

from which our present Hebrew and Greek Bibles were formed. We are informed by St. Chrysostom, an ancient Christian writer who lived soon after the days of Christ, that "many of the prophetic monuments have perished; for the Jews being careless, and not only careless, but also impious, have carelessly lost some of these monuments; others they have partly burned, partly torn in pieces."

We are also informed by St. Justin, another early Christian writer, that the Jews actually did destroy a great number of the prophetic books, in order that the world might not perceive the agreement between the ancient Prophets in the Old Testament and Christianity. Here, then, we have the testimony of early Christian writers that many of the prophetic books of the Old Testament were destroyed.

We are also informed by the Catholics, "That many, and very many of the canonical books of Scripture have quite perished, and not so much as appeared in the days of the very ancient fathers; so that nothing but the names of those books have come unto us." (See Mumford's Question of Questions, sec. 1. 7.)

We are also informed, by those manuscripts that are dated from the 12th century of the Christian era, that the few books that were preserved during the long reign of persecution and error had become very much altered and mutilated—so much so, that when the learned gathered a large number of manuscripts together, they found no two that agreed. A great variety of readings in these manuscripts discouraged many of our translators, some three centuries ago, from translating the Old Testament, lest the world should turn to atheism. If they had translated them all, they would have had several hundred Bibles, all clashing and differing from each other.

It must be recollected that the Catholic canon of Scripture was not formed until the year 397. Prior to that period, the people were left, some of them to believe in this manuscript, and some in that—some to reject this one, and some that; and many of the Christian fathers in the second and third centuries of the Christian era were entirely unable to determine what manuscripts were spurious, and what ones to receive as divine. Mumford speaks thus upon this subject—

"If you fly to the tradition of the Church only of the first four hundred years, remember that the Council of Carthage, just after the end of those years, alleged the ancient tradition of their fathers, which they judged sufficient for defining our canon. They, who were so near those first four hundred years, knew far better the more universal tradition of that age than we can, twelve hundred years after it. True it is (nothing being defined till then), private doctors were free to follow what they judged to be truest; and as you find them varying from our canon, some in some books, some in others, so you will find them varying from one another, and varying also from you" (meaning the Protestant Canon). "For, in those first four hundred years, Melitus and Nazianzen excluded the Book of Esther, which you add. Origen doubts of the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the second of St. Peter, of the first and second of St. John. St. Cyprian and Nazianzen leave the Apocalypse or Revelation out of their canon. Eusebius doubts of it."

Mumford further says—"All those holy fathers agreed ever in this, that such books were evidently God's word which had evidently a sufficient tradition for them. Now, in the days of those fathers who thus varied from one another, it was not by any infallible means made known to all that