

Shepherd of Hermas



The Apostolic Fathers

Greek Texts and English Translations

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Shepherd of Hermas

THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

The Visions

Vision 1

The Vision of Rhoda

1.1

1 The man who brought me up sold me to a woman named Rhoda in Rome. Many years later I met her again and I began to love her as a sister. **2** Some time later I saw her bathing in the Tiber River, and I gave her my hand and helped her out of the river. When I saw her beauty I thought to myself and said, “How happy I would be, if I had a wife of such beauty and character.” This was the only thing I thought, nothing more. **3** Some time later, as I was going to Cumae and glorifying God’s creatures for their greatness, splendor, and power, I fell asleep as I walked. And a spirit took me and carried me away through a pathless region through which a man could not make his way, for the place was precipitous and eroded by the waters. When I had crossed the river, I came to level ground, and I knelt down and began to pray to the Lord and to confess my sins. **4** While I was praying the

heavens opened and I saw that woman whom I had desired greeting me from heaven, saying, "Hello, Hermas." **5** And I stared at her and said, "Lady, what are you doing here?" And she answered me, "I have been taken up in order that I may accuse you of your sins before the Lord." **6** I said to her, "Are you now accusing me?" "No," she said, "but listen to the words I am about to say to you. God, who dwells in the heavens and created out of nothing the things that are, and increased and multiplied them for the sake of his holy church, is angry at you because you sinned against me." **7** Answering her I said, "I sinned against you? In what way? Or when have I ever spoken an indecent word to you? Have I not always regarded you as a goddess? Have I not always respected you as a sister? Why do you falsely accuse me, lady, of these evil and unclean things?" **8** She laughed at me and said, "The desire for evil rose up in your heart. Or do you not think that it is an evil thing for a righteous man if an evil desire rises up in his heart? It certainly is a sin, and a great one at that," she said, "for the righteous aim at righteous things. So, then, as long as their aims are righteous, their reputation is secure in heaven and they find the Lord favorably inclined in all they do. But those who aim at evil things in their hearts bring death and captivity upon themselves, especially those who lay claim to this world and pride themselves on their wealth and do not hold fast to the good things that are to come. **9** Their souls will regret it, for they have no hope; instead they have abandoned themselves and their life. But you, pray to God, and he will heal your sins, and those of your whole house, and of all the saints."

1.7 *In what way?* Some ancient authorities read *Where have I done so?*

An Elderly Woman

1.2

2 As soon as she had spoken these words the heavens were closed, and I was terribly shaken and upset. And I thought to myself, “If even this sin is recorded against me, how can I be saved? Or how will I propitiate God for my conscious sins? Or with what words will I ask the Lord to be gracious to me?” **2** While I was debating and discussing these things in my heart, I saw before me a great white chair made of snow-white wool, and there came an elderly woman in a shining garment with a book in her hands, and she sat down by herself and greeted me: “Hello, Hermas.” And I, upset and weeping, said, “Hello, lady.” **3** And she said to me, “Why are you so gloomy, Hermas? You who are patient and good-natured, always laughing, why do you look so depressed and unhappy?” And I said to her, “Because of a very good woman who says that I sinned against her.” **4** And she said, “May such a thing by no means happen to God’s servant! But certainly the thought did arise in your heart concerning her. To God’s servants, an intent such as this brings sin, for with respect to a devout and already approved spirit it is an evil and shocking decision if it should desire to do an evil deed, especially if it is Hermas the self-controlled, who abstains from every evil desire and is full of all sincerity and great innocence.”

1.3

3 “Yet this is not why God is angry at you. Rather it is in order that you may convert your family, which has sinned against the Lord and against you, their parents. But you are so fond of your children that you have not corrected your family, but have allowed it to become terribly corrupt. This is why the Lord is angry at you. But he will heal

all your past evil deeds that have been done by your family, for because of their sins and transgressions you have been corrupted by the cares of this life. **2** But the great compassion of the Lord has had mercy on you and your family, and will strengthen you and establish you in his glory. Only do not be careless, but be courageous and strengthen your family. For just as the blacksmith by hammering at his work completes the task he wants to do, so also does the daily righteous word conquer all evil. Do not cease, therefore, instructing your children, for I know that if they repent with all their heart, they will be enrolled with the saints in the books of life.” **3** After these words of hers ceased, she said to me, “Do you wish to hear me read?” And I said, “Yes I do, lady.” She said to me, “Pay attention, and hear about the glories of God.” I listened with care and amazement to things that I did not have the strength to remember, for all the words were terrifying, words that a human being cannot endure. The last words, however, I remembered, for they were beneficial to us and reassuring: **4** “Behold, the God of hosts, who by his invisible and mighty power and by his great wisdom created the world, and by his glorious purpose clothed his creation with beauty, and by his mighty word fixed the heaven and set the earth’s foundations upon the waters, and by his own wisdom and providence created his holy church, which he also blessed—behold, he is removing the heavens and the mountains and the hills and the seas, and all things are becoming level for his elect, so that he may keep the promise that he promised to them with great glory and joy, if they keep God’s commandments, which they received with great faith.”

1.4

4 When she finished reading and rose from her chair, four young men came and took away the chair and went away toward the east. **2** Then she called me to her and touched my breast and said to me, “Did my

reading please you?” And I said to her, “Lady, these last words please me, but the former were difficult and hard.” And she responded, saying to me: “These last words are for the righteous, but the former are for the outsiders and the apostate.” **3** As she was speaking, two men appeared and took her by the arms and went away toward the east, where the chair had also gone. And she smiled as she went away, and as she was going she said to me, “Be courageous, Hermas.”

Vision 2

The Woman and the Command to Copy the Message

2.1

5 When I was on the way to Cumae, about the same time as the previous year, as I walked along I remembered the vision of the previous year, and again a spirit took me and carried me away to the same place as the year before. **2** So when I reached the place, I fell to my knees and began to pray to the Lord and to glorify his name because he had considered me worthy and had made known to me my former sins. **3** And after I had risen from prayer, I saw before me the elderly woman whom I had seen the year before, walking and reading a little book. And she said to me, “Can you report these things to God’s elect?” I said to her, “Lady, I cannot remember so many things, but give me the little book, so that I can copy it.” “Take it,” she said, “and return it to me.” **4** I took it, and going away to some spot in the field I copied it all, letter by letter, for I could not make out the syllables. After I finished the letters of the little book, suddenly the little book was snatched out of my hand, but by whom I did not see.

4.3 *Be courageous Or Act like a man.*

The Meaning of the Written Message

2.2

6 Fifteen days later, after I had fasted and earnestly asked the Lord, the meaning of the writing was revealed to me. And this is what was written: **2** “Your children, Hermas, have rejected God and blasphemed the Lord and by their great evil they have betrayed their parents, and are called betrayers of parents, yet they have not profited from their betrayal. But still they have added licentiousness and orgies of evil to their sins, and so the limit of their transgressions has been reached. **3** But make these words known to all your children, and to your wife, who is about to become like a sister to you, for she does not control her tongue, with which she does evil. But when she hears these words she will control it, and will find mercy. **4** After you have made known to them all these words, which the Master ordered me to reveal to you, then all the sins that they have previously committed will be forgiven them. Indeed, all the saints who have sinned up to this day will be forgiven, if they repent with all their heart and drive away double-mindedness from their heart. **5** For the Master has sworn by his own glory regarding his elect, that if sin still occurs, now that this day has been set as a limit, they will not find salvation, for repentance for the righteous is at an end; the days of repentance for all the saints are over, although for the outsiders there is the possibility of repentance until the last day. **6** So speak, therefore, to the officials of the church, in order that they may direct their ways in righteousness, in order that they may receive the promises in full with much glory. **7** You, therefore, who work righteousness must be steadfast, and do not be double-minded, in order that you may gain entrance with the holy angels. Blessed are those of you who patiently endure the coming great tribulation and who will not deny their life. **8** For the Lord has sworn by his Son that those who have denied their

Lord have been rejected from their life, that is, those who now are about to deny him in the coming days. But to those who formerly denied him, mercy has been granted because of his great compassion.”

2.3

7 “But you, Hermas, must no longer bear a grudge against your children, nor allow your sister to have her way, in order that they may be cleansed from their former sins. For they will be disciplined with a righteous discipline if you do not bear a grudge against them. Bearing a grudge produces death. But you, Hermas, have had great tribulations of your own because of the transgressions of your family, because you were not concerned about them. Instead you neglected them and became entangled in your own evil transgressions. **2** But your sincerity and great self-control, and the fact that you have not fallen away from the living God, saves you. These things have saved you, if you remain steadfast, and they save all who practice such things and walk in innocence and sincerity. These people prevail over all evil and will endure to eternal life. **3** Blessed are all those who practice righteousness; they will never be destroyed. **4** But say to Maximus: ‘Behold, tribulation is coming; if it seems good to you, deny again.’ ‘The Lord is near to those who turn to him,’ as it is written in the book of Eldad and Modat, who prophesied to the people in the wilderness.”

The Identity of the Elderly Woman

2.4

8 As I slept, brothers and sisters, a revelation was given to me by a very handsome young man, who said to me, “Who do you think the

6.8 *Lord* One ancient authority reads *Christ*; another reads *son*. **8.1** *brothers and sisters* Gk *adelphoi*.

elderly woman from whom you received the little book was?” I said: “The Sibyl.” “You are wrong,” he said. “She is not.” “Then who is she?” I said. “The church,” he replied. I said to him, “Why, then is she elderly?” “Because,” he said, “she was created before all things; therefore she is elderly, and for her sake the world was formed.” **2** Afterwards I saw a vision in my house. The elderly woman came and asked me if I had already given the little book to the elders. I said that I had not given it. “You have done well,” she said, “for I have words to add. So when I finish all the words, they will be made known to all the elect through you. **3** Therefore you will write two little books, and you will send one to Clement and one to Grapte. Then Clement will send it to the cities abroad, because that is his job. But Grapte will instruct the widows and orphans. But you yourself will read it to this city, along with the elders who preside over the church.”

Vision 3

The Woman and the Tower

3.1

9 What I saw, brothers and sisters, was this. **2** After fasting often and begging the Lord to reveal to me the revelation that he promised to show me through the mouth of the elderly woman, that very night the elderly woman appeared to me and said, “Since you are so poorly instructed and eager to know everything, go into the field where you are farming, and about the fifth hour I will appear to you and show you what you must see.” **3** I asked her, saying: “Lady, to what part of the field?” “Wherever you wish,” she replied. I selected a beautiful secluded spot. But before I could speak to her and describe the place,

9.1 *brothers and sisters* Gk *adelphoi*. **9.2** *are farming* Some ancient authorities read *live*.

she said to me: "I will go wherever you wish." **4** So I went, brothers and sisters, to the field, and I counted up the hours and went to the place where I had instructed her to come, and I saw an ivory couch placed there, and on the couch there was a linen cushion, and on it was spread out a cloth covering of flaxen linen. **5** When I saw these things sitting there and no one in the area, I was astonished and a fit of trembling seized me and my hair stood on end and I shuddered in panic, as it were, because I was alone. Then I recovered myself and remembered the glory of God and took heart; I knelt down and once more confessed my sins to the Lord, as I had done before. **6** And she came with six young men, whom I had seen before, and she stood by me and listened attentively as I prayed and confessed my sins to the Lord. And she touched me and said, "Hermas, stop saying all these prayers for your sins. Ask also for righteousness, so that you may take some part of it to your family." **7** Then she raised me by the hand and led me to the couch, and said to the young men, "Go and build." **8** And after the young men had gone and we were alone, she said to me, "Sit here." I said to her, "Lady, let the elders sit down first." "Do as I say," she said. "Sit down." **9** Then when I wanted to sit down on the right side, she would not let me, but indicated to me with her hand that I should sit on the left side. Then as I thought about this and was sad because she would not permit me to sit on the right side, she said to me, "Are you sad, Hermas? The place on the right side is for others, who have already pleased God and have suffered for the sake of the Name. But you fall far short of sitting with them. But persevere in your sincerity, as you are now doing, and you will sit with them, as will all who do what they have done and endure what they have endured."

9.4 *brothers and sisters* Gk *adelphoi*.

3.2

10 “What,” I asked, “have they endured?” “Listen,” she said: “scourgings, imprisonments, severe persecutions, crosses, wild beasts, for the sake of the Name. This is why the right side of holiness belongs to them, and to anyone who suffers because of the Name. The left side belongs to the rest. But to both, to those sitting on the right and to those sitting on the left, belong the same gifts and the same promises; the only difference is the former sit on the right and have a certain glory. **2** And you are very eager to sit on the right with them, but your shortcomings are many. Nevertheless you will be cleansed of your shortcomings; indeed, all those who are not double-minded will be cleansed of all their sins to this day.” **3** Having said these things, she wished to depart. But falling at her feet I asked her by the Lord to show me the vision that she had promised. **4** So again she took me by the hand and raised me up and seated me on the couch on the left, while she herself sat on the right. And lifting up a shining rod she said to me, “Do you see something great?” I said to her, “Lady, I do not see anything.” She said to me, “Look! Do you not see right in front of you a great tower being built upon the waters out of shining square stones?” **5** And the tower was being built in a square by the six young men who had come with her, and countless other men were bringing stones, some of them from the deep and some from the land, and they were giving them to the six young men. And they were taking them and were building. **6** All the stones that were dragged from the deep they placed in the building just as they were, for they had been shaped and fit at the joints with the other stones. In fact, they fitted one another so closely that the joints were not visible, and the structure of the tower looked as if it were built of a single stone. **7** But of the other stones that were brought in from the dry land, some they threw away, and some they placed in the building, and others they broke in pieces and threw far away from the tower.

8 And many other stones were lying around the tower, and they were not using them for the building, for some of them were damaged and others had cracks in them, and others were too short and others were white and round, and did not fit into the building. **9** And I saw other stones thrown far from the tower and coming onto the road yet not staying on the road, but rolling to the wasteland; and others were falling into the fire and burning, and others were falling near the water, yet were not able to roll into the water, even though they wanted to roll and to come to the water.

The Explanation of the Tower

3.3

11 When she had shown me these things she wished to hurry away. I said to her, “Lady, what good does it do me to have seen these things and yet not know what they mean?” Answering me, she said, “You are a crafty fellow, wanting to know all about the tower.” “Yes, lady,” I replied, “so that I may report to my brothers and sisters, and so that they may be cheered, and that as a result of hearing these things they may know the Lord in much glory.” **2** Then she said, “Many will hear; but after hearing, some of them will rejoice, but others will weep. Yet even these, if they hear and repent, will also rejoice. Hear, therefore, the parables of the tower, for I will reveal everything to you. And do not bother me any more about a revelation, for these revelations have come to an end, for they have been completed. But you will never stop asking for revelations, for you are shameless. **3** The tower that you see being built is I, the church, who appeared to you now and previously. So ask whatever you want about the tower, and I will reveal it to you, so that you may rejoice with the saints.” **4** I said to her,

11.1 *brothers and sisters* Gk *adelphois*. • *and so that . . . cheered* and *these things* Some ancient authorities omit. • *Lord* One ancient authority reads *God*.

“Lady, since you once considered me worthy to reveal everything to me, reveal it.” And she said to me, “Whatever can be revealed to you will be revealed. Only let your heart be with God, and do not be double-minded about what you see.” **5** I asked her, “Why is the tower built upon water, lady?” “As I said to you before,” she said, “you do seek diligently. By seeking, therefore, you are finding the truth. Hear, then, why the tower is built upon water: it is because your life was saved and will be saved through water. But the tower has been set on a foundation by the word of the almighty and glorious Name, and is strengthened by the unseen power of the Master.”

3.4

12 I answered and said to her, “Lady, this thing is great and marvelous. But who are the six young men who are building, lady?” “These are the holy angels of God who were created first of all, to whom the Lord committed all his creation to increase and to build up, and to rule over all creation. Through them, therefore, the construction of the tower will be completed.” **2** “And who are the others who are bringing the stones?” “They too are holy angels of God, but these six are superior to them. The construction of the tower will be completed, and all will rejoice together around the tower and will glorify God because the construction of the tower was completed.” **3** I inquired of her, saying: “Lady, I wish to know about the destination of the stones, and what kind of meaning they have.” Answering me she said, “It is not because you are worthier than all others to have it revealed to you, for others are before you and are better than you, to whom these visions ought to have been revealed. But it has been revealed to you in order that the name of God might be glorified, and it will be revealed for the sake of the double-minded, who question in their

11.5 before Some ancient authorities read *before, you are crafty concerning the scriptures.*

hearts whether or not these things are so. Tell them that all these things are true, and that there is nothing besides the truth, but all are powerful and reliable and firmly established.”

3.5

13 “Now hear about the stones that go into the building. The stones that are square and white and fit at their joints, these are the apostles and bishops and teachers and deacons who have walked according to the holiness of God and have ministered to the elect of God as bishops and teachers and deacons with purity and reverence; some have fallen asleep, while others are still living. And they always agreed with one another, and so they had peace with one another and listened to one another. For this reason their joints fit together in the building of the tower.” **2** “But who are the ones that are dragged from the deep and placed in the building, whose joints fit together with the other stones already used in the building?” “They are those who have suffered for the name of the Lord.” **3** “And I wish to know who are the other stones brought from the dry land, lady.” She said, “Those going into the building without being hewn are those whom the Lord has approved because they walked in the uprightness of the Lord and rightly performed his commandments.” **4** “And who are the ones who are being brought and placed in the building?” “They are young in faith, and faithful; but they are warned by the angels to do good, because wickedness was not found in them.” **5** “Who are the ones they rejected and threw away?” “They are the ones who have sinned and wish to repent. Therefore they were not thrown far from the tower, because they will be useful for building if they repent. So, then, the ones who are about to repent, if in fact they do repent, will be strong in the faith if they repent now while

13.4 *was not found* Some ancient authorities read *was found*.

the tower is still being built. But if the tower is finished, they will no longer have a place, but will be rejects. The only advantage they have is this, that they lie near the tower.”

3.6

14 “And do you want to know who are the ones that are broken in pieces and thrown far away from the tower? These are the children of lawlessness; they believed hypocritically, and no wickedness escaped them. Therefore they do not have salvation, because they are not useful for building on account of their wickedness. That is why they were broken up and thrown far away, because of the Lord’s wrath, for they angered him. **2** As for the others that you saw lying around in great numbers and not going into the building, the ones that are damaged are those who have known the truth but did not abide in it, nor do they associate with the saints. Therefore they are useless.” **3** “But who are the ones with cracks?” “These are the ones who have something against one another in their hearts and are not at peace among themselves. Instead, they have only the appearance of peace, and when they leave one another their evil thoughts remain in their hearts. These are the cracks that the stones have. **4** The ones that are too short are those who have believed and live for the most part in righteousness, but they have a certain amount of lawlessness; that is why they are too short and not perfect.” **5** “And who are the white and round stones that do not fit into the building, lady?” She answered and said to me, “How long will you be foolish and stupid, asking about everything and understanding nothing? These are the ones who have faith, but also have the riches of this world. Whenever persecution comes, they deny their Lord because of their riches and their business affairs.” **6** And I answered her and

14.2 *nor do they . . . useless* Some ancient authorities omit.

said, “Then when, lady, will they be useful for the building?” “When,” she replied, “their riches, which lead their souls astray, are cut away, then they will be useful to God. For just as the round stone cannot become square unless it is trimmed and loses some part of itself, so also those who are rich in this world cannot become useful to the Lord unless their riches are cut away. **7** Learn first from yourself: when you were rich, you were useless, but now you are useful and beneficial to life. Be useful to God, for you yourself are to be used as one of these stones.”

3.7

15 “And the other stones that you saw thrown far from the tower, and falling onto the road and rolling off the road to wastelands, are those who have believed but because of their double-mindedness abandon their true road. Thinking that they can find a better way, they go astray and wander about in misery, trudging through the wastelands. **2** Those falling into the fire and burning are those who have completely rebelled against the living God, and the thought no longer enters their heart to repent on account of their licentious desires and the evil deeds they do. **3** And do you want to know who are the ones that fall near the waters but are not able to roll into the water? They are the ones who heard the word and want to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then, when they remember the purity of the truth, they change their mind and return again to their evil desires.” **4** So she finished the explanation of the tower. **5** Still unabashed, I asked her whether all these stones that were rejected and do not fit into the construction of the tower have opportunity for repentance and a place in this tower. “They have,”

she said, “an opportunity for repentance, but they cannot fit into this tower. **6** But they will fit into another much inferior place, but not until they have been tormented and fulfilled the days of their sins. And they will be transferred for this reason only, that they received the righteous word. And then it will happen that they will be transferred out of their torments, if the evil deeds that they have done come into their hearts; but if their evil deeds do not come into their hearts, they will not be saved, because of their hard-heartedness.”

