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Appendix A: Guide to Important Christian Documents and Writers from the Early Church to the Reformation

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Appendix A

GUIDE TO IMPORTANT CHRISTIAN
DOCUMENTS AND WRITERS FROM THE
EARLY CHURCH TO THE REFORMATION¹

Barry R. Bickmore

The purpose of this appendix is to provide a few basic background facts about Christian writers and documents that readers might find mentioned in this book, or other discussions of the great apostasy. Document titles are given in italics.

The Acts of Paul (ca. AD 185–195) According to Tertullian, this document was written by a presbyter in Asia Minor, who was expelled from his church for the forgery. The document itself contains nothing that would have been considered overtly heretical, except one passage where a female heroine, Thecla, baptized herself.²

1. Many of the entries are expanded from those found in the appendix of Barry R. Bickmore, *Restoring the Ancient Church: Joseph Smith and Early Christianity* (Ben Lomond, CA: Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research, 1999).

2. Willis Barnstone, ed. *The Other Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 445–47.

Ambrose of Milan (AD 339–397) Bishop of Milan, Ambrose was elected when he was only a catechumen (one preparing to be baptized) because, as a political official, he was instrumental in negotiating peace between the Arian and Catholic Christians in the city. Ambrose was not an especially innovative theologian, but was instrumental in the conversion of Augustine. His extant works include a number of sermons and treatises against Arianism, on church ordinances, the Bible, and ministerial practice.³

Anselm of Canterbury (AD 1033–1109) A forerunner of Scholasticism, Anselm was born in Italy and became a monk in Normandy in 1060. In 1093 he became Archbishop of Canterbury. He is most famous for his “ontological proof” of the existence of God, first propounded in his *Proslogion*. In brief, he argued that humans are thinking of God when they conceive of “that than which no greater thing can be thought.” If so, and if this being is not real, then an existing being would be greater than “that which no greater thing can be thought.” Since this situation is absurd, God (defined in this way) must exist.⁴

The Apocalypse of Abraham (ca. first century AD) A Jewish or Jewish-Christian apocalypse preserved only in the Slavonic language, *The Apocalypse of Abraham* was first published in 1863. It is an account of some events in the patriarch

3. Henry Bettenson, ed. and trans., *The Later Christian Fathers: A Selection from the Writings of the Fathers from St. Cyril of Jerusalem to St. Leo the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 20–22.

4. Anne Fremantle, *The Age of Belief: The Medieval Philosophers* (New York: Penguin Books, 1954), 88–97; Justo L. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1, *The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 311–14.

Abraham's life, including various revelations. In one scene, Abraham has a vision of the pre-existent spirits of mankind.⁵

The Apostolic Constitutions (fourth century AD) This compilation of Christian teachings and practices includes canon law. The material included is of varying age, and some of it may be based on earlier source documents, such as the *Didache*, going back as early as the first century.⁶

Aquinas, Thomas (AD 1224–1274) A Dominican monk and professor of theology at the university in Paris, Aquinas is regarded, along with Augustine, as the greatest Catholic theologian of all time. His great accomplishment was to harmonize Aristotelian philosophy (which was becoming popular in Europe) with Catholic dogma. His literary production was enormous, but his most famous work is the *Summa Theologica*. This work, however, was never finished, because he stopped writing after he experienced things that made all he had written seem to be made “of straw.”⁷

Arius (ca. AD 320) A presbyter (elder) of the church in Alexandria, his opposition to Bishop Alexander on the doctrine of the Trinity sparked the doctrinal controversy leading to the Council of Nicea in AD 325 and thirteen subsequent councils, culminating with the Council of Constantinople in AD 381. Arius took the traditional teachings that Jesus is subordinate to the Father, that God is an indivisible,

5. H.F.D. Sparks, ed., *The Apocryphal Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984,) 363–67.

6. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols. (Buffalo: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1885–1896), 7:387–88.

