

The Historical Course Of The Gospel According to Barnabas

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In the Name of Allah

Every human being has views and ideas characteristic to himself those who have taken to absurdities and an eccentric way of life, maintain in their turn that they, too, adhere to certain ideologies and mentalities.

Their personalities, as is true of every other individual, take peculiar forms under the influence of their own thoughts and outlooks, which are manifested in their actions.

The best way for human beings to improve their conducts and personalities is to try, free from any individual, ethnical and religious prejudices, to investigate and ascertain the truth, a process which should be supported by gaining experience and knowledge. Thus they would be able to reshape their thoughts and deeds.

The Holy Qur'an puts it in a most splendid way: "Give the good tidings to those servants who listen to various counsels and choose the best of them."

Imam All has given some excellent advice to those who intend to step on the path that will lead them where they would deserve to be the noblest of creatures. He says: "O man! Do not be a slave to others, for God has created you free."

The best people are those who take rapid steps to bring their individual and social beliefs to perfection. Therefore, it is necessary for everybody endeavoring to improve human society to show facts and truths with honesty and clear reasons to truth - seeking people. These facts and truths have often been concealed or given false appearances by human - like devils.

Based on this argument, Naba' Organization has set out to publish this book in English to offer facts, stripped of any bias and prejudice, to Jesus Christ's followers who have been kept away from these facts by mysterious malevolent bands.

This book brings to light the hidden truth of the Gospel of Barnabas, which has long been obscured in the course of Christian history by ill-wishing enemies of real Christian faith.

The book provides a precise and perfect introduction to this Gospel, dealing with its various manuscripts and printed texts in great world libraries, its ancient versions as well as modern translations. It also treats problems of the Christian beliefs in relation to monotheism, the Crucifixion, the future of history from the standpoint of Christian faith and other problems.

It is hoped that the study of this useful book will help us know this divine religion more profoundly.

Naba Cultural Organization

Eastern and Western scholars have long engaged themselves in various endless discussions over the Gospel according to Barnabas. Their scholarly debates have succeeded in casting light more and more on this document and have increasingly called in question the veracity of the standard Gospels belonging to the Christian Church.

God willing, we shall introduce in this treatise a summary of those debates and a short history of that Gospel, as well as an extract from its text.

Making occasional allusions to certain Christians' biased statements; we shall also give persuasive answers to their questions raised out of misunderstandings.

Let us call upon the Grace of God to protect our minds and those of our readers from slipping into any prejudices.

Facts about the Gospel According to Barnabas and its Historical Course

The Peculiarities of the Text

The original text of the Gospel According to Barnabas is in the Italian language. It consists of 222 chapters, written on 225 pages of thick paper. Bound in solid cardboard covered with yellowish - red leather, it is preserved in the Imperial Court in Vienna. Its cover design is in a style usually referred to by Europeans as 'Arabesque'. Some scholars claim that the book has been bound in a Muslim country. Others, however, believe that it is the work of two Parisian book-binders who were ordered to embark on this job by Prince Eugene of Savoy, who was a bibliophile, and who, as we shall see later, received this Gospel after it was bound. The book binders, it is believed, had bound the book in the Oriental style. (In Medieval times, the Orient was considered the cradle of science and culture. Naturally, Occidentals were inclined to imitate the Eastern fashions in art and culture.)

A document at the side of this book contains a treaty between the Ottoman Empire and the Venetian government. Its cover design bears a close resemblance to that of Gospel According to Barnabas. This document was bound in Turkey. It is in view of this very fact that it has been claimed that this Gospel, too, must be the work of the same Eastern binder who has bound the Treaty document, especially because the designs on the covers of both books are completely alike.

The Christian scholar, Dr. Khalil Saadat, says that the people who maintain such a belief have given no convincing proof of their assertion particularly because on some pages of the Gospel the design of a ship's anchor is printed, which is attributed by experts to a special brand of Italian paper.

In the margins of the pages sentences are written in Arabic, mostly containing grammatical errors. Among them, however, one may come across long and compound sentences, which are grammatically correct.

Scholars maintain that the Italian version had fallen into the hands of many people, some of whom had known Arabic perfectly. Others, however, did not know it well. For this reason, they had made these obvious grammatical errors.

These scribbles also suggest that this Italian copy had long been used by numerous people.

English, Arab and Persian translators have included these Arabic writings in their translations.

The first person who brought this copy out of the Pope's library to make it available to the general public was Fra Marino, the Italian monk, who embraced Islam after he read it. This happened in the late sixteenth century. We shall

elaborate this later in detail. Some experts have guessed that the Arabic sentences in the margin of the book were written by his monk.¹

We shall talk later about other copies and their translations.

Who is Barnabas?

In the 'Acts of the Apostles', one of Christians' sacred books, his name is mentioned 'Joseph' (in some copies 'Justus') and Jesus Christ's apostles named him 'Barnabas'. This name formed by 'Bar' and 'Nabas', means the 'son of exhortation' or 'the son of encouragement'.

He was born from Jewish parents in the island of Cyprus. He was a Levite descending from one of the Israeli clans.

Christians believe that he became a Christian after the Ascension of Christ. He had a farm which he sold and contributed the proceeds to apostles' community fund.

He began a vast cooperation with Christians and the missionaries of the new religion until he was named the 'son of exhortation' or the 'son of encouragement'. He was sent to Antioch to preach Christianity. He took Paul with him and made great successes in his mission of converting pagans into Christianity.

He was accompanied by Paul on most of his journeys. Both of them underwent great ordeals in their mission of propagating Christianity in the Mediterranean region in some cities, however, they were warmly welcomed by the inhabitants. For example, in the city of Lystra, Barnabas was greeted and paid homage to as the god Jupiter and Paul was glorified as the god Mercury. The city inhabitants had heard that those two gods (Jupiter and Mercury) had once come into their city, driven the inhabitants out and consequently suffered divine punishment. As a result, this time they paid great homage to these newcomers.

As is written in the 'Acts of the Apostles', the friendship between these two missionaries did not last long because some disagreements had occurred between them. After this, Barnabas sailed to Cyprus with Mark, whereas Paul set out for Syria and Asia Minor with Silas.

In Salamis, one of the important Cypriot ports, there is a monastery the monks of which say that Barnabas was stoned to death in Silas hippodrome by Jewish inhabitants. They say that his body was found four hundred years later. Now about ten churches (belonging to different sects) assert that they are in possession of his head. One church claims that it has got his body.

Besides the Gospel's authorship, Barnabas is the author of a treatise many copies of which have remained and been printed. In some of the old Bible

¹To write this section, we have made use of Dr. Khalil Saadat's Introduction to his Arabic translation of the Gospel of Barnabas.

manuscripts, the New Testament is written side by side with this treatise. For years, the attribution of this treatise to Barnabas has been an open question to Christian scholars. What has caused them to reject its attribution to Barnabas is that its teachings are in contra-diction with those traditionally preached by the Church.

As Miller writes: “This old treatise has been attributed by Clement of Alexandria and his contemporary historians to the friend of Paul, Barnabas the Apostle (Acts of the Apostles 13:2 etc.). The treatise itself, however, does not appear in any respect to have been written by Barnabas. Its teachings are so different from those of Paul and Peter that many scholars believe that it has not been written by Barnabas the Apostle”.²

But, as already mentioned, Christians admit that a conflict had occurred between Barnabas and Paul and should Barnabas treatise or gospel be in contradiction to the teachings prevalent in the Church, that does not mean that these writings do not belong to Barnabas. On the contrary, it confirms their attribution to him.

Some scholars ascribe the book of Hebrews, belonging to an anonymous author, to Barnabas. This book may have been written by Paul, as has been indicated in its title in some manuscripts, or by another author. That is a point not unanimously agreed upon.

Barnabas Memorial Day, celebrated in the Catholic Church, is the 11th of June when Catholic Christians hold a service in his honor.

A sect of hermits called Barnabasians lives in Italy, who are active in France and Austria as well as in their own country.

The preceding paragraphs were a brief history of the life of Barnabas in according with Christian views and writings. Here, however, a point is worth mentioning:

In Christian historical texts, Barnabas’ life begins with selling his property and ends with his breach with Paul. Even his martyrdom is not accepted by Christians. When and how did this figure who ranked as high as Paul (or even higher in position than he, as it is obvious in the book of Acts of the Apostles) accepted Christianity? What did he do after breaking up with Paul and traveling to Cyprus? After this separation, what opinion did the other apostles hold of these two? Finally, why his burial place remained a mystery as long as 400 years after his death?