The Seven Women Supporting the Tower

3.8

16 When I stopped asking her about all these things, she said to me: “Would you like to see something else?” Being very eager to see more, I was quite happy to look. **2** Looking at me she smiled and said to me, “Do you see seven women around the tower?” “I see them, lady,” I said. “This tower is supported by them by the Lord’s command. **3** Now hear about their functions. The first of them, the woman with the strong hands, is called Faith; through her God’s elect are saved. **4** The second, who is dressed for work and has a manly appearance, is called Self-control; she is the daughter of Faith. Those who follow her will be blessed in their life, because they will refrain from all evil deeds, believing that if they refrain from every evil desire they will inherit eternal life.” **5** “And who are the others, lady?” “They are daughters of one another, and they are called Sincerity, Knowledge, Innocence, Reverence, and Love. So when you do all the works of their mother, you will be able to live.” **6** “I would like to know, lady,” I said, “what power each of them has.” “Listen,” she said, “to the powers that they have. **7** Their powers are controlled by one another, and they follow one another, in the

16.4 *has a manly appearance* Or *is courageous*.

order in which they were born. From Faith is born Self-control; from Self-control, Sincerity; from Sincerity, Innocence; from Innocence, Reverence; from Reverence, Knowledge; and from Knowledge, Love. Their works, therefore, are pure and reverent and divine. **8** So whoever serves these and has the strength to master their works will have a dwelling in the tower with the saints of God.” **9** Then I began to ask her about the times, in particular if the consummation had already arrived. But she cried out in a loud voice, saying: “You foolish man, can you not see that the tower is still being built? When the tower is finished being built, then the end comes. But it will be built up quickly. Do not ask me any more questions; this reminder and the renewal of your spirits is sufficient for you and for the saints. **10** But these things have not been revealed for you alone, but in order that you might show them to everyone. **11** After three days—for you must first understand it yourself—I command you first, Hermas, to speak all these words that I am about to tell you to the ears of the saints, in order that by hearing and doing them they may be cleansed from their wickedness, and you with them.”

3.9

17 “Listen, my children. I brought you up in much sincerity and innocence and reverence through the mercy of the Lord, who instilled righteousness in you in order that you may be justified and sanctified from all evil and from all perversity. Yet you do not want to cease from your wickedness. **2** Now listen to me and be at peace among yourselves, and be concerned for one another and assist one another; and do not partake of God’s creation in abundance by yourselves, but also share with

17.2 *creation . . . share* Or *creation by yourselves, but share the abundance.*

those in need. **3** For by overeating some people bring on themselves fleshly weaknesses and injure their flesh, while the flesh of those who do not have anything to eat is injured because they do not have enough food, and their bodies are wasting away. **4** This lack of community spirit is harmful to those of you who have, yet do not share with those in need. **5** Look to the coming judgment. You, therefore, who have more than enough, seek out those who are hungry, until the tower is finished. For after the tower is finished, you may want to do good, but you will not have the chance. **6** Beware, therefore, you who exult in your wealth, lest those in need groan, and their groaning rise up to the Lord, and you together with your good things be shut outside the door of the tower. **7** Now, therefore, I say to you who lead the church and occupy the seats of honor: do not be like the sorcerers. For the sorcerers carry their drugs in bottles, but you carry your drug and poison in your heart. **8** You are calloused and do not want to cleanse your hearts and to mix your wisdom together in a clean heart, in order that you may have mercy from the great King. **9** Watch out, therefore, children, lest these divisions of yours deprive you of your life. **10** How is it that you desire to instruct God's elect, while you yourselves have no instruction? Instruct one another, therefore, and have peace among yourselves, in order that I too may stand joyfully before the Father and give an account on behalf of all of you to your Lord."

Meaning of the Three Forms of the Woman

3.10

18 So, when she stopped speaking with me, the six young men who were building came and took her to the tower, and four others picked up the couch and took it also to the tower. I did not

17.6 *your* One ancient authority reads *your brothers' and sisters'* (Gk *adelphōn*); Harmer reads *your abundance of*.

see their faces, because they were turned away. **2** And as she went away, I asked her to give me a revelation about the three forms in which she had appeared to me. She answered me and said, “Concerning these things you must ask someone else, so that they may be revealed to you.” **3** Now she appeared to me, brothers and sisters, in the first vision last year as a very elderly woman sitting on a chair. **4** But in the second vision she had a more youthful face, although her body and hair were old, and she spoke to me standing up, and she was more cheerful than before. **5** In the third vision, she was altogether more youthful and exceedingly beautiful, except that her hair alone was old, and she was extremely happy and seated on a couch. **6** Concerning these things I was deeply distressed; I wanted to learn about this revelation. And I saw the elderly woman in a nighttime vision, saying to me: “Every request requires humility. Fast, therefore, and you will receive what you request from the Lord.” **7** So I fasted one day, and there appeared to me that very night a young man, and he said to me, “Because you are continually asking for revelations in your prayers, take care, lest by requesting so many things you injure your flesh. **8** These revelations are sufficient for you. Are you able to see revelations mightier than those you have seen?” **9** I answered him and said, “Sir, I ask only this one thing about the three forms of the elderly woman: that a complete revelation may be given.” He answered me and said, “How long will you people lack understanding? Your double-mindedness causes you to lack understanding; indeed, you lack it because your heart is not set toward the Lord.” **10** Again I answered him and said, “But from you, sir, we will learn these things more accurately.”

18.3 *brothers and sisters* Gk *adelphoi*. **18.7** *Because . . . take* Some ancient authorities read *Why are you . . . prayers? Take*.

3.11

19 “Hear,” he said, “about the three forms, about which you inquired. **2** In the first vision, why did she appear to you as elderly and sitting on a chair? Because your spirit was old and already withered, and you had no power because of your weaknesses and double-mindedness. **3** For just as old people, no longer having any hope of renewing their youth, look forward to nothing except their falling asleep, so also you, being weakened by the cares of this life, gave yourselves over to indifference and did not cast your concerns on the Lord. Your mind was weakened and you were aged by your sorrows.” **4** “I wish to know, sir, why she was sitting on a chair.” “Because every weak person sits on a chair out of weakness, in order that the weakness of the body may be supported. You now have the symbolism of the first vision.”

3.12

20 “In the second vision you saw her standing, and she had a more youthful face and was more cheerful than before, but her body and hair were old. Listen,” he said, “to this parable too. **2** Imagine an old man who has already given up all hope for himself because of his weakness and poverty and looks forward to nothing except the last day of his life. Then an inheritance is unexpectedly left to him. Upon hearing the news he arises and is very joyful and clothes himself with strength; and he no longer lies down, but stands up, and his spirit, which was already broken by his former circumstances, is renewed, and he no longer sits, but acts with courage. So it was with you, when you heard the revelation that the Lord revealed to you. **3** For he had compassion on you and renewed your spirits, and you laid aside your weaknesses, and strength returned to you, and you were made powerful in the faith, and when the Lord saw you putting on

20.2 *acts with courage* Or *acts like a man*.

strength he rejoiced. Therefore he has shown to you the building of the tower, and he will show you other things, if with all your heart you remain at peace among yourselves.”

3.13

21 “In the third vision you saw her more youthful, and beautiful and cheerful, and her form was beautiful. **2** So, just as when good news comes to those who are grieving they immediately forget their former sorrow and think about nothing except the news that they heard, and from then on are strengthened to do good, and their spirit is renewed because of the joy that they received, so also you have received a renewal of your spirits by seeing these good things. **3** And because you saw her sitting on a couch, the position is secure, because the couch has four feet and stands securely, for even the world is sustained by four elements. **4** Those who have fully repented, therefore, will be young and firmly established—those who repent with all their heart. You now have the complete revelation; you shall not ask anything any more about a revelation. But if anything is still needed, it will be revealed to you.”

Vision 4

A Beast and a Bride

4.1

22 What I saw, brothers and sisters, twenty days after the previous vision occurred, was a foreshadowing of the impending persecution. **2** I was going into the country by the Campanian Way. The place is a little over a mile from the public road, and is easily reached. **3** So, as I was walking by myself, I asked the Lord to complete the revelations and visions

22.1 *brothers and sisters* Gk *adelphoi*.

that he showed to me through his holy church, in order that he might strengthen me and grant repentance to his servants who had stumbled, so that his great and glorious name might be glorified, because he considered me worthy to show his wonders to me. **4** And as I was glorifying him and giving him thanks, the sound, as it were, of a voice answered me: “Do not be double-minded, Hermas.” I began to discuss this with myself and to say, “How can I be double-minded when I have been so firmly established by the Lord and have seen glorious things?” **5** And I went on a little farther, brothers and sisters, and behold, I saw a cloud of dust rising up, as it were, to heaven, and I began to say to myself, “Maybe some cattle are coming and raising a cloud of dust?” And it was about two hundred yards away from me. **6** As the cloud of dust grew larger and larger, I began to suspect that it was something supernatural. Then the sun shone a little more brightly, and behold, I saw a huge beast, like some sea monster, and from its mouth flaming locusts were pouring out. And the beast was about one hundred feet long, and it had a head like a ceramic jar. **7** And I began to cry and to beg the Lord to rescue me from it. And I remembered the word that I had heard: “Do not be double-minded, Hermas.” **8** So, brothers and sisters, having put on the faith of the Lord and remembering the great things he had taught me, I took courage and faced the beast. And the beast was coming on with such a rush that it could have destroyed a city. **9** I came near it, and huge though it was, the sea monster stretched itself out on the ground and merely thrust out its tongue, and did not even twitch until I had passed by it. **10** And the beast had four colors on its head: black, then the color of fire and blood, then gold, and then white.

22.5 *brothers and sisters* Gk *adelphoi*. **22.8** *brothers and sisters* Gk *adelphoi*. • *the Lord* Some ancient authorities read *God*.

4.2

23 Now after I had passed the beast and gone on ahead about thirty feet, behold, a young lady met me dressed as if she were coming out of a bridal chamber, all in white and with white sandals, veiled down to her forehead, and her head covering was a turban, and her hair was white. **2** I knew from the previous visions that she was the church, and I became more cheerful. She greeted me, saying, "Good morning, my man," and I greeted her in return: "Good morning, lady." **3** She answered and said to me, "Did nothing meet you?" I said to her, "Lady, a beast so huge that it could destroy entire peoples, but by the power of the Lord and by his great mercy I escaped it." **4** "You deserved to escape it," she said, "because you cast your cares on God and opened your heart to the Lord, believing that you could not be saved by anything except the great and glorious Name. Therefore the Lord sent his angel who has authority over the beasts, whose name is Thegri, and he shut its mouth so that it might not hurt you. You have escaped a great tribulation because of your faith, and because you were not double-minded, even though you saw such a huge beast." **5** Go, therefore, and declare to the Lord's elect his mighty works, and tell them that this beast is a foreshadowing of the great tribulation that is coming. So, if you prepare yourselves in advance and turn to the Lord with all your heart, you will be able to escape it, if your heart is clean and unblemished and you serve the Lord blamelessly for the rest of the days of your life. Cast your cares upon the Lord, and he will set them straight. **6** Trust in the Lord, you who are double-minded, because he can do all things; he both turns his wrath away from you and sends out plagues upon you who are double-minded. Woe to those who hear these words and disobey them; it would have been better for them not to have been born."

4.3

24 I asked her about the four colors that the beast had on its head. And she answered me and said, “Again you are curious about such things!” “Yes, lady,” I said. “Tell me what these are.” **2** “Listen,” she said. “The black is this world in which you live. **3** The color of fire and blood signifies that this world must be destroyed by blood and fire. **4** You who have escaped from this world are the gold part, for just as gold is tested by fire and made useful, so also you who live in them are being tested. Therefore those who endure and pass through the flames will be purified by them. For just as gold casts off its dross, so also you will cast away all grief and distress, and will be purified and useful for the building of the tower. **5** The white part is the age to come, in which God’s elect will live because those chosen by God for eternal life will be spotless and pure. **6** Therefore do not cease speaking to the ears of the saints. You have also the foreshadowing of the great tribulation that is coming. But if you are willing, it will be nothing. Remember what has already been written.” **7** With these words she left, and I did not see where she went, for there was a noise, and I turned back in fear, thinking that the beast was coming.

*Vision 5**The Shepherd Arrives*

25 After I had prayed in my house and sat down on my bed, there came a man glorious in appearance, dressed like a shepherd, with a white skin wrapped around him and with a bag on his shoulders and a staff in his hand. He greeted me, and I greeted him in return. **2** He immediately sat

24.4 *in them* I.e., the fire and the blood; or *among them*, with reference to the inhabitants of the world. **24.7** *there . . . noise* Some ancient authorities read *a cloud appeared*. **25** **Title** *Vision 5* Some ancient authorities read *Revelation 5*.

down beside me and said to me, "I was sent by the most holy angel to live with you the rest of the days of your life." **3** I thought that he had come to tempt me, and I said to him, "Well, who are you? For I know," I said, "to whom I have been entrusted." He said to me, "Do you not recognize me?" "No," I replied. "I am," he said, "the shepherd to whom you were entrusted." **4** While he was still speaking, his appearance was changed, and I recognized him as the one to whom I was entrusted; and immediately I was confused, and fear seized me, and I was completely overwhelmed with sorrow, because I had answered him so wickedly and foolishly. **5** But he answered and said to me, "Do not be confused, but strengthen yourself in my commandments, which I am about to give you. For I was sent," he said, "that I might show you again everything that you saw previously, the most important points, those useful to you. First of all, write down my commandments and parables; but write down the other matters as I show them to you. This is why," he said, "I am commanding you to write down first the commandments and parables so that you may read them at once and be able to keep them." **6** So I wrote down the commandments and parables, just as he commanded me. **7** If, then, when you hear them you keep them and walk in them and carry them out with a clean heart, you will receive from the Lord whatever he promised you. But if after hearing them you do not repent, but continue to add to your sins, you will receive from the Lord the opposite. All these things the shepherd, the angel of repentance, commanded me to write as follows.

The Commandments

Commandment 1

Faith in God

26 “First of all, believe that God is one, who created all things and set them in order, and made out of what did not exist everything that is, and who contains all things but is himself alone uncontained. **2** Believe in him, therefore, and fear him, and fearing him, exercise self-control. Observe these things, and you will cast off all evil from yourself and will put on every virtue of righteousness and will live to God, if you observe this commandment.”

Commandment 2

Sincerity and Innocence

27 He said to me: “Be sincere and be innocent, and you will be like little children who do not know the evil that destroys human life. **2** First, speak evil of no one, and do not enjoy listening to someone who does. Otherwise you, the listener, will be responsible for the sin of the one speaking evil, if you believe the slander that you have heard, for by believing it you yourself will hold a grudge against your brother or sister. In this way you will become responsible for the sin of the one who speaks the evil. **3** Slander is evil; it is a restless demon, never at peace but always at home with dissension. So avoid it, and you will always have success with everyone. **4** Clothe yourself with reverence, in which there is no evil cause for offense, but all things are smooth and joyful. Work at what is good, and out of your labor, which God gives you, give generously to all who are in need, not debating to whom you will give and to whom you will not. Give to all, for God wishes that

27.2 brother or sister Gk *adelphou*.

from his own gifts, gifts should be given to all. **5** So those who receive are accountable to God regarding why they received and to what end; for those in distress who receive will not be judged, but those who receive under false pretenses will pay the penalty. **6** Therefore those who give are innocent, for as they received from the Lord a ministry to carry out, they carried it out sincerely, not worrying about to whom to give or not to give. This ministry, then, when sincerely carried out, becomes glorious in God's sight. Therefore the one who serves God sincerely in this manner will live. **7** So keep this commandment, as I have told you, in order that your repentance and that of your family may prove to be sincere and pure and innocent and unstained."

Commandment 3

Truth

28 Again he spoke to me: "Love truth, and allow only the truth to come from your mouth, in order that the spirit that God caused to live in this flesh may prove to be true in the sight of all people; and thus will the Lord who lives in you be glorified. For the Lord is truthful in every word, and there is nothing false in him. **2** Therefore, those who lie reject the Lord and defraud the Lord, for they do not return to him the deposit that they received. For they received from him a spirit uncontaminated by deceit. If they return this as a lying spirit, they have polluted the Lord's commandment and become thieves." **3** When I heard these things, I wept bitterly. But when he saw me weeping, he said, "Why are you crying?" "Because, sir," I said, "I do not know if I can be saved." "Why?" he asked. "Because, sir," I replied, "never in my life have I spoken a true word; instead, I have lived deceitfully with

27.7 *pure and innocent* Some editors restore (on the basis of the ancient Latin version) *your heart clean*. **28.3** *lived* One ancient authority reads *spoken*.

everyone, and have represented my lie as truth to everyone, and no one ever contradicted me but believed my word. So how,” I said, “can I live after having done these things?” **4** “Your thinking,” he said, “is right and true, for you must, as God’s servant, live truthfully, and an evil conscience must not live with the spirit of truth or bring grief to the spirit that is holy and true.” “Never before, sir,” I said, “have I correctly heard such words.” **5** “Well,” he said, “you are hearing them now. Obey them, so that the previous lies you told in your business affairs may themselves prove to be credible, now that your present remarks have proved to be true; for they too can become trustworthy. If you obey these and from now on speak only the truth, you will be able to attain life for yourself. And whoever hears this commandment and has nothing to do with falsehood, that most pernicious habit, will live to God.”

Commandment 4

Chastity, Marriage, Repentance

4.1

29 “I command you,” he said, “to guard purity, and let no thought enter your heart about another man’s wife or about fornication, or about some such similar evil thing, for in doing this you commit a great sin. But always keep your mind on your own wife and you will never go wrong. **2** For if this desire enters your heart, you will go wrong, and if other things as evil as this enter, you commit sin. For this desire in a servant of God is a great sin, and if anyone does this evil deed, he brings death on himself. **3** So beware! Have nothing to do with this desire; for where holiness lives, there lawlessness ought not to enter the heart of a righteous person.” **4** I said to him, “Sir, allow me to ask you a few more questions.” “Speak,” he replied. “Sir,” I said, “if a man has a wife who believes in the Lord, and he finds

her in some adulterous situation, does the man sin if he continues to live with her?” **5** “As long as he is unaware of it,” he said, “he does not sin. But if the husband knows about her sin and the wife does not repent, but persists in her immorality, and the husband continues to live with her, he becomes responsible for her sin and an accomplice in her adultery.” **6** “Sir,” I said, “what then should the husband do, if the wife persists in this passion?” “Let him divorce her,” he said, “and let the husband live by himself. But if after divorcing his wife he should marry another, then he too commits adultery.” **7** “So then, sir,” I said, “if, after the wife is divorced, she repents and wants to return to her own husband, she will be taken back, will she not?” **8** “Certainly,” he said. “If the husband does not take her back, he sins, and brings a great sin upon himself. In fact, the one who has sinned and repented must be taken back. But not repeatedly: for there is only one repentance for God’s servants. So, because of the possibility of her repentance, the husband ought not to marry. This procedure applies to wife and husband. **9** Not only,” he said, “is it adultery if someone pollutes the flesh, but whoever does anything like what the outsiders do commits adultery. So, if any persist in actions such as these and do not repent, have nothing to do with them and do not live with them. Otherwise you too are a partner in their sin. **10** This is why you are commanded to remain single, whether husband or wife, for in such cases repentance is possible. **11** I am not,” he said, “giving an excuse for this affair to end this way, but so that the sinner should sin no more. As for his or her previous sin, there is One who is able to give healing; it is he who has authority over everything.”

4.2

30 I asked him again, saying, “Since the Lord considered me worthy for you to live with me always, allow me a few more words, since I do not understand anything and my heart has been hardened by my

previous deeds. Make me understand, because I am very foolish and comprehend absolutely nothing.”² He answered me and spoke thus: “I,” he said, “am in charge of repentance, and I give understanding to all who repent. Or do you not think,” he said, “that this very act of repentance is itself understanding? To repent,” he continued, “is great understanding. For those who have sinned understand that they have done evil in the Lord’s presence, and the act that they committed enters their heart, and they repent and no longer do evil, but do good lavishly, and they humble their own soul and torment it, because they sinned. You see, therefore, that repentance is great understanding.”³ “This, sir,” I said, “is why I question you so precisely about everything; first, because I am a sinner; and second, because I do not know what deeds I must do in order to live, because my sins are many and varied.”⁴ “You will live,” he said, “if you obey my commandments and walk in them. And whoever hears these commandments and obeys them will live to God.”

