

The Witness of the Shepherd



The Twenty-One Witnesses

Books of Instruction

The Witness of Two Ways of Life and Death

The Witness of Two Paths of Light and Darkness

The Witness of The Twelve Apostles

Book of Christ

The Witness of Jesus

Books of Teaching

The Witness of the Barren Woman

The Witness of Rome's Letter to Corinth

The Witness of the Jewish Scriptures

Books of Visions

The Witness of the Four Visions

The Witness of the Shepherd

Books of Ignatius, Disciple of Apostles

The Witness of Ignatius: Ephesus

The Witness of Ignatius: Magnesia

The Witness of Ignatius: Tralles

The Witness of Ignatius: Rome

The Witness of Ignatius: Philadelphia

The Witness of Ignatius: Smyrna

The Witness of Ignatius: Polycarp

Books of Polycarp, Disciple of Apostle John

The Witness of Polycarp

The Witness of the State Execution of Polycarp

Books of Philosophers

The Witness of Aristides (Greek)

The Witness of Quadratus (Greek)

The Witness of Justin (Samaritan)

THE WITNESS OF THE SHEPHERD

Compiled by
Philip Holdway-Davis

Copyright © Philip Holdway-Davis 2025

The author asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

Paperback ISBN 978-1-0670386-5-6

All rights reserved.

Commercial Use: No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including photocopying, recording, information storage and retrieval systems, or otherwise, **without prior permission in writing from the author**, with the exception of a book reviewer, who may quote short excerpts in a review.

Private, Personal and Not-for-Profit Use: This book is free to use for private, personal and not-for-profit use, including reprinting, quoting and public speaking.

www.thesoulsong.co.nz created by Philip Holdway-Davis

Front cover image – Pixabay, by Gerd Altmann

Permissions have been obtained for all images where required. If there are any being used unwittingly without correct permissions, please contact the publisher so the situation can be rectified.

Published by Philip Holdway-Davis

PO Box 11-603, Ellerslie, Auckland 1542, New Zealand

Scriptures of Unconditional Love

They are called Scriptures of Unconditional Love because GOD is Unconditional Love (1 John 4:16) and these Scriptures will help us to walk in the ways of Unconditional Love. We should live by Unconditional Love because Moses commanded it (Leviticus 19:18) and so did Jesus the Christ (Matthew 22:37-39). There are an initial thirty of these books to be published. Some are still in process but should be ready by the end of 2026. Once they are completed, more will be added.

The Twenty-One Witness books have been updated from their previous titles and translations using the South-London English that I grew up with. I also replaced the word “church” with “community of GOD’s people” and “Lord” with “RULER” as these are more accurate translations. These twenty-one were chosen because they do not contradict the Old or New Testaments in any way but rather provide us with a means to interpret the Holy Bible more accurately and with additional knowledge and understanding.

Nobody had ever told me what was going to happen when I submitted my life to Christ on a South-London Street in February 1974, aged 13. I had a physical Holy Spirit experience as an “atomic bomb of joy” exploded in my being. As I walked along the street, it was like I was floating three feet off the ground. That evening, a Spirit person visited me and wrote these words in my heart with light and fire, “Do not rebuke the church”. The end result of this encounter are these Scriptures of Unconditional Love.

The Four Gospels-In-Advance

The Gospel of Isaiah

The Gospel of King David

The Gospel of Moses

The Gospel of The Prophets

These are the books of Written Miracles. Ancient prophecies and predictions scattered throughout the Holy Bible's Old Testament concerning the appearance of Christ. These prophecies were made hundreds, some over a thousand, years before Christ appeared. They were all miraculously fulfilled with pin-point accuracy by Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth. There are so many of them that they could only have been put there by Holy Spirit. Certain Jewish scholars, who did not want Jesus to be their Messiah or Christ, started deleting the more obvious prophecies. You can find some of them restored in the books of the twenty-one witnesses. It is best to read the Gospels of Isaiah and King David first as they will strengthen your faith so that your heart can be prepared to receive the teachings and testimonies of the twenty-one witnesses.

The Twenty-One Witnesses

It is like we have twenty-one new witnesses presenting themselves before a court with new evidence and testimonies that GOD is real, and Christ is knowable. Some of these witnesses might have come forward from the era of 'Belonging to the Way' which was from AD 33 (Jesus's physical and spiritual resurrection from the dead) to AD 47 after which time those 'Belonging to the Way' were first called Christians. Most of the other witnesses belong to the pre-church era of the Original First Christians. This era spanned from AD 47 to AD 155 when Polycarp, the Disciple of John the Apostle, was executed for being a Christian by the Roman Empire. The Roman Church filled the vacuum with their own authority and 'brand' and were a powerful influence in starting the new 'church age'. Eventually, the twenty-one witnesses were banned from the New Testament in the fourth century by Emperor Constantine's Roman Church of Christendom, even though these scriptures were originally treasured by Christians of the first and second centuries. Fearing persecution, holders of the books managed to hide them and keep them safe. One thousand two hundred and fifty years later they began to be rediscovered again. Silence broken. Christianity unrestricted. Let them speak. Let us listen.

If they had been allowed to speak and were given their rightful place in the New Testament, they would have acted as salt and light to have a purifying effect on the religious authorities down the centuries. The world would not have experienced the abuses of zealous misguided religious powers. There would have been no crusades, no inquisitions, no witch hunts, no public burnings and no religious persecutions. There would have been no need for European colonialism either as the colonised nations would already be worshipping Christ, having destroyed their gods. The world would have been a better place as the unconditional love of Christ became the new currency that replaced cruelty. The Good Confession would have united the community of GOD's people and all the gods would have been annihilated. There would also have been no need for GOD to send the Qur'an. Having said that, the church has done a vital job in helping to get rid of many gods by either destroying or absorbing them. My hope is that these twenty-one witnesses will serve to destroy the remaining gods in the world leaving Devil Satan, who has won the right to remain here, as the sole survivor from the original sin rebellion. Hindus and similar, must abandon all their gods and worship Krishna alone. You can read the books of enlightenment when they have been published, to understand more about this. It is also now time for those churches that have absorbed pagan gods and practices, to get rid of them.

The church's shortcomings can be traced all the way back to AD 154 when Anicetus, Bishop of Rome, refused to accept the Nisan 14 Passover date that Polycarp, disciple of apostle John, and the other apostles observed, regardless of the day of the week it landed on. Anicetus instead kept to what we now know as the Easter dates which should be abandoned in favour of Nisan 14.

The twenty-one witnesses reveal to mankind that all the books of the Holy Bible should be read in the context of GOD versus the gods. In this war, each one of us finds ourselves at one of five stages.

Stage One: Individuals abandon their god(s). It is better to practice secular atheism than to worship demons.

Stage Two: Acknowledge GOD but don't agree with GOD. Presenting oneself regularly before GOD, either in a church or some other similar gathering will help your case with your Creator.

Stage Three: Agree with GOD but don't obey.

Stage Four: Try your best to obey GOD.

Stage Five: Full submission to GOD. This is perfection.

