



# The Apostolic Fathers

*Charles H. Hoole , Polycarp , Clement of Rome , Barnabas , Ignatius of Antioch , Mark Galli (Foreword)*

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Excerpt from The Apostolic Fathers

The term Apostolic Fathers would mean, in its proper sense, the disciples of the Apostles of our Lord who succeeded them in the government of the Christian Church. It is, however, usually applied only to those who have left, or are supposed to have left, works behind them. These, according to the generally received account, are S. Clement of Rome, S. Barnabas, who was the disciple of S. Paul, S. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, S. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and Papias, bishop of Hierapolis; to these, at an earlier period, would have been added Dionysius the Areopagite. but the works that bear his name are now generally acknowledged to be spurious. Had even the writings of the first mentioned come down to us in a trustworthy state, we should have possessed a considerable body of literature illustrating the most interesting period of Church history. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

## The Apostolic Fathers Details

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# From Reader Review The Apostolic Fathers for online ebook

## Ron Willoughby says

I would have given this a 4, but The Pastor of Hermas finished me. After the second book, where a new set of commandments, the 12 Commandments, which were established by the Angel of Repentance sounded like the old law revisited, I found myself growing weary. Then in the third book, the one of similitudes, challenged my confidence in the work of the Holy Spirit in me and the beauty of grace, I decided it was time to stop.

I found the first half insightful. The Martyrdom of Polycarp was inspiring and heart breaking. But I only made it to about page 240. My apologies to the Pastor of Hermas, but we just didn't click.

I guess I'm still a spiritual lightweight. \*sigh\*

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## James Andersen says

This book contained some of the history of the early Christian Community, following the deaths of the Apostles. The writings enclosed tend to convey a message of Martyrdom and yet Wisdom as well. One story, was a Myth that the early Christian Community shared concerning a Shepard and his family and how to make himself and those around him, right with God. This book is an okay book it is nothing too special except for its historical value, and the book itself tends to support the notions of Mass/Liturgy and Eucharist as well. One of the more interesting aspects of this book is when you read the letter of a Bishop, and quotes from the more Apocryphal Texts.

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## Rachel says

This is a great read, learning about the early fathers. Its shocking to read the way St. Ignatius writes about the Church, totally blowing out of the water the idea that the Orthodox Church made up the idea of bishops hundreds of years after Christ. It's just not true.

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## Aaron says

Being far from the time of the early church we sometimes don't understand what the views and perspectives of those who came before us in Church. The Apostolic Fathers gives us a little insight of just some of the views amongst earlier Christians. This little collection of writings is certainly a recommended read to anyone who is a believer and wants to know a little more about Church history and certainly is a great non-Scripture collection.

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## Jacob Andrews says

Content: five stars

Translation: 3-4 stars

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## Kara says

A good basic intro to the apostolic fathers. This along with CCEL's Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 1 covers most of the major works of the first couple of centuries (there's a little overlap between the two).

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## Bob Hayton says

Christians today often have little sense of the past, and a low respect for church history. And they are almost totally ignorant of old books. Not every old book is worth reading, but some shine as true classics of the Christian faith. *The Apostolic Fathers* is one such work. It remains important for the insight it provides into the world of Christianity in the first generations after the death of the apostles.

As I read *The Apostolic Fathers*, I was reminded just how far removed I really am from the New Testament time period. I encountered much that was strange or different from my normal way of thinking. But I also found a good deal of continuity. Scripture is often quoted as Scripture. Justification by faith is stressed in 1 Clement, and a call to holy living pervades all the apostolic fathers. Even still, the Bible itself shines out all the brighter when compared with these non-inspired writings.

This Moody Classics edition is a handy sized, attractively presented book. It would fit in many pockets, and makes the task of reading "The Apostolic Church Fathers" much less daunting.

The book begins with a helpful foreword by Mark Galli. An introduction to each of the included works is provided and the merits of reading the Fathers is discussed. After the foreword you jump right into the Fathers themselves. 1 & 2 Clement, The Letters of Ignatius and Polycarp, The Martyrdom of Polycarp, The Didache, and The Pastor of Hermas are the included titles.

I was struck by the very first page of the Fathers, Clement's first letter opens up with this line: "The church of God, living in exile in Rome, to the church of God, exiled in Corinth—to you who are called and sanctified by God's will through our Lord Jesus Christ." (pg. 17) The idea of the church being exiled is also found in the opening of 1 Peter and James. It was special to see that sense of a pilgrim-mindset so clearly in 1 Clement.

1 Clement also showed an early example of typological interpretation. This book written in A.D. 96 already reveals importance placed on the "scarlet thread" of Rahab: "(She) should hang a piece of scarlet from her house... by this they made it clear that it was by the blood of the Lord that redemption was going to come to all who believe in God and hope on him." (pg. 25)

Polycarp's letter to the bishop of Smyrna exhorts the careful study of Paul's letters "that will enable you, if you study them carefully, to grow in the faith delivered to you" (pg. 127). Ignatius' letter to Polycarp revealed that he believed miraculous spiritual gifts were still to be sought in his day: "But ask that you may

have revelations of what is unseen. In that way you will lack nothing and have an abundance of every gift.” (pg. 121)

I must confess the Pastor of Hermas (sometimes called Shepherd of Hermas) was rather intriguing. It is a somewhat strange, allegorical tale of quite some length (around 150 pages in this edition). But even though much of it doesn’t make sense to me, or even seems wrong headed, it contains plenty of good exhortations and admonitions. In fact I even found a statement that echoes John Piper’s “Christian Hedonism” ideas: “Wherefore put on cheerfulness, which always is agreeable and acceptable to God, and rejoice in it. For every cheerful man does what is good, and minds what is good...” (pg. 222).

The back cover of this little book declares: “What you have in your hand is a modern translation of early Christian bestsellers.” I would recommend you strongly consider putting down today’s bestseller in favor of this convenient edition of *The Apostolic Fathers*. You’ll be glad you did.

Learn more about Moody Classics at [MoodyClassics.com](http://MoodyClassics.com). See more of my reviews at [CrossFocusedReviews.com](http://CrossFocusedReviews.com).

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### **Richard Conley says**

This book gives you an insight into the minds of those who followed the original 12 Biblical apostles and later generations. Great historic value.

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