

# THE OLD PATHS;

OR,

The Primitive Doctrine of a Future Life,

EMBRACING COPIOUS EXTRACTS

FROM THE WRITINGS OF PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS,

WITH ARGUMENTS AND REMARKS,

BY  
*Horace Bushnell*  
H. L. HASTINGS.

"Thus saith the LORD, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

JER. vi: 16.

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## P R E F A C E .

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TRUTH though progressive in its developments, is unchangeable in its character. Its principles are not affected by the lapse of fleeting years. Though its primary exhibition may be shadowy and obscure; and though its subsequent manifestations may be more lucid and explicit, yet these are but varied developments of the same great principles. The grand outlines are uniform and identical. The varied manifestations of truth, though different, are neither contradictory or discordant.

Again, the light of truth may be for a season in the obscurity and darkness of mistaken opinions; but when it emerges from the battle-field in the beauty of its victorious adorning, it is the same unchanging truth. Coming forth like the pure waters of some long buried and forgotten fountain, relieved of the accumulated rubbish of ages, it sends forth to sparkle in the sunlight the same silvery stream that gushed and glittered there in days gone by.

And yet when truths thus forgotten do at length appear, there are multitudes standing ready to drive them back to darkness, or to load them with obloquy if they will not

quietly retire. They are *novelties*. They are *new things* which of course cannot for a moment be considered. They are rejected at once with scarcely a pretence of obedience to that word which enjoins upon us to "*prove all things.*"

The stigma of 'novelty' is not, however, as powerful as once was. Thinking men will recollect that when our Saviour and his Apostles taught truths as old as the times of Moses, they were accused of promulgating novelties.— So when Luther disinterred the long-hidden and forgotten doctrines of Christ and his Apostles, he was regarded as an innovator, and his doctrines were *novelties*. And why? Because the *truth* had been forgotten; and the old prophetic and apostolic doctrines were new to *them*, from the fact that they had never seen them or believed them. The truths of the reformation were older than Luther and older than the pope. They were discovered, not created then. Others have followed in the track, and as successive searchers for truth have been enabled to extend their comprehensions of christian doctrine, a voice has seemed to say to them continually, and especially as they wearied at the toil, "dig deeper and thou shalt find more." Oh, that more were willing to venture forth from beneath the overshadowing "traditions of the elders," and learn the gospel of Christ from Christ himself, and be guided, enlightened, and redeemed by him who is "*the Way, the Truth, and the LIFE.*"

The truths taught by Luther are not the only ones that have been branded as heresies and rejected as novelties. Others have shared in the same maledictions, and for no better reasons. In fact it is impossible to disturb the moral inertia of sectarian bigotry by the promulgation of any unpopular truth, without raising the ire and receiving the contempt of a multitude whose ignorant conceit enables them to determine immediately, that as *they* are unacquainted with the hated doctrine it is new, and as *they* disbelieve it it cannot be true! Of course, investigation and candid examination might lead to juster conclusions, but will *they* investigate? Were not their fathers sound in the faith? Has not their own orthodoxy been guaranteed by competent judges? Why then should *they* busy themselves to trace the pedigree of a despised heresy, which were it found to be the doctrine of the apostles and their successors, could only prove a source of temporal disadvantage to *them* and their associates?

Especially is this true of the doctrine of Life and Immortality as revealed or brought to light in the Gospel of Christ, and the connected doctrines that present themselves to the mind when once this important truth is accepted and embraced, as delivered in the word of God. A doctrine so unwelcome to those heathen philosophers whose systems it ruined; so distasteful to those of their adherents whose wisdom it repudiated as foolishness; so unprofitable to the

Romish church, the purgatorial fires of which are extinguished by it; so unpopular among the Protestant multitudes who have ceased to groan as did the *apostles* for the redemption of their *body*, while they exult with the *heathen* over the emancipation of their imprisoned *souls*, such a doctrine can have no claims on any save those who acknowledge the imperative nature of *duty* and the paramount importance of *truth*.

To this class of persons we appeal from the decisions of the prejudiced, and from the false accusations of those who are wiser in their own conceit than seven men who can render a reason. We ask that the question may be examined in the pure light of the word of God. We ask that it may be investigated by persons possessing the heads of *men* and the hearts of *christians*. But we would extend the influence of the Gospel of Christ still farther, and endeavor by manifestation of the *truth* to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And as most of the objections of unbelievers in revelation are made to use the words of Locke "against Christianity misunderstood," it will perhaps lead them to a more favorable opinion of the doctrine of Christ, when they learn that the strength of their objections lies against the traditions of men, rather than the truths of God.

It is a principle well understood and fully admitted that any doctrine not taught in, or held by the church in the

times immediately succeeding the days of the Apostles, could not have been a prominent or important article of apostolic faith. The doctrines of the Gospel as promulgated by the Lord Jesus were delivered to the apostles to be disseminated throughout the world. As they passed from the stage of action, their companions, their fellow-laborers, and their successors, received at their lips the faith which they so well had kept, and they have transmitted some portions of it to succeeding generations. It is to such writers as these that we appeal in confirmation of the truths we advocate. We do not claim to derive our faith *from* them, we do not yield implicitly to their authority, we trace the stream of truth higher up, even to the fountain head. We claim that the prophets, the apostles, and the Lord Jesus Christ taught most unqualifiedly the doctrine of the *mortality of man*, and that his sole and only future and *eternal existence* was conferred through Jesus Christ alone. We deduce this doctrine from the word of God, we prove it by *that* in opposition to human traditions, the decrees of papal councils, and the creeds of those who adhere to what we regard as a vain philosophy. We ask no other evidence to prove our doctrine *true* but the word of God. But when the truth is assailed as a *novelty*, when the declarations of God's word are rejected because our forefathers, emerging from papal darkness, had not discovered them, *then* we claim the privilege of going back of the present generation,

back of the dark ages, and we are rejoiced to read in the records of the purer faith of the primitive church the same grand truths that *we* have learned from the word of God. We peruse with satisfaction the writings of these favored men, who enjoyed apostolic companionship and instruction, and we are glad to learn that the same faith which *we* derive from the apostolic *writings*, they derived from apostolic *teachings*. And surely if those men who journeyed with and listened to the Apostles of Jesus, gathered from their lips certain doctrines, we may be well assured that we have not erred in deducing from the apostolic writings the same important and consoling truths.

The object of the present treatise is to present in a convenient form, the results of certain researches in the department of primitive faith. And by sketching the characters of these writers as given by impartial and well known historians, and also by presenting copious extracts from their own writings, we hope to shed light on this interesting and important subject. Thus would we enquire for the old paths; thus would we seek for the good way, and walk therein, that we may find rest to our souls—that rest that results from an intelligent and well-grounded faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as revealed to us in the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

We will commence with the earliest uninspired Christian writings extant, and proceeding downward, we shall be able



to view the truth of God in its primitive purity,—then spoiled through vain philosophy, then lost in the apostacy of the dark ages, and obscured by heathen fables and papal traditions, then beaming forth occasionally in the Christian church, wherever untrammelled thought and free investigation were permitted and practised, even down to the present time. In doing this we hope to meet and refute the objection of *novelty*, and show that the doctrines of the earliest and most noted Christian writers in the primitive ages; which were held by such men as Luther, and Tyn-dale, and Milton, and others of the great and good of later times; are not so *modern* as to be rejected for their novelty, nor so *unreasonable* as to be despised for their absurdity, nor so *unscriptural* as to be rejected for their lack of inspired evidence—at least not till they have been investigated and scanned in the clear light of the word of inspiration, and calmly and candidly compared with the Law and the Testimony. And we expect also to show that doctrines which were not mentioned by the apostolical fathers, nor received by their immediate successors, which were esteemed as heresies in the earliest ages of the church, which were only decreed to be truth by a Romish council in the *fifteenth century*, have little in them to command the respect of the candid and impartial, even though they may have attained great currency among the religionists of the present day, whose faith is taught more by the catechism, the creed, and

the volumes on divinity written by men, than by the plain simple words of God. And we may also see how slight are the grounds upon which the exclusive arrogance of some modern Protestants is based, and how vain are their endeavors in these days of free enquiry to make revilings fill the place of reason, and heathen philosophy supersede the pure doctrines of Life and Immortality as brought to light in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

These are the objects of the present writing, and the work thus commenced and carried down through the period of the Apostolic Fathers is submitted to the candor of the reader. May the Spirit of him who is THE TRUTH rest upon reader and writer ; and may we all be led to seek for glory and honor and IMMORTALITY by patient continuance in well doing. Sure we are that it shall be well with the righteous, and it shall be ill with the wicked. Sure we are that God's favor is LIFE, and should the views herein deduced from the writings of some of the earliest teachers of Christianity, fail to receive the reader's approbation, he has of course the liberty of the Gospel to receive or reject them as conscience and judgment may decide.

That the Spirit of the Lord may guide both reader and writer in the paths of truth and duty, is the sincere prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

*Peace Dale, R. I., June, 1855.*

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE FUTURE LIFE REVEALED IN THE GOSPEL—DIVERSE  
OPINIONS—THE TEACHING OF PAUL — APPEAL TO APOS-  
TOLIC FATHERS FOR CONFIRMATORY TESTIMONY.

No doctrine is more explicitly revealed in the Gospel of Christ than the doctrine of a Future Life. And no doctrine is more variously taught in the theology of men, than this. That which the Scriptures declare to have been brought to light in the gospel, has been by its professed teachers so variously understood or *misunderstood*, and so differently inculcated by various classes, that the candid person who would learn the Christian doctrine of a future life, is driven to forsake the prejudices of early education, and the contradictory statements of the wise and great, and flee to the plain teaching of the inspired word.

To enumerate all the varieties of opinion existing upon this subject among those who profess Christianity, would be alike tedious and unprofitable. A few leading opinions may be presented, which form the foundation of all those combinations which the plastic ingenuity of mortal fancy has produced, or which the potent influence of human superstition has evoked from the abysmal regions of ignorance and obscurity.

There is, **FIRST**, The doctrine that all future life depends upon Jesus Christ and is bestowed by God through him. That natural death is an interruption or temporary cessation of all conscious existence. That in the resurrection at the last day, the whole human family will arise to judgment. That the righteous will then put on immortality, and receive the gift of God, Eternal Life, while the wicked, destitute of the life that is in Christ, will die the second death—be punished with everlasting destruction, and utterly perish in their own corruption.

There is a **SECOND** system that agrees with the above in denying the natural immortality of man, but which regards the future life obtained through Christ, as actually commenced in the soul, or communicated by faith in him; so that while death is to the *wicked* a suspension of consciousness, the souls of the righteous continue to exist separately and consciously, until the judgment, when, reunited with their resurrected bodies, they receive everlasting life, while the wicked, not having obtained this immortality, are destroyed and that to eternity.

There is a **THIRD** opinion that all human beings possess immortal souls by nature. That their bodies are but prisons and clogs. That at death the body returns forever to the dust, and the spirit forever emancipated from its corporeal thralldom pursues in the spirit-land a course of eternal progression, enjoying the incomprehensible privileges of an immaterial existence.

There is a **FOURTH** view of the subject which only varies from the last mentioned, in this: that it supposes the agency of Christ manifested in securing the future blessedness of the redeemed spirit in heaven, and regards him as finally accomplishing by such means as his own

wisdom may suggest, the eternal redemption and salvation of them all.

There is a FIFTH opinion that all souls are immortal, that at death they are separated from the body, and the righteous ascend to enjoy the felicities of God's presence, while the wicked are adjudged to the torments of hell. That at the last day, these souls are recalled from heaven and hell,—united with their bodies, which are raised and made immortal, and then the righteous return to eternal glory in heaven, and the wicked to eternal torment in hell.

There is a SIXTH hypothesis which only varies from the last mentioned view in denying the absolute eternity of these torments, and supposing instead that the torments of the wicked, though greatly protracted, will finally eventuate in the reformation, and consequent restoration of all the offenders to happiness and divine favor.

There is a SEVENTH view of the subject which inculcates the natural immortality of the soul, and the eternity of the rewards of the righteous, and the torments of the wicked in their resurrected state of corporeal immortality, but which rejects the doctrine of the existence of souls in heaven or hell between death and the resurrection, and locates them in an imperfect condition of happiness or misery amid the obscurity of *Hades* or the under-world.

There is an EIGHTH opinion that the souls of the pious who are purified ascend immediately to the presence of God, while others, who are so sinful as to be beyond the hope of pardon, are driven immediately to hell. That a middle and very numerous class of imperfect saints, and less heinous sinners are deposited in purgatory, where in the lapse of ages their moral characters become purged from every stain by the sanctifying influence of fire and

brimstone. That the process of purification is materially facilitated by the repetition of certain latin prayers, which those qualified are always ready to offer when paid for so doing. That after the judgment, the saints shall enjoy eternal blessedness in a bodily condition, and the wicked shall endure eternal torments.

There are numerous and various modifications of these several theories in consequence of various opinions upon other connected questions. To classify them all were unnecessary. The foregoing comprehend most that are held by those who lay claim to the title of Christians, and all of them, I presume, have the sanction of men of considerable eminence in the Christian church.

Now, these numerous opinions, so various and contradictory, cannot all be drawn from *one* plain common-sense, self-consistent Bible. Some of them must be spurious. Which is true? In a former treatise, the writer endeavored by an examination of all the epistles of the leading writer in the New Testament, to ascertain what was the Christian doctrine of future punishment. It was claimed that in the fourteen epistles of the apostle PAUL, who had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, we might look with confidence for a full statement of the doctrines under consideration. An examination of his fourteen epistles with reference to the question of *human immortality* disclosed the following facts :

“ *First*, The Apostle Paul is the only writer in the whole Bible who makes use of the word *immortal* or *immortality*.

“ *Second*, He never applies it to sinners.

“ *Third*, He never applies it to either righteous or wicked in this world.

"*Fourth*, He never applies it to *men's souls at all*, either before or after death.

"*Fifth*, He speaks of it as an attribute of the King Eternal.—1 Tim. i: 17.

"*Sixth*, He declares that He is the only possessor of it.—1 Tim. vi: 16.

"*Seventh*, He speaks of it as *revealed* or brought to light (not in heathen philosophy, but) in the Gospel of the Son of God.—2 Tim. i: 10.

"*Eighth*, He presents it as an object which men are to *seek for* by patient continuance in well doing.—Rom. ii: 7.

"*Ninth*, He defines the period when it shall be 'put on' by the Saints of God, and fixes it at *the resurrection*, when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear.—1 Cor. xv: 52, 54.

