

**EARLY CHURCH
CLASSIC: THE SHEPHERD
OF HERMAS. VOL. I.**

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Early Church Classic: The Shepherd of Hermas. Vol. I. by C. Taylor

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C. TAYLOR

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CLASSIC: THE SHEPHERD
OF HERMAS. VOL. I.**

THE SHEPHERD

Early Church Classics.

THE SHEPHERD
OF HERMAS

BY THE
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PREFACE

AMONG Early Church Classics the *Shepherd of Hermas* is distinct in species, being neither an epistle, nor a homily, nor a treatise, but a sort of "allegory or religious romance." Picturesque and pleasing in form, and credited with the inspiration which it seemed to claim, the work soon won for itself popularity and influence; for a time it was classed with the sacred writings read in churches; and part of a copy of it is still preserved in one of the chief manuscripts of the Bible in Greek.

Whatever may be said in disparagement of the style of "Herimas," he writes with a facility which implies that he had read discursively. For the suggestion that the *Tablet* or picture of Kebes was one of his main sources I am indebted to the Reverend J. M. Cotterill, Hon. D.D. of the University of St. Andrews. Clearly he drew also from the Old Testament and the New, but to what extent we cannot quite say with certainty; for the reason that he merely works up or

plays upon more or less of their contents as literary material, never expressly citing either. A like free handling of the words of Holy Scripture is common to inventive composers in all ages, from the early Christian homilist (p. 162 f.) to writers and speakers of to-day.

Traces of books of the Bible in the *Shepherd* are pointed out in Zahn's *Der Hirt des Hermas*; in Resch's extra-canonical *Paralleltexte zu den Evangelien*; and in the commentaries on *Hermae Pastor*. The Index to the Introduction and Notes in this edition is by Mr. H. J. A. Hart, Fellow of St. John's College.

C. TAYLOR.

Cambridge,
Nov. 1902.

INTRODUCTION

I. AUTHORSHIP AND DATE.

THE author of the *Shepherd*, who is addressed in it as Hermas, used to be reckoned one of the Apostolic Fathers, with Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and "Barnabas." The book purports to be the record of revelations made to him, the Shepherd in the main part of it being his angelic instructor and guardian, who by precept and parable gives him lessons for the edification of the Church. The story has been and is still by some accepted as historical, but in all probability it is an allegorical fiction, like *The Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come, delivered under the similitude of a dream by John Bunyan*.

The *Shepherd*, which was once a claimant to canonical rank, was perhaps written about 150 A.D., and not, as has been thought, some half-century or more earlier. In the last

quarter of the second century Irenæus, a link between East and West, quoted its first commandment in terms appropriate to Holy Scripture, as Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* (v. 8) thus narrates, "And he not only knows, but even receives the writing of the *Shepherd* saying, Well then spake the Scripture which saith, *First of all believe that God is one, even He that created all things.*"

Not long afterwards the claim of the book to such rank was disallowed in the *Muratorian Canon*, a lost Greek list of canonical writings of which a fragment in Latin was discovered in the Ambrosian Library at Milan by Muratori. In this fragment it is said that the *Shepherd* was written in Rome quite recently "in our times," and that its author was Hermas, a brother of Pius who was then Bishop of Rome. He would accordingly have written in or before the sixth decade of the second century A.D. In the next generation the book was widely circulated and highly esteemed as a work of inspiration and authority, but some doubted. It was known in Africa to Tertullian, who condemned it in one of his treatises; and in Alexandria to Clement and Origen, who regarded it as inspired.

Origen identified the writer with the Hermas