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THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS

THE document which is always known as the Epistle of Barnabas is, like I. Clement, really anonymous, and it is generally regarded as impossible to accept the tradition which ascribes it to the Barnabas who was a companion of S. Paul, though it is convenient to continue to use the title.

It is either a general treatise or was intended for some community in which Alexandrian ideas prevailed, though it is not possible to define either its destination, or the locality from which it was written, with any greater accuracy. Its main object is to warn Christians against a Judaistic conception of the Old Testament, and the writer carries a symbolical exegesis as far as did Philo; indeed he goes farther and apparently denies any literal significance at all to the commands of the Law. The literal exegesis of the ceremonial law is to him a device of an evil angel who deceived the Jews.

The date of Barnabas is doubtful. Two attempts have been made to fix it from internal evidence. In the first place, the ten kings in chap. vi. have been identified with the Roman Emperors, and thus a date well within the limits of the first century has been suggested, though there is no unanimity as to the

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exact manner in which the number of the ten Emperors is to be reached. In the second place attention has been drawn to the reference in chap. xvi. to the rebuilding of the Temple, and this is supposed to refer to the events of 132 A.D. Neither theory is quite satisfactory, but neither date is in itself impossible. The document no doubt belongs to the end of the first or beginning of the second century.

The text is found in the following authorities :—

(1) The *Codex Sinaiticus*, an uncial of the fourth century, now at St. Petersburg, and published in photographic facsimile by the Clarendon Press.

(2) The *Codex Constantinopolitanus*, found by Bryennios in 1875 and now at Jerusalem, the same MS. as that known as C in I. Clement and the Didache.

(3) In eight defective MSS., in which owing to some accident the ninth chapter of the epistle of Polycarp is continued without a break by the fifth chapter of Barnabas. These MSS. are clearly descended from a common archetype, copied from a MS. in which Barnabas followed Polycarp, but the pages containing the end of the latter and beginning of the former were lost, and a copyist who did not observe this merged the one into the other.

(4) A Latin version, extant in a single MS. at St. Petersburg, in which the text stops at the end of chap. xvii. It thus omits the "Two Ways," and the question (perhaps insoluble) arises whether the Latin has omitted it, or the Greek interpolated it. At present the general opinion is in favour of the former view.

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Barnabas, like I. Clement and Hermas, became canonical in some circles : it is quoted by Clement of Alexandria as Scripture, and is referred to by Origen as a Catholic Epistle, while it is included in the Codex Sinaiticus among the books of the New Testament, not, as is sometimes said, as an appendix, but following immediately after the Apocalypse, without any suggestion that it belonged to a different category of books.

The symbols employed in quoting the textual evidence are as follows :—

Σ = Codex Sinaiticus.

C = Codex Constantinopolitanus.

G = the archetype of the eight Greek MSS.

L = the Latin version.

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I

1. HAIL, sons and daughters, in the name of the Lord who loved us, in peace. Greeting
and intro-
duction

2. Exceedingly and abundantly do I rejoice over your blessed and glorious spirit for the greatness and richness of God's ordinances towards you; so innate a grace of the gift of the spirit have you received.

3. Wherefore I congratulate myself the more in my hope of salvation, because I truly see in you that the Spirit has been poured out upon you from the Lord, who is rich in his bounty;¹ so that the sight of you, for which I longed, amazed me.

4. Being persuaded then of this, and being conscious that since I spoke among you I have much understanding because the Lord has travelled with me in the way of righteousness, I am above all constrained to this, to love you above my own life, because great faith and love dwell in you in the "hope of his life." 5. I have therefore reckoned that, if I make it my care in your behalf to communicate somewhat of that which I received, it shall bring me the reward of having ministered to such spirits, and I hasten to send you a short letter in order that

¹ Literally "spring."

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, I. 5-II. 3

your knowledge may be perfected along with your faith.

6. There are then three doctrines¹ of the Lord: The three doctrines "the hope of life" is the beginning and end of our faith; and righteousness is the beginning and end of judgment; love of joy and of gladness is the testimony of the works of righteousness. 7. For the Lord Prophecy made known to us through the prophets things past and things present and has given us the firstfruits of the taste of things to come; and when we see these things coming to pass one by one, as he said, we ought to make a richer and deeper offering for fear of him. 8. But I will show you a few things, not as a teacher but as one of yourselves, in which you shall rejoice at this present time.

II

1. SEEING then that the days are evil, and that The need of virtue the worker of evil himself is in power, we ought to give heed to ourselves, and seek out the ordinances of the Lord. 2. Fear then, and patience are the helpers of our faith, and long-suffering and continence are our allies. 3. While then these things remain in holiness towards the Lord, wisdom, prudence, understanding, and knowledge rejoice

¹ Or possibly "ordinances" or "decrees."

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, II. 3-II. 10

with them. 4. For he has made plain to us through all the Prophets that he needs neither sacrifices nor burnt-offerings nor oblations, saying in one place, 5. "What is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of burnt offerings and desire not the fat of lambs and the blood of bulls and goats, not even when ye come to appear before me. For who has required these things at your hands? Henceforth shall ye tread my court no more. If ye bring flour, it is vain. Incense is an abomination to me. I cannot away with your new moons and sabbaths." 6. These things then he abolished in order that the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is without the yoke of necessity, might have its oblation not made by man. 7. And again he says to them, "Did I command your fathers when they came out of the land of Egypt to offer me burnt offerings and sacrifices? 8. Nay, but rather did I command them this: Let none of you cherish any evil in his heart against his neighbour, and love not a false oath." 9. We ought then to understand, if we are not foolish, the loving intention of our Father, for he speaks to us, wishing that we should not err like them, but seek how we may make our offering to him. 10. To us then he speaks thus: "Sacrifice for the Lord is a broken heart, a smell of sweet savour to the Lord is a heart that glorifieth him that made it."¹ We ought, therefore, brethren, carefully to enquire concerning our salvation, in

The
abolition
of Jewish
sacrifices

¹ The first part of this quotation is Ps. 51, 19; the second part according to a note in C is from the Apocalypse of Adam, which is no longer extant.

