
AREAS OF DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES

In the first part of this volume we have stressed what evangelicals have in common with Roman Catholics. In short, this includes the great fundamentals of the Christian faith, including a belief in the Trinity, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the creation and subsequent fall of humanity, Christ's unique atonement for our sins, the physical resurrection of Christ, the necessity of God's grace for salvation, the existence of heaven and hell, the second coming of Christ, and the verbal inspiration and infallibility of Scripture.

In spite of all these similarities in belief, however, there are some significant differences between Catholics and evangelicals on some important doctrines. Catholics affirm and evangelicals reject the immaculate conception of Mary, her bodily assumption, her role as corredeptrix, the veneration of Mary and other saints, prayers to Mary and the saints, the infallibility of the pope, the existence of purgatory, the inspiration and canonicity of the Apocrypha, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the worship of the transformed Host, the special sacerdotal powers of the Roman Catholic priesthood, and the necessity of works to obtain eternal life. Since all of these have been proclaimed as infallible dogma by the Roman Catholic Church, and since many are contrary to central teachings of evangelicalism, there appears to be no hope of ecumenical or ecclesiastical unity. Here we must recognize our differences and agree to disagree agreeably, knowing that there are many doctrines we hold in common (see Part One) and many things we can do together morally, socially, and educationally (see Part Three).

Donald G. Bloesch has put it thusly, “We are called to build bridges where bridges can be built and allow the cleavage to remain where it cannot be overcome.”¹ Unlike some evangelicals, we believe that there is no need to exaggerate our differences or to condemn Catholics for holding beliefs they do not hold. Nor should our doctrinal differences keep us from personal fellowship with other believing Catholics and social cooperation with them on common moral, social, and educational causes. At the same time, these valuable things we hold in common should not hinder us from the necessary task of pointing out, as we do in this section, what we believe to be serious errors in the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

9

APOCRYPHA

The question of authority is fundamental to the difference between Catholics and Protestants. There are disagreements in two basic areas: the extent of biblical authority and the sufficiency of biblical authority (see chap. 10). In this chapter we will deal with the extent of biblical authority by looking at the apocryphal books.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DEFENSE OF THE APOCRYPHA

As we have already seen in chapter 1 , both Catholics and Protestants affirm the inspiration and divine authority of the sixty-six books of the Protestant canon (thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament). A crucial difference emerges, however, over eleven pieces of literature (seven books and four parts of books) that the Roman Catholic Church infallibly pronounced part of the canon in A.D. 1546 at the Council of Trent. These books are known by Protestants as the Apocrypha and by Catholics as the deuterocanonical books (lit. “second canon”). It is important to note that,

¹ “Is Spirituality Enough?” in Armstrong, *Roman Catholicism: Evangelical Protestants Analyze What Divides and Unites Us*, p. 158.

unlike some Protestant groups,¹ Catholics' use of this "second canon" does not imply that the Apocrypha is a secondary canon of inferior status. In spite of some current speculative usage by Catholic scholars to the contrary, the Council of Trent affords these books full canonical status and pronounces an anathema (excommunication) on any who reject them. After enumerating the books, including the eleven apocryphal books, the Council stated: "If anyone, however, should not accept the said books as sacred and canonical, entire with all their parts . . . and if both knowingly and deliberately he should condemn the aforesaid tradition let him be anathema."² The same language affirming the Apocrypha is repeated by Vatican II.³

The differences over the canonicity of the Apocrypha are not minor. They are both doctrinal and canonical. Doctrinally, the Apocrypha supports prayers for the dead (which also entails a belief in purgatory). For instance, 2 Maccabees 12:46 reads: "Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from this sin." Canonically, the grounds on which the Apocrypha was accepted undermine the true test for canonicity—propheticity. In short, if the Apocrypha can be accepted in the canon, lacking, as it does, the characteristics that meet the true test of canonicity, then other noncanonical books could be accepted on the same grounds.

CATHOLIC ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE APOCRYPHA

The Apocrypha that Rome accepts includes eleven books—or twelve, depending on whether Baruch (1–6) is split into two books consisting of Baruch 1–5 and The Letter of Jeremiah (Baruch 6). These include all fourteen (or fifteen) books in the Protestant Apocrypha, except the Prayer of Manasseh and 1 and 2 Esdras (called 3 and 4 Esdras by Roman Catholics, since the Protestant Ezra and Nehemiah are called 1 and 2 Esdras by Catholics).

The Number of Books in Dispute

<i>Revised Standard Version</i>	<i>New American Bible</i>
1. The Wisdom of Solomon (c. 30 B.C.)	Book of Wisdom
2. Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) (132 B.C.)	Sirach
3. Tobit (c. 200 B.C.)	Tobit
4. Judith (c. 150 B.C.)	Judith
5. 1 Esdras (c. 150–100 B.C.)	3 Esdras *

1 At the Reformation, Lutherans and Anglicans considered the apocryphal books to be of inferior status, believing they had ethical/devotional value but denying they had authority in matters of faith.

2 Denzinger, *Sources of Catholic Dogma*, 784, p. 245.

3 See *Documents of Vatican II*, "Document on Revelation," chap. 3: "The Divine Inspiration and the Interpretation of Sacred Scripture."

* These books were rejected by the Council of Trent.

6. 1 Maccabees (c. 110 B.C.)	1 Maccabees
7. 2 Maccabees (c. 110–70 B.C.)	2 Maccabees
8. Baruch (c. 150–50 B.C.)	Baruch chaps. 1–5
9. Letter of Jeremiah (c. 300–100 B.C.)	Baruch chap. 6
10. 2 Esdras (c. A.D. 100)	4 Esdras *
11. Additions to Esther (140–130 B.C.)	10:4–16:24
12. Prayer of Azariah (2nd or 1st cent. B.C.)	Daniel 3:24–90 (Song of Three Young Men)
13. Susanna (2nd or 1st cent. B.C.)	Daniel 13
14. Bel and the Dragon (c. 100 B.C.)	Daniel 14
15. Prayer of Manasseh (2nd or 1st cent. B.C.)	Prayer of Manasseh *

Although the Roman Catholic canon has eleven more books than the Protestant Bible, only seven extra books appear in the table of contents of Roman Catholic Bibles. This makes the total forty-six (the thirty-nine in the Protestant and Jewish Old Testament, plus seven more complete books). There are, however, four more books or pieces of literature that are added to other books that do not appear in the table of contents. There are the Additions to Esther, added at the end of the Book of Esther (Esth. 10:4f .); the Prayer of Azariah, inserted between the Jewish (and Protestant) Daniel 3:23 and 24 (making it Daniel 3:24–90 in Roman Catholic Bibles); Susanna, placed at the end of Daniel 12 in the Protestant and Jewish Old Testament (as chap. 13); and Bel and the Dragon, which became chapter 14 of Daniel. So with seven complete books and four other pieces of literature found in Daniel and Esther, the Roman Catholic canon has eleven more books than does the Jewish Bible and Protestant Old Testament.

