



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ



*Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the
Worlds;*

Quran English Translation & Commentary

By

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Appendix III

On The Injil

(see [5:46](#), [n.757](#))

Just as the Tawrah is not the Old Testament, or the Pentateuch, as now received by the Jews and Christians, so the Injil mentioned in Quran is certainly not the New Testament, and it is not the four Gospels, as now received by the Christian Church, but an original Gospel which was promulgated by Jesus as the Tawrah was promulgated by Moses and the Quran by Muhammad Mustafa.

The New Testament as now received consists of;

- a. four Gospels with varying contents;
 - Matthew,
 - Mark,
 - Luke, and
 - John);and other miscellaneous matters; viz.,
- b. the Acts of Apostles (probably written by Luke and purporting to describe the progress of the Christian Church under St. Peter and St Paul from the supposed Crucifixion of Jesus to about 61 A.C.);
- c. twenty-one Letters of Epistles (the majority written by St. Paul to various churches or individuals, but a few written by other Disciples, and of a general nature);
- d. the Book of Revelation of Apocalypse (ascribed to St. John, and containing mystic visions and prophecies, of which it is difficult to understand the meaning).

As Prof. F.C. Burkitt remarks (Canon of the New Testament), it is an odd miscellany.

“The four biographies of Jesus Christ...are not all independent of each other, and neither of them was intended by its writer to form one of a quartette. But they are all put side by side, unharmonised, one of them being actually imperfect at the end, and one being only the first volume of a larger work.”

All this body of unmethodical literature was casual in its nature. No wonder, because the early Christians expected the end of the world very soon.

The four canonical of Gospel were only four out of many, and some others besides the four have survived. Each writer just wrote down some odd sayings of the Master that he recollected.

Among the miracles described there there is only one which is described in all the four Gospels, and others were described and believed in other Gospels, which are not mentioned in any of the four canonical Gospels.

Some of the Epistles contain expositions of doctrine, but this has been interpreted differently by different Churches. There must have been hundreds of such Epistles, and not all the Epistles now received as canonical were always so received or intended to be so received.

The Apocalypse also was not the only one in the field. There were others. They were prophecies of "things which must shortly come to pass"; they could not have been meant for long preservation, "for the time is at hand."

When were these four Gospels written?

By the end of the second century A.C. they were in existence, but it does not follow that they had been selected by that date to form a canon. They were merely pious productions comparable to Dean Farrar's Life of Christ.

There were other Gospels besides. And further, the writers of two of them. Mark and Luke, were not among the Twelve Disciples "called" by Jesus.

About the Gospel of St. John there is much controversy as to authorship, date, and even as to whether it was all written by one person. Clement of Rome (about 97 A.C.) and Polycarp (about 112 A.C.) quote sayings of Jesus in a form different from those found in the present canonical Gospels. Polycarp (Epistle, vii) inveighs much against men "who pervert the sayings of the Lord to their own lusts," and he wants to turn "to the Word handed down to us from the beginning," thus referring to a Book (or a Tradition) much earlier than the four orthodox Gospels.

An Epistle of St. Barnabas and an Apocalypse of St. Peter were recognized by Presbyter Clement of Alexandria (flourished about 180 A.C.) the Apocalypse of St. John, which is a part of the present canon in the West, forms no part of the Peshitta (Syriac) version of Eastern Christians, which was produced about 411-433 A.C. and which was used by the Nestorian

Christians. It is probable that the Peshitta was the version (or an Arabic form of it) used by the Christians in Arabia in the time of the Prophet.

The final form of the New Testament canon for the West was fixed in the fourth century A.C. (say, about 367 A.C.) by Athanasius and the Nicene creed. The beautiful Codex Sinaiticus which was acquired for the British Museum in 1934, and is one of the earlier complete manuscripts of the Bible, may be dated about the fourth century. It is written in the Greek language. Fragments of unknown Gospels have also been discovered, which do not agree with the received canonical Gospels.

The Injil (Greek, Evangel = Gospel) spoken of by the Quran is not the New Testament. It is not the four Gospels now received as canonical. It is the single Gospel which, Islam teaches, was revealed to Jesus, and which he taught. Fragments of it survive in the received canonical Gospels and in some others, of which traces survive (e.g. the Gospel of Childhood or the Nativity, the Gospel of St. Barnabas, etc.). Muslims are therefore right in respecting the present Bible (New Testament and Old Testament), though they reject the peculiar doctrines taught by orthodox Christianity or Judaism. They claim to be in the true tradition of Abraham, and therefore all that is of value in the older revelations, it is claimed, is incorporated in the teaching of the Last of the Prophets.

In 5:82 we are told that nearest in love to the Believers among the people of the Book are the Christians.

I do not agree that this does not apply to modern Christians "because they are practically atheists or freethinkers."

I think that Christians thought (like the world's thought) has learnt a great deal from the protest of Islam against priest domination, class domination, and sectarianism, and its insistence on making this life pure and beautiful while we in it. We must stretch a friendly hand to all who are sincere and in sympathy with our ideals.

Authorities:

The first two mentioned for Appendix II, and in addition:

Prof. F.C. Burkitt, on the Canon of the New Testament, in Religion. June 1934, the Journal of Transactions of the Society for Promoting the Study of Religions;

R.W. Mackay, Rise and Progress of Christianity;

G.R.S. Mead. The Gospel and the Gospels:

B.W. Bacon, Making of the New Testament, with its Bibliography;

Sir Fredrick Kenyon, the Story of the Bible;

R. Hone, the Apocryphal New Testament, London 1820:

Bell and T.C. Skeat, Fragments of an Unknown Gospels and other Christians Papyri, published by the British Museum, 1935.

See also chapter 15 of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of Roman Empire, where the genesis of the early churches and sects in the Roman Empire is briefly reviewed.



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