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sometime is lacking in the statement in Matt. ix. 'For I came to call the righteous, but sinners', and added the words 'unto repentance' (from Luke v. 32).<sup>19</sup>

### **1. Clearing up Historical and Geographical Difficulties**

Since the quotation which Mathew (xxvii.9) attributes to the prophet Jeremiah actually comes from Zechariah (xi. 12f), it is not surprising that some scribes sought to mend the error, either by substituting the correct name or by omitting the name altogether.<sup>20</sup>

### **2. Conflation of Reading**

What would a conscientious scribe do when he found that the same passage was given differently in two or more manuscripts which he had before him? Rather than make a choice between them and copy only one of the two variant readings (with the attendant possibility of omitting the genuine reading), most scribes incorporated both readings in the new copy that they were transcribing.<sup>21</sup>

### **3. Alterations Made because of Doctrinal Consideration**

The Number of deliberate alterations made in the interest of doctrine is difficult to assess.<sup>22</sup>

These are few evidences in order to show the degree of interpolation, corruption, and the discrepancies and inconsistencies of the Biblical text. The few instances presented above can make us believe that the authenticity of the Bible is doubtful. It is for these reasons that most of Christian, as well as Jewish scholars seem to believe that present Bible is the outcome of "the transmission of the Meanings of the words of Lord" rather than "the safe transmission of the words of the Lord".

It is up to the reader to decide whether he could base his belief system upon those words of Lord whose safe committing to writing and transmission through the ages is not beyond doubts.

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<sup>19</sup> Metzger., 198.

<sup>20</sup> Metzger., 199.

<sup>21</sup> Metzger., 200.

<sup>22</sup> Metzger., 201.

## 2. Errors Arising from Faulty Hearing

When scribes made copies from dictation, or even when a solitary scribe in his cell pronounced to himself the word that he was transcribing, confusion would sometime arise over words having the same pronunciation as others, but differing in spelling.<sup>15</sup>

## 3. Errors of the Mind

The category of the errors of the mind includes those variations which seem to have arisen while the copyist was holding a clause or sequence of letters in his (somewhat treacherous) memory between the glance at the manuscript to be copied and the writing down of what he saw there. In this way one must account for the origin of a multitude of changes involving the substitution of synonyms, variation in the order of words, and the transposition of letters.<sup>16</sup>

Words and notes standing in the margin of the older copy were occasionally incorporated into the text of the new manuscript. Since the margin was used for glosses (that is synonyms of hard words in the text) as well as corrections, it must have often been most perplexing to a scribe to decide what to do with a marginal note. It was easiest to solve his doubt by putting the note into the text that was copying.<sup>17</sup>

## B. Intentional Changes

Odd though it may seem, scribes who though were more dangerous than those who wish merely to be faithful in copying what lay before them. Many of the alterations which may be classified as intentional were no doubt introduced in good faith by copyist who believed that they were correcting an error or infelicity of language which had previously crept into the sacred text and needed to be rectified. A later scribe may even re-introduce an erroneous reading that had been previously corrected.<sup>18</sup>

Addition of Natural Complements and Similar Adjuncts.

The work of copyist in the amplifying and rounding off of phrases in apparent in many passages. Not a few scribes supposed that

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<sup>15</sup> Metzger, 190.

<sup>16</sup> Metzger., 192f.

<sup>17</sup> Metzger., 194.

<sup>18</sup> Metzger., 195.

Such a book, with one set of writing superimposed upon another, is called a palimpsest. Again, manuscripts were often corrected by later copyist who scraped out with a knife what seemed to them incorrect, and modern scholars know that in many cases it was the corrector, not the manuscript, that was at fault. Sometime a note, would be made in the margin which a subsequent copyist would take to be part of the text. The hazard of inaccuracy in copying out the Bible by hand in the circumstances that prevailed in those days were so great that it is indeed astonishing that a text has been preserved which, despite technical problems it presents to the learned, may be taken as generally not staying very far from the sense of the original.<sup>10</sup>

## **A. Unintentional Changes**

### **1. Errors Arising from Faulty Eyesight**

The scribe who was afflicted with astigmatism found it difficult to distinguish between Greek letters which resemble one another, particularly when previous copyist had not written with care.<sup>11</sup>

When two lines in the exemplar from which ascribe was making a copy happened to end with the same word or words, or even sometimes with the same syllable, his eye might wander from the first to the second, accidentally omitting the whole passage lying between them. Thus is to be explained the curious reading at John xvii. 15 in Codex Vaticanus. (...). Many other examples of omission, called haplography (the inadvertent writing once what should have been written twice)<sup>12</sup> occur in a wide variety of manuscripts.<sup>13</sup>

Some time eye of the scribe picked up the same word or group of words a second time and as a result copied twice what should have appeared only once (this kind of error is called dittography).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Mac Greger, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 187. From herein after (Metzger)

<sup>12</sup> *Chambers Dictionary*, 762.