4.3

31 “Sir,” I said, “I would like to ask a further question.” “Speak,” he said. “Sir,” I said, “I have heard from certain teachers that there is no other repentance beyond what occurred when we descended into the water and received forgiveness of our previous sins.”² He said to me, “You have heard correctly, for so it is. For the one who has received forgiveness of sins ought never to sin again, but to live in purity.”³ But since you inquire so precisely about everything, I will show you this also, so as to give no excuse for those who will believe at some time in the future, or those who have just now believed in the Lord. For those who have just now believed, or those who are about to believe do not have repentance for sins, but they do have forgiveness of their previous sins.⁴ So, for those who were called before these days the Lord has established repentance. For since the Lord knows every heart

and knows everything in advance, he knew the weakness of human beings and the cunning of the devil, and that he would do something evil to God's servants and treat them wickedly. **5** The Lord, however, who is exceedingly merciful, had mercy on his creation and established this opportunity for repentance, and authority over this repentance was given to me. **6** But I am warning you," he said, "if, after this great and holy call, anyone is tempted by the devil and sins, that person has one opportunity for repentance. But if that one sins repeatedly and repents, it is of no use for such a person, for that person will scarcely live." **7** I said to him, "I was restored to life again when I heard these things from you so precisely. For I now know that if I no longer add to my sins, I will be saved." "You will be saved," he said, "and so will everyone else who does these things."

4.4

32 Again I asked him, saying, "Sir, since you have borne with me once, explain also this to me." "Speak," he said. "Sir, if a wife," I asked, "or for that matter a husband, dies, and the survivor marries, does the one who marries sin?" **2** "That one does not sin," he said, "but if the survivor remains single, one gains for oneself greater honor and great glory with the Lord; but even if one does remarry, one does not sin. **3** Preserve, therefore, purity and holiness, and you will live to God. All these things that I am telling you and will tell in the future, keep from this time forward, from the day you were entrusted to me, and I will live in your house. **4** But there will be forgiveness for your previous sins if you keep my commandments; in fact, there will be forgiveness for all, if they keep my commandments and walk in this purity."

Commandment 5

Patience and Anger

5.1

33 “Be patient and understanding,” he said, “and you will overcome all evil deeds and will accomplish all righteousness. **2** For if you are patient, the holy spirit that lives in you will be pure, uncontaminated by some other, evil spirit; living in a spacious room, it will rejoice and be glad with the vessel in which it lives, and will serve God with much cheerfulness, for it is at peace with itself. **3** But if an angry temper approaches, immediately the holy spirit, which is very sensitive, is distressed because it does not have a clean place, and it seeks to leave the place. For it is choked by the evil spirit and does not have the room to serve the Lord the way it wants to, because it is polluted by the angry temper. For the Lord lives in patience, but the devil lives in an angry temper. **4** So if both spirits live together, it is unfortunate and evil for that person in whom they live. **5** For if you take a little wormwood and pour it in a jar of honey, all the honey is spoiled, is it not? Such a large amount of honey spoiled by such a small amount of wormwood; it spoils the sweetness, and the owner no longer cares for it, because it has become bitter and lost its usefulness. But if the wormwood is not put into the honey, the honey turns out to be sweet and is useful to its owner. **6** You see, then, that patience is very sweet, even more so than honey, and is useful to the Lord, and he lives in it. But an angry temper is bitter and useless. So, if an angry temper is mixed with patience, the patience is polluted, and its intercession

is no longer useful to God.”⁷ “I would like to know, sir,” I said, “how an angry temper works, in order that I can protect myself from it.” “Indeed,” he said, “if you do not protect yourself and your family from it, you have lost all hope. But protect yourself from it, for I am with you. And all who repent with all their heart will protect themselves from it, for I will be with them and will keep them safe, for they were all justified by the most holy angel.”

5.2

34 “Now hear,” he said, “how an angry temper works, how evil it is, and how it subverts God’s servants by its working, and how it leads them astray from righteousness. But it does not lead astray those who are filled with faith, nor can it work on them, because the Lord’s power is with them. But it can lead astray those who are empty-headed and double-minded. **2** For whenever it sees such people prospering, it insinuates itself into the person’s heart, and for no reason at all the man or the woman is embittered over worldly concerns, either about food or something trivial, or some friend, or about giving or receiving, or foolish matters such as these. For these things are all foolish and empty and senseless and inexpedient for God’s servants. **3** But patience is great and strong, and possesses a mighty and vigorous power, and prospers in a spacious area; it is joyful, exultant, free from care, glorifying the Lord at all times, having no bitterness in itself, always remaining gentle and quiet. This patience, therefore, lives with those whose faith is perfect. **4** But an angry temper is first of all foolish, fickle, and senseless. Then from foolishness comes bitterness, and from bitterness wrath, and from wrath anger, and from anger vengefulness. Then vengefulness, being composed of all these

34.1 *the Lord’s* One ancient authority reads *God’s*; another reads *my*.

evil elements, becomes a great and incurable sin. **5** For when all these spirits live in one vessel, where the holy spirit also lives, the vessel cannot contain them, but overflows. **6** So the sensitive spirit, which is used to living neither with an evil spirit nor with harshness, departs from a person such as this and seeks to live with gentleness and quiet. **7** Then, when it has left the one in whom it lives, that person is emptied of the spirit of righteousness, and from then on, since he or she is filled with the evil spirits, that one is unstable in everything he or she does and is dragged about here and there by the evil spirits, totally blind with respect to good intentions. So it goes, therefore, with all those who are ill-tempered. **8** Have nothing to do, therefore, with an angry temper, that most evil spirit. Instead, put on patience and resist an angry temper and bitterness, and you will be found in the company of the holiness that is loved by the Lord. So take care that you never neglect this commandment, for if you master it, you will also be able to keep the rest of the commandments that I am about to give you. Be strong in them, and empowered; indeed, let all who want to walk in them be empowered.”

Commandment 6

Two Ways

6.1

35 “I commanded you,” he said, “in the first commandments to protect faith and fear and self-control.” “Yes, sir,” I said. “But now,” he said, “I want to explain to you their powers, so that you may understand what the power and effect of each of them is. For their effects are twofold;

they relate to righteousness and to unrighteousness. **2** Be sure, therefore, to trust righteousness, but do not trust unrighteousness. For the way of righteousness is straight, but the way of unrighteousness is crooked. But follow the straight and level way, and leave the crooked one alone. **3** For the crooked way has no paths but only uneven ground and many obstacles, and is rough and thorny. Consequently, it is harmful to those who follow it. **4** But those who follow the straight path walk smoothly and without stumbling, for it is neither rough nor thorny. You see, then, that it is more advantageous to follow this way.” **5** “I am pleased, sir,” I said, “to follow this way.” “So follow it,” he said, “and whoever turns to the Lord wholeheartedly will follow it.”

Two Angels

6.2

36 “Now hear,” he said, “about faith. There are two angels with a person, one of righteousness and one of wickedness.” **2** “So how, sir,” I said, “will I recognize their workings, given that both angels live with me?” **3** “Listen,” he said, “and you will understand them. The angel of righteousness is sensitive and modest and gentle and tranquil. When this one enters your heart, immediately he talks with you about righteousness, about purity, about holiness, about contentment, about every righteous deed, and about every glorious virtue. Whenever all these things enter your heart, you know that the angel of righteousness is with you. These, then, are the works of the angel of righteousness. So trust him and his works. **4** Now observe the works of the angel of wickedness. First of all, he is ill-tempered and bitter and senseless, and his works are evil, tearing down God’s servants. So whenever this one enters your heart, recognize him by his works.” **5** “But I do not know, sir,” I said, “how to recognize him.” “Listen,” he said. “When some angry temperamental outburst or bitterness comes over you, recognize that he is in you.

Then comes the desire for much business, and extravagant kinds of food and drink, and much drunkenness, and various kinds of unnecessary luxuries, and the desire for women, and greed and arrogance and pretentiousness, and whatever else resembles or is similar to these things. So whenever these things enter your heart, you know that the angel of wickedness is with you. **6** Recognizing, therefore, his works, shun him and do not trust him at all, because his works are evil and harmful to God’s servants. You now have, then, the working of both angels; understand them and trust the angel of righteousness. **7** But shun the angel of wickedness, because his teaching is evil in every respect. For if there should be an extremely faithful man, and the thought of that angel should enter his heart, that man—or woman—must inevitably commit some sin. **8** On the other hand, if there should be an extremely sinful man or woman, and the works of the angel of righteousness should enter his or her heart, of necessity that person must do something good. **9** You see, then,” he said, “that it is good to follow the angel of righteousness but shun the angel of wickedness. **10** This commandment explains the things about faith, in order that you may trust the works of the angel of righteousness, and that doing them, you may live to God. But believe that the works of the angel of wickedness are dangerous, so that by not doing them you will live to God.”

Commandment 7

Fear the Lord

37 “Fear the Lord,” he said, “and keep his commandments. By keeping his commandments, you will be powerful in every deed,

36.7 *faithful man* Here the Gk for *man* is *anēr*. • *man—or woman* Gk *andra . . . gynaika* (= forms of *anēr . . . gynē*). **36.8** *man or woman* Gk *anēr . . . gynē*.

and your activity will be beyond criticism. For when you fear the Lord you will do everything well. This is the fear you must have to be saved. **2** But do not fear the devil, for if you fear the Lord you will rule over the devil, because he has no power. And where there is no power, there is no fear. But where there is glorious power, there also is fear. For everyone who has power has fear, whereas the one who has no power is despised by everyone. **3** But fear the works of the devil, because they are evil. When you fear the Lord you will fear the devil's works and will not do them, but will have nothing to do with them. **4** Fear, therefore, is of two kinds. If you want to do something evil, fear the Lord and you will not do it. But on the other hand, if you want to do good, fear the Lord and you will do it. So, the fear of the Lord is powerful and great and glorious. Fear the Lord, therefore, and you will live to him; and whoever fears the Lord and keeps his commandments will live to God." **5** "Why, sir," I said, "did you say about those keeping his commandments, 'they will live to God'?" "Because," he replied, "every creature fears the Lord, but not all keep his commandments. Life with God, therefore, belongs to those who fear him and keep his commandments; but those who do not keep his commandments do not have life in him, either."

Commandment 8

Self-Control

38 "I mentioned to you," he said, "that the creatures of God are twofold, because self-control is also twofold. For in some things it is necessary to exercise self-control, but in some things it is not necessary." **2** "Inform me, sir," I said, "about what things it is necessary to practice self-control and in what things it is not necessary." "Listen," he said. "Be self-controlled regarding evil, and do not do it; but do not be self-controlled regarding good, but do it. For

if you exercise self-control regarding what is good and do not do it, you commit a great sin. But if you exercise self-control regarding evil so as not to do it, you achieve great righteousness. Exercise self-control, therefore, over all evil and do what is good.”³ “Sir,” I responded, “what are the kinds of evils over which it is necessary for us to exercise self-control?” “Listen,” he said: “adultery and fornication, lawless drunkenness, wicked luxury, many kinds of food and the extravagance of wealth and boasting and snobbery and arrogance, and lying and slander and hypocrisy, malice and all blasphemy.”⁴ These actions are the most wicked of all in human life. So, the servant of God must exercise self-control over these works, for the one who does not exercise self-control over these is not able to live to God. Listen also, therefore, to the things that follow them.”⁵ “Why, sir,” I said, “are there still other evil practices?” “Indeed, there are many,” he said, “over which the servant of God must exercise self-control: theft, lying, robbery, perjury, greed, lust, deceit, vanity, pretentiousness, and whatever else is like these.”⁶ Do you not think that these things are evil? Indeed, to the servants of God they are very evil,” he said. “In all these things the one who serves God must exercise self-control. Exercise self-control, therefore, over all these things, so that you may live to God and be enrolled with those who do exercise self-control over them. These, then, are the matters in which you must exercise self-control.”

⁷ “But now listen,” he said, “to those things in which you must not exercise self-control, but do them. Do not exercise self-control over the good, but do it.”⁸ “Explain to me,” I said, “the power of the good things also, so that I may walk in them and serve them, in order that by doing them I may be able to be saved.” “Hear,” he said, “about the works of the good things, which you must do and toward which you must not exercise self-control.”⁹ First of all, there is faith, fear

38.6 *he said* One ancient authority reads *I said*; others omit.

of the Lord, love, harmony, words of righteousness, truth, patience; nothing is better than these in human life. Those who keep these things and do not exercise self-control over them will be blessed in their life. **10** Next hear the things that follow these: serving widows, looking after orphans and those in need, delivering God's servants from distress, being hospitable (for the practice of hospitality results in doing good, I presume), opposing no one, being quiet, becoming more needy than all other men, respecting the elderly, practicing righteousness, preserving the bond of fellowship, enduring insults, being patient, bearing no grudges, encouraging those who are sick at heart, not throwing out those who have stumbled but turning them around and encouraging them, admonishing sinners, not oppressing debtors and those in need, and whatever else is like these. **11** Do you not think," he said, "that these things are good?" "Why sir," I replied, "what can be better than these?" "Then walk in them," he said, "and do not exercise self-control over them, and you will live to God. **12** So keep this commandment; if you do good and do not exercise self-control in this respect, you will live to God; indeed, all who do so will live to God. And again, if you do not do evil and do exercise self-control over it, you will live to God; indeed, all who keep these commandments and walk in them will live to God."

Commandment 9

Double-Mindedness

39 He said to me, "Rid yourself of double-mindedness, and do not be at all double-minded about asking God for something, saying to

38.10 *needy* Or *humble*. • *the bond of fellowship* Gk *adelphotēta*.

yourself, for example, ‘How can I ask for something from God and receive it, when I have sinned so often against him?’ **2** Do not reason in this way, but turn to the Lord with all your heart and ask of him unhesitatingly, and you will know his extraordinary compassion, because he will never abandon you but will fulfill your soul’s request. **3** For God is not like humans, who bear grudges; no, he is without malice and has compassion on his creation. **4** You, therefore, cleanse your heart of all the vanities of this life, and of all the things mentioned to you above, and ask of the Lord, and you will receive everything, and will not fail to receive all of your requests, if you ask unhesitatingly. **5** But if you hesitate in your heart, you will certainly not receive any of your requests. For those who hesitate in their relation to God are the double-minded, and they never obtain any of their requests. **6** But those who are perfect in faith make all their requests trusting in the Lord, and they receive them, because they ask unhesitatingly, without any double-mindedness. For any double-minded person who does not repent will scarcely be saved. **7** So cleanse your heart of double-mindedness and put on faith, because it is strong, and trust God that you will receive all the requests you make. And whenever you ask for something from the Lord and you receive your request rather slowly, do not become double-minded just because you did not receive your soul’s request quickly, for assuredly it is because of some temptation or some transgression, of which you are ignorant, that you are receiving your request rather slowly. **8** Do not stop, therefore, making your soul’s request, and you will receive it. But if you become weary and double-minded as you ask, blame yourself and not the one who gives to you. **9** Beware of this double-mindedness, for it is evil and senseless, and has uprooted many from the faith, even those who are very faithful and strong. For this double-mindedness is indeed a daughter of the devil, and does much evil to God’s servants. **10** So despise double-mindedness and gain mastery over it in everything

by clothing yourself with faith that is strong and powerful. For faith promises all things, perfects all things; but double-mindedness, not having any confidence in itself, fails in all the works it tries to do. **11** So you see,” he said, “that faith is from above, from the Lord, and has great power, but double-mindedness is an earthly spirit from the devil that has no power. **12** So serve faith, which has power, and have nothing to do with double-mindedness, which has no power, and you will live to God; indeed, all who are so minded will live to God.”

Commandment 10
Cheerfulness and Grief

10.1

40 “Rid yourself,” he said to me, “of grief, for it is the sister of double-mindedness and an angry temper.” **2** “Sir,” I asked, “how is it the sister of these? For an angry temper seems to me to be one thing, double-mindedness another, and grief another.” “You are a foolish man,” he said. “Do you not understand that grief is the most evil of all the spirits and very bad for God’s servants, and that it corrupts a person more than all the spirits and crushes the holy spirit, and saves again?” **3** “I am foolish, sir,” I said, “and I do not understand these parables. For how it can both corrupt and save again, I do not comprehend.” **4** “Listen,” he said. “Those who have never searched for the truth or inquired about the deity, but have simply believed, and have been entangled in business affairs and wealth and friendships with outsiders and many other concerns of this world—well, those who are absorbed in these things do not comprehend the divine parables, because they are darkened by these matters and are ruined and become barren. **5** Just as good vineyards are made barren by thorns and weeds of various kinds when they are neglected, so people who have believed and then fall into these many activities that

have been mentioned above lose their understanding and do not comprehend anything at all concerning righteousness. For whenever they hear about divine matters and truth, their mind is preoccupied with their own affairs, and they understand nothing at all. **6** But those who fear God and inquire about divine matters and truth and direct their heart to the Lord grasp more quickly and understand everything that is said to them, because they have the fear of the Lord in themselves; for where the Lord lives, there also is much understanding. So hold fast to the Lord and you will understand and grasp everything.”

10.2

41 “Foolish man,” he said, “hear now how grief crushes the holy spirit and saves again. **2** Whenever double-minded people undertake some action and fail at it because of their double-mindedness, this grief enters them and grieves the holy spirit and crushes it. **3** Then again, when an angry temper holds fast to people over some matter and they become very embittered, again grief enters the heart of the angry-tempered ones, and they are grieved by what they have done, and they repent because they have done evil. **4** This grief, therefore, seems to bring salvation, because they repented after having done evil. So, both actions grieve the spirit: the double-mindedness, because it did not succeed in its attempt, and the angry temper grieves the spirit, because it did what was evil. So both are a cause for grief for the holy spirit, double-mindedness and an angry temper. **5** Rid yourself, therefore, of grief and do not oppress the holy spirit that lives in you, lest it intercede with God against you and leave you. **6** For the spirit of God that was given to this flesh endures neither grief nor distress.”

41.4 *because it did what was evil* I.e., *because the angry temper did what was evil.* **41.5** *against you* Some ancient authorities omit.

10.3

42 “Clothe yourself, therefore, with cheerfulness, which always finds favor with God and is acceptable to him, and rejoice in it. For all cheerful people do good things and think good things, and despise grief. **2** But sorrowful people always do evil; first, they do evil because they grieve the holy spirit, which was cheerful when given to the people, and second, they grieve the holy spirit by acting lawlessly in that they neither pray nor confess to God. For the intercession of grieving people never has the power to ascend to the altar of God.” **3** “Why,” I asked, “doesn’t the intercession of those who grieve ascend to the altar?” “Because,” he replied, grief is entrenched in their heart. When the grief is mixed with the intercession, it does not permit the intercession to ascend in purity to the altar. For just as vinegar mixed together with wine in the same bottle does not have a pleasant taste, so also grief mixed with the holy spirit does not have the same intercession. **4** So cleanse yourself of this evil grief, and you will live to God; indeed, all will live to God who rid themselves of grief and clothe themselves with all cheerfulness.”

*Commandment 11**True and False Prophets*

43 He showed me people seated on a bench, and another person seated on a chair. And he said to me, “Do you see those people seated on the bench?” “I see them, sir,” I replied. “These,” he said, “are faithful, but the one seated on the chair is a false prophet who destroys the mind of God’s servants; that is, he destroys the mind of the

double-minded, not of believers. **2** The double-minded come to him as to a fortune-teller and ask him what will happen to them. And that false prophet, not having the power of a divine spirit in himself, answers them in accordance with their questions and their wicked desires, and fills their souls just as they themselves wish. **3** For since he himself is empty, he gives empty answers to empty inquirers, for no matter what is asked, he answers according to the emptiness of the one asking. But he does speak some true words, for the devil fills him with his own spirit, to see if he will be able to break down any of the righteous. **4** So, those who are strong in the faith of the Lord, having clothed themselves with the truth, do not associate with such spirits, but have nothing to do with them. But those who are double-minded and frequently change their minds practice fortune-telling like the outsiders and bring greater sin upon themselves by their idolatries. For the one who consults a false prophet on any matter is an idolater and lacks the truth and is senseless. **5** For no spirit given by God needs to be consulted; instead, having the divine power, it speaks everything on its own initiative, because it is from above, from the power of the divine spirit. **6** But the spirit that is consulted and that answers according to the desires of the people consulting it is earthly and fickle, and has no power, and does not speak at all unless it is consulted.” **7** “So how, sir,” I asked, “will a person know which of them is a prophet and which is a false prophet?” “Hear,” he said, “about both the prophets, and on the basis of what I am going to tell you, you can test the prophet and false prophet. Determine the man who has the divine spirit by his life. **8** In the first place the one who has the divine spirit from above is gentle and quiet and humble, and stays away from all evil and futile desires of this age, and considers himself to be poorer than others, and gives no answer to anyone when consulted.