These are questions to which the Church has no so far found any answers. Our dear readers will soon realize the reason why the church has kept silent about this honest and faithful apostle of Jesus Christ.

Anyway, Barnabas considers himself in his Gospel one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, peace be upon him (Chapter 14, Verse 13). In any occasions, he

² The History of the Old Church, P.89

regards himself as one of the closest friends of Jesus, saying that Christ commanded him to write the story of his life (Chapter 221). In the opening and in the closing lines of his Gospel, he states that he is against Paul and considers his teachings satanic.

In following pages, we shall deal more with the instructions of Paul the Apostle, their relations with heathen beliefs in the Mediterranean region and their inconsistencies with Old Testament teachings.

This section has been written by making references to the following sources:

1-“Acts of the Apostles” 4, 36-37, 20-27; 11, 22-30; 12, 25; 13, 1-25; 14, 1-20 and 15, 1-41;

2-The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Corinthians 9,6.

3-The First Epistle of Paul to Galatians 2, 1-9.

4-The First Epistle of Paul to Colossians 4, 10.

5-Betrus Albostani Encyclopedia (in Arabic, the old edition), the headword: “Barnabas”.

6-“The Story of Civilization” by William James Durant (Persian translation by Ali Asghar Soroosh) Vol. 9, PP. 219-222.

7-“The History of the Old Church in Roman and Persian Empires” by W. M. Miller (Persian translation, printed in Germany) PP. 45, 75, 89, 106.

8-“The Bible's Archaeology”, by Dr. John Alder (translated by Soheil Azari) PP. 171-179.

9-“The Bible Dictionary”, by Mr. Hawks (printed in Beirut, 1928); headword: “Barnabas”.

10- The Gospel of Barnabas and their introductions.

The History of the Gospels

The word “evangel” (meaning Gospel) derives from the Greek “evangel ion” which means good news. In Christianity the good news is- the prophecy about the coming of Messiah. Now in the Church the word “evangel” or its English equivalent “Gospel” is applied to the four Gospels belonging to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

According to Christians themselves, there also existed other Gospels, which are not canonical and are considered Apocryphal. Some scholars have mentioned the names of as many as one hundred and sixty Gospels including the four Gospels mentioned above and others belonging to Peter, Paul and Barnabas. As we shall say later, these four Gospels were officially approved in 364 by the Council of Laodicea and the rest were proclaimed unauthorized and apocryphal.

Irenaeus and the Gospel of Barnabas

The oldest document in which the Gospel of Barnabas is mentioned in the writings of St. Irenaeus who was born between the years 120 and 140 in Asia Minor. To preach Christianity, he migrated to the region now called France, where he wrote treatises in refutation of Gnostics. They include, among others, a book called "On Refutation of Infidels". He died about 202.

The English translator of the Koran, George Sale, writes in the introduction to his translation:

"The Spanish translation of the Gospel according to Barnabas is preceded by an introduction in which Fra Marino, a Christian monk and the discoverer of the original manuscript, writes that during his researches he came across a piece of writing by Irenaeus in which he denounces Paul the Apostle, basing his remarks upon the Gospel according to Barnabas the Apostle. Fra Marino becomes very anxious to find this Gospel. He makes the acquaintance of Pope Sixtus V and a close friendship develops between them. One day when the two were in the Pope's library, his Holiness fell asleep. To amuse himself, Fra Marino took a book to read. The first book he took was by chance the very Gospel he had been looking for. He became so much happy to have made this discovery. He immediately hid this precious book in his sleeve. As soon as the Pope woke up, he took leave and walked out of the library with the treasure hidden in his sleeve. Afterwards, he read the book and was converted to Islam."³

Since the history tells us that the Gnostic gospel criticizes Paul, we come to believe that Irenaeus in his book against Gnostics quotes some passages from Barnabas Gospel to complete his discussion, and that Irenaeus himself does not criticize Paul, because St. Irenaeus is one of the well-known Christian figures and all pay tribute to him and quote from his writings. If he were opposed to Paul, he wouldn't enjoy so much veneration. Although some of his books no longer exist for our reference, their manuscripts must certainly be extant in major Vatican libraries and some other libraries elsewhere.

The Council of Laodicea

The Church tried to confine various existing gospels to the four well-known Gospels. Irenaeus, about whom we have talked in preceding lines, said in the late second century: "As the main winds are four, as the cherubs have four faces and as God made four covenants with man, then the Gospels have to be only four."⁴

On the other hand, however, other Gospels were becoming more and more prevalent in the Christian world until the year 364 when a Council was held in Laodicea, a Syrian city, in which the four well-known Gospels which are included in the New Testament were proclaimed authorized and the others

3. George Sale's Introduction to the Holy Quran translation, P.10.

4. The History of the old Church, P.74.

illegal. It is evident that the Gospel of Barnabas had been among those prevalent Gospels, for it had existed before the authorization of the Four Gospels.

The author of “Revelation of Truth” quotes from “Exihomo” written by a great western scholar mentioning in the, fifth chapter of the conclusion of his book (published in London in 1813) the names of more than 60 books and treatises which are ascribed to Christ, apostles and saints. One of them is the Gospel according to Barnabas. The author says that these books have been attributed to these men in the old times by great Christian writers.⁵

Decree of Western Churches

However, Christians never stopped believing in unauthorized non-standard Gospels. It may be that they had been attached to the precepts, maxims and proverbs included in the Gospel of Barnabas. Therefore, they would not give in to the order issued by the Council of Laodicea.

Once again a prohibition was proclaimed. This time an edict called “the Decree of Western Churches” was issued. Under this decree, which was worked out in the year 382, reading the Gospel of Barnabas was banned.

The Gospel of Barnabas in the Library of Pope Damasus

In 383, Pope Damasus acquired a copy of Barnabas Gospel, which he kept in his personal library. This copy is probably still kept in Vatican, for many manuscripts belonging to pre-Islamic period exist there. These copies are kept in a special place where only Pope has access to. It’s the same place into which Marino, Pope Sixtus V’s sincere friend, stepped and from which he walked out bringing with him the Gospel of Barnabas as an invaluable treasure to be gifted to the people. The author of “Almenar”, Seyed Mohammad Rashid Reza, writes that Mohammad Bairam has quoted an English tourist saying that he has come across the manuscript of a Gospel written in Homeira alphabet before Mohammad was appointed Prophet by God. In that Gospel, Christ is quoted as saying: “I prophesy the coming after me of a divine messenger to be called Ahmad.”⁶ This is precisely the sentence in the Koran on this subject. (Surah “The Ranks”, verse 6)

5. “The Expression of Truth” by Molla Rahmatollah Hendi (published by “Darolbeitha”), First Volume, PP. 285-288.

6. Almenar Commentary (Second edition, Beirut) Vol.9, P. 297, and the introduction of Raslud Reza to the Arabic translation of the Gospel of Barnabas.

A Manuscript on Barnabas Chest in the Grave

In the second volume of the Latin book “Acia Sanctorium Boland”, pages 422 and 450, (published in 1698), is written that in the fourth year of the reign of Zeno, the body of Barnabas was discovered with a copy of his Gospel on his chest. The handwriting was that of his own.

Some historians assert that the manuscript in question was the Gospel of Matthew. Others deny the truth of the story.⁷

Gelasius I bans the Gospel of Barnabas

The Encyclopedia Britannica (13th edition), pages 179-180, under the entry “Apocryphal literature” lists many Gospels of the early Christian era which were abandoned and yet have still remained to this day. The Encyclopedia mentions separately five names: the Gospels of Andrew, of Barnabas, of Bartholomew, of James and that of Thaddeus, adding that these five Gospels were banned by Pope Gelasius I, who later issued a special decree banning Barnabas Gospel, because people would not stop reading the banned Gospels.⁸

Gelasius I was Pope from 492 until 496 AD, a period more than a century before Mohammad was appointed Prophet by God. This has been omitted from the recent editions of Encyclopedia Britannica.

Barnabas’ Gospel in Photius “Apostolic Canon”

Bostani, a great Christian scholar, writes in his Encyclopedia under the headword “Barnabas”: “Photius has listed the Gospel of Barnabas in his “Apostolic Canon” as apocryphal”.

Photius was the bishop of Istanbul from 858 to 886 AD For a time he dissociated himself from the Catholic Church.

He arranged a series of arguments on theology and a set of canons for the Greek Church. He died in exile in 891 AD It is therefore evident that the Gospel of Barnabas was widely read until late 9th century when at last it was banned again by Bishop Photius.

