THE CRITERIA EMPLOYED IN DETERMINING THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

by

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INTRODUCTION

A. The Problem

1. The Problem Stated and Explained

A multitude of Christian believers take or have always taken their Bible for granted, putting their faith without question in its Divine merit. Others, however, no less believing, but seeking a more intelligent belief, have asked the questions this study will attempt to answer: Why have some books of the Old Testament been canonized and others rejected? Also, what standards or criteria have been employed in the process of canonization? These and other questions related to them are the burden of this study.

For any Bible scholar, this is a legitimate problem. Professor Ryle speaks of it in this way:

> How were these writings separated from all other Hebrew literature? When did the separation take place? What was the test of Canonicity, which determined, in one case, admission into, in another, exclusion from, the sacred collection? Questions such as these, cannot fail to suggest themselves to every thoughtful Christian mind. Indeed, the literature of the Old Testament is itself so varied in character, that an inquiry into the formation of a Canon, which includes writings so different as Genesis and the Song of Songs, Esther and Isaiah, Judges and the Psalter, needs no justification. It is demanded by the spirit of the age. It is even demanded, as just and necessary, by the requirements of reverent and devout study. 1

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1. Herbert E. Ryle: The Canon of the Old Testament, pp. 2-3.

2. The Significance of the Problem

Christian belief depends largely on what is found in the Holy Bible. Belief in the Saviour depends on that which is found in the New Testament, which in turn depends on that which is found in the Old Testament. If there is doubt concerning the validity of Old Testament books, such doubt may seriously injure faith. Therefore, it is important to gain a thorough knowledge of these books and to draw honest conclusions concerning their worth as the Divine rule of faith and practice.

> The mind hesitates not only as to what reliance to place on certain books, at least of the Old Testament, but also as to what relation the whole bears to the New Testament, in regard to authority and obligation. The use which should be made of much of the Old Testament, must, in this state of mind, necessarily become a matter of doubt and perplexity. 1

3. The Problem Delimited

Firstly, as stated above, the reasons why certain of the writings of the Old Testament and not others were canonized must be determined; secondly, also mentioned above, the criteria used for judging in the establishment of the canon must be isolated; thirdly, a consideration of the worth of border-line documents and the differences between them and canonical works must be seen; and lastly, objective conclusions must be drawn in the face of all the facts as to whether lists have been correct in the past. If the conclusion should be that there has been incorrect analysis of documents in the past, there evolves a fifth step, that of proposing a revised list.

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1. Moses Stuart: Critical History and Defence of the Old Testament Canon, p. 87.

B. The Method and Procedure to be Used

As concisely as is possible, the history of the canon, with close attention to the causes of formation, the reasons for choice, and the criteria of judgment, will be followed, first dealing with the formation of the Hebrew Canon, and next with that of the Christian Canon. Outstanding problems in connection with various documents will be clearly, though of necessity briefly, set forth. In dealing with the Hebrew Canon, a typical comparison will be made of a border-line book to an often-questioned canonical book, in order to examine the process of judging more closely. The third chapter, dealing with the Christian Canon, will present, with the history, a comparison of views concerning canonicity, grouped mainly under one or the other of two prominent Church Fathers. The conclusions drawn from the study will be based on a summary and evaluation of the criteria examined.

Throughout, the study will be historical and factual, avoiding, unless necessary for understanding, any exegesis of documents, rather relating simply, with express attention to criteria employed in canonization, the history of the canon of the Old Testament. The words "canon" or "canonical" will always mean the fixed, definite list of the inspired, sacred Scriptures.

C. The Sources of Data

Volumes giving the history of the Old Testament Canon are a source of general background on the subject. Some of these give detailed explanations of the difficulties confronting some books, the views in the past concerning them, and the significance of such

difficulties. In addition to these and other historical works concerning the religious development, especially as to writings, during the entire period of Canon formation, the actual works of the Jewish and Christian Fathers are available, and have been employed as primary sources of comment and witness.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CRITERIA EMPLOYED BY THE JEWISH FATHERS

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A. Introduction

One point must be asserted before approaching this subject of the criteria employed in determining the Old Testament Canon: viz., the origins of many of the Old Testament books are not clear. Dates attached to these origins vary with different commentators; evidently, then, there will be a problem in presenting this material in a decisive fashion. However, as definitely as is possible, the process of the growth of the Canon as an authoritative compilation will be shown. As the process is explored, methods of selection will be seen, also, the reasons behind the final fixing of the Canon.

> . . .The subject is involved in great obscurity. At the outset, we are confronted by the fact, that no historical account of the formation of the Canon has been preserved. . .The path is thus left open; and, in consequence, the investigation is beset by all the usual obstacles than can be thrown in the way, untrustworthy legend, popular assumption, clever, but baseless speculations. 1

An attempt will be made to present only proven data; facts will be separated from fiction.

This chapter will cover a period of roughly seven hundred years, tracing the formation of the Jewish Canon. The two main opinions regarding its origin will be explored, together with an analysis of the

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 4.

books chosen, the books not chosen, and the standards for choice.

The earliest religious writings and translations, namely, the Mishna, the Targums, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint, will be outlined briefly as to their history and their significance for canonical problems. Finally, the effect of invasion and destruction of the Law in the early second century will be seen, as well as its effect upon the era immediately following.

B. The Beginnings of the Hebrew Canon

1. Causes Leading to its Formation

a. The Ezra-Opinion

Although it is difficult to ascertain exactly the commencement of Canon formation, it is generally agreed to have been started in the period immediately following the Exile, about 458 B. C. Ezra, a scribe well versed in the Law, was sent by Artaxerxes of Persia with gifts for the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, and with orders to guide the people in matters of the Law.[1] One author has named Ezra a "second Moses among his countrymen."[2] The Law was read and explained by him to the people at a great assembly, causing them to repent and rededicate themselves to God. The priestly laws were revived, old rituals re-established; the order of the Scribes, perhaps the institution of the Synagogue were newly established;[3] the Pentateuch was designated once and

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1. Ezra, Chapter 7.
2. Stuart, op. cit., p. 70.
3. William Fairweather: From the Exile to the Advent, p. 83.

for all time as holy,[1] its worth never again being questioned by the Jews.[2]

There are two traditions referring to the formation of the whole Canon, not merely the Pentateuch, to Ezra and his age. The first, a current opinion among early Church Fathers,[3] until about the seventeenth century A. D.,[4] had its source in a fable recorded in II (IV) Esdras, one of the books of the English Apocrypha. There is no mention in Rabbinical literature of the legend.[5]

Esdras (Ezra) prayed that he might be given the Holy Spirit in order to rewrite the Law, which had been destroyed in the Captivity. His prayer was answered; in forty days, with the help of scribes, he accomplished the writing of ninety-four books, then was told by God to publish twenty-four (canonical books), but to hide seventy (extra-canonical books)[6] for the wise men of the people. Since its writings in the first century A.D., this fable has left many with the impression that in some way at least Ezra led in the compilation of the Canon.[7]

> It is of course possible that the legend may have reached them through some other more trustworthy channel. But the language in which they record it makes the inference most probable, that the 4th Book of Esdras is the source from which the stream of an

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1. W. Robertson Smith: The Old Testament in the Jewish Church, pp. 158-159.
2. H. Wheeler Robinson: The Old Testament, Its Making and Meaning, p. 198. The New Judaism after the Exile attached supreme importance to the revelation through Moses. A sharp division in writings was made after the account of his death.
3. Ryle, op. cit., p. 242.
4. Ibid., pp. 249-250.
5. Ibid., pp. 241-242.
6. II (IV) Esdras 14:21-28.
7. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 156.

almost unbroken ecclesiastical tradition directly flows.[1]

Another tradition, also springing from a spurious writing, II Maccabees, states that Nehemiah collected a library including the book of the kings, the prophets, and "letters of kings concerning sacred gifts."[2] It is possible that such collection was begun by Nehemiah or Ezra, although there is no definite record of any books being canonized in a fixed form except for the Pentateuch, which was established as a written covenant.[3]

> Indeed, Ezra and Nehemiah could not have undertaken to make a fixed and closed collection of the prophets, unless they had known that no other prophets were to rise after their time; and we have no reason to believe that they had such knowledge, which could only have come to them by special revelation. [4]

b. The "Great Synagogue"-Opinion

A view held in more honor, arising in the sixteenth century with a conjecture by Elias Levita, a Jewish Scholar of Luther's time,[5] is that the Canon was completed by a body of learned men headed by Ezra, known as the "Great Synagogue." This body is said to have been a ruling council over the Jewish nation for many years following re-establishment in Judea. Among other functions they were said to have

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 242.
2. II Maccabees 2:13.
3. Cf. Robinson, op. cit., pp. 195-197. The exact contents of Ezra's Law is not certain. Robinson feels that the evidence does not warrant identification of it with the whole Pentateuch, but that it was more likely the Priestly history and code, a new Law arising after the Exile. Fairweather: From the Exile to the Advent, op. cit., pp. 74-75. Fairweather's view is that it was, practically, the Pentateuch, plus the Priestly Code as a new feature.
4. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 159.
5. Ibid., p. 158.

arranged the Scriptures, circulated them, and edited the texts (the tasks later taken over by the Sanhedrin.)[1] There is mention in the Talmud, or the collection of Rabbinical writings within this period, concerning the descent of the Pentateuch to these men.

> Moses received the Law on Sinai and delivered it to Joshua; Joshua in turn handed it down to the Elders (not to the seventy Elders of Moses' time but to the later Elders who have ruled Israel, and each of them delivered it to his successor); from the Elders it descended to the Prophets (beginning with Eli and Samuel), and each of them delivered it to his successors until it reached the men of the Great Assembly. The last named originated three maxims: 'Be not hasty in judgment; Bring up many disciples; and, Erect Safeguards for the Law.' [2]

This conception of a "Great Synagogue" sprang from a controversy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as to the origin and date of the Masoretic text. The Ezra-theory was then held in dishonor; therefore, the "Great Synagogue"-theory gained ground. In 1620 John Buxtorf summarized all that was known concerning the "Massorah" in his Tiberias sive Commentarius Masorethicus. In it he alluded to the "Great Synagogue" as his principal source.[3]

Much of the traditional Rabbinical writing concerning the "Great Synagogue" is fanciful and false, yet the possibility of its existence is a valid one.[4] However, no account is given in the Bible of such a body. The only assembly spoken of is the great convocation of the people who heard the Law read by Ezra and his colleagues.[5] No early Jewish testimony before the Talmud associated the formation of

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1. Stuart, op. cit., p. 73.
2. The Babylonian Talmud, edited by Michael L. Rodkinson, Volume I, (IX), Jurisprudence, Tract Aboth, Mishna A, p. 1.
3. Ryle, op. cit., p. 250.
4. Stuart, op. cit., p. 73.
5. Nehemiah 8:1-8.

the Canon with the "Great Synagogue".[1] This is a later expansion.

2. Books Included in the Early Stages of the Hebrew Canon

a. Attitude Toward Books Outside the Law

At the earliest, the Canon consisted only of the Pentateuch, held separate and distinct from the writings of the Prophets or any other writings. In post-exilic writings it is paid exceptional reverence,[2] which has continued to be the case up to the present day. Gradually, between the middle of the fifth century B. C. and the second century B. C., the historical books, which wore a "halo of antiquity",[3] and the Prophets were canonized as well, without their worth being questioned to any extent.[4]

> . . .the Old Testament Books which bear the names of their authors were extant, and were acknowledged by the Jewish nation as genuine works, before and at the period in which Malachi, the last of the Hebrew prophets, lived; . . .Their authority or sanction does not depend on the fact, whether this prophet or that one wrote a particular book, or parts of it, but on the fact that a prophet wrote them.[5]

As canonical, the Prophets could be read in the Synagogue instead of the Torah alone, when the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century brought attacks upon the latter.[6]

Other books, which are now included in the Old Testament, were not recognized by this time as canonical, except in part; they

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 272.
2. Ibid., p. 89.
3. Robinson, op. cit., p. 200.
4. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 93-114.
5. Stuart, op. cit., p. 87.
6. Ryle, op. cit., p. 89.

continued to be held in uncertainty, though in honor, until after the close of the Jewish Era. They were compiled as a group much later than Ezra's time, when the traditions of the Scribes, with their theories and interpretations, were in effect.[1] They, with other writings of the period, were subjected to examination as to whether their narratives or teachings agreed with the Holy Torah. This was the criterion applied to all books, including those later accepted, and those which were forgeries under the names of patriarchs or ancient authorities.[2] However, none of these, true or false in origin, were canonized until much later than the Prophets.

> This conception of the Law caused the other divisions of the Old Testament---Hagiographa and Prophets---to be relatively overlooked. It was impossible to give them due regard when they were ranked as imperfect by the side of the Law. 3

b. Attitude Toward "Lost Books".

In one history of the Canon the author names several books referred to in the Old Testament which have never been found, and which he feels must have been held sacred. These, he states, must be considered in order to make a view of the Hebrew Canon complete.[4] However, it is not known whether they were accepted or rejected in the course of canonization; therefore, all that can be spoken of here is what might have been the attitude of the Scribes toward them if they were among the books considered.

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1. W. R. Smith, op. cit., pp. 167-168.
2. Ibid., p. 169.
3. George H. Gilbert: Interpretation of the Bible, A Short History, pp. 12-13.
4. Stuart, op. cit., p. 159.

The Book of the Constitution of the Kingdom,[1] The Acts of David,[2] A Life of Solomon,[3] The Acts of Rehoboam,[4] A Life of Uzziah,[5] A Life of Hezekiah,[6] and The Lamentations of Jeremiah at Joshua's Death,[7] the "Lost Books" recorded as written by prophets, would be the ones likely to receive sanction. Historical books such as the Book of Jashar,[8] The Book of the Wars of the Lord,[9] The Acts of Solomon,[10] The Two Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah,[11] The Books of the Kings of Israel and Judah,[12] The Book of Jehu,[13] The Book of the Kings of Israel,[14] may also have been accepted, perhaps incorporated into books now within the Canon. Some other books of songs, proverbs, and nature studies, probably the work of Solomon, would be less likely to be accepted,[15] even as other miscellaneous writings failed to be immediately included in the Canon.

This author believes that the manner of appeal to these "Lost Books"[16] shows that they were regarded as authoritative and canonical. Not much mention is made of them in other histories, however.

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1. I Samuel 10:25.
2. I Chronicles 29:29.
3. II Chronicles 9:29.
4. II Chronicles 12:15.
5. II Chronicles 26:22.
6. II Chronicles 32:32.
7. II Chronicles 35:25.
8. Joshua 10:12-13; II Samuel 1:18.
9. Numbers 21:14.
10. I Kings 11:41.
11. I Kings 14:19; 16:5,20,27; 22:39; 15:7.
12. II Chronicles 32:32.
13. II Chronicles 20:34.
14. II Chronicles 33:18.
15. Stuart, op. cit., p. 159.
16. Ibid., p. 163.

c. Arrangement of Books

The Torah was first in the Jewish Scriptures, the order of books being: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.[1] Following these were the historical books, or Former Prophets, in chronological sequence: Joshua, Judges, I,II Samuel as one book, I,II Kings as one book.

Within the books of the Latter Prophets and the Writings the order of sequence was not definitely fixed, or else not known.[2] The three great prophets would chronologically be placed: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, yet Hebrew tradition records them: Jeremiah, Ezekial, Isaiah, as they appear in a large number of manuscripts. The reason for this Talmudic tradition is not known, though many have guessed subject-matter, size, or some other criterion to be the answer.[3] The Minor Prophets, following the other three as one book, called the Book of the Twelve, is approximately chronological:[4] Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

The last section, called the Hagiographa, or Sacred Writings, contains the greatest variation of arrangement in this early history of the Hebrew Canon.[5] Indeed, some of the books included were not fully accepted as canonical until later. The earliest arrangement of these books is found in the Talmud:[6] Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes,

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 83.
2. Ibid., p. 225.
3. Ibid., pp. 225-229.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Talmud, Volume V (XIII), Jurisprudence, Baba Bathra, p. 44.

Song of Songs, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Chronicles. Ruth here is placed before Psalms, as a record of David's ancestry should precede his writings. Job, thought to be the work of Moses, between Psalms and Proverbs, gives priority to the Psalms and does not break the Solomonic group. The others are in order of composition, Solomon's works before Lamentations, and Daniel, Esther, and Ezra representing the beginning, middle, and close of the Exilic period. Chronicles is an appendix to the whole.[1]

Many manuscripts, especially the Spanish, begin the Writings with Chronicles, the other books usually following in this order: Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra,[2] although some slight variations do occur. Another order, the most common, is that of the German manuscripts, arranging them in three groups: the poetical books, Psalms, Proverbs, Job; the Five Rolls or Megilloth (used in certain sacred festivals), Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther; and the narrative books, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles. This is the order which has been found most in printed editions.[3]

3. Problems Involved in its Organization

Any questions of canonical worth referred, as intimated above, to the Writings, since the Law and the Prophets were received speedily as authoritative. Of some of these, such as the Psalms, which

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 230.
2. Ibid., pp. 232-233.
3. Ibid.

were used as the hymnbook of the Temple from David's time, there was little question. The three groups, Law, Prophets, and Psalms, were "inseparably linked with the very existence of the Old Testament Church."[1]

Job also was not questioned at any length because of its ancient character and probably because of its supposed Mosaic authorship. Proverbs, because of its acknowledged Solomonic origin, was placed on the list of holy books together with Job and Psalms. Lamentations passed without much dispute as an appendix to Jeremiah, and Ruth as an appendix to Judges.[2] Most of the books of the Hagiographa, however, had not obtained the full degree of recognition necessary for canonization, some because their treatment of subject matter was different from that of the Prophets, such as Lamentations, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Ruth. Others were questioned because of their late composition, such as Chronicles, Ezra, Esther, and Nehemiah.[3]

> . . .In the case of two others, it is probable that their compilation had not yet been completed at the time when the Canon of the Prophets was concluded; these were the Psalter and the Book of Daniel.[4]

Daniel and Esther were questioned because written on foreign soil, the words of Daniel questioned because he was not actually called a prophet, and also because of the character of the Hebrew, which seems to be a later form.[5] The entire group of Writings, was held to be of inferior inspirational quality to that of the Prophets, even as the latter was held inferior to the Pentateuch.[6]

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1. Smith, op. cit., p. 164.
2. Ibid., p. 170.
3. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 121-122.
4. Ibid., p. 122.
5. Ibid., p. 136.
6. Ibid., p. 122.