"*Tenth*, Therefore, he never taught the immortality of the *soul*, as it is now taught."\*

Further examination disclosed other facts in relation to the future state. These were summed up briefly as follows:

"*First*: Paul in his epistle speaks of, or alludes to, the destiny of the wicked at least *twenty-five times*. Certainly then he did not forget this subject. We could have asked no more of him than this. *Twenty-five distinct statements* with regard to the destiny of the impenitent, are certainly sufficient to give us a correct idea of the subject.

"*Second*: He does not in *one place* declare that any who remain impenitent through this life shall be *eternally saved*. True, he declared God to be the Saviour of all men, but it is evidently only from the consequences of Adam's sin, for as in Adam, all die—*literally*, so in Christ shall all be made alive, literally and bodily. For there shall be a

\* Pauline Theology, p. 84.

resurrection of the dead—both of the just and the unjust. This then is only a *salvation* from *natural death*, while he is specially the Saviour of them that believe; for *being made perfect, he became the author of ETERNAL SALVATION unto ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM.*”—Heb. v : 9.

“If the modern doctrine of Universal Salvation, had been true, Paul would have preached it. He did not preach it; therefore it is not true.

“*Third*: He does not *once* speak of the restoration of men to God, after their having endured the torments of hell for a longer or shorter period. Not *one word* does he say of the *final* holiness and happiness of *all mankind*; not *one word* about purgatorial flames, or a limited punishment.

“If Restorationism had been true, Paul would have taught it: He did not teach it; therefore it is not true.

“*Fourth*: He does not in *one place* speak of men as ‘dying and going to hell;’ or of their being consigned to a place of torment, previous to the day of judgment. ‘After death, the judgment.’ Not ‘after death, hell-fire for thousands of years; and then the judgment, and then torment again to all eternity.’ Can it be true that Paul believed as some men preach; that sinners were dying in this world, and dropping into hell at the rate of about thirty-six hundred every hour, and yet he never gave *one hint* of the fact, in *all* his writings?

“If the doctrine of going to a hell of fire at death had been true, Paul would have taught it. He did not teach it; therefore it is not true.

“*Fifth*: He does not *once* speak of there being a hell of fire, in existence at the present time. If there was in existence then, a vast portion of the universe, filled with fire



and brimstone, where men and devils were tormented, and suffered, and howled, and blasphemed, and calculated the slow rolling ages of eternity—where Cain was condemned to suffer six thousand years before others equally guilty commenced to suffer at all—where Satan was condemned to be tormented ‘before his time,’ instead of going about like a roaring lion—would not Paul have preached to us about it?

“If there had been in existence a place of unutterable torment, where sinners were, Paul would have warned us of it. He did not mention it; therefore *it does not exist at present.*

“*Sixth*: He does not mention or make use of the word *torment at all* in the whole of his epistles. The idea of devils mocking, and tormenting their victims in the pit of woe, does not appear once in all his writings.

“*Suffering and anguish* are *implied* in the *fire* which shall *devour* the ungodly, but *torment* as a distinct idea, as it is taught by modern religious teachers from Sabbath to Sabbath, *does not appear* in his epistles.

“If the idea that God would torment and torture wicked men in hell to all eternity had been true; Paul must have known it, and would have preached it. He did not preach it; therefore *it is not true.*

“*Seventh*: In the whole *twenty-five places* where he speaks of the punishment of the ungodly, he only uses the word *αιώνιον*: *aionion* (eternal or everlasting) *once*, 2 Thes. i: 9. This word occurs in the Apostle’s writings twenty-eight times; and how strange, if the doctrine of *ETERNAL torment* be true, that in speaking of the destiny of the wicked at least *twenty-five times*, he only uses the word *everlasting* once; and then, it is ‘*everlasting* DE-

STRUCTION.' How much do some men say of *eternity* and *ETERNAL torment*—and yet Paul omits such expressions altogether. We can easily understand why *they* use such expressions—*they* believe that doctrine. But why does Paul omit them? is it not because he did not believe it? He called the destruction *'eternal*, as he does the *Judgment* in Heb. 6: 2, not that either the one or the other would be eternally *going on*, and never consummated; for that would require *two eternities*: the first one for the judgment, and the second for the destruction; but because that *Judgment* is *final*, admitting of no appeal; and because that *destruction* is *final*, admitting of neither rescue or recovery, so they may both be denominated *eternal*.

“If the *eternity* of the punishment had been the main and important feature in the matter, as it must *ever be* while the *popular doctrine* of eternal torment is taught, certainly Paul would have spoken of *eternal torment*. He did not mention it; therefore *it is not true*.

“*Eighth*: Not one passage in his writings teaches or *hints* that wicked men shall *live* or *exist* for ever under *any circumstances whatever*. This idea that all men are to exist eternally, is not to be *assumed*, or taken for granted. The question is too important to be disposed of by a guess or opinion. It involves the destiny of the greater portion of our race. Can it be true that Paul believed that every wicked man carried within him *an immortal element*, which must go on expanding throughout the far-reaching ages of eternity, and linking man by a tie that can never be severed to endless *joy* or endless *agony*, and yet in all his epistles he gives us no hint of the fact? Does this look like the doings of one who *kept back nothing that was profitable for his hearers*? Does this sound like

the teaching of modern preachers, who assure their hearers that they have each of them an immortal soul, destined to exist so long as God exists?"

If every wicked man had been destined to eternal existence, Paul would have informed us of the fact. He does not once hint it; therefore *it cannot be TRUE*.

"*Ninth* : Paul could say of his preaching that he had not shunned to declare the *whole counsel of God*. His writings partake of the same fearless character which was impressed on his preaching, and, in fact, upon everything he did. He shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God. But *he did shun to declare the first word* concerning eternal torment; therefore, eternal torment is no part of the 'counsel of God.' "

"*Tenth* : Paul said, concerning his teaching, that he had 'kept back nothing that was profitable' for his brethren. But we find that he has entirely kept back the doctrine of the eternal torture of ungodly men. Now, if Paul believed this, he must have been strangely negligent, or else he must have believed it to be an unprofitable subject. If it is not true, of course it would not be profitable. The conclusion is, that it *is not true*, and in that case it should not be taught, or else, if it is true, it is *unprofitable*, and therefore, should be kept back.

"*Eleventh* : Every passage that relates to the destiny of the impenitent, imports their *utter dissolution* or *extermination*. An examination of the passages will put this assertion to the proof. Let others do it as I have done it, and they will find an argument for the final *destruction* of the *ungodly*, which honesty cannot evade. **EIGHT TIMES** he speaks of the wicked as destined to **PERISH**. **DEATH** is used to express their destiny **SEVEN TIMES**. **NINE TIMES**

they are spoken of as being DESTROYED, *once* as DEVoured *by fire*, and *once* as BURNED. Not one of these words has in the original or the translation, the meaning of eternal torment. Not one of them means any such thing in common conversation, and it is only by a 'theological' or *false* definition, alike repugnant to the laws of language and common sense, that such an idea can be conveyed by such language. Paul does not tell us that he used these words in a *peculiar* or *theological* sense. No Greek would have supposed so, had they heard him; and we are led to conclude, that as Paul would not use words calculated to mislead, therefore we are to take these words in their most obvious and current signification.

Paul did teach the utter DESTRUCTION OR PERISHING OR DEATH OR EXTERMINATION of ungodly men. He would not have taught it unless it were true; *therefore it is the truth.*

"*Twelfth*: No stronger expressions can be found in Greek or English, to denote the utter extirpation of the ungodly. If these words can be evaded or explained away, then, if the doctrine be *ever so true*, it would be impossible to teach it. *If these words do not convey the idea*, then *no words can be made to do it.*

"*Thirteenth*: If we had none but such as Paul to teach us, we should never have learned any other doctrine. If we had drawn our theology solely from *his epistles*, we should never have heard of an *immortal soul*, or an *immortal sinner*, of *eternal torments*, or of going to the lake of fire *at death*, of a heaven 'beyond the bounds of time and space,' where the righteous should dwell eternally, or of a hell in some distant portion of the universe, where an unceasing torrent of wailing and blasphemy should roll forth from the burning lips of the innumerable damned, so

long as God exists! Whence came this fearful doctrine? From the Apostle Paul? nay, rather 'from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers.'\*\*

Having deduced these statements from the writings of this great apostle, a question arises, have we understood him rightly? True, we take his words in their current signification in the times in which he lived, but were they understood thus by those to whom he spoke? We aver that they were, and in proof we refer to those writers who lived in apostolic times. We inquire what they taught. If we find them all with one voice proclaiming the immortality of the soul, the consciousness of the dead—their dwelling in heaven and hell between death and the judgment, and the eternal torment of the sinner in hell, we shall then be led to conclude that we have misunderstood the king's English, and the apostle's Greek, and shall yield to the force of the evidence. But if we find that the immortality of the soul and the eternal torment of the wicked was never mentioned until heathen philosophers became connected with the church, and was never believed until heathen philosophy had polluted the pure temple of truth—*Then* we shall conclude that we read and understood Paul correctly, and that if we would walk in the old paths we must reject the teachings of a vain and false philosophy with the adhering traditions of subsequent superstition, and return to the pure doctrines of life and immortality through Christ alone as brought to light by Jesus, and promulgated by his apostles.

\* Pauline Theology, pp. 38-44.

# The Primitive Doctrine of a Future Life.

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## PART I.

### THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### CHARACTER AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE APOSTOLICAL FATHERS—VALUE OF THEIR WRITINGS.

*“ And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”—2 TIM. ii. 2.*

WHEN the apostles, wearied with the toils of their ministry, after a long and tedious warfare, laid aside their harness, and ungirding themselves lay down to rest in the calm assurance of Christian faith and hope, there were others raised up by God for the furtherance of the cause of truth, who caught the words of inspiration from their lips, and who unfolded to succeeding generations the same sublime and glorious doctrines of the Gospel, which had previously been declared by the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the ears of a ruined and perishing race. These were men of deep and ardent piety, of unshrinking faith,

and of undoubted constancy. They had possessed the greatest facilities for obtaining in its purity the Gospel of Christ. They had "fully known" the "doctrine" as well as the "manner of life" of the apostles; they had been their companions in Christian labor; had traveled with them, and listened to them, had battled with them the prevailing systems of false and delusive philosophy; and had with them determined fully, to glory only in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was to the Jews, fast bound by traditions, a stumbling-block; and to the Greeks, inflated with false wisdom, foolishness; but which was the wisdom of God and the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed.

Some of these men not only preached but *wrote*, and their writings were handed down in the Christian church. Though not esteemed canonical or authoritative, yet they were regarded as profitable, and hence were sometimes read in the Christian assemblies for the instruction of the hearers. These writings have, some of them, been transmitted to us, and are commonly termed the writings of the "*Apostolical Fathers*," which term comprehends those writers who flourished between A. D. 71 and A. D. 140, who immediately succeeded the apostles, and who wrote previously to the time of Justin Martyr. Their names were, BARNABAS, CLEMENT, HERMAS, IGNATIUS, and POLYCARP.

"These five writers," remarks the learned Dr. Adam Clarke, "constitute the whole of what are called the 'APOSTOLICAL FATHERS, whose writings for their deep piety, simplicity, and divine unction, form a proper connecting link between those of the Evangelists and Apostles; and those of the PRIMITIVE FATHERS.'"

"As all classes of Protestants have agreed to annex those

‘writings called *Apocryphal* to the Old Testament, is it not strange that the *Apostolical Fathers* should not be annexed to the New? They are certainly far more authentic, and of much more intrinsic worth.’\*

To an examination of their writings, and a sketch of their characters, in the order of their succession, we devote the ensuing pages.

We appeal to them for confirmatory evidence that we teach Apostolic doctrine. What say they? Christians delight to honor them for their steadfastness in that faith which caused them “to believe, to love and to suffer,” but how many are aware that the faith held by these ancient martyrs would almost be regarded as heresy now, while the present faith of the professed church would, in some of its important features, have been condemned as vain philosophy then? How often these writings have been perused by the careless reader, and yet the fact that they have no terms to express the present popular doctrines of a future Life has been almost entirely overlooked. Shall we not confer a favor upon the candid by directing their attention to the facts in the case?

\* Clarke’s Succession of Sacred Literature, p. 92.



## CHAPTER II.

### BARNABAS, A. D. 71.

*“He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.”—*  
Acts xi. 24.

THIS name is familiar to the readers of the New Testament. Descended from the tribe of Levi, and a native of the island of Cyprus, he originally bore the name of *Joseph*. Having sold his property soon after the day of Pentecost, he came and laid the money at the apostles' feet. From them, probably, in consequence of the consoling character of his ministrations, he received the surname *Barnabas*, or “*Son of Consolation.*” By the church at Jerusalem he was sent to Antioch to carry forward the work of God, commenced under the labors of some who had fled from persecution at Jerusalem. After laboring there successfully for a season, he visited Tarsus, whence he returned to Antioch with Paul, who assisted him there in the ministry. Subsequently they were deputed as messengers to the church at Jerusalem to carry them alms in a time of dearth; and after their return, they went forth in obedience to the Holy Spirit's direction, to preach in various cities. They returned to Jerusalem again to make enquiries concerning the validity of the Jewish law, and coming back to Antioch, prepared for another mission. Here a misunderstanding arose about one of their companions in labor, which produced a separation. It is probable that

they were subsequently reconciled, as Paul afterwards makes honorable mention of *Mark*, the person about whom the dispute originally occurred. The future career of Barnabas is unwritten, save in the blessed "book of remembrance," where so many noble deeds forgotten on earth are chronicled in heaven.

Of his character, we learn that "he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith"—that he with Paul was "beloved" by the church at Jerusalem, that they had "hazarded their lives" for the gospel's sake—that like Paul, he is called by the inspired writers an "apostle," Acts xiv. 14—that, like Paul, he did not "forbear working" with his hands—that his ministrations were abundantly successful, and that through them "much people were added to the Lord." These are the facts stated of him in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the Epistles of Paul, from which we have compiled this brief sketch.\*

Leaving the New Testament, we find his name and writings mentioned by the early Christian fathers. Clement of Alexandria has often quoted him, and denominates him "the Apostle Barnabas. . . the apostolical Barnabas, one 'of the seventy, and fellow-worker with Paul,'"† whence it appears he was one of the seventy disciples sent forth to labor by Christ himself. Origen, in his answer to Celsus, quotes his Epistle styling it "The Catholic Epistle of Barnabas,"‡ and Eusebius mentions it as having been quoted and commented upon by Clement, and as being reckoned among the disputed or uncanonical writings of

\* See Acts iv. 36; xi. 22-30; xii. 25; xiii. 1, 2, 50; xiv. 12, 14; xv. 2, 12, 37. 1 Cor. ix. 6. Gal. ii. 1, 9, 13. Gal. iv. 10. Col. iv. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 11.

