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SIMON TUGWELL OP

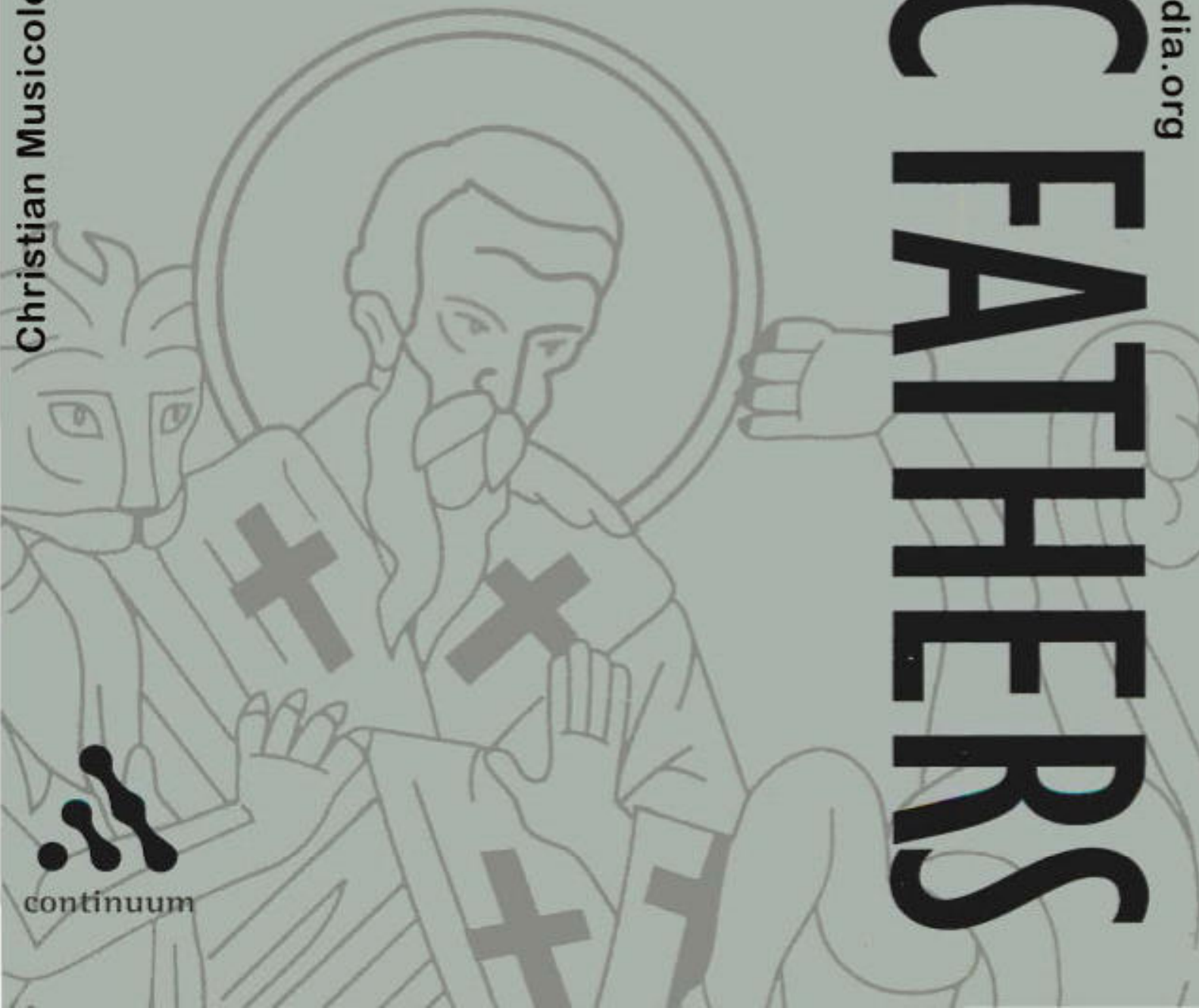


APOSTOLIC FATHERS

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OUTSTANDING
CHRISTIAN
THINKERS