Ezra and Nehamiah were doubtless originally part of Chronicles, but were separated, and Chronicles placed after them in order. Chronicles was evidently not as soon accepted as the others, because of late composition and dissimilarities within it to I,II Samuel and I,II Kings in historical matters.[1]

Solomon's Song of Songs, although accepted as to authorship, posed problems of interpretation, as did Ecclesiastes, in its method of dealing with life's problems.[2] The main objection concerning Esther was in connection with the Feast of Purim, the origins and observances of which are explained in the book. This feast was not commanded in the Law; also, as later disputed, it fell on the same day as the commemorization festival of the revolt of the Maccabees, who were hated by the ruling Pharisees; then too, the fast connected with the Feast conflicted with the idea of the festival. Another objection was that the name of God was not employed in the entire book.[3]

The four books, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Esther, and Chronicles were probably accepted later than the other Hagiographa,[4] actually not canonized until the first century A.D.[5]

4. Rigidity of Canon

The Law and the Prophets have remained the same within the

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1. Stuart, op. cit., p. 138.
2. Ryle, op. cit., p. 138.
3. Ibid., pp. 139-140.
4. Ibid., p. 142.
5. Ibid., p. 6. It has been suggested that the Canon contains only the relics of Hebrew literature, those surviving the "ravages of time". Late additions prove this assumption to be false.

Canon since their first inclusion, except that the order of the Prophets has been changed somewhat; also, the Hagiographa have been interspersed among the prophetical books.

At the earliest stages of the Canon, however, as has been shown, the Law and the Prophets alone were fixed; the Hagiographa, with the possible exceptions of Psalms, Job, and Proverbs, were not rigidly included.

> . . .The books of the Hagiographa were not continuously read in the Synagogues. They were not, therefore, estimated by the same test of public usage. It would be possible, I should think for a book to hover a long time in suspense, having been admitted into the sacred list at a time of popular religious enthusiasm, but having afterwards incurred suspicion, in consequence of doubts as to its orthodoxy, raised by the factious jealousy or officious zeal of learned scribes. But, once admitted, a book was never likely to be excluded. The dread of novelty, which protected the Canon against encroachments, helped also to appease the resentment against writings that had already received a quasi-recognition. The fact of a book having once been received into the list of the national Scripture never failed to outweigh, in the long run, the scruples that were felt at its doubtful orthodoxy. 1

Another writer echoes this feeling, even more emphatically.

> . . .Before the formation of the prophetic Canon anonymous prophetic writings could gain currency and acceptance on the ground of their inherent worth, but, when once the prophetic Canon was closed, no book of a prophetic character could gain canonization as such. . . To this third division of the Canon books were admitted down to A.D. 100, and the last were Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther. Daniel was admitted to this third Canon at some period in the second century B.C., in the belief that it was written by the ancient worthy of that name, but not among the prophets; for the prophetic Canon was closed. The example of Daniel was followed by Jewish apocalyptic down to the thirteenth century A.D. It was pseudonymous, and it remained pseudonymous; for the Law was supreme, inspiration was officially held to be dead, and the Canon was closed. Moreover, all the great Jewish Apocalypses which were written before A.D. 100, and which carried on the mystical and spiritual side of religion as opposed to the legalistic, Judaism dropped and banned after its breach

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1. Ibid.

with Christianity, just as it dropped and banned the Greek translation of the Old Testament. 1

C. The Samaritan Pentateuch

The Samaritans were a composite race, dwelling in the northern part of Palestine, which was separated at the division of the two Jewish kingdoms after Solomon's reign. The capital of the northern kingdom was Samaria, from whence the name of the people arose. It was incorporated into the Assyrian Empire in the eighth century B.C.; inter-marriage resulted,[2] and a new population was formed. Although they retained the worship of Jehovah, it was not in a pure form, for it included foreign practices.[3] When the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple there was begun,[4] the Samaritans offered help, but it was refused. They then built their own temple at Mount Gerezim, near Shechem, with the result that everlasting enmity sprang up between them and the Jews.[5] It is thought to have been a grandson of the Jewish high priest who established the Samaritan worship, having himself been expelled by Nehemiah for his marriage into the Samaritan group.[6]

The Jews overcame Samaria and destroyed the rival temple, but did not demolish the barriers between the two peoples. With the establishment of the Romans in Palestine, the Samaritans remained an Israelite group, but preserved their own traditions and worship.[7]

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1. R. H. Charles: Religious Development Between the Old Testament and the New Testament, pp. 32-44.
2. F. F. Bruce: The Books and the Parchments, pp. 121-122.
3. Fairweather, op. cit., p. 44.
4. Ezra 4:1-3.
5. Bruce, loc. cit.
6. Ryle, op. cit., p. 92.
7. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 122-123.

The Canon of the Samaritans consisted only of the Pentateuch, which was identical with the Jewish Torah except for some comparatively unimportant differences.[1] What differences there were sprang from the fundamental points at issue between the two nations; the importance of Mount Gerezim was emphasized as much as possible.[2] Their Pentateuch is an important witness, however, to the feeling concerning the holiness of the Law. Also, it testifies to the fact that the Law formed the only existent Canon at the time of the establishment of the Samaritan worship after the Exilic period.[3]

In addition to the five books of the Law, the Samaritans did possess a book of Joshua, not regarded as canonical, and a chronicle of their history from the time of Joshua to the Christian Era. They also preserved a Targum or translation of the Pentateuch in Aramaic, written in the Christian Era, and an eleventh or twelfth century Arabic version.[4]

D. The Mishna, Midrash, and the Talmud

1. Definition of Terms

The Mishna includes the Oral Law, or the ancient Jewish traditional learning, being divided into three forms: (a) Midrash, or exposition of Scripture, particularly of the Pentateuch; (b) Halakoth, traditional statements of law; (c) Haggadoth, Scriptural expositions not pertaining to law, but to proverbs, parables and

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 91.
2. Bruce, op. cit., p. 125.
3. Ryle, op. cit., p. 93.
4. Bruce, op. cit., p. 126.

narratives.[1]

> Mishna signifies specifically: (1) the entire content of the traditional law as far as it had been developed by the end of the second post-Christian century; (2) the sum of the teachings of any one of the teachers active up to that date (Tannaim); (3) a single statement of law, in which sense the term halakah was also employed; (4) any collection of such statements, as when reference is made to 'Mishnayoth Gedoloth', the great Mishna collections, e.g., the Mishna of Hoshaiah, of Bar Kappara; (5) par excellence, by Mishna is meant the collection made by Judah ha-Nasi ('Rabbi') which, however, in the form in which it has come down to us, contains many additions and modifications. [2]

The Mishna is included within the Talmud, with adjoining discussions. The Babylonian Talmud follows the Mishna with the discussions of scholars residing in Babylonia after the Fall of Jerusalem, the Palestinian or Jerusalemitic Talmud includes those of scholars resident in Palestine.[3]

Baraitha signifies those teachings not included in the Mishna of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi. Some of these are included in the Babylonian Talmud and not in the Palestinian, and vice versa.[4] The teachers of the Mishnaic Age were called the Tannaim. The Gemara are the "second constituent part of the Talmud",[5] or those discussions engaged in by the Amoraim, the later teachers of the post-Mishnaic Age.[6]

2. Causes Leading to its Formation

The Israelites in captivity were separated from the center

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1. Hermann L. Strack: Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, p. 3.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 5.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 4.
6. Ibid.

of their sacrificial worship, cut off from all the symbols of their faith. Still, they believed the Prophets that if they searched wholeheartedly for God, their restoration would come about. They were led particularly to study the Law, as to God's dealings in the past, and the reasons for all that had happened to them. Also, with the cessation of prophecy and the spoken word, and with the work of Ezra and his colleagues after the Exile, the Law took on renewed meaning for the lives of the people. However, their changing conditions required new explanations of old regulations, or sometimes new regulations, which would make the Law really effective in all phases of their living.[1]

The Law was translated into the Aramaic of the people, and read three times weekly, with explanations.[2] To meet changing conditions with their resulting problems, new interpretations of all parts of the Law were sought.

> The Torah (here in the wider sense betokening the collection of the holy scriptures of the Old Testament), moreover, meant to the Jews the sum and substance of all that is good and beautiful, of all that is worth knowing. Hence it ought to be possible to apply it to all conditions of life, it should comfort, exhort, and edify, and it must be shown further that it contained everything, even though germinally. 3

This was the beginning of the Oral Law, as these interpretations, precepts, arguments, etc., were called, in order to distinguish them from the written Torah. Some of these, the Halakoth, were strict interpretation; some of the Haggadoth, however, were exaggerated, trivial, or fanciful.[4] One sentence in the Talmud reads, "Ben Bag-Bag

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1. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
2. Leo Auerbach, Editor and Translator: The Babylonian Talmud In Selection, p. 7.
3. Strack, op. cit., p. 102.
4. Auerbach, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

"Ben Bag-Bag said: 'Turn it, and turn it again (the Torah), for everything can be found therein. . .'"[1]

These additions to the Torah, not meant as canonical, were handed down orally during a long period. There is said to have been a law among the Scribes who composed all this material that none of it could be written down, whether it be Halakoth or Haggadoth. When this occurred and whether it occurred it not known certainly; there are testimonies pro and con as to the theory.[2] Opinions are also divergent on the actual time of compilation of the Mishna, and, subsequently of the Talmud.[3] Many of the sages did commit parts of the Mishna to writing, or attempt compilation. It was not fully completed, most authorities feel, until the second century A. D.[4] Perhaps the formation of the New Testament was an incentive to the Jewish leaders to codify the Oral Law as a supplement to the Old Testament.[5] Rabbi Yehuda (Judah), the master editor, was at that time president of the Sanhedrin (the body developed from the old Scribal leadership). He divided the mass of material into six sections, dealing with agriculture, festivals, women, civil and criminal law, sacrifices, cleanliness, and purifications, and the sections into sixty-four tractates.[6]

The defining of the Mishnaic text did not stop the study of the Law. The Talmud includes later writings and other compilations.[7]

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1. Talmud, Volume I (IX), Jurisprudence, Tract Aboth, Mishna FF. p. 133.
2. Strack, op. cit., pp. 12-17.
3. Ibid., p. 18.
4. Frants Buhl: Canon and Text of the Old Testament, p. 25.
5. Strack, loc. cit.
6. Auerbach, op. cit., pp. 13-14.
7. Ibid., loc. cit.

The Palestinian Talmud was finished in the fourth century A. D., editor unknown,[1] and had little effect on Jewish life as a whole,[2] compared to the Babylonian Talmud, which was finished a century later.[3] There has even been a strong tendency to accept the Babylonian as Law,[4] although its contents are a "literary wilderness",[5] and not meant as sacred law. The aim of the Oral Law was rather to provide a help, a guide, a supplement to the existing Scripture.

3. The Canon in the Oral Law

In the Mishna, the succession of the Law is traced to the men of the "Great Synagogue".[6] This is traditional, not a proven historical fact. It indicates, however, the belief of most Rabbis concerning the commencement of the Canon.

Books included in the Canon are listed in Tract Baba Bathra, together with their supposed authors: the Pentateuch, the Prophets (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and the Twelve) and the Hagiographa (Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, and Chronicles).[7]

The Hagiographa are discussed at various places in the Mishna as to their worth, especially Esther, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of

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1. W. O. E. Oesterley, and G. H. Box: The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue, p. 65.
2. Auerbach, op. cit., p. 17.
3. Oesterley and Box, loc. cit.
4. Auerbach, loc. cit.
5. The Talmud, Translated by H. Polano, p. 5.
6. Talmud, Volume I (IX), Jurisprudence, Tract Aboth, Mishna A., p. 1.
7. Talmud, Volume V (XIII), Baba Bathra, p. 44.

Songs. A special treatise speaks of "defilement of the hands" as a quality of Holy Books, including a debate concerning the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes.[1]

> Without an explanation of the phrase 'defile the hands', Jewish criticisms upon the canonicity of books of Scripture would, in deed, convey no intelligible meaning; but, provided with this explanation, we gain a conception both of the freedom with which questions of canonicity were discussed, and of the finality with which custom had practically decided the compass of the Canon before the Rabbinic discussions in the first and second centuries A. D. 2

Mention of the Hagiographa in the Mishna usually take the form of arguments, showing that they were not unconditionally accepted as were the Law and the Prophets.

E. The Targums

The Targums, or Aramaic translations of the Old Testament Scriptures, "occupy a special place in the post-biblical religious literature of the Jews, because they embody the traditional exegesis of the Scriptures".[3] They were necessary in the religious awakening following the Exile, due to the gradual lessening of the use of Hebrew as a spoken language.[4] A special Church position was developed, that of the Targoman, or Meturgeman, who gave an oral paraphrase in Aramaic after each verse of the reading of the Law, and after each third verse of the Prophets. This man usually was a teacher employed by the Synagogue for biblical instruction.[5]

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1. Talmud, Section VI, Purifications, Tract LXII, Yadaiim, quoted in Bernhard Pick: The Talmud, What It Is, p. 64.
2. Ryle, op. cit., p. 187.
3. Oesterley and Box, op. cit., p. 44.
4. Bruce, op. cit., p. 128.
5. Oesterley and Box, op. cit., p. 45.

Although not at first written down, these paraphrases did appear in writing years later. The two which are considered the most authoritative are: a Targum of the Pentateuch, thought to be the work of one Onkelos, associated with Gamaliel II, and written late in the second century A. D. (for he appears to follow the careful Greek translation of Aquila.)The second is a Targum on the Prophets, attributed to Jonathan ben Uzziel, a pupil of Hillel, written probably about the same time as that of Onkelos.[1] There were many others, or fragments, some earlier than the two above mentioned, covering all of the books of the Canon except Daniel and Ezra, which were themselves largely Aramaic. They differ in character and worth, some literal, others more paraphrastic.[2] Targums of the Law were apparently prepared for public use[3] (which usage in the synagogues ceased almost entirely from the ninth century A. D.), while those of the Hagiographa were for private use.[4]

The Targums are important for their light thrown on Jewish theology, also as an index to Jewish exegesis.[5] They have little to do with the formation of the Canon as such.

F. The Septuagint

1. Causes Leading to its Formation

The conquests of Alexander the Great, and especially the

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1. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Volume V, J. E. H. Thomson,Editor: "Targum", pp. 2911-2913.
2. Oesterley and Box, op. cit., pp. 45-46.
3. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 117-118.
4. Oesterley and Box, op. cit., p. 45.
5. Ryle, op. cit., p. 118.

founding of Alexandria in 332 B. C., resulted in a great influence of Hellenistic culture upon the Jews. A large number of Jews settled in Egypt after the destruction of Jerusalem,[1] growing in numbers and prestige. Tradition holds that under the government of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who was a renowned patron of literature, the translation of their Scriptures into Greek was accomplished. He had been advised, the tradition goes, concerning their worth as an addition to his library.[2] The action was probably more directly due to the great need for a translation. The Jews had gradually rejected their mother-tongue and adopted Greek.[3]

> A Greek Targum was as necessary in Alexandria as an Aramaic Targum was in Palestine and Babylonia. And the internal evidence of the Septuagint suggests that this Greek version of the Old Testament was made in the first instance to meet the requirements of the Jewish population of Alexandria, and not to grace the royal library.[4]

The exact conditions under which the Septuagint was composed are not known.[5] One tradition is that Ptolemy sent to Jerusalem for elders, who in seventy-two days completed the translation of the Pentateuch, thus giving it the name "Seventy". (Later the name came to designate the translation of the whole Old Testament)[6]

Fairweather, however, deduces from a study of the linguistic

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1. Jeremiah 41-44.
2. Cf. Bruce, op. cit., p. 99. A letter, dating about 100 B. C., by Aristeas, a court official to his brother, describes how Demetrius, Ptolemy's librarian, arouses the governor's interest in the Torah. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 99. Smith considers this letter a forgery, but having bases in current tradition.
3. Rudolf Kittel: The Religion of the People of Israel, p. 196.
4. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 142-143.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., pp. 141-142.

peculiarities of the text that it was prepared by Alexandrians, not Palestinians.[1]

The translation of the Pentateuch was fairly authoritative, done carefully, and in a unified manner. The remainder of the books cannot be given an exact time of translation, nor can they be assigned to definite translators.[2]

> The books were translated by different hands, and at different times. Versions of the same book competed, as it were, for general acceptance. Those were accepted which found most general favour. With the possible exception of the Pentateuch, the version contains simply the renderings of books which, having in course of time most recommended themselves to Jewish residents in Alexandria, outlived, because they were preferred to, all other renderings. 3

The author of the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, one of the English Apocrypha, writing about 132 B. C., speaks of the "Law, the Prophets, and the other books of the fathers" as current in Greek. It would seem, then, that the version had been completed at that time.[4]

The inclusion of some of the Apocryphal books within the Alexandrian Canon is another indication of the time of complete compilation. Most of these books came into being in Egypt, during the cultural sway of Alexandria.[5] The inclusion of these books is the next point to be considered.