† Stromata lib. 2.

‡ Lib. 1.

the early Christian church.\* Jerome, in his Catalogue of Illustrious Men, says: "Barnabas, of Cyprus, called 'Joseph, a Levite, ordained an apostle of the Gentiles 'with Paul, wrote an Epistle for the edification of the 'church, which is read among the Apocryphal Scriptures."†

These testimonies inform us of the value which was attached to the Epistle of Barnabas by the early church; "the passages cited by them being still found," says Dr. Lardner, "in that Epistle which we now have under the 'name of Barnabas. . . . Pearson, Cave, DuPin, Wake, 'and many other learned men, suppose it to be a genuine 'Epistle of Barnabas, the companion of Paul."‡ It is supposed to have been written before the Epistle of Jude, and also previous to the writings of John. Some learned authors, as Bp. Fell and others, have regarded it as of equal authority with the New Testament writings; most writers deny this, a few regard it as the production of another than Barnabas, but all agree in assigning to it the highest antiquity.

Now, in this epistle, written in all probability by the companion of Paul, written while John the revelator was yet living, written by one who is called in the Scriptures an apostle, written by one who was full of the Holy Ghost, read in the various churches planted by the Apostles, received by them as of great value: in such an epistle we may hope to find Apostolic doctrine. If the doctrine of the immortality of some hidden part of man be the doctrine of Christ, we shall find it here. If the doctrine of the consciousness of souls in the state of death, and of

\* Ecclesiastical History B. vi., ch. 13, 14.

† Cap. 6. ‡ Credibility of the Gospel History, vol. ii. pp. 18, 19.

their reward or punishment in heaven, hell or purgatory be true, we shall find it here. If the doctrine of the eternal torture and agony of wicked men be the doctrine of the apostles, certainly this writer will warn his hearers of the fact.

But what are the facts? He does not in all his writings so much as hint that man has a soul which is immortal by nature. He does not once intimate that men go to hell or to heaven, or any where else but to the grave at death. He expressly postpones their reward and their punishment till the day of Judgment; he does not once intimate that the wicked are to be tormented or tortured eternally in hell; on the contrary he teaches that they shall be destroyed and that their doom is eternal death. He gives no hint that he used the terms life, death, &c., in the conventional sense in which they are now used, and hence we must conclude that he meant just what he said. Let us glance at his epistle as translated by Archbishop Wake, and divided in chapters and verses as in the Apocryphal New Testament.

#### THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, A. D. 71.

In the *first chapter* he says, "There are therefore three 'things ordained by the Lord; the *hope of LIFE*; the *beginning* and the *completion* of it."

In the *fourth chapter* he says, "A man will *justly PERISH*, if having the knowledge of the way of truth, he 'shall nevertheless not refrain himself from the way of 'darkness, and for this cause the Lord was content to 'suffer for our souls, although he be the Lord of the whole 'earth. . . . But he, that he might *abolish DEATH*, and make known the *resurrection from the dead*, was content,

‘ as it was necessary, to appear in the flesh, that he might  
 ‘ make good the promise before given to our fathers, and  
 ‘ preparing himself a new people, might *demonstrate* to  
 ‘ them whilst he was upon earth, that AFTER *the RESURREC-*  
 ‘ TION he would *judge the world.*”

In the *sixth chapter* he remarks, “ If therefore the Son  
 ‘ of God, who is the Lord of all, and shall *come to judge*  
 ‘ both the *quick and the dead*, hath suffered, that by his  
 ‘ stripes *we might LIVE*; let us believe that the Son of God  
 ‘ could not have suffered but for us.”

In the *seventh chapter* he declares that “ The kingdom  
 ‘ of Jesus was founded upon the cross; and therefore they  
 ‘ that *put their trust in him shall live FOREVER.*”

In the *eleventh chapter* he says, “ Moses makes a type  
 ‘ of Jesus, to show that he was to die; and then that he,  
 ‘ whom they thought to be *dead*, was to give LIFE to others,  
 ‘ in the type of those that fell in Israel.” After giving an  
 account of the making of the brazen serpent, he says,  
 “ Then Moses spake unto them, saying, When any one  
 ‘ among you shall be bitten, let him come unto the serpent  
 ‘ that is set upon the pole; and let him assuredly trust in  
 ‘ him, that, though he be *dead*, yet he is able to *give life*,  
 ‘ and presently he shall be saved; and so they did. See,  
 ‘ therefore, how *here also* you have in this *the glory of*  
 ‘ JESUS; and that in him and to him are all things.”

In the *thirteenth chapter*, he says again, while speaking  
 of the Church of God being his temple and the habitation  
 of his spirit, “ The word of his faith, the calling of his  
 ‘ promise, the wisdom of his righteous judgments, the com-  
 ‘ mands of his doctrine; he himself prophecies within us,  
 ‘ he himself dwelleth in us, and openeth to us who were in  
 ‘ *bondage of DEATH*, the gate of our temple—that is, the

‘mouth of wisdom,—having given repentance unto us; and by this means has brought us to be an *incorruptible temple.*”

In the *fourteenth chapter* he continues, “There are two ways of doctrine and power—the one of light, the other of darkness. But there is a great deal of difference between these two ways; for over one are appointed the angels of God, the leaders of the way of light; over the other the angels of Satan: and the one is the Lord from everlasting to everlasting; the other is the prince of the time of unrighteousness. Now the way of light is this, if any one desires to attain to the place that is appointed for him, and will hasten thither by his works. And the knowledge that has been given to us for walking in it is to this effect: Thou shalt love him that made thee; thou shalt glorify him that *redeemed thee from DEATH.* Thou shalt be simple in heart and rich in the spirit. Thou shalt not cleave to those that walk in the *way of DEATH.* . . . Thou shalt not be double-tongued, for a double tongue is the snare of DEATH. . . . Thou shalt not be forward to speak, for the mouth is the snare of death. *Strive for thy soul (ψυχή or LIFE) with all thy might. . . . Call to thy remembrance day and night the future JUDGMENT.* Thou shalt seek out every day the persons of the righteous, and both consider and go about to exhort others by the Word, and meditate how thou shalt *save a soul.*” Continuing thus to inculcate the duties of Christianity, almsgiving, peace-making and repentance, he remarks, “This is the way of light.”

In the *fifteenth chapter* he continues, “But the way of darkness is crooked and full of cursing; for it is the way of ETERNAL DEATH, *with punishment*; in which they that

‘walk meet those things that DESTROY *their own* SOULS. ‘Such are idolatry, confidence, pride of power, hypocrisy, ‘&c. . . . It is therefore fitting that, learning the just ‘commands of the Lord, which we have before mentioned, ‘we should walk in them. For he who does such things ‘shall be *glorified in the KINGDOM of God*. But he that ‘chooses the other part shall be DESTROYED, *together with* ‘*his works*. For this cause there shall be both a *resurrection* and a *retribution*. . . . For the day is at hand in which all things shall be DESTROYED, together with THE ‘WICKED ONE. The Lord is near, and his reward is with ‘him. . . . Be ye taught of God, seeking what it is the ‘Lord requires of you, and doing it, that ye may be SAVED ‘*in the day of JUDGMENT*.”

Here, then, we have the testimony of Barnabas, *what* he says, and *all* that he says concerning the future destiny of man. We need not enter into an extensive review of it. The words are before the reader. But we cannot avoid remarking the difference between the preaching and writing of Barnabas, and the teaching of modern professed preachers of the Gospel. And his sentiments as delivered in his epistle coincide perfectly with fragments of one of his warnings, which inspiration has preserved. When preaching the Gospel at Antioch, after the Jews had rejected their message, “*Then Paul and Barnabas waxed* ‘*bold, and said it was necessary that the word of God* ‘*should first have been spoken to you ; but seeing ye put it* ‘*from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of EVERLAST-* ‘*ING LIFE, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*”—Acts xiii. 46.

This was the character of apostolic preaching. *Life* and *Death* were set before the people. There was no blending of vain philosophy therewith, no phantom land or

spirit world beyond the bounds of space, no dropping of the souls of the dying into hell torments, no rising of the blest spirits on angel pinions, while the clay sank in the embrace of death, no punishment before judgment, no reward till Jesus' appearing, no home but in the renewed and glorious world to come. These are the old paths. This was the faith of the prophets and the apostles. We trace their faith first in their words, as written in the book of God, and then in the faith of their fellow laborers, the Apostolical Fathers. Can we be blamed for receiving such a faith as this?—a faith which was the comfort of all the sons of consolation in that dark and trying hour—a faith which then, as now, brought reproach to man but glory to Christ,—which awakens the displeasure of those who are bound by the traditions of the elders, but which comes to the believing Christian's heart as an unspeakable source of comfort, a blessed light, bringing life and immortality to view, as offered in the Gospel, to all who seek for it by patient continuance in well doing.



## CHAPTER III.

### CLEMENT, A. D. 96.

*“Clement also, and other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the Book of Life.”—PHIL. iv. 3*

Next after Barnabas in the succession of Christian writers we find Clement. He was Bishop of Rome; “whom,” says Dr. Lardner, “ancient writers, without any doubt or scruple, relate to have been the same Clement, whom St. Paul mentions among his ‘fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of Life.’ Philip iv. 3.”\* Dr. A. Clarke also declares that: “He was generally believed by the ancients to have been the same with that *Clement* whom St. Paul mentions among his fellow laborers whose names are in the book of Life. Phil. iv. 3.”†

Irenæus says, “When the blessed Apostles had founded and established the church, (at Rome) they delivered the office of the bishoprick in it to Linus. Of this Linus Paul makes mention in his epistles to Timothy, (2 Tim. iv. 21). To him succeeded Anenctetus. After whom in the third place after the Apostles, Clement obtained that bishoprick, who had seen the blessed apostles, and conversed with them: who had the preaching of the apostles still sounding in his ears, and their traditions before his eyes. Nor was he alone, for there were then still many alive,

\* Credibility, vol. ii. p. 29.

† Sac. Lit. p. 89.

' who had been taught by the apostles. In the time there-  
' fore of this Clement, when there was no small dissention  
' among the brethren at Corinth, the church at Rome sent  
' a most excellent *letter* to the Corinthians, persuading them  
' to peace among themselves."\*

Thus Irenæus represents Clement as the third bishop  
who succeeded the apostles at Rome. Eusebius bears  
witness to the same fact when after giving the names of  
his predecessors he states that "after Anencletus had been  
' Bishop of Rome twelve years he was succeeded by *Cle-*  
' *ment*, who, the apostle, in his epistle to the Philippians,  
' shows to have been his fellow laborer. Of this Clement  
' there is one epistle extant, acknowledged as genuine, of  
' considerable length and of great merit, which he wrote in  
' the name of the church of Rome, to that at Corinth, at  
' the time when there was a dissention in the latter. This  
' we know to have been publicly read for common benefit,  
' in most of the churches, both in former times and in our  
' own; and that at the time mentioned a sedition did take  
' place at Corinth, is abundantly attested by Hegesippus."†  
Eusebius also declares that at the beginning of Trajan's  
reign, "Clement still governed the church of Rome,"‡ and  
he is said to have died in the third year of Trajan, A.  
D. 100.§

Eusebius speaks again of "The epistle of Clement ac-  
' knowledged by all, which he wrote to the Corinthians in  
' the name of the church of Rome. . . . It ought to  
' be observed that there is *another* epistle said to be Cle-  
' ment's; but this is not so generally received as the

\* Adv. Hær. lib. iii. c. 3. Quoted by Eusebius Eccl. Hist. B. v. c. 6.

† Euseb. Eccl. Hist. B. iii. ch. 15, 16.

‡ Ibid, ch. 21.

§ Lardner's Credibility, vol. ii. p. 32.

‘former ; nor do we know the ancients to have quoted it  
 ‘There are also other writings reported to be his, verbose,  
 ‘and of great length . . . of which, however, not a  
 ‘syllable is recorded by the primitive church. For they  
 ‘do not preserve the impress of pure orthodoxy. The  
 ‘epistle therefore of Clement, that is acknowledged as  
 ‘genuine is evident.’\* Eusebius quotes from an epistle  
 written by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, to Soter, bishop  
 of Rome, about A. D. 170, thus : “ In this same letter, he  
 ‘(Dionysius) mentions that of Clement to the Corinthians,  
 ‘showing that it was the practice to read it in the churches,  
 ‘even from the earliest times. To-day’ says he, ‘we have  
 ‘passed the Lord’s holy day, in which we have read your  
 ‘epistle, in reading which we shall always have our minds  
 ‘stored with admonition, as we shall, also, from that writ-  
 ‘ten to us before by Clement.”†

Jerome also in his book of illustrious men‡ speaks of  
 “ Clement, of whom the apostle Paul writes in his epistle  
 ‘to the Phillippians, the fourth bishop of Rome after Peter  
 ‘. . . wrote a very useful epistle in the name of the  
 ‘church at Rome to the church of Corinth, which in some  
 ‘places is read publicly. . . . There is also a second  
 ‘epistle with his name, but it is *rejected by the ancients*,  
 ‘and a long dialogue of Peter and Apion, which Eusebius  
 ‘has censured in the third book of his Ecclesiastical His-  
 ‘tory. He died in the third year of Trajan.”

In the words of Dr. Lardner, “ All these testimonies  
 ‘agree together, and they are the most valuable we can  
 ‘have. . . . Upon the whole I think this epistle was  
 ‘written by Clement, when bishop, at the end of Domitian’s

\* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. B. iii. ch. 38. † Ib. B. iv. ch. 23. ‡ Cap. 15.

'persecution, in the year 96. The passages I have quoted 'have sufficiently shown, not only the age of Clement, and 'of this epistle, but the character of it, and also that this 'is the *only piece* of Clement that can be relied upon as 'genuine. Indeed the second epistle might be shown by 'many arguments not to be genuine. . . . It is expressly 'rejected by Photius. . . . Dr. Grabe concludes with great 'probability that this piece was not written before the mid- 'dle of the third century."\* Dr. A. Clarke says, "The 'second epistle attributed to Clement, is supposed to be a 'production of the fourth century."†

Clement then, the author of the epistle bearing his name, was the fellow laborer of the Apostle Paul—his name is "in the book of life"—he wrote about the time that John wrote the Apocalypse—his epistle was not merely his own, but in the name of the whole church at Rome—he had "the preaching of the apostles still sounding in his ears"—many of the brethren among whom he labored "had been taught by the apostles," and as this epistle was written in the name of the whole church, it is the expression of *their* faith as well as *his*; and as it was written to the church at Corinth where apostles had preached, and from the church at Rome, where Paul had died, and within the lifetime of some of the apostles, it comes to us with such claims upon our respect as few other writings can be said to possess. Certainly in this epistle we shall find some trace of the old paths in which the apostolic and primitive Christian Fathers walked, following as they did in the footsteps of the apostles of the Lamb. What is the voice of Clement? Does he teach the immortality of the soul?