<sup>13</sup> Metzger, 189.

<sup>14</sup> Metzger, 190.

- It was not even written in the language Jesus spoke.
- It was written down around 70 years after Jesus.
- It was conveyed to us through people in limited numbers—we don't even know the names and lives of the transmitters what to talk of judging their reliability.

This discussion does not preclude that other books of the Bible are any more strongly supported by external evidence. In fact, in many cases the evidence is even more dubious.

## ***II. The observations of the Biblical Scholars Regarding the Authenticity of the Bible***

The Christian scholars themselves observed that the text of the Bible had become corrupted through so many ways. A brief account of which can be appreciated from the following discussion:

The case of the Old Testament of the Bible is almost the same as discussed about the Gospel of the John in the previous section. Only a few lines are being reproduced here from "The Bible in the Making".

(...). For all the care that scribes often devoted to their task, a great many errors inevitably crept in. Deviations occur even among the most reliable of the ancient Greek manuscripts.<sup>9</sup>

Before the invention of printing, the difficulty of reproducing the bible did not consist solely in the labour of copying by hand. Parchments were scarce, so the contractions were very freely used. Sometime a valuable manuscript such as the Codex Ephraim, a fifth-century Bible now in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, was treated so that, the writings have been erased by scraping and pumicing, the pages might be used over again for making another book. The lower writing was not usually quite obliterated, however, though it was extremely difficult to decipher it until chemical means were found to revive what had been rubbed out.

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<sup>9</sup> Gedds Mac Greger, *Bible in the Making* (London: John Murray, 1961), 9. From herein after (Mac Greger)

in support of the apostolic origin of the Gospel according to John.<sup>5</sup>

The existing Gospel cannot be attributed to Apostle John who was an uneducated and common man<sup>6</sup>. The internal evidence that this Gospel differs substantially from other means that the authors of this Gospel were unconnected with the authors and traditions of the Synoptic Gospels. Meckenize remarks:

Many modern scholars believe that John certainly knew Mark, probably knew Luke probably did not know Matthew.<sup>7</sup> He adds that the differences between John and the Synoptic are great enough to permit the question whether John is to be classified in the same literary form or genre of gospel.<sup>8</sup> From the above discussion it can be said with full confidence that:

- The contents of Gospel of John were not revealed to a Prophet by God.
- It does not contain revealed material.
- It was authored by a group of people.
- It was not written down during the life time of Jesus Christ.
- It does not contain the words of Jesus Christ. Except the red lettered verses. It does not convey the words of Jesus Christ verbatim because its statement differs from the Synoptic Gospels.

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<sup>5</sup> Luke, K., 2:42.

<sup>6</sup> Acts 4:13

<sup>7</sup> McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1984.), 448. From herein after (McKenzie)

<sup>8</sup> McKenzie, 448.

## B. External Evidence

For the purpose of demonstrating the authenticity of scriptures through external evidence, we take the Gospel of John as an example.

The Gospel of John is the fourth gospel and is so different from the other three Synoptic Gospels that it is categorized distinctly from the other three. The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) stand together and are in several respects different from the fourth Gospel (the Gospel according to John). They are termed Synoptic for if their contents are arranged in several columns, we will get the same synopsis or conspectus.

This similarity among the Synoptic Gospels is to moot question but the most widely held theory is that Matthew and Luke depend on Mark and they have also utilized another source for the sayings of Jesus Christ known as 'Q' (German Quelle-source). This explanation is known as the 'Two Source Hypothesis', and needless to say, has its problems. This also raises a further question – whether the True and Original Gospel, that consisted of sayings of the Jesus Christ and could not survive to us, could be identified with this Q? In any case, the Gospel According to John is so different in structure and contents from the Synoptic Gospels that it is said; 'It is unique in every respect.'<sup>4</sup>

As regards the attribution of John's Gospel to an Apostle of Jesus Christ, we are in total darkness. It is commonly attributed to John son of Zebedee the Apostle of Christ, which makes it an eyewitness account of Christ's life and works but there were also dissident voices. K. Luke notes:

Irenaeus mentions groups who rejected the Gospel of John. The roman presbyter Gaius, appealing to the differences between synoptic and Johannine Gospel, concluded that the later was the work of Heresiarch Cenninthus. Another group that repudiated the Gospel was the Alogoi. The negative position, is should be remembered never won acceptance in the early church, and any number of testimonies can be cited

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<sup>4</sup> Luke, K., *Companion to the Bible* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1988), 2:9. From herein after (Luke, K.)