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, II. 10-III. 5

order that the evil one may not achieve a deceitful entry into us and hurl us away from our life.

III

1. To them he says then again concerning these ^{Concerning fasting} things, "Why do ye fast for me, saith the Lord, so that your voice is heard this day with a cry! This is not the fast which I chose, saith the Lord, not a man humbling his soul; 2. nor though ye bend your neck as a hoop, and put on sackcloth, and make your bed of ashes, not even so shall ye call it an acceptable fast." 3. But to us he says, "Behold this is the fast which I chose," saith the Lord, "loose every bond of wickedness, set loose the fastenings of harsh agreements, send away the bruised in forgiveness, and tear up every unjust contract, give to the hungry thy bread, and if thou seest a naked man clothe him, bring the homeless into thy house, and if thou seest a humble man, despise him not, neither thou nor any of the household of thy seed. 4. Then shall thy light break forth as the dawn, and thy robes shall rise quickly, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of God shall surround thee." 5. "Then thou shalt cry and God shall hear thee; while thou art still speaking He shall say, 'Lo I am here'; if thou putttest away from thee bondage, and

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violence, and the word of murmuring, and dost give to the poor thy bread with a cheerful heart, and dost pity the soul that is abased." 6. So then, brethren, the long-suffering one foresaw that the people whom He prepared in his Beloved should believe in guilelessness, and made all things plain to us beforehand that we should not be shipwrecked by conversion to their law.

IV

1. We ought, then, to enquire earnestly into the things which now are, and to seek out those which are able to save us. Let us then utterly flee from all the works of lawlessness, lest the works of lawlessness overcome us, and let us hate the error of this present time, that we may be loved in that which is to come. 2. Let us give no freedom to our souls to have power to walk with sinners and wicked men, lest we be made like to them. 3. The final stumbling block is at hand of which it was written, as Enoch says, "For to this end the Lord has cut short the times and the days, that his beloved should make haste and come to his inheritance." 4. And the Prophet also says thus: "Ten kingdoms shall reign upon the earth and there shall rise up after them a little king, who shall subdue three of the kings under one." 5. Daniel says likewise concerning the same: "And I beheld

Warning that the final trial is at hand

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, IV. 5-IV. 9

the fourth Beast, wicked and powerful and fiercer than all the beasts of the sea, and that ten horns sprang from it, and out of them a little excrescent horn, and that it subdued under one three of the great horns." 6. You ought then to understand. And this also I ask you, as being one of yourselves, and especially as loving you all above my own life; take heed to yourselves now, and be not made like unto some, heaping up your sins and saying that the covenant is both theirs and ours. 7. It is ours: but in this way did they finally lose it when Moses had just received it, for the Scripture says: "And Moses was in the mount fasting forty days and forty nights, and he received the covenant from the Lord, tables of stone written with the finger of the hand of the Lord." 8. But they turned to idols and lost it. For thus saith the Lord: "Moses, Moses, go down quickly, for thy people, whom thou broughtest forth out of the land of Egypt, have broken the Law." And Moses understood and cast the two tables out of his hands, and their covenant was broken, in order that the covenant of Jesus the Beloved should be sealed in our hearts in hope of his faith. 9. (And though I wish to write much, I hasten to write in devotion to you, not as a teacher, but as it becomes one who loves to leave out nothing of that which we have.)¹ Wherefore let us pay heed in the last days, for the whole

The covenant, Christian or Jewish?

Admonition to steadfastness

¹ It is possible that the odd change of construction is due to some reference to a well known maxim; but the source of such quotation or reference has not been found.

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, IV. 9-IV. 14

time of our life and faith will profit us nothing, unless we resist, as becomes the sons of God in this present evil time, against the offences which are to come, that the Black One may have no opportunity of entry. 10. Let us flee from all vanity, let us utterly hate the deeds of the path of wickedness. Do not by retiring apart live alone as if you were already made righteous, but come together and seek out the common good. 11. For the Scripture says : "Woe to them who are prudent for themselves and understanding in their own sight." Let us be spiritual, let us be a temple consecrated to God, so far as in us lies let us "exercise ourselves in the fear" of God, and let us strive to keep his commandments in order that we may rejoice in his ordinances. 12. The Lord will "judge" the world "without respect of persons." Each will receive according to his deeds. If he be good his righteousness will lead him, if he be evil the reward of iniquity is before him. 13. Let us never rest as though we were 'called'¹ and slumber in our sins, lest the wicked ruler gain power over us and thrust us out from the Kingdom of the Lord. 14. And consider this also, my brethren, when you see that after such great signs and wonders were wrought in Israel they were even then finally abandoned ;—let us take heed lest as it was written we be found "many called but few chosen."

¹ Apparently a loose expression = "confiding in our call."

