Didache

THE TEACHINGS OF THE LORD

THROUGH THE TWELVE APOSTLES

TO THE NATIONS

CHAPTER 1

THE TWO WAYS; THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

1) There are two ways: one of Life - one of Death, and there are great differences between the two ways.

2) The way of life is this:

First, you must love God, the One who formed you;

Second, you must love your neighbor in the same manner as yourself. Do not do to others, what you yourself would not want done to you.

3) And these are our teachings:

Bless the ones who curse you. Pray for your enemies. Fast for your persecutors. What blessing is there if you only love those who love you? Do not the Gentiles do the same? But if you love to those who hate you, you will have no enemies.

4) Abstain from the lusts of your selfish nature and of the self-serving world. If someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the left to be likewise struck. This discipline will lead to your perfecting. If someone forces you to go with him one mile, go with him a second. If someone robs you of your robe, freely give him your coat. If someone takes from you what belongs to you, don't ask that it be returned, not even if you are able.

5) Give to all who ask, and do not ask for it to be returned; for your Father in heaven wills that we give to everyone who has need, out of what we have been freely given. Blessed is the one who gives according to the commandment; for that person is guiltless. Woe to the one who receives if he has no need, for the one who receives and is in need, he is guiltless, but the one who receives and has no need, he will be judged for why he received and for what purpose, and in the judgment he shall be examined concerning his deeds, and "he will not be set free from there until he has paid the last penny".

6) Concerning this, it is written, "Let your alms sweat in your hands until you know to who you are to be giving."

CHAPTER 2

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT: GROSS SIN FORBIDDEN

1) This is the second commandment of the Teaching;

2) Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not molest children; do not practice immorality; do not steal; do not participate in fortune-telling; or witchcraft; do not participate in the abortion of unborn children; nor any sort of infanticide; do not covet your neighbor’s possessions,

3) You must not commit perjury nor give any false testimony, nor speak evil of any, nor bear a grudge.

4) You must not be double-minded [uncertain] nor double-tongued [dishonest]; for the "double-tongued" are a snare of death.

5) Your speech must not be false, nor empty, but confirmed by your deeds.

6) Do not defraud anyone, nor forcibly steal, nor be a hypocrite, nor malicious, nor arrogant; nor plot evil against your neighbor.

7) Do not hate anyone; but some you must correct, and for some you pray, and some you must love even more than your own life.

CHAPTER 3

OTHER SINS FORBIDDEN

1) My child, flee from everything evil, even from anything that resembles it.

2) Do not become angry, for anger leads to murder. Do not be jealous, and do not quarrel, nor be hot-tempered, for all these things are causes of murder.

3) My child, do not entertain lust; for lust leads to fornication. Do not be foul-mouthed, nor allow your eyes to roam; for all these are causes of adultery.

4) My child, pay no attention to any part of omens, because this leads to idolatry. Do not practice enchantment, nor astrology, nor sorcery, nor even want to see or hear about such things; for all these things cause idolatry.

5) My child, do not lie because the lie leads to theft. Do not love money, nor become overly ambitious because these all lead to theft.

6) My child, do not grumble because this leads to blasphemy. Do not be stubborn nor evil-minded because all of these lead to blasphemy.

7) Rather, be meek for "the meek shall inherit the earth."

8) Be patient, merciful, sincere, peaceable and good, always standing in awe of the Word which you have heard.

9) Do not push yourself forward, nor give your soul over to arrogance. Do not be joined with "high and mighty", but associate with the righteous and humble.

10) Whatever things may happen to you receive as good, for we know that nothing happens apart from God.

CHAPTER 4

VARIOUS PRECEPTS

1) My child, remember the one who speaks the Word of the Lord to you both night and day; and honor him as you would the Lord, for where the Lord’s Word is spoken, there the Lord is present.

2) And daily seek the companionship of the saints, that you may find support in their words.

3) Do not seek division, but seek to reconcile, judge righteously, and do not show favoritism towards any person when judging transgressions.

4) Do not be indecisive in your judgments.

5) Do not be eager to receive but reluctant to give.

6) If you have ought to give, give as though it were a ransom against your sins.

7) Do not hesitate to give, nor grumble about giving, for you know who it is that repays the hire.

8) You shall not turn away from the one in need, but you shall share with your brother in all things, and do not say that the things are yours; for if you are sharers in what is imperishable, how much more in what is perishable?

9) Do not withdraw your hand from your son or your daughter, but from their childhood on, teach them the fear of God.

10) Do not command your slave or your handmaiden, who hope in the same God, in your anger lest they cease to fear the God who is over you both. Remember, He comes not to call men with respect to their station in life, but those whom the Spirit has prepared.

11) But you who are slaves be subject to your masters in reverence and fear, as ‘types’ of God.