Gelasius II

Bostani writes: “Pope Gelasius II banned the Gospel of Barnabas in 1118 AD” We shall later give a brief account in this respect.

7. Bostani Encyclopaedia, the headword: “Barnabas”.

8. Encyclopaedia Americana, impression of 1962 (Head-word: “Barnabas”).

Sextus V's Library

As we have previously pointed out, Fra Marino, the Italian monk, carried away the Gospel of Barnabas from the special section of Pope Sextus V and after reading it was converted to Islam. Gelasius V was Pope from 1585 until 1590 AD

The Spanish Translation

The Gospel of Barnabas was never returned to the Pope's library. Some time later, the Gospel was translated from Italian into Spanish by a Muslim from Arragon. The translator, whose name, as has been mentioned, is Mustafa de Aranda, is little known.

The Spanish version was for some time in possession of George Sale, the famous English translator of the Holy Koran, who describes the Gospel as follows:

“The book, in a medium format, has been written in Spanish in legible handwriting. The last pages of the book, however, are somewhat blurred. The book consists of 222 chapters of different lengths and has 220 pages. In its preface, it has been pointed out that the text has been translated from Italian by an Arragonian Muslim named Mustafa de Arranda. The book has also an introduction in which the discoverer of the original manuscript, who was a Christian monk called Fra Marino, describes his discovery as follows;...”⁹ We have already quoted Fra Marino's description.

The Prevalence of Gospel of Barnabas

After its Italian version was discovered and translated into Spanish, the Gospel of Barnabas made its way into European scientific circles. Scholars began disputing its contents and history. It should be noted, however, that this controversy has long continued in the Christian world without Muslims being aware of it. Even Mulla Rahmatollah Hendi, the author of “Revelation of Truth”, who lived one hundred years ago, did not know anything about the Gospel of Barnabas, despite his vast knowledge of Christian writings. He has only quoted some passages from the introduction written by Sale to his translation of the Holy Koran.

In Europe, however, two authors, M. de Lamonnoye and M. Toland, have paraphrased a passage from the Gospel of Barnabas to George Sale, who has included them in his detailed introduction titled: “Acquaintance with Islam.” Then a man called Dr. Holme, director of Hedley College in Hampshire, gave the Spanish to George Sale.

9. Introduction of George Sale to the translation of the Holy Koran, PP.9 and 10.

He writes that he has been told that Moriscoes in Africa are in possession of a Spanish version of Gospel Sale gave the Spanish version of Gospel of Barnabas.

It is written that George Sale gave the Spanish text after studying it to a man called Doctor Menkhus who also gave it to Dr. Howit and the latter made extensive use of it in his scholarly researches.

The Spanish version has disappeared since then and now it is unclear whether it has been utterly destroyed or somewhere in Christian libraries.

Fortunately, however, the Italian version, which is older, has been preserved. In the course of time, the book was found in the possession of an important figure in Amsterdam and after his death, it was transferred to another person called Cremer (1828-1889), who was a Christian monk and is said to have served some years as the Austrian ambassador to Egypt and Lebanon.¹⁰

Four years after receiving the Italian text of the Gospel of Barnabas, the dedicated it to the Austrian Prince, Eugene of Savoy. As we have said before, this bibliophilic prince gave the text to two Parisian book-binders who bound it in Oriental style the book is still preserved in the same binding in the Viennese Court library.¹¹

English Translation

The Italian version was translated into English early in the 20th century by Lonsdale Ragg, the British Christian scholar, and his wife Laura M. Rubert and in 1907 was printed in Clarendon Press in Oxford and published by Oxford University.

Oddly enough, this translation was so quickly out of print that it was not clear where such numerous printed copies had gone. After prolonged search, it was discovered that one copy of it was kept in the British Museum and another copy was preserved in the U.S. Congress Library in Washington. From Washington text a copy was printed and published in Karachi in 1973.¹²

Arabic and Persian Translations

When the English translation appeared, Muslims heard about the name of the Gospel of Barnabas. Since this Gospel contained several explicit prophecies about the coming of the Prophet of Islam and moral precepts contrary to those prevalent in traditional Christian Church, Muslims were anxious to publish an Arabic translation from the text for the Islamic world. Meanwhile, an Egyptian Christian scholar translated it into Arabic. His name was Dr. Khalil Saadat.

The Arabic version was published in 1908 by Seyed Mohammad Rashid Reza Aihosseini in Almenar Publishing House.

10. Almonjid (Proper Names), the word "Cremer". TEH. IRAN.

11. "Arrehlatolmadressia", by Late Allama Balaghi, prefaced by Dr. Khalil Saadat.

12. Notes on the English Translation (published in Karachi 1973).

When the Arabic translation appeared, Iranians showed great interest in reading this “invaluable treasure”. Therefore, a great Persian-language scholar, Heidar Gholikhan, known as “Sardar Kaboli”, translated the Gospel from Arabic into Persian. In the course of his translation, this learned translator made constant references to the English version which was the source of the Arabic translation. He discovered passages and phrases, which had been translated incorrectly, intentionally or unintentionally, by the Arabic translator. He corrected the errors in his own translation.

The Persian translation was made in the Muslim year 1341 and was printed in the Muslim year 1350 (corresponding the Persian year 1311) in Kermanshah.

This translation has three introductions by: (1) Dr. Khalil Saadat, the Arabic translator; (2) Seyed Mohammad kashid Reza Alhosseini, the Arabic publisher, and (3) the Late Sardar Kaboli, the learned Persian translator. These three introductions, especially the third one, are very informative and interesting, containing useful information, which cast light on the history of the Gospel of Barnabas.

The Persian translation was published again in Tehran in 1966 by Seyed Mohammad Ali Safir.

Another Persian translation has been made from the Gospel of Barnabas in recent years, which does not match the previous ones in correctness and precision.

Various translations have also been made Malay and others.

The Syrian Version

Jalale Ale Ahmad, the renowned writer, notes in the introduction to his book, “Additional Wife” that he has seen a Syrian version of the Gospel of Barnabas belonging to one of his friends who is a priest. This version, being in the Syriac language, must be the original text or at least a text older than the Italian one.

We request this respectable priest to send us the specifications of the text, thus assisting us to make clear what has remained obscure about this historically important book. Let him accept in advance our gratitude.

The Version at Tokyo University, Japan

A Muslim resident in Japan called Mathna Alghertas writes in his letter sent to Islamic School Magazine (Volume 11, No.1, PP. 45-46):

“It is of particular interest that Seyed Hossein Khan Ali has recently heard about the existence of an old version of the Gospel of Barnabas in Tokyo Library and, because of the importance of his discovery, has immediately taken, at his own expense, photographs from all pages of the book to hand it out among Muslims.”

So far, we have not found in our inquiries anything about the above-mentioned version and are waiting for further information. We hope our Muslim brothers in Japan will do us a favor by sending us the specifications of this version. We shall be indebted to their Islamic kindness.

What has preceded is a summary of the strange fate of the Gospel of Barnabas from the beginning up to the present. In this chronology we have widely relied on and referred to Christian literature. On the other hand, some people affiliated with the Church have made suggestions, which will be quoted and then analyzed, in next chapters.

The Contents of the Gospel of Barnabas

A Brief Look at Jesus Christ's Teachings

Jesus says in the Gospel: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Gospel According to Matthew, Chapter 5, Verse 17).

We learn from this verse that Jesus came with the aim of completing and reconstructing the religion which had been ruined and abandoned by the Jews.

The Holy Koran, too, states the same point: "And when Jesus came with self-evident miracles, he said: I have come unto you with wisdom, and to make plain some of that concerning which ye differ. So keep your duty to Allah, and obey me. Lo! Allah, He is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is a right path." (Surah: "Ornaments of Gold", Verse 63-64).

Jesus Christ showed in his teachings the points of Jewish deviation from the religious path by referring to the Old Testament. That great man attempted to consolidate the Mosaic religion by guiding people to competence and righteousness. Peace be upon him on the day he came to the world, the day he will leave the world and the day he will be resurrected for the next world.¹³

Jesus was faithful to the Old Testament precepts and his true disciples followed his example after him. When he passed away, even Christian women knew that Saturday ought to be a holiday according to the religious Law (Luke, 23, 56).

