

LOST BOOKS OF THE BIBLE?

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ARE there lost books of the Bible? Some say yes, others say no. It is the purpose of this paper to see whether we can arrive at a definite answer. We may perhaps end up with a distinction, the bugbear of the non-Scholastic mind, or with a merely probable opinion, the cautious conclusion of Scholastics. Or we may have to confess in the end: "Ignoramus et ignorabimus." But it will do no harm to have faced the question honestly and dispassionately.

We shall do well at the outset to analyze our title carefully, since a difference of meaning would naturally entail different answers. What exactly is or can be meant by a lost book of the Bible?¹ Instead of formulating an abstract definition, we had better ask the concrete question: What books are supposed to be lost to the Bible? What books have a right to be included in the Bible, but are not found in it, at least not at present?

CLASSES OF LOST BOOKS

The books which might be or have been called now lost to the Bible, may be grouped in seven classes, each with its own claim of being part of the Bible.

First Class.—Throughout the Old Testament, one meets with references to writings no longer extant. Such are the "Book of the Wars of the Lord" mentioned in Num. 21:14 (with a quotation from it), the "Book of the Just" mentioned in Jos. 10:13 (also with a quotation) and again in II Kings 1:17, etc. Actually, we have the titles of more than twenty such books, but the books themselves are lost.² The Second Book of Machabees, of course, is not lost, but its author tells us that it is nothing more than a compendium of a five-volume work by Jason the Cyrenean (II Mach. 2:24-32); and Jason's work is now lost.

¹ We may dismiss as irrelevant *The Lost Books of the Bible*, which appeared in 1926, since it only reprints pieces of early Christian literature which no one ever dreamt of including in the Bible; cf. E. J. Goodspeed, *New Chapters in New Testament Study* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), pp. 210-19.

² Cf. J. Bonfrère, S.J., *Praeloquia in Totam S. Scripturam*, c. vi, sect. 2; A. Merk, S.J., *Introductionis in S. Scripturae Libros Compendium* (ed. 9a; Paris: Lethielleux, 1927), p. 97; S. M. Zarb, O.P., *De Historia Canonis* (Rome, 1934), pp. 527-29.

A particularly strong claim to be classed among the lost books of the Bible can be made out, so it seems, for writings such as the "Book of the Law of the Lord," which Josue wrote after his victories, and which he buried under the great stone in the sanctuary (Jos. 24:26-7), or for the "Descriptions of Jeremias the Prophet," which is mentioned in II Mach. 2:1, but of which nothing further is known. A like claim as having Prophets for their authors could be advanced for the "Book of Samuel the Seer," the "Book of Nathan the Prophet," the "Book of Gad the Seer" (I Par. 29:29).

A. Alexander, organizer and first professor of the Princeton Theological Seminary, thought it highly probable that several of the writings thus referred to in the Old Testament were not really lost, but existed under another title; e.g., in the four books of Kings or in the two books of Chronicles.³ A similar theory was already discussed by J. Bonfrère, a Jesuit exegete of the early seventeenth century.⁴ But, whatever be the value of this hypothesis (and it does not seem very great), it certainly does not apply to all the writings referred to (e.g., to Jason's five volumes), so that most of them must be regarded as truly lost.

But now the question arises to which this study intends to give a definite answer: If any of these books should turn up, could or should they be incorporated in our Bible?

Second Class.—The problem becomes more timely and intriguing when we look at our New Testament and recall what is known about the Epistles of Paul the Apostle. In fact, the likelihood that some day a lost letter of the great Apostle may be found has contributed greatly to render the discussion of the whole problem more urgent. But are any of the Epistles of St. Paul really lost?

Fourteen of them are contained in our New Testament. Now Paul certainly wrote more. We are not speaking of the apocryphal epistles ascribed to Paul: a third epistle written to the Corinthians after II Corinthians, an epistle to the Alexandrians, the epistolary intercourse between Paul and the Roman philosopher Seneca.⁵ But three passages in our Epistles clearly imply the former existence of Pauline letters now

³ Zarb, *op. cit.*, p. 530.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, c. vi, sect. 4.

⁵ Cf. Merk, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85; J. E. Steinmueller, *A Companion to Scripture Studies* (New York: Wagner, 1941), I, 125-26; *Lex. f. Theol. u. Kirche*, s.v. "Paulus"; H. Höpfl, O.S.B., *Introductionis Compendium: Introductio Generalis* (Rome, 1922), pp. 130-33; J. B. Lightfoot, *Commentary on Philippians*, pp. 268-331.

no longer extant: "I wrote to you in the letter not to associate with the immoral" (I Cor. 5:9-11), "see that . . . you yourselves read the letter from Laodicea" (Col. 4:16), and "to write you the same things indeed is not irksome to me, but it is necessary for you" (Phil. 3:1). Yet nothing more is known of a letter which Paul wrote to the Corinthians prior to I Corinthians, or of one "from Laodicea," or of any other letter to the Philippians besides the canonical one.⁶

The hypothesis which A. Alexander proposed for the lost books of the Old Testament was also applied to these lost letters of Paul. Some thought that the letter referred to in I Cor. 5:9-11 was really contained somewhere in our Epistles, but most modern Catholic commentators regard it as really lost.⁷ As for the letter "from Laodicea," most commentators, ancient and modern, also consider it lost, though there is a suspicion that it is identical with our Epistle to the Ephesians, an opinion mentioned in the Confraternity Translation.⁸

Pesch treats all these inferences as "pure conjectures";⁹ his main argument is that none of the "ancients," while constantly citing Paul's Epistles, ever hinted that he had seen any of these lost letters, and that the Greek Fathers (Origen, Chrysostom, Theodoret, *et al.*) therefore interpreted the pertinent passages differently. But the vast majority of scholars, Catholic and non-Catholic, are convinced that the passages quoted imply the existence of Pauline letters now lost. Merk says, "dubium non est";¹⁰ Rosadini¹¹ and Cornely¹² claim that "moderni omnes" interpret I Cor. 5:9-11 in that sense; Gutjahr says that "die Mehrzahl der Erklärer" understand it in that sense;¹³ J. E. Steinmueller thinks it "quite certain" that St. Paul composed other letters besides the fourteen canonical ones.¹⁴

⁶ Some also surmise that a lost letter to the Corinthians, written between I and II Corinthians, is alluded to in II Cor. 2:3-11 and 7:8-12.

⁷ Cf. R. Cornely, *Commentarium in Epistolam primam ad Corinthios* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1909), p. 129.