\* Credibility, vol. ii p. 33-35.

† Sec. Lit. p. 90.

The doctrine of the wicked going to hell at death? the universal salvation of mankind? the doctrine of purgatory? or the eternal torture of the lost in hell? We shall speedily see what his faith was relating to the destiny of mankind or the doctrine of a future life.

THE EPISTLE OF CLEMENT TO THE CORINTHIANS.

We remark first, that he never mentions the immortality of the soul once in his whole epistle. There is in it neither hint nor declaration that all men will be saved or that all will live forever. Neither does he say one word of wicked men dying and going to hell previous to the judgment, nor yet of their being destined to the horrors of eternal torment.

In the *fourth chapter*, while exhorting to repentance, he says, "And even the Lord of all has himself declared with 'an oath concerning it; As I live, saith the Lord, I desire 'not the DEATH of a sinner, but that he should repent."

Again, in the *seventh chapter* he says, "Let us be kind 'to one another, according to the compassion and sweetness of him that made us. For it is written, The merciful *shall inherit the earth*; and they that are without 'evil shall be *left upon it*: but the transgressors shall 'PERISH from off the face of it."

In the *eighth chapter* he speaks of the way of salvation through Christ, and quotes the language of the prophet,

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, &c.—When thou 'shalt make his SOUL an offering for sin, he shall see his 'seed, he shall prolong his days; and the pleasure of the 'Lord shall prosper in his hand. . . . Therefore will I 'divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide 'the spoil with the strong; because he hath *poured out his*

'SOUL unto DEATH.'" "Through love did the Lord join 'us unto himself; whilst for the love that he bore towards 'us, our Lord Jesus Christ gave his own blood for us, by the will of God; *his flesh for our flesh; his soul for our souls.*" Chap. xxi: 7.

Hence if he gave his soul for our souls and poured out his soul unto DEATH, then without his death or without our believing in him our *souls* must *die*, and consequently cannot be *immortal* or undying.

In the *eleventh chapter* he says, "Let us consider, beloved, how the Lord does continually show us that there 'shall be a future *resurrection*, of which he has made our 'Lord Jesus Christ the first fruits, raising him from the 'dead. Let us contemplate, beloved, the *resurrection* that 'is continually made before our eyes."

In the *twelfth chapter* he argues the resurrection, "For 'he says in a certain place Thou shalt *raise me up*, and I 'shall confess unto thee. . . And again Job says, Thou 'shalt *raise up this flesh of mine*, that has suffered all 'these things."

He writes again in the *seventeenth chapter*, "How blessed and wonderful, beloved are the GIFTS of *God! Life in IMMORTALITY!* brightness in righteousness, truth in 'full assurance, faith in confidence, temperance in holiness. ' . . . Let us therefore strive with all earnestness that we 'may be found in the number of those that *wait for him*, 'that so we may receive the *reward* which he has *promised.*" Again he says, "Let us be followers of those 'who went about in goat-skins and sheep-skins, *preaching the coming of Christ.*" 1 Cor. viii. 17. Thus he places Life in *immortality* among the gifts of God, connected with righteousness, truth, faith, temperance and holiness.

And as he exhorts to strive with earnestness to be found waiting for Christ, that we may thus receive the promised reward, it is evident that he did not expect this reward to be granted until the appearing of Jesus Christ, whose reward is with him to give to every man according as his work shall be. And hence the necessity of following those who "preached the coming of Jesus."

In the third chapter of his Epistle, he speaks of some of the righteous who had died, in terms somewhat vague and indefinite. He says nothing of their going to heaven, but says of Peter, "at last being martyred, he went to the 'place of glory that was *due* unto him." And again, of Paul, he "departed out of the world, and went unto his 'holy place ;" and also of others who, "having suffered very grievous and cruel punishments, have finished the 'course of their faith with firmness ; and though weak in 'body, yet received a glorious reward." But as in other passages he locates the time of *reward* at the *judgment*, it may be questioned whether the glory he speaks of has any reference beyond the glory of suffering for Jesus' sake, which the ancients frequently expressed as being "crowned 'with the crown of martyrdom," *that* being the greatest earthly honor to which they aspired. And "the holy 'place" to which he speaks of Paul's departing, may receive a fit interpretation from the language of the voice from heaven, "*Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord . . . for they REST from their LABORS.*" Or as the prophet declares concerning the righteous who dies, "*He 'shall go in peace: he shall REST in his bed ; even the 'perfect man ; he that walketh in the straight path.*"\*

\* Isaiah lvii. 2. Lowth's Translation.

In confirmation of this view, we quote again from the *twenty-first chapter*, as follows: "All the ages of the world, 'from Adam, even unto this day, are passed away, but 'they who have been made perfect in love, have by the 'grace of God obtained a place among the righteous; and 'shall be *made manifest* in the *judgment* of the kingdom 'of Christ. For it is written, Enter into thy chambers 'for a little space, till my anger and indignation shall pass 'away: and I will remember the good day, and will *raise* 'you up out of your graves. Happy then shall we be, 'beloved, if we shall have fulfilled the commandments of 'God, in the unity of love; that so through love, our sins 'may be forgiven us." For such a "manifestation of the 'sons of God," the apostles were accustomed to look and yearn. And for such a place of security in death, the patriarch seems to pray, "O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave (*Sheol*) that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy WRATH be past, that thou wouldst APPOINT me a set time and REMEMBER ME. . . . all the days of my APPOINTED time will I wait till my CHANGE come. THOU shalt CALL and I will answer thee" Job xiv. 13-15. Thus multitudes have laid them down to rest in sure confidence that they should be remembered in the 'good day,' and raised up out of their graves to share the glory of immortality, and the blessings of Eternal Life.

I may further remark that the Epistle of Clement, which we have, is quite likely to be *corrupted* in some respects, and that this may not rest upon my own assertion, I will introduce the testimony of the learned Dr. Lardner, who says: "It is called by the ancients an excellent and useful, a great and admirable Epistle. And the Epistle still 'in our hands deserves all these commendations: though



' *not entire*, there being some pages wanting in the manu-  
' script of it; and though we had but *one ancient manu-*  
' *script* of it remaining. For which reason it *cannot be al-*  
' *together so CORRECT*, as if we had a number of copies to  
compare together."\* Perhaps another copy might afford  
still more conclusive evidence of the truths which are so  
clearly taught in this.

One more passage from the *eighteenth chapter* must  
close our extracts from Clement. "Foolish and unwise  
' men, who have neither prudence nor learning, may mock  
' and deride us; being willing to set up themselves in their  
' own conceits: but what can MORTAL MAN do? Or what  
' strength is there in him that is *made out of the dust?*"

This is the pointed testimony of Clement. Never does  
he call man *immortal*; but once he does most unqualifiedly  
pronounce him *mortal*. And this is in accordance with  
the Scriptures, which never speak of immortal men or of  
*immortal souls* or *spirits*, but which, on the contrary, do  
term man MORTAL. Job iv. 17. And as they sometimes  
call man *mortal*, and never call *man*, or *any part of him*,  
body, soul, or spirit, *immortal*, we are drawn to the con-  
clusion that the doctrine of the *mortality* of the race, of  
eternal life only through CHRIST, is the doctrine of the  
Bible; and hence we are constrained to be followers of  
those who "went about in sheep skins and goat skins  
' preaching the coming of Jesus;" at which coming "*this*  
' MORTAL *shall put on IMMORTALITY*, and this CORRUPTIBLE  
' *shall put on INCORRUPTION*;" when death shall be swal-  
lowed up in full, and final, and eternal victory, and the  
deep and mournful groanings of a curse-burdened world  
shall be lost in the music of the everlasting jubilee.

\* Lardner's Credibility, vol. 2, p. 29.

This was the faith of the early Church. In the testimony of Clement we find nothing of the immortality of souls, nothing of a Romish purgatory, nothing of wicked spirits wailing in hell before the judgment, nothing of eternal torture for the impenitent after the judgment, nothing of going to heaven at death, or at any other time; and if some expressions may possibly be construed to imply consciousness in death, they are perhaps susceptible of another interpretation; and they refer to the *righteous alone*, who have sought for glory and honor and immortality by patient continuance in well doing.

We find him teaching that the wages of sin is *death*; that Christ in dying poured out his *soul* unto death; that he gave his *soul* for *our souls*, his flesh for our flesh; that the merciful shall inherit the earth; that the transgressors shall be rooted out of it, and shall PERISH; that immortality is the *gift of God*; that the righteous shall be made manifest at *the judgment*; that they shall then be raised up *out of their graves*; and that man is *mortal* while out of Christ.

These are old paths; these the doctrines of Paul and of Clement, his fellow-laborer, whose name is in the Book of Life. Let us seek to be followers of the faithful, in faith and in practice. Let us avoid the teachings of a vain and false philosophy, and the oppositions of a mis-called science, and seek to learn not philosophy as it is in Plato and Socrates, but "*the truth as it is in Jesus.*"

## CHAPTER IV.

### HERMAS, A. D. 100.

*"Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them."*—ROM. xvi. 14.

NEXT after Clement in the order of time we meet with HERMAS, who also lived in the days of the apostles. He was the author of a book called the Shepherd or Pastor, which we have.

Eusebius, while speaking of the genuine writings of the Apostle Paul, remarks as follows: "Forasmuch as the 'apostle, in the salutations at the end of his epistle to the 'Romans, makes mention among others of *Hermas*, who, 'it is said, wrote the book called the Shepherd, it is to be 'observed that it is doubted of by some. Wherefore it 'ought not to be placed among the books of unquestionable 'authority. By others it is judged to be a most necessary 'book, especially for those who are to be instructed in the 'first elements of religion. And we know that it is pub- 'licly read in the churches, and that some very ancient 'writers make use of it."\* Again, while speaking of the inspired and authoritative books, and distinguishing them from the uninspired, he remarks, "Among the spurious 'must be numbered both the books called 'the Acts of 'Paul,' and that called '*Pastor*,' and the 'Revelation of 'Peter.'"† "By which," says Dr. Lardner, "we are not

\* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. B. iii. ch. 3.

† Ib. ch. 25.

‘I think, to understand that the book of Hermas or the Shepherd, is not genuine, but that it ought not to be reckoned canonical Scripture.’\*

Jerome, in his book of “Illustrious Men,”† says: ‘Hermas, of whom the apostle makes mention in his epistle to the Romans, saying, ‘Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren that are with them,’ is affirmed to be the author of the book which is called Pastor. And it is publicly read in some churches of Greece. It is indeed a useful book, and many of the ancient writers have made use of testimonies out of it.” Dr. Lardner remarks, “It was well known to Tertullian, and to the Christian churches in general of his time. . . . It is then probable that this book was written by Hermas, whom Paul salutes. And it ought not to be doubted that it is an ancient Christian ecclesiastical writing, though not properly canonical.”‡ The Shepherd of Hermas was written in Greek; but we have now only an ancient Latin version, beside some fragments in Greek, preserved in the ancient Greek authors who have quoted him. It consists of three books. In the first are four *Visions*, in the second twelve *Commands*, in the third ten *Similitudes*.”§

From this work, which has come down to us, we proceed to make extracts, exhibiting the faith of those who lived in apostolic times, and who listened to apostolic teaching concerning the future life. As it was publicly read in the early churches as a useful and profitable work, it will doubtless give us some intimation concerning the old paths in which the primitive pilgrims walked. We

\* Credibility, vol. ii. p. 58.

† Cap. x.

‡ Credibility, vol. ii. p. 59.

§ Ib. p. 59.

will accordingly transcribe every passage in the work which has reference to the nature and destiny of man. We will commence with

## THE VISIONS.

In the *first vision* we read, "But as for those who think 'wickedly in their hearts, they take to themselves DEATH and captivity; and especially those who love this *present world*, and glory in their riches, and regard not the good things that are *to come*; their souls wander up and down, and know not where to fix. Now this is the case of such as are double-minded, who trust not in the Lord, and despise and neglect *their own LIFE*." Speaking of the Sin of Hermas' sons, the instructor says, "Wherefore cease not to admonish thy sons, for the Lord knows that they will repent with all their heart, and they shall be written *in the book of LIFE*."

In the *second vision*, after exhorting to constancy, the following words occur, "Happy are ye, as many as shall endure the great trial that is at hand, and whosoever shall not deny his LIFE. For the Lord hath sworn by his Son, that whoso denieth his Son and him, being afraid of his life, he will also deny him *in the world to come*." Again he exhorts him to remember not the evils which his sons have done, but see that they cease to do them. "For they will be instructed by this doctrine, if thou shalt not be mindful of what they have done wickedly. For the *remembrance of evils worketh DEATH*; but the *forgetting of them, LIFE ETERNAL*." Speaking of those who live purely and righteously, and who shall thus be saved by the purity of their lives, we read, "They who are of this kind shall prevail against all impiety, and *continue*

'unto LIFE ETERNAL. Happy are they that do righteous  
'ness; THEY *shall* NOT *be* CONSUMED *forever*."

In the *third vision* (verse 86) certain women are represented personating the Christian virtues, one of them "Is named Abstinence: she is the daughter of Faith. Whosoever, therefore, shall follow her, shall be happy in all his life; because he shall abstain from all evil works, believing that if he shall contain himself from all concupiscence, he shall be *the heir of ETERNAL LIFE*."

In the *fourth vision* he inquires the meaning of the four different colors which a symbolic beast had upon its head—the explanation is given thus: "The black denotes *the world in which you dwell*. . . the fiery and bloody color signifies that *this age must be destroyed by fire and blood*. . . The golden part is ye who have escaped out of it. . . But the white color denotes the time of *the WORLD WHICH IS TO COME, in which the elect of God shall DWELL*; because the elect of God shall be pure and *without spot unto LIFE ETERNAL*."

Such is the teaching of the VISIONS of Hermas. The wicked take to themselves *death*—they despise their own *life*, while the penitent are written in the book of *life*. We are not to deny our *life*, that is our Saviour who is our life. Col. iii: 1-3. The righteous shall continue unto *life eternal*, and shall not be *consumed* forever, while the obvious inference is, that the unrighteous will not thus continue but *will be consumed*. Those that follow virtue are to be heirs of *eternal life*. They are to dwell in the *world to come*, and be pure without spot unto *life eternal*. How Scriptural this testimony, how exactly in accordance with the precious faith of the apostles is the teaching of this apostolical man concerning the future life. But this is not all, the next book is

## THE COMMANDS.

There is one expression or promise of reward that is found at the conclusion of almost every command. It is this: "*Thou shalt LIVE TO GOD.*" Now by this living I think it evident that he intends *eternal life* in God's presence, and for this reason, this is the *only* reward that he promises to the obedient, and it is contrasted with the death resulting from *sin*.