REASONS ADVANCED FOR ACCEPTING THE APOCRYPHA

The larger canon is sometimes referred to as the “Alexandrian Canon,” as opposed to the “Palestinian Canon” (which does not contain the Apocrypha) because they are alleged to have been part of the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint or “Seventy” [LXX], which originated in Alexandria, Egypt). The reasons generally advanced in favor of this broader Alexandrian list accepted by Roman Catholics, which includes the apocryphal books, are as follows:

1. The New Testament reflects the thought of the Apocrypha, and even refers to events contained in it (cf. Heb. 11:35 with 2 Macc. 7 , 12).
2. The New Testament quotes mostly from the Septuagint, which contained the Apocrypha. This gives tacit approval of the whole text, including the Apocrypha, from which they quoted.

* These books were rejected by the Council of Trent.

* These books were rejected by the Council of Trent.

3. Some of the early church fathers quoted and used the Apocrypha as Scripture in public worship.
4. Some of the early church fathers—Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria—accepted all the books of the Apocrypha as canonical.
5. Early Christian catacomb scenes depict episodes from the Apocrypha, showing it was part of the early Christians’ religious life. If not their inspiration, this at least reveals a great regard for the Apocrypha.
6. The early Greek manuscripts (Aleph, A, and B) interpose the Apocrypha among the Old Testament books. This reveals that they were part of the Jewish-Greek translation of the Old Testament.
7. Several early church councils accepted the Apocrypha: the Council of Rome (A.D. 382), the Council of Hippo (A.D. 393), and the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397).
8. The Eastern Orthodox church accepts the Apocrypha, revealing that it is not simply a Roman Catholic dogma.
9. The Roman Catholic Church proclaimed the Apocrypha canonical at the Council of Trent (A.D. 1546). This was in accord with pronouncements at early councils (see point 7 above) and the Council of Florence not long before the Reformation (A.D. 1442).
10. The apocryphal books were included in the Protestant Bible as late as the nineteenth century. This indicates that even Protestants accepted the Apocrypha until very recently.
11. Some apocryphal books written in Hebrew have been found among other Old Testament canonical books in the Dead Sea community at Qumran. This shows that they were part of the Hebrew canon.

PROTESTANT RESPONSE TO CATHOLIC ACCEPTANCE OF THE APOCRYPHA ⁴

In response to the alleged support for considering the apocryphal books as canonical, we will do two things. First, we will respond to each of the Roman Catholic arguments in

⁴ For a current critique of the so-called Alexandrian Canon, see Norman L. Geisler, “The Extent of the Old Testament Canon,” in Gerald F. Hawthorne, ed., *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

favor of the Apocrypha, showing that they are unfounded. Second, we will build a positive case in favor of the Jewish and Protestant canon.

A RESPONSE TO CATHOLIC ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE APOCRYPHA

Our response will follow the order of the arguments given by Catholics discussed above. Thus, the numbering will correspond point by point.

1. There may be New Testament allusions to the Apocrypha, but there are no clear New Testament quotations from it. Not once is there a direct quotation from any apocryphal books accepted by the Roman Catholic Church.⁵ Further, although the New Testament cites the Hebrew Old Testament, it never once quotes any of the fourteen (or fifteen) apocryphal books as divinely authoritative or canonical. For example, they are never cited with introductory phrases like “thus says the Lord” or “as it is written” or “the Scriptures say,” such as are typically found when canonical books are quoted.

2. The fact that the New Testament often quotes from the Greek Old Testament in no way proves that the apocryphal books contained in the Greek manuscript of the Old Testament are inspired. First, it is not certain that the Septuagint (LXX) of the first century contained the Apocrypha. The earliest Greek manuscripts that include them date from the fourth century A.D. Further, even if they were in the Septuagint of apostolic times, Jesus and the apostles never once quoted them, although they are supposed to have been included in the very version of the Old Testament (the LXX) that they usually cited. Finally, even the notes in the current Roman Catholic Bible (NAB) make the revealing admission that the apocryphal books are “religious books used by both Jews and Christians which were not included in the collection of inspired writings.” Instead, they “were introduced rather late into the collection of the Bible. Catholics call them ‘deuterocanonical’ (second canon) books.”⁶

3. Citations of the church fathers in support of the canonicity of the Apocrypha are selective and misleading. While some Fathers accepted their inspiration, others used them only for devotional or homiletical (preaching) purposes but did not accept them as canonical. As a recent authority on the Apocrypha, Roger Beckwith, observes,

When one examines the passages in the early Fathers which are supposed to establish the canonicity of the Apocrypha, one finds that some of them are taken from the

⁵ There are, of course, allusions to pseudigraphal (false writings) that are rejected by Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, such as the *Book of Enoch* (Jude 14–15) and the *Bodily Assumption of Moses* (Jude 9). There are also citations from pagan poets and philosophers (Acts 17:28 ; 1 Cor. 15:33 ; Titus 1:12). But none of these are cited as Scripture nor as a divine authority. The New Testament simply refers to a truth contained in these books which otherwise may (and do) have many errors. Roman Catholics agree.

