

time furnish interesting information concerning the customs, habits of life, religious views, and opinions of their time. They show, in particular, the higher and nobler character of the inspired books of the Bible.

The apocryphal books are divided into two classes on the basis of their subject matter and reputed authors:

1. The Old Testament apocrypha were written chiefly by Jews, though some contain interpolations by Christians. These books propose fictitious narratives about Biblical persons, or add pious exhortations and precepts to the Mosaic Law, or in the style of prophecy an the name of some patriarch or prophet foretell the near advent of the Messianic reign. The most famous apocrypha of the Old Testament are the third and fourth books of Esdras and the prayer of Manasses, books often given as an appendix in the Latin Vulgate. Other apocryphal books of the Old Testament are: Book of Henoch, Assumption of Moses, Apocalypse of Abraham, Psalms of Solomon, Sibylline Oracles, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Ascension of Isaias.

2. The New Testament apocrypha are usually imitation of the genuine sacred books of the Bible. They treat at length matters either briefly mentioned in the Biblical books or omitted entirely. Their favorite themes are the infancy of our Lord or His life on earth after His resurrection. They contain many silly and foolish legends and are lacking in the simplicity and sublimity of the Biblical books. What they add to the four Gospels is made up on the whole either of crude amplifications or of legends. The portrait of our Lord in particular is a caricature of the true image which we find in the canonical Gospels. The

Divine Child is frequently represented as haughty, capricious, and performing miracles for purely selfish reasons. Much about Him is artificial and theatrical. Some fifty Gospels, twenty-two Acts, and many Epistles and Apocalypses of diverse Apostles are known to have existed, though many have perished. Famous among these writings is the Letter of King Abgar to our Lord. Other New Testament apocrypha are: Gospels according to the Hebrew and according to the Egyptians; Gospels of Peter and of Thomas; the Proto-Evangelium of James; Acts of Peter and Paul; Apocalypses of Peter, of Paul, of Bartholomew; Epistle of Paul and Seneca.

(1) Esther 10:14 to 16:14).

(2) Daniel 3:24-90; 13, 14).

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Catholic and Protestant Bibles

The Protestant Old Testament omits seven entire books and parts of two other books. To explain how this came about, it is necessary that we go back to the ancient Jewish Scriptures. The Hebrew Bible contained only the Old Testament and from its Old Testament it excluded seven entire books—namely, Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, I and II Maccabees—and parts of Esther(1) and Daniel(2). These books, which are missing in the Jewish Bible, came into the Catholic Church with the Septuagint, a pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament. In the Septuagint they are intermingled and given equal rank with other books as in the Catholic Bible. Since the Hebrew collection of the sacred books was older than the Septuagint, the books of the Hebrew Bible are known as the “protocanonical” (of the first canon, collection, catalog). The additional books and sections found in the Septuagint and in Catholic Bibles are called “deuterocanonical” (of the second canon or collection).

Jewish hostility to the deuterocanonical books is probably attributable to the conservative spirit of the times. During the last centuries which preceded the coming of Christ, the Jews of Palestine were becoming extremely reactionary under the stress of unfavorable political conditions. Since the deuterocanonical books were of comparatively recent origin and since some of them were written in Greek—the language of paganism—they naturally fell under the displeasure of the Jews. The fact, too, that the

early Christians used the Septuagint in their controversies with the Jews only served to confirm the latter in their opposition to this version of the Old Testament.

The Protestants of the sixteenth century objected to the deuterocanonical books because of their dogmatic content. Thus the second book of Maccabees (12:39-46), for instance contains the doctrine of purgatory, of prayers and sacrifices for the dead. The book of Tobias teaches the efficacy of good works, and the book of Sirach (15:11-20) clearly teaches that man has free will. The Protestants could not consistently reject some without excluding all the deuterocanonical books. Hence, in drawing up their list of Old Testament books they went back to the list of the Palestinian Jews. They removed the deuterocanonical books from their traditional place among the protocanonical books and placed them at the end in a special appendix. In addition, they designated them as "apocryphal" (spurious, uninspired), a term which helped to lower them in the estimation of Protestant readers. The Lutheran and Anglican Bibles still carry them in the appendix or give them a least a secondary rank. But the nonconformistic churches reject them entirely. In 1827 the British and Foreign Bible Society decided not to handle or print Bibles that contained the deuterocanonical books and not to subsidize companies that published them. In consequence, the deuterocanonical books have practically disappeared from Protestant Bibles. The Protestant opposition to these books has in turn influenced the attitude of the Greek and Russian Churches.

The attitude of the Catholic Church toward the deuterocanonical books is determined by a

constant and well-established tradition. How well attested this translation is, and how well founded is the position of the Catholic Church, is made readily apparent by the following important facts: In the first place, the Apostles and New Testament writers quoted principally from the Septuagint. On fact, of the three hundred and fifty Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament, about three hundred are taken from the Septuagint. Some of the New Testament writers made use of the deuterocanonical books themselves, particularly the Book of Wisdom, which seems to have been St. Paul's favorite volume. The Epistle of James, for example, shows familiarity with the book of Sirach. If the Apostles and New Testament writers used some of the deuterocanonical books, did they not thereby endorse the entire and longer Septuagint collection?

Secondly, the deuterocanonical books were accepted in the Church from the beginning. The Epistle of Pope Clement, written before the end of the first century, makes use of Sirach and Wisdom, gives an analysis of the Book of Judith, and quotes from the deuterocanonical parts of Esther. The same is true of other early Christian writers. The oldest extant Christian Bibles contain the deuterocanonical books intermingled with the protocanonical. The oldest Christian list of Biblical books contain the deuterocanonical books; in 382 Pope Damasus in a Roman Council promulgated a formal list of Old and New Testament books and the list contains the same books as we have in our Catholic Bibles. Finally, Christian art of the first four centuries, especially that found in the catacombs and cemeteries, furnish among others the following illustrations from the

deuterocanonical books: Tobias with the fish, Susanna (Dan. 13), Daniel and the dragon (Dan. 14), the angel with the three children in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:49), Habakkuk and Daniel in the lion's den (Dan. 14:35).

Suffice to say, in conclusion, that since they follow the synagogue in their rejection of the deuterocanonical books, the Protestants should in all logic follow it in its rejection of the New Testament and of Christ Himself.

Apocryphal Books

The term "apocryphal" is derived from the Greek "*apokryphos*" and denotes something hidden or secret. The sacred books of the ancient pagans, which described the mysteries of religion, were called Apocrypha, because they were kept hidden in the temples, and shown only to the initiated. Again, magicians and wonder-workers forged books reputed to contain hidden heavenly secrets, and designated by the title apocrypha.

Later on, however, the term came to denote a well-defined class of work with Scriptural or quasi-Scriptural pretensions, but lacking genuineness and canonicity, and composed during the last two centuries before Christ or during the early centuries of the Christian era. These books claimed divine authority, and were occasionally accepted by some as inspired, but were excluded from the Bible of the universal Church. Their number is exceedingly great. Most of them are either anonymous or pseudonymous. Some are written for edification; others for the sake of propagating false and heretical doctrines; others, finally, to satisfy a foolish curiosity concerning prominent Biblical persons. These apocryphal books are not entirely without value. To the student of the Scriptures they at