Series Editor
Brian Davies

Ignatius of Antioch, a brilliant and passionate martyr; the author of the Didache, a down-to-earth canon lawyer; Clement of Rome, a spokesperson for the Church of Rome and seen in retrospect as the third Pope – these are some of the figures examined in this scholarly but accessible book. They belong to the era when the Church was only gradually beginning to shape its own canon of Scripture, with a 'New Testament' as well as the old Jewish Bible. This was the period when the church was progressively formalizing its structures and institutions and developing a consciousness of its own 'orthodox' doctrine.

Simon Tugwell guides the reader carefully and intelligently through the major figures and debates of this key age in the emergence and spread of Christianity.

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OUTSTANDING CHRISTIAN THINKERS

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Editorial Foreword

St Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) once described himself as someone with faith seeking understanding. In words addressed to God he says ‘I long to understand in some degree thy truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but believe in order to understand.’

This is what Christians have always inevitably said, either explicitly or implicitly. Christianity rests on faith, but it also has content. It teaches and proclaims a distinctive and challenging view of reality. It naturally encourages reflection. It is something to think about; something about which one might even have second thoughts.

But what have the greatest Christian thinkers said? And is it worth saying? Does it engage with modern problems? Does it provide us with a vision to live by? Does it make sense? Can it be preached? Is it believable?

The Outstanding Christian Thinkers series is offered to readers with questions like these in mind. It aims to provide clear, authoritative and critical accounts of outstanding Christian writers from New Testament times to the present. It ranges across the full spectrum of Christian thought to include Catholic and Protestant thinkers, thinkers from East and West, thinkers ancient, mediaeval and modern.

The series draws on the best scholarship currently available, so it will interest all with a professional concern for the history of Christian ideas. But contributors also write for general readers who have little or no previous knowledge of the subjects to be dealt with. Its volumes should therefore prove helpful at a popular as well as an academic level. For the most part they are devoted to a single thinker, but occasionally the subject is a movement or school of thought.

Brian Davies OP

Preface

If we were to organize, with the help of time-machines and science fiction, a symposium at which Christian thinkers from every age were given an opportunity to present their characteristic doctrines, it is likely that the Apostolic Fathers would mostly feel rather out of place. If by 'thinkers' we are going to mean only people who have displayed their intellectual prowess in the deep waters of speculative theology and philosophy, then most of the Apostolic Fathers should not have been invited to our symposium in the first place. But, in a more generous understanding of the word, there is good reason to recognize the Apostolic Fathers as significant Christian thinkers.

The writers whom we now know as 'the Apostolic Fathers' were first rounded up and labelled like this in the late seventeenth century, following a pioneering edition of Barnabas, Hermas, Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp by the French scholar J. B. Cotelier, who dubbed them 'Fathers who flourished in the time of the apostles'. There has in fact been much scholarly controversy as to how many of them, if any, did actually flourish in the time of the apostles, but few scholars would jib at the claim that all the writings assembled under this heading do at any rate fall within the first 120 years of Christian history. That is to say, they belong to the period when the Christian church was struggling to understand its own identity and to define its distinctness from the Judaism which had enfolded its birth. They belong to the period when the church was only gradually beginning to shape its own canon of Scripture, with a 'New Testament' as well as the old Jewish Bible. They belong to the period when the church was progressively formalizing its structures and institutions and, under pressure from various movements and ideologies quickly diagnosed as 'heretical', developing a consciousness of its own 'orthodox' doctrine.



PREFACE

Viewed from the vantage point of posterity, with its superior wisdom, these early writers can easily be seen as rather footling, if not downright weird; but if we try to appreciate their endeavours in their own context, we can recognize that they were engaged in a very serious and very necessary intellectual exercise. In their different ways—and their ways were very different, as were their immediate settings—they were applying their minds to the practical and theoretical issues facing the church. And in a time of widespread confusion, like our own, in which we have seen apparently rocklike structures crumble almost overnight, these strange voices from the past can perhaps speak to us with a new aptness and even familiarity. They were trying to find out, with few points of certainty to guide them, what it meant to be a Christian. The church has maybe, after all, not moved so very far from that primitive and exhilarating problematic.