⁶ *New American Bible*, p. 413.

alternative Greek text of Ezra (1 Esdras) or from additions or appendices to Daniel, Jeremiah or some other canonical book, which . . . are not really relevant; that others of them are not quotations from the Apocrypha at all;⁷ and that, of those which are, many do not give any indication that the book is regarded as Scripture.⁸

So unqualified Catholic appeal to the use of the Apocrypha is misleading. For, as Beckwith notes, in many cases the Fathers were not claiming divine authority for one or more of the eleven books infallibly canonized by the Council of Trent. Rather, they were either citing a book that was part of the Hebrew canon or not quoting the apocryphal books as Scripture.

4. Although some individuals in the early church had a high regard for the Apocrypha, there were many who vehemently opposed it.⁹ For example, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Origen, and the great Roman Catholic biblical scholar and translator of the Latin Vulgate, Jerome, all opposed the Apocrypha (see below). Even the early Syrian church did not accept the Apocrypha. In the second century A.D. the Syrian Bible (Peshitta) did not contain the Apocrypha.¹⁰

5. As even many Catholic scholars will admit, scenes from the catacombs do not prove the canonicity of the books whose events they depict. Such scenes need not indicate any more than the religious significance that the portrayed events had for early Christians. They may show a respect for the books containing these events without recognizing that they are inspired.

6. None of the great Greek manuscripts (Aleph, A, and B) contain all of the apocryphal books. In fact, only four (Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, and Sirach [Ecclesiasticus]) are found in all of them, and the oldest manuscripts (B or Vaticanus) totally exclude the books of Maccabees. Yet Catholics appeal to this manuscript for proof of their deuterocanonical books that include the Apocrypha! What is more, no Greek manuscript

7 “Thus, *Epistle of Barnabas* 6.7 and Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.22.5, are not quoting Wisd. 2.12 but Isa. 3:10 LXX, and Tertullian, *On the Soul* 15, is not quoting Wisd. 1.6 but Ps. 139.23, as a comparison of the passages shows. Similarly, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 129, is quite clearly not quoting Wisdom but Prov. 8.21–5 LXX. The fact that he calls Proverbs ‘Wisdom’ is in accordance with the common nomenclature of the earlier Fathers.” See Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), p. 427 n. 208.

8 Ibid., p. 387.

9 J. D. N. Kelly’s comment that “For the great majority [of early fathers] . . . the deuterocanonical writings ranked as scripture in the fullest sense” is out of synch with the facts just cited by Beckwith.

10 See Norman L. Geisler and W. E. Nix, *General Introduction to the Bible, Revised and Expanded* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), chaps. 27–28.

has the same list of apocryphal books accepted by the Council of Trent (A.D. 1545–63).
11

7. There are some important reasons why citing these church councils does not prove the Apocrypha belonged in the canon of the Christian church. First, these were only local councils and were not binding on the whole church.¹² Local councils have often erred in their decisions and have been overruled later by the universal church.

Second, these books were not part of the Christian (New Testament period) writings and hence were not under the province of the Christian church to decide. They were the province of the Jewish community that wrote them and had centuries before rejected them as part of the canon, for books were accepted by the contemporary generations who were in the best position to verify the prophetic claims of their authors (cf. Heb. 2:3–4).

Third, the books accepted by these Christian councils may not have been the same ones in each case. Hence, they cannot be used as evidence of the exact canon later infallibly proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church in A.D. 1546.

Fourth, the local councils of Hippo and Carthage in North Africa were influenced by Augustine, who is the most significant voice of antiquity that accepted the same apocryphal books later canonized by the Council of Trent in A.D. 1546.¹³ However, Augustine’s position is ill-founded for several reasons. (a) His contemporary, Jerome, a greater biblical authority than Augustine, rejected the Apocrypha (see below). (b) Augustine himself recognized that the Jews did not accept these books as part of their canon.¹⁴ (c) Augustine erroneously reasoned that these books should be in the Bible because of their mention “of extreme and wonderful suffering of certain martyrs.”¹⁵ On that ground one could argue that *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*¹⁶ should also be in the canon! (d) Augustine was inconsistent, since he rejected books not written by prophets yet

11 See Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, pp. 194, 382–83.

12 Some Catholic apologists argue that even though the council was not ecumenical its results are binding since they were confirmed by a pope. However, they acknowledge that there is no infallible way to know which statements by popes are infallible and which are not. Indeed, they admit that other statements by popes were even heretical, such as the teaching of the monothelite heresy by Pope Honorius I (see chap. 11).

13 The Council of Rome did not list the same books accepted by Hippo and Carthage. It does not include Baruch, thus listing only six, not seven, of the apocryphal books later pronounced canonical by the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic scholars assume it was part of Jeremiah. However, Trent lists it as a separate book. See Denzinger, *Sources*, 84, p. 34.

14 Augustine, *City of God* 19.36–38.

15 Of the books of Maccabees Augustine said, “These are held to be canonical, not by the Jews, but by the Church, on account of the extreme and wonderful sufferings of certain martyrs” (*City of God* 18, 36).

16 John Foxe (1516–87), *Acts and Monuments of Matters Happening in the Church* (1563).

accepted a book that appears to deny being prophetic (1 Macc. 9:27).¹⁷ (e) Augustine's acceptance of the Apocrypha seems to be connected with his mistaken belief in the inspiration of the Septuagint, whose later Greek manuscripts contained them.¹⁸

8. The Greek church has not always accepted the Apocrypha, nor is its present position unequivocal. At the synods of Constantinople (A.D. 1638), Jaffa (1642), and Jerusalem (1672) these books were declared canonical. But even as late as 1839 their Larger Catechism expressly omitted the Apocrypha on the grounds that its books did not exist in the Hebrew Bible. This is still their position.

9. At the Roman Catholic Council of Trent (A.D. 1546) the infallible proclamation was made accepting the Apocrypha as part of the inspired Word of God.¹⁹ Unfortunately, the proclamation came a millennium and a half after the books were written and in an obvious polemic against Protestantism.²⁰ Furthermore, the official infallible addition of books that support prayers for the dead is highly suspect, coming as it did only a few years after Luther protested against this very doctrine. It has all the appearance of an attempt to provide ecclesiastical support for Roman Catholic doctrines that lack biblical support (see chap. 16).