⁸ It is certainly not the Epistle to the Laodiceans in Nestle's edition of the New Testament.

⁹ *De Inspiratione S. Scripturae* (Herder, 1925), pp. 597-98.

¹⁰ *Introductionis Compendium*, p. 811.

¹¹ *Institutiones Introductoriae in N.T.*, II, 66-67.

¹² *Op. cit.*

¹³ *Die Briefe des hl. Apostels Paulus* (Graz-Vienna, 1910, 1912), I, 128.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, III, 246; cf. R. Cornely, S.J., *Introductio in S. Scripturam* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1925), I, 247-48; H. Simón—J. Prado, *Praelectiones Biblicae: Novum Testamentum* (Turin: Marietti, 1927), II, 109; H. Höpfl—B. Gut, *Introductio Specialis in Novum Testamen-*

That Paul must have written other letters besides the fourteen canonical ones appears from other considerations. Can we imagine that Paul never communicated with his faithful companions, such as Barnabas or Luke, the "dearest physician," in their absence? And would it not be strange if he had never sent a line to the Philippians, who had come to his assistance from the beginning of his two-year captivity at Rome? The fact is that we have the independent testimony of St. Polycarp, who speaks of Paul's "letters" to the Philippians.¹⁵

The whole case has been well put by J. B. Lightfoot:

It is only reasonable to suppose that during the ten or eleven years which elapsed between the epoch of their conversion and the date of the epistle, the Apostle, ever overflowing with love and ever prompt to seize the passing opportunity, would have written not once or twice only to converts with whom his relations were so close and affectionate. And—to consider the broader question—if we extend our range of view beyond the Philippians to the many churches of his founding, if we take into account not those ten years only but the whole period of his missionary life, we can hardly resist the conclusion that in the epistles of our Canon we have only a part—perhaps not even a large part—of the whole correspondence of the Apostle either with churches or with individuals.¹⁶

The question then naturally presents itself: If some of these Pauline Epistles were found, would they be inserted in our New Testament?

Third Class.—There are grounds for thinking that parts of some canonical books are lost. One example is Psalm 9, the verses of which seem to be arranged alphabetically (in Hebrew); but if that is so, then some of the verses are missing; they exist neither in the original text nor in any of the ancient versions. The same argument applies to the first chapter of Nahum, which is a poem. Again, we read in III Kings 4:22 that Solomon wrote 3,000 parables and 5,000 songs. He was inspired in the composition of those we have (Book of Proverbs),¹⁷ and so Bonfrère's reasoning seems legitimate: "Si illorum pars quae ad nos pervenit, a Spiritu sancto est, quidni et reliqua quae exciderunt?" But

tum, p. 312; U. Holzmeister, S.J., *Summa Introductionis in Novum Testamentum*, p. 112; H. Lusséau—M. Collomb, *Manuel d'études bibliques* (Paris, 1930-1935), V, 245-46; E. F. Scott, *The Literature of the New Testament* (New York, 1933), p. 111.

¹⁵ J. Knabenbauer, S. J., *Commentarium in Epistolam ad Philippenses*, p. 240.

¹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 136.

¹⁷ The books of Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, and Ecclesiasticus do not seem to have Solomon for their author.

where are the rest? And if they should ever be recovered from the dust of centuries, would they be made part of our Old Testament?¹⁸

Fourth Class.—Generally speaking, the apocryphal books (Catholics) or *pseudepigrapha* (Protestants), whether extant or known only by their titles, do not enter our problem. Though they were eagerly read by earlier Christians and at times regarded as part of the Bible, they were so vigorously denounced by the Fathers as uncanonical or dangerous that they lost their standing with the Christian communities. However, there are a few exceptions.

Some of the editions of the Latin Vulgate (Hetzenauer, Gramatica) contain an *Oratio Manassae Regis* as well as III and IV Esdras. Although extant, these writings might be numbered among the lost books of the Bible, inasmuch as they are now extra-canonical. Catholics who add them to their editions of the Latin Vulgate place them explicitly "extra seriem librorum canonicorum quos Sancta Tridentina Synodus suscipit." Nevertheless, many Fathers regarded III Esdras as inspired, and Bonfrère^{18a} thinks the *Oratio Manassae* might yet become part of the Bible. Is there such a chance? Again, the *Book of Henoah* was not only looked upon by many in the early Church as part of the Bible, but a prophecy from it is quoted in the canonical Epistle of Jude (14–15). The book is not named in the Tridentine decree; but could it not be canonized by a future Council? We may add to these Psalm 151, which many of the Greek Fathers held to be Davidic and therefore inspired. It is found in the two Greek codices, Alexandrinus and Vaticanus, and in some early versions, but has no place in the Latin Vulgate. What are its chances of being made an official part of the Psalter?

An argument for these writings being eventually canonized might be drawn from the history of the so-called deutero-canonical books. They had never been lost, and though there had been serious doubt about them on the part of many Fathers of the Church, they were eventually accepted by the Church as canonical. Why could or would not the Church apply the same principle and procedure to these writings? In line with this argument is Bonfrère's answer to the general question,

¹⁸ Cf. Knabenbauer, *Commentarium in Psalmos*, p. 44; Merk, *Introductionis Compendium*, p. 603; *Lex. f. Theol. u. Kirche*, s.v. "Nahum"; Zarb, *De Historia Canonis*, p. 534.

^{18a} *Praeloquia*, c. iv, sect. 15.

whether apocryphal books could ever become canonical. He distinguishes: If an apocryphal book has been positively excluded by the Church, it will never be canonized; but it might be canonized if the Church has hitherto merely suspended judgment.¹⁹

Fifth Class.—Not exactly in the same category as the preceding four classes are the so-called *Agrapha*. They are not books, but individual sayings of our Lord. They are not found in our New Testament, but are met with here and there in early Christian literature or have recently been discovered on the potsherds and papyri of Egypt. A few of them seem to be genuine sayings of our Lord, perhaps handed on by oral tradition.^{19a} Their claim to a place in the Bible seems exceptionally strong, since, if genuine, they are the very words of our Lord.

