Which Book of Daniel?

Bernard P. Robinson

As every schoolboy once knew, the Church of Rome accepts the Longer Old Testament Canon rather than the shorter one read by Protestants and Jews. This means that she can invoke OT authority for the immortality of the soul (Wisd. 3. 1—9) and for the propriety and efficacy of prayers for the dead (2 Macc 12. 43—45). Apart, however, from a few proof texts of this sort, it is doubtful whether the so-called Deuterocanonical books and passages have much influence on Catholics. Take the case of the Book of Daniel. When they set out to expound Daniel Catholic writers tend either to give scant attention to the passages peculiar to the Longer Canon (so, e.g. Delcor, 1971 and Collins, 1981) or, as the present writer did in his brief commentary on Daniel (Robinson, 1971), to ignore them altogether. Should we not, perhaps, take our Canon more seriously?

In what follows, I shall first consider some general problems involved in taking one's Canon, whether the Shorter or the Longer, seriously, without however getting entangled in the 'canonical criticism' debate[1].

1. *Canon and Canons*

It is becoming increasingly clear that the early Christian Church did not simply inherit an OT Canon from the Jewish people. The Jews, in fact, did not possess a fixed Canon for the OT as a whole until the late first or early second century of our era: the contents of the Pentateuch and of the Prophets had certainly been settled by the time of the beginning of Christianity, but the extent of the third division, the Writings, remained unclear[2]. How, then, in the case of the Writings did the Church decide what to accept? It used to be commonly thought that the Jews of the time knew two Canons and she opted for a longer Alexandrian Jewish Canon rather than a shorter Palestinian one. It now, however, seems unlikely that there was a fixed Alexandrian Canon in existence, any more than there was a fixed Palestinian Canon. The Church had then to make her own decisions, though she was certainly influenced by Jewish practice. In practice the Church seems to have accepted all the books which the Jews cherished (a larger collection than the Jews eventually canonized); some other books which she herself was initially inclined to accept, e.g. Enoch,

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she excluded because of Jewish hostility to their apocalyptic tendencies. After the Jews had 'closed' their Canon, whether at Jamnia in the late first century or sometime in the second, there were moves in the Church over the next few centuries (Athanasius and Jerome, among others, favoured this) to cease to treat as part of Scripture such books as Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom and to restrict the Canon to the Shorter list on which the Jews had decided. The Church rejected this proposal: she felt obliged to abide by tradition and not, as Origen put it to Julius Africanus, who preferred the Shorter Canon, to remove the ancient landmark. The campaign was in fact based on a misapprehension, namely that the Shorter Canon had already been fixed by the time of the apostolic age, so that in accepting it the Church would be accepting the Canon as recognised by Jesus and his disciples. All this is well documented in various studies from the pen of A.C. Sundberg (1958; 1964; 1975).

The Churches of the Reformation, sharing the belief of Athanasius and Jerome that the shorter Canon was the Canon of Jesus and his disciples, set aside the traditional Longer Canon. At the Council of Trent, there was some slight support for a similar change of policy for Catholics, but opinion there was overwhelmingly in favour of the Longer Canon as already defined by the Council of Florence in 1441 (and, in the early Church, by local councils and synods of the fourth and fifth centuries). Better received, however, at Trent was the suggestion of Cardinal Seripando, a Papal Legate, that the Council, while accepting the traditional Longer Canon, should accord to the books of the Shorter Canon a greater authority than to those books rejected by the Jews. The books of the Shorter Canon would be stated to belong to the *canon fidei* and to be 'canonical and authentical'; the rest (what came to be called by Catholics the 'deuterocanonical' books[3]) would be regarded as belonging to the *canon morum*, being 'canonical and ecclesiastical' books. Seripando's suggestion was not adopted by the Council but neither was it ruled out of court: it was decided rather to leave it an open question, so far as Catholics went, whether there was a more authoritative Canon within the Longer Canon (see Jedin 1947; 1961).