2. Books Included

The Septuagint differs from the Hebrew Bible in arrangement

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1. Fairweather, From the Exile to the Advent, op. cit., p. 111.
2. Ryle, op. cit., p. 145.
3. Ibid., loc. cit.
4. W. R. Smith, pp. 99-100.
5. Stuart, op. cit., p. 261.

and in books included. There is no tripartite division of the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa, but first the Law and the historical books, next the poetical and didactic books, and lastly, the Prophets.[1]

> The Alexandrine version disregarded the Hebrew tripartite division, and generally endeavored to group the books, according to their subject-matter, into the divisions of narrative, poetical, and prophetical books. But no uniformity of order seems to have been maintained.[2]

This changed order has been felt by some to be superior to the Hebrew tradition.

> . . .It has been suggested. . .that the Septuagint preserves an order of the Old Testament books which may antedate the canonical order of the Hebrew Bible, as in some respects it keeps books in their original relationship, which has been dislocated in the Hebrew Bible. [3]

In addition to these changes, manuscripts and editions of the Septuagint show Apocryphal writings interspersed throughout the books of the Hebrew Canon, not precisely the same as our English Apocrypha, however. There are three classes of additional writings: (a) books translated from the Hebrew; (b) books originally written in Greek; (c) books based on translations of canonical books, fabulously expanded.[4]

The number of Apocryphal books is not always the same in all copies, indicating a still flexible, rather than a fixed canonical list.[5]

3. Reasons Included

The inference that the Alexandrine Canon was broader than

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1. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 133.
2. Ryle, op. cit., p. 213.
3. Bruce, op. cit., p. 104.
4. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 134.
5. Ibid., pp. 135-136.

the Hebrew, because of the presence of Apocrypha, is not necessarily valid.[1] Professor Stuart states: "Now there is not the least intimation from any quarter that either any new books or new ritual of worship were ever introduced here."[2]

The differences existing among manuscripts of the Septuagint are proof enough to show that there was no fixed Canon. Also, since all the available manuscripts are of Christian origin, and include Apocrypha, it does not necessarily follow that the Synagogue ascribed them full canonicity, even though it is evidenced that the early Christian Church held them in honor.[3]

The few direct witnesses in regard to the Alexandrine position do not show that canonical value was placed upon Apocrypha, although they speak of the other books in the same way as the Jews of Palestine.[4] There was in Alexandria, however, a theory of judgment different from that which decided the Palestinian Canon. The theory prevalent was that inspiration was not confined to any one particular period, but that any truly wise, virtuous man may be inspired by the Spirit. This way of thinking doubtless contributed to the smoothing down of sharp barriers between canonical and non-canonical.[5]

> . . .Perhaps, in Alexandria, no formal list was recognized. Be that as it may, the line of demarcation was apt to become very slight; and the prevalent liberal tone seems to have led men not only to tolerate variation, not only to welcome, along with the recognized books of Scripture, such writings as 'Ecclesiasticus' and 'Wisdom',

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 146.
2. Stuart, op. cit., p. 260.
3. W. R. Smith, loc. cit.
4. Buhl, op. cit., p. 44.
5. Ibid.

> but even to approve and license the addition of Haggadic legends and amplifications in the Greek versions of Job, Daniel, and Esther. 1

It is possible that the position of the Apocrypha among the other books was not as of equal worth, but only because there was a special respect paid to them in the early Christian Church and also in the Synagogues. They were probably read for ethical help or for worship services.[2]

> Although we know the Alexandrine translation of the Bible only in the form in which it has been used by Christians, it scarcely admits of doubt that this form was virtually in accordance with that current among the Alexandrine Jews, seeing that the Christians would certainly not have introduced a canon which had been wholly rejected by the Jews who had intercourse with them. Naturally, however, this does not prevent our regarding it as possible that the Christians may occasionally have enlarged the Jewish collection by the adoption of certain books. 3

The only portion of the Septuagint translated at the same time and by the same authors was the Pentateuch, which alone was authoritatively canonical.[4] It was considered so for the same reasons as the Palestinian Pentateuch, being Supreme Law, written by the great Moses, who heard it spoken directly by God. The Prophets and Hagiographa were finally adopted (in the compiling of surviving, preferred versions) for the same reasons as the Jewish, viz., for their consistency with the teachings of the Law, for their ancient character, their authorship, and their consistency with the progressive revelation of God to His people.

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 170.
2. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 137.
3. Buhl, op. cit., p. 45.
4. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

> The great mass of the Old Testament books gained their canonical position because they commended themselves in practice to the experience of the Old Testament Church and the spiritual discernment of the godly in Israel. For the religious life of Israel was truer than the teachings of the Pharisees. The Old Testament religion was the religion of revelation, and the highest spiritual truths then known did not dwell in the Jewish people without producing, in practical life, a higher type of religious experience, and a truer insight into spiritual things than was embodied in the doctrines of the Scribes. [1]

4. Significance of the Septuagint Translation

As a guide to the date of origin or to any fixed list of the Canon, the Septuagint has little value, as witnessed by its variant forms and flexible arrangements.[2] To the Jews in Palestine it was not an important collection, except for the Pentateuch, which was at first adopted as a valid, standard text.[3]

The Jews lost interest in the Septuagint when Christianity adopted it. A revised standard text for the Hebrew Bible, the consonantal text which formed the basis for the later Masoretic text, was established about 100 A. D. Its appearance further caused the Jews to reject the Septuagint and any other former translations. (However, the Septuagint text provided for the protection of an early text, when manuscripts of the Law were destroyed at the time of invasion in Palestine by Antiochus Epiphanes).[4] A new Greek translation of the revised standard text was made by the Jewish proselyte Aquila, and the Septuagint repudiated.[5]

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1. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 148.
2. Ryle, op. cit., p. 145.
3. Bruce, op. cit., p. 144.
4. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 83.
5. Bruce, op. cit., p. 146.

The importance of the Septuagint to Christians, however, was and is much more. Historically, it represents an underlying Hebrew text a thousand years older than the Masoretic, providing a useful help to existing manuscripts.[1] Another important factor is that it gave to later ages the books of the Apocrypha.[2] Even more important, it provived the means of carrying the Bible to all parts of the world, arising at a time when Greek was spoken everywhere.

> The religion of Israel, which hitherto had only existed in a language familiar to few; was now translated into a world-language. Suddenly the way was open for its ideas to penetrate into the consciousness of the whole educated world, and this too at the very moment when the victories of Alexander had made the whole world acceptable to Hellenism. . .The Septuagint thus becomes of importance in world-history. 3

G. Effect of the Invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes Upon the Canon

It has been mentioned before[4] that the use of the Prophets for synagogue reading was begun at the time of the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes about 175 B. C., the Prophets thus gaining further canonical status. Antiochus caused all manuscripts of Scripture, especially of the Pentateuch, to be torn and burned.[5] Under his tyranny the rebellion of the Maccabees broke out. In a questionable letter attached to II Maccabees it is recorded that Judas Maccabaeus collected the writings which had been scattered.[6]

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1. Ibid.
2. W. O, E. Oesterley: The Books of the Apocrypha, p. 60.
3. Kittel, op. cit., p. 196.
4. Ante, p. 6.
5. Cf. I Maccabees 1:56,57; The Works of Flavius Josephus, edited by William Whiston: Wars of the Jews, Book I, Chapter I,2, p. 554.
6. II Maccabees 2:14.

The attack on Scripture actually insured its protection, for it was seen that the enemy felt the Hebrew religion to be dependent upon its Books.[1] In the religious revival following the Maccabees, these books of the Hagiographa which had survived the persecution were held to be virtually canonized, and their preservation insured.[2] The Prophets had been listed, probably, prior to that time.

H. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has traced the history of the Jewish Canon from the Exile to the Maccabean Era. The origins of the Canon were explored, as to whether it was begun under Ezra's leadership or by men of a "Great Synagogue". Neither is definitely known to be the true origin, nor are any certain times, places, or circumstances of Canon beginnings known. However, the pre-eminence and sacredness of the Law was shown to be proclaimed in earnest after the Exile, under Ezra's guidance, and written records produced.

Any writings of the period following the Exile were examined, and received or rejected accordingly, as to their consistency with the Pentateuch. Several "Lost Books", referred to as authoritative in the Old Testament, were mentioned as books which probably would have gained canonical status had they been existent at the time of collection.

The basic tripartite division of the Scriptures came to be the Law, determined first, the Prophets, consisting of the historical books

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 125.
2. Ibid., p. 128.

and the Major and Minor Prophets, and the Writings, including poetical, didactic, and historical books, the earliest arrangement of which as a canonical group is found in the Babylonian Talmud.

Any problems in the organization of the earliest Canon were seen to be in the Writings, which actually were not fully accepted, due to late composition or questionable subject matter, until the Christian Era. However, any book once included was firmly fixed as canonical. The Samaritan Pentateuch, containing the same books of the Law as the Jewish, witnesses to the supreme position and importance of those books in the Canon.

In examining the history of the Mishna and of other religious writings, it was seen that exposition, interpretation, and sometimes expansion of the Scriptures came to be a common practice. A vast mass of literature developed, although it was never afforded canonicity. Its main purpose was to show the Law as relevant to all phases of living. In the Mishna, the Canon is said to consist in the three divisions, Law, Prophets, Writings; some of the arguments concerning the Writings are given.

The Bible gradually was translated into other tongues, the Aramaic for use in post-exilic times, and later the Greek, in the Septuagint translation. The former, or the Targums, had little to do with the Canon as such: the latter presented some changes, in the order of books and in books included. Apocryphal books, never before admitted by Jews, were interspersed throughout the Bible. There is no direct evidence, however, that the Alexandrians felt any differently from the Palestinians concerning them. The Septuagint influenced

Christian Fathers more than the Jews, who maintained their tripartite arrangement and their fixed list.

Lastly in this chapter, the effect of the invasion of Antiochus Epiphanes was seen, in that with the destruction of manuscripts of the Law, the Prophets came to be read in the synagogues, which increased their status. Also, any books surviving persecution were raised in honor and virtually canonized.

Conclusions which may be drawn as to criteria of canonicity are these: firstly, the Law held a supreme position as the words spoken "face to face" by God to Moses; secondly, any book included after the Law had to be consistent with its teachings; thirdly, the works of prophets were not questioned, nor works exhibiting the authority of age; fourthly, the books playing a vital part in the religious life and faith of the people were acknowledged; fifthly, books written in Hebrew were preferred above those in Aramaic or Greek; sixthly, the books destroyed by an enemy were felt to be worthy because of the store set by them on the enemy's part; lastly, the books surviving persecution came to be canonized because of the worth they were felt to have in order to survive.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CRITERIA EMPLOYED BETWEEN THE JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN ERAS

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A. Introduction

It has been mentioned before in this study[1] that the growth of a fixed Canon of the Old Testament among the Jews was in many ways an indefinite thing. No precise information concerning compilations or compilers of books is to be found. Driver states,

> . . .On the authorship of the Books of the O. T., as on the completion of the Canon of the O. T., the Jews possess no tradition worthy of real credence or regard, but only vague and uncertain reminiscences, intermingled often with idle speculations. 2

The period "between the Testaments" is the one in which it is generally believed that the Jewish Canon was officially defined. This rather indefinitely outlined era includes those years following the invasion by Antiochus Epiphanes, about 175 B. C. to the rise of Christianity. The Jewish Era may be said to have come to an end with the Fall of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, or soon thereafter, even as the Christian Era was beginning. It was mainly because of the rapid rise of Christianity that the Jamnia Council was held in A. D. 90 to form a definite list of Jewish Scriptures.[3]

Even though this period was the one in which the Jewish Canon

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1. Ante, p. 1.
2. S. R. Driver: An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, p. 1.
3. Post, pp. 54-55.

was made official, exact facts are lacking; it may only be conjectured on the basis of the testimony of important witnesses as to what the final processes of canonization were. H. H. Rowley writes,

> . . .Like the growth of a tree which passes imperceptibly from the stage of a sapling that might be transplanted to the stage when it is impossible to remove it, save by felling, canonicity grew imperceptibly. For a new work to secure a place in a given collection became progressively more difficult, though we cannot define with precision the point when it became impossible. And the different collections which began their life at different times, reached and passed that indefinable point at different times. 1

The witnesses to the fixing of the Canon to be consulted in this chapter are Jesus, the Son of Sirach, Philo Judaeus, and Flavius Josephus. From them it may be more or less established the extent of the Canon and the attitudes prevalent concerning it.

Following this brief examination of testimony the qualities of two books will be considered: the one, Ecclesiastes, a disputed canonical book, and the other, Ecclesiasticus, a non-canonical book which nevertheless enjoyed much favor. These will be evaluated as to their canonical worth, in an attempt to ascertain what qualities within the books, as well as what standards of canonicity were employed, caused one to be preferred over another. This evaluation will serve as a typical example of the disputes concerning several books in the last days of canon formation.

The importance to the Canon of the Council of Jamnia in 100 A. D. will next be seen. Then, an inquiry will be made into the rigidity of the Jewish Canon after its official closing. A summary of testimony will follow, with conclusions as to criteria of canonicity demonstrated within this period.

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1. Harold H. Rowley: The Growth of the Old Testament, p. 173.

B. The Testimony of Important Witnesses

1. Jesus, the Son of Sirach

a. Authorship, Date, and Type of Testimony

Jesus, the Son of Sirach, or as he is called by some, Ben Sira, was evidently the leading scribe in Jerusalem during the time in which he wrote.[1] At least he was one of the leading wise men, that class of sages already recognized in the time of Jeremiah.[2] His work, called Ecclesiasticus, or Sirach, or The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, the most favored book of the Apocrypha,[3] was accomplished in the first quarter of the second century B. C. Most scholars place its writing about 180 B. C.[4] It must have been written, in any case, between 200 and 175 B. C., just preceding the Maccabean Era, since there is no mention within it of the events of that period.[5]

The book was written originally in Hebrew, later translated into Greek by the grandson of Ben Sira, about 132 B. C.[6] In the original the Sadducean standpoint, as that of the ruling body of sages, was evidenced.[7] Later it underwent a comprehensive, deliberate revision in the interests of Pharisaism, which was gradually gaining popularity. Divergencies in the Greek texts translated from the Hebrew infer this recension.

Shortly after 1896 fragments of a Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus

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1. Edgar J. Goodspeed: The Story of the Apocrypha, p. 23.
2. R. H. Charles, editor: The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Volume I, p. 268.
3. Charles C. Torrey: The Apocryphal Literature, p. 93.
4. Cf. Ibid., Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Volume I, op. cit., p. 273, Kittel, op. cit., p. 208.
5. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 20.
6. Torrey, loc. cit.
7. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Volume I, op. cit., p. 283.

were found in the storeroom of a Cairo synagogue. They were hailed by many to be surviving portions of the original.[1] However, upon further study, the text, independent of Greek and Syriac influence, appeared to be the revised Pharisaic version,[2] for there was no impression of the masterful original Hebrew evidently behind the Greek translation, but rather what appeared to be a later Hebrew.[3]

The translator, who used the Septuagint as a lexicon, was most familiar with the Greek Pentateuch, less so with a Greek translation of the Prophets.[4] He did not seem to know a translation of the Hagiographa, although in his Prologue he mentioned that all the books cherished by the Jews were existent in Greek at his time.[5]

Because of the wide and many differences in the Hebrew fragments and the Greek translation of Ecclesiasticus, it is probable that there existed quite early, during the last century B. C., two types of the Greek text: the Original, or Primary, and a Secondary translation.[6]

b. Sum and Significance of Testimony

In the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, the grandson of Ben Sira speaks of his grandfather as having been a diligent student of "The Law, the Prophets, and the other Books of Our Fathers", and again, of "The Law, the Prophets, and the rest of the books". By these references it may be concluded that since the beginning of the second century B. C. in Alexandria the Law and the Prophets were fixed collections.[7] Three

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1. Torrey, op. cit., p. 97.
2. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 331.
3. Torrey, op. cit., p. 97.
4. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 287.
5. Bruce, op. cit., p. 101.
6. Charles, op. cit., p. 281.
7. Ryle, op. cit., p. 108.

divisions are shown, it is true, but it is equally possible to deduce that the third section was definite or indefinite.[1]

Most scholars conclude by this that the Hagiographa was indefinite[2] as a group, although held in honor.[3] However, the way in which all three divisions are quoted or referred to in the work puts a clear distinction between Scripture and other literature.[4]

Another opinion concerning the author's reference to the Scriptures is that he has assigned no place of honor to any one collection of books, but all three groups are treated as one category, not yet canonical.[5] The reason for this opinion is that Ben Sira seems to place himself in a direct line with the prophets,[6] adding his contribution to the other sacred books. Indeed, the way in which he determines to make that contribution is evidence that the Hagiographa at least had "not yet been severed from the religious literature of that present age by the deep gulf of a canonical ordinance."[7] Doubtless, however, some books of the time were pre-eminent. There was the idea of a Canon, even if there were no authoritative lists.[8]

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1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 101.
2. Stuart, op. cit., p. 215. Others, however, feel that "the rest of the books", indicates a definite, well-known remainder in that the tripartite division involved a special relation of each part to the other. This would necessitate definite limits to each part.
3. Cf. Ryle, op. cit., p. 119; Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 316; Buhl, op. cit., p. 14.
4. Buhl, op. cit., p. 16.
5. Oesterley, op. cit., pp. 167-169.
6. Ecclesiasticus 24:33.
7. Buhl, op. cit., p. 14.
8. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 169.