43.8 *divine* Some ancient authorities omit.

Nor does he speak on his own (nor does the holy spirit speak when a person wants to speak), but when God wants him to speak. **9** So, then, when the person who has the divine spirit comes into an assembly of righteous people who have faith in a divine spirit, and intercession is made to God by the assembly of those people, then the angel of the prophetic spirit that is assigned to him fills the person, and being filled with the holy spirit the man speaks to the multitude just as the Lord wills. **10** In this way, then, the divine spirit will be obvious. Such, therefore, is the power of discernment with respect to the divine spirit of the Lord.”

11 “Now hear,” he said, “about the earthly and worthless spirit, which has no power but is foolish. **12** In the first place, that person who seems to have a spirit exalts himself and wants to have a seat of honor, and immediately is arrogant and shameless and talkative and well-acquainted with many luxuries and with many other pleasures, and receives money for his prophesying, and if he does not receive money, he does not prophesy. Now, can a divine spirit receive money and still prophesy? It is impossible for a prophet of God to do this, but the spirit of such prophets who do so is earthly. **13** Next, he never comes near an assembly of righteous people; instead he avoids them, and associates with the double-minded and the empty-headed, and prophesies to them in a corner and deceives them; everything he says is in accordance with their own desires and characterized by his own empty manner, for he is answering those who are empty. For the empty vessel placed together with other empty vessels is not broken, but they match one another. **14** But when he does come to an assembly full of righteous people who have a divine spirit, and intercession is made by them, that person is emptied and the earthly

spirit flees from him in fear, and that person is rendered speechless and is completely shattered, unable to say a thing. **15** For if you store wine or oil in a storeroom and place an empty jar in among them and then later you wish to clear out the storeroom, you will find that empty jar you placed there still empty. So it is with empty prophets; whenever they encounter the spirits of the righteous, they are found to be just as they were when they arrived. **16** You now have descriptions of the life of both kinds of prophets. Therefore test by actions and life the person who claims to be spirit-inspired. **17** Put your trust in the spirit that comes from God and has power, but do not trust in any way the earthly and empty spirit, because it has no power, for it comes from the devil. **18** Listen to the parable I am about to tell you. Take a stone and throw it toward the sky; see if you can reach it. Or, for another example, take a water pump and squirt it toward the sky; see if you can penetrate it.” **19** “How,” I asked, “can these things be, sir? For both these things you just said are impossible.” “Well then,” he said, “just as these things are impossible, so also are the earthly spirits powerless and weak. **20** Now consider the power that comes from above. A hailstone is a very small pellet, but when it falls on a man’s head, what pain it causes! Or, for another example, take a drop that falls on the ground from the roofing tiles, and wears a hole in the rock. **21** You see, then, that even the smallest things from above falling on the earth have great power; so also the divine spirit that comes from above is powerful. So put your trust in this spirit, but have nothing to do with the other one.”

Commandment 12

Evil and Good Desires

12.1

44 He said to me, “Rid yourself of all evil desire, and clothe yourself with the desire that is good and holy, for when you have clothed yourself with this desire, you will hate the evil desire and will control it as you wish. **2** For the evil desire is savage and only tamed with difficulty, for it is terrible and utterly destroys people by its savageness; in particular, if servants of God become entangled in it and lack understanding, they will be terribly destroyed by it. It destroys those who do not have the garment of the good desire but are entangled with this world. These it hands over to death.” **3** “What, sir,” I said, “are the works of this evil desire that hand people over to death? Tell me, so that I may avoid them.” “Hear,” he said, “about the kind of works by which the evil desire puts to death God’s servants.”

12.2

45 “Above all is the desire for someone else’s wife or husband, and for the extravagance of wealth, and for many needless things to eat and drink, and for many other foolish luxuries. For every luxury is foolish and empty for God’s servants. **2** These desires, then, are evil and bring death to God’s servants. For this evil desire is a daughter of the devil. You must keep away, therefore, from evil desires, in order that by keeping away from them you may live to God. **3** But those who are mastered by them and do not resist them will utterly perish, for these desires are deadly. **4** But put on the desire of righteousness and, having armed yourself with the fear of the Lord, resist them. For the fear of God lives in the good desire. If the evil desire sees

you armed with the fear of God and resisting it, it will flee far from you and will no longer be seen by you, because it fears your weapons. **5** So you, when you have gained the victory and triumphed over the evil desire, come to the desire of righteousness and deliver to it the victory you have won, and serve it just as it desires. If you serve the good desire and submit to it, you will be able to master the evil desire and control it as you wish.”

12.3

46 “I would like to know, sir,” I said, “in what ways I must serve the good desire.” “Listen,” he said. “Practice righteousness and virtue, truth and fear of the Lord, faith and gentleness, and whatever good things are like these. By practicing these you will be an acceptable servant of God and will live to him; indeed, all who serve the good desire will live to God.”

Concluding Instructions

2 So he finished the twelve commandments, and said to me: “You have the commandments; walk in them and encourage your listeners, in order that their repentance may be pure the rest of the days of their lives. **3** Carefully execute this ministry that I am giving you and you will accomplish much. For you will find favor with those who are going to repent, and they will obey your words, for I will be with you and will compel them to obey you.” **4** I said to him, “Sir, these commandments are great and good and glorious, and are able to gladden the heart of the one who is able to keep them. But I do not know if these commandments can be kept by a human, for they are very hard.” **5** He answered and said to me, “If you propose to

45.5 *gained the victory and* Some ancient authorities omit.

yourself that they can be kept, you will keep them easily and they will not be hard. But if the idea that they cannot be kept by a human has already entered your heart, you will not keep them. **6** But now I say to you: if you do not keep them, but neglect them, you will not have salvation, nor will your children nor your household, since you have already decided for yourself that these commandments cannot be kept by a human.”

12.4

47 He said these things to me very angrily, which confused me, and I feared him greatly, for his appearance was so changed that one could not endure his anger. **2** And when he saw that I was extremely agitated and confused, he began to speak to me more gently and cheerfully, and said, “Foolish man, lacking understanding and double-minded, do you not understand how great and mighty and marvelous God’s glory is, because he created the world for the sake of humankind, and subjected all his creation to humankind, and gave them all authority to rule over everything under heaven? **3** If then,” he said, “humankind is lord of all God’s creatures and rules over everything, cannot humankind also master these commandments? Those who have the Lord in their heart,” he said, “can master everything, including all these commandments. **4** But to those who have the Lord on their lips but whose heart is hardened and who are far from the Lord, these commandments are hard and difficult. **5** You, therefore, who are empty and fickle in the faith, put the Lord in your heart and you will realize that nothing is easier or sweeter or more gentle than these commandments. **6** You who walk in the commandments of the devil, which are difficult and bitter and savage

47.2 *and cheerfully* One ancient authority omits. **47.3** *everything, including* One ancient authority omits. **47.4** *the Lord* One ancient authority reads *God*.

and licentious, be converted and do not fear the devil, for he has no power against you. **7** For I, the angel of repentance, rule over him; I will be with you. The devil can only cause fear, but his fear has no force. Do not fear him, therefore, and he will flee from you.”

12.5

48 I said to him, “Sir, listen to a few words from me.” “Say what you wish,” he replied. “Sir,” I said, “everyone is eager to keep God’s commandments, and there is no one who does not ask the Lord to be strengthened in his commandments and obey them, but the devil is hard and oppresses them.” **2** “He cannot,” he said, “oppress God’s servants who hope in him with all their heart. The devil can wrestle with them, but he cannot throw and pin them. So, if you resist him, he will be defeated and flee from you in disgrace. But those,” he said, “who are empty fear the devil, as if he had power. **3** When someone fills a large number of jars with good wine, and among these jars a few are partially empty, he does not bother to examine the full jars when he comes to the jars, for he knows that they are full. But he does examine the partially empty ones because he fears that they may have turned sour. For partially empty jars quickly turn sour, and the taste of the wine is ruined. **4** So also the devil comes to all God’s servants to tempt them. All those who are full in the faith resist him mightily, and he leaves them alone, because he finds no place where he can gain entrance. So then he comes to those who are partially empty, and finding a place he enters them, and then he does what he wants with them, and they become enslaved to him.”

12.6

49 “But I, the angel of repentance, say to you: do not fear the devil. For I was sent,” he said, “to be with you who repent with all your heart, and to strengthen you in the faith. **2** So believe in God, you who because of your sins have despaired of your life and are adding to your sins and making your life hard, because if you turn to the Lord with all your heart and practice righteousness the rest of the days of your life and serve him rightly according to his will, he will heal your previous sins and you will have power to conquer the devil’s works. But do not fear the devil’s threats at all, for he is as powerless as a dead man’s sinews. **3** Listen to me, therefore, and fear the one who is able to do everything, to save and to destroy, and keep these commandments, and you will live to God.” **4** I said to him, “Sir, now I am strengthened in all the Lord’s commandments, because you are with me. I know that you will crush all the power of the devil, and we will rule over him and prevail over all his works. And I hope, sir, that I am now able to keep these commandments that you have commanded, as the Lord enables me.” **5** “You will keep them,” he said, “if your heart is pure toward the Lord; indeed, all who cleanse their hearts of the vain desires of this world will keep them, and will live to God.”

The Parables

Parable 1

A Parable of Two Cities

50 He spoke to me: “You know,” he said, “that you who are servants of God are living in a foreign country, for your city is far from this city. If, therefore, you know,” he said, “your city in which you are destined to live, why do you prepare fields and expensive possessions and buildings and useless rooms here? **2** If you are preparing these things for this city, you obviously are not planning to return to your own city. **3** Foolish and double-minded and miserable person, do you not realize that all these things are foreign to you, and under someone else’s authority? For the lord of this city will say, ‘I do not want you to live in my city; instead, leave this city, because you do not conform to my laws.’ **4** So, you who have fields and dwellings and many other possessions, what will you do with your field and your house and all the other things you have prepared for yourself when you are expelled by him? For the lord of this country has every right to say to you, ‘Either conform to my laws, or get out of my country.’ **5** So what are you going to do, since you are subject to the law of your own city? For the sake of your fields and the rest of your possessions, will you totally renounce your own law and live according to the law of this city? Take care; it may not be in your best interest to renounce your law, for if you should want to return to your city, you will certainly not be accepted, because you have renounced the law of your city, and

50 Title *The Parables* Latin *Similitudines*; consequently, this part of *The Shepherd* (*Herm.* 50–114) is often referred to as the *Similitudes* (abbreviated *Sim.*). The ancient authorities read *Parables That He Spoke with Me* or *Here Begin the Parables That He Spoke with Me*. • **Parable 1** One ancient authority includes the heading *First Parable*. **50.1** *he said, “that you* Some ancient authorities omit *he said*. • *he said, “your city* Some ancient authorities omit *he said*.

will be shut out of it. **6** So take care; as one living in a foreign land, do not prepare for yourself one thing more than is necessary to be self-sufficient, and be prepared so that whenever the master of this city wants to expel you because of your opposition to his law, you can leave his city and come to your own city, and joyfully conform to your law, free from all insult. **7** Take care, therefore, that you serve the Lord and have him in your heart; do God's works, remembering his commandments and the promises that he made, and trust him to keep them, if his commandments are kept. **8** So instead of fields, buy souls that are in distress, as anyone is able, and visit widows and orphans, and do not neglect them; and spend your wealth and all your possessions, which you received from God, on fields and houses of this kind. **9** For this is why the Master made you rich, so that you might perform these ministries for him. It is much better to purchase fields and possessions and houses of this kind, which you will find in your own city when you go home to it. **10** This lavish expenditure is beautiful and joyous; it does not bring grief or fear, but joy. So do not practice the extravagance of the outsiders, for it is unprofitable to you, the servants of God. **11** But do practice your own extravagance, in which you can rejoice; and do not imitate or touch what belongs to another or covet it, for it is evil to covet someone else's things. But do your own task, and you will be saved."

Parable 2

The Elm and the Vine

51 As I was walking in the country, I noticed an elm tree and a vine and was comparing them and their fruits when the shepherd appeared

51 Title *Parable 2* The ancient authorities read *Another Parable* or *The Beginning of Another Parable* or *Second Parable*. **51.1** *vine* I.e., a grapevine. The use of elm trees in the cultivation of grape vines is well documented in central Italy.

to me and said, "What are you thinking about?" "I am thinking, sir," I said, "about the elm and the vine; specifically, that they are very well suited to one another." **2** "These two trees," he said, "are intended as a model for God's servants." "Sir," I said, "I would like to know the model represented by these trees of which you speak." "Do you see," he asked, "the elm and the vine?" "I see them, sir," I replied. **3** "This vine," he said, "bears fruit, but the elm is a fruitless tree. But unless it climbs the elm, this vine cannot bear much fruit when it is spread out on the ground, and what fruit it does bear is rotten, because it is not suspended from the elm. So, when the vine is attached to the elm it bears fruit both from itself and from the elm. **4** You see, therefore, that the elm also bears much fruit, not less than the vine, but even more." "How, sir," I asked, "does it bear more?" "Because," he said, "the vine, when hanging on the elm, bears its fruit in abundance and in good condition; but when it is spread out on the ground, it bears little fruit, and what it does bear is rotten. So this parable is applicable to God's servants, to poor and rich alike." **5** "How so, sir?" I asked. "Explain this to me." "Listen," he said. "The rich have much wealth, but are poor in the things of the Lord, being distracted by their wealth, and they have very little confession and prayer with the Lord, and what they do have is small and weak and has no power above. So whenever the rich go up to the poor and supply them their needs, they believe that what they do for the poor will be able to find a reward from God, because the poor are rich in intercession and confession, and their intercession has great power with God. The rich, therefore, unhesitatingly provide the poor with everything. **6** And the poor, being provided for by the

51.5 *power above* An editor's conjecture; another suggests *other power*. One ancient authority reads *power before the Lord*; another reads *human power*; some others read simply *power*.

rich, pray for them, thanking God for those who share with them. And the rich in turn are all the more zealous on behalf of the poor, in order that they may lack nothing in their life, for the rich know that the intercession of the poor is acceptable and rich before God. **7** They both, then, complete their work: the poor work with prayer, in which they are rich, which they received from the Lord; this they return to the Lord who supplies them with it. And the rich likewise unhesitatingly share with the poor the wealth that they received from the Lord. And this work is great and acceptable to God, because the rich understand about their wealth and work for the poor by using the gifts of the Lord, and correctly fulfill their ministry. **8** So, as far as people are concerned, the elm does not seem to bear fruit, and they neither know nor realize that if a drought comes the elm, which has water, nourishes the vine, and the vine, having a constant supply of water, bears double the fruit, both for itself and for the elm. So also the poor, by appealing to the Lord on behalf of the rich, complement their wealth, and again, the rich, by providing for the needs of the poor, complement their souls. **9** So, then, both become partners in the righteous work. Therefore, the one who does these things will not be abandoned by God, but will be enrolled in the books of the living. **10** Blessed are the rich who also understand that they have been made rich by the Lord, for the one who comprehends this will be able to do some good work.”

51.8 *souls* One editor suggests *prayers*.

Parable 3

Trees in Winter

52 He showed me many trees that had no leaves, and they appeared to me to be withered, for they were all alike. And he said to me, “Do you see these trees?” “I see them, sir,” I said. “They are all alike, and withered.” Answering me he said, “These trees that you see are the people who live in this world.” **2** “So why, sir,” I asked, “do they look like they are withered and all alike?” “Because,” he said, “neither the righteous nor sinners are distinguishable in this world, but they are alike. For this world is winter to the righteous, and they cannot be distinguished, because they live with the sinners. **3** For just as in winter the trees, having shed their leaves, are all alike, and it is not apparent which are withered and which are living, so also in this world neither the righteous nor the sinners can be distinguished, but all are alike.”

Parable 4

Trees in Summer

53 Again he showed me many trees, some of which were budding and some of which were withered, and he said to me, “Do you see,” he said, “these trees?” “I see them, sir,” I said. “Some are budding, but others are withered.” **2** “These trees,” he said, “that are budding are the righteous, who will live in the age to come; for the age to come is summer to the righteous but winter to the sinners. So when the mercy of the Lord shines forth, then those who serve God will be revealed; indeed, all people will be revealed. **3** For just as in summer

52 Title Parable 3 The ancient authorities read *Another Parable* or *The Beginning of Another Parable*. **53 Title Parable 4** The ancient authorities read *Another Parable* or *The Beginning of Another Parable* or *Fourth Parable*. **53.2 indeed . . . revealed** Some ancient authorities read *to all they will be revealed*.

the fruit of each one of the trees appears, and so it is known what kind they are, so also the fruit of the righteous will be revealed, and all will be known because they are flourishing in that world. **4** But the outsiders and the sinners, the withered trees that you saw, will be found to be withered and fruitless in that world, and will be burned as firewood, and will be obvious because their conduct in their life was evil. For the sinners will be burned because they sinned and did not repent, and the outsiders will be burned because they did not know the one who created them. **5** You, therefore, bear fruit, in order that in summer your fruit may be known. But avoid excessive involvement in business, and you will commit no sin. For those who are involved in business a great deal also sin a great deal, since they are distracted by their business and do not serve their own Lord in anything. **6** How, then," he said, "can such persons ask for something from the Lord and receive it, seeing that they do not serve the Lord? For those who serve him receive their requests, but those who do not serve him receive nothing. **7** But if people are engaged in just one business, they are able to serve the Lord, for their mind will not be corrupted and turned away from the Lord, but they will serve him with a pure mind. **8** So, if you do these things, you will be able to bear fruit for the age to come; indeed, whoever does these things will bear fruit."

Parable 5

True Fasting

5.1

54 As I was fasting while sitting on a certain mountain and giving thanks to the Lord for all that he had done for me, I saw the shepherd sitting next to me, and he said, “Why have you come here so early?” “Because, sir,” I replied, “I have a station.” **2** “What,” he said, “is a ‘station?’” “Sir,” I replied, “I am fasting.” “And what,” he continued, “is this fast you are keeping?” “I am fasting, sir,” I responded, “just as I have been accustomed to.” **3** “You do not know,” he said, “how to fast to God, and this useless fast that you are keeping for him is not a fast.” “Sir,” I said, “why are you saying this?” “I am telling you,” he said, “that even though you think you are fasting, this is not a fast. But I will teach you what a complete and acceptable fast to the Lord is.” “Yes, sir,” I said. “You will make me happy if I may learn about the fast acceptable to God.” “Listen,” he said. **4** “God does not desire such a worthless fast as this, for by fasting to God in this manner, you are accomplishing nothing with respect to righteousness. But keep a fast to God in this way: **5** Commit no evil in your life, and serve the Lord with a clean heart; keep his commandments and walk in his ordinances, and do not permit any evil desire to enter your heart, and believe in God. And if you do these things and fear him and restrain yourself from every evil deed, you will live to God; and if you do these things, you will complete a fast that is great and acceptable to God.”

54 Title *Parable 5* The ancient authorities read *Another Parable* or *The Beginning of Another Parable* or *Fifth Parable*. **54.3** *Yes . . . God* Some ancient authorities omit.

The Parable of the Vineyard

5.2

55 “Listen to the parable that I am about to tell you about fasting.
2 A certain man had a field and many slaves, and in a part of the field he planted a vineyard. And as he was going away on a journey, he chose a certain slave who was trustworthy and pleasing to him and called him over and said to him, ‘Take this vineyard that I have planted and fence it in until I return, but do not do anything else to the vineyard. Obey this command of mine, and you will gain your freedom from me.’ Then the slave’s master went away on a journey.
3 When he had gone, the slave took and fenced in the vineyard. When he finished fencing in the vineyard, he noticed that the vineyard was full of weeds. **4** So he thought to himself, saying, ‘This command of the lord I have carried out. Next I will cultivate this vineyard; indeed, it will look better after it is cultivated, and, having no weeds, it will yield more fruit, because it will not be choked by weeds.’ So he took and cultivated the vineyard, and pulled out all the weeds that were in the vineyard, and the vineyard was very attractive and flourishing, because no weeds were choking it. **5** Some time later, the master of the slave and of the field returned, and he went to the vineyard. And when he saw the vineyard fenced in neatly, and cultivated as well, and all the weeds pulled out, and the vineyard flourishing, he rejoiced greatly at what his slave had done. **6** So he called his beloved son, who was his heir, and his friends, who were his advisers, and told them what he had commanded his servant to do and what he had found done. And they congratulated the slave on the testimony that his master gave him. **7** And he said to them, ‘I promised this slave his freedom if he obeyed the command that I gave him. He has obeyed my command, and has, to my great pleasure, done a good job in the vineyard besides.

