

Lesson Fifty-three

THE CHRISTIAN DOCUMENTS

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 3:10-17.

Scripture to Memorize: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

1. Q. What is Christianity?

A. Christianity is that system of religious teaching and practice promulgated and established by Jesus of Nazareth and His Apostles.

2. Q. What are the two component parts of Christianity?

A. The two parts or phases of Christianity are: 1. The Person; 2. The System.

3. Q. Whom do we mean by The Person?

A. By The Person, we mean Jesus of Nazareth.

Matt. 1:21—"Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." The name *Jesus* means *Savior*, or literally, *Jehovah saves*. Because He was reared in Nazareth, He became generally known as *Jesus of Nazareth*. Acts 2:22—"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you," etc. Acts 10:38—"Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power," etc.

4. Q. What do we mean by The System?

A. By The System, we mean the principles, laws and institutions which Jesus revealed and established through His Apostles, commonly called in their collective sense, the Christian System.

In the apostolic writings, the Christian System is designated "the faith." 1 Tim. 4:1—"in later times some shall fall away from the faith." Jude 3—"contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Luke 18:8—"When the Son of man cometh, shall he find the faith on the earth?"

5. Q. To what primary sources must we go for information respecting Christ and Christianity?
 A. For information respecting Christ and Christianity, we must go to the Christian Documents.
6. Q. What do we mean by the Christian Documents?
 A. By the Christian Documents, we mean the books of the New Testament Scriptures.

The system of religious faith and practice revealed in the books of the Old Testament Scriptures, is what is known today as *Judaism*, which came from God through the mediation of Moses; and which was designed to lead up to, and prepare the world for, Christ and Christianity. The laws, principles and institutions of *Christianity*, which came from God through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and which Christ in turn revealed and established through His Apostles, are recorded in the books of the New Testament Scriptures.

7. Q. What is the name usually given to the Christian Documents as a whole?
 A. The name given to the Christian Documents as a whole, is: the New Testament Canon.

The word *canon* means literally, *measuring-reed*; hence, a rule, a standard, etc. The books of the New Testament as a unit or whole are therefore usually designated the New Testament Canon.

8. Q. How many books are there in the New Testament Canon?
- A. There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament Canon.
9. Q. Into what four classifications do the books of the New Testament Canon divide as to subject-matter and design?
- A. The books of the New Testament Canon, as to subject-matter and design, divide naturally into four classifications, viz., (1) Biography, (2) History, (3) Discipline, and (4) Prophecy.

Or, as frequently given: (1) the Gospels, (2) Acts of Apostles, (3) the Epistles, and (4) the Revelation, or Apocalypse. The word *apocalypse* means literally, an *un-covering*; hence, a *revelation*.

10. Q. How many books of Biography are there in the New Testament Canon?
- A. There are four books of Biography in the New Testament Canon.
11. Q. Name these four books of Biography.
- A. They are: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.
12. Q. By whom were these four books of Biography written?
- A. They are written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John respectively.

Matthew and John were of the original group of Twelve Apostles. Mark was a traveling companion of Barnabas, of Paul, and later of Peter (1 Pet. 5:13). Luke, a physician and man of science, was an intimate companion of the Apostle Paul.

13. Q. What are these four books of Biography commonly called?
- A. They are commonly called The Gospels.

Not, literally, *four* Gospels, but rather four accounts of the beginning of the *one* Gospel,—the Gospel, or good news, respecting Jesus Christ and salvation through His name.

14. Q. What is the essential nature of these four books of Biography?

A. They are four biographies of the Person known historically as Jesus of Nazareth.

15. Q. What is the design of these four books of Biography.

A. They are designed to give us the evidence to convince us that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

By *design*, is meant the *purpose for which they were written*. This purpose is expressly stated by John as follows: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his thew, Mark, Luke, and John, are not only biographies, name" (John 20:30-31). Hence the four books by Matthew *testimonies* as well.

16. Q. How many books of History do we find in the New Testament Canon?

A. We find only one book of History in the New Testament Canon.

17. Q. What is the name of this one book of History?

A. It is named: Acts of Apostles.

That is, not *all* the Acts of *all* the Apostles, but some of the more important acts of *some* of the Apostles, which have been thus recorded for the guidance of the Church and the Christian ministry. Hence, literally Acts of Apostles.

18. Q. By whom was the book of Acts of Apostles written?

A. The book of Acts of Apostles was written by Luke.

19. Q. What is the essential nature of the book of Acts of Apostles?
A. It is essentially a record of the labors and accomplishments of the Apostles and their evangelistic co-workers.
20. Q. What is the design of the book of Acts of Apostles?
A. It is designed primarily to tell sinners what to do to receive remission of sins.