Indeed, for the generation of the Apostolic Fathers, as for our own, the church herself very often seemed to be the problem. In the eyes of some, who did not want their religion to be too demanding, the church was far too religious; in the eyes of others, who wanted an elaborate ritual life or a chance to sail off splendidly into a spiritual empyrean, the church was not religious enough. It is interesting how much of the writing of the Apostolic Fathers constitutes a kind of apologia for the institutional church.

Since the dating of most of the works discussed is controversial, it would be foolish to claim that they are arranged here in chronological order, though by and large I have followed what I believe to be their chronological sequence. We begin with the *Didache* and Barnabas, two texts whose content makes it appropriate to take them closely together, whether or not they belong together in time. Their essential question is one which must have arisen almost immediately in the early church, and which is close to the Jewish matrix within which Christian speculation inevitably began: What, for a Christian, is the proper understanding of God's law?

Next we turn to two Roman documents, the *Shepherd* of Hermas and the letter of Clement to the Corinthians, both of which, in their different ways, are concerned with what it means to belong to the church. At first sight Hermas looks about as systematic as a rubbish dump, but I hope he will be discovered to have more structural coherence than he has sometimes been credited with. Clement's letter reflects a somewhat more developed ecclesiology than either the *Didache* or Barnabas, and he introduces us to notions which



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subsequently became routine elements in Catholic theology, such as 'apostolic succession'. After Clement we pass to Ignatius of Antioch, the first writer known to have used the phrase 'the Catholic church', and he is appropriately followed by his friend and admirer, Polycarp of Smyrna. Finally we take up the so-called 'Second Letter of Clement', whose provenance is quite uncertain.

My aim in this book has been to present an interpretation of these various writings, not to give a full account of the innumerable scholarly debates which they provoked. I have tried to take cognizance of the relevant scholarship, but it seemed inappropriate here to append lengthy notes, relating my views to those of other scholars. The primary evidence, from the texts themselves, I have cited as I go along; where it has seemed important or useful, I have provided in the notes some slightly fuller references to ancient sources and to modern discussions, as well as occasional more detailed arguments of my own. Needless to say, the sparseness of my explicit allusions to their works implies no lack of appreciation of or gratitude to the many scholars whose books and articles have helped me to develop my own understanding of these interesting texts. And I have also benefited enormously over the years from discussions with colleagues and students too numerous to name. I am particularly grateful to Anthony Meredith SJ for reading through the complete typescript with his customary critical acumen.

The editions of the texts that I have used are listed in the bibliography. All translations in this book, including those from Scripture, are my own. For the sake of convenience, I cite biblical books according to the current modern versions, such as the Revised Standard Version. References to the Apostolic Fathers are given in accordance with the standard divisions and subdivisions, which vary hardly at all from edition to edition, except that the useful division of Hermas into continuously numbered paragraphs is not found in editions prior to that included in the series Sources Chrétiennes. I have therefore cited Hermas both by paragraph number and by reference to the older divisions of the text (thus Sim. 5.5, 58.2 = Similitudes 5.5, which, in the new numbering, is paragraph 58, subdivision 2).

Simon Tugwell OP

Bibliography of editions and translations

The most substantial edition of the Apostolic Fathers is that by J. B. Lightfoot, with a large edition of Clement, Ignatius and Polycarp, (5 vols; London, 1885; London, 1890), and a smaller edition of all the Apostolic Fathers, with an English translation, in one volume (London, 1891).

There is an edition, with English translation, by Kirsopp Lake, in the Loeb Classical Library (2 vols, 1912, 1913).