Books of Instruction

The Witness of Two Ways of Life and Death

The Witness of Two Paths of Light and Darkness

The Witness of The Twelve Apostles

Book of Christ

The Witness of Jesus

Books of Teaching

The Witness of the Barren Woman

The Witness of Rome's Letter to Corinth

The Witness of the Jewish Scriptures

Books of Visions

The Witness of the Four Visions

The Witness of the Shepherd

Books of Ignatius, Disciple of Apostles

The Witness of Ignatius: Ephesus

The Witness of Ignatius: Magnesia

The Witness of Ignatius: Tralles

The Witness of Ignatius: Rome

The Witness of Ignatius: Philadelphia

The Witness of Ignatius: Smyrna

The Witness of Ignatius: Polycarp

Books of Polycarp, Disciple of Apostle John

The Witness of Polycarp

The Witness of the State Execution of Polycarp

Books of Philosophers

The Witness of Aristides (Greek)

The Witness of Quadratus (Greek)

The Witness of Justin (Samaritan)

The Twenty-Second Witness

The Witness of The Qur'an

The Witness of The Qur'an was delivered between AD 609–632. It was delivered by Angel Gabriel to Muhammad because both the Jewish and Church systems and authorities had become corrupt. It's rather like GOD opened another front in the war to destroy GOD's enemies who were the gods. Many of the gods were fallen angels, demigods and demons being worshipped by mankind.

Books of Enlightenment

Philip's Testimony

Enoch – Before Noah's Flood

The History of the Spirit World

Enlightenment

The books of enlightenment explain the war that has been, currently is and will be raging in heaven and on earth until it is won by Christ. They also provide a whole lot more information, which when combined with the knowledge of the twenty-one witnesses, helps the reader to understand life, the universe and everything a whole lot better.

Contents

<i>Scriptures of Unconditional Love</i>	<i>v</i>
The Prayer of Jesus	1
The SoUL Song	2
Introduction To: The Witness of The Shepherd	4
THE WITNESS OF THE SHEPHERD	7
The Good Confession	55

The Prayer of Jesus

Come near and draw close to GOD and GOD will draw near to you (James 4:8)

The Spirit of Jesus is EHYEH ASHER EHYEH which is the Name GOD told Moses when asked (Exodus 3:14).

Jesus told us to use these words when talking to GOD:

***“Our Father in Heaven,
May your Name be kept Holy,
Your Kingdom come,
Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven.***

***Give us enough bread to eat today.
Forgive us our sin as we have forgiven those who
have sinned against us.
Do not allow us to be tempted, but deliver us from
the Evil One.
Yours is the power and the glory forever and ever.”***

The Witness of The Twelve Apostles.

The SoUL Song



EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

IHU KARAITI

EGO SUM QUI SUM

I AM WHO AM

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

I AM THE WAY

I AM THE TRUTH

I AM THE LIFE

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

I AM THE LIGHT

I AM THE DOOR

I AM THE GOOD

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

I AM THE SHEPHERD

I AM THE BREAD

I AM THE VINE

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

I AM THE RESURRECTION

I AM THE START

I AM THE END

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

I AM THE ALPHA

I AM THE OMEGA

I AM WHO AM

EHYEH ASHER EHYEH

IHU KARAITI

EGO SUM QUI SUM

I AM WHO AM

Introduction To: The Witness of The Shepherd

When was it written?

AD 90. Most scholars date it at AD 150 because it is a composite document in two parts, and they have dated the older portion. As a composite document, it belongs to the Apostolic Fathers collection and is called *The Shepherd of Hermas*. The Shepherd was written around AD 150 according to the *Muratorian Canon* because it identifies Hermas as the brother of Pius, chief overseer at Rome. Irenaeus and others quote it as Scripture and allude to it as being a first-century writing. The earlier portion has been dated at AD 90 because Clement was 'secretary' of the community of GOD's people at Rome at that time and he is mentioned as a recipient of the book. Hermas is also told about a persecution that will soon come upon the community of GOD's people. This started around AD 92 under Emperor Domitian.

Where was it written?

Rome.

Who wrote it?

Hermas.

Why was it written?

Heaven had instructed him to share the vision given to him: *“When I have finished adding the words they will then be made known to all of GOD’s special people through you. You will therefore write two books. One you will send to Clement and the other to Grapte. Clement will forward it on to the cities abroad as that is his job. Grapte will instruct the widows and orphans. Your role is to read the words in this city along with the overseers who preside over the community of GOD’s people” (Holy Bible 2 Book Five).* Heaven also wanted to warn the community of GOD’s people about the impending persecution they would have to endure.

What authority does it have?

Irenaeus, Origen, and Didymus the Blind considered it as Scripture. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has included it in its New Testament Canon in the past. It was considered one of the most popular books in the Christian Church during the second, third and fourth centuries. Eusebius tells us it was read publicly in the churches. Many churches believed it was Scripture. Athanasius quoted it as New Testament Scripture and said that all new converts to Christianity should read it. It also appears that his Arian opponents thought likewise.

How was it rediscovered?

It was unknown in the West until rediscovered in 1844 in a fourth-century manuscript called *Codex Sinaiticus* at the Monastery of Saint Catherine, Mount Sinai. *Codex Sinaiticus* is the oldest Greek manuscript in existence and contains the entire New Testament. The *Shepherd of Hermas* sits at the end of the New Testament following *Revelation* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*.

Interesting points

- This vision took place before *Revelation* was written. Heaven instructs us to read this book and encourage others to read it also.
- The 'Tower' of the community of GOD's people is still being built today. Anyone can choose whether they wish to be included in it.

THE WITNESS OF THE SHEPHERD

The Law of the Angel Michael

Like a great tree that overshadows plains, mountains, and the whole earth is the Law of GOD that was given to the whole world. This Law is the Son of GOD who has been proclaimed to the very ends of the earth. The people who are under its shadow are those who have heard the proclamation and exercise faith in him. The great and glorious Angel Michael has power over these people and is their Captain. He is the one who places the law into the hearts of the believers. He himself inspects those to whom he gave it, to see whether they have kept it.

The Twelve Commandments

Hermas: Whilst I was praying, sitting on the couch in my house, a man came in wrapped in a skin with a bag on his shoulders and a staff in his hand. He greeted me and I greeted him. Straight away he sat down beside me.

The Shepherd: *"I was sent by the most holy angel to live with you for the rest of your life."*

Hermas: (I thought he had come to tempt me.) *"Who are you? For I know to whom I have been entrusted."*

The Shepherd: *"Don't you know me?"*

Hermas: *"No."*

The Shepherd: *"I am the shepherd, to whom you have been entrusted."*

Whilst he was speaking he transformed himself and I recognised him as being the one to whom I was entrusted. Right away I became disorientated and overwhelmed with panic as fear seized me. I felt I had answered him foolishly, in a wicked way.

The Shepherd: *"Don't be confused, instead strengthen yourself in my commandments which I will now give you. I was sent to repeat all the things that I showed you previously, especially regarding the most important points. First of all, write down my commandments and parables and then write down the other matters as I show them to you. The reason for me commanding you to write down the commandments and parables is so that you can read them straight away and therefore be able to keep them."*

So I wrote down the commandments and parables as he commanded me.

The Shepherd: *"If, when you hear them you keep them, walk in them, and act on them with a pure heart, you will receive from the RULER all the things that he has promised you. Conversely, if, when you hear them you refuse to repent but keep on adding to your sins, you will receive the opposite from the RULER."*

The First Commandment

“First of all believe that GOD is one and that he created all things out of nothing. He contains everything yet he alone is uncontained. Exercise faith in him, therefore, and be in awe of him, and in being in awe of him exercise self-control. Keep these commands and you will cast off all evil and clothe yourself with strength and righteousness. You will walk with GOD if you keep this commandment.”

The Second Commandment

“Live simply and innocently. Then you will become like little children who know no evil. First and foremost, don’t say anything evil about anyone else and don’t enjoy listening to someone who does. If you listen to them you will be partaking in the sin of him who speaks such evil. If you start believing the slander which you hear, you may start holding a grudge against your brother. In this way, you will also be guilty of the sin of the slanderer. Slander is an evil and restless demon. It never has peace, but always causes division. Avoid it and you will always be at peace with all people. Put on holiness in which there is no wickedness but only calm, composed pleasure.