Personally, I see little to be said for Seripando's compromise solution in the terms in which he presented it. He had been led to suggest it partly because of the false notion which he found in Jerome and Cajetan that Jesus would have used the Shorter Canon, and partly because of a belief that the books excluded by the Jews were written not in Hebrew or Aramaic but in Greek. There is now a scholarly consensus for the view that the bulk of the deuterocanonical books were composed in Hebrew or Aramaic. Catholics, I would suggest, have no need to be defensive about accepting the Longer Canon. The *onus probandi* is on those who reject the Canon of the early Church in

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favour of a Canon defined by the Jews only after the break with the Church. That the Church should have taken over the Pentateuch and the Prophets from the Jews without question or discussion, is no matter for surprise: there was no dispute in Jewish circles about the authority of any of these books. The Jews probably saw them all (see Blenkinsopp, 1977) as the work of prophetic figures (Moses for the Pentateuch; Samuel and Jeremiah for the Former Prophets, i.e. Samuel—Kings; and the three major and twelve minor prophets) and considered their authority to be beyond question; this was sufficient for the Church. The Writings also had a prophetic authority, for prophecy had been taken from the prophets and given to the sages (so R. Abdimi in the Talmud: Baba Bathra 12a), but the Jews were not so clear on *which* of the books in this category that they read proceeded from the prophetic spirit, so the Church had to try to resolve the issue for herself. If the Christian Church is led by the Spirit, her judgment in the second case is surely as trustworthy as in the first. To set aside the Christian Canon for the Jewish is, Origen told Africanus, 'to suppose that that Providence which in the Sacred Scriptures has ministered to the edification of all the churches of Christ had no thought for those bought with a price, for whom Christ died' (ep. ad Afr., 4). Strong words, but the principle behind them seems sound.

More problematic, to me, than the question of which Canon to accept is that of why we have a Canon at all. What is the function, purpose and authority of the Canon? To say, as we have been taught to do, that the canonical books are inspired by God whilst uncanonical books are not, is to invoke a theory that the early Church had not heard of: inspiration, as Sundberg has shown (Sundberg, 1975), was not a concept that the Church confined to Biblical books. If Clement of Rome or Ignatius regarded the Evangelists or Paul as inspired, as indeed they did, they also said the same about themselves. The notion that inspiration is coterminous with canonicity is properly speaking, Sundberg argues, a Jewish, not a Christian, doctrine.[4] Sundberg further says that the doctrine was not taken up by Christians until the seventeenth century, but this would not appear to be accurate, for the Council of Florence in 1442 (Denzinger 706) spoke of God being the author of the Biblical books inasmuch as the sacred authors spoke under divine inspiration; the implication, though this was not spelt out, is surely that this could not be said of non-Biblical works. Trent, in 1546, also used the language of authorship (D 783) and by implication probably thought of divine authorship/inspiration as confined to Scripture. The fact, however, that the equation of canonicity with inspiration is a notion which conflicts with the way the Fathers spoke must surely make one hesitate to think that this way of speaking does full justice to the Church's faith in this matter.

If we are not to say that the criterion of canonicity is inspiration,

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what account can we give of canonicity? Sundberg (Sundberg 1975: 371) suggests that the word *kanon,* as applied to Scripture, should be given its ordinary, dictionary meaning of 'measure', 'standard', 'norm':

> In following the canon, the church acknowledged and established the Bible as the measure or standard of inspiration in the church, not as the totality of it. What concurs with canon is of like inspiration, what does not is not of God.

Whether this attractive suggestion of a Protestant scholar could be accepted by the Catholic Church as giving an accurate and adequate account of the nature of canonicity, is not clear. One problem that occurs to me about Sundberg's theory as it stands is that I find it hard to believe that some OT books have ever been used as a norm: who in Christian history has ever tried to determine whether a speaker or writer had the spirit of God in him by reference to the books of, say, Nahum, Esther or Obadiah? (In fact it is far from obvious that Christian, or Jewish, history and belief would have been one whit different had these books perished). The Church has, from NT times onwards, been very selective in what OT books she nourished herself on and used as yardsticks of divine truth.