7. Fremantle, *The Age of Belief*, 144–79.

eternally unchanging substance, and that God created everything outside of himself from nothing to their logical conclusion—Jesus cannot be God in the strict sense and must have been created from nothing. Followers of this doctrine were called “Arians,” and were the dominant Christian sect in parts of Europe for centuries.⁸

The Ascension of Isaiah (ca. first or early second century AD)

This early Jewish-Christian apocryphal work was probably written in the first and second centuries AD. The first section, which deals with the martyrdom of Isaiah, is probably of Jewish origin and was written at least as early as the first century. The second section deals with Isaiah’s vision and journey into the heavens. This probably had its origin in early second century Christianity.⁹ Its Jewish-Christian provenance can be discerned by various details such as an anthropomorphic description of God.

Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. AD 300–373) Bishop of Alexandria from AD 328 to 373, Athanasius led the fight against the Arians at the Council of Nicea (AD 325) while a deacon under Bishop Alexander. Active in this controversy till the end of his life, Athanasius was exiled and readmitted as bishop several times during his career as the political winds changed to favor the Arians or Nicenes.¹⁰ Some of his more important extant works include *Orations against the Arians* (*Orationes Contra Arianos*) and *On the Incarnation* (*De Incarnatione*).

8. Everett Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York: Garland, 1990), 92–93.

9. Barnstone, ed., *The Other Bible*, 517–19.

10. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 110–11.

Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430) Augustine was bishop of Hippo in North Africa. Although his mother was a Christian, he did not convert until he was over thirty, after having been a Manichean and a Neoplatonist. One of the most prolific writers of early Christianity, Augustine was also one of its most important theologians.¹¹ His life's work was essentially to put Christian theology on what he saw as the solid foundation of Platonic philosophy.¹² Extant works are too numerous to list here, but prominent are *On the City of God* (*De Civitate Dei*) and *On the Trinity* (*De Trinitate*).

Basil of Caesarea (AD 330–379) Bishop of Caesarea from AD 360 to his death, Basil is considered an important theologian and monastic, especially in the Eastern Orthodox churches.¹³ Surviving works are too numerous to list here, but include many sermons, letters, and treatises on theological and practical subjects, as well as two sets of rules for the monastic life.

Benedict (b. ca. AD 480) A Christian monk who founded the Benedictine order, his *Rule* was written as a model of life for his monastic community.

Book of the Secrets of Enoch: see “Enoch Literature.”

Calvin, John (AD 1509–1564) Born in Noyon, France as Jean Chauvin, Calvin was the founder of the Calvinist system of theology prevalent in various Protestant sects. Calvin was the first great systematizer of Protestant theology. His most

11. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 121–26.

12. Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Scribner's, 1938), 16–24.

13. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 139–40.

famous work, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, was first published in 1536 as a small book of six chapters. Over the years, Calvin added to subsequent editions, until the final 1559 edition consisting of four books with eighty chapters.¹⁴

1 Clement: see “Clement of Rome.”

2 Clement (ca. AD 150) Second Clement is the oldest complete Christian sermon now extant. Although the author is unknown (and it certainly was not Clement of Rome), this document came to be associated with *1 Clement* by the fourth century.¹⁵

Clementine Homilies: see “Pseudo-Clementines.”

Clementine Recognitions: see “Pseudo-Clementines.”

Clement of Alexandria (AD 160–215) Clement was the head of the Christian catechetical school in Alexandria; one of his pupils was Origen. Clement tried to present the gospel in a manner that would be acceptable to the Greek mind, and to combat Gnosticism by presenting what he saw as the authentic secret knowledge in a somewhat veiled form. His work had a significant impact on later theologians.¹⁶ Extant works include *The Instructor (Paedagogus)*, *Miscellanies (Stromateis)*, *Who is the Rich Man who is Saved? (Quis Dives Salvetur?)*, *Exhortation to the Heathen (Protrepticus)*, and a number of fragments.