12) Hate all hypocrisy and all that is not God-pleasing.

13) Do not forsake the commandments of the Lord, but you shall guard that which you have received, not adding to it, nor taking away from it.

14) In church you are to confess your sins, and do not approach your prayers with an evil conscience. This is the way of life.

CHAPTER 5

THE WAY OF DEATH

1) But the way of death is this: First of all, it is evil and full of cursing: it is filled with murders, adulteries, lusts, sexual immoralities, thefts, idolatries, witchcraft by spells, witchcraft by potions, robberies, false witnessing, hypocrisies, deceit, treachery, depravity, stubbornness, covetousness, filthy talk, jealousy, impudence, haughtiness, arrogance;

2) Persecutors of all things good, hating truth, loving lies, ignorant of the reward for righteousness, not clinging to good nor righteous judgment, not looking for that which is good but looking for that which is evil; from whom humility and patience are far away, loving vanities, pursuing revenge, having no mercy for the poor, not helping the afflicted, not knowing Him who made them, murderers of children, destroyers of the handiwork of God, turning away from him who is in need, oppressing the afflicted, lawless judges against the poor, altogether sinful. Children may all of you be delivered from all these abominations.

CHAPTER 6

AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS, AND FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS

1) See that no one leads you away from this way of the Teaching, for such teaching leads you away from God.

2) If you are able to bear the entire yoke, you will be perfect; but if you are not, whatever you can do, that do.

3) And concerning food, eat what is right but be very careful that you never eat that which was sacrificed to idols, for that is the worship of lifeless gods.

CHAPTER 7

CONCERNING BAPTISM

1) And concerning baptism, baptize this way: After reviewing all of this teaching, baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, in living (running) water.

2) But if living water is not available, then baptize in other water; and if you cannot use cold water, then use warm.

3) But if neither is available, pour water three times upon the head in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

4) But before the baptism, let the one baptizing fast, and also the one being baptized, and whoever else that is able; you shall instruct the one being baptized to fast one or two days before.

CHAPTER 8

CONCERNING FASTING AND PRAYER

1) Be careful not to schedule your fasts at the times when the hypocrites fast. They fast on the second (Monday) and fifth (Thursday) day of the week, therefore make your fast on the fourth (Wednesday) day and the Preparation day (Friday, the day of preparation for the Sabbath-Saturday).

2) And, do not pray like the hypocrites, but as commanded by the Lord in the Gospel, pray in this manner:

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debt as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the power and the glory forever. Amen!

3) Pray in this manner three times each day.

CHAPTER 9

THE THANKSGIVING SACRAMENT

1) Concerning the Thanksgiving meal [Holy Communion], give thanks in this manner.

2) First, concerning the cup: We give thanks to You, our Father, For the Holy Vine of David Your servant, Whom You made known to us through Jesus, Your Son; Glory be to You forever.

3) Concerning the broken bread: We give thanks to You, our Father, For the life and the knowledge Which You made known to us through Jesus, Your Son; Glory be to You forever.

4) Just as this broken bread was scattered over the mountains, And was gathered together and became one, In the same way let Your Church be gathered together From the ends of the earth into Your kingdom; for Yours is the glory and power through Jesus Christ forever.

5) But let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving meal, but those who have been baptized; for concerning this, the Lord has said, "Do not give what is holy to dogs."

CHAPTER 10

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

1) Once it is completed, give thanks in this manner:

2) We give thanks to You, Holy Father, For Your Holy Name which You caused to dwell in our hearts, And for the knowledge, faith and immortality, Which You made known to us through Jesus, Your Son; Glory be to You forever.

3) You, Master and Creator of all, created all things for Your own name’s sake; You give food and drink to men to enjoy, In order that they might give You thanks; But to us You freely give spiritual food and drink, And eternal life through Jesus, Your Son.

4) Before all else, we give thanks You because You are mighty to save; Glory be to You forever.

5) Remember, Lord, Your Church, to deliver her from all evil, and to perfect her in Your love, and gather her from the four winds, Sanctified, into Your kingdom which You have prepared for her; For Yours are the power and glory forever.

6) Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David! If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not, let him repent. Maranatha [Come Lord!]. Amen.

7) But permit the prophets to give thanks as they desire.

8) Concerning the anointing, give thanks as follows:

9) We give thanks to You, our Holy Father, for the anointing, which You have made known to us through Jesus, Your Son. Glory be to You forever. Amen.

CHAPTER 11

CONCERNING TEACHERS, EMISSARIES, AND PROPHETS

TEACHERS:

1) Therefore, whoever comes teaching you in accordance with all these things said before, receive him.

2) But if the teacher goes astray, teaching another doctrine which would destroy this doctrine, do not hear him; but if his teaching increases righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive Him as from the Lord.