17 This verse denies there was a prophet *during the period it was written*, which would mean the author was not a prophet. In response, Catholics appeal to verses that say there were no prophetic visions in Israel *before* God raised up Samuel (1 Sam. 3:1). But this misses the point: the books of Samuel were not written *before* God began to speak to Samuel but *after*. Likewise, Psalm 74:9 refers to no prophet being left "in the land," since the Babylonians had destroyed the temple (v. 3) and the prophets were in exile (e.g., Daniel and Jeremiah). And Lamentations 2:9 does not say there were no prophets anywhere (Jeremiah, who wrote it, was a prophet) but that there were none in the land who were getting a "vision from the Lord." By contrast, the writer of 1 Maccabees was bemoaning the fact that there were no longer any prophets in Israel, even after they had returned to the land. Nor does 1 Maccabees state that the prophetic lull in Israel was to be only temporary. Indeed, Judaism has acknowledged that even before the time of Maccabees the prophetic spirit had departed from Israel (see Josephus, *Antiquities*, Against Apion 1.8: "From Artaxerxes until our time everything has been recorded, but has not been deemed worthy of like credit with what preceded, because the exact succession of the prophets ceased.")

18 However, Augustine's later acknowledgment of the superiority of Jerome's Hebrew text over the Septuagint's Greek text should have led him to accept the superiority of Jerome's Hebrew canon as well, which did not include the Apocrypha.

19 Some Catholic scholars claim that the earlier Council of Florence (A.D. 1442) made the same pronouncement. However, this is a disputed council, and its action here does not have any real basis in Jewish history, the New Testament, or early Christian history.

20 Even before Luther, the Council of Florence (A.D. 1442) had proclaimed the Apocrypha inspired, which helped bolster the doctrine of purgatory that had already blossomed in Roman Catholicism. However, the manifestations of this belief in the sale of indulgences came to full bloom in Luther's day, and Trent's infallible proclamation of the Apocrypha was a clear polemic against Luther's teaching.

10. Apocryphal books did appear in Protestant Bibles prior to the Council of Trent, but were generally placed in a separate section because they were not considered of equal authority.²¹ While Anglicans and some other non-Roman Catholic groups had a high regard for the devotional and historical value of the Apocrypha, they did not consider it inspired and of equal authority with Scripture. Even Roman Catholic scholars throughout the Reformation period made the distinction between the Apocrypha and the canon. Cardinal Ximenes made this distinction in his *Complutensian Polyglot* (A.D. 1514–17) on the very eve of the Reformation. Cardinal Cajetan, who later opposed Luther at Augsburg in 1518, published a *Commentary on All the Authentic Historical Books of the Old Testament* (A.D. 1532) many years after the Reformation began which did not contain the Apocrypha. Luther spoke against the Apocrypha in 1543, placing its books at the back of his Bible.²²

11. The discovery at Qumran included not only the community's Bible (the Old Testament) but their library, with fragments of hundreds of books. Among these were some Old Testament apocryphal books. But the fact that no commentaries were found on an apocryphal book and that only canonical books, not the Apocrypha, were found in the special parchment and script indicates that the Qumran community did not view the apocryphal books as canonical.²³ The noted scholar on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Millar Burroughs, concluded: "There is no reason to think that any of these works were venerated as Sacred Scripture."²⁴

Actually, all that the arguments used in favor of the canonicity of the apocryphal books prove is that various apocryphal books were given varied degrees of esteem by different persons within the Christian church, usually falling short of canonicity. Only after Augustine and the local councils he dominated mistakenly pronounced them inspired did they gain wider usage and eventual acceptance by the Roman Catholic Church at Trent. This falls far short of the kind of initial, continual, and complete recognition of the canonical books of the Protestant Old Testament and Jewish Torah (which exclude the Apocrypha) by the Christian church. It exemplifies how the teaching magisterium of the Catholic church proclaims infallible one tradition to the neglect of

21 Even knowledgeable Catholics acknowledge that the appearance of apocryphal books in Protestant bibles does not prove they were accepted as inspired but only that they were valued.

22 See Bruce Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 181f. Luther also had some initial doubts about James, but he eventually placed it alongside the other New Testament books.

23 Menahem Mansoor, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 203, lists the following fragments of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha: Tobit, in Hebrew and Aramaic; Enoch, in Aramaic; Jubilees, in Hebrew; Testament of Levi and Naphtali, in Aramaic; Apocryphal Daniel literature, in Hebrew and Aramaic; and Psalms of Joshua. See *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2:390.

24 Millar Burroughs, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 178.

strong evidence in favor of an opposing tradition because it supports a doctrine that lacks any real support in the canonical books.²⁵

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE PROTESTANT (“PALESTINIAN”) CANON

The evidence indicates that the Protestant Old Testament canon, consisting of thirty-nine books identical to the Hebrew Bible and excluding the Apocrypha, is the true canon.²⁶ The Palestinian Jews represented Jewish orthodoxy. Therefore, their canon was recognized as the orthodox one. It was the canon of Jesus,²⁷ Josephus, and Jerome. For that matter, it was the canon of many of the early church fathers, including, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Athanasius. The arguments in support of the Protestant canon can be divided into two categories: historical and doctrinal.

REASONS FOR ACCEPTING THE PROTESTANT CANON

The True Test of Canonicity. Contrary to the Roman Catholic argument from *Christian usage*, the true test of canonicity is *propheticity*. That is, propheticity determines canonicity. God determined which books would be in the Bible by giving their message to a prophet. So only books written by a prophet, that is, an accredited spokesperson for God, are inspired and belong in the canon of Scripture.

Of course, while God *determined* canonicity by propheticity, the people of God had to *discover* which of these books were prophetic. The evidence supports the thesis that this was done immediately by the people of God to whom the prophet wrote, not centuries later by those who had no access to him nor any way to verify his prophetic credentials. For example, Moses’ books were accepted immediately and were stored in a holy place (Deut. 31:26). Likewise, Joshua’s books were immediately accepted and preserved along with Moses’ Law (Josh. 24:26). Samuel wrote a book and added it to

25 The (proto) canonical books were received *immediately* by the people of God into the growing canon of Scripture (see Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction*, chap. 13). The subsequent debate was by those who were not in a position, as was the immediate audience, to know whether they were from an accredited apostle or prophet. Hence, this subsequent debate over the antilegomena was directly over their *authenticity*, not canonicity—they were already in the canon. What some individuals in subsequent generations questioned was whether they rightfully belonged there. Eventually, all of the antilegomena were retained in the canon. This is not true of the Apocrypha, for Protestants reject all of the books and even Roman Catholics reject some of them (e.g., 3–4 Esdras and The Prayer of Manasseh).