In principle, divine law is accompanied by precepts and moral philosophies the cancellation of which would lead to opposition to them and neglecting of what is considered their favorable results. Only a portion of the precepts, which are alterable and relative to certain conditions can be removed or annulled. For example, the eating of pork is physically and spiritually harmful and its dangerous results are exceedingly and irreparably great. So no religion could approve of eating it. Instead, the commandment binding a Muslim to pray towards Mecca has a pragmatically political implication, because it is obvious that God is not residing in Kaaba, but He is omnipresent and every direction leads towards Him. Therefore, the shrine in direction of which one prays may occasionally, under circumstances, shift from one place to another. To repeal a commandment and replace it with a new one require a wise and well-meaning purpose.

Where do Christian Teachings come from?

13. Quoted from the Holy Koran about that great man (Surah "Mary", Verse 33).

In the present century, a number of western scholars noticed that a strange similarity exists among the Christian, Buddhist and Hinduist doctrines.

During their studies, they discovered that the ideas concerning the Trinity, Christ's suffering; the Crucifixion and some other Christian beliefs literally existed in Far Eastern religions and in those of pagans from whom the Christians have adopted these beliefs. To their surprise, they even found in the Gospels some phrases and passages, which were similar to those, contained in Buddhist and Hinduist religious texts. They saw that even Christ's epithets such as "the Lamb of God", "the Son of God", "Redeemer", "Sufferer" etc., existed in those religions too. Since those religions are older than Christianity, the scholars suggested that the Christians had adopted these epithets from those older religions.

Several books were written on this subject, including an Arabic book named "Pagan Beliefs in Christian Religion". Its author is Mohammad Taher Attanir, who is Lebanese.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

In 1947, some scrolls were discovered in Palestinian deserts on the Dead Sea coasts. These scrolls fuelled an intellectual movement in Christian history and in Christianity itself.

These scrolls contain-passages from the Bible and other religious texts and date back to the beginning of the Christian era about 2000 years ago.

The scholars discovered after studying the scrolls that they belonged to Essenes, who were a Jewish sect, living in deserts and who had mystical beliefs and were waiting for the coming of a Messiah (Saviour) of the Israelites.

They put their written scrolls in pitchers, which were deposited in caves in Engedi situated on the Dead Sea coast. Soon, these people suffered a fate unknown to history.

The discovery made peculiar repercussions throughout the world's scholarly circles. At first, some doubted their authenticity, but after a series of scientific detection, it was proved that the scrolls had been written in the early Christian era.

The scholars observed that the scrolls discovered in Vadi Qumran near the Dead Sea would change their scientific hypotheses about Christ and the beginning of Christianity.

As many as four thousand books were written concerning the discovered scrolls, including one named "The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls" which is of utmost interest. The book, studying the scrolls contents, observes as follows:

"A hypothesis which the average Christian develops about the emergence of Christianity is that Jesus Christ preached his Gospel, died as a Messiah or Saviour, resurrected from among the dead and established the Christian Church

which spread throughout the world as a result of the activities of the Apostles. If the Christian in question does not believe in the Resurrection, he says at least that the Apostles were guided by the Spirit of Jesus Christ to establish his Church in accordance with his Gospel.”

“The average Christian also says that Jesus Christ was a Jew who had inherited Jewish traditions and culture. Besides, he may suggest that the Apostles were impressed by the Gospel of Christ and propagated his teachings. He also says that the Apostles realized through their personal experiences acquired during or after the life of Jesus Christ that he was the Saviour and the Lord of humanity and the Son of God.”

“Anyway, he expresses the shape of Christian belief in this way and it never occurs to him that the bulk of this belief existed before the Christian era (except perhaps for what had been said by Moses and Prophets) and he does not know that a great deal of it is based on what does not exist in the Bible.”

“What the ordinary Christian is not aware of is that in the early Christian era and after it, pagans believed in and gave names to their gods, and these have been reflected in Christian faith. Mithra was the Saviour of mankind, so were Tammuz, Adonis and Osiris. The belief which recognizes Christ as the Saviour - a belief which finally entered Christianity - was not a Jewish belief. Nor did the early Christians in Palestine have such a belief.”

“The Messiah who was expected to come by Jews and Christian converts of Jewish origin was not the Son of God but a Messenger of God. He was not the one whose blood would redeem other people from their sins, but one who wanted to save people by creating a Christian rule on earth. Christians of Jewish origin did not expect a redemption allowing them to enter the Heaven, but believed in and desired one which would establish a new order throughout the world, although they also believed in immortality.”

“Christian faith spread among pagans simultaneously with the appearance of the belief in Jesus as the Saviour Lord. This belief corresponds exactly with the older belief in Mithra. The Winter Solstice on 25th December (22nd December?) was the birthday of Mithra, which the pagans who had been converted to Christianity changed into Christ's birthday. Even Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, appointed for the Israelites and consecrated by God in Mosaic Law as the Day of His rest after creation of the universe, was shifted under Mithraic influence from Saturday into Sunday when the sun is at its zenith.”

“In the time of Christian expansion, there was no region in the Mediterranean where the idea of the Virgin Mother and her Dying Son did not prevail. Originally, the Mother Earth itself was a Goddess who turned virgin in the spring and then bore a son who was the fruit of the earth and who was born to die. As soon as he died he would be buried in the earth as a seed of the next fruit

and a new cycle started. It was the Vegetation Myth from which the pathetic story of the Saviour God and Mater Dolorosa was skillfully fabricated.”

The seasons cycle on the earth was identified with a similar cycle in the Heavens. There was also the idea that the Virgin Goddess was the Constellation Virgo (23) itself, which rose, in the eastern part of the sky just at the time when the great dog-star proclaimed the new birth of the sun in the east. The crossing of the horizontal line through Virgo was the symbol of the acceptance of Virgin by the sun. The myth of the Earth was thus confounded by the myth of the Heavens and mingled by the ancient beliefs about real and unreal heroes, leading to the creation of the myth of the Saviour Hero,

The cave considered to be the birthplace of Jesus had previously been the birthplace of Horus who grew up and became Osiris. He was destined to die for the redemption of his people. Isis was the Mater Dolorosa. There were innumerable faiths based upon the idea of suffering, described by writers such as Sir James G. Frazer in “The Golden Bough” and the great Roman and Greek literature scholar, professor Gilbert Murray.

In these faiths some rituals were instituted which were subsequently known as “Christian Rituals”. The Last Supper, a Militaristic ritual, was adopted to Palestinian Christian Supper service. Not only sacred precepts but also a series of beliefs such as “Lamb’s Blood” (to sacrifice a lamb and make baptism in its blood) were adopted from Mithraism. Besides religious beliefs, moral precepts, too, were derived from this faith, the believers of which had been converted to Christianity. Moreover, teachings, which were not religious, such as Stoic ideas penetrated Christianity.

The relation between Christianity and Paganism is so vast that it seems that a Jewish Christianity existed in the beginning which indeed served as a nucleus, for another Christianity in the formation of which Palestinian Christians have played the least part. It must be remembered that at first Jesus was called a Teacher and only for a short time. By the end of that time, he had become the Messiah, the Saviour and the Lord of Christians. And now, it was he rather than Mithra that the belief in and devotion to whom had been strengthened. Moreover, the veneration towards the Church went so far that it was finally declared that Christ was the “Saviour Lord”. Such an epithet was adopted and declared in 325 AD in the Council of Nicea by a majority vote of the Council members.

It should therefore be noticed that what the learned scholar knows and the layman is not aware of is the measure of deviation from the real Christianity, to which Jesus and his disciples made no contribution...”

A few lines below, the author writes:

“A main element causing the prevalence of the Jewish Christianity amid the conflicts among the faiths which believed in a suffering Redeemer, was Paul of Tarsus, who was both a Hellenist and an inspired Jewish Saint and a man of

deep insight into paganism. He was a great master of eclecticism and adoption. He was the first man who cherished the idea of identifying Israel with Athens, the Temple of Jerusalem with Mithraic altar and Essenic Jahovah with the unknown god of Aeropause Hill...”¹⁴

The above passage was quoted from A. Powell Davies, the late dean of All Souls Church. He is a scholar in theology. Having made profound studies on the discovered Dead Sea scrolls and other written sources, he writes that the present Christianity is something different from the early Christianity. A great deal of wrong pagan beliefs has entered Christianity and has deformed its true visage.

It should be noted that the Holy Koran, too, (in Sura “Repentance”, Verse 30) has pointed out this fact, saying that the words “Messiah is the Son of God” is a statement similar to that of the pagans.

This is an indisputable fact from scientific point of view and if a Christian missionary attaches any importance to Paul or his thoughts, he is obliged to do so (or, according to the above- mentioned scholar, he is a “non-expert” and a “Layman”).

