

We trace, too, in his letters a conscious lack in his spiritual experience. This incompleteness he fondly hopes will be made up by martyrdom. Hence he eagerly looks forward to his death after this manner as the needful perfection of his Christian life. He desires his friends not to oppose the obstacle of their prayers to this desired consummation. He declares that when thrown to the lions, if they do not readily attack him he will do what he can to entice them to their prey, so great is his desire to be made perfect by this means. So certain is it, in all ages, where the authority of the Holy Ghost is in whole or in part destroyed, and authority in man or book substituted, that conscious soul-lack must inevitably supervene. This law is, must be, without exception.

We have remaining one other book, called "*The Shepherd of Hermas*." This is the longest of them all, and consists almost entirely of visions experienced by the writer. Its date and origin are not clearly traced, but it is probable that it first saw the light near the beginning of the second century.

Judging from the internal evidence of the book itself, we should judge that these visions were real to the writer, and he transcribed with transparent honesty and simplicity. In short, they correspond to the visions of many other sincere Christians who have reported what they saw and heard when in the trance state, whilst about as much importance should be attached to the one set of visions as to the other.

As in many a modern instance, the result of these visions was beneficial, for they seem to have changed him from a mere worldling to an earnest, self-denying religionist.

As might be expected, he does not ignore the work of the Spirit, but devotes, in one place, considerable space to it.

His idea of the Holy Spirit is somewhat difficult to obtain, as the following sentence will show: "That Holy Spirit which was created first of all He placed in the body in which God should dwell."

He seems to teach, or make the angel who appears to him teach, that this created entity dwells in all Christians, or possibly in all men, as in the following

passage: "For if thou shalt be patient, the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in thee shall be pure and not be darkened by any evil spirit; but being full of joy, shall be enlarged and feast in the body in which it dwells, and serve the Lord with joy and in great peace. But if any anger shall overtake thee, presently the Holy Spirit which is in thee will be straitened and seek to depart from thee, for He is choked by the evil spirit and has not the liberty of serving the Lord as He would, for He is grieved by anger. When, therefore, both these spirits dwell together, it is destructive to a man."

Here he is evidently wrestling with the problem somewhat after the manner of the Mystics, and with about the same success. What a bottomless pit of mystery it is to all who fail to accept, in the absolute sense, the Holy Spirit as teacher and guide!

He is rather orthodox, after the modern type, about prayer, for he exhorts all, when they happen to commence to pray about anything, to persevere, for in the end they will obtain, if they *doubt* not. But, like moderns, he can give no rule to show with certainty how doubt may in every case be exorcised.

And yet again, in another place he seems to have some indefinite idea concerning what prayers may be without doubt, as witness the following: "For every good spirit that is given from God needs not to be asked; but, having the power of divinity, speaks all things of itself, because he comes from above, from the power of God."

He also seems to see, as through a glass darkly, some of the results of walking in the Spirit, as the following extracts will show: "But they that have the fear of the Lord, and search out the truth concerning God, having all their thoughts toward the Lord, apprehend whatsoever is said to them, and forthwith understand it. For where the Spirit of the Lord dwells there is also much understanding added. Wherefore join thyself to the Lord, and thou shalt understand all things."

"Remove sadness, therefore, from thyself and afflict not the Holy Spirit