55.2 *as he . . . journey* One ancient authority omits.

Therefore, in return for this work that he has done, I wish to make him joint heir with my son, because when the good idea occurred to him, he did not ignore it but did it.’⁸ The master’s son agreed with his decision that the slave should become joint heir with the son. ⁹ A few days later his master gave a feast and sent him a considerable amount of food from the feast. But when the slave received the food sent to him by the master, he took enough for himself and distributed the rest to his fellow slaves. ¹⁰ And when his fellow servants received the food, they rejoiced and began to pray for him, in order that he might find even greater favor with the master, because he had treated them so well. ¹¹ His master heard about all these things that had happened, and again he rejoiced greatly at his conduct. Calling together again his friends and son, he reported to them what the slave had done with the food that he had received, and they all the more heartily approved of the slave’s being made a joint heir with his son.”

More about Fasting

5.3

56 “Sir,” I said, “I do not understand nor am I able to comprehend these parables unless you explain them to me.” ² “I will explain everything to you,” he said, “and will interpret for you whatever I say to you. Keep the Lord’s commandments, and you will be pleasing to him and will be enrolled among the number of those who keep his commandments. ³ But if you do anything good beyond God’s commandment, you will gain greater glory for yourself, and will be more honored in God’s sight than you otherwise would have been. So if while keeping God’s commandments you also add these services, you will rejoice, if you keep them in accordance with my commandment.” ⁴ I said to him,

56.2 *and will interpret . . . his commandments* Some ancient authorities read *including whatever I say to you. I will show you his commandments*. • *him* One ancient authority reads *God*.

“Sir, whatever you command me, I will keep, for I know that you are with me.” “I will be with you,” he said, “because you have such a zeal for doing good; indeed, I will be with all those,” he said, “who have a zeal such as this. **5** This fasting,” he said, “is very good, if you keep the Lord’s commandments. This, therefore, is how you must keep this fast that you are about to keep: **6** First of all, guard against every evil word and every evil desire, and cleanse your heart of all the vanities of this world. If you observe these things, this fast of yours will be perfect. **7** And this is what you must do: when you have completed what has been written, you must taste nothing except bread and water on that day on which you fast. Then you must estimate the cost of the food you would have eaten on that day on which you intend to fast, and give it to a widow or an orphan or someone in need. In this way you will become humble-minded, so that as a result of your humble-mindedness the one who receives may satisfy his own soul and pray to the Lord on your behalf. **8** If, then, you complete the fast in this way, as I have commanded you, your sacrifice will be acceptable in God’s sight, and this fast will be recorded, and the service performed in this way is beautiful and joyous and acceptable to the Lord. **9** This is how you must observe these things with your children and your whole household, and in observing them, you will be blessed; indeed, all those who hear and observe them will be blessed, and whatever they ask from the Lord they will receive.”

The Vineyard Parable Explained

5.4

57 I urgently asked him to explain to me the parable of the field and the master and the vineyard and the slave who fenced in the

56.5 *is very . . . commandments* Or *consisting of keeping the Lord’s commandments is very good.*

vineyard, and the fences and the weeds that were pulled up out of the vineyard and the son and the friends who were advisers, for I understood that all these things are a parable. **2** But he answered and said to me, “You are exceedingly arrogant in asking questions. You ought not,” he said, “to ask any questions at all, for if it is necessary for something to be explained to you, it will be explained.” I said to him, “Sir, whatever you show me and do not explain, I will have seen in vain and will not understand what it is. In the same way, if you tell me parables and do not interpret them, I will have heard something from you in vain.” **3** But again he answered and said to me: “Those,” he said, “who are servants of God and have their own Lord in their heart ask for understanding from him and receive it, and so they interpret every parable, and the words of the Lord spoken in parables are made known to them. But those who are weak and sluggish in prayer hesitate to ask of the Lord. **4** But the Lord is extraordinarily compassionate and unceasingly gives to those who ask of him. But you, who have been strengthened by the holy angel and have received from him such power of intercession and are not sluggish, why do you not ask for understanding from the Lord, and receive it from him?” **5** I said to him, “Sir, since I have you with me, I must of necessity ask you and inquire of you, for you show me everything and speak with me; but if I had seen or heard them without you, I would have asked the Lord, so that it might be explained to me.”

5.5

58 “I told you just now,” he said, “that you are sly and arrogant in asking about the interpretation of the parables. But since you are so stubborn, I will explain to you the parable about the field and all the

rest that followed it, in order that you may make them known to everyone. Now listen,” he said, “and understand them. **2** The field is this world, and the lord of the field is the one who created all things and perfected them and endowed them with power, and the son is the holy spirit, and the slave is the Son of God, and the vines are this people that he himself planted. **3** The fences are the holy angels of the Lord who keep his people together, and the weeds that are pulled up out of the vineyard are the transgressions of God’s servants. The foods that he sent to him from the feast are the commandments that he gave to his people through his Son, and the friends and advisers are the holy angels who were created first; and the absence of the master is the time remaining until his coming.” **4** I said to him, “Sir, it is all great and marvelous, and all is glorious. Was it likely, then,” I said, “that I could have understood them? Nor could anyone else understand them, even if extremely intelligent. Furthermore, sir,” I continued, “explain to me what I am about to ask you.” **5** “Speak,” he replied, “if you want something.” “Why, sir,” I said, “is the Son of God presented in the parable in the guise of a slave?”

5.6

59 “Listen,” he said. “The Son of God is not presented in the guise of a slave, but is presented in great power and lordship.” “How so, sir?” I asked. “I do not understand.” **2** “Because,” he said, “God planted the vineyard, that is, he created the people, and turned them over to his Son. And the Son placed the angels over them to protect them, and the Son himself cleansed their sins with great labor and enduring much toil, for no one can cultivate a vineyard without toil or labor. **3** So, when he himself had cleansed the sins of the people, he showed them the paths of life, giving them the law that he

58.2 *and the son . . . spirit* Some ancient authorities omit. **59.1** *not* One ancient authority omits.

received from his Father. **4** You see,” he said, “that he is Lord of the people, having received all power from his Father. But hear why the Lord took his Son and the glorious angels as counselors concerning the inheritance of the slave. **5** The preexistent holy spirit, which created the whole creation, God caused to live in the flesh that he wished. This flesh, therefore, in which the holy spirit lived, served the spirit well, living in holiness and purity, without defiling the spirit in any way. **6** So, because it had lived honorably and chastely, and had worked with the spirit and had cooperated with it in everything, conducting itself with strength and bravery, he chose it as a partner with the holy spirit, for the conduct of this flesh pleased the Lord, because while possessing the holy spirit it was not defiled upon the earth. **7** So he took the Son and the glorious angels as counselors, in order that this flesh also, having served the spirit blamelessly, might have some place to live, and not appear to have lost the reward of its service. For all flesh in which the holy spirit has lived will, if it proves to be undefiled and spotless, receive a reward. **8** Now you have the explanation of this parable.”

5.7

60 “I am glad, sir,” I said, “to hear this explanation.” “Listen, now,” he said. “Keep this flesh of yours clean and undefiled, so that the spirit that lives in it may bear witness to it, and your flesh may be justified. **2** See to it that the idea never enters your heart that this flesh of yours is mortal, lest you abuse it in some defiling way. For if you defile your flesh, you also defile the holy spirit; and if you defile the flesh, you will not live.” **3** “But if, sir,” I said, “there was any previous ignorance before these words were heard, how will the man who has defiled his flesh be saved?” “Concerning the former acts of ignorance,” he said, “God alone has the power to give healing, for all authority

59.4 *You see . . . Father* Some ancient authorities omit. **59.6** *the Lord* One ancient authority reads *God*; others read *him*.

is his. **4** But now protect yourself, and the Lord, who is exceedingly compassionate, will give healing for your previous acts of ignorance, if from now on you defile neither your flesh nor the Spirit. For they belong together, and the one cannot be defiled without the other. Therefore keep both pure, and you will live to God.”

Parable 6

A Parable of Two Shepherds: The Danger of Luxury and Pleasure

6.1

61 As I sat in my house and glorified the Lord for all the things that I had seen, and was contemplating the commandments because they were beautiful and powerful and joyful and glorious, and able to save one’s soul, I said to myself, “I will be blessed if I walk in these commandments; indeed, whoever walks in them will be blessed.” **2** As I was saying these things to myself, I suddenly saw him sitting next to me and saying these things: “Why are you double-minded about the commandments that I gave you? They are beautiful. Do not be double-minded at all, but put on the faith of the Lord, and walk in them, for I will strengthen you in them. **3** These commandments are profitable to those who are about to repent, for if they do not walk in them, their repentance is in vain. **4** You, therefore, who repent, get rid of the evil things of this world that crush you; and by putting on every virtue of righteousness you will be able to keep these commandments and no longer add to your sins. So, by adding nothing you will cut off

60.4 *But now . . . ignorance* Some ancient authorities read *But now keep these things, and the Lord who is very compassionate will heal them*; another omits. **61** **Title** *Parable 6* One ancient authority reads *The Beginning*.

many of your former sins. Walk, therefore, in these commandments of mine, and you will live to God. All these things have been spoken to you by me.” **5** After he had spoken these things to me, he said to me, “Let us go into the country, and I will show you the shepherds of the sheep.” “Let us go, sir,” I said. And we came to a plain, and he showed me a young shepherd dressed in a suit of yellow clothes. **6** He was feeding a large number of sheep, and these sheep seemed to be well fed and very frisky, and were happily skipping about here and there. And the shepherd himself was quite happy over his flock, and even the very appearance of the shepherd was exceedingly cheerful as he was running about among the sheep.

6.2

62 And he said to me, “Do you see this shepherd?” “I see him, sir,” I replied. “This,” he said, “is the angel of luxury and deception. He crushes the souls of God’s servants who are empty and turns them away from the truth, deceiving them with evil desires in which they perish. **2** For they forget the commandments of the living God and live pleasurably in worthless luxury, and are destroyed by this angel, some to death and some to corruption.” **3** I said to him, “Sir, I do not understand what ‘to death’ and what ‘to corruption’ mean.” “Listen,” he said. “The sheep that you saw happily skipping about are those people who have been turned away from God completely and have handed themselves over to the lusts of this world. Among these, therefore, there is no repentance leading to life, because they have also blasphemed against the Lord’s name. For such as these, there is death. **4** But the sheep that you saw that were not skipping, but were feeding in one

61.6 *sheep* One ancient authority reads *sheep*. *And I saw in one place other frisky and well-fed sheep, but they were not skipping about* (cf. 62.4, 6 below). **62.1** *deception* Or *pleasure* (which, as Hermas sees it, is inherently deceptive because it involves one in sin).

place, are those who have handed themselves over to acts of luxury and deception, but have not spoken any blasphemy against the Lord. These, therefore, have been corrupted from the truth; for them there is the hope of repentance, by which they are able to live. So corruption has some hope of renewal, but death has only eternal destruction.”

5 Again we went on a little farther, and he showed me a huge shepherd who looked like a wild man, dressed in a white goatskin, and he had some kind of bag on his shoulders, and a very hard knobby staff, and a long whip. And he had such a bitter look that I was afraid of him, such a look he had. **6** This shepherd was receiving from the young shepherd those sheep who were frisky and well-fed but not skipping about and was putting them in a steep place covered with thorns and briars, so that the sheep were unable to disentangle themselves from the thorns and briars, but were entangled in the thorns and briars. **7** So they were attempting to graze while entangled in the thorns and briars, and were very miserable because they were being beaten by him. And he was driving them about here and there, giving them no rest, and those sheep were not at all happy.

6.3

63 When I saw them so beaten and miserable, I was sorry for them, because they were being tortured so and had no rest at all. **2** I said to the shepherd who was with me, “Sir, who is this shepherd who is so hard-hearted and mean, and has no compassion whatsoever for these sheep?” “This,” he said, “is the angel of punishment; he is one of the righteous angels and presides over punishment. **3** So he receives those who have wandered away from God and walked after

the desires and pleasures of this world, and punishes them, as they deserve, with various terrible punishments.” **4** “I would like to know, sir,” I said, “what these various punishments are.” “Listen,” he said. “The various tortures and punishments are tortures they experience in this life. For some are punished with losses, and others with deprivations, and others with various illnesses, and others with every kind of disturbance, and others are insulted by worthless people and suffer many other things. **5** For many people, vacillating in their intentions, attempt many things, but nothing ever succeeds with them. And then they say that they do not prosper in their efforts, and it never enters their hearts that they have done evil deeds; instead, they blame the Lord. **6** So, when they are afflicted with every kind of affliction, then they are handed over to me for good instruction and are strengthened in the faith of the Lord and serve the Lord with a pure heart the rest of the days of their lives. When they repent, therefore, the evil deeds that they did enter their hearts, and then they glorify God, because he is a righteous judge and because each one rightly suffered everything for what he had done. And from then on they serve the Lord with pure hearts and prosper in all they do, receiving from the Lord everything they ask for. And then they glorify the Lord because they were handed over to me, and they no longer suffer any evil.”

6.4

64 I said to him, “Sir, explain something else to me as well.” “What,” he said, “do you want to know?” “Whether, sir,” I said, “those who live in luxury and pleasure are tormented for the same length of time as they spend in luxury and pleasure?” He said to me, “They are tormented for the same length of time.” **2** “Then they are tormented very little, sir,” I said,

“for those who so live in luxury and forget God ought to have been tormented seven times as long.” **3** He said to me, “You are foolish and do not understand the power of torment.” “True, sir,” I said, “for if I had understood, I would not have asked you to explain it to me.” “Hear,” he said, “about the power of both. **4** The time of luxury and pleasure is one hour. But an hour of torment has the power of thirty days. So if someone lives in luxury and is deceived for one day, and is tormented for one day, the day of torment is equivalent to a whole year. So, for as many days as someone lives in luxury, for that many years is that person tormented. You see, therefore,” he said, “that the time of luxury and deception is very short, but the time of punishment and torment is long.”

6.5

65 “Sir,” I said, “since I do not fully understand about the time of the deception and luxury and torment, explain it to me more clearly.” **2** He answered and said to me, “Your stupidity is persistent, and you do not want to cleanse your heart and serve God. Take care,” he said, “lest the time be fulfilled and you are found to be still foolish. So listen,” he said, “so that you may understand the matter, just as you wish. **3** Those who live in luxury and deception for one day, and do what they want, have clothed themselves in much foolishness and do not understand what they are doing, for on the next day they forget what they did the day before. For luxury and deception have no memories, because of the foolishness with which they are clothed. But when punishment and torment cling to people for a single day, they are punished and tormented for a year, for punishment and torment have long memories. **4** So, being punished and tormented for a whole year, they then remember the luxury and deceit and realize that they are suffering these evils because of them.

64.3 *both* One ancient authority reads *both luxury and torment*.

All those, therefore, who live in luxury and deception are tormented in this way, because even though they have life, they have handed themselves over to death. **5** “Sir,” I said, “what kinds of luxuries are harmful?” “Everything people enjoy doing,” he said, “is a luxury for them. For even angry-tempered people indulge themselves when they give free rein to their passion. And adulterers and drunkards and slanderers and liars and greedy people and robbers and those who do things such as these all give free rein to their own sickness; they indulge themselves, therefore, by their action. **6** All these luxuries are harmful to God’s servants; because of these pleasures, therefore, those who are punished and tormented suffer. **7** But there are also luxuries that save people, for many indulge themselves in doing good, being carried away by the pleasure it gives them. This luxury, therefore, is profitable for God’s servants and brings life to such a person. But the harmful luxuries mentioned above bring torments and punishments to them; and if they persist and do not repent, they bring death upon themselves.”

Parable 7

Affliction and Repentance

66 A few days later I saw him on the same plain where I had also seen the shepherds, and he said to me, “What are you looking for?” “I am here, sir,” I said, “to have you order the punishing shepherd to leave my house, because he is afflicting me greatly.” “It is necessary,” he said, “for you to be afflicted. For this,” he said, “is what the glorious angel ordered concerning you, for he wants you to be tested.” “Why, sir?” I said. “What evil thing have I done that I should be handed over to this angel?” **2** “Listen,” he said. “Your sins are numerous, but not

66 Title *Parable 7* One ancient authority reads *The Beginning*.

so numerous that you should be handed over to this angel. But your household has committed great sins and iniquities, and the glorious angel was incensed by their deeds, and for this reason he ordered that you should be afflicted for a while, in order that they too might repent and cleanse themselves from every desire of this world. So when they repent and are cleansed, then the angel of punishment will leave.”³ I said to him, “Sir, even if they have perpetrated such deeds that the glorious angel is incensed, what have I done?” “They cannot otherwise be afflicted,” he said, “unless you, the head of the household, are afflicted. For if you are afflicted, they too will necessarily be afflicted; but if you are prosperous, they cannot experience any affliction.”⁴ “But look, sir,” I said. “They have repented with all their heart.” “I am quite aware,” he said, “that they have repented with all their heart. So, do you think that the sins of those who repent are forgiven immediately? Certainly not! But those who repent must torment their own soul and be extremely humble in everything they do and be afflicted with a variety of afflictions; and if they endure the afflictions that come upon them, then assuredly the one who created all things and endowed them with power will be moved with compassion and will give some healing.”⁵ And this will certainly be the case, if he sees that the heart of the one who repents is free of every evil thing. But it is beneficial for you and your family to be afflicted now. But why am I telling you so much? It is necessary for you to be afflicted, just as that angel of the Lord who handed you over to me ordered. And give thanks to the Lord for this, that he considered you worthy to reveal the affliction to you in advance, so that by knowing about it in advance, you might endure it with fortitude.”⁶ I said to him, “Sir, be with me, and I will be able to endure any affliction.” “I will be with you,” he said, “and I will ask the punishing angel to afflict you more lightly. But you will be afflicted

66.5 *will . . . if* Harmer suggests (on the basis of ancient authorities) *God will do, when.*

for a short time, and you will be restored again to your place. Only continue to be humble and to serve the Lord with a clean heart, with your children and your household, and walk in my commandments that I give you, and it will be possible for your repentance to be strong and pure. **7** And if you, with your family, keep these commandments, all affliction will leave you; indeed,” he said, “affliction will leave all who walk in these commandments of mine.”

Parable 8

Parable of the Willow Tree

8.1

67 He showed me a great willow tree that overshadowed plains and mountains, and all who are called by the name of the Lord came under the shade of the willow. **2** And by the willow there stood an angel of the Lord, glorious and very tall, with a huge pruning hook, and he was lopping off branches from the willow and giving them to the people who were in the shade of the willow; he gave them small sticks, about eighteen inches long. **3** After they all had received the sticks, the angel laid down the pruning hook, and the tree was healthy, just as I had initially seen it. **4** And I was amazed, and said to myself, “How can the tree be healthy after so many branches were lopped off?” The shepherd said to me, “Do not be amazed that the tree remained healthy after so many branches were lopped off. Wait,” he said, “until you see everything, and what this means will be explained to you.” **5** The angel who had given the sticks to the people asked for them back again, and they were summoned to him in the same order as they had received them, and each of them returned the sticks.

66.6 *place* One ancient authority reads *household*. **67** **Title** *Parable 8* One ancient authority omits this title. **67.1** *great* Some ancient authorities omit.