Sixth Class.—The book for whose recovery New Testament students have sighed for ages is the Aramaic (or Hebrew) text of the Gospel of St. Matthew. Of course, the Gospel itself is extant, inasmuch as we have a good Greek translation; but how many vexed questions could be settled at a glance if an archeologist were granted the good luck to find the original text. However, one may ask: If found, would the Aramaic (or Hebrew) text be inserted in our New Testament and perhaps replace the Greek, the earliest known version?²⁰

Though chances of an unexpected find are decidedly slimmer, scholars need not forego all hope of unearthing some day the original text of some books of the Old Testament, such as Baruch, Tobias, Judith, I Machabees; for we know that the Greek text in the Septuagint is a translation of an original Hebrew. That discoveries in this field are not excluded is clear from the fact that the Hebrew text of Ecclesiasticus was partially recovered at the end of the last century. But if found, would the original text of these books be inserted in our Hebrew Bible?²¹

Seventh Class.—According to IV Esdras 14:37–47, some or all of the sacred books of the Jews were destroyed when the Temple was burned

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, c. iii, sect. 8.

^{19a} The best discussion of the *Agrapha* is by L. Vaganay, "Agrapha," *Dict. de la bible*, Supplément, I, 159–98.

²⁰ We are not sure whether the *Evangelium secundum Hebraeos*, which St. Jerome claims to have translated, is the same as the original text of the first Gospel.

²¹ The Book of Jeremias presents a puzzling case of text transmission, but the missing Hebrew text corresponding to the LXX can scarcely be reckoned among the lost books of the Bible.

to the ground. After the Babylonian captivity, Esdras restored them by dictating them from memory or through verbal inspiration. Whence some have concluded that books which were once canonical might be lost or become apocryphal. If this could happen under the old dispensation, why not also under the new? Could the Bible or books now in the Bible be lost (perhaps in World War III) and then be restored?

CANON AND CANONICITY

These seven classes would seem to exhaust the list of writings that could possibly claim a place in the Bible. If we now approach the problem from the standpoint of principles, the first question we naturally ask is: What is the Bible? What book has the right to demand a place in the Bible? How do we know that one book belongs to the Bible, and that another does not? The Bible itself contains no list of the writings which belong to it. Nowhere in the Bible do we come across a catalog of books such as was drawn up by the Council of Trent. Who then is judge in this matter? What is the test?

1) As generally understood by Catholics, the Bible or Scriptures are the books enumerated by the Council of Trent as belonging to the Old and the New Testament (*DB*, 784).²² The list drawn up by the Council is also called the canon of Scripture, and the single books are called canonical. Since the decree of the Council is a solemn definition ("anathema sit"), Catholics are obliged to revere all books enumerated as "sacred and canonical" and therefore as part of the Bible. But why are they part of the Bible? Why were they inserted in the catalog? Why were they chosen from the world's literature and set apart as "sacred and canonical"?

When reaffirming the Tridentine decree, the Vatican Council also explained the reason for this distinction: "Eos Ecclesia pro sacris et canonicis habet . . . propterea quod Spiritu sancto inspirante conscripti Deum habent auctorem, atque ut tales ipsi Ecclesiae traditi sunt" (*DB*, 1787). Catholic theologians agree that the new decree contains a (logical) definition of inspiration and canonicity. The books listed by Trent are inspired because they were written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and therefore have God for their (princi-

²² Protestants sometimes restrict the term "Bible" to the Old Testament, but we take it now as including also the New Testament.

pal) author; their canonicity consists in this, that they were given to the Catholic Church as inspired. Though in the abstract a distinction may thus be made between inspiration and canonicity, yet theologians agree that in the concrete inspiration implies canonicity and vice versa. To belong to the Bible as understood in the Catholic Church, a book must be both inspired and canonical. When the Bible is spoken of as the "word of God" or the "written word of God," these expressions must be taken in the same sense.²³

Nevertheless, some theologians introduce what may be called a limited canonicity. They think it not impossible that the Holy Ghost may have inspired certain writings for a passing need, so that they were never meant to be proposed to all as the written word of God. Thus He might have inspired certain books and intended them only for the Jews, and perhaps only for the Jews of a certain period, not for the Catholic Church, the Church universal. The same may be true of lost letters of St. Paul, if there are such. They may have been truly the written word of God, yet destined only for an individual or for a particular church. Inspired and canonical in the full sense of the word are only those books which were "handed to the Catholic Church (*ipsi Ecclesiae traditi*)."²⁴

This, then, is our answer to the first question: The Bible is the collection of those books which are the written word of God, destined by Him for the use of the Catholic Church, and as such proposed by the *magisterium*.

2) But how do we know which books are the written word of God and have this universal signature? How do we distinguish between canonical and extra-canonical writings? In other words, what is the criterion of canonicity?

There is a fairly large school, comprising Protestants and Catholics, who derive inspiration and canonicity from human authorship. A book, they say, belongs to the Old Testament if it was written by a

²³ Cf. Pesch, *op. cit.*, pp. 329–31; J. Ruwet, S. J., in *Institutiones Biblicae* (ed. 5a), pp. 98–99; Zarb, *op. cit.*, pp. xix–xxxv; Steinmueller, *A Companion*, I, 48; T. Grandérath, S. J., *Geschichte des Vatikanischen Konzils* (Herder, 1903–1906), II, 466.

²⁴ Cf. Rosadini, *Institutiones*, II, 67; Cornely, *Introductio*, I, 246; Bonfrère, *op. cit.*, c. vi, sect. 2; A. Bea, S. J., *De S. Scripturae Inspiratione* (ed. 2a; Rome, 1935), p. 138; E. Dorsch, S. J., *Institutiones Theologiae Fundamentalís* (Innsbruck, 1916–1927), III, 246; A. Straub, S. J., *De Ecclesia Christi* (Innsbruck, 1912), II, 219–20; Lusseau-Collomb, *Manuel*, V, 246.

prophet, and a book belongs to the New Testament if it was written by an apostle. This criterion might be taken positively (*sensu aiente*) or exclusively (*sensu negante*). Taken positively, it would mean that any book written by a prophet or an apostle belongs to the Bible, though books written by other authors would not be excluded a priori. Taken exclusively, the criterion would mean that all and only those books belong to the Bible which are written by a prophet or an apostle.

