

I have been discussing the interesting and important early Christian document called the Didache. Yesterday I gave a translation of its first part, the “two ways” or the “two paths” section. After that the topic and tone of the book changes, as it starts to talk about how Christian baptism and eucharist should be celebrated. It ends on a completely different note, with a one-chapter description of the coming apocalypse. Scholars have asked whether the book as we now have it was actually created by someone who took several disparate texts and cut and pasted them together.

Here is what I say about the matter in my edition of the Apostolic Fathers in the Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press, 2003).

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The Didache obviously addresses several discrete topics: the two paths, the “church order” (which may comprise two distinct units, one on liturgical practices and the other on the treatment of itinerant “apostles and prophets”), and the apocalyptic discourse. Moreover, there is no necessary connection between them, except that provided perhaps by an editor, for example, the indication in 7.1 that the teaching of the two paths was to be given prior to the performance of baptism. For these reasons, scholars have long maintained that ...

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