

On Holy Scripture in Particular.

25. When were the sacred books written?

At different times: some before the birth of Christ, others after.

26. Have not these two divisions of the sacred books each their own names?

They have. Those written before the birth of Christ are called the books of the *Old Testament*, while those written after are called the books of the *New Testament*.

27. What are the *Old* and *New Testaments*?

In other words, the old and new Covenants of God with men.

28. In what consisted the *Old Testament*?

In this, that God promised men a divine Saviour, and prepared them to receive him.

29. How did God prepare men to receive the Saviour?

Through gradual revelations, by prophecies and types.

30. In what consists the *New Testament*?

In this, that God has actually given men a divine Saviour, his own only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

31. How many are the books of the *Old Testament*?

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. Athanasius the Great, and St. John Damascene reckon them at *twenty-two*, agreeing therein with the Jews, who so reckon them in the original Hebrew tongue. (Athanas. Ep. xxxix. De Test.; J. Damasc. Theol. lib. iv. c. 17.)

32. Why should we attend to the reckoning of the Hebrews?

Because, as the Apostle Paul says, *unto them were committed the oracles of God*; and the sacred books of the *Old Testament* have been received from the Hebrew Church of that Testament by the Christian Church of the New. [Rom. iii. 2.](#)

33. How do St. Cyril and St. Athanasius enumerate the books of the *Old Testament*?

As follows: 1, The book of Genesis; 2, Exodus; 3, Leviticus; 4, the book of Numbers; 5, Deuteronomy; 6, the book of Jesus the son of Nun; 7, the book of Judges, and with it, as an appendix, the book of Ruth; 8, the first and second books of Kings, as two parts of one book; 9, the third and fourth books of Kings; 10, the first and second books of Paralipomena; 11, the first book of Esdras, and the second, or, as it is entitled in Greek, the book of Nehemiah; 12, the book of Esther; 13, the book of Job; 14, the Psalms; 15, the Proverbs of Solomon; 16, Ecclesiastes, also by Solomon; 17, the Song of Songs, also by Solomon; 18, the book of the Prophet Isaiah; 19, of Jeremiah; 20, of Ezekiel; 21, of Daniel; 22, of the Twelve Prophets.

34. Why is there no notice taken in this enumeration of the books of the Old Testament of the book of the Wisdom of the son of Sirach, and of certain others?

Because they do not exist in the Hebrew.

35. How are we to regard these last-named books?

Athanasius the Great says that they have been appointed of the Fathers to be read by proselytes who are preparing for admission into the Church.

36. Is there any division of the books of the Old Testament by which you can give a more distinct account of their contents?

They may be divided into the four following classes:

Books of the Law, which form the basis of the Old Testament.

Historical books, which contain principally the history of religion.

Doctrinal, which contain the doctrine of religion.

Prophetical, which contain prophecies, or predictions of things future, and especially of Jesus Christ.

37. Which are the books of the Law?

The five books written by Moses--Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Jesus Christ himself gives to these books the general name of *the law of Moses*. [Luke xxiv. 44.](#)

38. What in particular is contained in the book of Genesis?

The account of the creation of the world and of man and afterwards the history and ordinances of religion in the first ages of mankind.

39. What is contained in the other four books of Moses?

The history of religion in the time of the Prophet Moses, and the Law given through him from God.

40. Which are the *historical* books of the Old Testament?

The books of Joshua the son of Nun, Judges, Ruth, Kings, Paralipomena, the book of Esdras, and the books of Nehemiah and Esther.

41. Which are the *doctrinal*?

The book of Job, the Psalms, and the books of Solomon.

42. What should we remark in particular of the book of Psalms?

This book, together with the doctrine of religion, contains also allusions to its history, and many prophecies of our Saviour Christ. It is a perfect manual of prayer and praise, and on this account is in continual use in the divine service of the Church.

43. Which books are *prophetical*?

Those of the Prophets--Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the twelve others.

44. How many are the books of the New Testament?

Twenty-seven.

45. Are there among these any which answer to the books of the *Law*, or form the basis of the New Testament?

Yes. The *Gospel*, which consists of the four books of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

46. What means the word *Gospel*?

It is the same as the Greek work *Evangelly*, and means good or joyful tidings.

47. Of what have we good tidings in the books called the Gospel?

Of the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, of his advent and life on earth, of his miracles and saving doctrine, and, finally, of his death upon the cross, his glorious resurrection, and ascension into heaven.

48. Why are these books called the Gospel?

Because man can have no better nor more joyful tidings than these, of a Divine Saviour and everlasting salvation. For the same cause, whenever the Gospel is read in the church, it is prefaced and accompanied by the joyful exclamation, *Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee.*

49. Are any of the books of the New Testament *historical*?

Yes. One: the book of the *Acts of the holy Apostles.*

50. Of what does it give an account?

Of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, and of the extension through them of Christ's Church.

51. What is an *Apostle*?

The word means a *messenger*. It is the name given to those disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ whom he sent to preach the Gospel.

52. Which books of the New Testament are *doctrinal*?

The seven general Epistles: namely, one of the Apostle James, two of Peter, three of John, and one of Jude; and fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul: namely, one to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, one to the Galatians, one to the Ephesians, one to the Philippians, one to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon, and one to the Hebrews.

53. Are there also among the books of the New Testament *any prophetical*?

Such is the book of the *Apocalypse.*

54. What means this word *Apocalypse*?

It is Greek, and means *revelation.*

55. What are the contents of this book?

A mystical representation of the future destinies of the Christian Church; and

of the whole world.

56. What rules must we observe in reading holy Scripture?

First, we must read it devoutly, as the Word of God, and with prayer to understand it aright; secondly, we must read it with a pure desire of instruction in faith, and incitement to good works; thirdly, we must take and understand it in such sense as agrees with the interpretation of the orthodox Church and the holy Fathers.