“Do a good job, and from the reward of your labour which GOD gives you, freely give to anyone in need in a simple manner, not hesitating regarding whom you are to give or not to give to. Give to everyone for GOD wishes his gifts to be shared amongst everyone. Those who receive will have

to give an account to GOD as to why they received it. Those who receive and are in distress will not be condemned, but those who receive on false pretences will pay the penalty. The one who gives is innocent, for just as he received from the RULER, so he has fulfilled his service in sincerity by not hesitating who to give and who not to give to. This service, then, if carried out with sincerity, is glorious in the eyes of GOD. Therefore, he who ministers with sincerity will walk with GOD. Therefore, keep these commandments just as I have given them to you, so that your own repentance and the repentance of your household may be found to be sincere, and your heart may be pure and unstained."

The Third Commandment

"Love the truth and let nothing but truth come out of your mouth, so that the spirit which GOD placed in your body may be found truthful in the eyes of everyone. Then the RULER, who lives in you, will be glorified, for the RULER is true with every word and there is nothing false in him. Therefore, those who speak lies reject the RULER and rob him by not giving back to him the deposit which they have received. For they received from him a spirit free of lies. If they give him back a lying spirit, they have polluted the RULER's commandment and become robbers."

Hermas: When I heard these words, I burst into tears.

The Shepherd: "Why are you crying?"

Hermas: *"I don't know if I can be saved."*

The Shepherd: *"How come?"*

Hermas: *"I have never said a true word in all my life. Instead, I have always spoken deceitfully and swapped the truth for a lie. Nobody questioned me on it but believed what I told them. How can I possibly live since I have behaved this way?"*

The Shepherd: *"Your assessment here is indeed true and correct, for a servant of GOD should only walk in the way of truth and not in compliance with evil. Particularly when the Spirit of Truth lives in you as this has caused great sadness to the holy and true Spirit."*

Hermas: *"Never before have I heard these words more clearly."*

The Shepherd: *"You must not only hear them but also guard them, in order for the lies that you previously told in your business affairs may come to be believed through the truthfulness of your present statements. For even they can become trustworthy. If you obey these precepts and from now onwards speak nothing but the truth, it will be possible for you to obtain life. In fact, anyone who hears this commandment and abandons that most evil habit of telling lies, will walk with GOD."*

The Fourth Commandment

"I command you to keep sexually pure and not allow any thought to enter your heart regarding another man's wife, or of fornication, or of similar evil deeds, for by doing these things you commit a great sin. Instead, always think of your own wife and you will never go wrong. For if these bad thoughts enter your heart, you will commit sin. These desires in a servant of GOD are a great sin and bring death to those who do them. Be mindful of this and abstain from such desires because evil should not be allowed to enter into the heart of a righteous man where purity lives."

Hermas: *"Will you allow me to ask you a few questions?"*

The Shepherd: *"Proceed."*

Hermas: *"If a man has a wife who has trusted in the RULER but thinks she's committed adultery, is he doing wrong by continuing to live with her?"*

The Shepherd: *"Providing he is uncertain of her sin the husband does no wrong in remaining with her. But if he knows for certain that she has sinned and she does not repent but continues in her adultery with the husband continuing to live with her, he also becomes guilty of her crime and shares in her adultery."*

Hermas: *"What should the husband do instead if the wife carries on with her behaviour?"*

The Shepherd: *"The husband should divorce her and live by himself. But if he divorces her then marries another woman, he also commits adultery."*

Hermas: *"What happens if the divorced woman repents and wants her husband to take her back? Should her husband take her back?"*

The Shepherd: *"It is certainly sinful if the husband does not take her back, in fact, he commits a great sin because anyone who sins should be brought back if they have repented. But not over and over again because there is only one repentance for the servants of GOD. Therefore, in case the divorced wife chooses to repent, the husband should keep himself single after the divorce. This procedure should be the same for both men and women."*

"Now understand this, it is not only through adultery that a person pollutes their body but also by imitating the behaviour of the godless. Should anyone you know continue to behave in this way and refuse to repent, you should cease to associate with them otherwise you will be sharing in their sins. This is why you have been commanded to remain single, both men and women because there is a possibility that repentance will take place. I am not giving the opportunity for wrongful behaviour here, on the contrary, I would like the sinner to sin no more. With respect to a person's previous sins, there is One who is able to provide healing, for it is he who has power over everything there is."

Hermas: *"Since the RULER has promised to live with me forever, please now hear me out as I am somewhat ignorant, and my heart has been hardened due to my former way of life. Teach me for I am rather stupid and totally ignorant."*

The Shepherd: *"I am in charge over all repentance, and I provide enlightenment to anyone who repents. Don't you think that it is very wise to repent? In repenting there lies great wisdom. He who has sinned recognises the fact that he has done evil in the sight of the RULER. He considers his past actions, repents of them, and chooses to stop doing evil. Instead, he chooses to do what is right and acts in a good way by humbling himself and agonises his soul because of the evil he has done previously. Now you know that there is great wisdom in repenting."*

Hermas: *"It's because of this that I am investigating such matters in depth, especially as I know that I am a sinner. I can then get to know the kind of works that I should be doing so that I can live, for my sins are many and varied."*

The Shepherd: *"If you keep my commandments and walk in them, then you will live. Anyone who hears and keeps these commandments will become alive to GOD."*

Hermas: *"I would like to ask some more questions."*

The Shepherd: *"Continue."*

Hermas: *"I have heard it said by certain teachers that there is no other repentance than the one which happens when we descend into the water and receive forgiveness for our past sins."*

The Shepherd: *"What you have heard is true. He who has received forgiveness for his sins should sin no further but live in purity. Because you are looking into these matters carefully, I declare to you that your previous sins are forgiven if you keep my commandments."*

The Fifth Commandment

"You must gain control over all evil deeds and do what is right. If you are patient then the Holy Spirit that lives in you will be pure and not darkened by another evil spirit. Instead, by living in a large space, he will rejoice and be glad with the vessel in which he lives and will serve GOD in great cheerfulness, being at peace with himself. Conversely, should there be any sign of an angry temper, immediately the sensitive Holy Spirit will leave because he no longer has a place of purity to live in. He has been choked by the evil spirit and is prevented from serving the RULER as he likes because the angry temper has polluted him. For the RULER lives in patience but Devil Satan lives in angry temper. There will be trouble and strife for the man in whom the two spirits live for they are in conflict with each other.

"If a tiny amount of wormwood is put inside a jar of honey, doesn't it spoil the whole jar of honey? Likewise, doesn't a

tiny amount of wormwood take away the sweetness of the honey so as to lose its attraction to the owner? It has become bitter and lost its use. But if there is no wormwood in the honey, then the honey is still sweet and is used by the owner.

“Now you can see that patience is sweeter than honey and useful to GOD and he lives in it. Whereas angry temper is bitter and useless. Now, if angry temper is mixed with patience, the patience is contaminated, and the person’s prayer is of no use to GOD.”

Hermas: “I would like to know about the power of the angry temper in order to protect myself from it.”

The Shepherd: “If you do not protect yourself from it, you and your household will lose all hope to save yourselves from it. Therefore, everyone must protect themselves from it. As I am with you, you will be able to stay away from it. If anyone repents with their whole heart, I will be with them and save them.

“Now listen to how the angry temper works and how it overcomes the servants of GOD by its power and turns them away from righteousness. That is, except for those who are full of faith for it does not work on them because the power of GOD is with them. But it leads astray those who are weak-willed and in two minds. For as soon as it comes across such people, it throws itself into their hearts and for no reason whatsoever the man or woman becomes bitter about events

that have happened in their lives. For instance, they become bitter over food, a wrong word uttered, a friend, a gift, a debt, or some other trivial matter. All these things are foolish, vain, useless, and unhelpful to the servants of GOD.