Despite the problem that arises if one tries to treat some individual books in the Canon as a norm of inspiration, I am, I must confess, reluctant to reject Sundberg's theory. I should like, rather, to suggest a modified version of it involving three propositions:

(a) The canonical books are examples of inspired books.

(b) Not all of them are equally inspired.

(c) As a collection, the Canon is a norm of inspiration, but because some books are less inspired than others, not all books are, considered individually, effective norms of inspiration.

A word, now, on each proposition. The proposition (a) that canonicity is not coterminous with inspiration is so effectively shown by Sundberg to be the thinking of the Fathers that it deserves to be treated with respect. It seems to me to make a lot of sense to say that God speaks through other books apart from the canonical ones. Why should we not say, for instance, that God inspired the writing of the Book of Enoch? A NT writer certainly thought in these terms: 'Enoch prophesied, saying...', Jude vv 14—15, quoting Enoch 1. 9. A number of Church Fathers also clearly thought in similar terms of this book. Why, then, was it excluded from the Canon? The Church, on reflection, and taking into account Jewish reservations about apocalypticism, decided that Enoch could not be safely read in church alongside, say, Deuteronomy and Isaiah without an unacceptable degree of danger to sound doctrine. Among the books through which

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the Church hears God speak, the books which she recognises as inspired, those alone she calls canonical through which she believes that her sons and daughters can safely be educated.

But inspiration is not, says proposition (b), an all-or-nothing business. I noted, when speaking of Trent, that the Council did not exclude the notion of degrees of authority. I rejected Seripando's theory (held also, incidentally, by Erasmus) of two degrees of authority because it was based on dubious foundations. I wonder, though, whether a theory of *multiple* degrees of authority might not serve us better? The Jews did not treat all OT books with equal reverence (the Pentateuch had a very special place; as also, in its way, did the Psalter), and Christians have similarly exalted some books above others (in the OT one might instance Deuteronomy, Isaiah and the Psalter; in the NT the Gospels). In some books, I want to assert, the voice of God is heard much more clearly than in others; there is, in fact, a great gradation in inspiration or authority among the books of the Bible, and some books outside the Canon, though wisely excluded, may have more divine inspiration in them than some canonical books. I see no reason, incidentally, to say that the deuterocanonical books, as a whole, have less authority than the protocanonical, though most, if not all of them, fall below the very highest levels.

If the canonical books are inspired, but are not the only inspired books in existence, and if there are degrees of inspiration, then it makes sense to think of the Bible as a collection of inspired texts, selected for various reasons, which the Church cherishes as classics of inspiration. By this collection, this canon, the Church judges how authentically non-Biblical speakers and writers down the centuries have operated as the channels of divine truth. Some individual canonical books, taken on their own, lack the high quality of inspiration to operate as a norm, but others can certainly function, even alone, not only as part of the canon as a whole, as a touchstone of inspiration (proposition (c)).

In what I shall now proceed to say about the Book of Daniel, I shall be drawing on the tentative canonical theory sketched out above, a theory which I am pleased to find has more than a little in common with that recently expounded in these columns by Geoffrey Turner (Turner, 1984).[5]

2. *The two texts of Daniel*

In the Shorter Canon, Daniel consists of six narratives (Dan 1—6) followed by six chapters of apocalyptic visions (Dan. 7—12)[6]. The Longer Canon, however, contains the following extra passages: (1) The Prayer of Azariah (3.24—45); (2) A prose narrative (3.46—51); (3) The Hymn of the Three Young Men (the 'Benedicite') (3.52—90); (4) The Story of Susanna, Dan 13; (5) and (6) The Stories

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of Bel and of The Snake, Dan. 14. These passages are rightly styled Additions to Daniel because, despite their being indubitably part of the Book of Daniel as received by the early Church, there is good evidence for supposing that they originally all (with the possible exception of the ch.3 prose passage) existed and circulated independently of the materials in the Short Text. Thus the presupposition of Azariah's prayer, namely that Israel's sufferings have been brought down on her head by her own sins, strongly suggests that the prayer was originally composed for a different context. This is confirmed, indeed, by its ascription to Azariah rather than to the man who is always the first-named of the trio of Daniel's friends, Hananiah.