26 The numbering of thirty-nine books is reduced to twenty-four by combining the following two books into one each: 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra–Nehemiah (thus reducing the number by four), and counting the Twelve Minor Prophets as one book (thus reducing the number by 11). Thus the total of 15 (4+11) from 39 leaves 24.

27 See Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction*, chap. 5.

the collection (1 Sam. 10:25). Daniel already had a copy of his contemporary Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2 , 11 , 13). Paul encouraged the churches to circulate his inspired epistles (Col. 4:16). And Peter had a collection of Paul's writings, which he called "Scripture" along with the Old Testament (2 Pet. 3:15–16).

There were a number of ways for the immediate contemporaries to confirm whether someone was a prophet of God. Among these were supernatural confirmation (cf. Exod. 3:1–3 ; Acts 2:22 ; 2 Cor. 12:12 ; Heb. 2:3–4). Sometimes this came in the form of feats of nature and other times in terms of predictive prophecy. Indeed, false prophets were weeded out if their predictions did not come true (Deut. 18:22). Of course, alleged revelations that contradicted previously revealed truths were rejected as well (Deut. 13:1–3).

The evidence that there was a growing canon of books that were accepted immediately by contemporaries who could confirm their prophetic authenticity is that succeeding books cited preceding ones. Moses' writings are cited throughout the Old Testament beginning with his immediate successor, Joshua (Josh. 1:7 ; 1 Kings 2:3 ; 2 Kings 14:6 ; 2 Chron. 17:9 ; Ezra 6:18 ; Neh. 13:1 ; Jer. 8:8 ; Mal. 4:4). Likewise, later prophets cited earlier ones (e.g., Jer. 26:18 ; Ezek. 14:14 , 20 ; Dan. 9:2 ; Jon. 2:2–9 ; Mic. 4:1–3). In the New Testament Paul cites Luke (1 Tim. 5:18), Peter recognizes Paul's epistles (2 Pet. 3:15–16), and Jude (4–12) cites 2 Peter. Also, the Book of Revelation is filled with images and ideas taken from previous Scripture, especially Daniel (cf. Rev. 13).

In fact, the entire Protestant Old Testament was considered prophetic. Moses, who wrote the first five books, was a prophet (Deut. 18:15). The rest of the Old Testament books were known as "the Prophets" (Matt. 5:17) since these two sections are called "all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27).²⁸ The "apostles and [New Testament] prophets" (Eph. 3:5) composed the entire New Testament. Hence, the whole Bible is a prophetic book, including the final book (cf. Rev. 20:7 , 9–10). As we will see, this cannot be said for the apocryphal books.

There is strong evidence that the apocryphal books are not prophetic. But since propheticity is the test for canonicity, this would eliminate the Apocrypha from the canon. First, no apocryphal books claim to be written by a prophet. Indeed, as already noted, one apocryphal book even disclaims being prophetic (1 Macc. 9:27). Second, there is no divine confirmation of any of the writers of the apocryphal books, as there is for prophets who wrote canonical books (e.g., Exod. 4:1–2). Third, there is no predictive

28 "The Prophets" were later divided into Prophets and Writings. The reasons are not clear, but some believe this division was based on whether the author was a prophet by office or just by gift. Others claim it was for purposes of use at Jewish festivals. Some say they were arranged chronologically in descending order of size (see Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction*, pp. 244–45). Whatever the reason, it is clear that the original (cf. Dan. 9:2 ; Zech. 7:12) and continual way to refer to the entire Old Testament up to the time of Christ was the twofold division of the "Law and Prophets."

prophecy in the Apocrypha, such as we have in the canonical books (e.g., Isa. 53 ; Dan. 9 ; Mic. 5:2) and which is a clear indication of their propheticity. Fourth, there is no new messianic truth in the Apocrypha. Thus, it adds nothing to the messianic truths of the Old Testament. Fifth, even the Jewish community, whose books they were, acknowledged that the prophetic gifts had ceased in Israel before the Apocrypha was written (see quotes above). Sixth, the apocryphal books were never listed in the Jewish Bible along with the “Prophets,” or any other section for that matter. Seventh, never once is any apocryphal book cited authoritatively by a prophetic book written after it.²⁹ Taken together, this provides overwhelming evidence that the Apocrypha was not prophetic and, therefore, should not be part of the canon of Scripture.

The Continuous Testimony from Antiquity. In addition to the evidence for the propheticity of only the books of the Protestant Old Testament (which exclude the Apocrypha) there is virtually an unbroken line of support from ancient to modern times for rejecting the Apocrypha as part of the canon. This is true for both Jewish teachers and Christian Fathers.

1. Philo, an Alexandrian Jewish teacher (20 B.C.–A . D . 40), quoted the Old Testament prolifically from virtually every canonical book. Never once, however, did he quote the Apocrypha as inspired text.

2. Josephus (A.D. 30–100), a Jewish historian, explicitly excluded the Apocrypha, numbering the Old Testament as twenty-two books (= thirty-nine books in the Protestant Old Testament). Neither does he quote an apocryphal book as Scripture, though he was familiar with them. In *Against Apion* he wrote:

For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have,] *but only twenty-two books, which are justly believed to be divine; and of them, five belong to Moses, which contain his law, and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death.* This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of

Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned at Xerxes, *the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books.* The remaining *four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life.*³⁰

These correspond exactly to the present Protestant Old Testament, which excludes the Apocrypha.

3. Jewish teachers acknowledged that their prophetic line ended in the fourth century B.C . Yet, as even Catholics acknowledge, the apocryphal books were written after this

29 While not every canonical book manifests all those characteristics, they do possess one or more. However, none of the apocryphal books possess any essential prophetic characteristic, manifesting that they are not prophetic.