And the angel of the Lord took them and examined them. **6** From some he received the sticks withered and eaten, apparently by grubs; the angel ordered those who returned sticks in this condition to stand off by themselves. **7** And others returned them withered but not eaten by grubs, and these too he ordered to stand off by themselves. **8** And others returned them half withered; these also stood off by themselves. **9** And others returned their sticks half withered and cracked; these also stood off by themselves. **10** And others returned their sticks green and cracked, and they stood off by themselves. **11** And others returned the sticks half withered and half green, and they stood off by themselves. **12** Others presented their sticks two-thirds green and one-third withered, and they stood off by themselves. **13** And others returned them two-thirds dry and one-third green, and these stood off by themselves. **14** And others returned their sticks nearly all green, but with just a little bit of their sticks withered, just the end, but they did have cracks in them; these also stood off by themselves. **15** Those of others had only a very small part green, and the rest of each stick was withered; and these stood off by themselves. **16** Others came presenting their sticks green, just as they received them from the angel. Most of the multitude returned their sticks in this condition, and the angel rejoiced greatly over them, and these stood off by themselves. **17** Others returned their sticks green and with buds; these too stood off by themselves, and the angel rejoiced greatly over them. **18** And others returned their sticks green and with buds, and their buds seemed to have some fruit. And those people whose sticks were found in this condition were extremely happy, and the angel rejoiced over them, and the shepherd was very glad for them.

8.2

68 And the angel of the Lord ordered that crowns be brought. And crowns were brought, apparently made of palm leaves, and he crowned the people who had returned the sticks that had the buds and some fruit, and sent them off to the tower. **2** And he also sent to the tower the others who had returned their sticks green and with buds, but with no fruit on the buds; and he gave them a seal. **3** And all those who went to the tower had the same clothes, as white as snow. **4** And he sent off those who had returned their sticks green as they had received them, giving them white clothes and seals. **5** After the angel had finished these things he said to the shepherd, "I am going away, but you must send these people inside the walls, insofar as any deserve to live there. Examine their sticks carefully, and send them off accordingly. But be careful in examining them. See to it that no one escapes you," he said. "But if anyone does escape you, I will test them upon the altar." After he had said this to the shepherd, he left. **6** And after the angel had left, the shepherd said to me, "Let us take everyone's sticks and plant them, to see whether any of them can live." I said to him, "Sir, how can these withered things live?" **7** He answered and said to me, "This tree is a willow, and this species of tree is very hardy. So, if the sticks are planted and get a little moisture, many of them will live. And then let us try to pour some water on them also. If any of them can live, I will rejoice with them; but if none live, at least I will not be found negligent." **8** So the shepherd ordered me to call them, in the order in which each of them stood. And they came row by row, and returned the sticks to the shepherd. And the shepherd took the sticks and planted them in rows, and after he planted them he poured so much water on them that the sticks could not be seen because of the water. **9** And after he had watered the sticks he said

to me, "Let us go now, and in a few days let us return and inspect all the sticks, for the one who created this tree wants all those who have received sticks from this tree to live. And I too hope that most of these sticks, now that they have received some moisture and have been watered, will live."

The Willow Tree Parable Explained

8.3

69 I said to him, "Sir, tell me what this tree means, for I am perplexed about it, because even though so many branches were lopped off, the tree is healthy, and nothing appears to have been lopped off from it; consequently, I am perplexed." **2** "Listen," he said. "This great tree, which overshadows plains and mountains and all the earth, is the law of God, which is given to the whole world, and this law is the Son of God, who has been proclaimed to the ends of the earth. And the people who are under the shadow are those who have heard the preaching and believed in him. **3** And the great and glorious angel is Michael, who has authority over this people and guides them, for he is the one who puts the law into the hearts of those who believe. He, therefore, examines those to whom he gave it, to see if they have kept it. **4** Now observe the sticks of each one, for the sticks are the law. When you see that many sticks have been made useless, you will know that they are all those who have not kept the law, and you will see each one's dwelling." **5** I said to him, "Sir, why did he send some off to the tower, but leave others for you?" "All those," he said, "who transgressed the law that they received from him he left under my authority for repentance; but all those who have already satisfied the law and kept it he retains under his own authority." **6** "So who, sir," I asked, "are those who have

been crowned and are going into the tower?” He answered and said to me, “Those who are crowned are the ones who have wrestled with the devil and conquered him. These are the ones who have suffered for the law. **7** And the others who also returned their sticks green and with buds, though not with fruit, are those who were persecuted for the law, but did not suffer, nor did they deny their law. **8** Those who returned them green, just as they received them, are reverent and righteous people who have walked with an extraordinarily clean heart and have kept the Lord’s commandments. But the rest you will learn when I examine these sticks that have been planted and watered.”

8.4

70 After a few days we came to the spot, and the shepherd sat down in the place of the great angel, while I stood beside him. And he said to me, “Tie a towel around your waist and assist me.” So I tied a clean towel made of sackcloth around my waist. **2** And when he saw me with the towel around my waist ready to assist him, he said: “Call the people whose sticks have been planted, according to the order in which they returned their sticks.” And I went to the plain and called them all, and they all stood in rows. **3** He said to them, “Pull out your own sticks, each one of you, and bring them to me.” **4** The first to return them were those who had had the withered and chewed-up sticks, and when they were found to be still withered and chewed up, he ordered them to stand off by themselves. **5** Then those whose sticks were withered but not chewed up returned them, and some of them returned the sticks green, but some returned them withered and chewed up, as though by grubs. So those who returned them green he ordered to stand off by themselves, but those who returned them withered and chewed up he ordered to stand with the first group. **6** Then those whose sticks were half withered and cracked returned them; many returned them

green and without cracks, and some returned them green and budded, with fruit on the buds, like the sticks of those who were crowned and went into the tower, but some returned them withered and eaten, and some withered but not eaten, and some were as before, half withered and cracked. He ordered each one of them to stand off by themselves, some with their own group and others by themselves.

8.5

71 Then those whose sticks were green and cracked returned them. These all returned them green, and stood in their own group. And the shepherd rejoiced over these, because they were all changed and had gotten rid of their cracks. **2** And those whose sticks were half green and half withered also returned them. The sticks of some were found to be completely green, of some half withered, of some withered and eaten, and of some green and with buds. These were all sent away to their own groups. **3** Then those whose sticks were two-thirds green and one-third withered returned them; many of them returned them green, but many half withered, and others withered and eaten. These all stood in their own group. **4** Then others returned their sticks, which had been two-thirds dry and one-third green. Many of them returned them half withered, and some withered and eaten, and some half withered and cracked; but a few returned them green. These all stood in their own group. **5** And those whose sticks were green, but with a small part withered and cracked, returned them. Of these some returned them green, and some green and with buds. They too went off to their own group. **6** Then those whose sticks were just a little bit green and the rest withered returned them. The sticks of these were, for the most part, found to be green and budded, with fruit on the buds, and others completely green.

The shepherd rejoiced greatly over these sticks, because they were found in this condition. These also went off to their own groups.

8.6

72 After the shepherd had examined the sticks of them all, he said to me, "I told you that this tree is very hardy. Do you see," he said, "how many repented and were saved?" "I see, sir," I said. "In order that you may see," he said, "that the abundant compassion of the Lord is great and glorious, he has also given the spirit to those who are worthy of repentance." **2** "Then why, sir," I said, "do they not all repent?" "To those," he said, "whose hearts the Lord saw were about to become pure, and who were about to serve him with all their heart, he gave repentance; but to those whose deceit and wickedness he saw, who were about to repent hypocritically, he did not give repentance, lest they should somehow again profane his name." **3** I said to him, "Sir, now explain to me about those who have returned their sticks, that is, what kind of person each of them is, and where they live, in order that when those who have believed and have received the seal and have broken it and have not kept it sound hear this, they may recognize what they are doing, and repent and thereby receive a seal from you, and glorify the Lord because he has had mercy on them and sent you to renew their spirits." **4** "Listen," he said. "Those whose sticks were found withered and eaten by grubs are the apostates and traitors to the church, who by their sins have blasphemed the Lord, and in addition were ashamed of the Lord's name by which they were called. These, therefore, utterly perished to God. And you see that not one of them repented, even though they heard the words that you spoke to them, which I commanded you. From people of this sort life has departed. **5** But those who returned the withered and uneaten sticks

72.2 *the Lord* One ancient authority reads *God*; another omits. • *name* Some ancient authorities read *law*.

are very close to them, for they were hypocrites and brought in strange doctrines, and perverted God's servants, especially the ones who had sinned, by not allowing them to repent, but dissuading them instead with their moronic doctrines. These, then, have the hope of repentance. **6** And you see that many of them have indeed repented, ever since you spoke my commandments to them, and still more will repent. But those who will not repent have lost their life; those of them who have repented, on the other hand, became good, and have found their home within the first walls, and some have even ascended into the tower. So you see," he said, "that repentance from sin brings life, but failure to repent means death."

8.7

73 "As for those who returned their sticks half withered and with cracks in them, hear about them as well. Those whose sticks were half withered are the double-minded, for they are neither alive nor dead. **2** But those whose sticks were half withered and had cracks in them are both double-minded and slanderers, and are never at peace among themselves, but are always causing dissensions. Yet even for these," he said, "repentance is possible. You see," he said, "that some of them have already repented, and there is still hope of repentance in them. **3** So those of them," he said, "who have repented have their home within the tower, but those of them who have repented more slowly will live within the walls; and those who do not repent but persist in what they are doing will surely die. **4** But those who returned their sticks green and cracked were faithful and good at all times, but they had a certain jealousy of one another over questions of preeminence and about some kind of distinction. But they are all fools to be jealous of one another regarding preeminence.

5 But these also, because they are good, cleansed themselves and quickly repented when they heard my commandments. Their home, therefore, is in the tower. But if any of them again turns to dissension, they will be thrown out of the tower and will lose their life.

6 Life is for all those who keep the Lord's commandments, but in the commandments there is nothing about preeminence or any kind of distinction, but a man's patient endurance and humility. In such people, therefore, is the life of the Lord, but in dissentious and lawless people there is death."

8.8

74 "The ones who returned their sticks half green and half withered are those who are absorbed in business and do not associate with the saints; this is why one half of them lives, but the other half is dead. **2** Many, therefore, repented when they heard my commandments. Those who have repented have their home within the tower. But some of them fell away completely. These, therefore, have no repentance, for on account of their business affairs they blasphemed the Lord and denied him. So they lost their life because of the evil they did. **3** But many of them were double-minded. These still have an opportunity to repent, if they repent quickly, and their home will be within the tower; but if they repent more slowly, they will live within the walls. But if they do not repent at all, they too have lost their lives. **4** And the ones who returned the sticks two-thirds green and one-third withered are those who have denied the Lord repeatedly. **5** Many have repented and gone off to live inside the tower, but many fell away from God completely; these ultimately lost their lives. And some of them were double-minded and caused dissensions. For these, then, there is repentance, if they repent quickly and do not persist in their pleasures. But if they persist in their actions, they too produce death for themselves."

8.9

75 “The ones who returned their sticks two-thirds withered and one-third green are those who had been faithful, but became rich and acquired a reputation among the outsiders. They clothed themselves with great pride and became arrogant and abandoned the truth and did not associate with the righteous, but lived with and according to the standards of outsiders, and this way of life was more pleasant to them. Yet they did not fall away from God, but continued in the faith, though they did not do the works of faith. **2** Many of them, therefore, repented, and their home was within the tower. **3** But others, living entirely among the outsiders and being corrupted by the worthless opinions of the outsiders, fell away from God and behaved like the outsiders. These, therefore, were counted with the outsiders. **4** But others of them were double-minded, no longer hoping to be saved because of the deeds that they had done; and others were double-minded and caused divisions among themselves. For these, then, who became double-minded because of their deeds, there is still repentance; but their repentance ought to be swift, in order that their home may be within the tower. But for those who do not repent but persist in their pleasures, death is near.”

8.10

76 “Those who returned their sticks green, but with the tips withered and cracked, were always good and faithful and glorious in God’s sight, but they sinned just a little because of small desires and petty matters that they held against one another. But when they heard my words, the majority quickly repented, and their home was in the tower. **2** But some of them were double-minded, and some, being double-

minded, caused a greater dissension. In these, then, there is still hope of repentance, because they were always good, and scarcely one of them will die. **3** But the ones who returned their sticks withered, yet with a very small part green, are those who believed but practiced the works of lawlessness. Still, they never fell away from God, but bore the name gladly, and gladly welcomed God's servants into their houses. So when they heard of this repentance, they repented unhesitatingly and are practicing every virtue and righteousness. **4** And some of them are even suffering, and are bearing their distress gladly, knowing the deeds that they did. The home of all of these, therefore, will be in the tower."

8.11

77 And after he had finished the explanations of all the sticks, he said to me, "Go and speak to all people, in order that they may repent and live to God, for the Lord in his compassion sent me to give repentance to all, though some, because of their deeds, do not deserve to be saved. But being patient, the Lord wants those who were called through his Son to be saved." **2** I said to him, "Sir, I hope that all who hear them will repent. For I am convinced that they all, when they realize what they have done and fear God, will repent." **3** He answered and spoke to me: "Those who repent," he said, "with all their heart and cleanse themselves from all their evil deeds just described and no longer add anything more to their sins will receive healing from the Lord for their previous sins, unless they are double-minded about these commandments, and they will live to God. But those," he said, "who add to their sins and walk in the desires of this

76.4 *even suffering... gladly* One ancient authority reads *also afraid*; an editor emends to *even suffering persecution willingly*. **77.1** *to be saved (1st)* One ancient authority omits.

world will condemn themselves to death. **4** But as for you, walk in my commandments, and you will live to God; indeed, whoever walks in them and acts rightly will live to God.” **5** Having shown me all these things and told me everything, he said to me, “The rest I will show you in a few days.”

Parable 9

The Twelve Mountains

9.1

78 After I had written down the commandments and parables of the shepherd, the angel of repentance, he came to me and said to me, “I want to explain to you what the holy spirit that spoke with you in the form of the church revealed to you; for that spirit is the Son of God. **2** For since you were too weak in the flesh, it was not explained to you by an angel; but when you were given power by the spirit, and grew strong in your strength, so that you could even see an angel, then the building of the tower was revealed to you through the church. You saw all things well and reverently, as from a young girl; but now you see it from an angel, though by the same spirit. **3** Yet you must learn everything more accurately from me. For it was for this purpose that I was assigned by the glorious angel to live in your house, in order that you might see everything as clearly as possible, with none of the fear you formerly had.” **4** And he led me away to Arcadia, to a certain rounded mountain, and seated me on top of the mountain, and showed me a great plain, and around the plain twelve mountains, and each mountain had a different appearance. **5** The first was black as soot, and the second was bare, without any vegetation, and the third was

78 Title *Parable 9* One ancient authority omits this title.

full of thorns and briars. **6** The fourth had half-withered vegetation; the tops of the plants were green, but the part by the roots was dry. And some of the plants were withering when the sun scorched them. **7** The fifth mountain had green grass and was very rugged, and the sixth mountain was all full of ravines, some small and some large, and the ravines had vegetation, but the vegetation was not very flourishing, but looked rather withered. **8** The seventh mountain had blooming vegetation, and the whole mountain was thriving, and cattle and birds of every kind were feeding on the mountain; and the more the cattle and the birds ate, the more and more the vegetation of that mountain flourished. The eighth mountain was full of springs, and every species of the Lord's creation drank from the springs on that mountain. **9** The ninth mountain had no water at all, and was completely desolate; it had wild beasts and deadly reptiles that destroyed people. The tenth mountain had very large trees and was completely shaded, and beneath the shade sheep lay resting and chewing their cud. **10** The eleventh mountain was thickly wooded all over, and these trees were very productive, each adorned with various kinds of fruit, so that anyone who saw them wanted to eat of their fruit. And the twelfth mountain was completely white, and its appearance was very bright, and the mountain in and of itself was extraordinarily beautiful.

Building the Tower

9.2

79 And in the middle of the plain he pointed out to me a great white rock rising up from the plain. And the rock was higher than the

78.8 *blooming* Lit. *cheerful*.

mountains and square, so that it could hold the whole world. **2** And that rock was old, and a door had been chiseled out of it; but the door seemed to me to have been chiseled out quite recently. And the door was so much more radiant than the sun that I marveled at the brightness of the door. **3** Around the door stood twelve virgins. The four who stood at the corners seemed to me to be more glorious (though the others were also glorious), and they stood at the four sides of the door, with a pair of virgins between each of them. **4** And they were dressed in linen tunics that were becomingly belted around them, their right shoulders bare, as though they were about to carry some load. Thus were they ready, for they were very cheerful and eager. **5** After seeing these things I wondered to myself, because I was seeing great and glorious things. And again I was perplexed by the virgins, because though they were delicate, they stood bravely, as if they intended to carry the whole heaven. **6** And the shepherd said to me, “Why are you debating with yourself and becoming perplexed, and troubling yourself? Do not attempt, as though you were intelligent, to understand things you cannot comprehend, but ask the Lord that you may receive the intelligence to understand them. **7** You are not able to see what lies behind you, but you do see what is in front of you. Let go of what you cannot see, and do not trouble yourself about it; but master those things that you do see, and do not concern yourself about the rest. But I will explain to you everything that I show to you. So, carefully watch the rest.”

9.3

80 I saw that six men had come, tall and glorious and similar in appearance, and they called a multitude of men. And those who came were also tall men, handsome and powerful. And the six men ordered them to build a tower upon the rock. And there arose a great noise

80.1 *upon the rock* One ancient authority reads *upon the rock and above the door*; an

from those men who had come to build the tower as they ran here and there around the door. **2** And the virgins standing around the door were telling the men to hurry to build the tower, and the virgins spread out their hands as though they were about to receive something from the men. **3** And the six men ordered stones to come up from some deep place and to go into the structure of the tower. And ten square stones, polished and unhewn, came up. **4** And the six men called the virgins and ordered them to pick up all the stones that were to go into the structure of the tower and to pass through the door and hand them to the men who were about to build the tower. **5** And the virgins put the first ten stones that arose from the deep on one another, and they carried them together, stone by stone.

9.4

81 In the same order in which they stood together around the door, those who seemed to be the strongest picked up the stone and got under its corners, while the others got under the sides of the stone, and thus they carried all the stones. They carried them through the door, just as they were ordered, and handed them to the men for the tower, and they took them and built. **2** The tower was built upon the great rock and above the door. So those ten stones were fitted together, and they covered the whole rock. And these formed the foundation for the construction of the tower; the rock and the door were supporting the whole tower. **3** And after the ten stones, twenty-five other stones came up from the deep, and these were fitted into the structure of the tower, having been carried in by the virgins like the previous ones.

editor emends to *above the door*. **81.3** *twenty-five* One ancient authority reads *twenty*; another reads *fifteen*.

And after these thirty-five came up, and these were likewise fitted into the tower. After these, forty other stones came up, and these were all put into the structure of the tower. So four tiers were laid in the foundations of the tower. **4** And the stones stopped coming up from the deep, and the builders also stopped for a little while. And next the six men ordered the multitude of the people to bring in stones from the mountains for the construction of the tower. **5** So stones of various colors were brought in from all the mountains, having been quarried by the men, and handed to the virgins, and the virgins carried them through the door and handed them over for the construction of the tower. And when the various stones were set into the building, they all alike became white and lost their various colors. **6** But some of the stones that were delivered by the men for the building did not become bright, but were found to be the same color as when they were put in; for they were not handed along by the virgins, nor had they been carried through the gate. These stones, therefore, were unsuitable for the building of the tower. **7** When the six men saw the unsuitable stones in the building, they ordered them to be removed and taken down to their own place, from where they had been brought. **8** And they said to the men who were bringing in the stones, "You must not bring any stones at all into the building, but only place them by the tower, so that the virgins can carry them through the door and hand them over for the building. For if," they said, "they are not carried through the gate by the hands of these virgins, they cannot change their colors. So do not labor in vain," they said.

9.5

82 And the construction was finished for that day, though the tower was not yet completed, for it was to be built up further, and there was a pause in the construction. And the six men ordered all the builders to pause for a little while and rest, but they ordered the virgins not to leave the tower. And it seemed to me that the virgins were to guard the tower. **2** After they had all paused and were resting, I spoke to the shepherd. “Why, sir,” I said, “was the building of the tower not completed?” “The tower,” he said, “cannot yet be completed until its master comes and tests this building, so that if any stones are found to be defective he may replace them, for the tower is being built according to his will.” **3** “I would like to know, sir,” I said, “what the construction of this tower means, and about the rock and door, and the mountains and the virgins, and the stones that came up from the deep and were unhewn, but went into the building just as they were; **4** and why first ten stones were placed on the foundation, then twenty-five, then thirty-five, then forty; and about the stones that had gone into the building and were then removed and put back into their own place. Put my soul at rest regarding all these things, sir, and explain them to me.” **5** “If,” he said, “your interest proves to be more than idle curiosity, you will know everything. For in a few days we will come here, and you will see the rest of the things that will happen to this tower, and will understand all the parables accurately.” **6** And after a few days we came to the place where we had been seated, and he said to me, “Let us go to the tower, for the owner of the tower is coming to inspect it.” So we went to the tower, and there was no one near it at all, except for the virgins. **7** And the shepherd asked the virgins whether the master of the tower had arrived. And they said that he was just about to come to inspect the tower.

