

The Books of the Bible

As we print the Bible today, it is one volume, and so we tend to think of it as one book. Nevertheless, it is not one book; it is a collection of sixty-six different books. Until the 3rd century A.D., these were printed on separate rolls so that it took a great many rolls to make^{up} all that we have in our modern Bible. The writing material was much thicker then than it is now, and the book form was not used but it was written on rolls, and, consequently, not nearly so much could be put on one of them. These sixty-six different books were written by different men over a period of ~~over~~^{nearly} two thousand years. The writers included men of many different types. Some of them were wealthy, and some were extremely poor. One was a king; one was a shepherd. Some were highly educated, and some had little or no formal education. There is great variety among the writers of the Bible.

Anyone who does much reading about ancient times, soon discovers that these are not the only books which were written in that period. There were many other books written by the Jews in ancient times, and there were many other books written by Jews and Greeks at the time of Christ and afterwards. Why is it that a certain collection of sixty-six have been put together to form our Bible? Are we sure that all of these belong in it; perhaps some of them should not be there? On the other hand, are there possibly other books that ought to be there? that have been omitted?

A few years ago there appeared an advertisement on the inside of the back cover of Time Magazine . It was a full-page ad,^{with a picture} suggesting great deeds in ancient days with beautiful buildings and richly dressed people standing in the picture. Below it, it said, "Do you know how many books are not contained in the Bible because someone was angry or because they failed in one vote in the councils that decided? Read these books. They are for sale in this volume entitled The Lost Books of the Bible" I do not know how many copies of that book were sold by the ad, but I am sure that whatever profit came to the publisher as a result of the advertisement, and it must have been a good deal or it would not have paid them to run so expensive an advertisement for many weeks, would not compare with the harm that must have been done to the faith of many Christian people, by the question that it raised in their minds as to whether, after all, we have the correct books in the Bible. Once I not-