Clement of Rome (Pope ca. AD 88–97) Second or third bishop of Rome, Clement reportedly knew Peter and had significant

14. González, *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 2, *The Reformation to the Present Day* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), 61–69.

15. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 217.

16. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 214–16.

influence even outside his own See. *First Clement*, which was written to exhort the Corinthian saints to resist certain factions that had arisen in opposition to the leadership of the Corinthian Church, has traditionally been attributed to Clement, although the author is not specifically identified. Its composition is usually dated to ca. AD 96.¹⁷

Cyprian (ca. AD 200–258) Elected bishop of Carthage in AD 248 or 249, Cyprian was involved in various schisms, persuading the various factions to preserve unity.¹⁸ Surviving texts include several treatises such as *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* (*De Catholicae Ecclesiae Unitate*), *On the Lapsed* (*De Lapsis*), *To Donatus* (*Ad Donatum*), and a large number of letters.

Cyril of Jerusalem (d. AD 387) Elected bishop of Jerusalem ca. AD 349, his *Catechetical Lectures* (*catecheses*) were designed to explain the faith to catechumens (those who were studying to join the church) and to explain the sacraments (mysteries) of baptism and the eucharist to those who had just participated in them for the first time.¹⁹

Didache (late first or early second century AD) This document, whose full title translates as *The Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations*, includes moral teachings and instructions for church practice. It was probably written in Syria or Egypt by Jewish Christians.²⁰

17. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 216–17.

18. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 246–48.

19. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 250–51.

20. J. W. C. Wand, *A History of the Early Church to AD 500* (London: Methuen, 1937), 24–25; Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 262; Ray R. Noll, *Christian Ministerial Priesthood: A Search for its Beginnings in the Primary Documents of the Apostolic Fathers* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1993), 34.

An early date is assigned to this work in part because it includes instructions for what to do when traveling prophets visit a local church.

1 Enoch: see “Enoch Literature.”

2 Enoch: see “Enoch Literature.”

Enoch Literature: Manuscripts of a body of literature based on the life and revelations of the biblical prophet Enoch have lately come to light, revealing that he was a favorite hero in Jewish apocalyptic literature. It has also become clear that many early Christian documents, including those in the New Testament, relied heavily on the language and teachings of these texts. The most well-known examples of this genre are *1 Enoch* and *2 Enoch (Secrets of Enoch)*; both documents are thought to have been written in the first two centuries before Christ, but parts of *1 Enoch* may be much older.²¹ *1 Enoch* in particular was very respected in the early church. Not only did Jude quote from it in the New Testament, but it was considered canonical by many early Christians, including the author of *Barnabas*, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and Tertullian.²²

The Epistle of Barnabas (late first or early second century AD) is an early letter by an unknown author attacking Judaism. It was traditionally attributed to Barnabas, the companion

21. See Margaret Barker, *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and Its Influence on Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1988).

22. Norman R. Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 176; Barnstone, ed., *The Other Bible*, 485, 495; Rutherford H. Platt Jr., ed., *The Forgotten Books of Eden* (New York: Random House, 1980), 81.

of Paul, but this is unlikely.²³ The work has a definite Jewish-Christian outlook, which may help explain its overt antagonism to Judaism.

The Epistle of the Apostles (ca. AD 150) is an apocryphal work purporting to record a post-resurrection dialogue between Jesus and his Apostles. This was a literary form used extensively in Gnostic writings, but apparently the author of this work used it as a vehicle to propagate strongly anti-Gnostic views. For example, the work argues for the full humanity of Christ, the resurrection of the flesh, and the necessity of literal water baptism.²⁴

Epistula Apostolorum: see “*The Epistle of the Apostles*.”