In spite of its rather wide acceptance, the criterion labors under a serious handicap; it assumes without proof the identity of distinct charisms—that of prophecy or apostleship and that of hagiography. St. Augustine long ago made the distinction between the charism of the prophet and that of the hagiographer; for he says that a book written by a prophet might or might not be inspired.²⁵ The prophet and the apostle have indeed a divine mission to preach, and they are assured of divine assistance in the fulfilment of their mission; also, they could receive new revelations, private or public. But that does not *ipso facto* make them “sacred writers” or hagiographers. A hagiographer is one whose writing is done under the positive influence of the Holy Ghost, so that God will be the principal author of his book, as a book. St. Thomas put it succinctly in a sentence which has been echoed down the centuries: “Auctor principalis S. Scripturae est Spiritus sanctus, homo autem est auctor instrumentalis.”²⁶ Hence one might be a prophet or an apostle and yet not be counted among the hagiographers; even if he did write, we could not at once conclude that his writings had God for their principal author; or he might be inspired in some of his writings, but not in all. There is no principle by which God could be tied down to inspire only prophets and apostles; He could choose any human being for His instrument in writing a book. It is for these reasons that Pesch, looking at the question from the opposite angle, rightly says: “Quaestio de scriptoribus humanis singulorum librorum sacrorum ex doctrina de inspiratione solvi nequit, neque vicissim ex eius solutione pendet utrum liber aliquis dicendus sit inspiratus necne.”²⁷

Apart from these theological considerations, certain historical facts also militate against the criterion of human authorship, especially in its

²⁵ *De civitate Dei*, XVIII, 38; cf. Zarb, *op. cit.*, pp. 530–31.

²⁶ *Quodl.* VIII, a. 14, ad 5m.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 403.

exclusive sense. Of many of the Old Testament books, notably the historical writings, we do not know the human authors, and yet no one ever doubted about their being part of the Bible; e.g., the four books of Kings. Again, Mark and Luke were not apostles, and yet the canonicity of their books in the New Testament was never called in question.

The vast majority of Catholic theologians, therefore, hold that the only certain and universal criterion of inspiration and canonicity is public revelation. That is to say, God is not only the principal author of the sacred writings, nor did He merely destine them in His own mind for the Catholic Church, but He also revealed both these divine facts to the apostles as part of the deposit of faith.²⁸ All this leads to five important corollaries, the last two of which are admitted by all Catholics:

a) The canon of Scripture is a matter of divine faith; for it rests on direct revelation. Those, on the contrary, who propose human authorship as the criterion of canonicity, would say that the canon is *per se* a "dogmatic fact," and so, after the definition of the Church, a matter of ecclesiastical faith.

b) The books pertaining to the Bible were handed to the Church by the apostles; for whatever is of divine faith in the Catholic Church, was revealed to the apostles; Catholic faith is apostolic (*DB*, 1836).

c) No book can belong to the Bible which was written after the death of the last apostle, not because only an apostle could make an addition to the New Testament, but because all public revelation, the guarantee of the canon, ceased with the last apostle.²⁹

d) The extent of the canon must now be settled by an appeal to Catholic tradition, the only source of public revelation of things not contained in Scripture.

e) Since all public revelation as well as its interpretation was entrusted by Christ to the apostles and their successors, the ultimate decision on the extent of the Bible rests with the *magisterium* of the Catholic Church. This idea is embodied in the famous dictum of St.

²⁸ Cf. A. Cotter, *Theologia Fundamentalis* (Weston, 1940), pp. 660-66; F. Ogara in *Gregorianum*, XV (1934), 451-66; XVI (1935), 577-85; K. Smythe in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, II (1940), 229-44.

²⁹ This clearly excludes the singular opinion of Bonfrère, *Praeloquia*, c. iv, sect. 15, that the Holy Ghost might yet inspire other writers and the canon receive additions even now.

Augustine: "Ego evangelio non crederem nisi me Catholicae Ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas."³⁰

THE COMPLETE BIBLE

What has been said so far gives us an inkling of the eventual answer to the question, whether there are any lost books of the Bible. But for a truly satisfactory answer we must take another step. The Council of Trent defined the canon of Scripture; but is that canon complete? Is it exclusive? Did the Council mean to say that these were the only books belonging to the Bible? Would the Church object to an addition to the Tridentine canon? Would she ever sanction one?

1) That the Tridentine canon is to be taken in the exclusive sense was certainly not defined by the Council. The assembled bishops may have had this in mind, but there is nothing in the definition as promulgated which would indicate their intention of settling this precise point. Since the Reformers had rejected certain books of the Bible, the Council confined itself to anathematizing those who would maintain that any or all of the books enumerated are not sacred and canonical; it did not anathematize those who would say that other books, too, are sacred and canonical. Nor did the Vatican Council modify the Tridentine decree by adding a clause to that effect.

However, theologians have asked themselves: While not defined by any Council or Pope, may not the exclusive sense of the Bible canon be a matter of Catholic tradition? Such seems indeed to be the case, and in proof of it the following ecclesiastical documents, too long hidden under a bushel, can be cited.

St. Irenaeus writes: "The true Gnosis is the teaching of the apostles and the ancient doctrine of the Church for the whole world. The body of Christ is known by the succession of bishops, to whom the apostles entrusted the Church everywhere. Here the Scriptures are faithfully transmitted, without addition or diminution [neque *additionem* neque *ablationem* recipiens]."³¹ We have here the testimony of a bishop and Father of the Church. Only the first sentence of the quotation exists in the original Greek, and the Latin translation is none too lucid. But

³⁰ *Contra epistolam Manichaei*, V, 6.

³¹ *Adversus haereses*, IV, 33, 8. My translation has been made on the German translation of E. Klebba in *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter* (Kösel, 1912).

the last sentence seems to imply clearly enough that, in the mind of Irenaeus, the Catholic Church has the complete Bible as handed down by the apostles. We also know that he counted as canonical all and only those books which were afterwards included in the Tridentine decree.³²

So far as the principle goes, St. Cyril of Jerusalem does not differ from St. Irenaeus. He writes: "Harum [scripturarum] lege libros 22, nihilque cum apocryphis habeto commune. *Eos solos* studiose meditare et versa quos etiam in Ecclesia cum certa fiducia legimus; multo prudentiores et religiosiores te erant Apostoli et veteres episcopi, Ecclesiae rectores, qui eos tradiderunt."³³ Even though St. Cyril here merely allows the Palestinian canon of the Old Testament, yet his principle of canonicity is not only based on apostolic tradition, but is also as exclusive as that of Irenaeus.

The first Council of Laodicea (ca. 360) decreed: "Non oportet privatos et vulgares aliquos psalmos dici in Ecclesia, nec libros non canonicos, sed solos canonicos Veteris et Novi Testamenti." Little is known about the Council itself and hence about the dogmatic value of the decree; the list of canonical books which is appended to the decree and which omits several deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament as well as the Apocalypse is declared by scholars to be a later addition. But the Council evidently understood its canon, whatever it was, in an exclusive sense.³⁴

In his famous *Epistola festalis* for Lent and Easter of 367, St. Athanasius listed all the books of the New Testament, and then added: "Hi sunt salutis fontes, ut qui sitit, eorum eloquiis impleatur; in *his solis* pietatis doctrina docetur. Nemo iis *addat* aut aliquid ab illis subtrahat." While this is the voice of only one bishop, yet St. Athanasius is a Father and Doctor of the Church, and he certainly meant his canon of the New Testament to be exclusive.³⁵

In the time of St. Augustine, the Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397, 419) proposed to the faithful of Africa the entire canon of

³² Cf. Zarb, *op. cit.*, pp. 180, 388; D. van den Eynde, O.F.M., *Les normes de l'enseignement chrétien*, p. 138.