In Chapter I it was seen that the Pentateuch was more probably fixed than indefinite, from the fourth century downward.[1] Ben Sira places full supremacy in the Torah, as comprising all revelation. His concept of the Pentateuch as a doctrine of "pre-existent and eternal law"[2] witnesses to its undisputed honor among the sages and among the people.

The Prophets also were probably fixed before the second century B. C.[3] Ben Sira in Ecclesiasticus 44-50 proceeds in lengthy eulogizing to recite a list of the famous men of Israel. He does not mention Ezra, Job, Daniel, Esther, or Mordecai, which indicates a line of separation between them and the accepted Prophets.[4] The Twelve, mentioned in the recital as a group, are shown to be an independent collection.[5] These chapters, spoken of as the nearest approach at this early time to a catalogue of the sacred books,[6] appears to consider a full prophetic Canon, even as it is known today.[7] The Hagiographa, as is seen by his silence concerning Ezra, Daniel, Job, and Esther indicate the later composition of those books and the existence of a previously fixed prophetic Canon in which, as a consequence of their lateness, could not be included.

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1. Ante, p. 4.
2. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 145.
3. Ante, p. 6.
4. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 108-111.
5. Ibid.
6. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 132.
7. Buhl, op. cit., p. 11.

2. Philo Judaeus

a. Authorship, Date, and Type of Testimony

Philo Judaeus, the renowned philosopher of Alexandria, was a contemporary of Christ, living approximately 20 B. C. - 50 A. D.[1] In all his literary work he sought to harmonize Greek and Hebrew thought,[2] to interpret the Jew to the Greek and the Greek to the Jew.[3] Philo's writings were largely philosophical and interpretive, and it is only indirectly that his ideas concerning the Scriptures can be discovered.

b. Sum and Significance of Testimony

Philo was not regarded as orthodox by the Jews.[4] However, throughout his works he exhibited an unbounded orthodox veneration for the Old Testament Scriptures, especially the Pentateuch,[5] which he pointed out to the Greeks as the source of all profoundest in philosophy and best in legislation. In his desire to reconcile Hebrew and Greek thought, he deduced from the Pentateuch for the sake of his Jewish readers the most approved conclusions of Greek philosophy.[6]

The Old Testament, both in Hebrew and in Greek translation, he considered as verbally inspired,[7] ascribing the highest gift of divine inspiration to the Pentateuch. He quoted extensively from

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1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 97.
2. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 67.
3. Fairweather, The Background of the Gospels, p. 351.
4. Oesterley, loc. cit.
5. Ibid., p. 62.
6. Fairweather, The Background of the Gospels, op. cit., p. 351.
7. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 62.

it,[1] except from Ruth, Esther, Chronicles, Daniel, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs.[2] This absence of quotations from the Hagiographa may mean that he had not yet learned to attach canonicity to them.[3] It cannot be said dogmatically that he did or did not accept the entire Canon.[4]

The passage in his De Vita Contemplavita which concerns the tripartite division of the Scriptures[5] is thought by some to be of doubtful origin, perhaps added to Philo's work in the third or fourth century A. D. If this were so, the passage would not be conclusive evidence to the first century Jewish thought.[6]

Philo does not quote from the Apocrypha, although he seems sometimes to borrow their phraseology.[7] This fact militates, as a sort of negative testimony,[8] against the canonicity of the Apocrypha. It may also indicate that the Alexandrian Jews did not consider them canonical, even though they included them in their Bible.[9]

3. Flavius Josephus

a. Authorship, Date, and Type of Testimony

Josephus (37-95 A. D.) was the great Jewish historian

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 91.
2. Stuart, op. cit., pp. 262-263.
3. Ryle, op. cit., p. 149.
4. Stuart, op. cit., pp. 262-263; Bruce, op. cit., p. 98.
5. Philo Judaeus, De Vita Contemplavita, 3 (ii, 475). Quoted in Ryle, op. cit., p. 149.
6. Ryle, op. cit., p. 150.
7. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 136.
8. Ryle, op. cit., p. 148.
9. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

without whose works much of the period would be dim and unknown. Of all men of his time he was one of the best qualified to give an account of Jewish affairs and opinions. He had been brought up in a priestly family, had studied searchingly the ways and beliefs of all the sects (finally becoming a Pharisee), knew the Law in minute detail, and knew the Greek language and culture as well.[1] His accounts, to all appearances, would reflect the national viewpoint. Stuart says there is ". . .no ground to suppose that Josephus gives us any other than the general and settled opinion of the great mass of the Jewish nation."[2]

However, most scholars appear to doubt the truth of this viewpoint. His language was rhetorical, suited to historical purposes rather than to solely religious purposes.[3] In the work containing his main utterances concerning the Scriptures, Contra Apionem, he has placed facts in a false light in order to vindicate the authority of the Jewish nation and the credibility of its history.[4]

b. Sum and Significance of Testimony

Josephus used the Septuagint as a source of his recounting of Jewish history, embellishing the text at times with legends or fables. He also made use of the Apocryphal books, especially II (IV) Esdras and I Maccabees.[5] His Antiquities of the Jews shows acquaintance with all the narrative literature of the Alexandrian Canon, but

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1. Stuart, op. cit., pp. 196-201.
2. Ibid., p. 197.
3. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 158-161.
4. W. R. Smith, op. cit., pp. 149-152.
5. Ryle, op. cit., p. 159.

fails to give definite data as to the Canon itself.[1]

In Contra Apionem, however, an apologetic work written in defense of Judaism, Josephus made very definite statements concerning their accuracy and their superior credibility in comparison with other national histories. The grounds for their superiority he states as Divine inspiration.[2]

The historian listed twenty-two books in the Old Testament, a different number from the traditional twenty-four. Referring to them from an historical viewpoint, he naturally classed all historical books together, using the Septuagint grouping. He reckoned Ruth with Judges and Lamentations with Jeremiah, as containing similar subject matter, thus causing the number twenty-two.[3] Probably, also the number was used in order to agree with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.[4]

Josephus' arrangement, then, was remarkable in two ways: firstly, as to the number twenty-two, which has been explained; secondly, as to the peculiar three-fold division of five books of Law, thirteen of Prophets, and four of Hagiographa, different from the traditional five, eight, and eleven.[5] This too has been partially explained in that he attempted a chronological grouping, according to subject matter. Furthermore, he was addressing foreigners, so turned

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., pp. 163-166.
4. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 98-99.
5. Buhl, op. cit., p. 19.

to the Septuagint (with which they were familiar) for his order.[1]

Josephus included no book written after the reign of Ahasuerus, whom he considered to be Artaxerxes.[2] This made Esther the last canonical book,[3] no others being inspired after 424 B. C.[4] His contention came to be the traditional Pharisaic view,[5] that after Malachi prophecy and inspiration ceased;[6] no book following that period could possibly be inspired.[7]

Those books known to be canonical could not be added to or subtracted from; they alone could lay claim to man's confidence.[8] The Apocrypha was definitely distinct from canonical books.[9]

Either Josephus did not know of the "Ezra-theory" or the "Great Synagogue-theory" concerning the origin of the Canon,[10] or he ignored them. He made the Scriptures appear as a continuous history, an unbroken succession of prophets up to the time of Esther, each prophet recording his works.[11] This view, however, is not in accordance with facts, but merely supports his polemical aim of vindicating Jewish history. The Prophets were not official historiographers, and were

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 163.
2. Ibid., p. 164.
3. Ibid., p. 140.
4. Stuart, op. cit., p. 198.
5. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 172.
6. R. H. Charles: Religious Development Between the Old and the New Testaments, pp. 40-41. This view was hastened also by the Jewish worship of the Law. The Law was considered as the last and final Word of God. It assumed the functions of the ancient pre-exilic prophet, and actually, made the revival of prophecy a near impossibility.
7. Oesterley, op. cit., pp. 171-172.
8. Buhl, loc. cit.
9. Stuart, op. cit., p. 199.
10. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 240, 270.
11. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 150.

often in opposition to the religious leaders. When the Law was found in Josiah's reign (621 B. C.) it appeared to be a thing forgotten.[1] These are but two examples of the falseness of his view.

Josephus' list indicated a long-settled Canon.[2]

> . . .That such a standard of canonicity as that of antiquity should be asserted, crude as it may seem, ought to be sufficient to convince us that the limits of the Canon had for a long time been undisturbed. [3]

However, this is inconsistent with the fact that a complete catalogue was not found in Ecclesiasticus, if the standard of prophetic succession were really in use. It is also inconsistent with the fact that some of the Hagiographa were still undecided in his own time, as seen in the vagueness of Philo's testimony.[4] According to the standard set by Josephus, the limits of the Hagiographa were closed after 424 B. C.[5]

C. A Typical Example of the Disputes: Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus

1. Ecclesiastes

a. Authorship, Date, and Contents

This book claims Solomonic authorship,[6] but it is generally felt to be pseudonymous, done in an effort to assure acceptance.[7] It

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1. W. R. Smith, op. cit., pp. 150-152.
2. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 166-167.
3. Ibid., p. 164.
4. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 52.
5. Ryle, loc. cit.
6. Ecclesiastes 1:1,12.
7. Goodspeed, op. cit., pp. 90-91.

is thought to have been written 200 years later than the Book of Job,[1] probably in the third century B. C.,[2] subsequent to the conquests of Alexander.[3] There are allusions throughout the book to the tyranny of the reigning king, which might indicate composition during the reign of Herod the Great.[4]

Ecclesiastes is a memorial, with Job, of the attack upon the orthodox doctrine of compensation for acts occurring in this life. This doctrine, begun by Ezekiel, became accepted in Judaism as the traditional view, and applied in Psalms and Proverbs. The author of Ecclesiastes reflects the dissatisfaction with this doctrine which existed in thoughtful circles.[5] This spirit and tendency presuppose an indirect Greek philosophical influence.[6] Traces of Stoicism and Epicureanism are discerned by many.[7] However, in his questioning of orthodoxy, he accepted ideas seemingly at random, which he could not fully assimilate.[8]

> . . .The book reminds one of the Talmud; the voice of the Rabbis in the Talmud, the one saying this, the other that, correspond to the mutually antagonistic notions of the new wisdom and the ancestral religion in the Book of Ecclesiastes. 9

Those who shared the author's doubts accepted it wholeheartedly.

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1. Charles, Religious Development Between the Old and the New Testaments, op. cit., pp. 108-109.
2. Ryle, op. cit., p. 120.
3. T. K. Cheyne: Jewish Religious Life After the Exile, p. 199.
4. Ibid.
5. Charles, Religious Development Between the Old and the New Testaments, loc. cit.
6. Cheyne, op. cit., pp. 197-199.
7. Oesterley, op. cit., pp. 74-75.
8. Kittel, op. cit., p. 208.
9. Ibid.

> . . .To such persons the deeply felt and vigorously expressed skepticism of Ecclesiastes appealed with great force. To suppress the book was impossible. All that the religious authorities could do was to neutralise its teaching. This they effected (as we have seen), partly by shuffling up certain sections, and so destroying the connection, and partly by interpolating passages referring to the future judgment and to the blase and penitent King Solomon. 1

The inconsistencies within the book are such as could not exist in the mind of a rational thinker. They infer the interpolation of Pharisaic editors, in the attempt to create a more orthodox attitude. Their emendations resulted in destroying the connection of the passages.[2]

What was this attitude which caused so much offense? In the answer to the old question of divine justice, the author maintained that rewards sought were not always in direct proportion to the wisdom or the virtue of the seeker.[3] Rather, there was no difference of destiny,[4] no individual retribution;[5] life was empty and vain.[6] In his attitude there was no concern for others or for a better world; it was destructive alone,[7] not destructive and constructive as was Job's. To quote Henry T. Fowler: ". . .The selfish, prudential aspect of ancient Hebrew wisdom reached its inevitable goal in Ecclesiastes."[8]

Ecclesiastes seemed to favor the views of the "heretics", or

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1. Cheyne, op. cit., pp. 196-197.
2. Ibid., p. 184.
3. Henry T. Fowler: A History of the Literature of Ancient Israel, p. 337.
4. Charles, Religious Development Between the Old and the New Testaments, op. cit., pp. 108-109.
5. Fowler, op. cit., p. 342.
6. Ibid.
7. Charles, Religious Development Between the Old and the New Testaments, loc. cit.
8. Fowler, op. cit., p. 343.

Sadducees,[1] in its denial of the future life. This was another reason for Pharisaic addition to it. The Book of Wisdom, of the Apocrypha, was perhaps written to oppose the philosophy, to present a far different and nobler view.[2] This Apocryphal work also adopted pseudonymous Solomonic origin.

b. Causes of Controversy

The main cause of dispute was its pessimistic, unorthodox manner, mentioned above. It was also opposed to the already sacred canonical books.[3] It contained contradictory and inconsistent statements.[4] It favored the Sadducidic philosophy.[5] The entire School of Shammai denied its value, in opposition to the School of Hillel, which contested its canonicity.[6] The debates and discussions among Rabbis concerning it are scattered throughout the Talmud.[7]

Circumstances of the day called for a definite listing: firstly, the School of Hillel attempted to get Scriptural proof for every tradition; secondly, a middle class of book was not permitted; thirdly, the ritual observance of "defiling the hands",[8] which was "devised in accordance with their principle of hedging in the law",[9]

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1. Cf. Ryle, op. cit., p. 195; Oesterley, op. cit., p. 456.
2. Charles F. Kent: The Growth and Contents of the Old Testament, p. 271.
3. Ryle, op. cit., p. 195.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 170.
7. Talmud: Sabbath, 30a, 30b; Midrash Vayyikra Rabba, c. 28; Eduyoth, v. 3; Yadaiim, iii, 5; Midrash Kohelith i,3; Xi, 9; Aboth R. Nathan (ut supra). Quoted in Ryle, op. cit., pp. 195-196.
8. Ante, p. 20.
9. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 173.

caused controversy and division as to Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs.[1] In the ensuing disputes there was a "tendency to cover the historical weakness of the position of disputed books by energetic protestations of their superlative worth."[2]

It is a known fact, however, that any questions in the Talmud as to the canonicity of certain books only concerns those ultimately admitted.[3] It is everywhere implied that the book was canonical in spite of the problems surrounding it.[4]

c. Causes of Canonization

Ecclesiastes probably owes its canonicity to a combination of factors. Firstly, its supposedly Solomonic authorship put it in a group with the Song of Songs and Proverbs;[5] due to this it may have made its way into the Canon.[6] Again, it may owe canonicity to its closing chapters,[7] hence to the Pharisaic revisers,[8] for it is thought that the concluding verses were added later to balance the heretical quality of the teaching.[9]

> . . .It is not strange that the book of Ecclesiastes was the last to find a place in the Old Testament Canon. The surprising fact is that it was included at all. 10

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1. Ibid., pp. 172-174.
2. Ibid., p. 174.
3. Oesterley and Box, op. cit., p. 28.
4. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 138-139.
5. Ryle, loc. cit.
6. Cheyne, op. cit., p. 197.
7. Amos K. Fiske: The Jewish Scriptures, p. 221.
8. Kent, op. cit., p. 273.
9. Ryle, op. cit., p. 195. Not all scholars accept this view. Some feel the verses were added on to justify a previous opinion of the book, and to declare that the Canon was complete by their means. Others feel that the author may have been expressing a genuine conclusion.
10. Kent, op. cit., p. 273.

The opinion proposed by some that the whole of the Hagiographa was written by prophets would explain the canonicity of Ecclesiastes. Also, its use in the Feast of Tabernacles gave needed support.[1]

Other elements, inherent in the writing, probably contributed to canonicity. Ecclesiastes possesses a perennial human interest;[2] it lays bare the tragedy of the human soul; it illustrates the consequences of a wrong approach to life.[3] Within the book there is a recognition of righteousness as being the greatest wisdom. The ways of God are acknowledged to be beyond all question.[4]

Few Old Testament books have made a deeper impression upon English literature and thought,[5] probably because of its universal, personal, human quality.

