

Roman Catholics claim to base their doctrine upon Holy Scripture, plus tradition. Protestants reject tradition as a source of religious knowledge, and insist that God's Word be recognized as our ONLY rule of faith and practice. This being the case, they can hardly regard mere tradition as a safe basis for determining whether a book is apostolic and therefore inspired. Without real proof that Peter supervised Mark, no one who believes that apostolicity determines canonicity can safely accept the Gospel of Mark.

If each individual believer is required to base his belief that specific books are inspired upon an ability to prove that they come from apostles or were written under apostolic direction, he is in a very difficult situation indeed. There are very few books of the New Testament which he would be safe in quoting as the infallible Word of God. The area of individual interpretation would have been extended to the point where Christian life and conduct would become extremely difficult.

When the Old Testament is considered, we find an even more difficult situation. It has been the belief of the Christian church that the five books of the Pentateuch were written by Moses, and this belief is still held by evangelical Christians, despite the efforts of the higher critics to demolish it. When we come to the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, however, we have no way of knowing who wrote them. There is no claim whatever to specific authorship connected with the last three of them. It is thought likely that they were written by prophets, but there is no proof. We have no certainty as to who wrote the books of Chronicles, or any way of making even a good guess as to who might have written the book of Ruth. Is it then impossible for us to know whether they are inspired or not?

We do not know who wrote Esther. If we assume, as has been traditionally believed, that Nehemiah and Ezra wrote the books that bear their names, it would be very difficult to find proof that either of these men was a prophet. There is