

to suit the heresy of Marcion, and several others, which cannot be received into the Catholic Church; for it is not fitting that gall be mixed with honey.

The Epistle of Jude no doubt, and the couple bearing the name of John, are accepted in the Catholic Church; and the Wisdom written by the friends of Solomon in his honour.

The Apocalypse also of John, and of Peter only we receive, which some of our friends will not have read in the Church. But the Shepherd was written quite lately in our times in the city of Rome by Hermas, while his brother Pius, the bishop, was sitting in the chair of the church of the city of Rome; and therefore it ought indeed to be read, but it cannot to the end of time be publicly read in the Church to the people, either among the prophets, who are complete in number, or among the Apostles.

But of Arsinous, called also Valentinus, or of Miltiades we receive nothing at all; those who have also composed a new book of Psalms for Marcion, together with Basileides and the Asian founder of the Cataphrygians are rejected.
Translation from Official Church Teachings, Biblical Interpretation, McGrath Publishing Co. 1978.

Pope John Paul II Society of Evangelists

14818 Ranchero Road
Hesperia, California, USA
Telephone: 760-220-6818
FAX: 760-948-7620

E-mail: pjpiisoe@earthlink.net
www.pjpiisoe.org

Pamphlet 309

The Muratorian Canon (about A.D. 170)

Also called the Muratorian Fragment, after the name of the discoverer and first editor, L. A. Muratori (in the "Antiquitates italicæ", III, Milan, 1740, 851 sq.), the oldest known canon or list of books of the New Testament. The manuscript containing the canon originally belonged to Bobbio and is now in the Bibliotheca Ambrosiana at Milan (Cod. J 101 sup.). Written in the eighth century, it plainly shows the uncultured Latin of that time. The fragment is of the highest importance for the history of the Biblical canon. It was written in Rome itself or in its environs about 170; probably the original was in Greek, from which it was translated into Latin. This Latin text is preserved solely in the manuscript of the Ambrosiana. A few sentences of the Muratorian Canon are preserved in some other manuscripts, especially in codices of St. Paul's Epistles in Monte Cassino. The canon consists of no mere list of the Scriptures, but of a survey, which supplies at the same time historical and other information regarding each book. The beginning is missing; the preserved text begins with the last line concerning the second Gospel and the notices, preserved entire, concerning the third and fourth Gospels. Then there are mentioned: The Acts, St. Paul's Epistles (including those to Philemon, Titus and Timothy; the spurious ones to the Laodiceans and Alexandrians are

rejected); furthermore, the Epistle of St. Jude and two Epistles of St. John; among the Scriptures which "in catholica habentur", are cited the "Sapientia ab amicis Salomonis in honorem ipsius scripta", as well as the Apocalypses of St. John and St. Peter, but with the remark that some will not allow the latter to be read in the church. Then mention is made of the Pastor of Hermas, which may be read anywhere but not in the divine service; and, finally, there are rejected false Scriptures, which were used by heretics. In consequence of the barbarous Latin there is no complete understanding of the correct meaning of some of the sentences. As to the author, many conjectures were made (Papias, Hegesippus, Caius of Rome, Hippolytus of Rome, Rhodon, Melito of Sardis were proposed); but no well founded hypothesis has been adduced up to the present.

The Muratorian Fragment c. 170 A.D .

... but at some he was present, and so he set them down [referring to Mark] .

The third book of the Gospel, that according to Luke, 11 was compiled in his own name on Paul's authority by

Luke the physician, when after Christ's ascension Paul had taken him to be with him like a legal expert. Yet neither did he see the Lord in the flesh; and he too, as he was able to ascertain events, begins his story from the birth of John.

The fourth of the Gospels was written by

John, one of the disciples. When exhorted by his fellow-disciples and bishops, he said, 'Fast with me this day for three days; and what may be revealed to any of us, let us relate it to one another.' The same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the apostles, that John was to write all things in his own name, and they were all to certify.

And therefore, though various ideas are taught in the several books of the Gospels, yet it makes no difference to the faith of believers, since by one sovereign Spirit all things are declared in all of them concerning the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, the conversation with his disciples and his two comings, the first in lowliness and contempt, which has come to pass, the second glorious with royal power, which is to come.

What marvel therefore if John so firmly sets forth each statement in his Epistles too, saying of himself, "What we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears and our hands have handled, these things we have written to you"? For so he declares himself not an eyewitness and a hearer only, but a writer of all the marvels of the Lord in order.

The Acts, however, of all the Apostles are written in one book. Luke, to the most excellent Theophilus, includes events because they were done in his own presence, as he also plainly shows by leaving out the passion of Peter, and also the departure of Paul from the City on his

journey to Spain.

The Epistles, however, of Paul themselves make plain to those who wish to understand it, what epistles were sent by him, and from what place or for what cause. He wrote at some length first of all to the Corinthians, forbidding the schisms of heresy; next to the Galatians, forbidding circumcision; then he wrote to the Romans at greater length, impressing on them the rule of the Scriptures, and also that Christ is the first principle of them, concerning which severally it is not necessary for us to discuss. For the blessed Apostle Paul himself, following the rule of his predecessor John, writes only by name to seven churches in the following order-to the Corinthians a first, to the Ephesians a second, to the Philippians a third, to the Colossians a fourth, to the Galatians a fifth, to the Thessalonians a sixth, to the Romans a seventh; although for the sake of admonition there is a second to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians, yet one Church is recognized as being spread over the entire world. For John too in the Apocalypse, though he writes to seven churches, yet speaks to all. Howbeit to Philemon one, to Titus one, and to Timothy two were put in writing from personal inclination and attachment, to be in honour however with the Catholic Church for the ordering of ecclesiastical discipline. There is in circulation also one to the Laodiceans, another to the Alexandrians, both forged in Paul's name