It is worth mentioning here that the 7th leader of the Islamic Shi’a Imam Mussa Kathem, peace be upon him, has said that seven people will suffer the worst punishment in Hell. One of them is Paul who misled Christians from the right path...¹⁵

Paul As Seen by Barnabas

As we have already observed, the “Acts of the Apostles” has pointed out the disagreement between Barnabas and Paul, which led to the fact that the former refused to continue his cooperation with the latter. Their disagreement seems to have begun at the moment when Paul decided to reveal his latent thoughts.

Barnabas, the innocent and monotheist Apostle, opposed Paul uncompromisingly. This opposition, however, is not included in the Acts of the Apostles for reasons of expediency. The fact is that Barnabas speaks bitterly against Paul both in the beginning and in the end of his Gospel. The following is exactly what he has said in this respect:

“Barnabas, the Messenger of Jesus of Nazareth, known as Christ, wishes peaceful submission and consolation for all the inhabitants of the world. O dear one! Almighty God has indeed favored us with his blessings, by appointing in recent times his prophet, Jesus Christ, with the mission of teaching. And the Satan used the heavenly verses to lead many people astray by pretending to be virtuous. Such persons preach what is greatly a blasphemy. They call Christ the Son of God. They reject circumcision, which God has always prescribed. They

14. Quoted from the English version (17th impression) Volume 8, P.311.

15. KHESAL SHEYKHE SADOOGH in ARABIC published by JAMEEH MODARRES SIN. IRAN. page 398 No.106

approve eating of every kind of impure meat. Paul is among these people who have gone astray. I talk about him only with regret. It is he who has caused me to write about the righteousness, which I have seen and heard during my companionship with Jesus. I write about this so that you will find salvation and be not led astray by the Satan and perish as a result of the punishment inflicted by God. Therefore avoid every person who offers you a new teaching in contradiction to what I write, so that you will find permanent salvation. May Almighty God assist you and protect you from the Satan and every other evil. Amen” (The opening lines of the Gospel of Barnabas).

In the end of his Gospel, Barnabas writes:

“And when Jesus passed away, his disciples dispersed throughout Israel and the rest of the world. Nevertheless, righteousness was loathsome to the Satan, who represented it as fallacy, as it has always been represented so, for a sect of evil-doers claiming to be the disciples of Jesus proclaimed that he had died and not resurrected and other announced that he had died a real death. They always preach that Jesus is the very Son of God. Among them, Paul, too, was one who fell victim to this deception. We, however, preach what we have written to those who fear God, so that they will be acquitted of sins during the Last Judgment.”

Anyway, Barnabas says that Paul has been deceived by the Satan and preaches that Jesus is the Son of God.

The Gospel of Barnabas Calls to Piety

Dr. Kilalil Saadat, the Christian translator of Gospel of Barnabas writes in Arabic:

“...This Gospel includes clear verses based upon philosophy, literary poise and a fluent grand style, which enrapture souls. It is simple in expression, aims to promote human aspiration towards a high horizon and purge it of sensual lusts enjoining what is right and prohibiting what is wrong, recommending virtues and exposing evils, inviting man to annihilate his sensual self and to do benevolence to people, so that all traces of selfishness will disappear from him and he will live for the benefit of his brothers.” (From the Introduction to the Gospel’s translation).

The compilers of the Encyclopedia Americana write under the headword “Barnabas” that the Gospel of Barnabas concentrates on special moral problems.

The Gospel in question attempts to purge individual and society of spiritual evils and impurities which are much worse and uglier than physical ones, trying to note down exactly what Jesus Christ said about them. It is impossible for us to include here all of the Gospel’s contents or make thorough and sweeping Judgment on them. Those who want to know them should read the Gospel itself.

Monotheism in the Gospel of Barnabas

One of the chief aims of Barnabas to write the Gospel was, as he says himself in the beginning of the book, to kindle the light of monotheism, for Jesus, like other Prophets, kept it alight and preached it.

It is very interesting that Barnabas says: “When Adam and Eve were driven out of Paradise, they saw written over the gate of Paradise: There is only One God. Mohammad is the messenger of God” (Chapter 41, Verse 33)

Earlier, as soon as Adam was created, he saw in the air these written words: “There is only One God. Mohammad is the messenger of God”. Adam asked God that these words be imprinted in his thumbs’ nails. God imprinted the first sentence on the nail of his right thumb and the second on that of his left thumb (Chapter 39).

For this reason, Barnabas utterly denies the divinity of Christ, which we shall discuss presently.

Resurrection in the Gospel of Barnabas

One of the best arguments refuting the authenticity of the existing Bible is that both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament there are few references to the Doomsday and the Resurrection after death. On the other hand, an important large portion of the Holy Koran contains verses about the Doomsday and the Resurrection and this is one of the advantages of the Holy Koran, which makes it incomparable with other religious books.

For 1400 years, this Heavenly Book has been inviting the inhabitants of the world to struggle, saying: “And if ye are in doubt concerning that which we reveal unto Our slave (Mohammad), then produce a surah of the like there of...” (Surah “the Cow”, Verse 23). It does not say to people to produce something like the whole Book of the Holy Koran, but it says if somebody can produce even a verse similar to the smallest surah of this Book, then he can challenge the Koran and Muslims. Now, here they are¹. Let them bring it if they can.

We know that for centuries, the enemies of Islam have not spared spending a great deal of money and suffering great losses and casualties to destroy this religion. Besides the battles fought during the lifetime of the Great Prophet and the Caliphs, there were eight Crusades, which ended in utter defeats of the Crusaders. It was not long ago when Jews made some modifications in the Koran. They omitted the anti-Jewish verses of the Koran and published it in Germany. Muslims discovered the fact and issued a decree to confiscate and destroy the copies.

Let those nations which have so many scientists, scholars, men of letters, philosophers, lawyers and Orientalists try to produce a surah like those of the Koran, so that it may be recognized as a work not inferior to the Koran with the unanimous approval of a council consisting of impartial experts and scholars. Such an achievement would help encourage Muslims to abandon Islam. As they

know that this is impossible and it is foolish to embark on such an under-taking, they constantly evade it and fight against Islam in other ways.

If Moses and Jesus, peace of God be upon them, had the personal gift of performing miracles, your Prophet (Mohammad) left it up to his disciples to do miracles, in order that “all people” might perform miracles “everywhere” and in “every time”, by offering the proof of their righteousness and this proof is the Holy Koran. A universal and permanent religion requires a universal and permanent miracle.

When we read this Heavenly Book, we notice that many of its verses deal with the Doomsday and the next world. What is to be done in this world where justice and injustice go along with each other and rights are irreparably violated? God is our Owner and our Lord. He confirms that our failure to regain our rights in a particular case does not mean that we are destined in our time of creation to be helpless, but He promises that a certain Day of Judgment has been appointed, which will inflict the worst of punishments on the oppressors, although He has also ordered us to try to recover our rights in this world. He also warns: “O oppressor! Do not think that you can do despotically what you wish to do without being punished. Know that a difficult Day awaits you...”

For this reason, the question of the next world and the Doomsday is the only thing which make people interested in life; otherwise, a purposeless life is really “foolish”. The Holy Koran determines the goal and anyone who does not work towards that goal is recognized as “guilty”. Therefore, those who indulge in other books and false religions and do not look for the goal of their life and consider life an activity which ends in “death” and not in the “next world”, will be responsible. Owing to this very fact the Holy Koran says: “And whose seeketh as religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and he will be a loser in the Hereafter.” (Surah “The Family of Imran”; Verse 85), since it is only Islam that has determined the “purpose of creation”.

The Gospel of Barnabas, too, contains many references to the Doomsday, the Heaven and the Hell, which are worth consideration (Chapter 135, 136, 169 and subsequent Chapters).

The Gospel of Barnabas Recommends Prayer

If we are really the servant of God, we must pay homage and reverence to Him by all means and in all possible ways. Serving the people, if it is for God, is a kind of worship and of great importance, but not in the sense that: “Worship is nothing other than serving people.”

The rituals ordained in Islam are to consolidate links between the slave (servant) and his or her Lord (Allah) and man acquires perfection when he does something to please Him.

We may not observe our rituals but may at the same time make good deeds which are not for God, but are done to acquire “good reputation”, fulfill our “ambitions”, “satisfy our human emotions”, or, serve “people”.

But despite all our good conducts, if the purpose of our behavior is not to please God, our actions will be meaningless and superficial. God says: “And we shall turn unto the work they did and make it scattered mutes” (Surah “the Criterion”; Verse 23). On the other hand, if our purpose is to please both God and others, we shall practice “hidden polytheism”.