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, v. 1—v. 6

V

1. For it was for this reason that the Lord endured to deliver up his flesh to corruption, that we should be sanctified by the remission of sin, that is, by his sprinkled blood. 2. For the scripture concerning him relates partly to Israel, partly to us, and it speaks thus: "He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, by his stripes we were healed. He was brought as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb dumb before its shearer." 3. Therefore we ought to give great thanks to the Lord that he has given us knowledge of the past, and wisdom for the present, and that we are not without understanding for the future. 4. And the Scripture says, "Not unjustly are the nets spread out for the birds." This means that a man deserves to perish who has a knowledge of the way of righteousness, but turns aside into the way of darkness. 5. Moreover, my brethren, if the Lord endured to suffer for our life, though he is the Lord of all the world, to whom God said before the foundation of the world, "Let us make man in our image and likeness," how, then, did he endure to suffer at the hand of man? 6. Learn:—The Prophets who received grace from him prophesied of him, and he, in order that he "might destroy death," and show forth the Resurrection from the dead, because he needs must be made "manifest in the

The reason
for the
Passion
of Christ

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, v. 6—v. 14

flesh," endured 7. in order to fulfil the promise made to the fathers, and himself prepare for himself the new people and show while he was on earth that he himself will raise the dead and judge the risen. 8. Furthermore, while teaching Israel and doing such great signs and wonders he preached to them and loved them greatly ; 9. but when he chose out his own Apostles who were to preach his Gospel, he chose those who were iniquitous above all sin to show that "he came not to call the righteous but sinners,"—then he manifested himself as God's Son. 10. For if he had not come in the flesh men could in no way have been saved by beholding him ; seeing that they have not the power when they look at the sun to gaze straight at its rays, though it is destined to perish, and is the work of his hands. 11. So then the Son of God came in the flesh for this reason, that he might complete the total of the sins of those who persecuted his prophets to death. 12. For this cause he endured. For God says of the chastisement of his flesh that it is from them : "When they shall smite their shepherd, then the sheep of the flock shall be destroyed." 13. And he was willing to suffer thus, for it was necessary that he should suffer on a tree, for the Prophet says of him, "Spare my soul from the sword" and, "Nail my flesh, for the synagogues of the wicked have risen against me." 14. And again he says : "Lo, I have given my back to scourges, and my cheeks to strokes, and I have set my face as a solid rock."

VI

1. WHEN therefore he made the commandment what does he say? "Who is he that comes into court with me? Let him oppose me; or, who is he that seeks justice against me? Let him draw near to the Lord's servant. 2. Woe unto you, for ye shall all wax old as a garment and the moth shall eat you up." And again the Prophet says that he was placed as a strong stone for crushing, "Lo, I will place for the foundations of Sion a precious stone, chosen out, a chief corner stone, honourable." 3. Then what does he say? "And he that hopeth on it shall live for ever." Is then our hope on a stone? God forbid. But he means that the Lord placed his flesh in strength. For he says, "And he placed me as a solid rock." 4. And again the Prophet says, "The stone which the builders rejected, this is become the head of the corner," and again he says, "This is the great and wonderful day which the Lord made." 5. I write to you more simply that you may understand: I am devoted to your love. 6. What then does the Prophet say again? "The synagogue of the sinners compassed me around, they surrounded me as bees round the honeycomb" and, "They cast lots for my clothing." 7. Since therefore he was destined to be manifest and to suffer in the flesh his Passion was foretold. For the Prophet says concerning Israel, "Woe unto their soul, for they have plotted an evil plot against themselves, saying, 'Let us

Proofs
from the
Prophets

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bind the Just one, for he is unprofitable to us.'"
8. What does the other Prophet, Moses, say to them?
"Lo, thus saith the Lord God, enter into the good land which the Lord swore that he would give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and inherit it, a land flowing with milk and honey." 9. But learn what knowledge says. Hope, it says, on that Jesus¹ who will be manifested to you in the flesh. For man is earth which suffers, for the creation of Adam was from the face of the earth. 10. What then is the meaning of "into the good land, a land flowing with milk and honey"? Blessed be our Lord, brethren, who has placed in us wisdom and understanding of his secrets. For the prophet speaks a parable of the Lord: "Who shall understand save he who is wise, and learned, and a lover of his Lord?"
11. Since then he made us new by the remission of sins he made us another type, that we should have the soul of children, as though he were creating us afresh. 12. For it is concerning us that the scripture says that he says to the Son, "Let us make man after our image and likeness, and let them rule the beasts of the earth, and the birds of heaven, and the fishes of the sea." And the Lord said, when he saw our fair creation, "Increase and multiply and fill the earth"; these things were spoken to the Son. 13. Again I will show you how he speaks to us. In the last

¹ A contrast is here no doubt implied between "that Jesus who will be manifested" and the Jesus, or Joshua (the two names are the same in Greek) who led the Israelites over the Jordan.

days he made a second creation; and the Lord says, "See, I make the last things as the first." To this then the Prophet referred when he proclaimed, "Enter into a land flowing with milk and honey, and rule over it." 14. See then, we have been created afresh, as he says again in another Prophet, "See," saith the Lord, "I will take out from them" (that is those whom the Spirit of the Lord foresaw) "the hearts of stone and I will put in hearts of flesh." Because he himself was going to be manifest in the flesh and to dwell among us. 15. For, my brethren, the habitation of our hearts is a shrine holy to the Lord. 16. For the Lord says again, "And wherewith shall I appear before the Lord my God and be glorified?" He says, "I will confess to thee in the assembly of my brethren, and will sing to thee in the midst of the assembly of saints." We then are they whom he brought into the good land. 17. What then is the milk and the honey? Because a child is first nourished with honey, and afterwards with milk. Thus therefore we also, being nourished on the faith of the promise and by the word, shall live and possess the earth. 18. And we have said above, "And let them increase and multiply and rule over the fishes." Who then is it who is now able to rule over beasts or fishes or the birds of heaven? For we ought to understand that to rule implies authority, so that one may give commandments and have domination. 19. If then this does not happen at present he has told us the time when it will;—when we ourselves also have been made perfect as heirs of the covenant of the Lord.

