

Roman Catholics assert that the Bible is the production of their church and that its hierarchy has the right to determine which books should be accepted as being inspired of God. Protestants have reacted strongly against this position. They assert that there is no evidence in Scripture or elsewhere that the Lord Jesus Christ established a continuing group of officials with authority to determine religious matters for Christian believers. They insist that each individual Christian must determine his own attitude on religious matters by study of the Word of God. This position being taken, we are immediately faced with the question, how is the individual to know which books are to be accepted as part of God's inspired Word? Must the individual believer study the evidence regarding the genuineness of each book for himself and make a decision as to every book which claims to be divine Scripture? Or is there some way in which he can have more certainty on this point?

Sometimes it is said that "apostolicity determines canonicity." According to this view, each believer must determine for himself which books were written in Old Testament times by prophets, and accept these books as parts of the Old Testament, and each believer must determine for himself which books were written in New Testament times by apostles or under apostolic direction, and accept such books as parts of the New Testament. According to this view, then, the believer has the duty of personal judgment in this matter also, and must base his judgment upon a historical question. If he can find satisfactory evidence for the determining of this question, he can solve the problem.

Unfortunately, however, such evidence is not always available. There is great difficulty in determining with certainty the authorship of many of the books. Even when the authorship is fairly certain, it is sometimes extremely difficult to find evidence on which to determine whether the author was actually a prophet or an apostle.