

What, for instance, should be the attitude of the Christian toward such a book as the Epistle to the Hebrews? Nobody knows who wrote this book. There have been many opinions about the matter. All sorts of guesses have been made. Probably the guess that has been made more frequently than any other is that it was written by the apostle Paul, but there is no sufficient evidence to prove this position. Great numbers of outstanding Christian leaders have agreed with the conclusion of Martin Luther and John Calvin, that there is more evidence against Pauline authorship of Hebrews than in its favor. What then is the Christian to do? If he does not know who wrote the book of Hebrews, he can surely have no certainty that it was written by an apostle, or even under apostolic direction. He cannot even find a claim in the book itself that the unknown author was writing under the direction of one of the apostles. If he is to assume that the apostle Paul wrote it, he must recognize that he is taking a position upon which great numbers of scholars and consecrated Christians differ with him.

Surely it would be very foolish to build a doctrine, or to preach a sermon, upon a text drawn from a book of which we cannot be sure. If our decision as to whether a book is divine Scripture depends upon our ability to prove that it was written by an apostle, or under apostolic direction, it would then be hazardous to preach a sermon based upon a text from the book of Hebrews.

Even when the authorship of a book is quite certain, we sometimes find ourselves in an equally difficult position. Thus, James and Jude, the brothers of the Lord, are not included in the list of the twelve apostles. They make no claim in their books that they were writing under the direction of one of the twelve apostles. If apostolicity determines canonicity, what right have we to include their books among those on which we can safely base determination of the facts about our eternal destiny?