VII

1. UNDERSTAND therefore, children of gladness, that the good Lord made all things plain beforehand to us, that we should know him to whom we ought to give thanks and praise for everything. 2. If then the Son of God, though he was the Lord and was "destined to judge the living and the dead" suffered in order that his wounding might make us alive, let us believe that the Son of God could not suffer except for our sakes. 3. But moreover when he was crucified "he was given to drink vinegar and gall." Listen how the priests of the Temple foretold this. The commandment was written, "Who-soever does not keep the fast shall die the death," and the Lord commanded this because he himself was going to offer the vessel of the spirit as a sacrifice for our sins, in order that the type established in Isaac, who was offered upon the altar, might be fulfilled. 4. What then does he say in the Prophet? "And let them eat of the goat which is offered in the fast for all their sins." Attend carefully,—"and let all the priests alone eat the entrails unwashed with vinegar." 5. Why? Because you are going "to give to me gall and vinegar to drink" when I am on the point of offering my flesh for my new people, therefore you alone shall eat, while the people fast and mourn in sackcloth and ashes. To show that he must suffer for them. 6. Note what was commanded: "Take two goats, goodly and alike, and offer them, and let the priest take the one as a burnt offering for sins." 7. But what are they to do with the other? "The

Fasting and
the scape-
goat

other," he says, "is accursed." Notice how the type of Jesus is manifested: 8. "And do ye all spit on it, and goad it, and bind the scarlet wool about its head, and so let it be cast into the desert." And when it is so done, he who takes the goat into the wilderness drives it forth, and takes away the wool, and puts it upon a shrub which is called Rachél,¹ of which we are accustomed to eat the shoots when we find them in the country: thus of Rachél alone is the fruit sweet. 9. What does this mean? Listen: "the first goat is for the altar, but the other is accursed," and note that the one that is accursed is crowned, because then "they will see him" on that day with the long scarlet robe "down to the feet" on his body, and they will say, "Is not this he whom we once crucified and rejected and pierced and spat upon? Of a truth it was he who then said that he was the Son of God." 10. But how is he like to the goat? For this reason: "the goats shall be alike, beautiful, and a pair," in order that when they see him come at that time they may be astonished at the likeness of the goat. See then the type of Jesus destined to suffer. 11. But why is it that they put the wool in the middle of the thorns? It is a type of Jesus placed in the Church, because whoever wishes to take away the scarlet wool must suffer much because the thorns

¹ It is probable that Barnabas has mistaken a word meaning a hill for the name of a herb with which he was familiar; but it is not clear whether the confusion was made in Hebrew or in Greek ($\rho\alpha\chi\acute{o}s$ =a brier, and sometimes a wild-olive, and $\rho\acute{\alpha}\chi\iota s$ =a mountain ridge, seems to suggest some such possibility). But the identity of the herb is unknown. There is an interesting article on it in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1890, by Rendel Harris.

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are terrible and he can gain it only through pain. Thus he says, "those who will see me, and attain to my kingdom must lay hold of me through pain and suffering."

VIII

1. But what do you think that it typifies, that the commandment has been given to Israel that the men in whom sin is complete offer a heifer and slay it and burn it, and that boys then take the ashes and put them into vessels and bind scarlet wool on sticks (see again the type of the Cross and the scarlet wool) and hyssop, and that the boys all sprinkle the people thus one by one in order that they all be purified from their sins? 2. Observe how plainly he speaks to you. The calf is Jesus; the sinful men offering it are those who brought him to be slain. Then there are no longer men, no longer the glory¹ of sinners. 3. The boys who sprinkle are they who preached to us the forgiveness of sins, and the purification of the heart, to whom he gave the power of the Gospel to preach, and there are twelve as a testimony to the tribes, because there are twelve tribes of Israel. 4. But why are there three boys who sprinkle? As a testimony to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for these are great before God. 5. And why was the wool put on the wood? Because the king-

The
sacrifice of
a heifer

¹ This seems to be the only possible translation, but the text must surely be corrupt.

dom of Jesus is on the wood,¹ and because those who hope on him shall live for ever. 6. But why are the wool and the hyssop together? Because in his kingdom there shall be evil and foul days, in which we shall be saved, for he also who has pain in his flesh is cured by the foulness of the hyssop. 7. And for this reason the things which were thus done are plain to us, but obscure to them, because they did not hear the Lord's voice.

IX

1. For he speaks again concerning the ears, how he circumcised our hearts; for the Lord says in the Prophet: "In the hearing of the ear they obey me." And again he says, "They who are afar off shall hear clearly, they shall know the things that I have done," and "Circumcise your hearts, saith the Lord." 2. And again he says, "Hear, O Israel, thus saith the Lord thy God," and again the Spirit of the Lord prophesies, "Who is he that will live for ever? Let him hear the voice of my servant." 3. And again he says, "Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken these things for a testimony." And again he says, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of this people." And again he says, "Hear, O children, a voice of one crying in the wilderness." So then he circumcised our hearing in order that we should hear the word and believe. 4. But moreover the circumcision in which they trusted has been abolished. For he declared that circumcision was not of the flesh, but they erred because an evil angel

¹ Or "on the tree."

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, ix. 4-ix. 9

was misleading them. 5. He says to them, "Thus saith the Lord your God" (here I find a commandment), "Sow not among thorns, be circumcised to your Lord." And what does he say? "Circumcise the hardness of your heart, and stiffen not your neck." Take it again: "Behold, saith the Lord, all the heathen are uncircumcised in the foreskin, but this people is uncircumcised in heart." 6. But you will say, surely the people has received circumcision as a seal? Yes, but every Syrian and Arab and all priests of the idols have been circumcised; are then these also within their ¹ covenant?—indeed even the Egyptians belong to the circumcision. 7. Learn fully then, children of love, concerning all things, for Abraham, who first circumcised, did so looking forward in the spirit to Jesus, and had received the doctrines of three letters. 8. For it says, "And Abraham circumcised from his household eighteen men and three hundred." ² What then was the knowledge that was given to him? Notice that he first mentions the eighteen, and after a pause the three hundred. The eighteen is I (=ten) and H (=8)—you have Jesus ³—and because the cross was destined to have grace in the T he says "and three hundred." ⁴ So he indicates Jesus in the two letters and the cross in the other. 9. He knows this who placed the gift of his teaching in our hearts. No one has heard a more excellent lesson from me, but I know that you are worthy.