9. Saint Paul cited from Isaiah: 'No eye has seen, no ear has heard no mind has conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him' (2-Cor 2:9). Where in Isaiah the correct words are: 'Since ancient time no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you who acts on behalf of those who wait for him' (64:4). These two extracts are clearly divergent and it is difficult to decide whether Isaiah was corrupted or Paul carelessly copied from it.

10. There are occasions when we learn that NT authors were not aware of the OT, or the OT was then different from what we have now. For example, Paul in 1-Cor 10:8 says that let us not commit fornication as some of them committed and fell in one day 2300. Where in Numbers 25:9 the correct number is 24,000. Similarly, in Acts 7:14 we find that the family of Joseph when brought to Egypt consisted of 75 people. Whereas in Genesis 46:27, we find that they are only 70. The NT authors probably had a different version of OT with them.

11. How did Judas Iscariot die? Matthew 37:5 states that he hanged himself whereas in Acts 1: 18 we learn that he fell and his abdomen burst open.

12. In 1-John 5:7 the statement comes quite close to the pronounced creed of Christians on Trinity: 'For there are three that testify; the spirit the water and the blood, and the three in agreement, However even the New International Version notes in a footnote: ' These words are not found in any Greek manuscripts before the sixteenth century. 'That is why they are added later to provide scriptural support to the doctrine of Holy Trinity.

13. Matthew records: 'While he (Jesus Christ) was saying this, a ruler came knelt before him and said; "My daughter has just died."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand mark relates: 'Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet and pleaded earnestly with him: My little daughter is dying'.<sup>3</sup>

The Bible is replete with such discrepancies. Those quoted above only give an idea of the nature of irreconcilable inconsistencies in the biblical text.

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew 9:18.

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 5:23.



read: 'And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a hundred thousand and a hundred thousands men that drew sword; and Judah was four hundred and threescore and ten thousand and that drew sword, ' The difference is apparent and only one of the above statements can be correct.

3. In 2-Kings 8:26 we find that Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, while in 2-Chronicles 22:2 we find that 'Ahaziah was forty two years old when he began to reign'. These two statements are irreconcilable.
4. 2-kings 24:8 reads that Jehoiacilable was eighteen years old when he began to reign while 2-Chronicles 36:9 reads that he was eight years old when he began to reign. The inconsistency can only be explained by admitting that one of the texts must have been corrupted. Genesis 6:19-20 says that God commanded Noah to carry a pair of each animal in the Ark whereas Genesis 7:2-3 shows that he was commanded to carry seven pairs of each. Again, a contradiction between two consecutive chapters of Genesis shows that even a single book was compiled by more than one hand, and also permitted latter revisions and additions.
5. King Abijah's mother was Michaniah, daughter of Uriel of Grebeah (2-Chr 13:2). In 11:20 of the same book are told that she was daughter of Absalom. The in 2-Samuel 14:27 we learn that Absalom had only one daughter named Tamar.
6. The Genealogy of Jesus Christ given in Luke 3 and Mathew differs in a number of respects. Mathew reports: 'When Jesus came to live in a town called Nazareth, in fulfillment of what said by prophets. He shall be called a Nazarene' (2:23). It is widely accepted that the book in which this prophecy was proclaimed was lost, because no such prophecy has survived to us in the OT.
7. Matthew records: Jesus sent two disciples saying to them: 'Go to the village ahead of you and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Unite them and bring them to me; (21:2). On the other hand Mark (11:2), John (12:14) and Luke (19:29) all mention only the colt.
8. The Gospel of John, it is believed, was written by John the son of Zebedee. Whereas in John we find the words: 'This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.' (John 21:24) This shows that others edited John.

redactors of the books of the Bible or when they had been written or compiled.

### *1. Judging the Authenticity of Biblical Literature*

The authenticity of the Bible should be judged on scientific grounds, which are helpful in defining the authenticity of any other ancient document. A document is first examined internally and then externally. Internal evidence is the study of the text itself while the external evidence is the study of the historical process through which the text was transmitted to us.

Internal evidence deals with the content while the external evidence deals with the process of its transmission. If the text suffers from errors and inconsistencies, we do not need to go for the external evidence. And such text is found without errors, we should judge it on the external grounds—modes of transmission.

### **A. Internal Evidence**

Following are a few examples of inconsistencies and errors in the Bible:

1. It is believed that Moses wrote the Law or the first five books (Torah). But it contains the details of Moses' death and burial. In the last book of the Pentateuch, we find the following passage:

And Moses the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is. Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he dies.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, if the Pentateuch had been authored by Moses, these verses could not find way into the text. It appears that they were added later. Moreover, the phrase 'to this day no one knows where his grave is' shows that these additions were made quite some time after the death of Moses.