Erasmus, Desiderius of Rotterdam (AD 1466–1536) Erasmus was one of the leaders of the “humanist” movement that sought to revive classical learning and reform Christianity by a return to the New Testament and Patristic sources. When the Reformation broke out, both sides sought Erasmus as an ally, but while he sympathized with the Lutherans, he felt he could not follow them all the way. During his life, therefore, he was attacked by both Protestants and Catholics, but later it was recognized on both sides that Erasmus had something to teach them. One of his most famous works was *Handbook of the Christian Soldier* (*Enchiridion*

23. John G. Davies, *The Early Christian Church* (New York: Anchor Books, 1965,) 80; Wand, *A History of the Early Church to AD 500*, 40.; Richard Hanson, “The Achievement of Orthodoxy in the Fourth Century AD,” in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*. ed. Rowan Williams (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989,) 143–44.

24. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 309.

Militis Christiani—Dagger), in which he used military metaphors to explain what he saw as the ideal Christian life.²⁵ In 1516, Erasmus published a new Greek edition of the New Testament that included information from recently discovered manuscripts, annotations, and a Latin translation. This was the most scholarly study of the New Testament manuscripts produced up to that time, and it was later used by the translators of the King James Version of the Bible. In 1517, he wrote his best-known work, *In Praise of Folly*, which is a satirical essay on the dominant religious beliefs of the day.²⁶

Erigena, John Scotus (fl. AD 840–877) Born in Ireland, and exposed to the knowledge of antiquity that had been preserved in the Irish monasteries, Erigena was one of the most erudite and original thinkers of the medieval period. In AD 840, he began teaching at the palace school of the Frankish king, Charles the Bald. His greatest work, *The Division of Nature*, has been said to be the synthesis of fifteen centuries of Western philosophical thought, and it is generally recognized that it is more Neoplatonic than Christian.²⁷

Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. AD 260–339) Bishop of Caesarea, his most famous work was his *Ecclesiastical History*, and, indeed, he was the first major historian of Christianity. Many fragments of early writings that are otherwise lost can be

25. Gonzalez, *Story of Christianity*, 2:10–13.

26. For more complete background information on Erasmus, see Erika Rummel, *Erasmus* (New York: Continuum, 2004); and C. Augustijn, *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence*, trans. J. C. Grayson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

27. Fremantle, *The Age of Belief*, 72–87; González, *Story of Christianity*, 1:269–70.

found in Eusebius's writings.²⁸ Other extant works include a glowing history of Emperor Constantine, *The Proof of the Gospel*, and *Preparation for the Gospel*. The latter has many valuable quotations of Greek philosophical works that are otherwise lost.

The Gospel of Philip (third century AD) This is a collection of statements concerning ordinances and ethics which probably originated with the Valentinian Gnostics in Syria and was most likely used to prepare investigators for initiation rites.²⁹ Some of the rites referred to evidently included something similar to the Latter-day Saint endowment and marriage ceremony in a mirrored bridal chamber.

The Gospel of Thomas (late first century AD) Many scholars feel that this collection of sayings of Jesus is closely related to the hypothetical source of the gospel narratives in the New Testament. Many of the parables and sayings of Jesus found in the Gospels appear in the Gospel of Thomas as well but in an apparently more primitive form. It was probably written in the second half of the first century AD, but the version available today may not be original. Clearly some Gnostic influence has been exerted on the text, but the extent of this influence is not clear.³⁰

Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. AD 329–390) Bishop of Constantinople, Gregory was instrumental, along with Hilary of Poitiers, Basil of Caesarea, and Gregory of Nyssa, in

28. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 325–27.

29. Barnstone, ed., *The Other Bible*, 87–88.

30. Barnstone, ed., *The Other Bible*, 299–300; Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 55–65.

negotiating the final Trinitarian position and related issues.³¹ His extant works include 245 letters, 45 orations or sermons, and a number of poems.