> . . .Koheleth furnishes an excellent basis for the appreciation of the optimistic teachings of Ben Sira and of that deeper philosophy of life lived and proclaimed by the great Teacher of Nazareth.[6]

d. Significance of Ecclesiastes to Canon Formation

Ecclesiastes, with the Song of Songs, represents the last stages in the history of the Canon,[7] for these two books were the most disputed. They were discussed and ratified at the Council of Jamnia in A. D. 90.[8] Even so, these books, with Ezekiel, Proverbs, and

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1. The Jewish Encyclopedia, Isidore Singer Editor: "Bible Canon", p. 153.
2. Kent, op. cit., p. 269.
3. Ibid., p. 273.
4. Fiske, op. cit., p. 386.
5. Kent, op. cit., p. 269.
6. Ibid., p. 273.
7. W. R. Smith, op. cit., pp. 172-174.
8. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

Esther, have not always been above suspicion since the Council.[1]

> . . .These books have been delivered to us; they have their use and value, which are to be ascertained by a frank and reverent study of the texts themselves; but those who insist on placing them on the same footing of undisputed authority with the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, to which our Lord bears direct testimony, and so make the whole doctrine of the Canon depend on its weakest part, sacrifice the true strength of the evidence on which the Old Testament is received by Christians, and commit the same fault with Akiba and his fellow Rabbis, who bore down the voice of free inquiry with anathemas instead of argument. [2]

Two other facts must be noted. One is, that Ecclesiastes testifies to the existence of a mass of religious literature at that time.[3] This emphasizes its value, for it was at least outstanding among them, in spite of its problems. The other fact is that neither the New Testament nor Philo allude much to it in quotation or otherwise. This, however, is no real argument against its canonicity, since its contents do not particularly lend themselves to Christian writers for quotation purposes.[4]

2. Ecclesiasticus

a. Authorship, Date, and Contents

The authorship and date of this Apocryphal book has been seen already, in examining the testimony of Jesus the Son of Sirach in regard to the formation of the Canon.[5] More can be said, however, of the contents and aim of the book.

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1. Oesterley and Box, op. cit., p. 28.
2. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 175.
3. Ecclesiastes 12:12.
4. Ryle, op. cit., p. 174.
5. Ante, pp. 33-34.

Ben Sira's work did not display any striking originality, or "fresh fund of spiritual life and force".[1] Also, it presented no new conception of religion and history.[2] The author directs his readers to the authority of the ancients and of the wise men of the people, not pretending himself to bring any new revelation.[3] He claims an almost prophetic authority,[4] but he is unclear as to the difference between wisdom resulting from study and true creative prophecy.[5] Some feel he does not make such a claim at all, that the unaffected pride of authorship in his writings contrasts with the impersonal manner of canonical writers in such a way as to appear unlikely that he considered his work a candidate for the Scriptures.[6]

Utilizing the words and teachings of Old Testament writers,[7] his aim is to present an authoritative reference work for guidance in all phases of life.[8]

> The writer evidently intended to offer to his people a kind of textbook to which men and women might have recourse for guidance in almost every conceivable circumstance of life. He does this, however, with the primary object of setting in clear light the superior excellence of Judaism over Hellenism. In a sense, therefore, Ecclesiasticus may be regarded as an apologetic work, inasmuch as it aims at combating the rising influence of Greek thought and culture among the Jews. 9

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 183.
2. Ibid.
3. Ecclesiasticus 39.
4. This fact may indicate, as noted Ante, p. 37, that the Hagiographa were not a complete canon, and that Ben Sira sought to add his own work to others.
5. W. R. Smith, op. cit., pp. 144-145.
6. Torrey, op. cit., p. 95.
7. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 268.
8. Ibid., p. 269.
9. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 327.

Hellenism had assumed a debased form in Palestine.[1] The author was doubtless influenced in part by Greek thought,[2] but more so by the Jewish Law. He sought to assist others to a life more in accordance with the Law,[3] by demonstrating its wisdom as superior to all other philosophies.[4] In opposing the "New Wisdom" of Greek culture, he idealized the wisdom of the scribes and the Jewish cultus.[5] Virtue became identified with knowledge; wisdom with the Jewish Law itself.[6]

> . . .The evil of wickedness is represented as lying in the fact that wickedness is foolishness, and therefore essentially opposed to wisdom. On the other hand, the Jews were faithful to the Law, the ordinances of which were binding because it was the revealed will of God; and, therefore, in order to reconcile the new teaching that wisdom was the chief requirement of the man of religion, wisdom became identified with the Law: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;' by 'the fear of the Lord' is meant, of course, obedience to His commands, i.e., the observance of the Law. These words express what is, in truth, the foundation-stone of the Wisdom Literature, and this identification between wisdom and the Law formed the reconciling link between Judaism and Hellenism in this domain. Nowhere is this identification more clearly brought out than in the Book of Wisdom and in Sirach. 7

The Sadducean tendencies of this book have been spoken of, as well as the Pharisaic revision.[8] It reflects the outlook of the period following the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes, where the only immortality desired is posterity's remembrance of a man's virtues.[9] His

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1. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, loc. cit.
2. Cf. Ibid; Oesterley, op. cit., pp. 77-80.
3. Ryle, op. cit., p. 144.
4. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 77.
5. Kittel, op. cit., p. 208.
6. Oesterley, op. cit., pp. 77-80.
7. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 269.
8. Ante, p. 34.
9. Bruce, op. cit., p. 162.

words form a natural sequence to Proverbs, propounding the same theory of rewards and self-interest.[1]

> The general observations of Ben Sirach do not concern themselves with problems more perplexing than the best way to get along smoothly and honestly in the world as it is. 2

In showing the superiority of the Law in all phases of living, Ben Sira indirectly portrays a vivid picture of Jewish life in the second century B. C.[3]

b. Reasons for Exclusion from Canon

Ecclesiasticus and I Maccabees were the only two books ever set forth as candidates for canonization, although they never met with any real success.[4] Ben Sira's veneration for the Law would seem to be a factor in his favor, since the Jews admitted no work which was inconsistent with the Law.[5] It was composed in Hebrew, which fulfilled another of the usual criteria.[6] His teaching was authoritative and orthodox, justified by his assiduous study.[7]

However, his work was never regarded as canonical by the Jews, in spite of its position of high honor.[8] In the Talmud it is grouped with all other books written after the prophetic period, none of which were considered inspired.[9] This strict traditional view was doubtless

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1. Fowler, op. cit., p. 358.
2. Ibid., p. 353.
3. Ibid., pp. 354-358.
4. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 183-186.
5. The Jewish Encyclopedia, Isidore Singer, Editor: "Bible Canon", op. cit., p. 150.
6. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume III, Special Edition, "Canon", p. 269.
7. Ryle, op. cit., p. 144.
8. Torrey, op. cit., pp. 93-95.
9. Oesterley and Box, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

the main cause of its exclusion. The author was known to be recent; therefore, his words could not be inspired.[1]

The book was not recommended by any claim of antiquity or ancient authorship, another point in its disfavor.[2] Finally, it perhaps lacked some intangible, inherent worth, some sign of the inspiration of the Spirit that was present in the accepted sacred works. To quote Rudolf Kittel, ". . .His frankness is refreshing, but in the spirit of this legality of the scribes there is little that uplifts."[3]

c. Value of Ecclesiasticus

From the name of this book can be seen the place it held, as "The Church Book", or "Church Book par excellence".[4] This name was gained from its use as a Church Lectionary or "reading book".[5] It had great influence on Rabbinical literature and even upon liturgy.[6]

The book was known by New Testament writers as by the Jewish sages, and used for edifying reading.[7] James employs his teachings in his Epistle, practically quoting from Ben Sira in several places.[8] Ben Sira's work helps to lead from the "wise men" of the Old Testament to the "scribes" of the New Testament.[9] He expounds the theories of Wisdom prevalent among the Jews.

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1. Oesterley and Box, op. cit., pp. 41-42.
2. Ryle, op. cit., p. 183.
3. Kittel, op. cit., p. 209.
4. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 25.
5. Charles, Religious Development Between the Old and the New Testaments, op. cit., p. 189.
6. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, op. cit., p. 297.
7. Ibid., p. 295.
8. Ibid.
9. Robert C. Dentan: The Apocrypha, Bridge of the Testaments, p. 5.

> His work is invaluable as exhibiting the thoughts and views of a cultured and genuine Jew and the main questions of his day from a standpoint of the ruling Sadducean priesthood. 1

Its greatest value for Christians, and for Biblical study, lies in the light which it throws upon the customs, the manner of life, and the systems of thought of the Jews. Comprehending these helps to set the background for the New Testament, especially for the understanding of the Gospels.[2]

D. The Completion of the Jewish Canon:

The Council of Jamnia

1. Place of the Council in History

After the Maccabean Era, when Palestine was undergoing persecution by Roman forces, the Sanhedrin, or ruling body of religious leaders, faced extinction in the pending destruction of Jerusalem. Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai, the master of the period, counselled submission, but was not heeded.[3] Smuggled out of Jerusalem by disciples,[4] he obtained permission from the Romans to reconstitute the Sanhedrin on a purely spiritual basis in the city of Jamnia.[5] Thus the organized religious leadership was retained even though Jerusalem was destroyed.

The rise of Christian doctrines in this time horrified the strict Jews, who thought the Fall of Jerusalem to be a sign of God's

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1. Charles, Religious Development Between the Old and the New Testaments, op. cit., p. 190.
2. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 345.
3. Auerbach, op. cit., p. 11.
4. Ibid.
5. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

wrath at the departure from orthodox Judaism.[1] The superiority and purity of Judaism had to be re-stated in an authoritative manner.

> In any case, the feud was bitter to the extreme; and ere many years passed, the most natural consequence was a jealous effort to 'hedge round the ancient Doctrine', as the famous tract on the 'Sayings of the Hebrew Fathers' had counselled; and how better could the Jewish scholars 'hedge' them than by declaring clearly just what were the contents of their sacred writings. Thus a Jewish criticism of the Old Testament was made imperative by the rise of Christianity. [2]

The Council of Jamnia, held in A. D. 90 and in A. D. 118, presided over by Rabbi Gamaliel II, was probably the official occasion upon which Canon limits were fixed.[3] Although Rabbinical evidence is fragmentary,[4] it is quite sure that the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes were here definitely ratified and canonized.[5] The Talmud records the discussions.[6]

The traditional view concerning the formation of the Canon, i.e., that the three divisions of the Scriptures represent three stages of development, considers the Writings, and hence the entire Canon, to have come to a conclusion as a collection at the time of the Jamnia Council.[7] Others maintain that there was no Canon at all as such until the Council, where the criterion of "defiling the hands"[8] was first employed.[9] In either case, an official seal was put upon the sacred collection at Jamnia.

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1. Archibald Duff: History of Old Testament Criticism, pp. 112-113.
2. Ibid.
3. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 171-173.
4. Ibid., p. 172.
5. Ibid., p. 171.
6. Oesterley, op. cit., pp. 173-174.
7. Rowley, op. cit., p. 169.
8. Ante, p. 20.
9. Rowley, loc. cit.

2. Significance of the Council Concerning the Canon

The importance of the Council of Jamnia for the Canon was not really great, for most of the books it listed were already generally accepted.[1]

> The only decision of the kind which is known to history is that said to have been made by a Synod of Jamnia in 90 A. D., and this Synod appears to have provided merely a few puerile reasons for confirming the canonicity of certain books, which had already for nearly two centuries enjoyed the reverence of the people. 2

There are good grounds for the recognition of disputed books before the close of the second century B. C. Firstly, external evidence is available, that of Josephus and the New Testament; secondly, the state of Jewish affairs after the first century B. C., i.e. wars, tyranny, controversies among religious sects, would have made the unanimous addition of new books improbable. Thirdly, the internal character and the popularity of the books won them a place without the decrees of religious leaders.[3]

> How far, in the gradual settlement of the question, the Rabbis acted on their own initiative, and in how far they were merely registering and crystallizing the popular verdict articulated by usage is difficult to say. To maintain that the latter alone was decisive makes it hard to understand why such books as Ecclesiasticus, Judith, and Tobit, to mention a few of the 'apocryphal' books only, were excluded; on the other hand, we cannot believe that popular usage accounted for nothing. Most probably the whole question was one of compromise in which by degrees Rabbinical logic, based upon their theory alluded to above prophetical succession, forced popular usage to give way to the official position which became finally and irrevocably fixed by the Sanhedrin at Jabneh. 4

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1. Bruce, loc. cit.
2. George A. Smith: Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament, p. 8.
3. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 173-178.
4. Ibid., pp. 173-174.

The most important point for observation is probably that the discussions recorded in the Talmud, whether they be "serious controversies or only academic displays of verbal adroitness",[1] presuppose the canonicity of the books discussed.[2] Another important point is that their answer to the Apocrypha is "uncompromisingly negative".[3]

In the main, the Jamnia Council echoed public opinion concerning books, which would indicate an outstanding criterion of canonicity in practice, that of popular acceptance.

> Without such effects and testimonies in the experience of the nation, no name, whether it really belonged to a book or had been thrust upon it, no ascription of antiquity and no official decree could have availed to bestow canonical rank. Not learned discussions by scribes and doctors, whose reasons, so far as they have come down to us, are all afterthoughts and mostly foolish ones, but proof beneath the strain of time, persecution, and the needs of each new age ---these were what proved the truth of a Book, enforced its indispensableness to the spiritual life of God's people, or to their national discipline, and declared the will of Providence regarding it. 4

Thus popular usage, and the meaning of Scripture to the hearts of the people, may well have been the concluding criterion in the completion of the Jewish Canon.

E. Rigidity of Canon

No other books have found their way into the Jewish Canon since the Council of Jamnia. Neither have any books been taken from it. There has been some changing of the arrangement of the Prophets

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 202.
2. Ibid.
3. Bruce, op. cit., p. 97.
4. G. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 9.

and the Hagiographa, but this has not, of course, affected their canonicity. Furthermore, the extent of variation in arrangement is proof of its secondary importance.

> . . .No two are alike. Even the Masorites and the Talmudists differ from each other; Jerome differs from both and Origen from him. And so, if we compare Melito, the Laodicean Council, the Apostolic Canons, Cyrill, Gregory Nazianzen, Athanasius, Hilary, Epiphanius, the Council of Hippo, Jerome, Rufinus, etc., scarcely any two of them are alike throughout. And this is almost the case even with MSS. and editions in later times. 1

Some of the Scriptural books have been questioned in Jewish circles since the Jamnia Council, but the limits of the Canon have not been molested.

> It is true that long after the Council of Jabneh, the canonicity of Ezekiel, Jonah, Proverbs, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, was at different times called into question; but this only reflects the opinions of individuals, and cannot be said to have in any way modified the practical consensus of Jewish teachers that the final word had been spoken at Jabneh. 2

F. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has presented the last stages of the Jewish Canon, stating important testimony concerning the period and demonstrating the attitudes then prevalent concerning the books.

The witness of Jesus, the Son of Sirach was the first which was noted. Writing in the first quarter of the second century B. C., he testified to the supremacy of the Pentateuch, and to the list of the Prophets, with little mention of the Hagiographa. His grandson, translating the work into Greek in 132 B. C., seems to know the Law and the

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1. Stuart, op. cit., p. 242.
2. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 174.

Prophets as definite collections, but not the Hagiographa. This would indicate that the latter division was not yet a fixed number during his time.

Philo Judaeus, a contemporary of Christ, writing in Alexandria, sought to harmonize Hebrew and Greek thought. His testimony to Scripture is indirect, seen in his frequent allusion to them, especially the Pentateuch. He did not quote much from the Hagiographa and not at all from the Apocrypha. In the first instance, the lack of allusion may mean that they were not yet fully canonical. The latter fact is a sort of negative testimony against the worth of the Apocrypha for canonical purposes. It also implies that no Alexandrian Jew fully accepted the Apocrypha as canonical, since Philo was the supreme spokesman of Alexandria.

The statements of Josephus (A. D. 37-95) are more definite concerning the Canon. A historian, seeking to vindicate the superiority of Judaism and Jewish history, he maintained that an unbroken succession of history was written down by the prophets. This theory is contrary to fact, but came to be the accepted tradition of the Pharisees. No book was considered inspired which was written outside the prophetic period, which extended from Moses' time to that of the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther (thought by Josephus to be Artaxerxes - 424 B. C.)

Josephus testifies to the sacred nature of all the present books of the Hebrew Bible, grouping them chronologically and according to subject matter, making division different from the traditional. He does not include Apocrypha, which he considers definitely distinct from other books. His theory indicates a long-settled Canon, from shortly

after the Exile.

Following the testimony of these witnesses, a discussion was made of Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus, a disputed canonical book and an honored non-canonical book. The authorship, date, and the contents of each were noted, and the reasons for inclusion within or exclusion from the canon explored.

Ecclesiastes, of pseudo-Solomonic origin, written in the third century B. C., met opposition because of its pessimistic, skeptical attitude, which represented a school of thought opposing orthodox doctrine. Also, it reflected the philosophy of the Sadducees, so was fought by the Pharisees (who later revised it). The School of Shammai denied its value, while the School of Hillel contested its canonicity. The Talmud records some of the debates concerning it.

The book probably owes canonicity to its Solomonic pseudonym, to the revision of the Pharisees, to its use in the Feast of Tabernacles, and to its human quality, which made it popular with the people. Its canonicity was confirmed fully at the Council of Jamnia in A. D. 90; it has met with questioning since then, but has never been taken from the sacred list.

