

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

the teaching of Jesus, as if He had Himself written the words which they wrote. John 16:13, 14—"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth . . . for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you." Cf. Acts 1:1-8, John 17:18, John 20:21-23, Gal. 1:12, etc.

35. Q. What, then, necessarily becomes the first matter for us to investigate at his point?

A. The first matter for us to investigate is, necessarily, the **Genuineness of the Christian Documents.**

By the Christian Documents, as it has already been explained, is meant the books of the New Testament, which purport to have come down to us from apostolic times. Have we sufficient grounds for accepting them as apostolic?

36. Q. What do we mean by the **Genuineness of the Christian Documents?**

A. By the **Genuineness of the Christian Documents**, we mean the certainty that they were written at the age to which they are assigned, and by the men or class of men to whom they are ascribed, and that they have thus come down to us unimpaired in their essential contents.

37. Q. In what age of the world's history do the Christian Documents represent themselves as having been written?

A. The Christian Documents represent themselves as having been written in the last half of the first century of the Christian era, *i.e.*, about A.D. 50-100.

38. Q. By what class of men do the Christian Documents represent themselves as having been written?

A. The Christian Documents represent themselves as having been written by the Apostles or by men intimately associated with the Apostles.

The apostolic writers were Matthew, John, James, Jude, Peter and Paul. Mark was a companion of Barnabas and Paul, and later of the Apostle Peter (1 Pet. 5:13, Acts 12:12). The *Epistle to the Hebrews*, in case it was not

written—as tradition has it—by the Apostle Paul, must have been indited by a member of the apostolic company.

39. Q. On what form of writing material were the Christian Documents originally inscribed?

A. They were inscribed on parchment, vellum, or paper.

Parchment was writing material made from the skins of sheep and goats. *Vellum*, which was more costly and more durable, was made from the skins of young calves or antelopes. The *paper* (from the Egyptian *papyrus*) used in apostolic times was made from the inner bark of reeds, and was very brittle and perishable. Parchment was evidently used by Paul (2 Tim. 4:13); while it seems that John, at least for his shorter epistles, used paper (2 John 12).

40. Q. In what language and style were the Christian Documents written?

A. They were written in the Greek language, and entirely in capital letters.

These were known as uncial (inch-high) letters, an exaggeration of their size, of course. In the ninth and tenth centuries, a new style of handwriting was adopted called the cursive (running hand).

41. Q. On what ground are we justified in accepting the Christian Documents as genuine?

A. We are justified in accepting the Christian Documents as genuine, on the ground of corroborative historical evidence.

42. Q. Of what does this corroborative historical evidence consist?

A. It consists of the following: (1) ancient uncial manuscripts; (2) ancient versions; (3) ancient catalogs; and (4) quotations in the ancient writings.

43. Q. What is meant by the Ancient Manuscripts?

A. By the Ancient Manuscripts, is meant the four great uncial Manuscripts of the Bible, now reposing in museums or libraries in London, Cambridge, Paris and Rome.

It should be kept in mind that by a *manuscript* is meant a *hand-written* (not printed) document. These four great Ancient Manuscripts are hand-written copies of the Sacred Writings in canonical form, in uncial style, and in the Greek language. Their antiquity is so great and their value so pre-eminent that every student of the Bible should know about them.

44. Q. What are the five great Ancient Manuscripts?

A. They are: (1) the Sinaitic Manuscript; (2) the Alexandrian Manuscript; (3) the Vatican Manuscript; (4) the Ephraemic Manuscript; and (5) the Codex Bezae.

1. The *Codex Sinaiticus*, or *Sinaitic Manuscript*, is the only one of the four which contains our present New Testament Canon in its entirety. It also contains a large portion of the Greek Version of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), and has appended to it two post-apostolic works, *The Epistle of Barnabas* and *The Shepherd of Hermas*. It is written on vellum. It was found by Dr. Tischendorf, a German scholar, in the Convent of St. Catherine, at the foot of Mount Sinai, in the year 1859; and was made the property of the Czar of Russia, who financed Tischendorf's researches, and for a long time reposed in the Imperial Library in St. Petersburg. In 1934 it was sold by the Soviet authorities to the British Government, and is now kept in the British Museum in London. Biblical critics are unanimous in ascribing it to the first half of the fourth century (between 300 and 350). It is the oldest and most valuable of all known manuscripts.