All the Apostolic Fathers, except for Hermas, are included in the 3rd, revised, version of Funk's edition, edited by K. Bihlmeyer (Tübingen, 1970).

There are important editions of all the Apostolic Fathers, except 2 *Clement*, in Sources Chrétiennes:

Didache, ed. W. Rordorf and A. Tuilier (Paris, 1978).

Barnabas, ed. P. Prigent and R. A. Kraft (Paris, 1971).

Hermas, ed. R. Joly (Paris, 1968).

Clement, ed. A. Jaubert (Paris, 1971).

Ignatius and Polycarp, ed. P. T. Camelot (Paris, 1969).

There is an English translation of the Apostolic Fathers, without Hermas and 2 *Clement*, in the Penguin Classics: *Early Christian Writings*, trans. Maxwell Staniforth, with new editorial material by A. Louth (Harmondsworth, Middx, 1987).

Bibliographies will be found in all these editions, but the immense scholarly literature on the Apostolic Fathers is largely made up of

very specific, detailed studies. English-speaking readers may, however, like to note:

- L. W. Barnard, *Studies in the Apostolic Fathers and their Background* (Oxford, 1966).
 Virginia Corwin, *St Ignatius and Christianity in Antioch* (London, 1960).
 A. P. O'Hagan, *Material Re-creation in the Apostolic Fathers* (Berlin, 1968).

Abbreviations

Hermas		CD	Qumran, Covenant Document
Mand.	Commandments		
Sim.	Parables (Similitudes)	PG	J.-P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
Vis.	Visions		
		PL	J.-P. Migne (ed.), <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
Letters of Ignatius			
Eph.	Ephesians	IQH	Qumran, Hymns of Thanksgiving
Mag.	Magnesians		
Phld.	Philadelphians	IQS	Qumran, Rule of the Community
Pol.	Polycarp		
Rom.	Romans		
Sm.	Smyrnaeans		
Trall.	Tralleans		

The *Didache*

The *Didache* is a rudimentary manual of church order, compiled in the first century AD. Its 'author' has worked into his text at least two earlier documents, which may go back to the very earliest years of Christian history: a brief instruction on Christian morals, which is also known from other sources, and a liturgical directive on baptism and the eucharist. In the adaptation of these documents we can recognize the work of a single editor, who may well be the compiler of the *Didache* as a whole; him we shall call 'the Didachist'. The full title of the book, 'The teaching [Greek *didachē*] of the apostles', indicates the author's intention to pass on what he took to be apostolic tradition.

The church for which the *Didache* was written was clearly a predominantly rural one, and, although the work was certainly known and used in Egypt, it probably originated in some Greek-speaking part of western Syria.

Both the ethical catechesis incorporated into the *Didache* (the 'Two Ways') and the *Didache* itself envisage converts to Christianity from paganism; nevertheless there is an unmistakable Jewish background throughout. The *Didache* belongs in the context of the early Christian attempt to define the new religion as distinct from Judaism.

The picture of the church that we get from the *Didache* is a strange one. We are given an invaluable glimpse of a community that is making or has just made the transition from a régime of prophets and teachers to one of bishops and deacons. The author has to reassure his readers that the liturgy celebrated by these new officials



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is just as good as that of the prophets and teachers (15.1–2). And it is still regarded as normal and desirable that each local church should have its prophet and teacher. Any authentic prophet or teacher who is willing to stay should be welcomed and supported by the church, ‘for they are your high priests’ (13.1–3).

One reason why prophets and teachers are so welcome is that this is a church which has not yet developed more than the most basic doctrines about Christian belief and practice. Anyone who can ‘add to’ its ‘righteousness and knowledge of the Lord’ is to be received ‘as the Lord’ (11.2).