“Conversely, patience is great, mighty, strong, powerful and prospers in every way. Patience brings joy and is free from anxiety, glorifying GOD in every circumstance, free from bitterness and continually living in gentleness and tranquillity. This patience lives in all those who live by total faith.

“But angry temper is foolish, fickle and senseless. Out of foolishness comes bitterness and out of bitterness comes angry rage and out of angry rage comes vicious hate. This vicious hate is composed of all those evil elements and leads to great and incurable sin. When all these spirits live in the same vessel that the Holy Spirit lives in, the vessel is unable to hold them all and overflows. The gentle Spirit is not used to living with evil spirits or with any ruthlessness and departs from such a person to look for somewhere to live in gentleness and tranquillity. After it has left that person, that person is emptied of the righteous Spirit and from then on is filled with evil spirits. They are plunged into chaos in all their ways, being dragged about here and there by the evil spirits. Their minds then become covered in complete darkness and never think to do anything good. That is what happens to those who harbour vicious hate.

“Make certain you stay away from angry temper which is the evilest of spirits. In its place clothe yourself with patience, resist angry temper and bitterness, and then you will be found in the company of holiness which is loved by the RULER. Make sure you never neglect this commandment because if you obey this commandment, you will be able to keep all the other commandments which I will give to you. Make yourself strong in them and full of power.”

The Sixth Commandment

“In the First Commandment, I instructed you in faith, living in awe of GOD and self-control.”

Hermas: *“Yes, you did.”*

The Shepherd: *“Now I want to explain about their powers and the power that each one possesses. Their powers are effective in two ways and relate to both righteousness and unrighteousness. Make sure you trust righteousness but not unrighteousness. The way of righteousness is straight, but the way of unrighteousness is crooked. Walk along the straight path and stay away from the crooked path, for the crooked path has no tracks but only pathless places, obstacles, rough ground, and thorns. It is harmful to those who go down it. But those who follow the straight path walk smoothly without falling over because it is neither rough nor thorny. Obviously, it is best to walk along this road.”*

Hermas: *“I want to walk along that road.”*

The Shepherd: *"You will walk along it. Now listen to me on the subject of faith. There are two angels with men, one being good and the other evil."*

Hermas: *"Tell me how they each work, seeing that both angels live with me."*

The Shepherd: *"Listen and understand about them. The good angel is gentle, modest, sensitive and peaceful. When this one enters your heart, he starts talking to you about righteousness, purity, holiness, contentment and of every righteous act and glorious virtue. When all these things enter your heart, know that the good angel is with you. These are the works of the good angel. Trust him along with his works."*

"Now consider the work of the evil angel. First of all, he has an angry temper, is bitter, uncaring and all his works are evil which ruins the servants of GOD. Whenever he enters your heart be cautious of his activities."

Hermas: *"How will I recognise him as I don't know how he works?"*

The Shepherd: *"When angry temper or ruthlessness comes upon you be aware that he has got inside you. You will also know this is the case when you are attacked by various strong desires:*

- *to make a lot of money through business*

- *for the richest delicacies*
- *drinking bouts*
- *extravagant luxuries*
- *immoral behaviour*
- *womanising*
- *greed*
- *arrogance*
- *boasting*
- *whatever else is similar to these.*

“When these things enter into your heart then be aware that the evil angel has got inside you. When you notice that he is at work quickly run away from him and don’t trust him with anything for his works are evil and do harm to the servants of GOD. Those are the actions of both angels. Become conscious of them and trust the good angel but stay away from the evil angel because his instruction is evil in every way. Even if a person is full of faith, should thoughts from the evil angel enter their heart, that man or woman is compelled to sin. On the other hand, if a man or a woman is wicked yet receives the works of the good angel into their heart, he or she is compelled to do something good. You see, then, that it is good to follow the angel of righteousness but to shut the door on the evil angel. This commandment declares actions concerning faith for you to trust the works of the good angel. By doing them you walk with GOD.

Believe also that the works of the evil angel are dangerous and if you refuse to comply with them you will also walk with GOD.”

The Seventh Commandment

“Fear the RULER and keep his commandments. For if you keep GOD’s commandments you will become powerful in everything you do, and all your works will be unequalled. By having a healthy respect for the RULER, you will be successful in everything. This is the type of awe that you should have so that you can be saved. But have no fear of Devil Satan because by deeply respecting the RULER, you will rule over Devil Satan. He has no power and he who has no power should not be feared. However, he who has glorious power should truly be held in great awe, for everyone who has power should be respected deeply, whereas he who has no power is despised by everyone. But you must fear the works of Devil Satan for they are evil. By reverently respecting the RULER, you won’t copy those works but instead abstain from them. There are two kinds of fear: firstly, if you don’t want to do evil then fear the RULER and you won’t do evil and secondly, if you want to do good then fear the RULER and you will do it. The fear of the RULER is powerful, great and glorious. Therefore, be in awe of the RULER and you will become alive to him. In fact, anyone who deeply respects him and keeps his commandments will walk with GOD.”

Hermas: *“Why say that those who keep his commandments will walk with GOD?”*

The Shepherd: *“The reason is that all creation fears the RULER, but not all creation keeps his commandments. Only those who fear the RULER and keep his commandments will walk with GOD. But those who do not keep his commandments have no life in them.”*

The Eighth Commandment

“I previously told you that there are two sides to GOD’s creation, well there are two kinds of self-control. In certain circumstances self-control should be exercised, and in others not at all.”

Hermas: *“Explain to me when self-control is to be exercised and when it is not.”*

The Shepherd: *“Be self-controlled with regard to evil and don’t do it but have no self-control with regard to doing good and do it. Should you exercise self-control in doing good, you will be committing a great sin, but if you exercise self-control so that you do not do any evil, you are doing something very good. Be self-controlled in regard to all sin and do good instead.”*

Hermas: *“What kind of behaviour must we exercise self-control towards?”*

The Shepherd: *"Listen to me. You must exercise self-control over the following:*

- *adultery*
- *sex outside of marriage*
- *unrestrained drunkenness*
- *wicked luxury*
- *gluttony*
- *extravagant riches*
- *boasting*
- *snobbery*
- *pride*
- *lying*
- *gossiping*
- *hypocrisy*
- *hate*
- *harbouring vengeance*
- *slander.*

"These are the wickedest actions that people do. The servant of GOD must exercise self-control over them all. He who does not exercise self-control over them will not be walking with GOD. Listen also to the other behaviours like them."

Hermas: *“Are there any other evil deeds apart from these then?”*

The Shepherd: *“Yes, there are many others from which the servant of GOD must be self-controlled:*

- *stealing*
- *telling lies*
- *robbery*
- *false witness*
- *greed*
- *lust*
- *deceit*
- *self-importance*
- *boastfulness*
- *all other evil behaviour like them.*

“Don’t you think that these things are extremely wrong and exceedingly evil for the servants of GOD? The servant of GOD must exercise self-control over all of them. Exercise self-control from all these and you will walk with GOD. You will also be enrolled amongst the number of all those who exercise self-control in this regard. These, then, are the things over which you must exercise self-control. Now hear about the things where you do not have to exercise any self-

control and which you should do. Have no self-control in doing good but go ahead and do it."