Gregory of Nyssa (ca. AD 331–395) Elected bishop of Nyssa in AD 372, Gregory was an extremely influential theologian, heavily involved in the fight against extreme forms of Arianism. He was very acquainted with the Greek philosophy of the day, especially Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism, and he put this education to use in his theological speculations. His major theological accomplishment was to elaborate on the concept of the fundamental distinction between God and created beings and to exclude from mainstream Christian belief any concept of subordinationism. His brother, Basil of Caesarea, was also a noted theologian.³² His extant writings are too numerous to list here, but include important treatises such as *That There Are Not Three Gods* (*quod non sint tres dii*) and a number of sermons.

Gregory the Great (Pope, AD 590–604) Bishop of Rome (Pope Gregory I) amid a very troubled political scene, he is remembered as a champion of Catholic orthodoxy and for strong leadership when the political structure of Rome was dissolving. He also strengthened the Papacy and promoted monasticism. His writings are too numerous to list here.³³

Hermas (fl. early second century AD) Herman was the brother of an early bishop of Rome and author of the document known as the *Shepherd of Hermas* or the *Pastor of Hermas*. This

31. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 397–400.

32. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 400–402.

33. J. N. D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of Popes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 65–68.

work describes a series of visions given to Hermas in which an angel sometimes appeared as a shepherd. The *Shepherd* was considered canonical by many Christians for centuries.³⁴ The fact that this document, which did not claim authorship by the apostles or their associates, was considered canonical shows that many early Christians were open to the idea of continuing revelation.

Hippolytus (ca. AD 170–236) A presbyter (elder) at Rome who led a schism against the bishop of Rome, becoming the first “anti-Pope,” his most important work, *The Refutation of All Heresies*, describes a large number of heretical groups.

Ignatius of Antioch (d. ca. AD 110) During the reign of Trajan, while bishop of Antioch, Ignatius was arrested and martyred. On the journey to Rome, Ignatius wrote seven letters that have been preserved. One purpose of the letters seems to have been to establish the authority of the bishops.³⁵

Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. AD 115–202) Bishop of Lyons and a student of Polycarp, Irenaeus’s most famous work is *Against all Heresies* in which his major concern was to stop the spread of Gnosticism in Christianity.³⁶ Another important work is *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*.

Jerome (ca. AD 345–420) One of the most famous early Christian scholars, Jerome is best known for his Latin translation of the Bible, known as the Vulgate.

34. Davies, *Early Christian Church*, 81; Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 421.

35. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 451–52.

36. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 471–73.

Jeu, Two Books of: An early third-century Egyptian Gnostic work, the *Books of Jeu* claim to be a record of some conversations between Jesus and his disciples after his resurrection. A Coptic manuscript was discovered in 1769, and published in 1891.³⁷

John Chrysostom (ca. AD 347–407) Chrysostom was bishop of Constantinople from 398 till shortly before his death. Chrysostom means “golden-mouthed,” and refers to John’s reputation as the greatest preacher in early Christianity. John took some uncompromising moral stances and even criticized the empress for the opulent life of the court.³⁸

Justin Martyr (d. ca. AD 163) A second-century Christian apologist and theologian, Justin established a Christian school in Rome. He had been educated in philosophy before his conversion and afterward continued to wear his philosopher’s cloak. His works show a tendency to harmonize Middle Platonic philosophy with Christian doctrine, but also retain many archaic elements. Justin was condemned, scourged, and beheaded by the Romans when he would not deny his faith and sacrifice to the pagan gods.³⁹ His best-known extant works include the *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, which argues that Christianity is the fulfillment of the Old Testament, the *First Apology*, and the *Second Apology*, which were written to the Roman Emperors in defense of Christianity.

37. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, ed., *New Testament Apocrypha*, trans. A. J. B. Higgins and others (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 1:259–61.

38. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 495–97.