³³ *Catecheses*, IV, 35. Cf. Zarb *op. cit.*, p. 147.

³⁴ Cf. *Enchiridion Biblicum*, nn. 8-10; Zarb, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-74, 445-46; Ruwet, *op. cit.*, p. 128; Amann, "Laodicée," *DTC*.

³⁵ Cf. Zarb, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-45, 423-24.

the Old and the New Testament. Not only that, but the introductory sentence of the decrees reads as follows: "Placuit ut *praeter* Scripturas canonicas nihil in Ecclesia legatur sub nomine divinarum Scripturarum."³⁶ Being merely provincial, these Councils had no power to define a doctrine for the universal Church, but they certainly looked upon their canon as exclusive and proposed it to the faithful as such.

St. Augustine, perhaps the greatest of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, taught the same doctrine. He writes: "*Totus* canon scripturarum . . . his libris continetur,"³⁷ and then goes on to enumerate all the books of the Old and New Testament. Again, he writes: "*Solis* eis scripturarum libris qui iam canonici appellantur, didici hunc timorem honoremque deferre ut nullum earum auctorem in scribendo errasse aliquid firmissime credam."³⁸ Since St. Augustine was also present at the African Synods just mentioned, there can be no doubt that he meant the canon to be exclusive; his statements and their decrees supplement one another.

A far more important document, however, is the answer given by Pope Innocent I (401-417) to Exuperius, a Spanish bishop. At that time, there were circulated in Spain as part of the New Testament certain writings attributed to apostles (Matthias, James the Less, Peter, John, Andrew, and Thomas), and Exuperius asked the Pope what to do about it. The Pope wants them excluded from the canon of the Bible. And there may be others, he adds; they are to be rejected and condemned.³⁹ Though this is but an answer to a particular question and not a definition, the letter of Innocent I ranks high in dogmatic value.

Owing perhaps to the persistence of the same unauthorized practice in Spain, the first Council of Toledo (447) decreed: "Si quis dixerit vel crediderit *alias* scripturas praeter quas Ecclesia catholica recipit, in auctoritate habendas vel esse venerandas, anathema sit."⁴⁰ The Council may have had definite non-canonical books in mind (like Bishop Exuperius), but the decree is general in its exclusiveness and vigorous in its condemnation.

³⁶ *DB*, 92; *Enchir. Bib.*, nn, 11-15.

³⁷ *De doctrina christiana*, II, 8.

³⁸ *Epist.*, 82, 3.

³⁹ *DB*, 96; *Enchir. Bib.*, n. 17; L. de San, S.J., *De Divina Traditione et Scriptura* (Bruges, 1903), p. 443.

⁴⁰ *DB*, 32; *Enchir. Bib.*, n. 22; Simón-Prado, *Propaedeutica Biblica*, p. 113.

The famous *Decretum Gelasianum* also seems to regard the canon as exclusive; for it begins with the words: "Nunc vero de Scripturis divinis agendum est, quid universalis recipiat Ecclesia, et quid *vitare* debeat" (*DB*, 84; *Enchir. Bib.*, n.19). While the origin of this decree is somewhat shrouded in obscurity,⁴¹ its antiquity and high dogmatic value are uncontested.

St. Isidore of Seville, archbishop and Doctor of the Church (died 636), closes his list of canonical books with this outspoken testimony to the exclusiveness of the canon: "Haec sunt nova et vetera quae de thesauro Domini proferuntur; hi libri sacri, hi libri integri numero et auctoritate; *aliud* cum istis nihil est comparandum; quae *extra hos* fuerint, inter haec sancta et divina nullatenus sunt recipienda."⁴²

By far the weightiest document in this whole question is the symbol of faith which Pope Leo IX sent to Peter, Patriarch of Antioch, in 1053. There we read: "Anathematizo . . . quicumque aliquas scripturas *praeter* eas quas catholica Ecclesia recipit, in auctoritate habendas esse crediderit vel veneratus fuerit" (*DB*, 349). The language is strangely reminiscent of the Council of Toledo, but the meaning of the anathema is clear. Its dogmatic value is of the highest, since it is a symbol of faith proposed by the Pope himself to a newly appointed patriarch, of whose orthodoxy he wanted to be sure.

Next in chronological order is the Council of Trent. The exclusive sense of the canon was not then defined explicitly, but it is implied in the preamble to the decree on the two sources of revelation. The Council asserts that *all* "salutary truth" is contained in the Bible (as it was then before the assembly) and in Catholic tradition. Likewise, when the Council proposed the Latin Vulgate as the norm by which the extent of the Bible is to be judged, it supposed that *all* sacred books are contained in it.⁴³

After the Council, Pope Sixtus V published a new edition of the Septuagint (1587). His immediate purpose was to furnish Scripture scholars with a means for understanding better the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Fathers; but in the introductory Brief where he sets forth

⁴¹ Cf. De San, *op. cit.*, pp. 443-50; Rosadini, *Institutiones*, I, 27-28; II, 258; *Lex. f. Theol. u. Kirche*, s.v. "Gelasius I"; G. Bardy, "Gélase," *Dict. de la bible*, Supplément.

⁴² Cf. Zarb, *op. cit.*, pp. xxvi, 213; Cornely, *Introductio*, I, 246-47.

⁴³ Cf. Straub, *De Ecclesia*, II, 221-22.

this purpose, he forbids anyone to *add* or take away or to make any changes.⁴⁴

Though of unequal dogmatic value, these ecclesiastical documents seem to be sufficient warrant for maintaining that the exclusive sense of the Bible canon is a matter of Catholic tradition. It is not merely that the Church hitherto "suspended judgment," as we heard Bonfrère distinguish; she has given a positive decision more than once, and that in a matter which her spokesmen judged to pertain to faith and morals. And if this is so, no other book belongs to the Bible, no other book will ever be declared canonical. Our Bible is complete *de iure* and *de facto*. Catholic tradition knows nothing of a "lost book of the Bible."

2) Nevertheless, as long as a question is not defined by the Church, there is always the possibility of a controversy. Ours, too, has been called a "quaestio controversa." The fact is that some Fathers are cited against our conclusion, and that theologians, especially today, are ranged on either side of the question.