Hermas: *"Tell me about the kind of things that are good so that I may walk in them and serve them. In that way, I can be saved."*

The Shepherd: *"Then hear about these good deeds that you should do and where there is no self-control required:*

- *faith*
- *deeply respecting the RULER*
- *unconditional love*
- *harmony*
- *righteous words*
- *truth*
- *patience.*

"Nothing is better than these in a person's life. If anyone pays attention to them and exercises no self-control in them, that person will be happy in their life. Then following on from these comes:

- *helping widows*
- *looking after orphans*
- *looking after those in need*
- *rescuing the servants of GOD from their pressures*

- *practising hospitality (which does good in its time)*
- *oppressing no one*
- *being peaceable*
- *being humble*
- *not wanting anything*
- *respecting the elderly*
- *practising righteousness*
- *supporting brotherly behaviour*
- *standing up under injustice*
- *being patient*
- *encouraging the sick at heart*
- *not discarding those who have fallen away from the faith into sin, but helping them to turn back and restoring them*
- *reproving sinners*
- *not being harsh on those in debt or the needy*
- *as well as any other similar actions like these.*

“Do you agree with these things?”

Hermas: *“What else is better than these?”*

The Shepherd: *“Walk then in them. And do not exercise any self-control over them and you will walk with GOD.*

Therefore, keep this commandment. If you do good and exercise no self-control over it you will walk with GOD. In fact, everyone who behaves in this way will walk with GOD. I also remind you that if you refuse to do evil and exercise self-control over it, you also will walk with GOD. Everyone who keeps these commandments and walks in them will walk with GOD."

The Ninth Commandment

"Never doubt and never be in two minds about asking the RULER for something by saying to yourself, 'How can I ask for something from the RULER and receive a response when I have sinned so much against him?' Never use this reasoning, but instead, turn to the RULER with all your heart and ask of him with no doubt whatsoever, and you will then get to know about his abundance of compassionate mercy. He will never leave you but will fulfil the requests of your soul. He is not like us, for we remember evil done against us, but he himself does not remember sins, instead, he has compassion on his own creatures.

"You must therefore cleanse your heart from all the vanities of this world and from all the bad things mentioned previously. Then when you ask for something from the RULER you will receive everything. You will not be denied anything you ask for from the RULER if you ask without any doubt in your heart. Those who doubt the matters concerning GOD are two-minded and will not receive any of

their requests. But those who are complete in faith ask for everything, and while trusting in the RULER, they receive because they asked without doubting and were not double-minded. For every double-minded person, even if they repent, will hardly be saved. Therefore, cleanse your heart from all doubt and clothe yourself with faith which is powerful and trust GOD so that you will obtain from him everything that you ask.

“Should it appear that the RULER is a bit late in providing you with a response, don’t begin to doubt because you have not obtained your request quickly, because most probably it is late due to some temptation or sin that you are ignorant of. Don’t stop making your soul’s requests and in time you will receive them. But if you grow tired and start doubting when you ask, blame yourself and not him who does not give to you. Get rid of this doubting for it is evil and senseless and has turned many away from the faith, even though they once were faithful and strong. Truly, this doubting is the daughter of Devil Satan who causes much evil to fall upon the servants of GOD.

“Therefore, you must loathe doubting and gain control over it. Clothe yourself in faith which is both strong and powerful, for faith promises all things and completes all things, but doubt produces lack of confidence and fails in every task it undertakes. You see then that faith is from above. It is from the RULER and has great power. Doubt, however, is an earthly spirit that comes from Devil Satan and has no power.

Now serve faith which has power and stay away from doubt which has no power, and then you will walk with GOD. Everyone who has a mindset like this will walk with GOD."

The Tenth Commandment

"Get rid of any feelings of grief for it is the sister of two-mindedness and angry temper."

Hermas: *"How is this? To me, angry temper seems to be one thing, two-mindedness another, and grief another also."*

The Shepherd: *"You are being ignorant! Don't you realise that grief is the evilest of spirits and is most deadly to the servants of GOD? More than any other spirit it destroys a man and crowds out the Holy Spirit, and yet, on the other hand, it can save him."*

Hermas: *"I must have no sense because I cannot understand this teaching. How can it both crowd out and save at the same time?"*

The Shepherd: *"Listen, those who have never searched for the truth or looked into the Divine, but have simply believed, when they devote themselves to doing business, gaining wealth, making friends with the ungodly and many other affairs of this world, cannot understand the teachings of the Divine. Their minds have been darkened by these actions and they have become corrupt and desolate. Just like healthy vines which have been neglected, they become*

withered by thorns and other plants. Likewise, men who have at first believed then afterwards fallen away into many of those actions stated above, go astray in their minds and lose all understanding in regard to righteousness. When they hear of anything to do with righteousness, their minds are instead occupied with their business, and they give no attention to it at all.

“However, those who are in awe of GOD search for the truth and for GOD. Their hearts are turned to the RULER and they quickly understand what is said to them because they have the deep reverent trust of GOD in them. For where the RULER lives, there is much knowledge. Therefore, stick closely to the RULER and you will understand and realise everything.

“Now stop being ignorant and listen to me about how grief crowds out the Holy Spirit whilst at the same time saves the man. When the two-minded man tries to do a task but fails in it because of two-mindedness, then grief enters the man and grieves the Holy Spirit by crowding him out. Then, again, when angry temper attaches itself to a man for any reason he becomes bitter. Upon this happening, grief enters into the man’s heart, and he becomes sad because of the act that he did. He then repents of the evil act that he has done. This grief, therefore, appears to bring salvation because the man, having done a wicked deed, repents. So, both actions grieved the Spirit: two-mindedness because it did not achieve what it aimed for and angry temper because it did

what was evil. Both two-mindedness and angry temper grieve the Holy Spirit. It is important to rid yourself of grief to ensure the Holy Spirit who lives in you is not crowded out, otherwise he might petition GOD against you and leave you completely. For the Spirit of GOD that was given to live in our bodies cannot tolerate any grief or restriction. It is therefore important to clothe yourself in cheerfulness which always goes down well with GOD and rejoice along with it. Every cheerful person does what is good, thinks good thoughts and despises grief.

“In contrast to this, the sorrowful man always behaves wickedly. First, he acts wickedly because he grieves the Holy Spirit, a cheerful spirit, which was given to man t. Secondly, by grieving the Holy Spirit the man sins by either not bothering to talk to the RULER or by not sharing his wrongdoing with him. The petitions of a sorrowful person have no power to reach the altar of GOD.”

Hermas: “Why do the petitions of a sorrowful person not reach the altar?”

The Shepherd: “Because grief camps in his heart. Grief, when in the company of petitions, does not allow the petitions to ascend in purity to the altar of GOD. Just as when vinegar and wine are mixed together, the wine does not taste as nice as when by itself, so grief mixed with the Holy Spirit does not produce the same petition as produced when the Holy Spirit is alone. Cleanse yourself from this evil

grief and you will walk with GOD. Everyone will walk with GOD if they expel grief from themselves and clothe themselves in cheerfulness."

The Eleventh Commandment

The Shepherd: *"Can you see the men sitting on a seat and another man sitting on a chair?"*

Hermas: *"Yes, I can."*

The Shepherd: *"These are the faithful, but the one sitting on the chair is a false prophet. He wrecks the minds of the servants of GOD, but only the minds of the doubters and not the faithful. The doubters go to him as one who could tell the future and ask him what their future will be. The false prophet, not having the power of the Divine Spirit within himself, responds according to their questions and their evil desires. He fills their souls with expectations in compliance with their own wishes. Being himself empty, he provides empty answers to empty enquirers because every answer is made to the emptiness of man. He does occasionally say something that is true, for Devil Satan fills him with his own spirit with the aim of defeating the righteous."*

"Those who are strong in the faith of the RULER and are clothed with truth, don't have anything to do with such spirits and keep well away from them. However, those who are in two minds keep changing their minds and go to see fortune-tellers just as the ungodly do. They heap a lot of sin

upon themselves because of their idolatry, for he who asks a false prophet with regard to anything is an idolater and has no truth in them and is senseless. No spirit given by GOD needs to be asked for such a spirit, having the power of the Divine, speaks everything by itself. This is because it is from above, from the power of the Divine Spirit. But the spirit that is consulted and speaks according to the desires of men, is earthly and untrustworthy having no power. It says nothing until it is asked."