God prescribed the Prophet at the very beginning of his divine mission to rise at night and worship Him, saying that he must keep vigil and do prayers during the night, for the night-time is calm and silent. As a result, the mind can concentrate better at night and prayers may be recited more eloquently and articulately (The Holy Koran, Surah “The Enshrouded One”; Verses 6-7). This is the reason why prophets used to keep vigil and pray much (even it was incumbent upon the Prophet of Islam to engage himself in special night prayers).

Jesus Christ ordered his disciples to pray and worship. As a baby in his cradle, he said: “[God] hath enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving so long as I remain alive” (Surah “Mary”; Verse 31).

The Gospel of Barnabas, too, refers many times to Christ's prayers and quotes several times Christ's advice about the importance of prayer (notably in the Chapter 119).

Barnabas Considers Christ a Messenger of God

We have previously noted that Christian scholars have discovered that Christ regarded himself a Messenger of God and even the early Christians recognized him as a divine Messenger and the attribution of divinity to Christ was an idea coming from pagan beliefs. The idea penetrated as a harmful microbe into the Christian body making it corrupt.

Barnabas quotes that Christ himself was much upset and regretful at such an idea which had been imported and spread by the Roman army. He attributes the idea of Christ being Son of God to Roman beliefs and thus, Barnabas is in agreement with the Holy Quran¹⁶ and researchers' studies.

Barnabas says that Christ himself repeatedly disowned such an attribution (52: 10, 126, 101, 138: 11, 198: 16-17, 206: 2-18, 212: 6, 220: 19 and some other Chapters).

Barnabas also states that Jesus gathered people round him many times, commanding them not to call him the Son of God. He even endowed others with his power of miracles, so that people should discard such a loathsome belief (Chapter 126).

16. The verse itself was quoted in a preceding chapter.

Barnabas Denies the Crucifixion of Jesus

The Gospel of Barnabas denies the Crucifixion. Barnabas announces explicitly that Jesus was not crucified, but was taken by God to Heavens. Instead, God cast the design of the face of Jesus on the face of one of his Apostles, Judas Iscariot, who had betrayed Jesus to his enemies and it was Judas who was crucified instead of Jesus. The similarity between the two was so great that all disciples and people even Mary, Jesus' mother, believed that it was Jesus himself who had been crucified. But after some time, Jesus came down and declared that he had not been crucified, thus consoling his mother, disciples and acquaintances (from Chapter 215 to the end of the book).

The Gospel of Barnabas and the Four Gospels of the Church

The Gospel of Barnabas contains almost all that appears in the First three Gospels called Synoptic, but with a few differences. For example, we read in the Gospel according to Luke (Chapter 3; Verse 16) that John the Baptist said that he was not worthy to unloose the latchet of Christ's shoes. But in the Gospel of Barnabas (Chapter 44; Verse 30 and some other parts) Jesus is quoted to say that he is not worthy to unloose the latchet of the shoes of Mohammad, the Messenger of God...

The Gospel of Barnabas corresponds least of all with that of John, because the Gospel of John concentrates largely on the divinity of Jesus and has been peculiarly influenced by polytheistic philosophies, while that of Barnabas is free from these superstitions.

It must be noted that the Gospel according to John was written much later than the Synoptic, when the Hellenism had already begun to flow into Christianity. The Gospel of John was written about 90 AD, sixty years after Jesus Christ departed from this world.

In contrast with the irrelevant rhetoric of other Gospels, the Gospel of Barnabas tries, by giving pieces of excellent advice, to guide mankind to the right path, bring spirituality and morality to perfection and exalt the human mind.

This book preaches that everybody will suffer the consequences of his own good and evil deeds. Everybody is responsible for his own actions and cannot bear the responsibility of other people (Look at the Chapter 114). Every good deed must be approved by God and the slave has constantly to remember God (Chapter 126, 12-14). Nevertheless, the present Christianity tells us that Jesus died on the Cross to redeem us from our sins.

In the Gospel of Barnabas, the problems of fatalism and human free will have been solved and the problem of neither determinism nor freedom has been discussed fully enough (126, 12-14; 114, 15; 164 and 165).

Once a Jewish rabbi asked Jesus: Was it the will of God that Adam ate the fruit of the “Forbidden Tree” in Paradise? Jesus answered: God has left man free to walk on his own feet and enabled him to do “good” and “evil”. Therefore, if man does good, it will be out of his own free will and therefore of much value, and if he does evil, that will also be considered his own doing, so the infliction of divine punishment on him will not look “obtrusive”. (Chapter 155)

Asked whether those inhabiting lower dwellings of the Heaven would not feel humiliated at seeing those living in upper dwellings, Jesus replied: “No, because everybody would be content with what he may have, just as the children in this world would be content with their childish costumes” (Ch. 176).

In this Gospel, many problems have been solved in similar fashion. Complex scholarly terminology has also been avoided in this book in order for all people to be able to understand and benefit from it.

The pleasant stories about the beneficent prophets instructive allegories and impressive Words of God refresh the reader’s soul to such an extent that when he reads the book over he may regret having finished it, although the book is longer than the official Gospels.¹⁷

When you read this Gospel and then compare it with the Church Gospels, you will find many differences between the teachings of Jesus Christ and those of Greeks and Mediterranean pagans, introduced by Paul the Apostle into the official Gospels, and you will see those Gospels overshadowed by this Holy Gospel, as is the light of a candle by the light of the sun. Then you will regret the fact that the Church has banned this Gospel several times and will realize why people have not respected the decrees of these so-called “reverends”.

17. We shall discuss later about acquiring knowledge about the sacred books.

The Prophet of Islam in the Gospel of Barnabas

Had the coming of the Prophet of Islam been prophesied?

We read in the Holy Koran that “the names of the Prophet, who can neither read nor write, will be found written in the Torah and the Gospel” (Surah “The Heights”, Verse 157).

We learn from this verse that during the time of the Prophet, his name had appeared in the Torah and the Gospel; otherwise, the Jews and Christians who lived in great numbers in Medina would have presented their holy Books to the Prophet, asking him to show them his name in their Books and if he had failed to do so, they would have publicized this failure. But the fact is quite different and a great number of the Jews and Christians admitted that the name of the Prophet was registered in their Books and that they had the records containing the description of him, his religion and his followers.

In the present Bible, too, one can see explicit hints prophesying the coming of the Prophet of Islam.

Mohammad, Ahmad and the Comforter

The Islamic testifications to the unity of God and the apostleship of Mohammad appear several times in the Gospel of Barnabas: “There is but One God; Mohammad is the Messenger of God” (chs. 39 and 41) The Gospel says that as soon as Adam was created, he saw these words written in the air and saw that the words were shining brighter than the sun. He asked God to imprint them on his fingers. God imprinted the testification to God's unity on his right thumb and the testification to Mohammad's apostleship on his left thumb.

The name of “Mohammad” has more than ten times been mentioned in the Gospel and each time accompanied by special tribute to him. Jesus described the Prophet of Islam in such a way that made people raise their voices and say: “O God, send us your Messenger. O Mohammad, hasten to save the world” (19; 97).

Christ's description of the Prophet of Islam surprises everybody who is acquainted with the Holy Koran and the details of Mohammad's life (which is the perfect reflection of his Book). Nevertheless, it does not surprise the Muslims, who only wonder why this description has not been recorded in the other Gospels. The points of difference are so many that it is impossible to discuss them all here. One should refer to the Gospel itself.

Once, we published a booklet named (It Is AHMAD, Not the Comforter), in which we have proved with clear reasons and irrefutable argument that the sacred name of the Great prophet of Islam has appeared in the Gospel of John.

In it, we have also discussed the name “Paradete” (THE COMFORTER), Explaining that this word has originated from the word (PERICLATE) (AHMAD), as the Hebrew Versioxa of the Gospel translated from very ancient manuscripts supports our view. The Holy Koran, too, says that Christ prophesied the coming of Ahmad (Surah “The Ranks”; Verse 6).

It is interesting that in the Gospel of Barnabas, too, the words “Comfort” and “Comforter” appear with the name of the Prophet of Islam. There are two probabilities. First, the Comforter may be one of the Prophet’s epithets. Second, in the Gospel of Barnabas some errors may have occurred in the course of its several transcriptions and translations into Greek and thus the case of the Gospel of John may have been repeated in the Gospel of Barnabas. The original text of this Gospel has certainly been other than the Italian version currently available.