The *First Command* enjoins believing in one God "who comprehends all things, who can neither be defined by any words, nor conceived by the mind. Therefore believe in him and fear him; and fearing him, abstain from all evil. Keep these things, and cast all lust and iniquity far from thee; and put on righteousness; *and thou shalt LIVE to God, if thou shalt keep this commandment.*"

The *Third Command* is against lying. It concludes thus: "If for time to come thou shalt speak truth, . . . by so doing thou mayest *attain unto LIFE.* And whosoever shall hearken unto this command, and do it, and shall depart from all lying, *he shall LIVE UNTO GOD.*"

The *Fourth Command* is to avoid adultery and concerning divorce. Hermas inquires of his instructor to know more fully his duty thus: "And I said unto him, For this cause, sir, I inquire diligently into all things, because I am a sinner, that I may know what I must do *that I may LIVE;* because my sins are many. And he said unto me, *Thou shalt LIVE* if thou shalt keep these my commandments. And whosoever shall hear and do these commands, *shall LIVE unto God.*"

The *Fifth Command* is against anger and sadness. Hermas says, "And I said unto him, sir, I would know

‘ the sinfulness of anger, that I may keep myself from it.  
 ‘ And he said unto me, Thou shalt know it, and if thou  
 ‘ shalt not keep thyself from it, Thou shalt lose thy hope  
 ‘ with all thy house. Wherefore depart from it. For I,  
 ‘ the messenger of righteousness, am with thee : and all that  
 ‘ depart from it, as many as shall repent with all their  
 ‘ hearts, *shall LIVE UNTO GOD* ; and I will be with them,  
 ‘ and will keep them all. . . . Wherefore strengthen thy-  
 ‘ self now in these commands, that thou mayest *LIVE UNTO*  
 ‘ *GOD*. And whosoever shalt observe these commandments  
 ‘ shall *LIVE UNTO GOD*.”

The *Sixth Command* exhorts to follow righteousness.  
 “ Do thou therefore keep the right way, and leave that  
 ‘ which is evil. For the *evil way* has not a good end, but  
 ‘ hath many stumbling blocks ; it is rugged and full of  
 ‘ thorns, and *leads to DESTRUCTION* ; and is hurtful to all  
 ‘ such as walk in it. . . . Thou seest therefore how it is  
 ‘ good to follow the angel of righteousness. If therefore  
 ‘ thou shalt follow him, and submit to his works, *thou shalt*  
 ‘ *LIVE unto God*. And as many as shall submit to his  
 ‘ works, *shall LIVE also unto God*.”

The *Seventh Command* requires to fear God and keep his  
 commandments, and concludes thus : “ Wherefore, fear  
 ‘ God and *thou shalt live* : and whosoever shall fear him,  
 ‘ and keep his commandments, *their LIFE is with the Lord*.  
 ‘ But they who keep them not, *neither is LIFE in them*.”

The *Eighth Command* requires that we depart from all  
 evil, “ from adultery ; from drunkenness ; from riots ; from  
 ‘ excess of eating ; from daintiness and dishonesty ; from  
 ‘ pride ; from fraud ; from lying ; from detraction ;  
 ‘ from hypocrisy ; from remembrance of injuries ; and from  
 ‘ all evil speaking. For these are the works of iniquity ;



‘ from which the servant of God must abstain. For he that  
 ‘ cannot keep himself from these things, *cannot LIVE unto*  
 ‘ *God*. . . Keep thyself therefore from them, that thou may-  
 ‘ est *LIVE unto God*, and be written among those that ab-  
 ‘ stain from them. . . . Live then in these commandments,  
 ‘ and do not depart from them. For if thou shalt keep all  
 ‘ these commandments, thou shalt *LIVE unto God*. And  
 ‘ all they that shall keep these commandments *shall LIVE*  
 ‘ *unto God*.”

The *Ninth Command* enjoins daily and believing prayer.  
 “ For they that are full of faith, ask all things with confi-  
 ‘ dence, and receive from the Lord, because they ask with-  
 ‘ out doubting. But he that hath doubts shall hardly  
 ‘ *LIVE unto God*, except he repent. . . . Do thou therefore  
 ‘ keep the virtue of faith, and depart from doubting, in  
 ‘ which is no virtue, and thou *shalt LIVE unto God*. And  
 ‘ all *shall LIVE unto God*, as many as shall do these  
 ‘ things.”

The *Tenth Command* requires us to put away sadness of  
 heart, or melancholy, and to avoid grieving the Holy  
 Spirit. “ When therefore a man’s prayer shall be accom-  
 ‘ panied with sadness, it will not suffer his requests to as-  
 ‘ cend pure to the altar of God. For as wine mingled with  
 ‘ vinegar, has not the sweetness it had before; so sadness  
 ‘ being mixed with the Holy Spirit, suffer’s not a man’s  
 ‘ prayer to be the same that it would be otherwise. Where-  
 ‘ fore cleanse thyself from sadness, which is evil, and  
 ‘ *thou shalt LIVE unto God*. And all others *shall LIVE*  
 ‘ *unto God*, as many as shall lay aside sadness and put on  
 ‘ cheerfulness.”

The *Twelfth Command* forbids evil desire and all unholy  
 lusts—“ For in much delicacy there is folly; and many

‘pleasures are needless to the servants of God. Such lusting therefore is evil and pernicious, which *brings to DEATH the servants of God*. For all such lusting is from the ‘devil. Whosoever therefore shall depart from all evil ‘desires, *shall LIVE unto God*; but they that are *subject* ‘unto them *shall DIE FOREVER*. For this evil lusting is ‘DEADLY. Do thou therefore put on the desire of righteousness, and being armed with the fear of the Lord, resist all wicked lusting. . . . If thou shalt do these things, ‘thou shalt be an approved servant of God; and shall ‘serve him: and all others who shall in like manner serve ‘a good desire *shall LIVE UNTO GOD*. . . . Fear not the ‘devil. . . . But hearken unto me, and fear the Lord Almighty, who is able to *SAVE and to DESTROY you*; and ‘keep his commands, that ye may *LIVE unto God*. . . . Thou ‘shalt keep them. . . . if thou shalt purify thy heart towards the Lord. And all they also shall keep them who ‘shall cleanse their hearts from the vain desires of the present world, and *shall LIVE unto God*.”

Thus closes this ancient writing, The Precepts, or Commands of Hermas. How pure and Christian their morality, and how clear their testimony upon the questions before us. Thou shalt *LIVE* unto God if thou shalt keep these commandments. By so doing, thou mayest attain unto *life*. Thou shalt *live* if thou keep these my commandments. The evil way leads to *destruction*. Fear God and thou shalt *LIVE*. Those who do not obey cannot receive the blessings, neither is *LIFE* in them. Evil lusting is *deadly*—it brings to *DEATH*. We are to fear him who is able to save and to *destroy*, and finally if we keep these commands we shall *live*. And how much is the teaching of this shepherd to Hermas like the doctrine of

the Shepherd of Israel. Let us read it—" *And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, THAT I MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt ENTER into LIFE KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.*" Matt. xix. 16, 17. This was the teaching of Jesus and his apostles, and their immediate followers. This is the primitive doctrine of a future life. And this was the sole teaching of Hermas in the book of Commands. LIFE is the only future reward held out. DEATH or *destruction* is the only punishment mentioned. There is not one word concerning immortal souls or disembodied spirits from the beginning to the end of it. Not one word of dying and going to heaven or hell or purgatory, or to some other place which some Protestants believe in. Not one word about an eternal home in some remote portion of the universe. Not one word about the eternal torture and torment of the damned in hell.

And yet this book was written by one who was doubtless a personal friend of the Apostle Paul, who is mentioned by name in one of his Epistles, who heard the word of the Lord from apostolic teachers, and who followed in the same good old paths in which they trod. Let us weigh these facts, and in the light of them discern which is the good way, and walk in it.

The next work of Hermas is a book of allegories and similitudes. By this we are not to suppose that Hermas construed or interpreted the *Scriptures allegorically*, or *mystically*. By no means. We find no traces of this pernicious system as yet in the church of Christ. But like Bunyan, he wrote *allegories* and explained them, while he firmly held at the same time the literal sense of the word of God. We will now examine the teaching of

## THE SIMILITUDES.

The *First Similitude* teaches us that we have no abiding city here in this world, but that we should seek for one to come. It commences thus: "Ye know that ye, who are the servants of the Lord, live here as in a pilgrimage; for *your city* is far off from this city. If, therefore, ye know *your city* in which you are to dwell, why do ye here buy estates, and provide yourselves with delicacies, and stately buildings, and superfluous houses? For he that provides himself these things in *this city*, does not think of returning into *his own city*. . . . See, therefore, that like a man in another country, thou procure no more to thyself than what is necessary and sufficient for thee; and be ready, that when the god or lord of this city shall drive thee out of it, thou mayest oppose his law, and go into *thine own city*, where thou mayest with all cheerfulness live according to thine own law, without wrong. . . . Instead, therefore, of the possessions that ye would otherwise purchase, redeem those that are in want from their necessities, as every one is able; justify the widows; judge the cause of the fatherless; and spend your riches and wealth in such works as these. For to this end has God enriched you, that ye might fulfill these kind of services. It is much better to do this than to buy lands or houses; because all such things shall perish with this present time. But what ye shall do for the name of the Lord, ye shall find in *your city*, and shall have joy without sadness or fear. Wherefore, covet not the riches of the heathen, for they are DESTRUCTIVE to the servants of God; but trade with your own riches which you possess, by which ye may attain unto EVERLASTING JOY. And do

'not commit adultery, nor touch any other man's wife, nor  
'desire her; but covet that which is thine own business,  
'and *thou shalt be* SAVED."

The *Second Similitude* represents the rich man supported and upheld by the prayers of the poor whose wants he supplies, as the vine is upheld by the elm around which it twines itself. "With men, therefore, the elm is not  
'thought to give any fruit; and they know not, neither  
'understand, that its company being added to the vine, the  
'vine bears a double increase, both for itself and for the  
'elm. Even so the poor, praying unto the Lord for the  
'rich, are heard by him, and their riches are increased, be-  
'cause they minister to the poor of their wealth. They  
'are, therefore, both made partakers of each others good  
'works. Whosoever, therefore, shall do these things, he  
'shall not be forsaken by the Lord, but *shall be written in*  
'*the BOOK OF LIFE.*"

In the *Third Similitude*, under the figure of leafless trees in winter, when the dead are not easily distinguished from the living ones, he presents the mingled condition of both righteous and wicked in this world. "Because nei-  
'ther the righteous nor unrighteous are known from one  
'another, but are all alike in *this present world.* For  
'this world is as the winter to the righteous men, because  
'they are not known, but dwell among sinners. As in the  
'winter all the trees, having lost their leaves, are like dry  
'trees, nor can it be discerned which are dry and which  
'are green; so in *this present world* neither the righteous  
'nor wicked are discerned from each other, but they are  
'all alike."

In the *Fourth Similitude*, under the figure of trees withered, and others with fruit and leaves, he presents the

*future state* of mankind. "These trees which are green 'are the *righteous*, which shall possess the WORLD TO COME. 'For the world to come is the summer to the righteous; 'but to sinners it is the winter. When, therefore, the 'mercy of the Lord shall shine forth, then they who serve 'God shall be made manifest and plain unto all. For as 'in the summer the fruit of every tree is shown and made 'manifest; so also the works of the righteous shall be 'declared and made manifest, and they shall all be RE- 'STORED *in that* WORLD merry and joyful. For the other 'kind of men, namely, the wicked, like the trees which 'thou sawest dry, shall as such be found dry and without 'fruit *in that other* WORLD, and *like* DRY WOOD shall be 'BURNT; and it shall be made manifest that they have 'done evil all the time of their life; *and they* SHALL BE BURNT, because they have *sinned*, and have *not repented* of their sins. And also all the other nations shall be 'BURNT, because they have not acknowledged God their 'Creator. Do thou, therefore, bring forth good fruit, that 'in the summer thy fruit shall be known. . . . If, there- 'fore, thou shalt do this, thou mayest have fruit *in the* 'WORLD TO COME; and all, as many as shall do in like 'manner, shall bring forth fruit."

In the *Fifth Similitude* he treats of fasting, and, towards the close, of bodily purity. Man is represented as a vineyard, out of which sins are to be rooted, and *in* which every grace should flourish. While speaking of the endeavors of Christ to free his people from their sins, he says: "He himself labored very much, and suffered very much, that he might blot out their offences. . . . Where- 'fore, having blotted out the sins of his people, he showed 'to them the *paths of* LIFE, giving them the law which he

· had received of the Father.” Concerning bodily purity, he has these words, which show that he looked upon the redemption of man as a bodily redemption. “For every ‘pure BODY shall receive its *reward* that is found without ‘spot, in which the Holy Spirit has been appointed to ‘dwell. . . . Keep this *thy* BODY clean and pure, that the ‘spirit which shall dwell in it may bear witness unto it, and be judged to have been with thee. Also *take heed* ‘that it be not *instilled into thy mind* that *this* BODY PER- ‘ISHES, and thou abuse it to any lust. For if thou shalt ‘defile thy body, thou shalt also at the same time defile ‘the Holy Spirit; and if thou shalt defile the Holy Spirit, ‘thou SHALT NOT LIVE. . . . But now guard thyself; and ‘seeing God is almighty and merciful, he will grant a ‘remedy to what thou hast formerly done amiss, if for the ‘time to come thou shalt not defile thy body and spirit, for ‘they are companions together, and the one cannot be de- ‘filed but the other will be so too. Keep, therefore, both ‘of them pure, and *thou shalt* LIVE UNTO GOD.”

In the *sixth similitude* he says: “I shall be happy if I ‘shall walk according to these commands, and whosoever ‘shall walk in them *shall* LIVE UNTO GOD. . . . Walk ‘in my commands, and ye *shall* LIVE UNTO GOD: These ‘things have I spoken unto you.” Afterward under the figure of sheep living in pleasure and luxury, he represents “Such as have forever departed from God, and given them- ‘selves up to the lusts of this present time. To these ‘therefore there is no return, by repentance, *unto* LIFE; ‘because that to their other sins they have added this, that ‘they have blasphemed the name of the Lord. These kind ‘of men are *ordained unto* DEATH. . . . Whosoever ‘therefore have delivered themselves over to such pleasures

‘are thus punished; because that when they had *life* they rendered themselves *liable to DEATH*. . . . And whosoever shall continue in them, and shall not repent of what they have done, shall *bring DEATH UPON THEMSELVES*.”