This dependence on ‘charismatic’ leaders, however, posed several problems. First of all, there was the general difficulty, widely encountered in the early Christian centuries, that the hospitality which Christians were expected to practise towards visitors could easily be exploited. This was sufficiently well known for the pagan writer, Lucian, to be able to make a story out of it.¹ The Didachist, therefore, gives some rules to help the community to deal with visitors. ‘Everyone who comes in the name of the Lord is to be welcomed’, but, after the initial welcome, a more stringent attitude is to be adopted. A traveller is to be helped as much as possible, but he must not stay for more than three days at the outside. If he wants to remain, he must earn his keep by doing some work. The Didachist leaves it to the good sense of the community to decide what to do with someone who has no craft or skills, but in any case no Christian is to be allowed to live in idleness. Any visitor who refuses to abide by these terms is to be shunned as a ‘trader in Christ’ (12.1–5).

Genuine prophets and teachers, on the other hand, deserve to be supported without having to do any other work. They should be given the first fruits of all the produce and income of the community (13.1–7). But how are genuine teachers to be recognized?

The primary criterion is a doctrinal one. Referring back to the ethical and liturgical instructions which occupy the first ten chapters of the *Didache*, the author says, ‘If anyone comes and teaches you all these things, welcome him; but if the teacher turns aside to teach some other doctrine with destructive consequences, do not listen to him’ (11.1–2). Any teaching which undermines the ‘apostolic tradition’, which our compiler has presented to us, is automatically regarded as disqualifying the would-be teacher. New teaching, by contrast, which proposes some development in the understanding of Christian faith and practice, is acceptable, provided it is compatible with what has already been received. In view of the very meagre tradition which is already established—it contains almost no

Christology, for instance—one cannot help but feel that the church of the *Didache* was singularly unprotected against heresy.

Apart from plain teachers, two special kinds of itinerant teacher called for more specific treatment, though they were all naturally still subject to the basic doctrinal criterion.

'Apostles' were expected to conform to a rather stricter version of the rules governing all Christian travellers. They were allowed to stay for only one day, or two if it was necessary; if they stayed for a third day, that was enough to reveal them as 'false prophets'. At their departure they were to be given only enough bread to last them until their next port of call; if they asked for money, once again they were thereby exposed as phoney (11.4–6).

These 'apostles' are evidently not to be identified with the Twelve. They are rather the successors of all the itinerant preachers sent out by Christ (cf. Luke 10:1–11), and they are an important link in the development of the itinerant monasticism characteristic of the Syrian church.² The hardening of itinerancy into a rule making it compulsory to move on nearly every day (a rule found later in Manichaean monasticism)³ was presumably the result of a combination of apostolic urgency and the need to protect the hosts of the wandering preachers from having their hospitality unfairly exploited or overburdened.

Quite what the role of the apostles was is not clear. No liturgical office is ascribed to them; it is only prophets and teachers who are described as celebrating the liturgy (15.1). Nor is there any suggestion that the content of their teaching differed from that of other teachers. The fact of their constant wandering might imply that their task was to provide basic instruction in the faith, which could then be elaborated by more settled teachers. Against this interpretation, however, is the initial rubric which welcomes teachers of any kind who can *add* to the church's 'righteousness and knowledge of the Lord' (11.2), and also the fact that teachers other than apostles are not necessarily going to settle down any more than the apostles do (cf. 13.1–2). It is unlikely that there was any rigorous division of labour between apostles and other teachers, any more than there is now between parochial clergy and visiting preachers. The essential distinction was simply that apostles were not allowed to settle down, whereas other teachers were free to stay or to move on as they pleased or in response to the needs of the churches.

'Prophets' were distinguished from other teachers by the fact that they 'spoke in spirit'. Although it is not clear exactly what 'speaking in spirit' means, it was evidently a phenomenon that could be