Other Details about the Prophet of Islam

Barnabas quotes Jesus Christ as saying that the world has been created for the love of the Prophet of Islam (Chapter 55), that all people will benefit from him (Ch. 136), that all people, even divine prophets, will resort to him on Doomsday (from Chapter 52 on) and that they will kiss his hands (8, 54). Jesus spoke with the light of Mohammad, saying that if he could unloose the latches of Mohammad’s shoes, then he would himself be a great Prophet (31-30, 44). The light of Mohammad, Jesus said, would be on Doomsday like that of the sun, even thousands of suns (2, 54), the Prophet of Islam would be the moon of Heaven and other prophets the stars (7-6:177), and the Prophet “will bring the Word of God and his religion will survive for ever” (17, 42 and elsewhere). The latter statement refers to the Holy Koran and the immortality of Islam.

Christ has also hinted at Mohammad’s “splitting of the Moon” (18,72).

He has also said that Messiah is waiting for the coming of the Prophet of Islam, which we shall deal with hereafter.

Jesus made other descriptions the quotation of, which is impossible here for the reason of space. Those interested in further information, should refer to the Gospel itself.

The Desperate Efforts

Has the Gospel of Barnabas Been Originally Written in Arabic?

The Christians have made strenuous efforts to mislead people and convince them that the Gospel in question does not belong to Barnabas. They have endeavored to attribute the date of its composition to more recent times, but since their attempts have been made separately and not in association with one another, the dates they have given do not correspond with each other.

George Sale who was referred to in previous chapters writes in “Fundamental Questions” concerning the translation of the Holy Koran (page 58): “The Muslims have a Gospel in Arabic attributed to Saint Barnabas. In this Gospel, the description of the whole life of Christ is, in general, different from that of the official Gospels and corresponds with what Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) has recorded in the Koran...”

When this treatise was printed and the English translation appeared, George Sale wrote in another introduction: “When I was writing that article, I had not yet seen the Gospel of Barnabas and now I have received a copy of it...”

We have discussed before about the copy in question and said that it came into the possession of Dr. Howit.

It is worthwhile mentioning that Dr. Howit has said: “The Arabic version of the Gospel of Barnabas is still found in the East (Muslim countries)”.¹⁸

Cremer, too, about whom we talked before, has written on the cover of the Italian version which he dedicated to the Prince Eugene of Savoy the following sentence: “This Mohammad and Gospel have been translated from Arabic”.¹⁹

We do not know about the Arabic version, because it has not been referred to in any books and not listed in any Islamic bibliographies. As far as we know, the name of the Gospel of Barnabas appeared for the first time in the “Revelation of Truth” which was written in 1864 and was translated first in 1908 into Arabic and was made available to Muslims.

Earlier, however, the European versions of the text were passed from hand to hand in Christian communities. All these assertions originate from George Sale’s statement in “Fundamental Questions” concerning the translation of Koran. As pointed out above, he said that during the time he had been writing this treatise, he had not yet seen the Gospel of Barnabas.²⁰

18. Dr. Khalil Saadat’s Introduction to the Arabic translation of the Gospel of Barnabas.

19. Ibid.

20. Margoliouth D.S., the great Christian scholar and Orientalist, argues that the fact that Muslims had not heard of the Gospel of Barnabas is a good proof that its origin text was not in Arabic (Dr. Khalil Saadat’s introduction).

Anyway, we need evidence concerning the original Arabic version and what has happened to it. Otherwise, assertions of this kind would furnish us with proofs no more valid than those demonstrating the reality of tales and myths.

What Bostani Says

Bostani, the Christian author, writes in his Encyclopedia under the headword “Barnabas”:

“There is a forged Gospel in Arabic which has been ascribed to Barnabas. This book has been translated into English, Spanish and Italian and seems to have been written by a group of heretics. Photius listed it in his Apostolic Canons as apocryphal and Pope Gelasius II banned it in 1118.”

Although this spiteful writer has lived among Muslims and Arabic books and his knowledge of Arabic and Islamic books is no less than that of Muslim scholars, he says in an effort to blur the history of this Gospel that the Gospel of Barnabas is originally an Arabic text, which has been translated into English, Spanish and Italian. But as we know, it is certain that the Arabic, English and Spanish versions have been translated from an Italian version. As for the original text from which the Italian version has been translated, we cannot find a due to its discovery, as the bibliographical history does not provide us with an answer.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the reason why Bostani has attributed the banning of the Gospel to Gelasius II is probably because of the fact that he wants to direct its efforts towards making it appear that the Gospel belongs to the Islamic era and thus, by confounding Gelasius I with Gelasius II, he tries to fish in troubled waters.

Christian Miller

Miller, the American missionary, regards the Gospel of Barnabas as a book forged in the fifteenth century (“Old Church History”, printed in Germany, PP. 89-0-).

Apart from the old date of the book, we have just made a quotation from Bostani, Miller's colleague, that Gelasius II banned the Gospel of Barnabas in the 12th century. We shall later say that some other Christians, relying on Jubilee problem, consider it a work belonging to the first half of the 14th century, but no scholar or historian has attributed its authorship to a later time. Miller, however, puts the date at a later, time, that is, in the 15th century.

What Bible Dictionary says

Mr. Hox, the American compiler writes in his Bible Dictionary: “...There was another book, which came to be called the Gospel of Barnabas. This book has been written in Italian in the present century by a Muslim in an effort to show

that the Bible has been subject to alterations and has derived no facts about Jesus Christ from reliable sources.”

This compiler thinks that the writers of the standard Four Gospels who have derived “facts” about Jesus Christ from Buddhist, Hinduist and Greek pagans,(34) had “reliable” sources, and that Barnabas who says in the beginning of his Gospel that he has written his book after he associated with Christ is mistaken and his sources are unreliable.

This compiler who has lied about the time of the authorship of the Gospel of Barnabas, giving a date differing at least two centuries from that of real date, ought not to have called this Gospel unreliable, because two hundred years before him, George Sale had seen it and mentioned its name and its specifications in his book

The errors committed by these dishonest missionaries are too numerous to be counted in this small book.

To Answer a Few Questions

Has the Gospel of Barnabas Been Written by a Muslim Neophyte?

Although Lonsdale and Laura Rogg, the translators of the Gospel of Barnabas into English, do not believe that the original text is in Arabic, they consider it the work of a Muslim proselyte who had been converted from Christianity.²¹

George Sale has set forth the same theory in his Introduction to the Quran.²²

Dr. KItalil Saadat believes that the Gospel has been written by a Jew converted to Islam.²³

They have given their proper reasons for having such opinions and anyone who wants to know them should refer to their books.

Here we should ask when the Gospel of Barnabas so eloquent and beautiful in style was written and how it turned up in Pope's library. History tells us that the Gospel of Barnabas already existed in the Christian years of 190, 364, 382, 383, 495, 870 and 1118. Later, the Italian version was discovered between 1585 and 1590. Now the question is when the Gospel according to Barnabas was originally written before Islamic era and when it was hidden and when the present Gospel of Barnabas reappeared.

Those who have made the suggestions mentioned above, seeing that the teachings of this Gospel are similar to those of Islam and Judaism, have seen it necessary to make such assertions. But, as we said before, the true religions of the world have common nucleus, although the form given to them are different. The present Christianity has derived its religious and moral beliefs and rituals from pagans, so its teachings have become different from those of the Torah. The original Christianity, on the other hand, is not much different from those of original Judaism and Islam in basic and ideological rules and the genuine Christianity is mostly reflected in the Gospel of Barnabas.

Since Dr. Khalil Saadat has noticed that there are paganistic elements in Christian beliefs and since he has not been acquainted with original Christianity, then he has said that the writer of the Gospel of Barnabas was a Jew converted to Islam.

21. The Encyclopaedia Americana (headword "Barnabas").

22. The Introduction to Quran, P.10.

23. The Introduction to Arabic translation.

The Errors in the Versions of the Gospel of Barnabas

The Gospel of Barnabas has suffered many textual errors owing to numerous transcriptions. The author himself, too, may have memorized or rendered some events incorrectly. These kinds of errors are abundant in Christian sacred books. In the very first chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, more than ten mistakes can readily be detected. For example, in the verse 17, we read: “From the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.” When we count the number of the generations, which Matthew has mentioned by name, the result including Jesus himself totals only thirteen. The number “fourteen” is certainly a mistake, but Christians will be at a loss to justify this error.

The mistakes in Christian sacred books are so numerous that Biblical scholars have admitted them in their commentaries, without having found any solution to this problem.