In the *Eighth Similitude* he speaks of “The deserters and betrayers of the church; who, with the rest of their crimes, have also blasphemed the Lord, and denied his name which had been called upon them. Therefore all these are dead unto God; and thou seest that none of them have repented, although they have heard my commands which thou hast delivered unto them. From these men therefore *LIFE is far distant*.” Of others he says “They have been counterfeits, and brought in evil doctrines; and have perverted the servants of God; but especially those who had sinned; not suffering them to return unto repentance, but keeping them back by their false doctrines. These therefore have hope; and thou seest that many of them have repented, since the time that thou hast laid my commands before them; and many more will yet repent. But *they that shall not repent, shall lose both REPENTANCE AND LIFE*. . . . Thou seest therefore, that in the repentance of sinners there is *LIFE*; but that for those who repent not, *DEATH* is prepared.” He speaks again of others who are “Evil-speakers; who detract from those that are absent, and have never peace among themselves, and that envy one another. Howbeit to these also repentance is offered . . . but they that shall not repent, but shall continue on in their wicked doings, *shall DIE THE DEATH*. . . . But if any one shall again return to his dissent, . . . he shall *LOSE HIS LIFE*. For the *LIFE* of those who keep the commandments of the Lord, consists in *doing what they are commanded*; not in princi-



'pality, or in any other dignity. For by forbearance and  
 'humility of mind, men shall *attain unto* LIFE, but by se-  
 'ditions, and contempt of the law, they shall *purchase*  
 DEATH *unto themselves*, . . . but if they shall not  
 'repent, *they shall* DIE." Again he speaks of others who  
 "have altogether departed from God. *These have* UT-  
 'TERLY LOST LIFE. And some being in a doubtful state,  
 'have raised up dissensions; these may yet return if  
 'they shall suddenly repent, and not continue in their  
 'lusts, but if they shall continue in their evil-doing,  
 '*they shall* DIE." Of "others still living among the  
 'heathen people," and who "being lifted up with their  
 'vanities, have utterly fallen away from God, and followed  
 'the works and wickednesses of the heathen," he says,  
 "these kind of men are to be reckoned among strangers to  
 'the gospel. Others of these begin to be doubtful in their  
 'minds by reason of their wicked doings, ever to attain  
 'unto salvation. . . . To these there is still hope of return;  
 'but they must repent quickly. . . . But they that  
 'repent not, but continue still in their pleasures, are *nigh*  
 '*unto* DEATH. . . . Whosoever shall repent with all  
 'their hearts, and cleanse themselves from all the evils that  
 'I have before mentioned, and not add anything more to  
 'their sins, shall receive from the Lord the cure of their  
 'former iniquities, if they shall not make any doubt of  
 'these commands, and shall live unto God. But they that  
 'shall continue to add to their transgressions, and shall  
 'still converse with the lusts of this present world, *shall*  
 '*condemn themselves* UNTO DEATH. But do thou walk in  
 'these commands, and thou *shalt* LIVE UNTO GOD; and  
 'whosoever shall walk in these and exercise them rightly,  
 '*shall* LIVE UNTO GOD."

In the *Ninth Similitude*, after beholding the erection of the church, under the figure of a building, he says—  
 “For all these things I gave thanks unto the Lord, that  
 ‘being moved with mercy towards all those upon whom  
 ‘his name is called, he sent to us the angel of repentance  
 ‘to preside over us who have sinned against him; and that  
 ‘he has refreshed our spirits which were almost gone, and  
 ‘who had no hope of salvation, but are now refreshed to  
 ‘*the renewal of LIFE*. . . For they could not otherwise enter  
 ‘into the kingdom of God, but by laying aside the  
 ‘*mortality* of their former life. They, therefore, being *dead*,  
 ‘were nevertheless sealed with the seal of the Son of God,  
 ‘and so entered into the kingdom of God. For before a  
 ‘man receives the name of the Son of God, he is *ordained*  
 ‘*unto DEATH*; but when he receives that seal, he is *freed*  
 ‘*from DEATH*, and *assigned unto LIFE*. Now that seal is  
 ‘the water of baptism, into which men go down under the  
 ‘*obligation unto DEATH*, but come up *APPOINTED UNTO*  
 ‘*LIFE*.” Alluding to the punishment of apostates, he says :  
 “And does not he then seem to thee to sin more who  
 ‘ought to follow goodness, if he shall prefer the part of  
 ‘sin, than he who offends without knowing the power of  
 ‘God? Wherefore these are indeed *ordained unto DEATH*;  
 ‘but they who have known the Lord, and have seen his  
 ‘wonderful works, if they shall live wickedly, they shall  
 ‘be *doubly punished*, and *shall DIE FOREVER*.”

Again he says of those who “Have indeed the name of  
 ‘Christians, but are empty of faith, nor is there any fruit  
 ‘of the truth in them. Nevertheless there is room left to  
 ‘them for repentance, if they shall suddenly pursue it;  
 ‘but if they shall delay, they also shall be *partakers of*  
 ‘*DEATH with the foregoing kind*. . . There is, therefore, to

‘these a *return unto LIFE by repentance.*” Concerning those who were encumbered with the cares and riches of this life, he declares, “If, therefore, having repented, they shall do the works of righteousness, they *shall LIVE*: but if they shall continue in their evil courses, they shall be delivered to those. . . .that will *take away their LIFE.*” And of others who “live only in words but their works ‘are dead. . . .This kind of men then is neither dead nor ‘alive; nevertheless *these also may LIVE*, if they shall presently *repent*: but if not, they shall be delivered to those ‘. . . .who shall *take away their LIFE.*”

Speaking of those who have quarrels and refuse forgiveness, he says: “Those who will be as stiff stones, mindful ‘of grudges and offences, and full of anger among themselves. . . .this kind of men *shall hardly LIVE*. Our God ‘and Lord, who ruleth over all things, and has power over ‘all his creatures, will not remember our offences, but is ‘easily appeased by those who confess their sins: but man, ‘being languid, MORTAL, infirm and full of sins, perseveres ‘in his anger against man; as if it were in his power to ‘save or to destroy him. But I, as the angel who am set ‘over your repentance, admonish you, that whosoever ‘among you has any such purpose, he should lay it aside, ‘and return unto repentance; and the Lord will heal your ‘former sins, if you shall purge yourselves from this evil ‘spirit; but if you shall not do it, *ye shall be DELIVERED ‘to him UNTO DEATH.*” Again, he refers to “such ministers as discharge their ministry amiss; ravishing away ‘the goods of the widows and fatherless; and serve themselves, not others, out of those things which they have ‘received. These, if they continue in their covetousness, ‘*have delivered themselves unto DEATH*, nor shall there be

'any hope of LIFE for them. But if they shall be converted, and shall discharge their ministry sincerely, they may LIVE. As for such as have denied the name of the Lord, and not returned again to the Lord, but have become savage and wild; not applying themselves to the servants of God, but being separated from them, have for a little carefulness lost their LIVES. . . . Howbeit to these there is, after all, repentance allowed, if they shall not be found from their hearts to have denied Christ: but if any of these shall be found to have denied him from his heart, I cannot tell whether such an one can attain unto LIFE."

Again, while warning them against denying the Lord, he writes, "For if all nations punish their servants which deny their masters, what think you that the Lord will do unto you, who has the power of all things? Remove, therefore, from your hearts these doubts, that ye may LIVE FOREVER UNTO GOD." And towards the close he says, "If, therefore, ye shall believe and hearken to these words, and shall walk in them, and shall correct your ways, ye shall LIVE. But if ye shall continue in malice, and in the remembrance of injuries, no such sinners shall LIVE UNTO GOD."

In the *Tenth Similitude* he speaks of repentance, and enjoins obedience to the commands that have been given. Says Hermas, "I declare to all men the wonderful works of God; and I hope that all who love them and have before sinned, when they shall hear these things, will repent and recover LIFE. . . . and whosoever shall do according to the commands of this Shepherd, he shall LIVE; and shall have great honor both here and with the Lord. But they that shall not keep his commands, flee from their LIFE, and are adversaries unto it. And they that follow

not his commands shall *deliver themselves* unto DEATH, 'and shall be every one guilty of *his own blood*. But I 'say unto thee, keep these commandments, and thou shalt 'find a cure for all thy sins . . . And whosoever shall 'walk in these commands *shall* LIVE, and shall be *happy in* 'his LIFE. But he that shall neglect them *shall* NOT LIVE, 'and shall be unhappy in his life." That is, he shall be unhappy in his *present life*, and shall not *live forever*.

Thus we conclude our extracts from the writings of Her-  
mas. The passages quoted from the Similitudes are too  
numerous for repetition or recapitulation, but the reader  
can see at a glance that they teach the same doctrines as  
the Visions and the Commands, from which we have before  
made extracts. Our examination of the writings of this  
apostolic Christian has been necessarily prolix. We are  
fully rewarded for our pains by the clear testimony to Gos-  
pel truth which we are thus enabled to deduce. And we  
are confident that no one coming after us can obtain any  
contravening evidence. Every passage in which he refers  
to the future condition of mankind has been largely quoted.  
There is no "other side" to the statement of this good  
man's faith—a faith as yet not spoiled by vain philosophy  
or encumbered by the oppositions of a fabled science.

We are struck with the pure morality and Christianity  
which shines in every page of these writings. The sym-  
bols are sometimes peculiar and often ingenious and fanci-  
ful, but the precepts that are scattered through the whole  
remind us of the words of those who have "been with  
Jesus" and learned of him. No human writing furnishes  
us purer morality, or better precepts; and the *doctrines*  
are the doctrines of Christianity as they fell from the  
burning lips of the apostles of Jesus Christ. Can this

doctrine be unsound which was written, taught believed, and publicly read among the Christian churches while yet some of the apostles were living in their midst ?

But this writer sets before the people *life* and *death*. In all his writings there is no promised reward but *life*, no threatened punishment but *death*. He gives no hint of any intermediate state of consciousness after death and before the resurrection. He intimates nothing of going to heaven or to hell at death. He says not one word of universal salvation. He gives no countenance to the idea of a limited future punishment to be succeeded by universal restoration. He says nothing of eternal torment and agony as the portion of the impenitent; he says nothing of immortal souls or of immortal sinners; he makes no mention of deathless spirits, and the only immortality he recognizes is a gift of God. Man he most unqualifiedly pronounces *mortal*, never *immortal*. LIFE he constantly holds out as the reward of obedience, and *death* and destruction he *invariably* teaches to be the wages of sin. And we are not to suppose that he attached a spiritual meaning to the words, by which everlasting destruction was made to signify everlasting preservation, and death was explained to mean eternal life in torment. No! not one hint of such interpretations can be found in all his writings. This putting light for darkness and darkness for light was reserved for other bolder and less reliable writers than those who listened to apostolic teachings, received apostolic salutations, and cherished an apostolic faith. No one would derive the doctrine of the immortality of the soul or the endless torment of the sinner, from the writings of Hermas any more than they would from the writings of Paul, in which every careful reader may know there is no

intimation of either of these doctrines to be found. Thus then we seek for the old paths. Hermas walked in them as did the apostles before him. We follow rejoicingly on, believing that this is the good way, and that by walking therein we shall find rest to our souls. We teach as did Hermas. "We "hold fast" the same "form of sound words" which he had received of the apostles. We do not *build* our faith on Hermas, but having found that Paul teaches it in all his epistles, we are glad to follow on and to find that instead of having adopted a novel principle of interpretation, we come to the same conclusions that were arrived at by the Christians of primitive ages. We must have *read* Paul aright when others who *heard* him agree with us in the matter. And shall a faith thus derived from apostolic writers, and confirmed by the united voice of their disciples, hearers and fellow laborers, be in the nineteenth century counted as a novelty, and condemned as a heresy? And is the judgment of the man who knows so little of Christian antiquity, as to pronounce this doctrine *new*, worthy of very much deference on the part of any save those who are the blinded followers of still blinder guides?

## CHAPTER V.

### IGNATIUS, A. D. 107.

“Wherefore, I exhort all of you that ye obey the word of righteousness, and exercise all patience which ye have seen set forth before your eyes . . . . in the blessed IGNATIUS.” POLYCARP to the *Philippians*, iii. 7.

Leaving the writings of Hermas and passing downward, we next meet with *Ignatius*, a saint and martyr of most blessed memory. Dr. A. Clarke remarks concerning him, that he was “Surnamed *Theophorus*, born in Syria, educated under the apostles *John* and *Peter*, and became bishop of Antioch, about A. D. 67, in which he continued till A. D. 107, when he was sent to Rome by the order of *Trajan*, and devoured by wild beasts, being found guilty of believing in Jesus Christ!”\*

Says Dr. Lardner: “Ignatius was bishop of Antioch, in Syria, the latter part of the *first*, and the beginning of the *second* century. He is said by some to have been the child whom our Lord took in his arms and set in the midst of his disciples, as an emblem of humility. But of this story there is no foundation in the earliest antiquity. Eusebius in his ecclesiastical history says, ‘that Euodius having been the first bishop of Antioch, Ignatius succeeded him.’† With whom St. Jerome agrees. In his Chronicle,

\* Sacred Literature, p. 90.

† Eccl. Hist. B. iii. ch. 22.



‘Eusebius places the ordination of Ignatius in the year 69, after the death of Peter and Paul at Rome. Nevertheless some think, that Ignatius was ordained by Peter; and suppose that Euodius and Ignatius were both bishops of Antioch at one and the same time; the one of the Jewish, and the other of the Gentile Christians; but after the death of Euodius, they all came to be under Ignatius, as their bishop. If Ignatius only succeeded Euodius about the year of our Lord 70, it may be reasonably concluded, he was acquainted with several of the apostles. And St. Chrysostom says, ‘he conversed familiarly with them, and was perfectly acquainted with their doctrine,’ and had the hands of Apostles laid upon him.”