39. Wand, *A History of the Early Church to AD 500*, 54; Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 514–16.

Leo the Great (Pope AD 440–461) Bishop of Rome (Pope Leo I), he is remembered for strengthening the position of the papacy, strong opposition to heretical movements, personal courage, and for settling the controversy over whether Christ has one or two natures. Leo's *Tome* was written to Flavian of Constantinople to explain the doctrine of the two natures. The *Tome* was read at the Council of Ephesus in AD 449, where Leo's point of view was rejected, and the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, where the decision at Ephesus was reversed.⁴⁰

Luther, Martin (AD 1483–1546) Founder of the Lutheran churches, Luther was a Roman Catholic monk who sought the reformation of Catholicism. Luther ended up leading a schism that began the Protestant Reformation. While teaching at the University of Wittenberg, Luther became convinced of the need to reform the church, especially its teachings about grace, works, and salvation. He composed a set of ninety-seven theses designed to stir up academic debate on such issues, but there was little response. Later, Luther wrote another set of ninety-five theses in 1517 that unleashed a firestorm of debate, mainly because the sale of indulgences was included as an issue. The publication of the *95 Thesen* is generally considered the beginning of the Reformation. Luther's works are too numerous to mention here, but include a German translation of the Bible, various commentaries, voluminous correspondence, and theological treatises.⁴¹

40. Kelly, *Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, 43–45.

41. González, *Story of Christianity*, 2:6–45.

Melito of Sardis (ca. AD 170) Bishop of Sardis, Melito was one of the most voluminous writers of the second century, but only fragments of his works survive.⁴²

Novatian (ca. AD 200–258) A presbyter (elder) in Rome, Novatian believed the holiness of the church was threatened by the readmission of apostates. He led a schism and was ordained counter-bishop (anti-Pope) by three other Italian bishops. He had a formidable reputation as a theologian, and his treatise on the Trinity is considered the greatest Christian theological treatise from the West before 350.⁴³ The movement he started spread widely, persisting into the fifth century. The Novatianists were orthodox in doctrine, except for their teaching that there could be no forgiveness for serious sins after baptism.

The Odes of Solomon (first century) are a collection of beautiful songs or poems dedicated to Christ. One of the most plausible explanations of their origin is that they were written by newly baptized Christians in the first century.⁴⁴

Origen of Alexandria (ca. AD 185–251) Origen was one of the most important theologians of the early church and produced some 2000 works, including commentaries on almost every book in the Bible. He was born of Christian parents in Alexandria. He eventually succeeded Clement as the head of the catechetical school there. Origen was an incurable speculator at a time when orthodoxy was not

42. Robert M. Grant, *Second-Century Christianity* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1946), 69.

43. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 654.

44. Platt, ed., *Forgotten Books of Eden*, 120; Grant, *Second-Century Christianity*, 11.

strictly defined, and later councils judged some of his doctrines heretical.⁴⁵ On the other hand, Edwin Hatch calls Origen's *On First Principles* (*De Principiis*) the first complete system of dogma in Christianity, and recommends the study of it because "of the strange fact that the features of it which are in strongest contrast to later dogmatics are in fact its most archaic and conservative elements."⁴⁶ Some of Origen's other important works include *Against Celsus* (*Contra Celsum*), a treatise against a second-century pagan critic of Christianity, *On Prayer* (*De Oratione*), and a number of scriptural commentaries and homilies.

The Pastor of Hermas: see "Hermas."

Papias (ca. AD 70–155) Bishop of Hierapolis, Papias wrote a series of five books about the gospel, of which only fragments have been preserved. He made a special effort to collect items of doctrine preserved orally by those who had actually heard the apostles speak.⁴⁷

The Pistis Sophia is a group of Gnostic documents composed at various times during the third century in Egypt. Included in this work is a supposed conversation between Jesus and his disciples after his resurrection.

Polycarp (d. ca. AD 156) Bishop of Smyrna, Irenaeus claimed that he had been appointed to that post by the apostles themselves and was taught by the Apostle John. Polycarp

45. Wand, *A History of the Early Church to AD 500*, 72–76; Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 667–69.

46. Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1914,) 323.