¹ I.e. of the Jews.

² In Greek, which expresses numerals by letters, this is TIH.

³ Because IH are in Greek the first letters of the word Jesus.

⁴ The Greek symbol for 300 is T.

X

1. Now, in that Moses said, "Ye shall not eat swine, nor an eagle, nor a hawk, nor a crow, nor any fish which has no scales on itself," he included three doctrines in his understanding. 2. Moreover he says to them in Deuteronomy, "And I will make a covenant of my ordinances with this people." So then the ordinance of God is not abstinence from eating, but Moses spoke in the spirit. 3. He mentioned the swine for this reason: you shall not consort, he means, with men who are like swine, that is to say, when they have plenty they forget the Lord, but when they are in want they recognise the Lord, just as the swine when it eats does not know its master, but when it is hungry it cries out, and after receiving food is again silent. 4. "Neither shalt thou eat the eagle nor the hawk nor the kite nor the crow." Thou shalt not, he means, join thyself or make thyself like to such men, as do not know how to gain their food by their labour and sweat, but plunder other people's property in their iniquity, and lay wait for it, though they seem to walk in innocence, and look round to see whom they may plunder in their covetousness, just as these birds alone provide no food for themselves, but sit idle, and seek how they may devour the flesh of others, and become pestilent in their iniquity. 5. "Thou shalt not eat," he says, "the lamprey nor the polypus nor the cuttlefish." Thou shalt not, he means, consort with or become like such men who are utterly ungodly and who are already condemned

The Food-law of the Jews

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, x. 5-X. 10

to death, just as these fish alone are accursed, and float in the deep water, not swimming like the others but living on the ground at the bottom of the sea. 6. Sed¹ nec "leporem manducabis."

Non eris, inquit, corruptor puerorum nec similabis talibus. Quia lepus singulis annis facit ad adselandum singula foramina; et quotquot annis vivit, totidem foramina facit. 7. Sed "nec beluam, inquit, manducabis";² hoc est non eris moecus aut adulter,

nec corruptor, nec similabis talibus. Quia haec bestia alternis annis mutat naturam et fit modo masculus, modo femina. 8. Sed et quod dicit mustelam odibis. Non eris, inquit, talis, qui audit iniquitatem et loquitur immunditiam. Non inquit adhaerebis immundis qui iniquitatem faciunt ore suo. 9. The

Moses received three doctrines concerning food and thus spoke of them in the Spirit; but they received them as really referring to food, owing to the lust of their flesh. 10. But David received knowledge concerning the same three doctrines, and says: "Blessed is the man who has not gone in the counsel of the ungodly" as the fishes go in darkness in the deep waters, "and has not stood in the way of sinners" like those who seem to fear the Lord, but sin like the swine, "and has not sat in the seat of the scornful" like the birds who sit and wait for their prey. Grasp fully

explanation
in the
Psalter

¹ The Latin here given is that of the Old Latin version, and does not in all places correspond quite accurately to the Greek.

² This prohibition is not in the O.T.

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, X. 10-XI. 2

the doctrines concerning food. 11. Moses says again, "Eat of every animal that is cloven hoofed and ruminant." What does he mean? That he who receives food knows him who feeds him, and rests on him and seems to rejoice. Well did he speak with regard to the commandment. What then does he mean? Consort with those who fear the Lord, with those who meditate in their heart on the meaning of the word which they have received, with those who speak of and observe the ordinances of the Lord, with those who know that meditation is a work of gladness, and who ruminate on the word of the Lord. But what does "the cloven hoofed" mean? That the righteous both walks in this world and looks forward to the holy age. See how well Moses legislated. 12. But how was it possible for them to understand or comprehend these things? But we having a righteous understanding of them announce the commandments as the Lord wished. For this cause he circumcised our hearing and our hearts that we should comprehend these things.

XI

1. But let us enquire if the Lord took pains to Baptism foretell the water of baptism and the cross. Concerning the water it has been written with regard to Israel that they will not receive the baptism that brings the remission of sins, but will build for themselves. 2. For the Prophet says, "Be astonished O heaven, and let the earth tremble the more at this, that this people hath committed two evils: they have deserted me, the spring of life, and they have

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, XI. 2-XI. 9

dug for themselves a cistern of death. 3. Is my holy mountain Sinai a desert rock? For ye shall be as the fledgling birds, fluttering about when they are taken away from the nest." 4. And again the Prophet says, "I will go before you and I will make mountains level, and I will break gates of brass, and I will shatter bars of iron, and I will give thee treasures of darkness, secret, invisible, that they may know that I am the Lord God." 5. And, "Thou shalt dwell in a lofty cave of a strong rock." And, "His water is sure, ye shall see the King in his glory, and your soul shall meditate on the fear of the Lord." 6. And again he says in another Prophet, "And he who does these things shall be as the tree, which is planted at the partings of the waters, which shall give its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not fade, and all things, whatsoever he doeth, shall prosper. 7. It is not so with the wicked, it is not so; but they are even as the chaff which the wind driveth away from the face of the earth. Therefore the wicked shall not rise up in judgment, nor sinners in the counsel of the righteous, for the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, and the way of the ungodly shall perish." 8. Mark how he described the water The Cross and the cross together. For he means this: blessed are those who hoped on the cross, and descended into the water. For he speaks of their reward "in his season"; at that time, he says, I will repay. But now when he says, "Their leaves shall not fade," he means that every word which shall come forth from your mouth in faith and love, shall be for conversion and hope for many. 9. And again another Prophet says, "And the land of Jacob was praised

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, XI. 9—XII. 2

above every land.” He means to say that he is glorifying the vessel of his Spirit. 10. What does he say next? “And there was a river flowing on the right hand, and beautiful trees grew out of it, and whosoever shall eat of them shall live for ever.”