30 See Josephus, *Antiquities*, *Against Apion* 1.8, emphasis added.

time. Josephus wrote: “From Artaxerxes until our time everything has been recorded, but has not been deemed worthy of like credit with what preceded, because the exact succession of the prophets ceased.”³¹ Numerous rabbinical statements on the cessation of prophecy support these.³² Seder Olam Rabbah 30 declares: “Until then [the coming of Alexander the Great] the prophets prophesied through the Holy Spirit. From then on, ‘Incline thine ear and hear the words of the wise.’” Baba Bathra 12b declares: “Since the day when the Temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken from the prophets and given to the wise.” Rabbi Samuel bar Inia said, “The Second Temple lacked five things which the First Temple possessed, namely, the fire, the ark, the Urim and Thummin, the oil of anointing and the Holy Spirit [of prophecy].” Thus, the Jewish fathers (rabbis) acknowledged that the time period during which their Apocrypha was written was not a time when God was giving inspired writings.

4. Jesus and the New Testament writers never once quoted the Apocrypha as Scripture, even though they were aware of these books and possibly even alluded to them at times.³³ This point is reinforced by the fact that the New Testament writers have hundreds of citations from all but a few canonical books in the Old Testament. And the manner in which they are cited with authority indicates that they were believed to be part of the “Law and Prophets” [i.e., the whole Old Testament] which was believed to be the inspired and infallible Word of God (Matt. 5:17–18 ; cf. John 10:35). In fact, Jesus specifically quoted books from each of the parts of the Old Testament “Law and Prophets,” which he called “all the Scriptures” (Luke 24:27).³⁴

5. The Jewish scholars at Jamnia (c. A.D. 90) did not accept the Apocrypha as part of the divinely inspired Jewish canon.³⁵ Since the New Testament explicitly states that Israel was entrusted with the oracles of God and was the recipient of the covenants and the Law (Rom. 3:2), the Jews should be considered the custodians of the limits of their own canon. And they have always rejected the Apocrypha.

6. No canonical list or general council accepted the Apocrypha as inspired for nearly the first four centuries of the Christian church. This is especially significant since all the lists available and most of the Fathers from this period rejected the Apocrypha. The first councils to accept the Apocrypha were only local ones without ecumenical force.³⁶

31 Ibid.

32 The following citations are found in Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, p. 370.

33 For example, Heb. 11:35 may allude to 2 Macc. 7, 12, though this may be a reference to the canonical Book of Kings.

34 There was also a threefold division of the Old Testament into Law, Prophets, and Writings, but this simply divided the “prophets” into two sections called “prophets and writings.” See Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction*, chap. 14.

35 See Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, pp. 276–77, for a summary of recent scholarship on Jamnia.

36 The Catholic contention that the Council of Rome (A.D. 382), though not an ecumenical council, had ecumenical force because Pope Damasus ratified it is without

7. Many of the early Fathers of the Christian church spoke out against the Apocrypha, including Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and the great Roman Catholic Bible translator, Jerome.

8. Jerome (A.D. 340–420), the greatest biblical scholar of the early medieval period and translator of the Latin Vulgate, explicitly rejected the Apocrypha as part of the canon.³⁷ He said the church reads these books “for example and instruction of manners” but does not “apply them to establish any doctrine.”³⁸ In fact, Jerome disputed Augustine’s unjustified acceptance of these books. He even refused at first to translate the Apocrypha into Latin, but later made a hurried translation of a few books. After listing the exact books of the Jewish Bible and Protestant Old Testament (which exclude the Apocrypha), Jerome concluded:

“Thus altogether there come to be 22 books of the old Law [according to the letters of the Jewish alphabet], that is, five of Moses, eight of the Prophets, and nine of the Hagiographa. Although some set down . . . Ruth and Kinoth among the Hagiographa, and think that these books ought to be counted (separately) in their computation, and that there are thus 24 books of the old Law; which the Apocalypse of John represents as adoring the Lamb in the number of the 24 elders.” . . . Then St. Jerome adds, “This prologue can fitly serve as a Helmed (i.e., equipped with a helmet, against assailants) *introduction to all the biblical books* which have been translated from Hebrew into Latin, so that we may know that *whatever is not included in these is to be placed among the apocrypha.*”³⁹

In his preface to Daniel, Jerome clearly rejected the apocryphal additions to Daniel (Bel and the Dragon, Susanna) and argued only for the canonicity of those books found in the Hebrew Bible that excluded all the Apocrypha. He wrote:

grounds. First, it begs the question, assuming that Damasus was a pope with infallible authority. Second, even Catholics acknowledge this council was not an ecumenical one. Third, not all Catholics agree that statements like this by popes are infallible. As noted in chap. 11, there are no infallible lists of infallible statements by popes. Nor are there any universally agreed upon criteria that yield conclusions on issues like this that even all Catholics agree on. Finally, appealing to a pope to make a statement by a local council infallible is a double-edged sword; even Catholic scholars admit that some popes taught error and were even heretical at times!

³⁷ In view of these clear quotations showing Jerome’s rejection of the Apocrypha, recent Catholic argument that Jerome “occasionally quotes from them as scripture in accordance with the common practice” and thus “becomes an involuntary witness to their established position” is without foundation (see *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* [New York: Nelson, 1953], par. 15f.).

³⁸ As cited by Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, p. 343, who cites Jerome’s preface to his Vulgate version of the *Book of Solomon*.

³⁹ Jerome, main preface to Vulgate, as cited in Beckwith, *Old Testament Canon*, pp. 119–20, emphasis added.

The stories of Susanna and of Bel and the Dragon are not contained in the Hebrew. . . . For this same reason when I was translating Daniel many years ago, I noted these visions with a critical symbol, showing that they were not included in the Hebrew. . . . After all, both Origen, Eusebius and Appolinarius, and other outstanding churchmen and teachers of Greece acknowledge that, as I have said, these visions are not found amongst the Hebrews, *and therefore they are not obliged to answer to Porphyry for these portions which exhibit no authority as Holy Scripture.* ⁴⁰

9. Even noted Roman Catholic scholars during the Reformation period rejected the Apocrypha, such as Cardinal Cajetan, who opposed Martin Luther. As already noted, he wrote a *Commentary on All the Authentic Historical Books of the Old Testament* (A.D. 1532), which excluded the Apocrypha. If he believed they were authentic, they certainly would have been included in a book on “all the authentic” books of the Old Testament.