Hermas: "How does one know if it is a true prophet or a false prophet?"

The Shepherd: "Listen to me about both of the prophets and what I tell you will show you how to test both the true prophet and the false prophet. Test the man who has the Divine Spirit by his life. First of all, he who has the Spirit from above is gentle, peaceful, humble, abstains from all evil and abstains from the vain desires of this present world. He considers himself inferior to all men and does not give an answer when questioned. Nor does he speak on his own account for neither does the Holy Spirit speak when a man wants him to speak, but the man speaks when GOD wants him to speak. When a man who has the Divine Spirit comes in amongst a group of righteous people who have faith in the Divine Spirit, and this group sends up prayers to GOD, the angel of the prophetic Spirit that is attached to him then fills the man. The man, being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks to the group as the RULER wills. In this way, the

Divine Spirit is revealed. This great power that comes from the Divine Spirit belongs to the RULER.

“Now hear about the worldly and vain spirit that has no power and is foolish. In the first place, the man who seems to have a spirit exalts himself and wants to have the prime position. Immediately he is arrogant, shameless, talkative and likes to live surrounded by luxuries and in delusion. He takes money for his prophesying and if he does not receive any he does not prophesy. How can the Divine Spirit ask for money and prophesy? It is impossible for a prophet of GOD to do this.

“However, prophets of bad character are possessed by a worldly spirit which never goes near a group of Christ-like men, instead it avoids them. It sticks to two-minded people and those who are vain and prophesies to them in secret, deceiving them by telling them empty things according to their desires because those who are receiving the answers are empty themselves. When empty vessels are placed alongside other empty vessels they are not broken but get along together.

“But when he joins a group of righteous people who have the Divine Spirit and they start praying, that man is emptied because the worldly spirit flees from him in fear and the man is struck dumb. He is broken and cannot speak. For, if you pack wine or oil closely together in a warehouse and then place an empty jar in the middle of them, you will return and

find the jar as empty as when you first placed it. Likewise with the empty prophets, when they come amongst the spirits of righteous people they find themselves exactly the same as when they entered. This is the way with both types of prophets.

“Therefore, the person who says they are moved by the Spirit must be tested by their life and behaviour. You must trust the Spirit that comes from GOD and has power. But don’t trust the spirit which is worldly and empty because it is powerless and comes from Devil Satan. Listen to this parable that I will now tell you. Pick up a stone then see if you can throw it all the way to heaven or take some water and see if you can squirt it into heaven.”

Hermas: “How can these things be done for both are impossible?”

The Shepherd: “Just as these things are impossible to do, so also are the worldly spirits powerless and feeble.

“Now consider the power that comes from above: Hail is a very small stone yet if it falls on someone’s head it can hurt a lot. Take the drop of water that drips from the roof tiles onto the ground and wears out the stone. Understand then that even the smallest things coming from above have great power when they fall to the earth. Likewise, also, the Divine Spirit, which comes from above, is powerful. Therefore trust that Spirit and have nothing to do with the other one.”

The Twelfth Commandment

The Shepherd: *“Get rid of every evil desire and dress yourself up in everything that is good and GOD-like, for being dressed in this desire you will hate evil desires and will control them as you wish. Evil desire is wild and can only be tamed with difficulty. It is dreadful and devours people by its wildness. Especially if a servant of GOD who has no understanding becomes entangled in it, they will be consumed by it. It consumes everyone who is not dressed in the clothing of good desire but is instead mixed up with this world. It hands these men over to death.”*

Hermas: *“What are these deeds of evil desire that send a man to his death? Tell me about them so that I can avoid them.”*

The Shepherd: *“Hear about the works of evil desire that send the servants of GOD to their death. The worst of all is the desire for someone else’s wife or husband, the second worst is for extravagant riches, the third is for craving foolish and useless luxuries such as exotic foods and drinks, and the fourth is for every other foolish luxury. Every luxury is foolish and useless for the servants of GOD. These desires are evil and bring death to the servants of GOD. These evil desires are all daughters of Devil Satan. You must abstain from them for by avoiding them you will walk with GOD. Sadly, those who are overcome by them and do not successfully resist them will die for these desires are deadly.*

“Therefore, dress yourself in the desire for righteousness and arm yourself with reverent respect because the RULER lives in good desires. Should evil desire see you armed with godly reverence and resisting it, it will flee far away from you, and it will be seen no more by you because it fears your armour. After you have conquered it draw close to the desire for righteousness and hand over to it the prize you have won as the victor. Then go and serve her just as she would like to be served. If you serve good desire and make yourself her servant, then you will gain control over evil desire, and make it subject to you exactly as you want.”

Hermas: *“What can I do to serve good desire?”*

The Shepherd: *“You must practise truth, righteousness, godly fear, faith and gentleness, along with any other good deeds like them. By practising these, you will become an acceptable servant of GOD and will walk with him.”*

Epilogue

Hermas: *“And that brought the Shepherd’s Twelve Commandments to a conclusion.”*

The Shepherd: *“You now have these commandments. Walk in them and encourage those who hear them so that their repentance will be genuine for the remainder of their lives. You must work hard and conscientiously at this ministry which I have given you to the very end, so that many people will become aware of it. Those who are about to repent will*

obey your words for I, the Angel of Repentance, will be with you to influence them."

The Twelve Virgins

The Shepherd: *"I am busy for a little while and will explain things to you later. Wait for me here until I return."*

Hermas: *"How shall I occupy myself since I am all alone?"*

The Shepherd: *"You are not alone for these virgins are here with you."*

Hermas: *"Introduce me."*

The Shepherd: *"I commend this man to you until I return."*

Hermas: The Shepherd left. I was alone with the virgins. They were very cheerful and very kind towards me, particularly the four of them who were the most glorious in appearance.

The Virgins: *"The Shepherd will not be back today."*

Hermas: *"What shall I do then?"*

The Virgins: *"Stay until the evening and if he comes he will speak to you, but if he doesn't arrive you will stay here with us until he gets back."*

Hermas: *"I will wait for him until the evening and if he does not get back, I will go home and return in the morning."*

The Virgins: *"You were entrusted to us. You can't leave us."*

Hermas: *"Where shall I stay?"*

The Virgins: *"You will spend the night with us like a brother does, not as a husband. You are our brother and from now onwards we will live with you for we love you dearly."*

Hermas: I felt ashamed to be amongst them. The one who seemed to be their leader started to kiss and cuddle me. The others saw her cuddle me and began to kiss me too. They led me around a tower and played games with me. I rediscovered my youth and also started to play games with them. Some of them began to dance, some skipped, some sang. But I kept quiet and walked with them around the tower. I was happy to be with them, but when evening came I wanted to go home. They refused to let me go and detained me, so I had to spend the night with them and slept by the side of the tower. The virgins spread their linen tunics on the ground and made me lie down in the middle of them. They did nothing but pray. So, I prayed with them non-stop as much as they did. The virgins rejoiced that I prayed so much so I stayed there with the virgins until eight o'clock in the morning. Then the Shepherd came back.