11. He means to say that we go down into the water full of sins and foulness, and we come up bearing the fruit of fear in our hearts, and having hope on Jesus in the Spirit. “And whosoever shall eat of them shall live for ever.” He means that whosoever hears and believes these things spoken shall live for ever.

XII

1. SIMILARLY, again, he describes the cross in The Cross another Prophet, who says, “And when shall all these things be accomplished? saith the Lord. When the tree shall fall and rise, and when blood shall flow from the tree.” Here again you have a reference to the cross, and to him who should be crucified. 2. And he says again to Moses, when Israel was warred upon by strangers, and in order to remind those who were warred upon that they were delivered unto death by reason of their sins—the Spirit speaks to the heart of Moses to make a representation of the cross, and of him who should suffer, because, he says, unless they put their trust in him, they shall suffer war for ever. Moses therefore placed one shield upon another in the midst of the fight, and standing there raised above them all kept stretching

out his hands, and so Israel again began to be victorious: then, whenever he let them drop they began to perish. 3. Why? That they may know that they cannot be saved if they do not hope on him. 4. And again he says in another Prophet, "I stretched out my hands the whole day to a disobedient people and one that refuses my righteous way." 5. Again Moses makes a representation of Jesus, showing that he must suffer, and shall himself give life, though they will believe that he has been put to death, by the sign given when Israel was falling (for the Lord made every serpent bite them, and they were perishing, for the fall¹ took place in Eve through the serpent), in order to convince them that they will be delivered over to the affliction of death because of their transgression. 6. Moreover, though Moses commanded them:—"You shall have neither graven nor molten image for your God," yet he makes one himself to show a type of Jesus. Moses therefore makes a graven serpent, and places it in honour and calls the people by a proclamation. 7. So they came together and besought Moses that he would offer prayer on their behalf for their healing. But Moses said to them, "Whenever one of you," he said, "be bitten, let him come to the serpent that is placed upon the tree, and let him hope, in faith that it though dead is able to give life, and he shall straightway be saved." And they did so. In this also you have again the glory of Jesus, for all things are in him and for him. 8. Again, why does Joshua Moses say to Jesus, the son of Naue,² when he gives him, prophet as he is, this name, that the whole

¹ Literally the "transgression." ² i.e. Joshua the son of Nun, of which names Jesus and Naue are the Greek forms.

people should listen to him alone? Because the Father was revealing everything concerning his Son Jesus. 9. Moses therefore says to Jesus the son of Naue, after giving him this name, when he sent him to spy out the land, "Take a book in thy hands and write what the Lord saith, that the Son of God shall in the last day tear up by the roots the whole house of Amalek." 10. See again Jesus, not as son of man, but as Son of God, but manifested in a type in the flesh. Since therefore they are going to say that the Christ is David's son, David himself prophesies, fearing and understanding the error of the sinners, "The Lord said to my Lord sit thou on my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool." 11. And again Isaiah speaks thus, "The Lord said to Christ my Lord, whose right hand I held, that the nations should obey before him, and I will shatter the strength of Kings." See how "David calls him Lord" and does not say Son.

XIII

1. Now let us see whether this people or the former people is the heir, and whether the covenant is for us or for them. 2. Hear then what the Scripture says concerning the people: "And Isaac prayed concerning Rebecca his wife, because she was barren, and she conceived. Then Rebecca went forth to enquire of the Lord and the Lord said to her: two nations are in thy womb, and two peoples in thy belly, and one people shall

Jews and
Christians
as heirs
of the
covenant

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, XIII. 2—XIII. 7

overcome a people, and the greater shall serve the less." 3. You ought to understand who is Isaac and who is Rebecca, and of whom he has shown that this people is greater than that people. 4. And in another prophecy Jacob speaks more plainly to Joseph his son, saying, "Behold the Lord hath not deprived me of thy presence; bring me thy sons, that I may bless them." 5. And he brought Ephraim and Manasses, and wished that Manasses should be blessed, because he was the elder; for Joseph brought him to the right hand of his father Jacob. But Jacob saw in the spirit a type of the people of the future. And what does he say? "And Jacob crossed his hands, and placed his right hand on the head of Ephraim, the second and younger son, and blessed him; and Joseph said to Jacob, Change thy right hand on to the head of Manasses, for he is my first-born son. And Jacob said to Joseph, I know it, my child, I know it; but the greater shall serve the less, and this one shall indeed be blessed." 6. See who it is of whom he ordained that this people is the first and heir of the covenant. 7. If then besides this he remembered it also in the case of Abraham, we reach the perfection of our knowledge. What then does he say to Abraham, when he alone was faithful, and it was counted him for righteousness? "Behold I have made thee, Abraham, the father of the Gentiles who believe in God in uncircumcision."