It seems unfair to quote Origen as holding or favoring the opinion that an inspired book has been lost. In his *Prologus ad Canticum* he discusses indeed the reference works mentioned in our first class. But it is not at all clear that, to his mind, any of them had been originally inspired and canonical; he only wonders why they disappeared so completely, suggests two reasons, but finally refuses to pronounce judgment.⁴⁵

So far as I know, the only Father who really thought that an inspired book can be lost is St. Chrysostom. In his Commentary on I Corinthians, he asks himself whence Paul took the saying "eye has not seen, etc." (I Cor. 2:9), and thinks it likely that Paul is quoting from a book now lost. That he meant a canonical, not a profane book, seems clear from his concluding remark where he puts the lost book on a par with Deuteronomy. We may, then, agree with Zarb who draws the conclusion: "Chrysostomus clare admittit libros inspiratos et canonicos fuisse revera deperditos."⁴⁶ But let us reflect that the dissenting voice of this one Father cannot prevail against the unanimous voice of the

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, II, 225; Cornely, *op. cit.*, I, 374.

⁴⁵ Cf. Bonfrère, *Praeloquia*, c. vi, sect. 2; Zarb, *op. cit.*, p. 530.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 532.

Church of the first thousand years. St. Chrysostom argues here as a "doctor privatus."

While St. Thomas does not interpret Phil. 3:1 of letters now lost, he does take I Cor. 5:9 to mean that Paul had written another letter to the Corinthians prior to I Corinthians. Also, arguing from Col. 4:16 that some of the letters of St. Paul are lost, he gives two reasons for it: "Quia non constabat de earum auctoritate, quia forte erant depravatae et perierant in Ecclesia, vel quia non continebant aliud quam ista."⁴⁷

It was at the time of the Reformation that Catholic apologists began to use the supposed loss of sacred books as a powerful argument against the Protestants, who proclaimed the Bible to be their sole rule of faith. St. Robert Bellarmine accords first place to the argument in his proof of the necessity of Catholic tradition.⁴⁸ He is convinced that "multi libri vere sacri et canonici perierunt." He proves this, first of all, by the authority of St. Chrysostom; then, enumerating many books mentioned in the Old Testament, he asks: "Ubinam sunt haec omnia?" Lastly, passing to St. Paul, he thinks that an epistle to the Laodiceans, another to the Corinthians, and perhaps still others are now lost. Then he springs the trap on the Reformers: "Viderint ergo haeretici unde resarcent hunc insignem defectum"; the Bible, their only rule of faith, is incomplete.

Not all Catholics accepted Bellarmine's premises. A. Salmeron, another Jesuit, who wrote commentaries on all the books of the New Testament, marshalled against them four strong arguments. But he was challenged by J. Bonfrère.⁴⁹ Drawing the distinction between limited (*in actu primo*) and complete (*in actu secundo*) canonicity, he judged it "more probable" that a canonical book might be lost, though hardly after it had been canonized by the Church. His first answer to Salmeron is interesting: "Respondeo ad Dei providentiam pertinere ut Ecclesia libris necessariis ad fidelium salutem . . . non careat; ad hoc autem forte nullus in particulari, vel pauci eorum quos modo

⁴⁷ *In Col.* In this connection it may be interesting to note the reason which J. Holzner, *Paul of Tarsus* (Herder, 1944), p. 336, gives why the "Epistle of Tears" (II Cor. 2:4) was lost; he says, "probably because it discussed some personal matters that were embarrassing for the people of Corinth."

⁴⁸ *De verbo Dei*, IV, 4.

⁴⁹ *Op. cit.*, c. vi, sect. 2.

habemus, fuerunt absolute necessarii; . . . et proclive est existimare aliquos etiamnum in Ecclesia esse quibus, si ipsa careret, id non magno ipsius incommodo fieret, ut, v.g., libro Judith, Esther.”⁵⁰ To Salmeron’s contention that it would be as bad for the Church to lose a canonical book as to lose one of the seven sacraments, he replies that the Church could do nothing about it if such was God’s will: “Si Deus a Christiana Ecclesia Sacramentum aliquod tolli vellet, deberet tolli, nec ipsa infidelitatis in servando deposito argui posset.”

Coming down to modern times, we are told that “moderni vix non omnes” (Cornely), “recentiores plerique” (Merk), “recentiores communiter” (Simón-Prado), admit the loss of books of the Bible. This is a slight exaggeration. The authors to whom I have had access, are about evenly divided between the affirmative and the negative answer to the question whether an inspired book can be lost.

The affirmative answer is upheld by Franzelin.⁵¹ Where he begins to discuss the genuinity of I John 5:7, he lays down the *principium iuris* that not only single texts and parts of the Bible may be lost, but even whole books. His main argument, not unlike the one advanced by Bonfrère against Salmeron, is as follows: “Libri inspirati non sunt unicum nec absolute necessarium instrumentum ad conservandam revelationem; unde potest Spiritus sanctus per Ecclesiam conservare integritatem revelatae veritatis, licet permetteret libri aut partis libri inspirati iacturam.” Other theologians who admit that an inspired book can be lost, are Lamy,⁵² Cornely,⁵³ Schifflini,⁵⁴ de Groot,⁵⁵ Merk,⁵⁶ Simón-Prado,⁵⁷ and Zarb.⁵⁸ While some (de Groot, Merk, etc.) repeat Franzelin’s argument, Schifflini reasons thus: If doctrinal sermons of the apostles, conciliar decrees, etc., could be lost without consequent loss of doctrine, why not also a part or a whole book of the Bible?

The negative opinion, viz., that no canonical book has been or can be lost, is held, at least as more probable, by J. MacDevitt,⁵⁹ Straub,⁶⁰ Pesch,⁶¹ Bainvel,⁶² Bea,⁶³ Rosadini,⁶⁴ and Tromp.⁶⁵

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, c. vi, sect. 7.

⁵¹ *De Deo Trino*, thesis 4.

⁵² *Introductio in Scripturam* (ed. 4a; Malines, 1886), I, 74.

⁵³ *Introductio*, I, 246-50.

⁵⁴ *De Vera Religione* (Senis, 1908), pp. 570-71.

⁵⁵ *Summa Apologetica* (Ratisbon, 1906), pp. 679-80.

⁵⁶ *Introductionis Compendium*, pp. 96-98.

⁵⁷ *Propaedeutica*, p. 112.

⁵⁸ *De Historia Canonis*, pp. 527-35.