The Daniel of the Susanna story is a young man whom the author introduces to the reader, as if on the assumption that he will not have heard of him (13.45). The Theodotionic recension (read in the Church from patristic times in preference to the LXX text) places the Susanna story at the very beginning of the Book of Daniel, in which context v. 45 creates no problem, but the earlier LXX text has it after the original book. The Bel story looks as if it arose as a result of midrashic reflection on Dan. 3, and the Snake story, in which Daniel spends six days in a den of lions, has a similar relationship with the Daniel 6 tradition, but it does not at all follow from this that either story was written for its present context within the Longer Text of Daniel; rather, they both probably began life as free-floating Diaspora tales (as is true also, probably, of the traditions behind Dan. 1—6). Like the Susanna story, the Bel narrative introduces Daniel to the reader:

> 'There was a certain man, a priest(!) called Daniel son of Abal, who was a confidant of the king of Babylon' (14.2)

Since the Greek of the Additions is very similar to that of the remainder of the book, it is likely that these passages (which were all probably composed in Hebrew or Aramaic) had already been attached to the original book at the time of its translation into Greek (c. 100 B.C.). How long they had been in existence by this time, we have little direct evidence to help us to decide. It is not implausible to suppose that the Bel and the Snake stories derive from a period of persecution: the reign of Antiochus VII Sidetes, 139—128 B.C. has been suggested. A second-century date has been postulated for the Prayer of Azariah, because of the lament it contains over the absence of prince, prophet, leader and all kinds of sacrifices (3.38). 'A wicked king, the vilest in the world' (3.32) may well be Antiochus IV. The Hymn of the Three Young men reads like, and probably was, a traditional liturgical hymn, and it may well predate the Short Text of Daniel. It is true that Oesterley (Oesterley, 1914: 390) sees in 3.86 ('Bless the Lord, you spirits and souls of the just') an 'advanced belief in the future life' requiring a post-Maccabaean date; it seems to me, however, more

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natural to take the reference to be to 'men who are righteous and alive' (Moore, 1977: 73). The mention in the Hymn of 'the temple of thy holy glory' (3.53), without any hint at the desecration of that building by Antiochus, rules out a date during the Maccabaean troubles, as also does the Hymn's 'tone of exultation' which 'is in strong contrast to the despondent tone of the Prayer' (Oesterley, 1914: 390).

Some think that the Susanna story reflects a dispute in the first century B.C. between Pharisees and Sadducees. The Saduccees said that false witnesses could only be punished if the penalty had already been visited on their hapless vistims, whereas the Pharisee Simeon ben Shetach said that they could be punished anyway, receiving the punishment intended for their victims. Simeon insisted on close examination of witnesses (such as Daniel implements in this narrative); the maxim, 'Examine the witnesses thoroughly' is attributed to him (Aboth 1.9) and it is said in T.J. Sanh vi. 23b that his own son was executed because a false witness had not been interrogated with sufficient thoroughness. Since Simeon was a young man at the time of the controversy, the young Daniel, it is sometimes suggested, may be intended to stand for Simeon. For my part, I would endorse Dancy's cautious judgment (Dancy, 1972: 225) that while it is possible that the Susanna tale was used by the Pharisees in their anti-Sadducee polemic, it is unlikely that the piece was originally composed for this purpose. A second century date is perhaps the likeliest for this story too.