10. Martin Luther, John Calvin, and other Reformers rejected the canonicity of the Apocrypha. Lutherans and Anglicans used it only for ethical/devotional matters but did not consider it authoritative in matters of faith. Reformed churches followed the Westminster Confession of Faith (A.D. 1647), which states: “The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon of the Scriptures; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than any other human writings.”

In short, the Christian church (including Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, and others) has rejected the Apocrypha as part of the canon to this date. They do so because it lacks the primary determining factor of canonicity: propheticity; that is, the apocryphal books lack evidence that they were written by accredited prophets of God. Further supporting evidence is found in the facts that the Apocrypha is never cited as authoritative in Scripture in the New Testament; it was never part of the Jewish canon whose books they are; and the early church as a whole did not accept the Apocrypha as inspired.

THE MISTAKE OF THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

40 Jerome, Preface to *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel*, trans. by Gleason Archer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), p. 17, emphasis added. The suggestion that Jerome really favored the apocryphal books but was only arguing that the Jews rejected them is groundless. First, he said clearly in the above quotation that these books “*exhibit no authority as Holy Scripture.*” Second, he never retracted his rejection of the Apocrypha. Further, he stated in his work *Against Rufinus* (33) that he had “followed the judgment of the churches” on this matter. And his statement “I was not following my own personal views” appears to refer to “the remarks that they [the enemies of Christianity] are wont to make against us.” In any event, he nowhere retracted his many statements against the Apocrypha. Finally, the fact that Jerome cited apocryphal books is no proof that he accepted them. This was a common practice by many Fathers. What is important is that he never retracted his statement that the church reads them “for example and instruction of manners” but does not “apply them to establish any doctrine.”

The infallible pronouncement by the Council of Trent that the Apocrypha is part of the inspired Word of God is unjustified for many reasons. It reveals how fallible an allegedly infallible statement can be, since it is historically unfounded, being a polemical overreaction, and entailing an arbitrary decision that involved a dogmatic exclusion.

1. *Prophetically Unverified.* The true test of canonicity is propheticity. There is no evidence that the apocryphal books were prophetic. They lack prophetic authorship, content, and confirmation.
2. *Historically Unfounded.* The council's pronouncement went against a continuous line of teaching, including noted Jewish and Christian fathers, such as Philo, Josephus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and Jerome. Certainly, it is not based on any "unanimous consent of the Fathers" Catholics claim for their dogma.
3. *Polemical Overreaction.* The occasion of Trent's infallible pronouncement on the Apocrypha was part of a polemical action against Luther, supporting teaching that he had attacked, such as prayers for the dead (cf. 2 Macc. 12:45–46).
4. *Arbitrary Decision.* Not all the Apocrypha was accepted at Trent. In fact, they arbitrarily accepted a book favoring their belief in prayers for the dead (2 Maccabees) and rejected one opposing such prayers (2 [4] Esdras; cf. 7:105). Thus, Trent's acceptance of the Apocrypha was unfounded. There were fourteen books and yet they selected only eleven. On what grounds did they reject the three?
5. *Dogmatic Exclusion.* In fact, the very history of this section of 2 (4) Esdras reveals the arbitrariness of Trent's decision.⁴¹ It was written in Aramaic by an unknown Jewish author (c. A.D. 100) and circulated in Old Latin versions (c. A.D. 200). The Latin Vulgate printed it as an appendix to the New Testament (c. A.D. 400). It disappeared from Bibles until Protestants, beginning with Johann Haug (1726–42), began to print it in the Apocrypha based on Aramaic texts, since it was not in Latin manuscripts of the time. However, in 1874 a long section (seventy

41 Some Catholics argue that this was not arbitrary because: (1) it was not part of earlier deuterocanonical lists; (2) it was written after the time of Christ; (3) it was relegated to an inferior position in the Vulgate; and (4) it was only included among the Apocrypha by Protestants in the eighteenth century. This line of argument is not convincing. First, 2 [4] Esdras was part of earlier lists of books not considered fully canonical, as even Catholics acknowledge. Second, the date of the book has nothing to do with whether it should be in the Jewish Apocrypha but whether it was used by early Christians, and it was used, just as the other apocryphal books were. Third, if it was rejected because it was reduced to an inferior position in the Vulgate, then Catholics would have to reject all the Apocrypha, since Jerome, who translated the Vulgate, relegated all the Apocrypha to an inferior position. Fourth, the reason it did not reappear until the eighteenth century is because early on a Catholic monk apparently cut out the section against praying for the dead!

verses of chap. 7) was found by Robert Bently in a library in Amiens, France. Bruce Metzger noted: “It is probable that the lost section was deliberately cut out of an ancestor of most extant Latin Manuscripts, because of dogmatic reasons, for the passage contains an emphatic denial of the value of prayers for the dead.”⁴²

In spite of the testimony of antiquity against them, in A.D. 1546, just twenty-nine years after Luther had posted his ninety-five theses,⁴³ the Roman Catholic Church infallibly and irrevocably proclaimed that the apocryphal books were on the same level as Scripture, declaring: “The Synod . . . receives and venerates . . . all the books [including the *Apocrypha*] both of the Old and the New Testaments— seeing that one God is the Author of both . . . as having been dictated, either by Christ’s own word of mouth or by the Holy Ghost. . . . If anyone receives not as sacred and canonical the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church . . . let him be anathema.”⁴⁴

The Wrong Test for Canonicity. When all is said and done, the Roman Catholic Church uses the wrong test for canonicity. The true and false views of what determines canonicity can be contrasted as follows.⁴⁵

<i>Incorrect View of Canon</i>	<i>Correct View of Canon</i>
Church Determines Canon	Church Discovers Canon
Church Is Mother of Canon	Church Is Child of Canon *
Church Is Magistrate of Canon	Church Is Minister of Canon
Church Regulates Canon	Church Recognizes Canon
Church Is Judge of Canon	Church Is Witness of Canon
Church Is Master of Canon	Church Is Servant of Canon

In spite of the fact that Catholic sources can be cited supporting what looks very much like the “correct view” above, Catholic apologists often equivocate on this issue. Peter Kreeft, for example, argues that the church must be infallible if the

Bible is, since the effect cannot be greater than the cause and the church caused the canon. But if the church is regulated by the canon, not ruler over it, then the church is not the cause of the canon. Other defenders of Catholicism make the same mistake, giving lip-service to the fact that the church only discovers the canon, yet constructing an argument that makes the church the determiner of the canon. They neglect the fact that it is God who caused (by inspiration) the canonical Scriptures, not the church.

