

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

WE ARE PLEASED to present to our readers the Gospel of Barnabas in a new edition, with an introduction by Raimundus Lullus who on the basis of exegetical and historical context analysis has plausibly established the Gospel as being a "Legacy of the Nazarenes" (cf. p. 11 ff.).

He cites important witnesses to show that far from being a forgery or falsification of conventional Christian scriptures, or even a complete fabrication, this text obviously is the more authentic version, and conversely, it is the canonical scriptures that stand in need of justification.

Presented here for the first time in an abridged version*, this appraisal of the early Christian period and its scriptures, its tendencies and compelling powers, gives us unrivalled insight into the high rank and authenticity of the text and paves the way for an appreciation, which thus far has been nearly impossible.

Anyone seeking Jesus' original teachings and a truthful portrayal of his life and the lives of his companions will encounter obstructions at every step, seemingly conspiring to mislead his search. Facing a thicket of manipulated or entirely fictional writings, he will deeply regret the destruction of the earliest, most basic and much attested documents, and inevitably the suspicious detective's question will arise in his mind: "*cui bono?*" Who is the beneficiary of such destruction of documentary evidence, text manipulation and adulteration of Gospels or Epistles? If Paul's arbitrary ideas in the realm of dogma are responsible for this counterfeiting, then the unjustified highlight-

* Later this year Spohr Publishers intend to launch an elaborated version as part of a monograph on the subject of Jewish-Christianity.

ing of Paul's importance to the disadvantage of that of the other Apostles, in particular of his mentor Barnabas and of Peter, can explicitly be blamed for a failure in the appreciation of the true events and circumstances.

By all indications, it is very likely that our Gospel of Barnabas is a late offshoot of the famous testimony of Jesus' life, which was once known and esteemed as the "Gospel of the Nazarenes". Powerful forces removed it from circulation, along with other writings that were based upon it or that testified to it, and to this day are waiting to be rediscovered. However, as will be made abundantly clear, such a rediscovery cannot simply be gleaned from Christian scriptures of Pauline orientation, but needs to be defiantly reclaimed* through investigative efforts of criminalistic precision.

To this day the conventional Biblical version of the parable of the adulteress has left us puzzling over a mystery. When we read: "Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground" – what does it mean that Jesus wrote something on the ground? This is elucidated in Chapter 201 of the Gospel of Barnabas; here we find out that Jesus drew a mirror upon the ground with his finger in which "everyone knew his own misconduct."

Only now the full meaning of Jesus' writing on the ground and of his famous saying: "He who is without sin cast the first stone", and thereby the whole import of the parable becomes apparent. This is a splendid example of how in accuracy and plausibility the Gospel of Barnabas surpasses not only the canonical texts of the present, but even the oldest source texts. This speaks for the book's authenticity, for its descent from the

* Cf. the devastating critique by the famous religious scholar ADOLF VON HARNACK, founder of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft in his *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (4th ed. 1910). "The church now established for itself a thoroughly falsified tradition, by the exclusion of its true Fathers and by labelling them heretics under the patronage of Justinian. Its theology supposedly had always been the same. And whoever in earlier times taught otherwise was no Father, no shepherd, but an innovator, a robber and a murderer."

“Gospel of the Hebrews” and for the fact that we have in it a true testimony of Jesus’ life, in other words, a sacred text.

Given the great number of forgeries, and in particular the destruction of documents closely related to the life of Jesus’, — quite apart from the vastly deplorable murder of so many dissenters — and the ease with which these forgeries can be accomplished, (since at any time a true judgment can be turned into a false one by the insertion of the word “not”, and vice versa,) an aspirant to the truth might well-nigh despair, unless he remembers this one all-important point: a true statement essentially differs from a false one in that it refers to something real, in that there exists a corresponding reality. This is why in some languages the same word is used to denote both “true” and “real” (cf. in Arabic *ḥaqq*), or in German the word “*wahr*” can be used in the sense of real, as in “*ein wahrer Freund*” (meaning a “true or real friend”).

The fact that there is and was a reality corresponding to the “True Gospel of Jesus”, which the forgeries so manifestly lack, gives us hope that in the final end the Truth will prevail in that Reality to which the Gospel of Jesus testifies, albeit with a delay of two millennia.

To conclude on a personal note: the first person to call my attention to the special nature of this work was a Muslim, Shaykh Nazim Efendi, *qaddasa llāhu sirrahū*. It was he who encouraged us to publish a German edition of the Gospel of Barnabas. And noticing a copy of our first edition lying on the floor, he sternly demanded that it be picked up at once and lifted up to a higher place, since it was a “holy book”. When once I showed him a library copy of the Ragg edition of 1907 (London) of the Gospel of Barnabas borrowed from the Theological Seminary of the University of Freiburg, he handled the old book with a reverence that still touches me today. In his attempt to open the book, he discovered that after having been in the theologians’ possession for nearly a century its pages had never yet been cut open. He expressed his disappointment, saying, “They did not cut. They fear the truth!”

I can understand that Christians may be troubled when reading in the Gospel of Barnabas that it was Judas Iscariot who was crucified instead of Jesus, since they have always been taught that Jesus redeemed the world through his sacrifice on the cross. But if this doctrine is perceived as a Pauline invention, the Gospel of Barnabas provides ample reason for rejoicing, for that the Lord of the Worlds has preserved His beloved servant Jesus, on whom be peace, from death by crucifixion. No less a man than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe protested against the crucifixion in these words: „*Mir willst du zum Gotte machen solch ein Jammerbild am Holze!*“ (And would ye make my God to be such an image of misery upon a cross!”) The testimony of the Apostle Barnabas most certainly would have delighted him greatly.

We hope for wide distribution of the current edition of this book among all those who appreciate its wisdom, admire its stunning beauty and fear not its truth.

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