

attitude on the part of all portions of the professing Christian church, accepting exactly these books which are in our present New Testament. When we find Christian councils making statements as to the books that are to be accepted as part of God's Word, they are so expressed as to show that a new decision is not being stated, but that the council is merely affirming its adherence to what was already universally believed.

In the case of the New Testament we have more knowledge about the process by which this unanimity was attained than in that of the Old Testament, though even here our evidence is scanty. Within two centuries after the last book was written all groups of Christians agreed as to about twenty of the New Testament books. Many of the Christians in the eastern portion of the Roman empire accepted three or four additional books which some western Christians thought of as rather questionable. Similarly many Christians in the western portion of the empire accepted three or four books which some eastern Christians regarded as questionable. There was by this time no way in which any objective investigation of the authorship of these books could be made, nor is there any evidence that such an investigation was ever attempted, but soon all groups of orthodox Christians came to a complete agreement, accepting the twenty-seven books that are contained in our present New Testament and no others. The attainment of such a unanimity, within a few centuries after the writing of the last book, among people so widely scattered as the early Christians, is almost miraculous, particularly when we consider the great arguments and strong divisions of opinion that were found among them on various doctrinal questions. That the unanimous conclusion reached in such a way should be correct could hardly be assumed aside from the providential activity of the Holy Spirit.

10. The authority of Christ, which is our only basis for being sure that we have the correct books in the Old Testament, authenticates the same process, since it also occurred in the case of the New Testament.