(1) That is, what to do to be saved (Acts 2:37, 16:30), pardoned, justified, adopted, etc. (cf. Luke 24:25-49; Acts 2:38, 10:43); what to do to become Christians, citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, members of the Church of Christ, etc. (2) In the book of Acts, we have the authentic record of what the Apostles preached, what they told sinners to do to be saved, how those things were done, and what the results were in each case. (3) In Acts, we have also concise accounts of several important cases of conversion under apostolic preaching, which have been set down as a pattern of evangelistic procedure for the Church and her ministry to follow throughout the Christian Dispensation. (4) Finally, we have in Acts of Apostles an historical account of the beginning and spread of Christianity throughout the then known world.

21. Q. How many books of Discipline are there in the New Testament Canon?
A. There are twenty-one books of Discipline in the New Testament Canon.
22. Q. Name these twenty-one books of Discipline.
A. They are: Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude.
23. Q. Who wrote these twenty-one books of Discipline?
A. They were all, with possibly one exception, written by Apostles.

The first thirteen in the order named, were written by Paul. One was written by James (as to which James this was, there is some difference of opinion). Two were written by Peter, three by John, and one by Jude. The authorship of Hebrews is undetermined.

24. Q. What is the essential nature of these books of Discipline?
- A. They are letters which were written by the Apostles and addressed to the churches and Christians of their day and age.
25. Q. What are these twenty-one books of Discipline commonly called?
- A. They are commonly called The Epistles.
26. Q. What is the general design of these twenty-one books of Discipline?
- A. They are designed to serve as books of instruction for all Christians in the essential principles of Christian worship and conduct.

It should be emphasized at this point that the *Epistles* were written to *Christians*, not to unconverted people. They especially contain the *apostles' teaching*. They are intended to serve as a *rule of faith and practice* (hence the term *discipline*, which means *guidebook*, book of principles and rules, etc.) for Christians in all ages of the present Dispensation. Cf. 2 Tim. 3:16—"profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness," etc. Acts 2:42: here we read that the church at Jerusalem "continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching."

27. Q. How many books of Prophecy do we find in the New Testament Canon?
- A. We find only one book of Prophecy in the New Testament Canon.
28. Q. What is the name of this one book of Prophecy?
- A. It is named The Revelation, or The Apocalypse.

29. Q. Who wrote this book of Prophecy?
A. It was written by the Apostle John.
30. Q. What is the essential nature of this book of Prophecy?
A. It is the inspired record of a series of panoramic visions which were communicated to the Apostle John on the isle of Patmos.
31. Q. What is the design of the book of Revelation?
A. It is obviously designed to portray, by means of prophetic symbolism, the trials and triumphs of the Church, and especially the final joys and blessings of the redeemed in the eternal state.
32. Q. What, then, is the design of the New Testament Canon in its entirety?
A. It is obviously designed to give us all the essential facts with regard to our eternal salvation.

It first presents to us Jesus, together with the evidence to induce us to forsake the world and to accept Him as our personal Savior. It then informs us what we must do to be saved, to receive and enjoy the salvation that God offers in Jesus' precious name. It then gives us the necessary instruction as to how to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18), and in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). Finally, it holds up before us, in glowing imagery, the joys and blessings and glories of our eternal home, thus nurturing in our hearts the living hope which serves as an anchor of the soul (1 Pet. 1:3, Heb. 6:18-19). It will thus be seen that the New Testament Canon, in its various parts, *progressively* meets every need of the spiritual man.

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON FIFTY-THREE

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2. What are the two component parts of Christianity?

3. Whom do we mean by The Person?
4. What do we mean by The System?
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14. What is the essential nature of these four books of Biography?
15. What is the design of these four books of Biography?
16. How many books of History do we find in the New Testament Canon?
17. What is the name of this one book of History?
18. By whom was the book of Acts of Apostles written?
19. What is the essential nature of the book of Acts of Apostles?
20. What is the design of the book of Acts of Apostles?
21. How many books of Discipline are there in the New Testament Canon?
22. Name these twenty-one books of Discipline?
23. Who wrote these twenty-one books of Discipline?
24. What is the essential nature of these books of Discipline?

25. What are these twenty-one books of Discipline commonly called?
26. What is the general design of these twenty-one books of Discipline?
27. How many books of Prophecy do we find in the New Testament Canon?
28. What is the name of this one book of Prophecy?
29. Who wrote this book of Prophecy?
30. What is the essential nature of this book of Prophecy?
31. What is the design of the book of Revelation?
32. What, then, is the design of the New Testament Canon in its entirety?

Lesson Fifty-four

THE GENUINENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCUMENTS

Scripture Reading: John 20:30-31; Luke 1:1-4; 1 Thess. 2:13-16.

Scripture to Memorize: "Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name" (John 20:30-31).

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33. Q. What did Jesus Himself say with respect to His teaching?
 - A. He said: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).
 34. Q. In what set of books is the teaching of Jesus recorded?
 - A. The teaching of Jesus is recorded in the books of the New Testament Canon.

By the teaching of Jesus, we mean not only what He Himself taught while in the flesh, but what He taught through His Apostles as well. We must never overlook the fact that the teaching of the Apostles is just as truly