Eusebius makes mention of Ignatius again in his history, where after referring to Polycarp and Papias he alludes to “Ignatius, also, who is celebrated by many even to this day, as the successor of Peter at Antioch; was the second who obtained the episcopal office there. It is said that he was sent from Syria to Rome to be devoured by wild beasts for the testimony of Christ. And making his journey through Asia under a strong guard, he confirmed the churches in every city by his discourses, and especially cautioned them against the heresies then springing up, and gaining ground; and exhorted them to adhere to the tradition of the apostles. And for the greater security, he also put down his instructions in writing. Therefore when he came to Smyrna, where Polycarp was, he wrote an epistle to the church at *Ephesus*, another to the church in *Magnesia*, which is situated upon the Meander, . . . another also to the church of the *Trallians*. . . . To these must be added the epistle to the church at *Rome*. . . . Afterwards removing from Smyrna he wrote to the

*Philadelphians* from Troas, and to the church of *Smyrna*, 'and particularly to *Polycarp*, who was bishop there.'"\*

Polycarp also in his epistle makes mention of "the blessed Ignatius," and also of "the *Epistles* of Ignatius, 'which he wrote to us. . . . by which ye may be greatly 'profited; for they treat of faith and patience, and of all 'things that pertain to edification in the Lord Jesus."† Jerome also, in his book of *Illustrious Men*, ‡ says of "Ignatius, the third bishop of the church of Antioch after 'the apostle Peter, in the persecution under Trajan, was 'condemned to wild beasts. And when he came to Smyrna, 'where Polycarp, the disciple of John, was bishop, he 'wrote an epistle to the *Ephesians*, another to the *Magne-* 'sians, a third to the *Trallians*, a fourth to the *Romans* : 'and when he was gone thence he wrote to the *Philadel-* 'phians, the *Smyrneans*, and in particular to *Polycarp*."

These epistles so particularly mentioned by these numerous Christian writers, have come down to us, bearing the names of the author, and the churches to whom they were respectively addressed. The testimony of such an early martyr must of course be of great value in ascertaining what was the primitive doctrine of a future life.

What then was the teaching of Ignatius, the successor of Peter, at Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians? What was the doctrine of this cotemporary of the apostles? of this faithful martyr of Jesus? Surely he who conversed familiarly with the apostles and was perfectly acquainted with their doctrine, will give us light upon the points we seek to investigate. Does Ignatius teach the

\* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. B. iii. ch. 36. † Philippians iii. 7; iv. 15, 15.

‡ Cap. 16.

immortality of the soul? the doctrine of going to heaven or hell at death? or the eternal torment of sinners? If he does, his testimony must have weight. If he does not, his evidence is no less weighty. Let us commence then our extracts from his writings.

Our first quotations are from his

#### EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS.

In the *first chapter* he speaks thus: "For even Christ, 'OUR *inseparable* LIFE, is sent by the will of the Father."

In the *second chapter* he remarks: "There is one Physician, both fleshly and spiritual, made and not made; God incarnate; *true* LIFE in *death*; both of Mary and of God." Now by this he evidently implies that the divine nature of Christ was TRUE LIFE, while the mortal nature is termed *death*. Again he says, "I rejoice that I have been 'thought worthy by this present epistle to converse, and 'joy together with you; that with respect to the *other* 'LIFE, ye love nothing but God only." Here the *other life* or *life to come*, is presented as a motive to point them to love God only.

In the *third chapter*, unlike many who proclaim that the world is yet in its infancy, Ignatius solemnly writes, "The 'last times are come upon us: let us therefore be very 'reverent, and fear the long-suffering of God, that it be not 'to us unto condemnation. For let us either fear the 'wrath that is to come, or let us love the grace that is present, that by the one or the other of these we may be 'found in *Christ Jesus*, unto *true* LIFE."

In the *fourth chapter* he says, "Be not deceived, my 'brethren; those that corrupt families by adultery shall 'not inherit the kingdom of God. If therefore they who

' do this according to the flesh, have suffered *death* ; how  
 ' much MORE *shall he DIE*, who by his wicked doctrine cor-  
 ' rupts the faith of God for which Christ was crucified ?  
 ' He that is thus defiled, shall depart into *unquenchable*  
 ' *fire*,\* and so also shall he that hearkens to him. For this  
 ' cause did the Lord suffer the ointment to be poured on  
 ' his head ; that HE might breathe the BREATH OF IMMOR-  
 ' TALITY into *his CHURCH*. Be not ye therefore anointed  
 ' with the evil savor of the doctrine of the prince of this  
 ' world : let him not take you captive from the LIFE that is  
 ' *set before you*. And why are we not all wise, seeing we  
 ' have received the knowledge of God, which is Jesus  
 ' Christ ? Why do we suffer ourselves foolishly to PERISH ;  
 ' not considering *the GIFT* which the Lord has truly sent to  
 ' us ? Let *my life* be sacrificed for the doctrine of the  
 ' cross ; which is indeed a scandal to the unbelievers, but  
 ' to us is salvation and LIFE ETERNAL. . . . Hence all  
 ' the power of magic became dissolved ; and every bond of  
 ' wickedness was destroyed ; men's ignorance was taken  
 ' away ; and the old kingdom abolished ; God himself ap-  
 ' pearing in the form of a man, for *the renewal of ETERNAL*  
 ' LIFE. From thence began what God had prepared : from  
 ' thenceforth things were disturbed ; for as much as he  
 ' designed to ABOLISH DEATH." In the same chapter he in-  
 ' timates his purpose to write to them again more fully con-  
 ' cerning Christ, " both in his faith and charity ; in his suf-  
 ' fering and in *his RESURRECTION*. Especially if the Lord  
 ' shall make known unto me, that ye all by name come to-  
 ' gether in common in one faith, and in one Jesus Christ ;

\* See an explanation of this phrase with examples of its use in " Pauline Theology," page 49.

‘ who was of the race of David, according to the flesh ;  
 ‘ the Son of man, and Son of God ; obeying your bishop  
 ‘ and the presbytery with an entire affection ; breaking one  
 ‘ and the same bread, which is *the medicine of IMMOR-*  
 ‘ *TALITY* ; our *antidote* that we should *not* DIE, but *live FOR-*  
 ‘ *EVER in Christ Jesus.*”

These are all the passages in this epistle in which Ignatius makes reference to a future state. No reader can fail to see the course of his testimony which he gave concerning the future life, while walking in the old paths. We proceed now to examine

#### THE EPISTLE TO THE MAGNESIANS.

In the *first chapter* he writes : “ When I heard of your  
 ‘ well ordered love and charity in God, being full of joy,  
 ‘ I desired much to speak unto you in the faith of Jesus  
 ‘ Christ. For having been thought worthy to obtain a  
 ‘ most excellent name,\* in the bonds which I carry about,  
 ‘ I salute the churches ; wishing in them a union both of  
 ‘ the *body and spirit* of Jesus Christ, *our ETERNAL LIFE* ; as  
 ‘ also of faith and charity.”

In the *second chapter* he says, “ Seeing then all things  
 ‘ have an end, there are *these two* together *set before us*,  
 ‘ *DEATH and LIFE* : and every one shall depart unto his  
 ‘ proper place. For as there are two sorts of coins, the  
 ‘ one of God, the other of the World ; and each of them  
 ‘ has its proper inscription engraven upon it ; so also it is  
 ‘ here. The unbelievers are of this world ; but the faith-

\* Literally “ a name carrying a great deal of divinity in it,” referring probably to his name *Theophorus*, from *theos* God, and *phero*, to bear.

‘ful, through love, have the character of God the Father  
 ‘by Jesus Christ; by whom, if we are not readily disposed  
 ‘to die after the likeness of his passion, *his LIFE is not in*  
 ‘*us . . .* Let there be nothing that may be able to make a  
 ‘division among you; but be ye united to your bishop,  
 ‘and those who preside over you, to be your pattern and  
 ‘direction in *the way to IMMORTALITY.*”

In the *third chapter*, while cautioning them not to be deceived with strange doctrines, or led away by Jewish fables, he says, “Wherefore if they who were brought up  
 ‘in these ancient laws, came nevertheless to the newness of  
 ‘hope; no longer observing Sabbaths, but keeping the  
 ‘Lord’s day, in which also our LIFE is sprung up by him,  
 ‘and through his death, whom yet some deny. . . . How  
 ‘shall we be able to LIVE *without him*; whose disciples  
 ‘the very prophets themselves being, did by the spirit expect him as their master, and therefore, he whom they  
 ‘justly waited for, being come, *ruised them up from the*  
 ‘DEAD.\* Let us not then be insensible of his goodness;  
 ‘for should he have dealt with us according to our works,  
 ‘we *had NOT now had a BEING.*” In concluding the chapter, he exhorts them to “be fully instructed in the birth,  
 ‘and suffering, and *resurrection* of Jesus Christ *our HOPE*;  
 ‘which was accomplished in the time of the government of  
 ‘Pontius Pilate, and that most truly and certainly; and  
 ‘from which God forbid that any among you should be  
 ‘turned aside.”

Thus wrote Ignatius to the Magnesian church. Can we mistake his testimony? Let us proceed to examine his

\* See Matt. xxvii. 52. To which Ignatius evidently refers here.

## EPISTLE TO THE TRALLIANS.

In the *first chapter* he salutes "The holy church which is at Tralles in Asia; beloved of God the father of Jesus Christ; elect and worthy of God; having peace through the flesh and blood, and passion of Jesus Christ our hope; in the *resurrection which is by him*," and says, "Ye appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ; who died for us, that so, believing in HIS *death*, ye might *escape* DEATH."

In the *second chapter* he warns them against false doctrine and heresy, "For they that are heretics confound the doctrine of Jesus Christ with their own poison; whilst they seem worthy of belief: as men give a deadly potion mixed with sweet wine, which he who is ignorant of does with the treacherous pleasure sweetly drink in his *own* DEATH. . . . Stop your ears, therefore, as often as any one shall speak contrary to Jesus Christ; who was of the race of David, of the Virgin Mary. Who was truly born, and did eat and drink, . . . was truly crucified and dead, . . . who was also truly *raised from the dead* by his Father in the same manner as he will also *raise up us* who believe in him, by Christ Jesus; *without whom* we have *no* TRUE LIFE. But if, as some who are atheists, that is to say, infidels, pretend, that he only *seemed* to suffer (they themselves only *seeming* to exist); why then am I bound? Why do I desire to fight with beasts? Therefore do I die in vain. Therefore I will not speak falsely against the Lord. Flee, therefore, these evil plants, which bring forth *deadly* fruit; of which if any one taste he *shall presently* DIE. For these are not the plants of the Father; seeing if they were, they would ap-

pear to be the branches of the cross, and their fruit would be INCORRUPTIBLE."

Leaving the Epistle to the Trallians, we now proceed to quote briefly from

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

In the *first chapter* he remarks, "It is good for me to 'set from the world unto God; that I may rise again unto 'him."

In the *second chapter* he says, "If I shall suffer I shall 'then become the freeman of Jesus Christ, and *shall* RISE 'FREE." . . . "I would rather die for Jesus Christ, than rule 'to the utmost ends of the earth!"

In the *third chapter* he declares, "I take no pleasure 'in the food of corruption, nor in the pleasures of this life. 'I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus 'Christ the Son of God, made in these last times of the 'seed of David and Abraham, and the drink of God I long 'for, is his blood which is incorruptible love and *perpetual* 'LIFE." There is another passage where he tells his brethren, "Ye shall not hinder me from living, nor desire me 'to die," but as this reading of the Greek is contradicted by the Latin copy, we pass it by with the statement that in the whole epistle he makes use of no expressions that teach the natural immortality of man. He does speak of attaining unto God, or unto Christ, but by this it would seem he means that he should "be truly a disciple of Christ," as he expresses it, thus having fellowship with his sufferings, that he might thus "rise free" in the resurrection at the last day, and reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Leaving this we pass to



## THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILADELPHIANS.

In the *first chapter* he addresses "The Church of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, which is at Philadelphia in Asia, which has obtained mercy, being fixed in the concord of God, and rejoicing evermore in the passion of our Lord, and being fulfilled in all mercy *through his RESURRECTION*; which I also salute in the blood of Jesus Christ, which is our *eternal and undefiled joy*."

In the *second chapter* he says, "To me, Jesus Christ is instead of all the incorrupted monuments in the world; together with those undefiled monuments, his *cross*, and *death*, and *RESURRECTION*, and the faith which is by him; by which I desire, through your prayers, to be justified. . . . The Gospel has somewhat in it far above all other dispensations; namely, the appearance of our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, his passion and *resurrection*. For the beloved prophets referred to him: but THE GOSPEL is *the perfection of INCORRUPTION*." How perfectly this accords with the statement of Paul, that Christ "*hath abolished DEATH, and brought LIFE and IMMORTALITY to LIGHT in THE GOSPEL*."

In the *third chapter*, at the close of the epistle, he refers to certain Christians, and says, "May our Lord Jesus Christ honor them; in whom they hope, both in *flesh*, and *soul*, and *spirit*; in faith, in love, in unity. Farewell in Christ Jesus *our common hope*."

Thus closes this epistle in which, while the resurrection is constantly presented as the object of the Christian's hope, there is not one intimation that he believed in the natural immortality of the soul or any of the errors that have sprung from that unscriptural idea. And here I am

reminded of the following truthful admission of the learned Dr. A. Clarke. "One remark I cannot help making; the 'doctrine of the *resurrection* seems to have been thought 'of much more consequence among the primitive Christians 'than it is *now*! How is this? The apostles were con- 'tinually insisting on it, and exciting the followers of God 'to diligence, obedience, and cheerfulness, through it. And 'their successors in the present day seldom mention it! 'So apostles preached; and so primitive Christians believed: 'so we preach and so our hearers believe. There is not a 'doctrine in the gospel on which more stress is laid; and 'there is not a doctrine in the present system of preaching 'which is treated with more neglect."\* Could there be a more frank admission that "the present system of preaching" is more apostate than apostolic?

#### THE EPISTLE TO THE SMYRNEANS.

In the *first chapter* of this epistle we find Ignatius writing in opposition to certain heretics, that Christ was truly crucified by Pontius Pilate, &c. "That he 'might set up a token for all ages through his RESURREC- 'TION to all his holy and faithful servants, whether they be 'Jews or Gentiles, in one body of his church. Now all 'these things he suffered for us that we might be saved. 'And he suffered truly, as he also truly raised up himself; 'and not, as some unbelievers say, that he only *seemed* to 'suffer, they themselves only *seeming* to be. And as they 'believe, so shall it happen unto *them*; when being 'divested of the body they shall become *mere spirits*! 'But I *know* that even after his resurrection, he was *in*

\* Notes at the end of 1 C r. xv.

*the flesh*; and I believe that he is *still so*. And when he came to those that were with Peter, he said unto them, Take, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal demon. And straightway they felt him and believed; being convinced both by his flesh and spirit. For *this cause* they despised death, and were found to be above it. But after his resurrection he did eat and drink with them, as he was *flesh*; although as to his spirit he was united to the Father."

One remark here deserves notice: "And as *they* believe 'so shall it happen unto them; they shall become mere 'spirits!'" This seems to be a most cutting stroke of irony; as they believed that Jesus was nothing but a *phantom* or shade, so *they* will be when their life has ended. "From whence," says Dr. Lardner, "I think it appears, 'Ignatius was wont to use the words demon and demoniac 'as equivalent to *phantom* or *spirit* and *phantastical*.'"\* Of course, he does not intend to represent by this the separate state of the dead, as he is only speaking of *heretics*; and the expression seems to amount to this, that as they thought Christ to be a *phantom* or *nothing*, so they themselves would become *phantoms* or mere spirits by rejecting him.

