See [Franzelin](#), "De Divinâ Traditione et Scripturâ"; [Wiseman](#), "Lectures on Christian Doctrine", Lecture ii; also [INSPIRATION](#)

.)

The Wikipedia - is it reliable ? Do we know whose opinions they represent ? In any case, this is a matter of partisanship and those who want to go their way there is no one stopping them, but the tree is known by the fruit it gives. If you look at the modern times and the confusion in the minds of those very people, you should think where you want to put your eggs !

Conclusion:

This is the reason even after 2000 years, The Church founded by Jesus is still active and operating. Is the Holy Spirit still teaching the Church ? Of course he is, even if many so called wise men of the world proclaim, that the Church is 'man - made' institution. The only reason they can say so, is because they are either fallen away, or are not a part of the mission of Christ. Whatever they are Jesus still cares for them and a few years having passed, they too will go to uncontrollable turmoil and will have to turn to some body, and that some body, will be God and he will shed light on them and there is a chance they will come back.