9.6

83 And behold, a little later I saw an array of many men coming, and in the midst a man of such lofty stature that he stood taller than the tower. **2** And the six men who had supervised the building were walking with him on his right and on his left, and with him were all those who worked on the building, and many other glorious beings were around him. And the virgins who watched the tower ran up and kissed him, and began to walk around the tower beside him. **3** And that man inspected the building so carefully that he felt every single stone. And he held a rod in his hand, and struck every stone that had been put into the building. **4** And when he struck the stones, some of them became black as soot, and some rough, and some cracked, and some too short, and some neither white nor black, and some became uneven and did not fit in with the other stones, and some badly spotted; these were the various kinds of defective stones found in the building. **5** So he ordered all these to be removed from the tower and placed by the side of the tower, and other stones brought and put in their place. **6** And the builders asked him from what mountain he wanted stones to be brought and put in their place. But he did not order them to be brought from the mountains; instead he ordered them to be brought from a certain plain that was nearby. **7** And the plain was excavated, and brilliant square stones were found there, but some were round. And all the stones that were found in that plain were brought in and were carried through the door by the virgins. **8** And the square stones were trimmed and set in the place of those that had been removed, but the round ones were not placed in the building, because they were too hard to shape and it took too long. So they were placed beside the tower, as though they were going to be shaped and put into the building, for they were extraordinarily brilliant.

9.7

84 So, when the glorious man who was lord of the whole tower had finished these things, he called the shepherd to him and handed over to him all the stones that had been removed from the building and were lying beside the tower, and said to him, **2** “Clean these stones carefully, and use those that can fit with the others in the construction of the tower, but throw those that do not fit far away from the tower.” **3** After giving these orders to the shepherd, he left the tower, together with all those with whom he had come. And the virgins stood around the tower watching it. **4** I said to the shepherd, “How can these stones go back into the structure of the tower after they have been rejected?” He answered me and said, “Do you see,” he said, “these stones?” “I see them, sir,” I said. “I myself,” he said, “will trim the majority of these stones and put them into the building, and they will fit with the rest of the stones.” **5** “How, sir,” I said, “can they still fill the same space after they have been trimmed?” He answered and said to me, “those that are found to be small will be placed in the middle of the building, but those that are larger will be set on the outside and will support them.” **6** Having spoken these things to me, he said to me, “Let us go, and after two days let us return and clean these stones and put them into the building, for everything around the tower must be cleaned up, lest the master should come unexpectedly and find things around the tower dirty and become incensed, in which case these stones will not go into the construction of the tower, and I will appear to be careless in my master’s sight.” **7** And after two days we came to the tower, and he said to me, “Let us inspect all the stones, and see which ones can go into the building.” I said to him, “Sir, let us inspect them.”

Inspecting the Stones

9.8

85 So we inspected the stones, beginning first with the black ones. They were found to be in the same condition as when they were taken from the building, and the shepherd ordered them removed from the tower and taken away. **2** Then he inspected the rough ones, and took and trimmed many of them, and ordered the virgins to take them and place them in the building. And the virgins took them and placed them in the building, in the middle of the tower. But the rest he ordered to be placed with the black ones, for these were also found to be black. **3** Then he inspected the cracked ones, and of these he trimmed many, and ordered them to be carried by the virgins to the building. And they were put on the exterior, because they were found to be stronger. But the rest could not be trimmed because of the large number of cracks, and for this reason they were rejected for the construction of the tower. **4** Then he inspected the ones that were too short, and many black ones were found among them, and some had developed huge cracks, and he ordered these also to be placed with those that had been discarded. But he cleaned and trimmed the ones that were left, and ordered them to be placed in the building. So the virgins picked them up and fitted them into the middle of the tower's structure, for they were rather weak. **5** Then he inspected those that were half white and half black. Many of them were now found to be black, and he ordered these also to be taken away with those that had been discarded. But all the rest were taken by the virgins, for they were white, and were fitted by the virgins themselves into the building. And they were placed on the exterior because they proved to be sound and thus could support the ones put in the middle, for not one of them was too short. **6** Then he inspected the hard, uneven

85.5 *rest* Some ancient authorities read *rest were found to be white and*.

ones, and a few of them were thrown away because they could not be trimmed, for they proved to be very hard. But the rest of them were trimmed and taken by the virgins and fitted into the middle of the tower's structure, for they were rather weak. **7** Then he inspected the spotted ones, and of these a few had turned black and were thrown away with the rest. But the remainder were found to be bright and sound, and those were fitted into the building by the virgins; and they were placed toward the exterior, owing to their strength.

9.9

86 Finally he came to inspect the round white stones, and he said to me, "What should we do with these stones?" "How would I know, sir?" I said. "Then you do not notice anything about them?" **2** "Sir," I said, "I do not possess this skill, nor am I a stonecutter, nor can I understand." "Do you not see," he said, "that they are very round, and that if I want to make them square, a great deal must be cut off of them? Yet some of them must of necessity be placed in the building." **3** "So if it is necessary, sir," I said, "why do you torment yourself? Why not just choose the ones you want for the building, and fit them into it?" He chose the larger and brighter of them, and trimmed them; and the virgins took them and fitted them into the exterior portion of the building. **4** But the rest that were left were taken and put back in the plain from which they had been brought; they were not, however, thrown away "because," he said, "there still remains a little of the tower to be built. And the master of the tower is most anxious to have these stones fitted into the building, because they are very bright." **5** And twelve women were called, whose appearance was extraordinarily beautiful, dressed in black, belted, with their shoulders bare and hair hanging loose. And these women seemed to me to be wild. And the shepherd ordered them to take the stones discarded from the building and carry them back to the mountains

from which they had been brought. **6** And they cheerfully picked up and carried away all the stones and put them back where they had been taken from. And after all the stones had been taken back, and not a stone still lay around the tower, the shepherd said to me, “Let us go around the tower and see if there is any defect in it.” So I went around the tower with him. **7** And when the shepherd saw that the tower’s structure was beautiful, he was extremely happy; for the tower was so well built that I admired its construction when I saw it, for it was built as if it were from a single stone, without one joint in it. And the stone looked as if it had been hewn out of the rock, for it seemed to me to be all one stone.

Hermas and the Virgins

9.10

87 And as I walked with him I was glad to see so beautiful a sight. And the shepherd said to me, “Go and bring some plaster and a thin piece of broken pottery, so that I may fill in the imprints in the stones that have been taken up and put into the building, for it must be smooth all around the tower.” **2** And I did as he ordered, and brought them to him. “Assist me,” he said, “and the work will be finished soon.” So he filled in the imprints in the stones that had gone into the building, and ordered the area around the tower swept and cleaned. **3** And the virgins took brooms and swept, and they removed all the rubbish from the tower, and sprinkled some water, and the site of the tower became cheerful and attractive. **4** The shepherd said to me, “Everything,” he said, “has now been cleaned. If the Lord comes to look over the tower, he will have nothing for which to blame us.” Having said these things he wished to leave. **5** But I grabbed hold of his shoulder bag and began to implore him by the Lord to explain to me what he had showed me. He said to me,

“I am busy for a little while, but then I will explain everything to you. Wait here for me until I come.” **6** I said to him, “Sir, what will I do while I am here alone?” “You are not alone,” he said, “for these virgins are with you.” “Then commend me to them,” I said. The shepherd called them and said to them, “I am entrusting this man to you until I return,” and he left. **7** And I was alone with the virgins, and they were most cheerful and gracious to me, especially the four of them who were more glorious in appearance.

9.11

88 The virgins said to me, “The shepherd is not coming here today.” I said, “So what should I do?” “Wait for him until evening,” they said, “and if he comes, he will speak with you; but if he does not come, stay with us until he does.” **2** I said to them, “I will wait for him until evening, and if he does not come, I will go home and come back in the morning.” But they answered and said to me, “You were entrusted to us; you cannot leave us.” **3** “Where, then,” I said, “will I stay?” “You will sleep with us,” they said, “as a brother and not as a husband, for you are our brother, and from now on we are going to live with you, for we love you very much.” But I was ashamed to stay with them. **4** And the one who seemed to be their leader began to kiss me and embrace me, and the others, seeing her embrace me, began to kiss me themselves, and to lead me around the tower and play with me. **5** And I seemed to have become younger, and I began to play with them myself; for some were dancing together as a chorus, and some were dancing, and others were singing. But I remained silent as I was walking around the tower with them, and was happy with them. **6** When evening came, I wanted to go home, but they would not let me go, but detained me. And I spent the night with them and slept beside the tower. **7** For the virgins spread out their linen tunics on the ground, and made me lie down in the midst of them, and they did

nothing at all except pray; and I prayed with them without ceasing, and no less than they. And the virgins rejoiced that I prayed like that. And I stayed there with the virgins until about eight o'clock the next morning. **8** Then the shepherd came and said to the virgins, "Have you done him any harm?" "Ask him," they said. I said to him, "Sir, I enjoyed staying with them." "What," he asked, "did you have for dinner?" "Sir," I said, "I dined on the words of the Lord the whole night." "Did they treat you well?" he asked. "Yes, sir," I said. **9** "Now," he said, "what do you want to hear first?" "Just as you showed me from the beginning, sir," I said. "I am asking you, sir, to explain them to me just as I ask you." "Just as you wish," he said, "so I will explain them to you, and I will not hide anything at all from you."

Explanation of the Tower and the Virgins

9.12

89 "First of all, sir," I said, "explain this to me: Who is the rock and the door?" "This rock," he said, "and the door are the Son of God." "How is it, sir," I said, "that the rock is old, but the door is new?" "Listen," he said, "and understand, foolish man. **2** The Son of God is far older than all his creation, with the result that he was the Father's counselor in his creation. This is why the rock is old." "But why is the door new, sir?" I said. **3** "Because," he said, "he was revealed in the last days of the consummation; that is why the door is new, in order that those who are going to be saved may enter the kingdom of God through it. **4** Did you notice," he said, "that the stones that came through the door have gone into the construction of the tower, but those that did not come through it were returned to their own place?" "I noticed, sir," I said. "In the same way," he said, "no one will enter the kingdom of God unless he receives the name of

his Son. **5** For if you want to enter some city, and that city is walled all around and has only one gate, can you enter that city except by the gate it has?" "How, sir," I said, "could it be otherwise?" "If, therefore, you cannot enter the city except through its gate," he said, "so too one cannot enter the kingdom of God except by the name of his Son, who was loved by him. **6** Did you see," he said, "the multitude that was building the tower?" "I saw them, sir," I said. "Those," he said, "are all glorious angels. By them the Lord is walled about. But the door is the Son of God; there is only this one entrance to the Lord. No one, therefore, will go in to him in any other way than through his Son. **7** Did you see," he said, "the six men, and the glorious and mighty man in their midst, who walked around the tower and rejected the stones from the building?" "I saw him, sir," I said. **8** "The glorious man," he said, "is the Son of God, and those six are the glorious angels who surround him on his right and on his left. Not one of these glorious angels," he said, "enters God's presence without him; whoever does not receive his name will not enter the kingdom of God."

9.13

90 "And who," I asked, "is the tower?" "This tower," he said, "is the church." **2** "And who are these virgins?" "They," he said, "are holy spirits; and there is no other way a person can be found in the kingdom of God except that they clothe him with their clothes. For if you receive only the name, but do not receive clothing from them, it does not benefit you. For these virgins are powers of the Son of God. If you bear the name but do not bear his power, you will bear his name in vain.

3 And the stones,” he said, “that you saw rejected are the ones who bore the name, but did not clothe themselves with the virgins’ clothing.” “What kind of clothing do they have, sir?” I asked. “The names themselves,” he said, “are their clothing. Whoever bears the name of the Son of God ought also to bear their names, for even the Son himself bears the names of these virgins. **4** All the stones,” he said, “that you saw go into the structure of the tower, delivered by their hands and remaining in the building, are clothed with the power of these virgins. **5** This is why you see that the tower has become a single stone with the rock. So also those who have believed in the Lord through his Son and clothe themselves with these spirits will become one spirit and one body, and their clothes will be one color. And the home of those who bear the names of the virgins is in the tower.” **6** “Now, sir,” I said, “about the rejected stones—why were they rejected? For they passed through the door and were placed in the structure of the tower by the hands of the virgins.” “Since everything interests you,” he said, “and you are inquiring carefully, listen regarding the rejected stones. **7** All these,” he said, “received the name of the Son of God, and also received the power of these virgins. Having received, therefore, these spirits, they were strengthened and were with God’s servants, and they had one spirit and one body and one garment; for they had the same mind and did what was right. **8** Then after a while they were seduced by the women whom you saw dressed in black garments, with bare shoulders, loosened hair, and attractive figures. When they saw them they desired them and put on their power, and laid aside the clothes and the power of the virgins. **9** These, therefore, have been thrown out of God’s house and handed over to those women. But those who were not deceived by the beauty of these women remained in God’s house. Now you have,” he said, “the explanation of the rejected stones.”

90.8 *the clothes and* Some ancient authorities omit.

9.14

91 “So what will happen, sir,” I asked, “if these people, being what they are, repent and cast aside their desire for these women and return to the virgins and walk in their power and in their works—will they not enter God’s house?” **2** “They will enter,” he said, “if they cast aside the works of these women and take up again the power of the virgins and walk in their works. For this is why there was a pause in the construction, so that if these repent, they may go back into the structure of the tower. But if they do not repent, then others will go in, and these will be cast out in the end.” **3** I gave thanks to the Lord for all these things, because he had mercy on all those who called upon his name, and sent forth the angel of repentance to us who had sinned against him and renewed our spirit, and he restored our life when we were already ruined and had no hope of life. **4** “Now, sir,” I said, “explain to me why the tower is not built on the ground but upon the rock and the door.” “Are you still,” he said, “stupid and senseless?” “I am obliged, sir,” I said, “to ask you about everything, for I am absolutely unable to comprehend anything at all; for all these matters are awesome and glorious, and difficult for people to understand.” **5** “Listen,” he said. “The name of the Son of God is great and incomprehensible, and sustains the whole world. If, therefore, all creation is sustained by the Son of God, what do you think of those who are called by him and bear the name of the Son of God and walk in his commandments? **6** Do you see, then, what kind of people he sustains? Those who bear his name with their whole heart. So he himself has become their foundation and gladly sustains them because they are not ashamed to bear his name.”

9.15

92 “Tell me, sir,” I said, “the names of the virgins and of the women dressed in the black garments.” “Hear,” he said, “the names of the

stronger virgins who are stationed at the corners. **2** The first is Faith, and the second, Self-control, and the third, Power, and the fourth, Patience. And the others standing between them have these names: Sincerity, Innocence, Purity, Cheerfulness, Truth, Understanding, Harmony, and Love. The one who bears these names and the name of the Son of God will be able to enter the kingdom of God. **3** Hear also," he said, "the names of the women with the black clothes. Of these, four also are more powerful. The first is Unbelief, the second, Self-indulgence, the third, Disobedience, and the fourth, Deceit. And the ones who follow them are called Grief, Evil, Licentiousness, Angry Temper, Falsehood, Foolishness, Slander, and Hatred. The servant of God who bears these names will see the kingdom of God but will not enter it." **4** "And who are the stones, sir," I said, "that came from the deep and were fitted into the building?" "The first ones," he said, "the ten that were placed on the foundations, are the first generation, and the twenty-five are the second generation of righteous men. The thirty-five are God's prophets and his ministers, and the forty are apostles and teachers of the proclamation of the Son of God." **5** "So why, sir," I said, "did the virgins also deliver these stones for the construction of the tower, after carrying them through the door?" **6** "Because," he said, "these were the first to bear these spirits, and they never separated from one another at all, neither the spirits from the people nor the people from the spirits, but the spirits remained with them until they fell asleep; and if they had not had these spirits with them, they would not have been useful for the construction of this tower."

92.4 *twenty-five* One ancient authority reads *fifteen* (cf. 81.3).

9.16

93 “Sir, explain something else to me,” I said. “What else do you want to know?” he said. “Why, sir,” I said, “did the stones come up from the deep, and why were they put into the building, even though they had borne these spirits?” **2** “It was necessary,” he said, “for them to come up through water in order to be made alive, for otherwise they could not enter the kingdom of God, unless they laid aside the deadness of their former life. **3** So even those who had fallen asleep received the seal of the Son of God and entered the kingdom of God. For before people bear the name of the Son of God,” he said, “they are dead, but when they receive the seal, they lay aside their deadness and receive life. **4** The seal, therefore, is the water; so they go down into the water dead and they come up alive. So this seal was proclaimed to them as well, and they made use of it in order that they might enter the kingdom of God.” **5** “Why, sir,” I said, “did the forty stones also come up with them from the deep, when they had already received the seal?” “Because,” he said, “when these apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God fell asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, they preached also to those who had previously fallen asleep, and they themselves gave them the seal of the preaching. **6** Therefore they went down with them into the water and came up again. But these went down alive and came up alive, whereas those who had previously fallen asleep went down dead and came up alive. **7** So they were made alive through them and came to full knowledge of the name of the Son of God. This is why they also came up with them and were fitted together with them into the structure of the tower, and were joined together without being trimmed, for they fell asleep in righteousness and in great purity, only they did not have this seal. You now have the explanation of these things as well.” “I do, sir,” I said.

93.1 *even though* OR *since*.

Explanation of the Twelve Mountains

9.17

94 “Now then, sir, explain to me about the mountains. Why is their appearance different from one another, and so diverse?” “Listen,” he said. “These twelve mountains are twelve tribes that inhabit the whole world. To them, therefore, the Son of God was proclaimed by the apostles.” **2** “But explain to me, sir, why the mountains are so diverse, and different from one another in appearance.” “Listen,” he said. “These twelve tribes that inhabit the whole world are twelve nations, and they are diverse in thought and mind. So just as you observed that the mountains are diverse, so also there are diversities of mind and thought among the nations. And I will explain to you the operation of each one.” **3** “Sir,” I said, “first tell me this: given that the mountains are so diverse, why is it that when their stones were set into the building, they became bright and all one color, just like the stones that had come up from the deep?” **4** “Because,” he said, “all the nations that dwell under heaven, when they heard and believed, were called by the name of the Son of God. So when they received the seal, they had one thought and one mind, and one faith and one love became theirs, and they bore the spirits of the virgins along with the name. This is why the construction of the tower shone with one color, as bright as the sun.” **5** But after they went in together and became one body, some of them polluted themselves and were cast out of the race of the righteous, and again became as they were before, or rather even worse.”

9.18

95 “How, sir,” I said, “did they become worse, after they had come to know God?” “Those who do not know God,” he said, “and do evil receive

some punishment for their evil, but those who have come to know God ought no longer to do evil, but to do good. **2** So if those who ought to do good do evil, do they not appear to do greater evil than those who do not know God? This is why those who have not known God and do evil are condemned to death, whereas those who have known God and have seen his mighty works and yet do evil will be doubly punished and will die forever. In this way, therefore, the church of God will be purified. **3** And just as you saw the stones removed from the tower and handed over to the evil spirits and thrown away from there, so there will be one body of those who have been purified; just as the tower became as though made of one stone after it had been purified, so also will the church of God be after it has been purified, and the wicked and hypocrites and blasphemers and double-minded and those who do various kinds of evil have been cast out. **4** When these have been cast out, the church of God will be one body, one thought, one mind, one faith, one love; and then the Son of God will rejoice and be glad in them, because he has received back his people pure.” “All these things are great and glorious, sir,” I said. **5** “Yet tell me more, sir,” I said, “about the power and the functions of each one of the mountains, so that every soul that trusts in the Lord may glorify his great and marvelous and glorious name when he hears about them.” “Listen,” he said, “to the variety of the mountains and of the twelve nations.”

9.19

96 “From the first mountain, the black one, are believers such as these: apostates and blasphemers against the Lord, and betrayers of God’s servants. For these there is no repentance, but there is death, and this is why they are black, for their kind is lawless. **2** And from

the second mountain, the bare one, are believers such as these: hypocrites and teachers of evil. These, then, are like the first in not having the fruit of righteousness. For as their mountain is without fruit, so also people such as these have the name, but are devoid of faith, and there is no fruit of truth in them. To these, then, repentance is offered, if they repent quickly; but if they delay, their death will be with the first group.” **3** “Why, sir,” I said, “is there repentance for them but not for the first group? For their actions are almost the same.” “This is why,” he said, “repentance is offered to them: they have not blasphemed their Lord, nor have they become betrayers of God’s servants. Yet because of the desire for gain they acted hypocritically, and each one taught to suit the desires of sinful people. But they will pay a penalty; yet repentance is offered to them, because they did not become blasphemers or betrayers.”