Ecclesiasticus, written by Jesus the Son of Sirach about 200-175 B. C., presented no fresh, original concepts of religion, nor did it have any claim to an ancient authority. It was designed as a guide-book, illustrating the Law in all phases of living. The author claimed an almost prophetic authority as a teacher, seeming to place his work among the indefinite group of Hagiographa. However, he utilized the words and teachings of the ancients, and does not present original new

revelation. The Law is exalted to an extreme, identified with Wisdom.

Although the book was held in great honor, being read for edification (hence the name, "Church Book"), it was never accepted as canonical by the Jews. It fulfilled the requirements of being written in Hebrew, and of reverencing the Law, yet it was composed after the cessation of prophecy, according to the Jewish tradition. This was doubtless the main reason for its exclusion; however, it may have lacked an intrinsic quality of inspiration, not containing anything truly uplifting.

The value of Ecclesiasticus, although not canonical, lies in its vivid picture of Jewish life, which aids in setting the background for the New Testament.

The Hebrew Canon saw its official closing at the Council of Jamnia, in A. D. 90 and A. D. 118. The Sanhedrin had been transferred, with Roman permission, to Jamnia, at the time of the Fall of Jerusalem. It was necessary to catalogue the Jewish Scriptures in the face of rising Christianity. Rabbinical evidence concerning the Council is fragmentary, but it is generally felt that its decisions were an official seal upon the Canon. The most disputed books, Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes, were ratified there, the discussions concerning them recorded in the Talmud. Either the one division of the Writings was officially closed, or the entire Canon was listed.

The importance of the Jamnia Council to the Canon is not great, for most books which it listed were already quite well accepted, as the witnesses given have shown. Popular acceptance appears to be the final ruling factor in canonicity. Following the Jamnia Council

no changes, except in arrangement, have been made in the Hebrew Canon.

Conclusions which may be drawn from this period as to standards of canonicity employed are these: firstly, the growing tradition of the cessation of prophecy after Malachi caused leaders to reject books written outside the prophetic period; secondly, the claim of antiquity and authority, even if pseudonymous, was strong; thirdly, any book had to agree with the Law, and with orthodox doctrine; lastly, the popular acceptance of books told in their favor, for such as were so accepted had found an irrevocable place in their hearts. That fact could not be overlooked in any examination of the value of the several books.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CRITERIA EMPLOYED BY THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS

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A. Introduction

The basic criteria behind the Christian judgment of the Old Testament was, of course, the fact of Christ's own testimony to it, as well as that of His disciples. This fact underlies all the rest of this chapter. It will be considerations other than this which will be taken up.

Since Christianity inherited the Greek version of the Old Testament, it was faced with the question of Apocrypha among the other writings. Some of the Fathers denied their sacred character; others felt that they were inspired. The Canon underwent anew the process of acceptance and rejection, of confirming and eliminating.

In examining that process in the Early Christian Church, this chapter will first set the background for the opinions of the Christian Fathers. The causes behind a definite canonization will be seen. The early work of Melito and Origen will be stated briefly, with the significance of each respectively to the study of the Canon. The earliest codices and lists will be noted.

Primarily, this chapter will deal with Jerome and Augustine, who were of contradictory opinions regarding the Canon. Each one will be discussed in turn, with mention of the Fathers who echoed their views. Another strong comparison will be made in examining the history

of the Canon at the time of the Reformation. The positions of the Protestant and the Roman Churches will be outlined; the stands of other Church groups will also be mentioned.

In closing, this chapter will sketch briefly the position of the Apocrypha in the present day. Also, the rigidity of the Christian Canon from the time of the Reformation will be examined. A summary will follow, with any conclusions which may be drawn from the Christian Era as to criteria employed by the Fathers in canonization.

B. General Situation in the Early Church: Causes Behind Canonization

The Scriptures were at first of only secondary importance to individual Christians. Oral traditions and eye-witness reports modified any need for authoritative writings. Eventually, however, the need arose for the formation of a sacred Canon of specifically Christian writings, even as the Jews had felt the need of an authoritative Hebrew collection. With this came the need to make a distinction among Apocryphal books,[1] for not only was there disagreement between Christians and Jews concerning them,[2] but there was disagreement among Christians as well.

Divergent customs were exhibited in regard to the use of the Apocrypha.[3] It was commonly accepted, however, as part of the Greek Bible. The New Testament writers quoted from and alluded to them,

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1. Torrey, op. cit., pp. 22-23.
2. Buhl, op. cit., p. 52.
3. Ibid.

nowhere prohibiting their use.[1] The use of the Septuagint was the main reason behind the popularity of the Apocrypha, for in venerating what they thought were venerated by the Jews as sacred Scripture, the early Christians venerated the Apocrypha interspersed among the canonical books.[2] Another cause behind such acceptance of the Apocrypha was the prevalent ignorance of Hebrew, which resulted in ignorance of the true limits of the Hebrew Bible as it was sanctioned by the Apostles.[3] Still another was the adoption of the bound book, or codex, in the second century A. D. This replaced the scroll, not only in Greek cities, but in Jerusalem. Scriptures thus became more easily accessible; there developed a relative stability in the natural tendency to treat as inspired all that was found between the covers.[4] Divergencies appear among early lists, but in general, the Apocryphal books which gained favor and were gradually included in the codices were those similarly preferred by Greek-speaking Jews.[5]

This use of the Apocrypha would indicate that the canon of the Early Church was not rigid. The way in which they are referred to does not suggest an absolute list. In addition to this, the fact that the New Testament does not quote from some of the Hagiographa (and that there was controversy about them among the Jews themselves) indicates an indefiniteness concerning them.[6]

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1. Buhl, op. cit., p. 52.
2. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 208-209.
3. Ibid.
4. Torrey, op. cit., p. 23.
5. Ibid., pp. 22-23.
6. Robinson, op. cit., p. 205.

> . . .The standard of inspiration was notably different in those times from the standard at present. What Clement of Alexandria and Origen regarded as a sacred writing would now be thought very commonplace, and to claim that it is inspired would seem to every one ridiculous. [1]

Some of the early codices and lists were these: the list of Melito, in A. D. 170, which excluded the Apocrypha;[2] the Muritorian Fragment, c. A. D. 180, which mentioned books not in the Hebrew Canon;[3] Codex Claromontanus, probably third century A. D., including the Apocrypha;[4] Codex Vaticanus[5] and Codex Sinaiticus,[6] fourth century A. D., including the Apocrypha; Codex Alexandrinus,[7] fifth century A. D., including the Apocrypha. The Catalogue of the Sixty Canonical Books, earlier than the seventh century A. D., gave a list of "outside books" following the New Testament; at the very end appeared a list of the "Apocrypha" of both Testaments. The designation "outside the sixty" is a classification appearing often in the study of Canon history.[8]

C. The Work of Melito and Origen

1. Melito

Melito, the Bishop of Sardis,[9] was the earliest writer after Josephus to provide information on the Old Testament.[10] He was considered a "very distinguished and enlightened man".[11] He sought

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1. Gilbert, op. cit., p. 91.
2. Bruce, op. cit., p. 99.
3. Torrey, op. cit., p. 22.
4. Ibid., p. 23.
5. Ryle, op. cit., p. 215.
6. Ibid., pp. 215-216.
7. Ibid., p. 215.
8. Torrey, op. cit., p. 24.
9. Ryle, op. cit., p. 203.
10. Stuart, op. cit., p. 225.
11. Ibid.

to draw up an accurate account of the Scriptures as held by the Jews.[1] To attain this end he travelled in Syria, making inquiries,[2] as well as consulting the Greek Bible.[3]

Since the time of Josephus, the Jews had not altered their Scriptures. Alteration was impossible because of domestic and religious rivalries, and because of the zeal with which traditions were guarded.[4] The Jews attacked the Christian use of Apocryphal proof-texts; actually, the Christians needed to know more of the true extent of the Jewish Canon. The work of Melito served to show the exact limits of that Canon.[5]

Thus Melito had a practical end in view; there was no thought at the outset of giving up the Apocrypha, nor any controversial attitude motivating his inquiry.[6] However, in seeking out the authoritative Hebrew Canon, he discovered that no Apocrypha were included therein.[7] His list contained all books then included in the Hebrew Canon, with the exception of Esther.[8] Included in a letter sent to a friend, A. D. 170, the list has been preserved by Eusebius in his Ecclesiastical History, Book IV.[9]

The exclusion of Esther from his list was possibly accidental, but more probably purposely omitted by his Syrian informants. Although

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1. Buhl, op. cit., p. 58.
2. Bruce, loc. cit.
3. Stuart, op. cit., pp. 225-226.
4. Stuart, loc. cit.
5. Buhl, loc. cit.
6. Ibid.
7. Stuart, loc. cit.
8. Bruce, loc. cit.
9. Ibid.

the book was assured at that time of a place in the Canon, it may have experienced local and/or temporary disuse. It was not, however, wholly rejected in these cases.[1] Melito may not have realized the distinction. (His is not the only list excluding Esther. Unfavorable opinion concerning it is found in Rabbinical discussions, and implied or excluded in several lists of the Fathers.)[2]

The names and order in Melito's list indicate his use of the Septuagint in this respect.[3] He groups together in turn the narrative, poetical, and prophetical books:[4] The Pentateuch, Judges-Ruth, four books of Kings, two of Chronicles, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Twelve, Daniel, Ezekiel, and Ezra. Likely, he included Lamentations with Jeremiah and Nehemiah with Ezra.[5]

2. Origen

Generally, the Greek-speaking Church accepted and used the Septuagint as it was.[6] Some of the Greek Fathers, however, among them Origen, A. D. 185-254, who was their greatest Biblical scholar,[7] recognized distinctions within the number of existent Scriptural writings. In theory he restricted the Canon more or less to the ancient Hebrew list, although in practice he quoted the Apocrypha as canonical.[8]

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1. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 205-207.
2. Ibid.
3. Stuart, loc. cit.
4. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 213-214.
5. Bruce, loc. cit.
6. Ibid., p. 164.
7. Ibid., p. 99.
8. Ibid., p. 164.

Origen lists twenty-two canonical books, with Hebrew and Greek titles: the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges-Ruth, four books of Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah-Lamentations and the Epistle (Baruch), Daniel, Ezekiel, Job, Esther.[1] The Book of the Twelve is omitted, probably due to an error in copying.[2] In including the Apocryphal Baruch, Origen may have been reporting a local practice, or he may have had in mind the expanded form of Jeremiah as it was found in the Greek Bible. His order, in addition to the inclusion of Baruch, shows his use of the Septuagint.[3]

Although Origen excluded the Apocrypha from his list, he used them himself, and vindicated them in other writings. In a letter to Junilius Africanus, written in their defense, he urged that the practice of the Christian Church (that of using the Apocrypha) was developed under the Providence of God.[4] His opinion was not victorious in this case, however.

> . . .his knowledge of Hebrew was not thorough and independent, his historical sense was little developed, and in critical power he was not the equal of his contemporary Africanus. 5

The great work accomplished by Origen was the compilation and editing of the Hexapla, c. A. D. 240, which was an edition of the Old Testament in six columns: The Hebrew Text, a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew, the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, Origen himself, and of Theodotion, with other versions added occasionally. In this

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1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 99.
2. Ibid.
3. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 207-208.
4. Buhl, loc. cit.
5. Gilbert, op. cit., p. 114. The contemporaries of Origen and Africanus might disagree, since they tended to side with Origen because of his popularity.

work, Origen attempted to make the Septuagint conform more nearly to the Hebrew. The consonantal Hebrew text he gave has changed but little since the edition appeared.[1]

The Hexapla is important, not only for textual purposes, but for the study of the Canon, and for an understanding of the state of the Canon in Origen's time.

> . . .clear evidence that the meaning of the Old Testament writings was far, very far, from being a fixed thing to which anybody might appeal as giving a definite utterance of the laws of God. Origen may or may not have recognised how he was showing us a vivid picture of the great variety of opinions held in his time concerning the actual utterances of Old Testament Scriptures; but the criticism of the great Alexandrian father was thus a distinct and autographic declaration of the facts. It shows that uniformity of the "Canon" was non-existent in the time of Origen. [2]

D. A Comparison of the Testimony of Jerome and Augustine

1. Jerome

a. Factors Behind the Vulgate Translation

The Latin Church in the fourth century possessed a mass of religious literature, which was widely used without discrimination.[3] These were not only apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books, but various translations and forms of the Scriptures. Jerome testified to ten current authorized forms of the Old Testament then in use;[4] his Vulgate was not the first Latin translation.[5] Authoritative direction

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1. Bruce, op. cit., p. 119.
2. Duff, op. cit., p. 99.
3. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 191.
4. Duff, op. cit., pp. 100-101.
5. Oesterley, loc. cit.

was needed; distinction had to be made.[1]

Jerome, born in A. D. 347 in Dalmatia (full name Eusebius Sofronius Hieronymous), was educated in Rome; he travelled widely, learning Hebrew in Syria. Pope Damasus of Rome commissioned him with the task of making an authoritative text, a task which he undertook with misgivings. Jerome did not succeed Damasus to the leadership of the Roman See as he had hoped, and retired to Bethlehem in A. D. 386 where he studied Hebrew thoroughly, and where he finished his translation.[2]

Jerome was acquainted with the Samaritan Pentateuch,[3] and with Origen's Hexapla.[4] His translation was made directly from the Hebrew, and from references to the original text of Old Testament passages found in other writings. His translation is a witness to an ancient Hebrew text existing five hundred years before the Masoretic text.[5]

Jerome's words had great weight not only because of his authoritative translation,[6] which in comparison with others showed a ". . .sheer intrinsic superiority"[7] of text, but because of his Hebrew learning.[8]

> . . .In Jerome the critical element assumes as large proportions as in the work of Origen, and in this department his achievement was of the greatest influence, far surpassing that of the Alexandrian

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1. Oesterley, op. cit., p. 191.
2. Bruce, op. cit., pp. 194-195.
3. Ibid., p. 123.
4. Ibid., p. 150.
5. Ibid., p. 119.
6. Torrey, op. cit., p. 5.
7. Bruce, op. cit., p. 196.
8. Torrey, op. cit., p. 5.

> pioneer. He was the first to reject the tradition regarding the Septuagint translation, the first to go with adequate or at least respectable knowledge to the Hebrew original, the first to make a critical translation of the Bible, and the first to acquire a considerable archaeological knowledge of the Scriptures. 1

b. Testimony of Jerome Concerning the Canon

Jerome observed that the Palestinian Canon omitted some books, the Apocrypha, which the Greek Bible continued to treat as Scripture. Because of their acceptance as such he was obliged to include them in some way,[2] although he declared them outside the Canon.[3] He left them as he found them in the Greek Bible, but distinguished them from the canonical books in a Prologue attached to his translation.[4] Only books original in Hebrew or Aramaic were considered canonical;[5] in this he took up his position at the Palestinian standpoint.[6]

This theory changed the attitude of the Church toward the Septuagint, revealing its deficiencies.[7] However, the use of the word "Apocryphal" had a wider significance than with the Jews. The term did not mean "unauthentic" or "untrue";[9] they were honored, and read for edification throughout Christendom, but could not be used to support Church dogmas.[10] This view constituted the position of the Synod of

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1. Gilbert, op. cit., p. 119.
2. Goodspeed, op. cit., pp. 2-3.
3. Torrey, loc. cit.
4. Goodspeed, loc. cit.
5. Dentan, op. cit., p. 16.
6. Buhl, op. cit., p. 60.
7. Dental, op. cit., pp. 15-17.
8. Buhl, op. cit., pp. 60-61.
9. Bruce, op. cit., p. 164.
10. Torrey, loc. cit.