47. Ferguson, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 686.

apparently wrote several letters to neighboring congregations, but only his letter to the Philippians remains. An early account of his martyrdom is also preserved, which describes various miracles accompanying that event.⁴⁸

Pseudo-Clementines (second through fourth centuries) A collection of early Jewish-Christian documents, especially the *Clementine Homilies* and the *Clementine Recognitions*, pseudonymously attributed to Clement of Rome. Apparently, these works derive from a common second-century source document, adapted for various purposes over the next one or two centuries. They describe various travels of Clement, his conversion, and conversations with the apostle Peter. They were originally written in Greek, but the only extant version of the *Recognitions* is a Latin translation by Rufinus of Aquileia, who apparently made some emendations to the text. A number of conservative and Jewish elements are evident, as well as a distinct anti-Pauline bias, and many scholars consider them to be a product of a widespread branch of Jewish-Christianity of which we have no other witness.⁴⁹

Secrets of Enoch: see “Enoch Literature.”

The Secret Gospel of Mark (early third century?) In 1941, Morton Smith was looking through the library at an Orthodox

48. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 742.

49. Fergusen, ed., *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, 768–69; Roberts and Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 8:69–76.

50. For a popular treatment, see Morton Smith, *The Secret Gospel: The Discovery and Interpretation of the Secret Gospel according to Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973). For a more scholarly treatment, see Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

monastery in Mar Saba, near Jerusalem, when he found a document claiming to be a copy of a letter of Clement of Alexandria to Theodoret, a local church leader. Clement wrote that a document called the *Secret Gospel of Mark*, an expanded version of Mark's canonical gospel written by Mark after Peter's death, was in the possession of the church at Alexandria. However, the Carpocratian Gnostics had corrupted it to suit their agenda. Clement quoted an intriguing passage from the work and claimed that it was composed for those who were being initiated into the "great mysteries."⁵⁰ However, a number of scholars have expressed some suspicion that Smith forged the document. In fact, although Smith published photographs of the manuscript, it has been subsequently lost. However, Guy Stroumsa (a Jewish scholar at Hebrew University) claims to have seen the original in the monastery and that the librarian had told him that the manuscript had been removed for safe-keeping, and subsequently was lost.⁵¹

The Shepherd of Hermas: see "Hermas."

Tertullian of Carthage (ca. AD 155–225) Born to heathen parents in Carthage, Tertullian was trained to become a lawyer. When he became a Christian, he used his training to write tracts in defense of the church. Tertullian was an ordained a presbyter (elder), but eventually defected to the Montanist camp and wrote several bitter attacks against the Catholics.⁵² Important works include *Against Praxeas* (*Adversus Praxean*), which is a treatise against Modalism (the idea that

51. For a summary of the details of the controversy, see Ehrman, *Lost Christianities*, 70–84.

52. Wand, *A History of the Early Church to AD 500*, 79.

the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one person who appears in three different modes), *On the Soul (De Anima)*, *On Baptism (De Baptismo)*, and *A Demurrer to the Heretics' Plea (De Praescriptione Haereticorum)*, as well as many others.

Wycliffe, John (AD 1328–1384) English churchman, scholar, and diplomat, Wycliffe criticized the Papacy for being self-serving rather than serving others. This message was at first received well by the English court, which was constantly wrangling with the Papacy over its rights regarding taxation and temporal authority in general. However, Wycliffe soon began criticizing the civil authorities on the same grounds and fell out of favor. He taught Augustine's doctrine of predestination and argued against the dogma of transubstantiation. He is most famous for his English translation of the Bible.⁵³

Zwingli, Ulrich (AD 1484–1531) Zwingli was a priest whose lectures on the New Testament in 1519 launched the Swiss Reformation movement.

53. González, *Story of Christianity*, 1:346–48.