

will also apply to the work called the Shepherd of Hermas.

In the documentary records of the early part of the second century, we meet with the celebrated Epistles of Ignatius, bishop of Antioch. This writer may in his early years, have seen and conversed with some of the Disciples of Jesus of Nazareth and their companions, and though it certain that these compositions have in after ages been extensively interpolated and corrupted yet there is also lamentable evidence that the writer himself had departed on many points from "the faith once delivered to the saints," and still held by the Nazarenes, and which in his younger years he had been instructed. But in both his epistles to the church at Smyrna, and to Polycarp its bishop, he seems to have referred more particularly to the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, than to any other. Indeed, it seems very probable that he used no other in writing to this ecclesia, and its elder, and though he wrote, or had it copied into Greek, the gospel quotations seem to be translations from the Hebrew, and therefore a proof, among many others, that Papias was right when he made the statement that the first gospel was written in the Hebrew, and that each (when it was necessary to do so) translated it as he was able. In the epistle to the church in Smyrna there is a quotation from the Gospel not found in any of our Greek or other versions, but which was in the copies of the Hebrew Gospel long afterwards preserved by the Nazarenes. Ignatius is here combatting the opinion of a sect

of the Gnostics, who denied the reality of the death and re-errection of Jesus, and which is now virtually done by all who teach the natural immortality of the soul. This passage of Ignatius reads as follows: "For I knew that after his (Christ's) resurrection also he was possessed of flesh, and I believe so now. When for instance he came to those who were with Peter, he said unto them, 'Lay hold, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit,' and immediately they touched him and believed, being convinced both by his flesh and spirit. . . . and after his resurrection he did eat and drink with them, being possessed of flesh though spiritually he was united with the Father." A part of this passage Eusebius, in speaking of the letters of Ignatius, quotes, but he says that he did not know from what author the quotation was made, which apparent ignorance on his part may be accounted for from the fact that he did not understand the Hebrew language and could not read the Hebrew Gospel, although a copy of it was in the library of the church of which he was bishop, and Jerome states that this passage was in the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew used by the Nazarenes in the fourth century, a copy of which he procured and translated. Indeed a careful reading of these two epistles of Ignatius, in the shorter rescension, strongly indicates that he used no other Gospel than that of Matthew, in its original form, and that he translates this passage from the Hebrew into the Greek, when writing to the ecclesia in Smyrna, of which