The Shepherd: *"Have you virgins done him any harm?"*

The Virgins: *"Ask him."*

Hermas: *"I was very happy to stay with them."*

The Shepherd: *"What did you eat?"*

Hermas: *"I dined on the words of the RULER all night long."*

The Shepherd: *"Did they treat you well?"*

Hermas: *"Yes. Who are these virgins?"*

The Shepherd: *"They are Holy Spirits and unless a person dresses in their clothing, they will not be able to enter the Kingdom of GOD. If you receive the Name only but not the clothing, it will do you no good because these virgins are powers of the Son of GOD. The Name of the Son of GOD is great and astounding for it sustains the entire universe. If the whole of the material creation is sustained and supported by the Son of GOD, what do you think of those who bear his Name with all their heart and walk true to his commandments?"*

Hermas: *"Tell me the names of the virgins, especially the more powerful ones."*

The Shepherd: *"The first is Faith, the second Self-Control, the third Power and the fourth Patience. The others placed between them have these names:*

Simplicity

Innocence

Purity

Cheerfulness

Truth

Understanding

Harmony

Unconditional Love.

The person who bears these names and the Name of the Son of GOD will enter the Kingdom of GOD."

Hermas: The Angel then came to the house where I was staying and sat on the couch. The Shepherd stood at his right hand.

The Angel: *"I have sent these virgins to you so that they can live with you. I notice that they are friendly towards you, and you now have them as your helpers. They will help you to keep the commandments with excellence. It is impossible for the commandments to be kept without the assistance of the virgins. I also see that they enjoy your company too. I will order them to never leave your house. But you must keep your house clean for they will be exceedingly happy to live in a house that is clean. You see, they are clean, chaste, hard-working and all of them are favoured in the eyes of the RULER. Therefore, if they find your house pure, they will stay with you. But should the slightest impurity crop up they will then leave your house immediately because these virgins cannot live with any kind of pollution."*

Hermas: *"I really hope I will make them happy so that they will be happy to live in my house forever. Just as the Shepherd has not had a problem with me, so I hope they too will never have a problem."*

The Angel: *"I see that he wishes to live as a servant of GOD, that he will keep these commandments and will give the virgins a clean place to live."*

Hermas: With these words, he handed me over to the Shepherd again and called the virgins over.

The Angel: *"Because I see that you are happy to live in this man's house, I commend him and his house to you so that you will never leave his house."*

Hermas: The virgins were glad to hear these words.

The Angel: *"Carry out your ministry like a good man. Declare to everyone the mighty works of the RULER and you will find favour. Whoever walks in these commandments will live and be happy in their life, but whoever neglects them will not live and won't be happy in their life. Tell everyone who is able to do the right thing, not to stop doing good works. For it is beneficial to them."*

"Also, every person needs to be rescued from distress for the person that is in need suffers distress in their daily life and experiences trauma and hardship. He who rescues such a person from misery in their life brings happiness to

themselves. The person who is oppressed by distress of this sort is afflicted and tortured with the same level of suffering as one clamped in chains. Some people commit suicide because of distress of this kind when they can take it no longer. The person who knows the misery that another person is suffering under, and does nothing to help them, commits a big sin and becomes guilty of the person's blood.

“Therefore, you must do good works if you have received benefits from the RULER. You must not put them off whilst the building of the tower is being completed. It is because of you that the building work has been delayed. Unless you act quickly to do what is right, the tower will be completed, and you will be shut out.”

Hermas: When he had finished speaking to me, he rose from the couch and left. He took the Shepherd and the virgins with him. He told me, however, that he would send the Shepherd and the virgins back to my house later.

The Two Cities

If you know that you do not belong in this city, but are aware of another city in which you do belong, then why bother working hard to buy luxury goods and houses that are surplus to requirements? He who puts the effort into obtaining these things has no intention of returning to his own city. Foolish, two-minded, miserable person that you are, don't you realise that all these things are foreign to you

and under the power of someone else? The ruler of this city could one day say, *"I no longer want you to live in my city because you don't conform to my laws, so get out!"* Being the owner of land, property, and other possessions, what will you do with these things that you have arranged for yourself when you are thrown out? The ruler of the country could justly say to you, *"Conform to my laws or get out of my country."* What will you do because you live by the law of your own country? For the sake of your land and other possessions won't you totally reject your own law and start complying with the law of this city? Be very careful as it will be harmful to reject your law. Should you one day wish to return to your city, you certainly won't be welcomed because you rejected the law of the city and will be refused entry to it.

Listen carefully now; if you live in a strange land make sure you have nothing more than what is necessary to survive. Be prepared in case the ruler of this city wants to throw you out because of your opposition to his law. You can then leave his city and go to your own city where you can live by your own law with happiness and joy, free from being insulted.

Be diligent you who serve GOD and have him in your heart. Do the works of GOD being mindful of his commandments and of the promises that he has made, then exercise faith in him that he will keep them if you keep his commandments. Therefore, instead of buying land buy the souls of those who

are distressed instead, as you are able, and don't forget to visit widows and orphans as you must not neglect them. Spend your riches and possessions that you have received from GOD on land and houses such as these. This is the reason the Master has granted you riches, in order for you to carry out this ministry for him. It is much better to buy fields and houses of this kind which you will find in your own city when you visit it. This lavish expenditure is beautiful and full of joy, it does not bring sadness or fear, but happiness. Don't spend as the ungodly do for it is useless to you as the servants of GOD. Instead, spend on things that will bring you joy and do not desire or touch anything that belongs to someone else. It is evil to lust after someone else's property.

The Elm and The Vine

Hermas: Whilst walking in the country I saw an elm and a vine and started looking at their fruits. Suddenly the Shepherd appeared. I was just thinking about the elm and the vine and how well they were suited to each other.

The Shepherd: *"These two trees represent certain kinds of GOD's servants."*

Hermas: *"What kinds are represented by these trees?"*

The Shepherd: *"Do you see this elm and vine."*

Hermas: *"I do."*

The Shepherd: *"The vine produces fruit, but the elm does not. But the vine cannot produce much fruit when it is spread over the ground as the fruit it produces goes rotten. This is because it is not attached to the elm. When it climbs the elm and attaches itself to it, fruit is produced from the combination of itself and the elm. In this way, the elm also produces much fruit, not less, but more."*

Hermas: *"How can that be?"*

The Shepherd: *"When the vine hangs from the elm it produces good fruit in great measure, but on the ground, it produces little fruit which goes rotten. This illustration is also applicable to all GOD's servants whether rich or poor."*

Hermas: *"Tell me how?"*

The Shepherd: *"Listen. The rich man has much wealth, but in the ways of the RULER, he is poor because he is distracted by his riches. His communication with the RULER is infrequent and even when he does, it is small, weak and powerless. So, the rich person helps the poor person with their needs, knowing that what he does for the poor person will be rewarded by GOD. This is because the poor person is rich in prayer and his prayer has great power with GOD. The rich person knows this and supplies everything the poor person needs without hesitation. The poor person then thanks GOD for sending the rich person."*

"In turn, the rich person becomes more enthusiastic in assisting the poor person so that they can carry on with their life. They know that the prayer of the poor person is rich and acceptable in the eyes of GOD. They accomplish their work in their own way. The poor person is rich in prayer which is supplied by the RULER. Likewise, the rich person shares his riches, which he has received from the RULER, without hesitation with the poor person. This action is good and acceptable to GOD. The rich person understands about their riches and works for the benefit of the poor person. They use the gifts given to them by the RULER to carry out the RULER's ministry correctly.

"People think that the elm does not produce any fruit itself, but they don't understand or realise that when there is a drought, the elm stores up water that nurtures the vine. Having a consistent supply of water, the vine produces twice the fruit both for itself and for the elm. The same with the poor. They attract riches when they pray to the RULER for the rich. The rich attract spiritual growth when they provide for the needs of the poor. Both become partners in this righteous work and the person who does these things will not be abandoned by GOD but will be written into the books of the living. Happy are the rich who know they are blessed and made rich by the RULER."

The Good and The Bad

Hermas: He showed me a number of trees that had no leaves and appeared to be withered and all alike.