Laodicea, A. D. 343 and 381.[1] They were to be a "sort of esoteric library for only the initiated to use".[2] The fact that Jerome himself translated Judith and Tobit and made favorable mention of the Apocrypha helped to "neutralise the effect of his teaching as to the canon on inspired writings".[3] His translation is said to have been determined with a special regard to prevalent opinion in the Church, and not by a thorough application of any test of canonicity.[4]

In Jerome's arrangement of the books, he follows largely the ancient tradition, though there is a contradiction as to the number of canonical books. In the Preface to his Commentary on Daniel, he states three divisions; five, eight, and eleven. In the Prologue to the Books of Samuel and Kings he remarks that in some circles the number is reduced to twenty-two, to correspond to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet (by combining Ruth and Judges, Lamentations and Jeremiah), and in other circles raised to twenty-seven, to allow for the variant forms of five Hebrew letters (by dividing the books of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Jeremiah-Lamentations).[5]

This use of the number twenty-two was first exhibited by Josephus, the coincidence first pointed out by Origen, repeated by Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzen, Hilary of Poitiers, Epiphanius, and Jerome.[6] The Canon was thought by some to have been "providentially

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1. Buhl, op. cit., p. 58.
2. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 3.
3. Torrey, op. cit., p. 7.
4. Marcus Dods: The Bible: Its Origin and Nature, p. 35.
5. Bruce, op. cit., p. 100.
6. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 221-22.

ordained"[1] to agree with the number of Hebrew letters. This "shadowy hypothesis"[2] was of Greek origin, not of ancient Jewish tradition.[3] When Jerome was not distracted by this imaginary symbolism, he was able to reproduce the true tradition of five, eight, and eleven.[4]

> He did not realise the necessity of accurately preserving the Hebrew tradition. He could not foresee the confusion that might afterward arise from carelessness, or want of thoroughness, in his use of it. For to this, and nothing else, can we ascribe his mention of the tripartite division in the Prologue Galeatus, and his enumeration of the books, immediately afterwards, in an order which claiming to be the Jewish order, fails to agree with that of genuine Hebrew tradition, or even with his own explicit statements elsewhere. 5

Jerome's Latin Vulgate became the official, accepted translation of the Roman Catholic Church, although his theory concerning canonical and non-canonical books was not received.[6]

Jerome's view was in opposition to Origen's, who contested the authority of the Apocrypha. One writer feels that Jerome's work was done to condemn Origen's view, and his translation made in an effort to condemn all others.[7] Duff says, "Jerome's blows at Origen were deadly blows at thinking and life; the author of the Vulgate stunned Old Testament study for a thousand years."[8]

However, in spite of this one opinion, Jerome is considered the best Biblical scholar of the Western Church.[9] His work was vastly

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1. Ryle, op. cit., p. 221.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 223.
5. Ibid., p. 231.
6. Dentan, op. cit., p. 17.
7. Duff, loc. cit.
8. Ibid., p. 105.
9. Bruce, op. cit., p. 164.

needed in his own time, and has had lasting, authoritative effects, even though there were errors in his translation, upon works following his own.

c. Christian Fathers Who Shared Jerome's View

Teachers connected with Palestine and familiar with the Hebrew Canon were those most likely to accept Jerome's theory.[1] Athanasius expressly forbade the use of Apocrypha for doctrine;[2] Junilius Africanus of Emmaus (who debated the issue with Origen) revered the authority of the Jewish Canon.[3]

Cyril of Jerusalem, a "typical and influential leader",[4] had a "profound sense of the difference between divine oracles and mere human wisdom".[5] Following Palestinian doctrine, he excluded the Apocrypha, except for Baruch;[6] however, in practice, he acknowledged them, as did Athanasius and Jerome, giving them a sort of deutero-canonical, secondary status.[7]

Gregory of Nazianzen, A. D. 390, Epiphanius, A. D. 403 (who included several individual Apocrypha), and Ruffinus, A. D. 410, also followed Jerome's example.[8] Erasmus, in an edition of the New Testament, A. D. 1516, questioned the worth of the Apocrypha, but was not ready to remove them completely.[9]

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1. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Volume I, op. cit., p. ix.
2. Buhl, op. cit., p. 58.
3. Torrey, op. cit., p. 25.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ryle, op. cit., p. 216.
7. Torrey, loc. cit.
8. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 216-218.
9. Torrey, op. cit., p. 31.

Cardinal Cajetan, before whose tribunal Luther appeared for trial, shared Jerome's viewpoint, although the Roman Church on the whole did not. As Torrey observed: "The words of councils and doctors must alike be revised by the judgment of Jerome."[1] He was allowed to hold the opinion during his lifetime, but was questioned after his death by the Church.[2] The Reformers followed Jerome's example, as did the Puritans after them. The opposition of the latter was the start of the permanent exclusion of the Apocrypha.[3]

2. Augustine

Augustine, born one hundred years after Origen's death,[4] maintained and accepted a conception of all books in the Greek Bible as Divinely inspired and Scriptural.[5] This lack of distinction was the stand which the Latin Fathers took, for the most part.[6] The differences in the Greek translation from the Hebrew Augustine held to be due to Divine inspiration,[7] and purposely existent so as to be suited to Gentiles.

> Augustine studied the Scriptures in a Latin translation. He had no knowledge of Hebrew, and did not deem such knowledge necessary. The Greek translation of the Old Testament was for him as truly inspired as was the original itself. The translators were themselves

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1. Torrey, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
2. Ibid., p. 32.
3. Goodspeed, op. cit., pp. 6-7.
4. Gilbert, op. cit., p. 124.
5. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, loc. cit.
6. Bruce, loc. cit.
7. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, loc. cit.

> prophets. Their work differed somewhat from the original, he knew, but he regarded these differences as divinely suited to an edition of the Scriptures for the Gentiles. [1]

Augustine reckoned forty-four books in the Old Testament, including Tobit, Judith, I-II Maccabees, Ecclesiasticus, and the Wisdom of Solomon.[2] He gave Apocrypha equal rank; although he admitted a detraction from authority in the partial recognition of them, he argued that it was better not to make a distinction when there was a difference of opinion, since no sufficient criterion of judgment was to be found.[3]

In addition to this theory, he advanced the use of allegorical interpretation of the Bible,[4] declaring that the New Testament was hidden in the Old Testament.[5] He recognized the value of Jerome's translation and used it extensively.[6] He cited a Western text, however, whose chief characteristic was a tendency towards expansion.[7]

The value of Augustine's criticism has been called into question by some.

> . . .He and his comrades through the ages of Roman Christianity had no sense of the real meaning and value of a document coming from an age other than their own. Augustine's superficial expositions and his allegorical deductions headed the process, 10 centuries long, of similar uncritical use of the noble old Scriptures. [8]

In Augustine's later writings, he made concessions to the view that the Apocrypha should be separated. His doctrine then was

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1. Gilbert, loc. cit.
2. Bruce, loc. cit.
3. Torrey, op. cit., p. 30.
4. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, loc. cit.
5. Bruce, op. cit., p. 86.
6. Ibid., p. 176.
7. Torrey, op. cit., p. 26.
8. Duff, op. cit., p. 105.

not much different from Jerome's.[1]

Augustine's primary views had great influence in the Church, and were paramount in the West even at the time of the Reformation.[2] They were echoed officially at the Council of Hippo, A. D. 393 and the Council of Carthage, A. D. 397. Augustine was present at these Councils as Presbyter and Bishop respectively. These decrees provided the chief authority behind those of the Council of Trent,[3] to be discussed later.

The chief exponents of Augustine's doctrine of the Canon were Tertullian, the "great jurist-theologian",[4] Cyprian,[5] and Origen, who felt that the tradition of the Christian Church was valid, even as Hebrew tradition.[6]

E. Pre-Reformation Views

Ecclesiastical writers of the Middle Ages vacillated in their lists between Augustine and Jerome. The whole question of canonicity was an open one.[7] The criterion of judgment appeared to be popular usage;[8] hence, the canon was uncertain,[9] since popular usage was varied.

> . . .Some Christian teachers (e.g., Augustine) argued that the Apostolic quotation proved Enoch to be inspired; others (mentioned by Jerome) argued that Jude was not inspired because he quoted

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1. Torrey, loc. cit.
2. Ibid., p. 30.
3. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, loc. cit.
4. Torrey, op. cit., p. 26.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., p. 27.
7. Buhl, op. cit., p. 64.
8. Dods, op. cit., p. 35.
9. Torrey, op. cit., p. 30.

Enoch, which reminds us how differently the same fact may be viewed by different people. 1

The Canon, then, was in abeyance among Christians just prior to the Reformation,[2] not a fixed, rigid list such as that of the Jews.

> Jerome pointed to the Hebrew Canon, acknowledged everywhere and solely valid; yet found himself constrained by Church usage to recognize also a secondary list; and he himself translated Tobit and Judith; Augustine pointed to the outside books, which the Christians for four centuries had read and cherished; but at length found himself constrained to give superior rank to those books whose authority was unquestioned. The learned leaders of the Reformation were thus provided with a doctrine of holy writ which left them in some uncertainty. 3

F. Protestant and Catholic Controversy

In the Reformation

1. The Stand of the Reformers

Carlstadt, in 1520, adopted Jerome's position, excluding all books from the Canon except those used by the Hebrews.[4] Luther, in 1534, took a decisive step, acting on a suggestion made by Jerome over a thousand years before.[5] He removed the Apocrypha from among the other books to a separate section. The new order marked the beginning of a decline in the appreciation of the Apocrypha.[6]

Luther's tests of canonicity were these: (a) whether a book brought new life to the reader (an inward witness of the Spirit) and thus proved itself to be from God; (b) whether or not the book was

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1. Robinson, op. cit., p. 206.
2. Dods, loc. cit.
3. Torrey, loc. cit.
4. Buhl, op. cit., p. 65.
5. Goodspeed, op. cit., p. 4.
6. Dentan, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

occupied with Christ, as the Fulfillment of all revelation. Luther first accepted Jerome's list, as the result of authoritative study, and then applied his tests.[1]

The Hebrew language was more available to the Reformers than to Jerome. They studied it diligently, desiring to give the common people the fruit of the best Jewish learning. They did not always agree with the Christian tradition as to the number of books in the Old Testament, the text, the principles of interpretation, etc., yet they did not regard Jewish tradition as final, either. Jewish scholarship was accepted because its results were in accordance with the best light then attainable.[2]

> . . .The Reformers had too much reverence for God's Word to subject it to the bondage of any tradition. [3]

Generally, the Reformers stood with Jerome on principle. They all recognized the Apocrypha as a secondary group, substantially the same list; they were included in translations, yet not considered canonical.[4]

2. The Stand of the Council of Trent

When the Protestants accepted the theory of Jerome, the Roman Church followed that of Augustine, and of Church practice.[5] In the Fourth Session of the Council of Trent, A. D. 1546, the Apocrypha, as they were found in the Vulgate and as they were accustomed to be

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1. Dods, op. cit., pp. 40, 45-47.
2. W. R. Smith, op. cit., pp. 43-46.
3. Ibid., p. 46.
4. Torrey, op. cit., p. 31.
5. Buhl, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

read, were decreed canonical. They were considered equally valid for doctrinal questions.[1] Anyone who did not receive them thus was anathematized;[2] hence, their acceptance was actually proclaimed as a matter of salvation.[3]

This decree of the Roman Church disregarded the Jewish Canon, and also the remarks of Jerome, striving to assure a definite and unequivocal form.[4] As such, it was a "practical, if not historically justifiable decision."[5] It brought several later Church theologians into embarrassment; their attempts to make distinctions were not effective,[6] for the Council decrees were considered as utmost authority.

Those Apocrypha afforded full canonicity by the Church were Tobit, Judith, the additions to Esther and Daniel, Baruch, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Solomon, and I-II Maccabees. (The position concerning them was reaffirmed at the Vatican Council in 1870.[7])

At the same Council the ultimate authority of the Vulgate was upheld.[8] This appears strange, since Jerome's Prologue concerning the Canon was ignored.[9] However, the text which was authorized was not the pure text of Jerome, but a version modified by older considerations taken from other Latin translations.[10]

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1. Torrey, op. cit., p. 33.
2. Ibid.
3. Buhl, op. cit., p. 31.
4. Ibid., pp. 61-62.
5. Ibid., p. 62.
6. Ibid., pp. 65-65.
7. Bruce, op. cit., p. 165.
8. Ibid.
9. W. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 40.
10. Ibid., p. 36.

In the Roman Catholic consideration of books, then, Church authority and decree appear as the ruling criteria of judgment. This was made plain in the formal declarations at the Council of Trent, when the Church's decision regarding books was set forth authoritatively.[1]

3. Protestant and Catholic Views Contrasted

The difference between Protestant and Romish Canons represented essentially the difference between the Palestinian and Alexandrian,[2] hinging chiefly upon the place of the Apocrypha.

> . . .The general rejection of them by the Protestant Churches may have contributed to their firmer recognition by the Roman Church at the Council of Trent. Even since that Council there have been Catholic doubts expressed about them, while with the Protestant Churches rejections have never been universal and absolute. 3

Logically speaking, the Protestant view, in its reference to the Hebrew Canon, was the more correct. It was right to regard the Jews as the truest authorities for several reasons: (a) the Revelation of God was entrusted to them; it was their task to preserve it; (b) the decrees of the Scribes concerning the Canon were echoes of popular favor and circulation; (c) they recognized only the Scriptures which provided means of knowing more of spiritual life; (d) the Scribes were guided by the feeling of whether books contained a true expression of the Spirit of the Old Testament.[4] Only the Jewish Canon gave a true picture of the spiritual life of the Old Covenant, of prophecies, and

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1. Torrey, loc. cit.
2. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Volume I, op. cit., p. viii.
3. Rowley, op. cit., p. 172.
4. Buhl, op. cit., pp. 71-73.

of the Old Testament Revelation.[1]

> The Hebrew is the only literature in all the world in which God is in all, through all, and over all. [2]

G. Individual Church Practices Following the Reformation

1. The Puritans

Churches influenced by Calvin carried out even stricter principles of Scripture than did the early Reformers. The Puritans emphasized the non-canonical status of the Apocrypha and made definite efforts to remove them from the Bible. (Synod of Dort, 1618-1619) They were forbidden reading in the Puritan Confession of 1648.[3]

2. Reformed Churches

These churches were also influenced by Calvin, obtaining their pattern from Geneva. The Apocrypha were read for ethical values, but enjoyed no status any different from ordinary religious writings. This view was stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647.[4]

3. Lutheran and Anglican Churches

There was a divergence in these two branches of the Protestant Church from the others. They adopted an intermediary position regarding

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1. Buhl, op. cit., pp. 71-73.
2. Gibson, op. cit., p. 46.
3. Buhl, op. cit., p. 69.
4. Bruce, op. cit., p. 165.

the Apocrypha, affording them a deutero-canonical status.[1] They were not, however, considered as decisive in doctrinal matters.[2]

4. Greek Church

The Greek Church never came to a formal, authoritative statement concerning the Apocrypha. Its tendency at first was to follow Athanasius, who rejected them as doctrinal guides, but permitted their reading;[3] it was influenced as well, however, by the Alexandrians.[4] A controversy arose in the seventeenth century around the Christian use of Apocrypha. Cyril of Jerusalem, Patriarch in 1621-1637, proclaimed the Reformers' view, following the example of Jerome. The attempt to exclude the Apocrypha was fruitless. At the Synod of Jerusalem, A. D. 1672, which was directed against the Reformers' view, the Apocrypha were upheld as equal in authority to the accepted Biblical books.[5] The Apocrypha included were those partially accepted by the Jews, although some manuscripts included others.[6]

5. Syriac-speaking Church

A manuscript has been preserved containing the teachings of a scholar named Paul who worked with another scholar named Junilius of Constantinople in the latter's city in the sixth century. Three classes of Scriptural literature were taught: (a) historical, having perfect

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1. Bruce, loc. cit.
2. Dentan, op. cit., pp. 20-21.
3. Torrey, op. cit., pp. 34-35.
4. Buhl, op. cit., p. 54-55.
5. Torrey, loc. cit.
6. Buhl, loc. cit.

authority; (b) prophetic, having qualified authority; (c) gnomic, having no real authority. Ecclesiasticus was included with the historical group, Job, Tobit, Judith, and I-II Maccabees with the prophets. Ecclesiastes was not mentioned at all.[1]

There was practical agreement in the Syriac Canon with the Hebrew; divergencies lay, as has just been seen, in the inclusion of some Apocrypha. Even the Nestorians, who were the rigid traditionalists among the Syrian Christians, received Ecclesiasticus and the additions to Daniel.[2]

H. General Arrangement of the Christian Canon

Even where it was intended that the Hebrew Canon be the rule, the Christian Fathers followed the order of the Septuagint. This is seen in the Greek titles, the insertion of some Greek books, the subdivision of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah, the prevailing arrangement by subject-matter, and the absence of uniformity.[3] The reason behind the rejection of the Jewish tripartite division must have been ignorance of Jewish tradition, or else a feeling that to disregard it was but a trivial departure from the tradition.[4]

I. Rigidity of the Christian Canon

Following the Reformation the Protestant Canon remained the

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1. Torrey, op. cit., pp. 28-29.
2. Buhl, op. cit., pp. 52-53.
3. Ryle, op. cit., pp. 218-219.
4. Ibid.

same as the Hebrew Canon, with the inclusion for many years of a separate section of the Apocrypha, usually placed between the Testaments. Gradually they were left out of Bible editions, which practice was begun with the protests of the Puritans and carried through by the Bible Societies.

> . . .The exclusion of the apocryphal books from the Protestant Canon was not due to the action of any authoritative committee or council, but to the arbitrary action of the Bible Societies. Today the wisdom of this action is being seriously challenged by thoughtful biblical scholars throughout the Anglo-Saxon world. 1

J. Present-Day Views of the Apocrypha

Not much is said about the Apocrypha today, nor do the books appear in many copies of the Bible.

> . . .The 'Church Books' of the Fathers are still in evidence, but in the light and heat of modern times and historical studies the recognition of their religious value to the layman has reached a point which is perhaps its lowest ebb. 2

There is still much of value to be found in the study of the Apocrypha, however, as is indicated by the following quotations from recent authors.

> But to us this appendix of the Old Testament is important as forming a very necessary link between the Old Testament and the New, and if we had no Old Testament at all, the Apocrypha would still be indispensable to the student of the New Testament, of which it forms the prelude and background. . .The strong contrast they present in sheer, moral values to the New Testament is most instructive. And they form an indispensable part of the historic Christian Bible, as it was known in the ancient Greek and Latin churches, in the Reformation and the Renaissance, and in all authorized English Bibles, Catholic, and Protestant. 3

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1. Kent, op. cit., p. 274.
2. Torrey, op. cit., p. 40.
3. Edgar J. Goodspeed: The Apocrypha: An American Translation, pp. vi-vii.