42 Metzger, *Introduction to the Apocrypha*, p. 23.

43 For information concerning the occasion and content of the *Ninety-Five Theses*, see chap. 5 .

44 Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 2:81.

45 The chart comes from Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction*, p. 221.

* Of course the whole canon was not completed before the New Testament church came into existence.

This misunderstanding is sometimes evident in the equivocal use of the word “witness.” When we speak of the later church as being a “witness” to the canon, we do not mean in the sense of being an eyewitness to first-hand evidence. Only the people of God contemporary to the events were first-hand witnesses. Rather, the later church is a witness of the canon in the sense that it testifies to the historical *evidence* for the authenticity of the canonical books as coming from prophets and apostles. Yet when Roman Catholics speak of the role of the church in determining the canon they endow it with an evidential role it does not have. Several points will clarify the proper role of the Christian church in discovering which books belong in the canon.

First, *only the people of God contemporary to the writing of the biblical books are actual eyewitnesses to the evidence.* They alone were witnesses to the canon as it was developing. Only they are qualified to testify to the evidence of the propheticity of the biblical books, which is the determinative factor of canonicity.

Second, *the later church is not an evidential witness for the canon.* The later church does not create or constitute evidence for the canon. It is only a discoverer and observer of the evidence that remains for original confirmation of the propheticity of the canonical books. Assuming that the church itself is evidence is the mistake behind the view favoring the canonicity of the Apocrypha.

Third, *neither the earlier nor later church is the judge of the canon.* The church is not the final authority for the criteria of what will be admitted as evidence in the way that judges are. That is, it does not determine the rules of canonicity. Since the Bible is the Word of God, only God can determine the criteria for our discovery of what is his Word. Or, to put it another way, what is of God will have his “fingerprints” on it, and only God is the determiner of what his “fingerprints” are like. It is up to the people of God simply to discover these divine characteristics that God has determined.

Fourth, *both the early and later church is more like a jury than a judge.* The role of a jury is to listen to the evidence, not create it or try to be it. They weigh the evidence, not make it or constitute it. Then, they render a verdict in accord with the evidence. This, as we have shown, is precisely what the Christian church has done in rendering its verdict that the Apocrypha is not part of sacred Scripture. The first-century church looked at the first-hand evidence for *propheticity* (miracles, etc.), and the subsequent historic church has reviewed the evidence for the *authenticity* of these prophetic books that were directly confirmed by God when they were written.

There is, of course, a certain sense in which the church is a “judge” of the canon. It is called upon, as all juries are, to engage in an active use of the mind in sifting and weighing the evidence and in rendering a verdict. But this is not what Roman Catholics believe, in practice, if not in theory: that the Roman Catholic Church plays a magisterial role in determining the canon. After all, this is what is meant by the “teaching magisterium” of the church, which it exercised at Trent and reaffirmed at Vatican I and II. The Roman Catholic hierarchy is not merely ministerial, it is magisterial. It has a

judicial role, not just an administrative one. It is not just a jury looking at evidence, but a judge determining what counts as evidence and what does not. And herein is the problem.

In exercising its magisterial role, the Roman Catholic Church chose the wrong course in rendering its decision about the Apocrypha. First, it chose to follow the wrong criterion: *Christian usage* rather than *propheticity*. Second, it used *second-hand evidence* of later writers rather than *first-hand evidence* for canonicity (divine confirmation of the author's propheticity). Third, it did not use *immediate confirmation* by contemporaries of the events but *later statements* by people often separated from the events by generations or centuries. All of these mistakes arose out of a misconception of the very role of the church as judge rather than jury, as magistrate rather than minister, as sovereign over rather than servant of the canon. By contrast, the Protestant rejection of the Apocrypha was based on a proper understanding of the role of the contemporary eyewitnesses to the evidence of propheticity and the succeeding church as being possessor of historical evidence for the authenticity of these prophetic books.

CONCLUSION

Differences over the Apocrypha are crucial to Roman Catholics and Protestants. Opposing doctrines held firmly by both sides are at stake, such as purgatory and prayers for the dead. As we have seen, there is no evidence that the apocryphal books are inspired and, therefore, should be part of the canon of inspired Scripture. They do not claim to be inspired nor does the Jewish community that produced them claim they were. Indeed, they are never quoted as Scripture in the New Testament, and many early Fathers, including the great Roman Catholic biblical scholar, Jerome, categorically rejected them. Adding them to the Bible with an infallible decree at the Council of Trent has all the markings of a dogmatic and polemical pronouncement, geared by Roman Catholicism to bolster support for doctrines for which they cannot find clear support in any of the sixty-six canonical books.

In view of the strong evidence against the Apocrypha, the decision by the Roman Catholic Church to pronounce them canonical is unfounded and unanimously rejected by all orthodox Protestants. Tragically, the Roman Catholic view has been pronounced *ex cathedra* and is therefore an official, infallible, and irrevocable part of the Roman Catholic faith. As such, it is an insurmountable obstacle to any union between Catholics and Protestants on a fundamental teaching: the extent of Scripture. Furthermore, it is a very serious error to admit nonrevelational material into the written Word of God, since it corrupts the revelation of God and thereby undermines the divine authority of Scripture.

46

46 See Bernard Ramm, *The Pattern of Religious Authority* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), p. 65.