XIV

1. So it is. But let us see whether the covenant which he swore to the fathers to give to the people—whether he has given it. He has given it. But they were not worthy to receive it because of their sins. 2. For the Prophet says, “And Moses was fasting on Mount Sinai, to receive the covenant of the Lord for the people, forty days and forty nights. And Moses received from the Lord the two tables, written by the finger of the hand of the Lord in the Spirit”; and Moses took them, and carried them down to give them to the people. 3. And the Lord said to Moses, “Moses, Moses, go down quickly, for thy people whom thou didst bring out of the land of Egypt have broken the Law. And Moses perceived that they had made themselves again molten images, and he cast them out of his hands, and the tables of the covenant of the Lord were broken.” 4. Moses received it, but they were not worthy. But learn how we received it. Moses received it when he was a servant, but the Lord himself gave it to us, as the people of the inheritance, by suffering for our sakes. 5. And it was made manifest both that the tale of their sins should be completed in their sins, and that we through Jesus, the Lord who inherits the covenant, should receive it, for he was prepared for this purpose, that when he appeared he might redeem from darkness

The
fulfilment
of the
promise to
the Jews

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, XIV. 5—XV. 2

our hearts which were already paid over to death, and given over to the iniquity of error, and by his word might make a covenant with us. / 6. For it is written that the Father enjoins on him that he should redeem us from darkness and prepare a holy people for himself. 7. The Prophet therefore says, "I the Lord thy God did call thee in righteousness, and I will hold thy hands, and I will give thee strength, and I have given thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth from their fetters those that are bound and those that sit in darkness out of the prison house." We know then whence we have been redeemed. 8. Again the Prophet says, "Lo, I have made thee a light for the Gentiles, to be for salvation unto the ends of the earth, thus saith the Lord the God who did redeem thee." 9. And again the Prophet saith, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the Gospel of grace to the humble, he sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim delivery to the captives, and sight to the blind, to announce a year acceptable to the Lord, and a day of recompense, to comfort all who mourn."

XV

1. FURTHERMORE it was written concerning the Sabbath in the ten words which he spake on Mount Sinai face to face to Moses. ^{The Sabbath} "Sanctify also the Sabbath of the Lord with pure hands and a pure heart." 2. And in another place he says, "If my

sons keep the Sabbath, then will I bestow my mercy upon them." 3. He speaks of the Sabbath at the beginning of the Creation, "And God made in six days the works of his hands and on the seventh day he made an end, and rested in it and sanctified it." 4. Notice, children, what is the meaning of "He made an end in six days"? He means this: that the Lord will make an end of everything in six thousand years, for a day with him means a thousand years. And he himself is my witness when he says, "Lo, the day of the Lord shall be as a thousand years." So then, children, in six days, that is in six thousand years, everything will be completed. 5. "And he rested on the seventh day." This means, when his Son comes he will destroy the time of the wicked one, and will judge the godless, and will change the sun and the moon and the stars, and then he will truly rest on the seventh day. 6. Furthermore he says, "Thou shalt sanctify it with clean hands and a pure heart." If, then, anyone has at present the power to keep holy the day which God made holy, by being pure in heart, we are altogether deceived. 7. See that we shall indeed keep it holy at that time, when we enjoy true rest, when we shall be able to do so because we have been made righteous ourselves and have received the promise, when there is no more sin, but all things have been made new by the Lord: then we shall be able to keep it holy because we ourselves have first been made holy. 8. Furthermore he says to them, "Your new moons and the sabbaths I cannot away with." Do you see what he means? The present sabbaths are not acceptable to me, but that which I have made, in which I will give rest to all things and make the beginning of an

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, xv. 8--xvi. 6

eighth day, that is the beginning of another world. 9. Wherefore we also celebrate with gladness the eighth day in which Jesus also rose from the dead, and was made manifest, and ascended into Heaven.

XVI

1. I WILL also speak with you concerning the Temple, and show how the wretched men erred by putting their hope on the building, and not on the God who made them, and is the true house of God. 2. For they consecrated him in the Temple almost like the heathen. But learn how the Lord speaks, in bringing it to naught, "Who has measured the heaven with a span, or the earth with his outstretched hand? Have not I? saith the Lord. Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool, what house will ye build for me, or what is the place of my rest?" You know that their hope was vain. 3. Furthermore he says again, "Lo, they who destroyed this temple shall themselves build it." 4. That is happening now. For owing to the war it was destroyed by the enemy; at present even the servants of the enemy will build it up again. 5. Again, it was made manifest that the city and the temple and the people of Israel were to be delivered up. For the Scripture says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the Lord shall deliver the sheep of his pasture, and the sheep-fold, and their tower to destruction." And it took place according to what the Lord said. 6. But let us inquire if a temple of God exists. Yes, it exists, where he himself said that he makes and perfects it. For it is written, "And it shall come to

pass when the week is ended that a temple of God shall be built gloriously in the name of the Lord.”

7. I find then that a temple exists. Learn then how it will be built in the name of the Lord. Before we believed in God the habitation of our heart was corrupt and weak, like a temple really built with hands, because it was full of idolatry, and was the house of demons through doing things which were contrary to God. 8. “But it shall be built in the name of the Lord.” Now give heed, in order that the temple of the Lord may be built gloriously. Learn in what way. When we received the remission of sins, and put our hope on the Name, we became new, being created again from the beginning; wherefore God truly dwells in us, in the habitation which we are. 9. How? His word of faith, the calling of his promise, the wisdom of the ordinances, the commands of the teaching, himself prophesying in us, himself dwelling in us, by opening the door of the temple (that is the mouth) to us, giving repentance to us, and thus he leads us, who have been enslaved to death into the incorruptible temple. 10. For he who desires to be saved looks not at the man, but at him who dwells and speaks in him, and is amazed at him, for he has never either heard him speak such words with his mouth, nor has he himself ever desired to hear them. This is a spiritual temple being built for the Lord.

XVII

1. So far as possibility and simplicity allow an Summary explanation to be given to you my soul hopes that none of the things which are necessary for salvation have been omitted, according to my desire. 2. For if I write to you concerning things present or things to come, you will not understand because they are hid in parables. This then suffices.