2. The *Codex Alexandrinus*, or *Alexandrian Manuscript*, is in four volumes. The first three contain the *Septuagint* Version of the Old Testament Scriptures almost complete. (The *Septuagint* is the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, made by seventy Greek scholars, in Alexandria, about 285 B.C.). The fourth volume contains

the New Testament Canon, with certain portions missing (part of *Matthew*, two leaves of *John's Gospel*, and three leaves from 1 *Corinthians*); and appended to the New Testament are the *First Epistle of Clement*, and a portion of his second Epistle. It was sent as a present to Charles I of England, in 1628, by the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople, who had previously brought it from Alexandria. It is also kept in the British Museum, where the open volume of the New Testament can be seen under a glass by every visitor. It is generally conceded that this Manuscript dates from about the beginning of the fifth century (about 400).

3. The *Codex Vaticanus*, or *Vatican Manuscript*, originally designed for a complete Greek Bible, now lacks the first forty-six chapters of *Genesis*, and thirty-two of the *Psalms*; and the New Testament portion terminates at *Hebrews* 9:14. The remainder of the New Testament has been appended by a later writer. It was placed in the Vatican Library in Rome shortly after the establishment of that institution in 1448, and is still well preserved. Nothing is known of its history prior to that date. The open volume is kept on exhibition under a glass in a magnificent hall filled with the rich treasures of the Vatican. In point of antiquity, this work is the rival of the *Sinaitic Manuscript*, obviously dating from the fourth century, or from between A.D. 350 and 400.

4. The *Codex Ephraemi*, or *Ephraemic Manuscript*, a "palimpsest" (another work having been written over the first on the same vellum), contains a small portion of the Old Testament in Greek, and fragments of every book of the New Testament, except 2 *Thessalonians* and 2 *John*. It was brought from some unknown library in the East, to Florence, Italy, in 1535; and was later transferred to Paris, France, where it is now kept in the National Library. It dates from about the same period as the *Alexandrian Manuscript* (A.D. 400).

5. The *Codex Bezae*, of the sixth century, once belonged to the eminent reformer, Beza. It is now in the University of Cambridge, England. It contains only the *Gospels* and *Acts* in Greek and Latin and a few verses of the *Third Epistle* of John in Latin.

6. The whole number of Uncial Manuscripts known to the critical world is estimated at something over 120; and of Cursive Manuscripts, at from 2,400 to 2,500. In addition to these, *Lectionaries*, or copies of the *Gospels*, or of the *Acts* and *Epistles*, arranged for reading in the churches, are very numerous, and often contain fragments of the very earliest texts.

7. *Facsimiles of the pages of these Manuscripts have been made and circulated among scholars*, and have been used in preparing the various versions now extant. It will thus be seen that the world is in actual possession of authentic Manuscripts of the New Testament Canon, which are from fourteen hundred to sixteen hundred years old; or which, in other words, were written from some two hundred to three hundred years after the death of the Apostle John, which took place about A.D. 100. Their genuineness and accuracy can scarcely be called in question.

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON FIFTY-FOUR

33. What did Jesus Himself say with respect to His teaching?
34. In what set of books is the teaching of Jesus recorded?
35. What, then, necessarily becomes the first matter for us to investigate at this point?
36. What do we mean by the Genuineness of the Christian Documents?

37. In what age of the world's history do the Christian Documents represent themselves as having been written?
38. By what class of men do the Christian Documents represent themselves as having been written?
39. On what form of writing material were the Christian Documents originally inscribed?
40. In what language and style were the Christian Documents originally written?
41. On what ground are we justified in accepting the Christian Documents as genuine?
42. Of what does this corroborative historical evidence consist?
43. What is meant by the Ancient Manuscripts?
44. What are the five great Ancient Manuscripts?

Lesson Fifty-five

**THE GENUINENESS OF THE CHRISTIAN
DOCUMENTS (Concluded)**

Scripture Reading: John 20:30-31, 21:24-25; Luke 1:1-4; 1 Thess. 2:13-16.

Scriptures 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). "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

45. Q. What is meant by the Ancient Versions?
 - A. By the Ancient Versions is meant Translations of the Sacred Writings, from the original Greek into other ancient languages; four of which Versions are older than the four Ancient Manuscripts.