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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?

The situation is, in fact, even worse than this. The gospels tell us that Jesus appointed twelve apostles, and give their names. There is no mention in the gospels of Paul having been appointed as an apostle. Nor is there any statement in the book of Acts that the apostles decided to add Paul to their number. Except for the two cases in Acts 14, every use of the term apostle in the book of Acts refers to the group selected by Christ during His earthly ministry, and not one of those occurrences can be shown to include Paul. In all the chapters devoted to Paul's missionary journeys the word apostle is never applied to Paul or his associates with the sole exception of the two instances in chapter 14. In these two cases (14:4,14), it would seem to be used in a general sense, for it is used in the plural, so as to include Barnabas, and in fact, where the names are given, that of Barnabas is mentioned first! It has never been claimed that Barnabas was an apostle, and no portion of the Christian church accepts the so-called Epistle of Barnabas as inspired Scripture. It is only in the letters written by Paul himself that we find any evidence that he was a member of the apostolic group. In them we find him making the claim that he was an apostle, not because of any selection by the other apostles, but purely as a result of the action of the Holy Spirit, performed after Jesus had departed from the earth and the other apostles had been active for many years.

Approximately half of the books of the New Testament, therefore, come from a man who is not mentioned among the twelve apostles, and for whom our only evidence that he was an apostle rests upon the statements that he makes in his own writings. Do we believe that these books are inspired because Paul was an apostle, and then prove his apostleship by the statements which the books contain? Or can we rest our belief that they are inspired books upon some