⁵⁹ *Introduction to the Scriptures* (Dublin, 1889), p. 145.

⁶⁰ *De Ecclesia*, II, 218-25.

Pesch lays bare the weakness inherent in Franzelin's (and Bonfrère's) argumentation: It is not merely the doctrines contained in a canonical book that pertain to the deposit of faith, but the books themselves as inspired and canonical (*in actu primo*). Their very inspiration and canonicity is part of public revelation, and it is for this reason that the Council of Trent solemnly proposed them to the faithful as sacred and canonical. To accept them as pious and edifying reading would not be enough for a Catholic. Therefore (to switch to Bonfrère's second argument), while the practical consequences of losing one of these books might not be as serious as those which would undoubtedly follow upon the loss of one of the seven sacraments, the theoretical consequences would be the same. Lastly, Schiffini's mode of reasoning neglects the essential disparity between the sermons of the apostles, etc., and the "written word of God." The Church is only to preserve the doctrine of the apostles, not the verbal text of their sermons; but God meant the books of the Bible themselves to be preserved, not merely the doctrines contained in them; that is why they were "traditi ipsi Ecclesiae."

But while I can see arguments for both sides, I ask myself with a measure of astonishment: Why do not the authors on the affirmative side discuss the highly dogmatic teaching of the *magisterium* as set forth in the ecclesiastical documents quoted above? None of them even refer to these documents. Yet is not the teaching of the *magisterium* itself (as distinct from Fathers and theologians) the primary source of revelation? And even if one denies that the canon is a matter of direct revelation, yet it certainly is intimately connected with revelation and so belongs to the competency of the *magisterium*.

In the last analysis, it seems that the dividing line between the affirmative and the negative side is the criterion of canonicity. Those who look on human authorship (prophet or apostle) as the decisive test, are almost compelled by history to say that there are lost books of the Bible; for it seems undeniable that some books mentioned in the Old Testament were written by prophets, and that St. Paul wrote more letters than the fourteen which have come down to us. And if that is so, they are obliged to explain why and how such writings, supposedly

⁶¹ *De Inspiratione*, pp. 595-600.

⁶² *De Scriptura Sacra* (Paris, 1910), pp. 176-77.

⁶³ *De Inspiratione*, pp. 137-38.

⁶⁴ *Institutiones*, II, 67.

⁶⁵ *De S. Scripturae Inspiratione* (Rome, 1936), p. 25.

part of the Bible, can be lost. Those on the other hand who derive the canon ultimately from public revelation, cannot allow that the Church ever lost or can lose a canonical book, either before or after its canonization. To lose a canonical book would be a diminution of the deposit of faith entrusted to her.

3) A minor issue remains, if any issue can be called minor where the word of God is at stake. Granted that no canonical book as a whole can be lost, what about its parts? Are they equally guaranteed against loss?

It would seem that the argument for books also applies to them. True, the ecclesiastical documents do not speak of them; only the Council of Trent includes in its definition both books and their parts ("libros ipsos integros cum omnibus suis partibus").⁶⁶ I shall not pursue this subject further, because it would involve us in the intricate question, how far precisely the Latin Vulgate agrees with the autographs of the sacred books. But we may perhaps, with Straub,⁶⁷ distinguish between parts in the strict sense of the word and what might be called with Newman (though with a different shade of meaning) *obiter dicta*, or better, *inspirata per accidens*. Though inspired, the latter were not inspired for their own sake and so may be lost through the ravages of time. But as no part of the deposit of faith can or ever will be substantially corrupted and then discarded, so no book of the Bible.

PARTICULAR SOLUTIONS

Supposing, then, that any of the "lost books of the Bible" (e.g., a fifteenth letter of St. Paul) were to turn up, we might reflect that the ultimate decision in this matter rests with the *magisterium* and say with Pesch: "Possumus quidem hunc eventum divinae providentiae, et iudicium quid in hoc eventu faciendum sit, auctoritati ecclesiasticae relinquere." Still, as long as the question has been broached at all, it will do no harm to see what Catholic principles apply to the seven classes of "lost books of the Bible."

First Class.—Since the Tridentine decree mentions none of the various reference works of the Old Testament, they are undoubtedly uncanonical; even if rediscovered, they would not be inserted in our canon. But apart from the exclusive nature of our canon, being merely

⁶⁶ *DB*, 784; cf. 1809.

⁶⁷ *Op. cit.*, II, 225-27.

referred to somewhere in the Bible constitutes no title to being part of the Bible. As St. Augustine said with regard to one of them: "Non ideo sit assumendus in eas Scripturas quibus divina commendatur auctoritas."⁶⁸ Nor does the fact that the book referred to or quoted is written by a prophet or seer, make it at once canonical; there is a distinction between the charism of the prophet and that of the hagiographer. As regards Jason's five-volume work, there is no shred of evidence that it was inspired; not it, but the compendium made from it by an unknown author is the written word of God.⁶⁹

Second Class.—That the number of the canonical Epistles of St. Paul will not be augmented by future discoveries also flows from the exclusiveness of our canon as well as from the distinction of charisms. While we should prize a genuine epistle most highly, it would find no place in the New Testament. Neither the fact that Paul was an apostle, nor that his known letters are all canonical, nor yet that the new letter treated of faith and morals or even of new revelations would suffice. One would have to show that the new letter was "sacred and canonical" in the Tridentine sense; and if that were so, it would not have been lost. The conclusion holds even if it was addressed to a church, not merely to an individual, like the letter to Philemon. However, the Church might grant permission to insert such an epistle in our New Testament "extra seriem librorum canonicorum," as she did with III and IV Esdras.⁷⁰

Third Class.—As regards the writings of this class, a distinction is in order. If the surmises of scholars are well founded and the missing parts of Psalm 9 and Nahum are found, there is no doubt that they would be restored to the Bible; for they would have been originally part of the Bible. As a matter of fact, however, the surmises are thought groundless by many. All attempts at an alphabetical arrangement of the verses have failed so far because they would involve too many consonantal changes. But the lost parables and songs of Solomon are in a different category. Even if they were found, it would not suffice

⁶⁸ *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum libri Septem*, IV, 42.

⁶⁹ Cf. Dorsch, *Theol. Fundamentalis*, III, 124-27.