In the *second chapter* he speaks of "the Lord Jesus 'Christ, who is *our true life*." Of unbelievers who denied these teachings, he says, "God forbid that I should make 'any mention of them, till they shall repent to a true belief of Christ's passion, which is *our RESURRECTION*. . . . 'They abstain from the eucharist, because they confess not 'the eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, 'which suffered for our sins, and which the Father of his

\* Credibility, vol. ii. p. 92.

‘goodness raised again from the dead. And for this cause, ‘contradicting the gift of God, they DIE in their disputes; ‘but much better would it be for them to receive it, that ‘they might *one day RISE through it*. It will, therefore, ‘become you to abstain from such persons, . . . but to ‘hearken to the prophets, and especially to the Gospel, in ‘which both Christ’s passion is manifested unto us, and his ‘RESURRECTION perfectly declared.”

Again, in the *third chapter*, he salutes them “in general, ‘and every one in particular, in the name of Jesus Christ, ‘and in *his flesh and blood*; in his *passion* and RESURREC- ‘TION, both *fleshly* and *spiritually*; and in the unity of ‘God with you.” These extracts may serve to show that the preaching of Christ in those days extended farther than the bare fact of his crucifixion. They preached “*Christ that died, yea RATHER that is RISEN AGAIN*.” His resurrection was their hope, and the doctrine of the resurrection was the centre of that wondrous system of glad tidings which was to those who believed “*the power of God and ‘the wisdom of God*.”

#### THE EPISTLE TO POLYCARP.

This epistle is a solemn exhortation from Ignatius in chains to Polycarp, who was also destined to be among the martyrs of the Lamb. He exhorts him thus: “Be watch- ‘ful, having thy spirit always awake; . . . where the labor ‘is great, the gain is the more. . . . The times demand ‘thee, as the pilots the winds; and he that is tost in a tem- ‘pest, the haven where he would be; that thou mayest ‘attain unto God. Be sober as the combatant of God; ‘*the crown proposed to thee is IMMORTALITY; and ETERNAL ‘LIFE*, concerning which thou art also fully persuaded. . . .

Stand firm and immovable, as an anvil when it is beaten upon. It is the part of a brave combatant to be beaten, and yet overcome. . . . Be every day better than another : ' consider the times, and expect him who is above all time, ' eternal, invisible, though for our sakes made visible; impalpable and impassable, yet for us subjected to sufferings; enduring all manner of ways for our salvation."

In the *second chapter* he says, " Labor with one another; contend together, run together, *suffer together*, SLEEP together, and RISE TOGETHER, as the stewards, and assessors, and ministers of God." I am not positive, but I judge from the passage, that by *suffering*, *sleeping* and *rising*, he refers to the death and resurrection of the saints. If so, we find it in accordance with his own and others' teachings. The saints are to sleep in Jesus 'together,' till they rise in the resurrection at the last day.

Thus we conclude our extracts from the writings of this ancient and excellent writer. And here we must remark, as concerning other of his cotemporaries: We find not one hint that all men have immortal souls. We find no mention of undying souls, immortal minds or deathless spirits. We hear nothing of a hell of fire, into which the spirits of the wicked are plunged at death. We hear nothing of eternal torment for sinners in the world to come. We hear, on the other hand, of Christ, who is our *true life*; of immortality presented in the Gospel, of *death* for the sinners, and of the *crown of immortality* being set before the victorious warrior in the fight of faith. One or two passages might be construed to favor the idea of a conscious state of the righteous in death; but these are susceptible of another interpretation, and besides, in some of these cases the Latin copy contradicts the Greek, showing

that it has been interpolated or corrupted. Is the faith of Ignatius a novelty? Are those who believe as he did innovators, infidels and heretics? Readers, judge ye. Are they not rather walking in the old paths? Can we hope to be more correct in our understanding of the apostles' writings than was "the blessed Ignatius," who saw and talked with them? Have we not reason to be strengthened in our faith, when we find that the earliest uninspired teachers of Christianity believed and taught just as we believe that the apostles taught before them?

## CHAPTER VI

### POLYCARP, A. D. 108.

‘POLYCARP, *disciple of the Apostles, who received the Bishopric of the church in Smyrna from the eye witnesses and ministers of the Lord.*’—EUSEBIUS, B. 3, c. 36.

Among the brilliant examples of primitive piety and faith, I know of none more remarkable than that of Polycarp. He is termed by Irenæus “A man who had been ‘instructed by the Apostles, and had familiar intercourse ‘with many that had seen Christ, and had also been appointed bishop by the apostles in Asia, in the church at ‘Smyrna, whom we also have seen in our youth, for he ‘lived a long time, and to a very advanced age, when after ‘a glorious and most distinguished martyrdom, he departed ‘this life. He always taught what he had learned from the Apostles, what the church had handed down, and ‘what is the only true doctrine. All the churches bear ‘witness to these things, and those that have been the successors of Polycarp, to the present time.”\* He left what Irenæus calls “an excellent epistle to the Philippians, ‘from which they who are willing, and are concerned for ‘their own salvation may learn both the character of his ‘faith, and the doctrine of the truth.”

\* Irenæus *Adversus Hæc.* Lib. iii. c. 3, sect. 4. Eusebius *Ecl. Hist.* B. iv. c. 14.

Irenæus mentions Polycarp with great respect in a letter to Florinus, as follows:

“ I can tell the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, and his going out and coming in, and the manner of his life, and the form of his person, and the discourses he made to the people; and how he related his conversation with John, and others who had seen the Lord; and how he related their sayings, and what he had heard from them concerning the Lord; both concerning his miracles and his doctrine, as he had received them from the eye witnesses of the Word of Life: all which Polycarp related agreeable to the Scriptures.”\*

Eusebius also, after mentioning various Christians who lived in the time of Trajan, says, “At that time flourished in Asia, Polycarp, an intimate disciple of the apostles, who received the bishopric of the church in Smyrna from the eye witnesses and ministers of the Lord.”†

Jerome in his book of *Illustrious Men* ‡ says “Polycarp, the disciple of John the apostle, and by him ordained bishop of Smyrna, was the prince of all Asia. Forasmuch as he had seen and been taught by some of the Apostles, and those who had seen the Lord. . . . In the reign of Marcus Antonius and L. Aurelius Commodus, in the fourth persecution after Nero, he was condemned to the flames at Smyrna, the proconsul being present, and all the people in the amphitheatre demanding his death. He wrote to the Philippians a very useful epistle, which to this day is read in the assembly of Asia.”

Says Dr. A. Clarke, “Polycarp, one of the disciples of

\* Euseb. *Ecl. Hist.* B. v. ch. 20.

† *Ibid.* B. iii ch. 36.

‡ *Cap.* 13.



John, and bishop of Smyrna, supposed to be the *messenger* of that church, to whom St. John is directed to send an Epistle, Rev. ii: 8-11. He was sentenced to be burned alive for the testimony of Christ, A. D. 166.\*

Let us now proceed to consider the writings of this ancient Christian, who was taught by that disciple whom Jesus loved. Probably we shall gain instruction from his words, and learn what was that sure and steadfast hope which sustained him amid the perils and persecutions of a Christian's life, and amid the pain and anguish of a martyr's death. We will examine his

#### EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

In the *first chapter* he thus writes: "Wherefore, girding up the loins of your minds; serve the Lord with fear, and in truth; laying aside all empty and vain speech, and the error of many; believing in him that raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and hath given him glory, and a throne at his right hand. To whom all things are made subject, both that are in heaven, and that are in earth; whom every living creature shall worship; who shall come to be the judge of the quick and dead; whose blood God shall require of them that believe not in him. But he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also *raise up us* in like manner, if we do his will, and walk according to his commandments; and love those things which he loved."

In the *second chapter* he exhorts them to be "blameless. . . . Not false accusers; not double-tongued; not lovers of money; but moderate in all things; compassionate, careful; walking according to the truth of the

\* Sa. Lit. p. 91.

' Lord, who was the servant of all. Whom if we please  
' in this present world, we shall also be made partakers of  
' *that which is TO COME*, according as he has promised to  
' us, that he *will RAISE US FROM THE DEAD*; and that if we  
shall walk worthy of him, we shall also REIGN *together* WITH  
HIM, if we believe."

Again he exhorts to be " Not easy to believe any thing  
' against any; not severe in judgment; knowing that we  
' are all debtors in point of sin. If therefore we pray to  
' the Lord that he would forgive us, we ought also to for-  
' give others; for we are all in the sight of our Lord and  
' God; and must all stand before the judgment seat of  
' Christ; and shall every one give an account of himself.  
' Let us therefore serve him in fear, and with all reverence  
' as both himself hath commanded; and as the Apostles  
' who have preached the Gospel unto us, and the prophets  
' who have foretold the *coming of our Lord*, have taught us."

In the *third chapter* he declares that " Whosoever does  
' not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, he is  
' Antichrist: and whosoever does not confess his suffering  
' upon the cross is from the devil, and whosoever perverts  
the oracles of God to his own lusts, and says that *there  
shall neither be any RESURRECTION, nor JUDGMENT*, he is  
the FIRST-BORN OF SATAN. . . . Let us therefore, without  
' ceasing, hold steadfastly to him who is our hope, and the  
' earnest of our righteousness, even Jesus Christ; who,  
' his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree;  
' who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.  
' But suffered all for us, that *we might LIVE through  
' him*. . . . When it is in your power to do good, defer it  
' not; for charity *delivereth from DEATH*."

These are all the references to a future state that I find

in the epistle of Polycarp. But there is a record of some of his last words, which furnishes something appropriate to the present purpose. It is contained in a letter written by the church at Smyrna, where he labored, giving an account of his death. Eusebius has preserved most of it in his history, and it has come down to us elsewhere entire.

When brought before the proconsul, he maintained his faith with a courage that nothing could daunt. "Swear," said the governor, "and I will dismiss you. Revile 'Christ.'" Polycarp replied, "Eighty-and-six years have 'I served him, and he never did me wrong; and how can 'I now blaspheme my King who has saved me?" To all the threats of his persecutors he returned similar answers. Enraged at his constancy, they prepared the funeral pile to burn him. As they were about nailing him to the stake, he objected, declaring that the Lord would give him power to remain unmoved in the fire. But he, closing his hands behind him, and bound to the stake as a noble victim selected from the great flock, an acceptable sacrifice to Almighty God, said, "Father, of thy well-beloved and 'blessed Son Jesus Christ, through whom we have received 'the knowledge of thee, the God of angels and powers, 'and all creation, and of all the family of the righteous 'that live before thee, I bless thee that thou hast thought me 'worthy of the present day and hour, to have a *share* in 'the number of the martyrs and in the cup of Christ, *unto* 'the RESURRECTION of ETERNAL LIFE, BOTH of SOUL and 'BODY, in the incorruptible felicity of the Holy Spirit; 'among whom may I be received in thy sight this day, as 'a rich and acceptable sacrifice as thou the faithful and true God hast prepared, hast revealed and fulfilled. Wherefore, on this account, and for all things I praise

' thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal high priest, Jesus Christ, thy well-beloved Son. Through whom, glory be to thee with him in the Holy Ghost, both now and forever. Amen.'\*

Thus prayed the faithful servant, and then the flames of the faggot-fire and the sword of the executioner terminated his sufferings and his toils. But his words remain. He being dead yet speaketh. And what is his hope of future life? Does he mention the immortality of the soul or the consciousness of the dead? Not at all. Does he speak of going to heaven or hell at death? By no means. Yet he was a disciple of John the Revelator. He was intimately acquainted with that holy man. He heard from him the doctrines of the Gospel, and taught what he had thus learned. He points continually to the resurrection and judgment. He expected reward then, and not till then. And his dying words show that he expected "the RESURRECTION to eternal life," would be a resurrection of "*both SOUL and BODY.*" When threatened with the flames, he referred to "*the judgment to come, and the fire of eternal punishment RESERVED for the wicked.*" Hence he believed that the wicked were not punished till the judgment, that then they would be punished with *fire*, and that their *punishment* was everlasting or eternal, that as the apostle says they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction," and shall, like the cities of the plain, suffer "the vengeance of *eternal fire.*" But of eternal *torment*, or *torture* or *suffering*, we find no intimation in any portion of the writings of this ancient martyr.

Thus closes the testimony of Polycarp and of the Apostolic fathers. Their testimony has been given without re-

\* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. B. iv. ch. 15.

serve. They agree in their teachings concerning the doctrine of a future life. They extend the promise of that life to those and those only who believe on Jesus Christ. They threaten death or destruction to the disobedient and the rebellious. They point to the resurrection of the dead, both of soul and body, and to the world to come, and teach us then and there to anticipate the Christian's reward and crown.

This was the primitive doctrine of a future Life—Life in Christ, death out of Christ. These are the old paths. This is the good way. And now, having referred in the commencement to the opinion of the learned Dr. A. Clarke, who says that the writings of the Apostolical Fathers “for their deep piety, simplicity, and divine unction, form a proper connecting link between those of the Evangelists and Apostles; and those of the PRIMITIVE FATHERS,” I will add to it the testimony of the learned ARCHBISHOP WAKE, from whose translation of these Epistles our extracts have chiefly been made. This pious prelate says, that these Epistles are a full and perfect collection of “all the genuine writings that remain to us of the Apostolical Fathers, and carry on the antiquity of the church to about a hundred and fifty years after Christ;\* that except the Holy Scriptures, there is nothing remaining of the truly genuine Christian antiquity more early;† that they contain all that can with any certainty be depended upon of the most Primitive Fathers,‡ who had not only the advantage of living in the apostolical times, of hearing the holy Apostles, and conversing with them, but were most

\* Abp. Wake's Apostolical Fathers, Bagster's Edition 8vo., 1817. Preliminary Discourse, p. 106.

† Ib. 120.

‡ Ib. 126.

‘ of them persons of very eminent character in the church  
‘ too ;\* that we cannot with any reason, doubt of what they  
‘ deliver to us as the Gospel of Christ, but ought to receive  
‘ of them persons of very eminent character in the church  
‘ it, if not with equal veneration, yet but with a little less  
‘ respect than we do the sacred writings of those who were  
‘ their masters and instructors.”

With this estimate in the main, we are not disposed to find much fault. We invite the reader to receive “ what they deliver to us, as the Gospel of Christ,” so far as it agrees with the sacred oracles. And we invite the opposer to present his reasons for disbelieving or deriding that which we have shown to be the doctrine of these holy men. We invite the candid to investigate the matter, and thus enquire for the Old Paths.

\* Ib. 128.

END OF PART I.