One mistake in the Gospel of Barnabas is that it says that the angels prostrated themselves to the dust of Adam before life was breathed into his body (Chapters 35 and 39). The Holy Koran recounts that God said to the angels: “So, when I have made him and have breathed into him of my spirit, do ye fall down, prostrating yourselves unto him” (Surah “Al-Hijr”, Verse 29).

Another mistake in this Gospel is that it says: “Jesus turned, through miracle, water into wine” (Chapter 15). It goes without saying that Christ cannot have changed water into wine, so that some people might drink from it and do harm to their minds and bodies. This point is also included in the Gospel of John (Chapter 2).

Another error is that, according to the Gospel of Barnabas, there are nine heavens (6, 178), while the Holy Koran puts the number at seven. Some other errors have occurred there, too.

Jubilee, Once Every Hundred Years

According to the Hebrew law of the Old Testament (Leviticus, 25, 11), Jews had to hold a celebration once a period of fifty years. They had to stop farming and cultivation of the land in that year and behave humanely in everyday life...

Such a celebration was held in Christianity, too. From the year of 1300 onward, Christians celebrated this festival once every one hundred years. This festivity was called Jubilee. In 1350, they decided to celebrate the Jubilee every 50 years, as did the Jews. Later, the cycle was reduced to 25 years, which has lasted ever since.

The Gospel of Barnabas says: “Now the Jubilee is celebrated every one hundred years” (18, 82 and 25, 83). Judging from this verse, some have guessed that the Gospel of Barnabas was written in the first half of the 14th century.

A brief analysis makes it clear that this estimation is utterly mistaken. If the author of this Gospel had intended to ascribe falsely his book to Barnabas the Apostle, he would at least have avoided describing in his book a tradition originated in his own time. The study of the Torah shows since the writer does not intend to attribute the book to Moses, he narrates the event of Moses' death and those belonging to the time after his death and repeatedly points out that such and such a tradition in the time of Moses are still so and so... But people, driven by ignorance, consider the Torah a work of Moses, while all evidence support the opposite. On the other hand, a single "slip of a scribe" has served as proof to deny the attribution of the Gospel to Barnabas.

In our opinion, the scribe who was copying the manuscript either added this sentence to the text or was unaware of the history of the Jubilee (for the author himself, with his vast knowledge, could not have made such a mistake). The scribe probably thought that "fifty" was wrong and "hundred" was correct. In Italian, these two words have almost similar spellings. "Cinquant" may well be compared with "Cento".

It is remarkable that a Christian missionary, named Rev. Jan Slomp, after referring in the pages 71-76 of Vatican Bulletin No.31 to this point (which, if correct, proves the Gospel of Barnabas to have been written between the years 1300 and 1350) tries to philosophize, claiming that the Gospel of Barnabas was written in the 17th century or even after it.

He says that the author wanted to take vengeance on Christians making inquisitions into other people's beliefs and persecuting them, by making Christians suspicious of their own Gospel.

Mr. Slomp does not note the fact that if somebody wants to do such an action, he will not include the sacred name of the Prophet of Islam in his false Gospel and say that Jesus Christ, the Lord of Christians, has said: "I am not worthy to unloose the lachets of Mohammad's shoes." (P.B.U.H.) Yes, the clever person who is supposed to have fabricated the so-called "Gospel of Barnabas" has had to be a much more intelligent author.

Messiah and Christ...

George Sale writes (in his Introduction to Holy Koran's translation, P.58) that the author must have been a man of limited knowledge, because he has given the epithet "Messiah" to Mohammad (P.B.U.H.), while the Holy Koran applies it to Jesus.

Paradoxically, Christians say at one time that the contents of this Gospel have been adopted from the Holy Koran, and in another occasion that the author has not even been aware of the word "Messiah" being written in the Koran, although they describe the author as a scholar and although the word "Messiah" has more than ten times been applied to Jesus.

Let us give a brief explanation. Messiah is a general term that has been applied to many people, including Saul (Samuel 1, 10) and Cyrus (Isaiah 1, 45). As a result, it does not matter if Jesus may have said that Messiah was in all respects the Prophet of Islam, just as when Christians do not intend to deny Saul or Cyrus' being the Lord's Anointed by applying the epithet "Christ" or "Messiah" to Jesus.

Is the Gospel of Barnabas the Same Gospel Preached by Jesus Christ?

In his Gospel, Barnabas explains that Jesus had a Gospel of his own, which shone like a mirror and he supported his words by referring to it. Later, it disappeared from the world (Chapters 10 and 168).

Therefore, Barnabas does not say that his Gospel, which is a biography of Jesus Christ, is the very divine book revealed to Jesus. The divine Gospel, Barnabas says, consists of Jesus' total preaching, many of which have been included in this book of Barnabas. In other words the Gospel of Barnabas contains some of the statements belonging to the original heavenly Gospel.

Christian missionaries claim in their writings that Muslims regard the Gospel of Barnabas as the same divine Gospel revealed to Jesus. As a protest, they emphasize and magnify those statements. Which contradict the Quranic statements?

We should declare here explicitly that no Muslim considers this book the real Gospel revealed to Jesus Christ. Such a belief is, in principle, contradictory to the true and accepted Muslim belief that a Divine Book is always revealed by God and that its phrases are exposed by Him or a prophet inspired by God, and not by a third party.

If the Gospel of Barnabas were believed by us Muslims to be the genuine Gospel gifted to us by God, we would hold it in high esteem as we do the Holy Koran. It is the law of Islam that every Muslim is obliged to pay tribute to all Divine Books.

There is no doubt that the Popes and other Christian leaders tried hard and persistently to keep this Gospel away from the public eyes and prevented it one way or another from being published, now by banning studying of it, and then by hiding it in the recess of Pope's library. Who knows? They may have set fire to many a copy of it or they may have thrown it into the sea.

In fact, the Gospel of Barnabas has been brought out of the Church and has reached us. The efforts made by the Church - associated writers to accuse Muslims of forging this Gospel and their claims as to Muslims' considering it the original inspired Gospel of Jesus cannot obscure the atmosphere of research for free thinkers.

By the way, attention should be drawn to the fact that the Pope's library has a section where no one except him is allowed to enter and Heaven knows how many invaluable manuscripts are being kept there.

In the past, Vatican even did not provide sufficient information as to the existence of the Bible's manuscripts in its repositories. A typical example is a manuscript known as "Vatican City Manuscript", which had remained unknown for a long time and which is claimed by Christians to have been written in the fourth century. Information about this manuscript was published for the first time in 1475 (eleven centuries after it was written) in Vatican bibliographical list. Afterwards, no one was able to get further information about it. Early in the 19th century, Napoleon captured this manuscript and took it to Paris where some scholars found the opportunity to examine it. In 1815, the manuscript was returned to Vatican. But His Holiness, the Pope, resumed his policy as before, not allowing anybody to see it. In 1843, Tischendorf, the greatest Biblical scholar in recent times, was allowed after months of waiting to see it for only six hours. In 1844, Zedomorant was given permission to examine it for nine hours. One year later, it was agreed that Tregelles, the great British scholar, might see it, provided that he should not transcribe even a single word of the text. Before entering the special section where the manuscript was kept he was frisked to see if he had means of writing with him. Moreover, if he concentrated on a certain point in the manuscript, two guards would immediately come forward and take it away from him. Again and again, other scholars managed to take a brief look at it, suffering much trouble and contempt.

At last, a photograph of the manuscript was published in 1889-1890. (For more details, refer to relevant books).

When the Church handles its own books in such a way, one may wonder what they might do to hostile books.

In the end, it is necessary to emphasize that, given that all these suspicious prove to be correct, the value and credit of the Gospel of Barnabas the Apostle will not be reduced to a level lower than that of the Present Old and New Testaments, because the problems in this Gospel are literally found in the official Bible too. The only difference is that the problems in the present Bible are absolutely unanswerable.

Christians do not yet know what their sacred books are. The Catholic Bible consists of passages unacceptable by the Protestants. Until 1828, Catholics and Protestants were not divided over the points in the Bible. But since then, they have considered some of the books of the Bible as apocryphal (The Bible Dictionary, the word "Apocrypha").

Not only the Old Testament books, but also many sections of the New Testament have been subject to scepticism. They include Gospel of Mark (16, 9-20), Gospel of Luke (22, 34-44), Gospel of John (8, 3-12), Hebrews, James, II Peter, III John, Jude and the Revelation (Apocalypse). Various sections of the

Old and New Testaments have long been disputed, so detailed recounting of the points of dispute will require much time and space.

We pray to God to guide by his Grace to the right path those who think and keep open their minds' eyes.