

Some have portrayed the sacred writings as being collected by men and becoming the Word of God when they were accepted either by the public masses or the official councils. The Apostle Paul makes no allowance for such action in passages such as 2 Thess. 3:14. What the Spirit had given him was the Word of God *then*, and human approval must be forthcoming. Those who did not recognize it jeopardized their standing in the community. No records of official councils on canonicity exist in the historical perspective. In the later stages of the early Christian era (after A.D. 300), there were church councils; but the authoritative books were already established, and they were the ruling literature by which those councils reached their conclusions. Long before such councils formally convened, the extent of the inspired literature had been determined by godly men as the sacred books appeared.

As far as the Old Testament is concerned, we may assume that the approval of Christ and the apostles indicated that no books had been overlooked. In the New Testament age, the witness of the early Christians and the church verifies the same point. It is an assertion based on sound evidence and true logic when we declare that all the books which meet the test have been included in the canon.

The work of men in this field was very important in giving us the Bible. But no book depended on men for its inspiration. It was God's Word, and men who refused to recognize it were judged for their sin (see Jeremiah 36). Some say that the Bible is the Word of God only to those who believe. This is not so. The most unused Bible in the world is still God's Word, and unbelieving men are guilty if they refuse to recognize it as such. Man had a key role in preserving the Scriptures; but his important part did not obscure that which God had done, nor did God's work depend on man's assent.