The incorporation of the Additions raises the important question of whether the nature of the original book is thereby changed. Do the Additions produce a new entity (the longer Daniel) which can and should in all its parts be interpreted as a unified work? In that event, in my view, the original meaning of Daniel 1—12 would not be superseded, but in addition to what it will have originally meant it will have taken on a new meaning. The message of the final text of a book does not invalidate the message of earlier stages. To dismiss in the case of the Pentateuch the J and P traditions and concentrate solely on what the final redactor meant, or to exalt the views of the final editor of the Book of Amos above those of the prophet Amos, or the teachings of the evangelist Matthew above those of the historical Jesus, would appear to me to be too quixotic, and I think an extreme canon criticism which tends to such a conclusion should be vigorously challenged. The issue is not, in my view, whether it is the message of the original Book of Daniel that is inspired or that of the Longer Book of Daniel. The original Book is clearly, for believers, an inspired work. The Additions are also, according to Catholic tradition, inspired. The question is, whether the Additions are a collection of inspired traditions, each to be interpreted individually, or whether the final text of Daniel is a literary unity with an inspired overall meaning.

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We ought also, I think, in view of the fact that the Church reads Daniel as one of the four major prophets rather than among the Writings, to ask whether this has implications for the way in which the book is to be read in the Church.

3. *Is the Longer Text of Daniel a literary entity?*

I should like to quote and make my own some words of Sean McEvenue (McEvenue 1981: 238):

> What the Yahwist meant in Genesis 1—11 is a meaning of Scripture insofar as the biblical text still retains it. What P meant is a meaning of Scripture. What the redactor meant is also a meaning of Scripture *insofar as one finds objectified* there a redactional meaning distinct from his sources. But where an editor has simply collected texts side by side without meaning anything further, then no further meaning can be said to be biblical. The case for meaning must be decided on literary criteria: one must show that a unit is not just an anthology, but is an intended structure with meaning.

If the Additions merely have the effect of making the resultant book an anthology of Danielic materials, then there will not be one book of Daniel extending from chapter 1 to chapter 14, but the original book plus a number of disparate pieces. What then, is the effect of the incorporation of the Additions? Let us examine each in turn, beginning with the three pieces which have not been attached to the end of the book, but have been inserted into chapter 3. If any of the Additions change the nature of the book and create a new literary entity, it is likely to be these.

Daniel 3.

Before, however, we speak of Daniel 3 in the Longer Text, it may be as well to spend a moment on the Shorter Text, for in one way it is itself problematic. In 3.23, the three men are cast into the fire; we are not told immediately that they were unharmed, nor that an angelic figure joined them in the furnace. Instead, we hear in 3.24 (91) that the king was amazed and exclaimed that the men had not been burnt but had now present with them a fourth figure. Some commentators see herein great artistic finesse in that the sequel to the casting into the furnace of the three men is not directly narrated but is made known to the reader through the words of the king (so Montgomery, 1937: 9). For my part, however, I find that the fondness of the Book of Daniel for needless repetition (especially of lists: e.g. 3.2,3; 3.5, 7, 10, 15) sorts ill with the attribution to its author of subtle understatement of this sort. I, therefore, favour the view that something resembling[7] what we have in the Longer Text's prose narrative, 3. 46—51, which

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speaks of the descent of an angelic being who protected the men from harm, originally stood between verses 23 and 24 of the Shorter Text. In this event, the prose narrative will not strictly speaking be an Addition at all, but an amplified translation of an original part of the Shorter Text.

When we look, however, at the Longer Text and the place of the prose narrative within it, we note that it has been put not before Azariah's Prayer, its natural place, but between the Prayer and the Hymn, so that we are told that Azariah launched into a long prayer without being told yet that he and his companions remained unscathed. This may explain why the passage (or an earlier version of it) got lost from the Shorter Text. When the Jews wished to revert to reading the Shorter Text, it seems plausible to suppose that they had no copies of the latter to hand so they had to take a Longer Text and excise secondary passages: they took out however, by mistake, not only the Prayer and the Hymn but also the prose passage lying between them, thus producing a peculiar Aramaic text.