> In addition to the spiritual and moral service rendered by these books, the modern student recognizes that without them it is absolutely impossible to explain the course of religious development between 200 B. C. and A. D. 100. If the Canonical and Apocryphal Books are compared in reference to the question of inspiration, no unbiased scholar could have any hesitation in declaring that the inspiration of such a book as Wisdom or the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs is incomparably higher than that of Esther. 1

> . . .No one can seriously doubt that the canonical Old Testament as a whole is both of greater historical significance and higher religious authority than the Apocrypha, but neither can one doubt that, even though the great age of Hebrew history was past and the people of Israel were no longer stirred by the creative ferments of the prophetic age, the Holy Spirit was still moving among them. His Presence can be felt in the great passages of the Apocrypha. 2

K. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter first outlined the situation existent in the Early Church prior to any definite steps towards the canonization of books. Such need was not felt at first; however, distinctions eventually had to be made within the religious literature inherited through the Greek version of the Scriptures.

Divergent customs were in use in regard to the Apocrypha, which was venerated as Scripture through ignorance of ancient Jewish tradition. The use of the Codex aided in sifting Scriptures; all within its covers, usually including only those Apocrypha respected by Greek-speaking Jews, was considered canonical.

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1. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, op. cit., p. x.
2. Dentan, op. cit., p. 21.

The way in which the Apocrypha were revered indicates that the Canon of the early Christians was not rigid. Standards of inspiration were different from those of the present. Most of the early codices and lists include the Apocrypha.

The list of Melito is the earliest available, and of great importance. Melito was the Bishop of Sardis, the earliest writer after Josephus to provide information on the Old Testament. He travelled and inquired in Syria, seeking to draw up an accurate text according to the most ancient evidence. Such a service was needed, due to the attack of Jews upon Christians for using Apocryphal proof-texts; also, Christians needed to know the true extent of the Jewish Canon.

Melito's list is the same as the Hebrew, with the omission of Esther, although his order is that of the Septuagint. The omission may have been accidental, or due to a local tradition. The Apocrypha were not included.

Origen, A. D. 185-254, listed the Old Testament in much the same way, including Baruch with Jeremiah, including Esther, but omitting the Twelve. The omission here is definitely thought to have been accidental; the use of Baruch may have been a local practice.

Although Origen's list was much like the Hebrew, he defended and vindicated the Apocrypha in practice. He felt that the Christian tradition in regard to them was developed under God's providence.

Origen's most important work was a six-column edition of the Old Testament, illustrating the unsettled state of the Canon, and providing ancient texts.

The views of Christian Fathers concerning the Canon were grouped largely under either of two men, Jerome or Augustine, who held opposite opinions.

Jerome, born A. D. 347, the greatest scholar of the Western Church, was commissioned by the Pope of Rome to create an authoritative translation which would do away with the many variant, existent forms and texts. He was especially fitted for the task because of his extensive travel and Hebrew learning. He was also well-versed in the best texts available.

Jerome made his translation directly from the Hebrew text, accepting as canonical only those books included by the Hebrews. Although the Apocrypha were left among the other books, he designated them as non-canonical in an attached prologue. His work changed the attitude of the Church somewhat towards the Septuagint; Apocrypha were still honored, but were not considered valid for doctrinal support.

Jerome speaks of the number twenty-two as applied to the books of the Old Testament, but in another instance he gives the traditional twenty-four. The former was employed by several Christian Fathers, in an agreement with the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In most cases, however, Jerome followed Hebrew tradition.

Those among the Fathers who shared Jerome's view were Athanasius, Junilius Africanus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzen, Ruffinus, Erasmus, Cardinal Cejetan, and the Reformers.

Augustine maintained a conception of all books of the Greek Bible, including the Apocrypha, as Divinely inspired. The differences in translation were felt to be providentially suited to Gentile readers.

Augustine, writing over a hundred years later than Origen, admitted that the partial recognition of the Apocrypha detracted somewhat from their authority, yet he argued that it was better to make no distinction when there was difference of opinion. In his later writings, however, Augustine separated the Apocrypha from the rest of the books, adopting a view almost the same as Jerome's.

His early view had great influence in the Roman Church, being one proclaimed by the Councils of Hippo and of Carthage, A. D. 393 and A. D. 397, which in turn became the authority behind the proclamations of the Council of Trent. Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian were the most important among those sharing Augustine's viewpoint.

Prior to the Reformation there was uncertainty as to a fixed Canon, viewpoints varying between that of Jerome or of Augustine. When the Reformers, Carlstadt in 1520, Luther in 1534, took decisive steps based on Jerome's principles, a controversy arose between Protestantism and Catholicism. Luther, the first to place the Apocrypha in a separate section, based canonicity upon the inward witness to and the effect upon a reader, and upon whether or not a book was occupied with Christ. The Reformers sought after the ancient Hebrew text, yet took into consideration in their judging the popular Christian usage of various books.

The Council of Trent, in 1546, opposed Jerome's view of the Canon, although it accepted his Vulgate as the official text of the Old Testament. The Apocrypha were decreed canonical; belief in them as such was said to be a necessary factor for salvation. This decree disregarded the Jewish Canon; Church practice and Church ordinances were the chief criteria of judgment.

The essential difference between the Catholic and Protestant Churches rested in their regard for the Apocrypha, which was the basic difference between the Palestinian and Alexandrian Canons. The Protestant view was the more logical, for it was based on the true authority of the Jews, who were entrusted with the fullest revelations of God, who demonstrated the popularity of various books, who understood the Scriptures in the best sense then possible.

The practice of individual Church groups following the Reformation was touched upon: The Puritans, and the Reformed Churches excluded the Apocrypha, the former group seeking to eliminate them entirely, the latter using them for ethical purposes. The Lutheran and Anglican Churches adopted an intermediate position between the extremes of inclusion or exclusion, yet not considering them decisive in doctrinal matters. The Greek Church, although led by Cyril of Jerusalem in an attempt to adopt the Reformers' view, gradually included the Apocrypha, in 1672, at the Synod of Jerusalem. The Syriac Church observed three classes of authority within Scripture; some Apocrypha were added, yet there was practical agreement with the Hebrew Canon.

The general arrangement of Christian Canons followed the Septuagint order. Protestant and Catholic lists remained much the same after the Reformation. The Protestant Church, however, gradually dropped the Apocrypha from Bible editions, under the influence primarily of the Puritans and the Bible societies. Interest in the Apocrypha waned; however, the values of the Apocrypha, as background, both historical and spiritual, for the New Testament, are still maintained.

Conclusions which may be drawn as to the criteria employed by the Christian Fathers in canonization are these: firstly, the witness of the ancient Hebrew Canon was sought; secondly, Church usage, as springing from ancient Jewish usage, was considered; thirdly, books written in Hebrew or Aramaic were preferred; fourthly, books which truly brought new life to the reader, in an inward witness of the Spirit, were acknowledged; fifthly, books which were occupied with Christ as the chief end of Revelation, were recognized; sixthly, at the Council of Trent, the decrees of the Church were proclaimed as the ultimate criterion. In the main, the chief criteria were: the most ancient Jewish tradition available, since the Jews were best authorized to testify to the Scriptures, and the test of popular usage.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

A. Summary of Criteria Employed

Criteria for canonization employed by the Jewish Fathers in the early stages of the Hebrew Canon were these: (a) the Law, or Pentateuch, as the Supreme Revelation of God to Moses, spoken "face to face", enjoyed an idealized, exalted position; (b) any book added after the Law had to be consistent with its spirit and teachings; (c) works exhibiting prophetic authorship or the marks of antiquity were not questioned; (d) books affecting the religious life of the people were honored; (e) books written in Hebrew were preferred above those written in Aramaic and those written in Aramaic over those written in Greek; (f) books surviving persecution were considered worthy of a special place.

Additional criteria exhibited by the Jewish Fathers in the later stages of the Hebrew Canon were these: (a) the tradition of prophetic succession, which restricted the writing of all canonical books to the prophetic era; (b) claims to antiquity, even if pseudonymous, were influential; (c) popularity and public usage told in the favor of books.

Criteria employed by the Christian Fathers beyond the basic fact of Christ's own testimony to the Old Testament, were these:

(a) the witness of the ancient Hebrew Canon, the Jews being best qualified to testify to the Old Covenant; (b) Church usage, as springing from ancient Jewish usage; (c) Hebrew and Aramaic compositions as preferred above Greek writings; (d) the inward witness of the Holy Spirit to the heart; (e) the occupation of a book with Christ as the chief end of all Revelation; (f) Church authority and ordinance as final, as proclaimed by the Council of Trent.

B. Evaluation of Criteria

The criteria employed by the Jewish Fathers in the early stages of the Canon all appear to be justifiable standards. The consideration of the Books of Moses as the highest revelation was natural and obviously true. These tell of the very beginning of Time; they display the character of God in His dealings face to face with His people; they give the basic Law for all Time in the Ten Commandments; they relate the history and traditions of the people; they outline the laws by which the nation was to govern all phases of its life. Even though the books of the Law suffered misinterpretation with the advent of legalism, their superiority on the life of the Jews and in the life of the world is clearly evident.

> . . .That the Law was developed in a wrong spirit, and that the living truth was obscured through a mechanical worship of the letter does not alter the fact that but for the veneration in which, as a fixed and sacred Canon, the Scriptures were held, and the consequent care with which they were transmitted, it would have been impossible to preserve unimpaired the spiritual treasure which they enshrined. 1

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1. William Fairweather: The Background of the Gospels, pp. 41-42.

This veneration for the Law is further justified for Christian readers in that it formed the basis for Jesus' teachings and was beloved by Him.

If the acceptance of the Pentateuch as supreme in the Old Testament is valid, it follows that the Jewish criterion of judging other books as to their consistency with its teachings is also valid. This would be doubtful only if in their interpretation they failed to distinguish between essential and incidental similarities or dissimilarities, or indulged in conjecture or speculation in interpreting a passage.

The criterion of antiquity and authoritative authorship is a valid one, as is the one preferring Hebrew compositions over others. These would help towards obtaining the oldest possible works, which would be the best witnesses. Also, the criterion of survival in the face of persecution is valid. Only those most important to the life of the people would be protected and preserved; others would be forgotten. However, this criterion considered alone would not be sufficient, since it partakes of uncertainty; accidents might possibly have occurred to cause some books to survive which were not authoritative and others to be lost which were authoritative.

On the whole, the criteria employed in the early history of the Jewish Canon were thoughtful and genuine.

In the later stages of the Jewish Canon, the criteria employed by the Fathers were at times questionable, particularly that of prophetic succession. This idea had its origin in Josephus' theory, which was propounded for historical purposes, not religious purposes,

and which distorted the actual historical facts. Resting on such a questionable basis, the criterion could not be just. In addition to this, the growth of Pharisaic tradition and Scribal legalism tended to nullify the true spiritual teachings, and make further prophecy a difficult thing. Thus this criterion was not only of unsteady historicity, but was contradicted by the attitudes of those who applied it.

The criterion of antiquity was, of course, valid, if applied sincerely, but it underwent modification. Pseudonymous works were accepted at times on the strength of the pseudonym, which practice did not demonstrate valid, thorough scholarship. During this period, also, religious leaders at times revised books to meet with orthodox doctrine, and then canonized them on the strength of these revisions; this does not correspond to the purest degree with the criterion of consistency with the Law. However, the criterion of popular usage was as valid in this period as in others, for it testified to the place of the books in the lives and hearts of the people.

Jewish scholarship, then, tended to become careless in the final days of their Canon. Controversies within sects, rather than the example of the Law or the consideration of God's progressive plan of revelation, came to influence viewpoints regarding various books.

The validity of the basic criterion accepted and employed by the Christian Fathers, that of Christ's testimony to the worth and inspiration of the Old Testament, cannot be questioned, for to do so would be to question His words and His very life.

> . . .That which was used by the Redeemer Himself for the sustenance of His own soul can never pass out of the use of His redeemed. That from which He proved the divinity of His mission and the age-

> long preparation for His coming, must always have a principal place in His Church's argument for Him. 1

The Christians' search for the ancient Hebrew text and listing, in the belief that the Jews were the best authorized to testify to the Old Covenant, was also obviously a valid standard of judgment. The voice of antiquity is the one most likely to be correct; Israel, as the people experiencing the very events of the Old Testament, was logically the one best equipped to criticize it.

> . . .Israel was a prophet nation called of God to proclaim His message of salvation to the whole world; and in this unquestionable fact we have a broad and deep foundation for our faith in the inspiration and authority of the library of sacred literature in which the story of the nation is enshrined and their oracles are preserved. 2

The criterion of Church usage met with problems in the Christian Church, for usage was varied, especially of Apocryphal books, and sometimes of accepted canonical books. It may be considered as having been a justifiable criterion when it sought out ancient Jewish usage behind the Christian practices, but it was not generally a conclusive criterion.

The inward witness of the Holy Spirit, in testing the Divine character of books, was the purest criterion employed, for it gave God's own testimony, not the testimony of men. The intrinsic truth of Scripture appeared to men through the application of this criterion, as a subjective interpretation of objective facts of history. 3

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1. G. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 19.
2. Gibson, op. cit., pp. 66-67.
3. Robinson, op. cit., pp. 209-210.

> . . .Truth can be sufficiently compelling to win its own recognition, and God does not require a testimonial from anybody when He chooses to speak. 1

The Reformers stated this criterion of inward witness as the ultimate deciding-factor for each individual in his judgment of Scripture. Gibson quotes John Calvin as saying, "Scripture, carrying its own evidence along with it, deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes the full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit."[2]

Whether or not a book concerned itself with Christ as the chief end of Revelation was a valid criterion from the standpoint of the Christian Fathers, who could survey the Old Testament in retrospect, and in the light of its fulfillment of Revelation in Christ. The twin tests of congruity with the main end of Revelation and of direct historical connection with the Revelation of God in history,[3] could justly be applied to all books towards a full understanding of that Revelation.

Church authority and decree, as a final, imperative criterion of canonicity, is obviously, in comparison with the other criteria employed by the Christian Fathers, far inferior. An organizational decree made by a few ruling some books as canonical, and others non-canonical does not let books speak for themselves, nor does it allow for the inward witness of the Spirit to individuals concerning them. It does not even allow for an intelligent consideration of the books in the face of available evidence, but calls only for blind acceptance and obedience to orders, orders having their source in fallible men.

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1. Robinson, op. cit., p. 210.
2. Gibson, op. cit., quoting John Calvin, p. 111.
3. Dods, op. cit., p. 54.

This latter criterion, then, and the criterion of Church usage, are the two employed in the Christian Era which are of doubtful value. The others, however, show earnest seeking for the truth, both of the technical factors of authorship and antiquity, and of spiritual teaching.

C. Conclusion

In the Introduction it was stated that conclusions would be drawn, or at least attempted, as to whether the present list of the Old Testament Canon is the best possible one. Also, if it were not so concluded, a revised list was to be suggested.

Most of the Criteria employed in determining the Old Testament Canon were done so justifiably, and with pure motives. The Old Testament Canon has undergone careful and assiduous study by consecrated men. In view of these facts, it is probably right and safe to accept their listing, which for Protestants is the same as the ancient Hebrew Canon, the Apocrypha being considered separate and non-canonical, although valuable for historical background and moral edification.

To the question whether or not the Fathers were correct in separating the Apocrypha from the Canon, this answer may be given: evidently, to the majority of scholars, at least, the Apocrypha did not present an indispensable link in the chain of God's progressive Revelation. In answer to the question of the value of Ecclesiastes, Esther, or the Song of Songs, it may be said that the majority of scholars evidently saw some deep purposeful meaning in them for the understanding of God's Revelation. Also, they were enshrined in the hearts and lives

of the people, affecting their religious life, and as such were worthy of preservation and canonization.

Some of the Apocrypha contain great passages possessing deep spiritual value, notably Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon. If any of the Apocrypha should have been included in the Canon, it should probably have been these two, as sister works to Proverbs. However, the teachings within them are not original, but were copied from the ancients, and as such they lack some intrinsic quality which testifies inwardly to the worth of the older canonical books. Another addition which perhaps would have been made had the Apocrypha been accepted more readily, might have been I Maccabees, in that it fills in the gap between the Testaments, and keeps alive the story of Israel as a nation through which God was working.

A proposition which is felt to be made justifiably is this: that the Canon remain as it is, but that the Apocrypha also be included in Bible editions, with an explanation of the problems of Canon formation and of the criteria employed in determining it. This would acquaint readers with the usually unknown Apocrypha; it would give them further bases for their belief in the Old Testament; and it would help them to form their own conclusions in the face of all evidence.

A blind acceptance of every word of Scripture is foolish, in the face of the problems which have accompanied its formation and its interpretation. Still, a blind skepticism, seeking to undermine the value and influence of the Bible as a rule for faith and practice is also foolish. There has never in all Time been such a Book; even

though there are difficulties within it, its effect upon men for centuries has been unmistakable and miraculous, a testimony to its pervasion by a "Someone" who can communicate through it to men.

In conclusion, the following quotation may express the eternal quality of the Bible, which can neither be explained fully nor explained away. Gibson writes,

> . . .And when I hear of these old difficulties marshalled for the thousandth time, with the expectation of destroying our faith in Christ, I think of my little grandchild of eighteen months, who having been taught by her father to blow out first a match, and then a candle, made her next attempt on the orb of day, on an afternoon with just enough fog to make it possible for her to look straight at its great red ball. The dear child tried it again and again and again. And the Sun is shining yet! 1

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1. Gibson, op. cit., pp. 245-246.

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