recognized at once. Presumably the *Didache* is referring to the same phenomenon that St Paul mentions in 1 Cor 12:3, and, like St Paul, it shows an awareness that the 'spirit' in question is not necessarily the Holy Spirit. 'Not everyone who speaks in spirit is a prophet' (11.8). We may presume that, however it was manifested, 'speaking in spirit' involved making utterances purporting to come from God and so claiming the authority of divine revelation. It was therefore crucial to have some criteria whereby to judge whether the alleged revelation was genuine or not, particularly in a church as ill-equipped with doctrine as that of the *Didache*. St Paul proposes a very simple test: if someone speaking in spirit is able to confess that 'Jesus is Lord', the inspiration comes from the Holy Spirit; if instead the person curses Jesus, then it is another spirit that is at work. Since 'speaking in spirit' is evidently not something that goes on entirely beyond the control of the speaker (cf. 1 Cor 14:32), the Pauline test can presumably be applied by requiring the speaker to confess that 'Jesus is Lord' and seeing what happens.

St Paul has no qualms about subjecting both the behaviour and the words of prophets to the critical judgement of the church (1 Cor 14:29–33). The Didachist does not share his confidence. He knows that sins against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven and, unlike the New Testament writers, he identifies this kind of sin with presuming to question or discriminate between prophetic utterances (11.7). No doubt a 'prophet' who infringed the rudimentary doctrinal principles governing all sorts of teachers would thereby be disqualified, and the Didachist himself in fact notes other things which someone speaking in spirit might say, which would reveal him to be a false prophet: 'If anyone says in spirit, "Give me money" or anything else, do not listen to him' (11.12). But, for the Didachist, the essential test is how the 'prophet' behaves. What has to be discovered is whether someone who speaks in spirit is or is not a genuine prophet; it is only the words of genuine prophets that cannot be criticized without sinning against the Holy Spirit. Although it may sometimes be possible to convict a false prophet on the basis of what he says, what is looked for primarily is that the prophet should have 'the manners of the Lord' and that he should practise what he preaches. If he asks for money or other gifts, it must be for the benefit of the poor; if he orders a meal 'in spirit', it must be for others, and he must not eat it himself (11.7–12).

A speaker in spirit who passes the test and is recognized as a 'true, tested prophet' (11.10) is exempt from critical assessment. His words must simply be accepted as coming from God. In the church

of the *Didache* there can be no question of revelation being already closed and complete. Further revelation was both needed and expected. And if the prophet did strange things, like the prophets of the Old Testament, it was for God to judge him, provided that he did not try to incite his hearers to behave likewise (11.11).

The ethical catechesis adopted and adapted by the Didachist pre-existed the *Didache*, as has already been mentioned. We get a good idea of its contents, before its adaptation by the Didachist, from a Latin version which has survived in two mediaeval manuscripts, known as the *Doctrina Apostolorum*.⁴

The overall structure of this little catechism embodies a teaching device common to Judaism and classical antiquity. The life of virtue and the life of vice are presented as two options or 'ways', with the implication, sometimes explicated, that we should follow the former and shun the latter. In the Jewish tradition, the way of virtue is associated with the promise of life, while the way of vice is associated with the threat of death. The most famous classical example is the story told by Xenophon of the choice of Herakles.⁵ In the Old Testament the outstanding instance is Deuteronomy 29 – 30, in which Moses declares the terms of God's covenant with his people and concludes, 'I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; so choose life' (Deut 30:19).⁶

It is quite likely that, before the Christians took it over, there was already a Jewish 'Two Ways', containing basic ethical instruction for Gentiles who wanted to associate themselves with Judaism. But the basic schema, common to all varieties of Judaism, could be nuanced in different ways to suit the beliefs of the different parties within Judaism, particularly the Pharisees and the Essenes.

The Pharisees (contrary to what is sometimes affirmed) had a real belief in divine grace, but they supposed that God's help is conditional on the individual's choice of the right path. Whatever choice is made by human beings, whether good or bad, is helped by God.⁷ Moses' advice to 'choose life' can thus be taken at its face value: the choice is ours.