How well does the text of Daniel 3 as found in the Longer Canon hang together? The insertion of the Prayer and the Hymn is a gain in one respect, in that they raise the spiritual tone of the chapter. The three men are not seen simply as loyal Jews who refused to commit idolatry and were rescued by God from the wrath of a pagan king (Yahweh looking after his own), but they are presented more particularly as models of devout Jews who humbled themselves in a contrite spirit before God and with quiet enthusiasm conducted the massed choirs of the universe in a great paean of praise to the Creator.

On the other hand, the Long Text is much less of a literary unity than the Short. After narrating the loyalty to their God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (using the Babylonian names) and their casting into the furnace, the chronicler then, without saying that they were unharmed, makes the second of the three men, whom he calls now (as later he will do with the other two) by his Hebrew name, to call on God to pretermit the Jewish sufferings so richly merited by their sins (what sins? the men are guiltless). Then, in the prose narrative we are belatedly told of the intervention of the angel which saves Azariah and his companions from being burnt alive and of how the three—who now become Hananiah and his companions, 3.88!—praise God with great and serene eloquence, not for having delivered them, but for the gift of Creation. In the last verses of the chapter, which tell of the promotion of the three Jews and the promulgation of an edict of toleration, the trio have reverted to their Babylonian names.

In the Codex Alexandrinus text of the LXX, the Psalter is followed by nine Odes taken from OT and NT, which include our Prayer and Hymn. Both texts, especially the Hymn, have a long

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history of liturgical usage in Christian circles outside the context of Daniel 3. Is it not, perhaps, better that these fine pieces should be sung on their own, as originally intended before their incorporation into Daniel 3, and that the Short Text of Daniel 3 should be printed without these gauche intrusions?

Daniel 13

The Susanna narrative of Daniel 13, in the earliest version we have of it (LXX), is not set in Babylon. Theodotion located it in Babylon, to tie it, we may suppose, more closely to the original Book of Daniel, but this raises the question of the plausibility of a wealthy Jewish exile owning a magnificent garden (a *paradeisos,* 13.4) and of the Jewish community in Babylon having the right of putting offending Jews to death (13. 41). The late entry on to the stage of action of Daniel (13. 46) and the comparatively minor role he plays has led some commentators to wonder whether the connection of the story with Daniel may not itself be a secondary feature. The story is clearly a folk-tale upholding in a vivid fashion the ideal of female chastity. It is perhaps significant that the heroine is a private citizen, the villains leaders of the Jewish people: here the honourable Jewish tradition of pointing to the fallibility of office-bearers is continued. Another important theme is, of course, the duty of sound judgment (*à la* Solomon), particularly in respect of the testimony of witnesses. The youthfulness of Daniel may also be a significant point, indicating that virtue is not a prerogative of age. Well narrated and edifying as this story is, it has nothing (except for possibly secondary features: Babylon; Daniel) in common with the Book of Daniel as found in the Shorter Text.

Daniel 14.

In Dan. 14 we have two accounts of Daniel taking vigorous action against idolatry, by showing the powerlessness of the Babylonian statue of 'Bel' (Marduk) and by killing a snake worshipped by the Babylonians. The stories were probably written for a Jewish rather than a Babylonian readership, even though neither makes reference to specifically Jewish doctrines or practices. The Bel narrative is a type of detective story; it can also be described as a sort of midrash on the idol story of Daniel 3. The snake narrative involved the imprisonment of Daniel in a den of lions and is clearly influenced by the imprisonment tradition preserved in Daniel 6. These two stories have more in common with the Book of Daniel of the Shorter Canon than has Dan. 13, since the evil and folly of idolatry is an important theme there. The flavour of the stories is, however, very different: the Dan. 14 stories are not only cruder, they are also more negative: they poke fun at idolatry without extolling or exhibiting the nobility of monotheism.