APOSTLES & PROPHETS

3) Concerning the Apostles and prophets, you shall act according to the principles of the Gospel.

APOSTLES:

4) Receive every Apostle that comes to you.

5) He will remain one day, and if it be necessary, a second; but if he remains three days, he is a false prophet.

6) When the apostle leaves, let him take only the bread to sustain him to his next stopping-place. But if he asks for money, he is a false prophet.

PROPHETS:

7) Do not test or judge any prophet who speaks in the Spirit, "for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven."

8) Not everyone who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet, but only those whose manner is of the Lord. Therefore, from their manner can you discern the false prophet and the true prophet.

9) And every prophet who commands in the Spirit that food to be brought to him will not eat from it, unless he is a false prophet;

10) Every prophet who will teach the truth, but if he does not act in accord with what he teaches, he is a false prophet.

11) And every prophet who has shown himself to be true, even who shall perform a worldly mystery of the Church, yet he does not teach others to do as he does, he shall not be judged by you, for his judgment will be by God. For, so it was done also with the ancient prophets.

12) If anyone says in the Spirit, "Give me money," or something else, you shall not listen to him. But if he tells you about others to give to them because they are in need, do not judge him.

CHAPTER 12

RECEPTION OF BELIEVERS

1) Anyone who comes to you in the name of the Lord, receive him, but then examine him and know his character. You surely will be able to discern right from left.

2) If the one who comes is a traveler, help him according to your ability. But he should not stay with you more than two days, or possibly three days if there is a necessity.

3) But if he desires to stay among you, if he is a craftsman, put him to work and so let him eat.

4) But if he is not a craftsman, provide for him according to your own judgment, but sure that he is not allowed to be idle, since he is a Christian.

5) But if he does not want to cooperate with you, he is a Christ-merchant (one who makes his living trading on the name of Christ). Be careful to avoid such people as this.

CHAPTER 13

SUPPORT OF PROPHETS

1) Every true prophet who desires to settle among you is worthy of his food.

2) A true teacher is also worthy, just like a workman, of his food.

3) You shalt, therefore, take the first-fruits of every produce of the wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and sheep, and shalt give it to the prophets, for they are your chief priests.

4) If you do not have a prophet, give it to the poor.

5) If you make bread, take the first-fruits and give it according to the commandment.

6) In this manner, when you open a container of wine or oil, take the first-fruit of it and give it to the prophets.

7) And take the first-fruits of money, clothing, and every sort of possession, and give as it seems appropriate to you, according to the commandment.

CHAPTER 14

THE SABBATH ASSEMBLY

1) On every Lord’s Day, gather together, break bread and give thanks having confessed your sins, that your offering may be pure.

2) But let no one who has a quarrel with another of you stand among you, until they are reconciled, that you’re offering may not be polluted.

3) For this is that which was spoken by the Lord: "In every place and time offer to me a pure offering; for I am a great King, says the Lord, and My name is wonderful among the nations."

CHAPTER 15

BISHOPS AND DEACONS; REPROOF

1) Therefore, appoint for yourselves, worthy bishops and ministers of the Lord; humble men, and not lovers of money, and true and tested, for these men will serve you in the office of the prophets and teachers.

2) Therefore do not despise them, for they are to be honored among you, together with the prophets and teachers.

3) Reprove one another not in anger, but in peace, as you have it in the Gospel. And if anyone among you misses the mark as regards another, let no speak to him and do not let him hear from any of you until he repents.

4) And your prayers, charitable giving, and all your deeds, whatever you may do, do them as we have it from the Gospel of our Lord.

CHAPTER 16

WATCHFULNESS; THE COMING JUDGMENT

1) Be on the alert concerning your life. Do not let your lamps be extinguished or your loins be ungirded, but rather be prepared, for you do not know the hour in which our Lord shall come.

2) But be gathered together frequently, seeking that which is beneficial for your souls, for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you unless you are found perfect at the last time;

3) For in the last days false prophets and corrupters will be multiplied, and the sheep will become wolves, and love will be turned into hate.

4) For as lawlessness increases, they will hate and betray one another. And then the deceiver of the world will appear as a son of God, and will perform signs and wonders, and the earth will be given over into his hands, and he will do abominable things that will surpass all evil done since the beginning.

5) Then all mankind will be tested by fire, and many will be offended (and fall away) and perish. But those remaining in their faith will be saved by Him who is "the Rock of Offense".

6) Then the signs of truth will appear: First, the sign of heaven opening. Then, the sign of the trumpet sounding. And third, the sign of the resurrection of the dead.

7) Yet, not of all, but as it is said: "The Lord will come, and all His saints with Him."

8) Then the world will see the Lord coming on the clouds of heaven.

“Unum praedica, sapientiam crucis!”   (There is only one thing to preach, the wisdom of the cross!)