The Shepherd: *"These trees that you see are those who live in this world."*

Hermas: *"Why are they all withered and all the same?"*

The Shepherd: *"Because neither the good nor the bad are distinguishable in this world but they all look alike. This world is winter to the good who do not stick out because they live with the bad. In winter, the trees shed their leaves, and all look withered alike. You cannot tell which ones are withered and which ones are alive. The same with this world, the good and the bad are not easily discerned and all look the same."*

Hermas: He then went on to show me a number of other trees; some were in bud and others withered.

The Shepherd: *"Can you see these trees?"*

Hermas: *"Yes I can. Some are budding and others are withered."*

The Shepherd: *"The trees in bud are the good and they will live in the future world. The future world is summer to the good but winter to the bad. When the mercy of the RULER shines out, those who serve GOD will be revealed. In fact,*

everyone will be shown up for who they are. Just as in summer the fruits of the trees appear and are recognised as to the kind they are, so also the fruits of the good will appear and even the very smallest will be seen as flourishing in the future world. As for the godless and the sinners, just as you saw the trees that were withered, they will be revealed in that very state, withered and unfruitful. They will stand out as being evil because of their actions and will be burnt up as fuel."

The Perfect Fast

Hermas: While I was sitting on a certain mountain, fasting and giving thanks to the RULER for all that he had done for me, I suddenly noticed the Shepherd sitting next to me.

The Shepherd: *"Why are you here this early in the morning?"*

Hermas: *"I am keeping my post."*

The Shepherd: *"What type of post?"*

Hermas: *"A fast."*

The Shepherd: *"What kind of fast?"*

Hermas: *"The same one that I always do."*

The Shepherd: *"You don't know how to fast to the RULER. You are not fasting, what you are doing is useless."*

Hermas: *"Why do you say that?"*

The Shepherd: *"I tell you that this fast you think you are doing is not really a fast. Listen, I will tell you of the kind of fast that is totally acceptable to the RULER. GOD does not want vain fasts. By fasting in this way to GOD you do nothing for righteousness. Instead fast to GOD in the following manner:*

- *Do nothing wicked in your life*
- *Serve the RULER with a pure heart*
- *Follow his commandments*
- *Walk in his ways*
- *Permit no evil desire to arise in your heart*
- *Exercise faith in GOD.*

"If you do these things, fear him, and exercise self-control over every evil deed, you will walk with GOD. If you do these things you will achieve a great fast that is totally acceptable to GOD. If you keep the commandments of GOD your fasting will be very good. This then is the way you should keep this fast:

1. *Keep yourself from every evil word*
2. *Keep yourself from every evil desire*
3. *Purify yourself from all the vanities of this world.*

“If you keep these things your fast will be perfect, providing on the day that you fast you do the following:

- 1. Abstain from the choice foods you would normally have eaten*
- 2. Eat only bread and drink only water*
- 3. Set aside the cost difference of the food and drink you usually would have spent*
- 4. Give the money to a widow, an orphan, or someone else in need.*

“In this way, your soul will become humble, and the consequence of your humility is that the receiver will also be humbled and pray to the RULER for you. Should you carry out the fast in this manner as I have commanded you, your sacrifice will be acceptable in the eyes of GOD. Your fast will be remembered because the service performed is joyous and acceptable to the RULER. You should follow these things and get your children and all your household to observe them also so that you all will be blessed.”

The Flesh & The Spirit

The Shepherd: *“Keep your body pure and don’t degrade it so that the Spirit can live righteously in it. See to it that the thought never enters your heart that this body of yours can be destroyed, otherwise you might abuse it or degrade it. If you degrade your body you will also degrade the Holy Spirit and if you degrade your body you will not live.”*

Hermas: *“If a person had lived in ignorance previously and degraded their body before these words were heard, how can they be saved?”*

The Shepherd: *“For former actions done in ignorance, only GOD has the power to forgive as all authority belongs to him. So control yourself, so that the RULER Almighty who is full of compassion, will heal your former actions done in ignorance. That is, if from now onwards you neither degrade your body nor the Holy Spirit. They live in common with each other and one cannot be degraded without the other being degraded also.”*

Luxury & Deception

The Shepherd: *“The person who lives in self-indulgent luxury for even one day is deluded and clothed with foolishness. They don’t understand the consequences of their actions because the very next day they forget about the day before. Being self-indulgent and deluded at the same time they have no memory because they are clothed with foolishness.*

“In contrast, when punishment and suffering inflict a person for just one single day, it seems like they are suffering for an entire year because punishment and suffering have long memories. When enduring punishment and suffering for a whole year, the person remembers at length their self-indulgent luxury and delusion. They then understand that it is on account of these that they are suffering these pains.

Every person that lives in self-indulgent luxury is deluded and suffers in this way because, though being alive, they have delivered themselves over to death."

Hermas: *"Exactly what kind of self-indulgence is harmful?"*

The Shepherd: *"Everything pleasurable is self-indulgence. The angry-tempered person is being self-indulgent when they hand themselves over to this passion. The same goes for the adulterer, the drunkard, slander, liar, stingy miser, defrauder, and anyone who does similar. They all hand themselves over to their passion and indulge in their luxury. All these habits of self-indulgence are harmful to the servants of GOD. On account of these delusions, they therefore suffer punishment and pain. Having said that, there are also luxurious habits that save a person. There are those who indulge themselves in doing good and are carried away by the pleasure it gives them. This kind of luxury is beneficial to the servant of GOD and brings life to them. But the harmful, previously mentioned self-indulgent luxuries bring punishment and pain to people."*

Repent And Walk With GOD

The Shepherd: *"You must go and tell everyone everywhere to repent so they can walk with GOD. In his compassion, the RULER sent me to give repentance to everyone even though many don't deserve it because of their evil deeds."*

Nevertheless, the RULER is very patient and wants everyone who has been called through his son to be saved."

Hermas: "I hope that everyone will repent when they hear these words. I am sure that when they hear these words every single one of them will repent and fear GOD once they have understood what they have done."

The Shepherd: "Those people who:

- repent with their whole heart*
- cleanse themselves from all the evil deeds stated previously and*
- add nothing more to their sins*

will receive healing from the RULER for their earlier sins and will walk with GOD. Those who are two-minded in regard to these commandments and add to their sins by walking according to the lusts of this world will condemn themselves to death. You must walk in my commandments and walk with GOD. Whoever follows them and does what is right will walk with GOD."

The Good Confession

We agree with the apostles and believe that there is only one Healer who is made of both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, GOD in the flesh, true life surrounded by death, son of Mary and Son of GOD, initially experiencing suffering then afterwards beyond suffering – Jesus the Christ our RULER.

For our GOD, Jesus the Christ:

- Was conceived in Mary's womb according to the pre-planning of GOD and by the Holy Spirit
- Is physically descended from the line of David according to ancestry
- Is the Son of GOD according to the will and power of GOD
- Was born the son of Mary when she was still a virgin
- Ate and drank among us, both before being killed and after being raised up to life again
- Was baptised by John in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him
- Was nailed and crucified for us in his physical body under Pontius Pilate and Herod the Tetrarch
- Died in full sight of persons in heaven, on earth, and under the earth

- Was physically and spiritually raised from the dead when his Father raised him up
- Was touched and handled by his disciples after his resurrection. His disciples then saw that he was composed of flesh whilst being spiritually united with the Father at the same time. For this reason, his disciples also treated death with the same contempt.

He suffered all these things for our sakes so that we might be saved and likewise be raised up from the dead by the Father if we exercise trust in Jesus the Christ.

He has raised up a standard for all ages through his resurrection, to rally together his holy and faithful people whether among Jews or non-Jews, in the one body of the Community of GOD's people.