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Some of the Dan. 1—6 traditions may originally have been intended to show Jews how a successful career in court circles was compatible with the maintenance of the highest standards of Jewish belief and conduct. The twelve chapters of the Book of Daniel, however, as they stand in the Shorter Canon, form, in my view, a unified literary work put together during the Maccabaean troubles to counsel patience under persecution and confidence in an imminent divine intervention which would end oppression and establish an everlasting Jewish world empire. When, half a century or more later, the Longer Text of the Book of Daniel was produced, Dan. 1—14, it had no such literary unity. The meaning of the original book was not modified by the incorporation of the Additions in the way that 1—6 had been transformed when joined to 7—12. The Additions, for their part, remained individual units each with its own meaning. There is no literary unity discernible among the Additions themselves; still less is there any question, in my view, of the entire book as found in the Longer Canon forming a literary entity. It can be urged (so Moore, 1973: 126) that the form of the book, which is that of a set of visions sandwiched between two sets of narratives, corresponds to the ABA pattern familiar from the Code of Hammurabi, the Book of Job and other Near Eastern texts. Perhaps a redactor did decide to include Susanna, Bel and The Snake at the end rather than to group them with the original Daniel stories precisely in order to achieve this effect, but such a formal patterning does not amount to a coherent literary plan.

It seems to me, therefore, that, to use McEvenue's terminology, the Longer Text is an anthology rather than a structured book with meaning. There is no meaning in the Longer Daniel which can be pointed to as a Biblical meaning or message. The Additions, which have canonical standing for those who accept the Longer Canon, are to be read each on its own terms; they have nothing to say about the interpretation of the original book and are best printed separately from it. Such attempts as have been made to interpret the Book of Daniel in the form found in the Longer Canon as presenting a unified theological viewpoint have all adopted pre-critical methods. Thus in 1626 Cornelius a Lapide in his commentary on the four major prophets saw each section of the book as portraying a type of Christ: we begin with the abduction of Daniel to Babylon in chapter 1, foreshadowing the Incarnation, and end up in Daniel 13 with Daniel typifying Christ the faithful judge and in Dan. 14 with Daniel's destruction of Bel and the Snake serving as types of Christ's destruction of, and victory over, Satan. Not by expedients such as this is the modern reader to be persuaded that the fourteen chapters have a unified theological vision! It is, I suggest, significant that Gaide (Gaide, 1969), one of the few commentators of recent times to treat Dan. 1—14 seriously as a literary entity—he speaks of the 'fairly

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straightforward' plan of the Longer Text, p. 54, and alludes only briefly in a footnote, p. 15, to the fact that some passages are 'deutero-canonical'—in a 36-page discussion of the theology of the book makes no reference to any of the Additional passages. There is, in fact, no theological vision common to Dan. 1—14.

4. *Daniel among the Prophets?*

In the Greek Bible, the Book of Daniel is placed among the prophetical books, and the English Bible, which follows the Greek Bible arrangement of books, even when only those of the Shorter Canon are printed, similarly treats Daniel as the fourth major prophet. Should Christians feel constrained by this fact to interpret Daniel—whether the Shorter Text; an integral Longer Text; or (as I have recommended that we treat the book) the Shorter Text plus Additions—as prophetic? For my part, I see no reason why the way the Jewish editors of the Greek Bible set out the OT should be mandatory for Christians. In any case, I am aware of no evidence for thinking that by placing the Book of Daniel where they did they were trying to inculcate a new way of looking at it. There are three divisions in the Greek OT: The Law plus Histories (Genesis—2 Maccabees); The Prophets; and the Poetic Books. The third division was out of the question, so the choice lay between treating Daniel as an historical book, on the strength of the narratives in 1—6 and in the Additions, and treating it as a prophetic book because of the visions of Daniel in 7—12. I suspect that the editors thought it a matter of little moment in which of the two divisions they put the book, and decided on the prophetic division because on the whole Dan. 7—12 seemed more distinctive than the rest.

