

by God to the writer, but the Holy Spirit led the writers, so that they, using words out of their own vocabularies, and expressing their own personalities, would give us ideas which it was God's desire should be included in those books which He desired to have authoritative for His people. There is thus a human and a divine element in the Scripture, just as our Lord, Jesus Christ, is both human and divine, and yet every bit of the Scripture is, of course, true and free from error.

Since this is true of the books of the Bible, they are not made the least bit authoritative by any assent which is given to them by any human beings. They derive their authority from God, and they were just as authoritative when the writers first wrote them as they could ever be made subsequently. People might be mistaken as to which books were inspired of God, but that would ^{not} affect the authority which those books had themselves. The authority is not in the collection, but in each individual book as having come from God.

Since this is the case, it is not a matter of tremendous importance for us who collected the books. It does not affect their authority at all, although it does affect our confidence in their transmission to us.

However, it is, of course, a matter of great importance to have some attitude toward this question, "How do we know that we have the right books? How do we know that these particular books are the ones which God gave as authoritative, and not some others?"

We reject the idea that the Christian ^{can tell} ~~can tell~~ simply by reading a book whether it is part of the inspired Scripture or not. There are Apocryphal writings and writings of ancient saints, which would ~~if~~ impress some of us as having a loftier spiritual tone than the book of Ecclesiastes, or of Esther, or of various other portions of the Old or the New Testament. We are not competent to judge which particular book comes from God. We receive the books from Him, and they have value to us because we take them as His Word. It is then of great importance to know just which books have come from God and are authoritative for us.

Various suggestions might be made as to how we come to have these particular books in the Bible. I knew a young man in college who started to take some work at

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