

We have been talking about the Didache on the blog, and it occurred to me that it might be useful to post part of its text, so readers can see what we're talking about. The book has several discrete parts: it begins with a discussion of the "two ways" - one that leads to life and one to death. This is a set of ethical instructions for Christians. As you'll see, the author appears to have taken materials from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and various other passages chiefly from Matthew and Luke; but he cites other ethical injunctions (some of them unusual) from other, unknown sources.

After the "two ways" comes a set of instructions about church life and ritual - for example, how to baptize and what prayers to say at the eucharist meal. At the end comes a one-chapter "apocalyptic discourse" describing what will happen at the end of time.

Here is the opening discussion of the two ways; it is my own translation, which, in a later version, appeared in my edition of the Apostolic Fathers in the Loeb Classical Library, with Harvard University Press.

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