XVIII

1. Now¹ let us pass on to another lesson and The two Ways teaching. There are two Ways of teaching and power, one of Light and one of Darkness. And there is a great difference between the two Ways. For over the one are set light-bringing angels of God, but over the other angels of Satan. 2. And the one is Lord from eternity and to eternity, and the other is the ruler of the present time of iniquity.

XIX

1. The Way of Light is this: if any man desire The Way of Light to journey to the appointed place, let him be zealous in his works. Therefore the knowledge given to us of this kind that we may walk in it is as follows:—
2. Thou shalt love thy maker, thou shalt fear

¹ Here begins the section taken from the "Two Ways," cf. p. 309.

thy Creator, thou shalt glorify Him who redeemed thee from death, thou shalt be simple in heart, and rich in spirit; thou shalt not join thyself to those who walk in the way of death, thou shalt hate all that is not pleasing to God, thou shalt hate all hypocrisy; thou shalt not desert the commandments of the Lord. 3. Thou shalt not exalt thyself, but shall be humble-minded in all things; thou shalt not take glory to thyself. Thou shalt form no evil plan against thy neighbour, thou shalt not let thy soul be froward. 4. Thou shalt not commit fornication, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not commit sodomy. Thou shalt not let the word of God depart from thee among the impurity of any men. Thou shalt not respect persons in the reproof of transgression. Thou shalt be meek, thou shalt be quiet, thou shalt fear the words which thou hast heard. Thou shalt not bear malice against thy brother. 5. Thou shalt not be in two minds whether it shall be or not. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain." Thou shalt love thy neighbour more than thy own life. Thou shalt not procure abortion, thou shalt not commit infanticide. Thou shalt not withhold thy hand from thy son or from thy daughter, but shalt teach them the fear of God from their youth up. 6. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods, thou shalt not be avaricious. Thou shalt not be joined in soul with the haughty but shalt converse with humble and righteous men. Thou shalt receive the trials that befall thee as good, knowing that nothing happens without God. 7. Thou shalt not be double-minded or talkative. Thou

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, XIX. 7—XIX. 12

shalt obey thy masters as a type of God in modesty and fear ; thou shalt not command in bitterness thy slave or handmaid who hope on the same God, lest they cease to fear the God who is over you both ; for he came not to call men with respect of persons, but those whom the Spirit prepared. 8. Thou shalt share all things with thy neighbour and shall not say that they are thy own property ; for if you are sharers in that which is incorruptible, how much more in that which is corruptible ? Thou shalt not be forward to speak, for the mouth is a snare of death. So far as thou canst, thou shalt keep thy soul pure. 9. Be not one who stretches out the hands to take, and shuts them when it comes to giving. Thou shalt love “as the apple of thine eye” all who speak to thee the word of the Lord. 10. Thou shalt remember the day of judgment day and night, and thou shalt seek each day the society of the saints, either labouring by speech, and going out to exhort, and striving to save souls by the word, or working with thine hands for the ransom of thy sins. 11. Thou shalt not hesitate to give, and when thou givest thou shalt not grumble, but thou shalt know who is the good paymaster of the reward. “Thou shalt keep the precepts” which thou hast received, “adding nothing and taking nothing away.” Thou shalt utterly hate evil. “Thou shalt give righteous judgment.” 12. Thou shalt not cause quarrels, but shalt bring together and reconcile those that strive. Thou shalt confess thy sins. Thou shalt not betake thyself to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the Way of Light.

XX

1. But the Way of the Black One is crooked and full of cursing, for it is the way of death eternal with punishment, and in it are the things that destroy their soul: idolatry, frowardness, arrogance of power, hypocrisy, double-heartedness, adultery, murder, robbery, pride, transgression, fraud, malice, self-sufficiency, enchantments, magic, covetousness, the lack of the fear of God; 2. persecutors of the good, haters of the truth, lovers of lies, knowing not the reward of righteousness, who "cleave not to the good," nor to righteous judgment, who attend not to the cause of the widow and orphan, spending wakeful nights not in the fear of God, but in the pursuit of vice, from whom meekness and patience are far and distant, "loving vanity, seeking rewards," without pity for the poor, working not for him who is oppressed with toil, prone to evil speaking, without knowledge of their Maker, murderers of children, corrupters of God's creation, turning away the needy, oppressing the afflicted, advocates of the rich, unjust judges of the poor, altogether sinful.

The Way of
Darkness

XXI

1. It is good therefore that he who has learned the ordinances of the Lord as many as have been written should walk in them. For he who does these things shall be glorified in the kingdom of God, and he who chooses the others shall perish with his works. For this reason there is a resurrec-

Final
exhortation

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS, XXI. 1—XXI. 9

tion, for this reason there is a recompense. 2. I beseech those who are in high positions, if you will receive any counsel of my goodwill, have among yourselves those to whom you may do good; fail not. 3. The day is at hand when all things shall perish with the Evil one; "The Lord and his reward is at hand." 4. I beseech you again and again be good lawgivers to each other, remain faithful counsellors of each other, remove from yourselves all hypocrisy. 5. Now may God, who is the Lord over all the world, give you wisdom, understanding, prudence, knowledge of his ordinances, patience. 6. And be taught of God, seeking out what the Lord requires from you, and see that ye be found faithful in the day of Judgment. 7. If there is any memory of good, meditate on these things and remember me, that my desire and my watchfulness may find some good end. I beseech you asking it of your favour. 8. While the fair vessel¹ is with you fail not in any of, them but seek these things diligently, and fulfil every commandment; for these things are worthy. 9. Wherefore I was the more zealous to write to you of my ability, to give you gladness. May you gain salvation, children of love and peace. The Lord of glory and of all grace be with your spirit.

The Epistle of Barnabas.

¹ *i.e.* while you are in the body.

END OF VOL. I.