None of the parts of the book is, however, genuinely prophetic. Even Dan. 7—12, predictive as they are, do not belong to the prophetic genre; they are apocalyptic. The Book of Daniel is *sui generis* in the OT, being neither historical, prophetical nor poetical.

What, then, do I conclude? I conclude that the Catholic Church is on firm ground in preferring the Longer to the Shorter Canon of the Old Testament, and that there are no good reasons for supposing that within the Longer Canon the books of the Shorter Canon have a greater authority simply because they are in the Shorter Canon. On the other hand, I also think it is plausible to suppose that there are many gradations of inspiration and authority among OT books. The Additions to the original Book of Daniel enjoy only a tenuous link with that book, and with one another, and are best printed separately from the original book. They constitute a collection of disparate, though canonical, traditions. In commentaries they should not be neglected, but they should all (with the possible exception of the Dan. 3

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prose narrative) be grouped together at the end of Daniel as an appendix. I should, for myself, be inclined to claim a higher degree of inspiration for the Prayer and the Hymn than for the Dan. 13 and 14 narratives, and the greater use and respect that the Church has traditionally accorded to them—today the priests and religious of the Catholic world are required to recite the Prayer once every four weeks and part of the Hymn every Sunday and feast-day—encourages me to think I am right.

1 The principal exponent of canonical criticism, Professor Brevard Childs, has in various places argued that the final text of a Biblical book or passage, as found in the Canon, is definitive, and that the shape and structure of the Canon are, or should be, a sovereign norm in exegesis. By the Canon he means, for the OT, the Shorter Canon. A move away from the over-analytic approach to the Bible which showed more interest in putative 'sources' than in interpretation of the extant text, was overdue. Both the theory and the practice of canonical criticism, however, have come in for some hard knocks, not least from Professor James Barr.

2 If Barr is right to argue (Barr, 1983: 54—55) that the OT originally had a bipartite rather than a tripartite structure (as the commonly found expression 'The Law and the Prophets' suggests), we should rather say that the Prophets (the division which will have included the Psalms and other writings apart from strictly prophetic ones) had not been fixed. The fixing of the rest did not involve a formal process of canonization: no books were rejected; the books had simply, by usage, come to be accepted as having an authoritative role.

3 The expression deuterocanonical (which occurs in Latin from 1566 and in English from the late seventeenth century) is inaccurate, based as it is on the false notion that the Church began with a fixed (Palestinian) Canon and then added extra books.

4 The Jews, from Josephus (Against Apion I. viii. 41: c 90 A.D.) onwards, taught that inspiration lasted from the time of Moses down only to that of Ezra and the men of the Great Synagogue (the authoritative academy supposedly established by Ezra) and that canonical Biblical books were all written in this period. No critical scholar would accept that none of the writings in the Shorter Canon is later than the time of Ezra. In order to explain how Esther qualified, it was sometimes said that its was handed down on Sinai by God to Moses! There is some evidence that Esther was added to the Jewish Canon at a date well into our era: a number of Fathers in listing books accepted by the Jews exclude Esther.

5 I would call attention especially to the following: 'To call the Bible inspired, then, is to make a minimal claim. It is in these books *at least,* but also in other, unspecified works, that we may discover a fragment of the reality of God' (p 425). I agree also with Turner that 'if we are to sustain belief in biblical inspiration we must cut it loose from inerrancy' (p 421); without such a distinction, the notion of degrees of inspiration, as propounded in the present article, would, of course, be impossible.

6 Some would divide the book up rather into 2—7 (Aramaic, apart from 2.1—4a) and 1, 8—12 (Hebrew).

7 It must, however, be confessed that the prose passage in the precise form in which it has reached us could scarcely have followed 3.23: the prose narrative speaks of the burning to death of the Chaldaeans who had cast the Jews into the flames, an event which had already been narrated in 3.22. Theodotion suppressed the death of the Chaldaeans in vv 22—23 in order to remove this contradiction.

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