⁷⁰ We may merely mention here the proposed or actual continuation of Acts; cf. *DB*, 2169; Rosadini, *Institutiones*, II, 35; Merk, *Introductionis Compendium*, p. 690; Knabenbauer, *Commentarium in Actus Apostolorum*, p. 7; E. Jacquier, S.J., *Les Actes des Apôtres*, p. cix; M.-J. Lagrange, *L'Évangile selon s. Luc*, pp. xxi-xxvii.

to prove them genuine; one would have to prove that Solomon was inspired when writing them. Considering the exclusive nature of our canon, such a proof is doomed a priori.

Fourth Class.—For the same reason, none of the writings mentioned in this class ever were or will be part of the Bible. But let us look at them singly. An *Oratio Manassae* is indeed mentioned in II Par. 33:12, 18 as having been contained in the (lost) *Sermones regum Israel*; but that *Oratio* is not ours; ours is merely based on what is narrated in II Paralipomenon.⁷¹ Though Catholic tradition is sometimes thought to favor the canonicity of III Esdras, yet, on closer inspection, this title is seen to be futile. While a good many Fathers, Greek and Latin, quoted it as inspired, the practice was never universal. However, in line with Professor Alexander's hypothesis, scholars agree that a good deal of the book is contained in other canonical books (or rather copied from them).⁷² Since IV Esdras was, according to the consent of scholars, written in the time of Domitian (81–96 A.D.), and yet pretends to announce the coming of the Messiah as still in the future, it could not have been inspired; but chapters one and two, and fifteen and sixteen are probably of Christian origin. Catholic tradition was never firmly in favor of the canonicity of the book (or rather books) of Henoch; it may be that the canonical Epistle of St. Jude quotes from it, but that is not a sufficient argument for its inspiration, as is clear from Acts 17:28 and Tit. 1:12 where pagans are quoted.⁷³ Psalm 151 is certainly spurious and non-canonical; according to Bonfrère, "psalmus ille nescio quid adulterinum redolet."⁷⁴ Therefore the parallel between the writings of this class and the deuterocanonical books is fictitious. While the former were regarded as canonical by comparatively few, the latter had a firm apostolic tradition behind them, which led to their eventual inclusion in the canon when it was defined.⁷⁵

Fifth Class.—No special problem is created by the *Agrapha*. They are not part of the Bible. If genuine, they are indeed the spoken word of God, inasmuch as Christ is God. But the Bible and every part of it is the written word of God, in the sense that God is their literary author.

⁷¹ Cf. Steinmueller, *A Companion*, I, 115–16.

⁷² Cf. J. Frey, "Apocryphes," *Dict. de la bible*, Supplément; Merk, *op. cit.*, p. 73; Ruwet, *op. cit.*, pp. 166–67; Steinmueller, *op. cit.*, I, 114–15.

⁷³ Cf. Steinmueller, *op. cit.*, I, 105–107, 110–11.

⁷⁴ *Praeloquia*, c.v, sect. 6; cf. Merk, *op. cit.*, p. 74; Ruwet, *op. cit.*, pp. 161, 188.

⁷⁵ Cf. Zarb, *op. cit.*, pp. 264–67, 540; Dorsch, *Theol. Fundamentalis*, III, 245.

However, with the approval of the Church, the *Agrapha*, like the writings of the fourth class, might be added in an appendix to the Gospels.⁷⁶

Sixth Class.—The status of the writings of this class is not subject to the principles discussed so far. It must be judged on other grounds, namely, those of editions of the original text. Catholics have published the Greek text of the New Testament, which is, of course, the official text of the Greek Church. If the Aramaic (or Hebrew) text of the first Gospel were found, we would be the first to insert it in our edition of the New Testament, though it would be the only non-Greek book.

There is no Catholic edition of the Hebrew Old Testament, and the books of the sixth class are all deutero-canonical; modern Protestants and Jews do not admit them to be part of the Bible. It is only lately that Protestant scholars, like E. J. Goodspeed, try to rehabilitate them; but earlier neglect may be responsible for the fact that the original text of *Ecclesiasticus* has not yet appeared in our Hebrew Bibles. There is no doubt that a Catholic edition of the Hebrew Old Testament, if it ever becomes a reality, will contain it. The same is to be said of the Hebrew text of the other writings in this class.

The Latin Vulgate has been the official text of the Western Church for the last 400 years, and, since it has been satisfactory in the eyes of the *magisterium*, no special effort was made to edit the original text. However, the latest encyclical on Scripture (*Divino Afflante Spiritu*) seems to envisage a change; Catholic scholars are urged to work toward the establishment of a good original text, which the Church could eventually promulgate as official.

Seventh Class.—The account of the lost and restored books in IV Esdras is now generally dismissed as unhistorical. In any case, the argument from the old dispensation to the new lacks all force. The sacred books are now part of the deposit of faith and therefore cannot be lost. Whatever may have happened at the time of the Babylonian captivity, Catholics are sure that no world catastrophe can rob them of any book of the Bible.

CONCLUSION

While Catholics are sure that they have the entire canon, Protestants can truly lament the loss of books of the Bible. In 1939 appeared

⁷⁶ Cf. Simón—Prado, *Propaedeutica*, p. 114.

E. J. Goodspeed's *Complete Bible*. The editor called it "complete" because it includes the *Apocrypha* (or deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament), which Protestants had hitherto excluded. The reason for departure from Protestant practice is given by Professor Goodspeed in the general preface: "From the earliest Christian times down to the age of the King James Version, they belonged to the Bible; and, while modern critical judgments and religious attitudes deny them a position of equality with the Old and New Testament scriptures, historically and culturally they are still an integral part of the Bible." In the special preface to the *Apocrypha*, he calls them "a very necessary link between the Old Testament and the New," and "an indispensable part of the historic Christian Bible." The Catholic Church never sacrificed the *Apocrypha* to the unholy demands of the *Zeitgeist*. Though there were some who hesitated about their canonicity, she never counted them among the "lost books of the Bible"; the genuine current of Catholic tradition was too strongly in their favor.

But this whole question of "lost books of the Bible" or of the "complete Bible" does not affect Catholics as it should Protestants. If the Bible is proclaimed as the sole rule of faith and source of revelation, then the "complete Bible" is a condition *sine qua non* of faith. Bellarmine was right in urging this argument on the Protestants in the first place. Yet, according to Goodspeed's preface, Protestants have been without the complete Bible for quite some time. As a matter of history, they have never worked out a valid and consistent criterion of canonicity; their reasons why certain books should or should not be part of the Bible, like Goodspeed's own reasons for rehabilitating the *Apocrypha*, lack all theological force. If they ever regain the complete Bible, they will do so by falling back on tradition; for, as Newman (still an Anglican) once said so well: "Men may say what they will about going by Scripture, not tradition; but nature is stronger."