

The Books of the Old Testament

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD TESTAMENT AS A WHOLE

Name

The name, Old Testament, is derived from 2 Cor. 3 : 14. "For until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament." It means the collection of sacred and inspired books connected with the old covenant or Jewish dispensation. The collection is sometimes spoken of as the Old Testament Canon (or Rule), because it was regarded as an authoritative rule of faith and practice.

The forming of the collection as an authoritative Canon of Holy Scripture, has commonly been attributed to Ezra and his successors as heads of the Great Synagogue or Council of Seventy Elders. But very little is definitely known regarding that point.

Original Language

The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, except a few chapters of the books of Ezra and Daniel which have come down to us in Chaldee, — a kindred language spoken by the Babylonians and by the Jews after the captivity.

At least a hundred years before the Christian era, however, the whole of the Old Testament had been