

real situation. He believes thoroughly in the right and duty of the individual believer to determine objectively the meaning of the Scripture for himself. He believes, however, that God has given us a means of knowing exactly what books the Bible should include, without the necessity of making an individual judgment on the basis of evidence which is no longer available. This can be shown by examining certain definite propositions:

**1. As a first step toward finding the answer to this problem we should note that for the Christian the supreme authority is the Lord Jesus Christ.**

A Christian is one who has accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, who is grateful to Him for having died on the cross for his salvation, and who is anxious to follow where his Master leads. If one is a true Christian he is ready to declare that whatever Jesus believed is normative for him. If we can find what Jesus thought about the Old Testament, this should settle the matter for all true Christians.

**2. Jesus considered the Old Testament as God's Word, free from error, and dependable in all things.**

Even considering the New Testament books simply as sources giving us evidence about the views of people in the first century A.D., and leaving out of consideration for the present any question of their inspiration or inerrancy, one cannot avoid reaching the conclusion that these books witness clearly to the fact that Jesus Christ considered the Old Testament as the Word of God, free from error, and authoritative. He often appealed to it in such a way as to show that He had no doubt about the matter. He strongly criticized the people of His day for "making the word of God of none effect through your tradition" (Mark 7:13). He sharply distinguished between anything added to the Word of God and what is actually contained in it. He criticized the religious leaders of His day for many things, but He never made the slightest suggestion that they might be in error as to which books belong in the category of inspired Scripture.

**3. Christ and the apostles considered the Old Testament as a definite unit, the extent of which is clearly fixed.**

The Old Testament was never published as one book in Christ's day. Ordinarily it was on twenty-two separate scrolls. These scrolls were not even numbered in any fixed order. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ referred to them by terms which lump them all together into one book, generally calling the entire group of books "the law and the prophets" or simply "the Scriptures." From the way the terms are used it is quite clear that He expected that those to whom He spoke would understand exactly what He meant. The way in which He spoke of the Old Testament leaves no doubt that He considered it as a fixed unit.

The same is true of the apostles. Peter speaks of the Word of God as a definite unit. Paul describes it as "the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation," indicating that by the term "holy scriptures" he means the books that Timothy has known from his youth. Paul says that each of these books is "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:15-16).