2. It says in 2-Samuel: 24:9: 'And Joab gave up the number of the people unto the king; and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword and the men of Judah were five hundred thousands men.' While in 1-Chronicles 21:5 we

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 34:5-7.

3. Different kinds of possibilities of mistakes during the process of copying.
4. Non-existence of certain mechanisms of transmission: writing or printing.
5. Reluctance and reservations of the Jewish Rabbis to make the Bible accessible to the common man to maintain their monopoly.
6. Absence of continued political stability and independence of the Jewish people.

The originality and authenticity of the Bible has been subject to criticism through the ages and by different groups of people. Textual criticism has also put the credibility of the Bible into question. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the middle of the 20th century CE was a turning point in the history of religious studies and, especially, the history and authenticity of the Bible. It afforded a fresh confidence to the scholars of the Bible. This discovery established that although there had been discrepancies in the Bible yet its text existed almost in the same form even two centuries before Christ. Whatever material of the Dead Sea Scrolls has been released and published, has, to some extent, contributed towards the authenticity of the Bible.

From the very beginning of the second millennium AD, critical and analytical study of the Bible had started. Leading factors were the interaction with the Muslim scholars through Muslim Universities in Spain, the Crusades, the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Age of discovery, and introduction of scientific method. As the access of the common educated people to the Bible increased, the more questions about its veracity and authenticity began to arise. Scholars and construing persons began to appreciate the contradictions within the text of the Scripture, inconsistencies, and non-compatibility of the Bible with the scientific knowledge. Moreover, very little is known about the authors or about the

been written down for about four or five centuries after the death of Moses. Even the Jewish and Christian scholars admit that the Torah cannot be traced to have been committed to writing before the 8th century BCE. It is almost universally acknowledged that the character/script of the language of the Jews (Hebrew) has not yet been traced to have developed before the era of David/Solomon (10th century BCE).

There might have a crude form of Hebrew alphabets during those centuries, but firstly it is merely a matter of conjecture, and secondly, if any of such alphabets ever existed, it was quite different from even the ancient Hebrew alphabet. Although on the basis of mere conjectures; oral traditions; literary, linguistic, scribal, grammatical, and orthographic research and analysis, some of the scholars have assigned a fairly earlier date of the Bible having been committed to writing. But on the basis of objective study it can only be asserted that the initial manuscripts of the Pentateuch had appeared by the 7th or 8th century BCE—but still not in a definitive form.

In the later centuries as well, the process of deletion, addition, interpolation and updating went on. The Samaritan Pentateuch, however, had not appeared until the 5th century BCE. The process of recension and revision of the Masoretic text also remained in progress. Its definitive canon could not be finalized until the Synod of Jamnia in Palestine in the last decade of the first century CE. It is, however, noteworthy that some modern biblical scholars do challenge the happening of any such council. They render this event as a mere fiction. As to the preparation of the famous Greek Translation of the Old Testament called Septuagint, nothing can be said of certain. It is claimed that the translation of the Torah had been completed by 250 BCE. However, the translation of whole of the Hebrew Bible was not completed by mid of second century CE. The safe transmission and handling down of the Bible through the ages could not have been possible due to the following factors:

1. High cost and scarcity of the writing material such as papyrus, vellum, parchments. Etc.
2. Continued process of the development of the art of writing, scribism, and scripts.

## **Authenticity of the Bible — An Appraisal of the Internal and External Evidences**

Ihsan Ur Rahman Ghauri \*

The authenticity of the Bible is a matter of extensive debate thought the history. And while judging the authenticity of any significant book, one have to judge its text internally and secondly how the book have been transmitted thought ages. As far as the text is concerned, many discrepancies and factual and historical mistakes have been pointed on even by the Jewish and Christian scholars. The issue of its recording and safe transmission has no different story. First the system of writing scribes and script of the Hebrew language in which torah was revealed to mosses had not been evolved with the time of David ( C. 1000 BCE) secondly the scarcity of writing tools led to certain impediments in to safe transmission. Thirdly different kind of mistakes during the process of copying. Fourthly reluctance and reservations of the Jewish Rabbis to make the Bible accessible to the common man. And lastly, absence of continued political stability and independence of Jewish people.

The authenticity of the Bible has never remained without doubts. It is a matter of fact that no reliable manuscript of Torah (Pentateuch)/ O.T. of Before Common Era (BCE) could ever have been discovered. Codex Sinaitcus, Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrines etc., which have been recovered so far, belong to the period of centuries after the advent of The Common Era (CE). It is also to be noted that no book of the Old Testament (OT) of the Bible can be claimed to have been written by the person to whom it has been ascribed. Torah is attributed to Moses and Moses lived in the 13th century BCE. Yet there is no evidence of Torah having

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