9.20

97 “And from the third mountain, the one with thorns and briars, are believers such as these: some of them are rich, and some are entangled in many business affairs. The briars are the rich, and the thorns are those who are entangled in various business affairs. **2** So these who are entangled in many and various business affairs do not associate with God’s servants, but being choked by their affairs they go astray. Meanwhile the rich associate with God’s servants only with difficulty, for they are afraid that they may be asked for something by them. Such people, therefore, will enter the kingdom of God only with difficulty. **3** For just as it is difficult to walk on briars with bare feet, so it is difficult for such people to enter the kingdom of God. **4** But for all these repentance is possible, but it must be quick, so that they may now retrace the days when in former times they

failed to do anything, and do something good. So, if they repent and do something good, they will live to God; but if they persist in their actions, they will be handed over to those women, who will put them to death.”

9.21

98 “And from the fourth mountain—the one with much vegetation, which was green at the tops and withered at the roots, and some of which was dried up by the sun—are believers such as these: the double-minded, and those who have the Lord on their lips but do not have him in their hearts. **2** That is why their foundations are dry and have no power, and only their words are alive, but their works are dead. Such people are neither alive nor dead. They are, therefore, like the double-minded, for the double-minded are neither green nor withered, for they are neither alive nor dead. **3** For just as these plants were dried up when they saw the sun, so the double-minded, whenever they hear about a persecution, worship idols because of their cowardice and are ashamed of the name of their Lord. **4** Such people are, therefore, neither alive nor dead. Yet these, too, if they repent quickly, will be able to live. But if they do not repent, they have already been handed over to the women who take away their lives.”

9.22

99 “And from the fifth mountain, the rugged one with the green grass, are believers such as these: they are faithful, but slow to learn, arrogant, and self-satisfied; though they want to know everything, they know nothing at all. **2** Because of this arrogance of theirs, understand-

ing has left them and a foolish stupidity has taken possession of them. Yet they praise themselves for having wisdom and want to be volunteer teachers, foolish though they are. **3** So, because of pride many people have been ruined while attempting to exalt themselves, for arrogance and overconfidence are a mighty demon. Many of these, therefore, were rejected, but some, comprehending their own foolishness, repented and believed, and submitted themselves to those with understanding. **4** And for the rest of these people repentance remains a possibility, for they were not really evil but rather stupid and short on understanding. So these will, if they repent, live to God, but if they do not repent they will dwell with the women who do them harm.”

9.23

100 “And those from the sixth mountain, the one with large and small ravines and withered plants in the ravines, are believers such as these: **2** the ones with small ravines are those who have something against one another; because of their backbiting they are withered in the faith. But many of these have repented, and the rest will repent when they hear my commandments, for their backbiting is relatively minor, and they will quickly repent. **3** But the ones with the large ravines are those who persist in their backbiting and hold grudges in their rage toward one another. These, therefore, were thrown away from the tower and rejected for its construction. Such people will find it difficult to live. **4** If our God and Lord, who rules over all things and has authority over all his creation, holds no grudge against those who confess their sins and is merciful, can a human being, who is mortal and full of sin, hold a grudge against someone as if he could destroy or save that person? **5** But I, the angel of repentance, am telling you, whoever holds this view must lay it aside and repent, and the Lord will heal your previous sins if you cleanse yourselves of this demon. But if you do not, you will be handed over to him to be put to death.”

9.24

101 “And from the seventh mountain, where the vegetation was green and blooming and the whole mountain was thriving and cattle of every kind and birds of the sky were feeding on the vegetation on that mountain, and the vegetation on which they fed became all the more luxuriant, are believers such as these: **2** they were always sincere and innocent and blessed, holding nothing against one another but always rejoicing in God’s servants and clothed in the holy spirit of these virgins, and always having compassion for everyone, and from their labors they supplied everyone’s needs without reproach and without hesitation. **3** The Lord, therefore, seeing their sincerity and utter childlikeness, prospered them in the labors of their hands and favored them in all that they did. **4** And I, the angel of repentance, declare to you who are like this: continue to act like this, and your descendants will never be blotted out. For the Lord has tested you and has enrolled you among our number, and all your descendants will live with the Son of God, for you have partaken of his spirit.”

9.25

102 “And from the eighth mountain, where there were many springs and all the Lord’s creation drank from the springs, are believers such as these: **2** apostles and teachers who preached to the whole world and who reverently and purely taught the word of the Lord, and who misappropriated nothing for evil desire, but always walked in righteousness and truth, just as they had also received the holy spirit. Such people, therefore, will enter in with the angels.”

9.26

103 “And from the ninth mountain, which was desolate, which had on it reptiles and wild beasts that destroy men, are believers such as these: **2** the ones with the spots are deacons who carried out their ministry badly and plundered the livelihood of widows and orphans, and profited themselves from the ministry that they received to carry out. If, therefore, they persist in the same evil desire, they are dead and there is no hope of life for them. But if they turn about and fulfill their ministry purely, they will be able to live. **3** And the ones who are rough are those who have denied and have not returned to their Lord, but have become barren and desolate; because they do not associate with God’s servants but remain alone, they destroy their own souls. **4** For just as a vine left untended along a fence is ruined and stunted by weeds and eventually becomes wild and is no longer useful to its owner, so also people such as these have despaired of themselves and become useless to their Lord, since they are growing wild. **5** For these, then, there is repentance, unless they are found to have denied from the heart. But if someone is found to have denied from the heart, I do not know if it is possible for that person to live. **6** And I do not say this regarding these days, that someone who denies may receive repentance, for it is impossible for anyone who denies the Lord from now on to be saved; but for those who denied him long ago repentance seems to be a possibility. If, however, any are about to repent, let them do so quickly, before the tower is completed, or else they will be destroyed by the women and put to death. **7** And the short ones are treacherous backbiters; these are the snakes you saw on the mountain. For just as snakes poison and kill a person with their venom, so also the words of such people poison and kill a person. **8** These, therefore, are short in their faith because of their conduct toward one another, but some repented and were saved. And the rest of those who are like this can be saved,

if they repent; but if they do not repent, they will meet their death at the hands of those women whose power they have.”

9.27

104 “And from the tenth mountain, where trees were sheltering some sheep, are believers such as these: **2** bishops and hospitable people who were always glad to welcome God’s servants into their homes without hypocrisy. And the bishops always sheltered those in need and the widows by their ministry without ceasing, and conducted themselves in purity always. **3** All these, therefore, will be sheltered by the Lord forever; the ones who have done these things are glorious in God’s sight, and their place is already with the angels, if they continue serving the Lord to the end.”

9.28

105 “And from the eleventh mountain, where trees were full of fruit, each adorned with various kinds of fruit, are believers such as these: **2** those who suffered for the name of the Son of God, who suffered willingly with all their heart, and gave up their lives.” **3** “Why then, sir,” I said, “do all the trees have fruit, but the fruit of some is more beautiful than others?” “Hear,” he said. “All who have ever suffered for the name are glorious in God’s sight, and the sins of all of these have been taken away, because they suffered for the name of the Son of God. But hear why their fruits are varied, and some superior to others. **4** As many,” he said, “as were questioned with torture when brought before the authorities and did not deny, but suffered willingly, these are the more glorious in the Lord’s sight; theirs is the superior fruit. But as many as were cowardly and hesitated, and debated in their hearts whether they should deny or confess, and yet suffered,

their fruit is of lesser excellence, because this thought arose in their heart; for this thought—that a servant should deny his own lord—is evil. **5** Take care, therefore, you who entertain these ideas, lest this thought persist in your hearts and you die to God. But you who suffer for the sake of the name ought to glorify God, because God has considered you worthy that you should bear this name and that all your sins be healed. **6** So consider yourselves blessed; indeed, realize that you have done a great work if any of you suffers for God’s sake. The Lord is granting you life, but you do not comprehend it, for your sins weighed you down, and if you had not suffered for the sake of the Lord’s name, you would have died to God because of your sins. **7** I say these things to you who are hesitating about denial or confession. Confess that you have the Lord, lest by denying you get thrown in prison. **8** For if the outsiders punish their slaves for denying their own lord, what do you think the Lord who has authority over everything will do to you? Rid your hearts of these thoughts, so that you may live to God forever.”

9.29

106 “And from the twelfth mountain, the white one, are believers such as these: they are as veritable infants, into whose heart nothing evil enters, nor do they even know what wickedness is, but they have remained in childlike innocence always. **2** People such as these, therefore, undoubtedly dwell in the kingdom of God, because they in no way defiled God’s commandments, but have continued in childlike innocence all the days of their lives in the same state of mind. **3** All of you, therefore, who continue,” he said, “and will be as infants, with no wickedness, will be more glorious than all those who have been mentioned previously, for all infants

106.2 *dwell* One ancient authority reads *will dwell*.

are glorious in God's sight and stand foremost with him. Blessed are you, therefore, who have cast aside evil from yourselves and clothed yourselves in innocence; you will live to God first of all."

4 After he finished the parables of the mountains, I said to him: "Sir, now explain to me about the stones that were taken from the plain and put into the building in place of the stones that were removed from the tower, and about the round stones that were placed in the building, and about those that are still round."

Explanation of the Round Stones

9.30

107 "Hear also," he said, "about all these things. The stones that were taken from the plain and put into the structure of the tower in place of the ones that were rejected are the roots of this white mountain. **2** So since those who believed from the white mountain were all found innocent, the Lord of the tower ordered these from the roots of this mountain to be put into the structure of the tower. For he knew that if these stones went into the structure of the tower, they would remain bright and not one of them would turn black. **3** But if he had put in stones from the other mountains, he would have had to visit the tower again and cleanse it. But all those who have believed and who will believe have been found to be white, for they are of the same kind. Blessed is this kind, for it is innocent. **4** Hear now also about the stones that are round and bright. All these are also from this white mountain. Now hear why they were found round. Their riches have obscured them a little from the truth and darkened them, yet they never departed from God, nor did any evil word come out of their mouth, but only all justice and true virtue. **5** So when the Lord discerned that their minds

107.2 *from the roots . . . structure* Or to be taken from the roots of this mountain for the construction.

posse eos veritati favere, bonos quoque permanere, iussit et opes eorum circumcidi, non enim in totum tolli, ut possint aliquid boni facere de eo quod eis relictum est; et vivent deo, quoniam ex bono genere sunt. Ideo ergo pusillum circumcisi sunt et positi sunt in structuram turris huius.

9.31

108 Ceteri vero, qui adhuc rotundi remanserunt neque aptati sunt in eam structuram, quia nondum acceperunt sigillum, repositi sunt suo loco; valde enim rotundi reperti sunt. **2** Oportet autem circumcidi hoc saeculum ab illis et vanitates opum suarum, et tunc convenient in dei regnum. Necesse est enim eos intrare in dei regnum; hoc enim genus innocuum benedixit dominus. Ex hoc ergo genere non intercidet quisquam. Etenim licet quis eorum temptatus a nequissimo diabolo aliquid deliquerit, cito recurret ad dominum suum. **3** Felices vos iudico omnes, ego nuntius paenitentiae, quicumque estis innocentes sicut infantes, quoniam pars vestra bona est et honorata apud deum. **4** Dico autem omnibus vobis, quicumque sigillum hoc accepistis, simplicitatem habere neque offensarum memores esse neque in malitia vestra permanere aut in memoria offensarum amaritudinis; in unum quemque spiritum fieri et has malas scissuras permediare ac tollere a vobis, ut dominus pecorum gaudeat de his. **5** χαρ σεται δ , ν π ντα γι ε ρεθ κα μ διαπεπτωκ τα τιν ξα τ ν . ν δ ε ρεθ τινα ξα τ ν διαπεπτωκ τα, ο α το ζποιμ σιν σται. **6** ν δ κα α το ο ποιμ νες ε ρεθ σιν διαπεπτωκ τες, τ ρο σιν τ δεσπ τ το ποιμν ου; τι π τ ν προβ των δι πεσαν ; ο πιστευθ σονται. πιστον γ ρ ρ γ μ

108.5 και . . . αυτων Ant] – L **108.6** τι . . . διεπεσαν Ant] quid respondebunt <pro> pecoribus his? numquid dicunt a pecore se vexatus? L

could favor the truth and remain good, he ordered their wealth to be cut away, yet not to be taken away completely, so that they might be able to do some good with what was left to them, and they will live to God, because they are of the good kind. Therefore they were cut down a little, and placed in the structure of this tower.”

9.31

108 “But the others, which still remained round and had not been fitted into the structure, because they had not yet received the seal, were returned to their place, for they were found very round. **2** For this world and the vanities of their possessions must be cut away from them, and then they will be fit for the kingdom of God. For it is necessary for them to enter the kingdom of God, because the Lord has blessed this innocent kind. So not one of this kind will perish. Indeed, even though one of them, being tempted by the most wicked devil, does something wrong, that person will quickly return to the Lord. **3** I, the angel of repentance, pronounce all of you who are as innocent as infants blessed, because your part is good and honorable in God’s sight. **4** So I say to all of you who have received this seal: maintain your sincerity and bear no grudge, and do not persist in your wickedness or the memory of bitter offenses, but become of one spirit and heal these evil divisions and get rid of them from among you, so that the lord of the flocks may rejoice in them. **5** For he will rejoice, if all are found safe and none of them are scattered. But if any of them are found scattered, woe to the shepherds. **6** But if the shepherds themselves are found scattered, what will they say to the lord of the flock? That they were scattered by the sheep? They will not be believed, for it is an unbelievable thing for the shepherd

108.5 *and none . . . scattered* One ancient authority omits. **108.6** *what will . . . the sheep* One ancient authority reads *how will they answer for their flocks? Will they say they were harassed by the sheep?*

to be injured by the sheep; instead they will be punished for their lie. And I, too, am a shepherd, and most certainly have to give an account for you.”

Final Exhortations

9.32

109 “Mend your ways, therefore, while the tower is still being built. **2** The Lord lives among people who love peace, for peace is truly dear to him, but he keeps his distance from the quarrelsome and those destroyed by wickedness. So return your spirit to him whole, just as you received it. **3** Suppose you gave a new undamaged garment to a cleaner, wanting to receive it back undamaged, but the cleaner returned it to you torn; would you accept it? Would you not immediately flare up and attack him with insults, saying, “The garment I gave you was undamaged; why did you tear it and make it useless? Because of the rip you made in it, it cannot be used!” Would you not say all this to a cleaner just for a rip he made in your garment? **4** If, therefore, you become so upset about your garment and complain because you did not get it back undamaged, what do you think the Lord, who gave you the spirit undamaged, will do to you when you return it completely useless, so that it cannot be of any use at all to its Lord? For its usefulness began to be impaired when it was corrupted by you. Will not the Lord of this spirit punish you with death because of this deed of yours?” **5** “Certainly,” I said, “he will punish all those whom he finds continuing to bear malice.” “Do not trample on his mercy,” he said, “but rather honor him, because he is so patient with your sins, and is not like you. Repent, therefore, in a way that is beneficial to you.”

9.33

110 “All these things that are written above I, the shepherd, the angel of repentance, have declared and spoken to God’s servants. If you believe them and hear my words, and walk in them and mend your ways, you will be able to live. But if you persist in wickedness and bearing malice—no one of this kind will live to God. Everything that I was to say I have now said to you.” **2** The shepherd said to me, “Have you asked me everything?” “Yes, sir,” I said. “Then why,” he said, “did you not ask about the marks on the stones that were put into the building, the marks that we filled in?” “I forgot, sir,” I said. **3** “Hear now,” he said, “about them. They are those who have now heard my commandments and repented with all their heart. And when the Lord saw that their repentance was good and pure, and that they could continue in their repentance, he ordered their former sins to be wiped out. For these marks were their sins; they were smoothed over, therefore, so that they would no longer be visible.”

*Parable 10**Conclusion*

10.1

111 After I had written this book, the angel who had turned me over to the shepherd came to the house where I was and sat on the couch, and the shepherd stood at his right hand. Then he called me and

spoke to me. **2** “I have turned you and your household,” he said, “over to this shepherd, so that you may be protected by him.” “Yes, sir,” I said. “So if,” he said, “you want to be protected from all trouble and cruelty, to be successful in every good deed and word, and to have every virtue of righteousness, walk in his commandments, which I have given you, and you will be able to overcome all wickedness. **3** For if you keep his commandments, every evil desire and delight of this world will be subject to you, and success will accompany you in every good undertaking. Embrace his maturity and self-restraint, and tell all people that he is held in great honor and esteem with the Lord and is a ruler of great power and authority in his office. To him alone in the whole world has authority over repentance been given. Does he not seem powerful to you? Yet you despise his maturity and moderation, which he demonstrates toward you.”

10.2

112 I said to him, “Ask him, sir, whether I have done anything contrary to his command that has offended him since he has been in my house.” **2** “I know,” he said, “that you have done nothing out of order, and are not about to do so. And so I am saying these things to you so that you may persevere. For he has given me a good report about you. You, therefore, must tell these things to others, so that those who have repented or are going to repent may share your attitude, so that he can give a good report about them to me, and I to the Lord.” **3** “I myself, sir,” I said, “proclaim to everyone the mighty acts of the Lord, for I hope that all who have sinned in the past will gladly repent and regain life if they hear these things.” **4** “Then continue in this service and complete it. All who fulfill his commandments will have life, and the one who does so will have great honor with the Lord. But all who do not keep his commandments are running away from their own life and

oppose him. But such people have their own honor before God. So those who oppose him and do not follow his commandments hand themselves over to death, and every one of them is guilty of his or her own blood. But I am telling you to obey these commandments, and you will have a cure for your sins.”

10.3

113 “Moreover, I have sent these virgins to you to live with you, for I saw that they were friendly to you. You have them, therefore, as helpers, so that you may be better able to keep his commandments, for it is impossible for these commandments to be kept without the help of these virgins. I also see that they are glad to be with you; nevertheless I will instruct them not to leave your house at all. **2** Only you must keep your house clean, for they will gladly live in a clean house, for they are clean and chaste and industrious, and all have favor with the Lord. If, therefore, they find your house pure, they will remain with you. But if the slightest impurity turns up, they will leave your house at once, for these virgins do not love impurity in any form.” **3** I said to him, “I hope, sir, that I will please them, so that they will gladly live in my house always. And just as he to whom you turned me over finds no fault in me, neither will they find any fault in me.” **4** He said to the shepherd, “I know that the servant of God wants to live, and will keep these commandments, and will support these virgins in purity.” **5** Having said these things he again turned me over to the shepherd, and calling the virgins he said to them, “Since I see that you are glad to live in this man’s house, I entrust him and his house to you; do not leave his house at all.” And they were glad to hear these words.

112.4 *But such . . . oppose him* A restoration based on a Latin translation. The text is corrupt. **113.3–5** *And just as he to whom . . . to them* So reads a fragmentary Greek text; the Latin reads somewhat differently.

10.4

114 Then he said to me, “Carry out your ministry courageously; declare the Lord’s mighty acts to every person, and you will find favor in this ministry. Whoever, therefore, walks in these commandments will live and will have a happy life; but whoever neglects them will not live and will have an unhappy life. **2** Tell all who are able to do right not to stop; to work at good works is beneficial to them. Moreover, I say that every person ought to be rescued from distress, for one who is in need and suffers distress in daily life is in great anguish and hardship. **3** So whoever rescues such a person from misery wins great joy for himself. For the one who is troubled by distress of this sort is afflicted with the same anguish as one who is in chains. For many people, because of afflictions of this kind, commit suicide when they can no longer endure them. Therefore, whoever knows about the misery of someone like this and does not rescue that person commits a great sin and becomes guilty of that person’s blood. **4** Do good works, therefore, you who have received from the Lord, lest while you put off doing them the building of the tower is completed. For it is on your account that the work of building has been suspended. So unless you act quickly to do right, the tower will be completed, and you will be excluded.”

Now when he had finished speaking to me, he rose from the couch and departed, taking the shepherd and the virgins with him, telling me, however, that he would send the shepherd and the virgins back to my house.

114.1 *courageously* Or *manfully*. **114.3** *commit suicide* Lit. *bring death upon themselves*.