The Essenes, by contrast, seem to have espoused a much more deterministic view of life.⁸ There are even signs that they believed in astrological determinism.⁹ For them it is therefore important to determine of what 'spirit' someone is¹⁰—just as the Christians introduced exorcisms into the pre-baptismal scrutinies to test whether or not the candidate was in the grip of any demon.¹¹ It is far from clear to what extent the Essenes or the Christians who followed them

believed that human beings were free to escape from the domination of whatever spirit, good or bad, was in possession of them.¹²

Against this background, it is probably significant that the Two Ways is found in the *Doctrina Apostolorum* and in the letter of Barnabas in a form which is not reproduced in the *Didache*. Where the *Didache* simply announces that 'there are two ways, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between the two ways' (1.1), both the *Doctrina* and Barnabas refer to two angels presiding over the two ways. Barnabas makes the strongest claim: 'On the one way light-bringing angels of God are drawn up, but angels of Satan on the other way. The one is Lord from eternity and to eternity, but the other is the ruler of this present time of lawlessness' (Barn. 18.1-2). Barnabas is explicitly inviting 'anyone who wishes' to follow 'the way of light' (19.1), but the choice of paths is much more fraught than it appears to be in the *Didache*. Barnabas presents us with 'two ways of teaching and power' (18.1). That is to say, the options are not just proposed to our spontaneous choice; each one is urged upon us, not only with the recommendation of its own appropriate teacher, but with all the power that is at the disposal of that teacher, whether it be God or Satan. At least to some extent, therefore, the exposition of the two ways is almost a diagnostic tool, to alert us to the identity of the power to which we are subject.

The *Didache* has a less sombre view of this present age. It nowhere alludes to any pressure brought to bear on us by hostile spiritual powers. Even in the grim conditions of the Last Days, the opposition comes only from false prophets and 'corrupters' and from a general increase in lawlessness, culminating in the appearance of the 'world-deceiver' (16.3-4). And the false prophets seem to be motivated by common human greed rather than by diabolical inspiration. It is in line with this relatively unthreatening scenario that the Didachist seems to be able to dispense with the idea of our being dramatically rescued by God from the tyranny of Satan; 'redemption', for him, simply means the provision that is made almost routinely for the forgiveness of our sins. If we choose to follow the right path, there is seemingly nothing to hinder us except our own weakness and mistakes.

In spite of some divergences between them, the *Didache* and the *Doctrina* both offer essentially the same account of the ways of life and death, and, particularly in the *Doctrina*, there is a perceptible, if



is not developed, the author's implicit argument must be that the incarnation is the key to our understanding of salvation: if the beginning of our salvation was the coming of Christ in the flesh to us who are in the flesh, then the end of our salvation must also be in the flesh. And the linking together of the need to keep our flesh pure and the need to keep the baptismal seal unspotted implies that we are meant to recall that it was our flesh that was sealed in baptism.

In spite of our author's belief that adultery is one of the most pronounced features of worldly life, which Christians must therefore specially renounce (4.3, 6.4), it is quite clear that he is not particularly thinking of sexual morality, when he talks about keeping the flesh pure. At the end of his little demonstration of the importance of the flesh and the need to keep it pure, he concludes, 'Let us therefore love one another, so that we may all come to the kingdom of God' (9.6). In early Christian writings, 'love' is habitually a practical virtue, meaning actual kindness to and service of other people, with little or no reference to interior sentiment or emotion. This is why Clement, in his letter to the Corinthians, formulates the obvious objection to the doctrine of justification by faith with the question, 'What are we to do, then, brethren? Shall we refrain from good works and abandon charity?' (1 Clem. 33.1). Similarly Ignatius complains that heretics who deny the flesh of Christ 'have no concern for charity', clearly meaning practical charity towards those in need (Sm. 2, 6.2). Charity sums up the whole 'outwardness' of Christian morality, which stands or falls with people's beliefs about the seriousness of the flesh.

Practical charity and mutual help are obviously important aspects of what it means to belong to the church (cf. 4.3, 17.2); but our preacher has a view of the church which gives it a much greater significance than we might expect. If we do the will of God, 'we shall belong to the first church, the spiritual church, which was created before the sun and the moon' (14.1). This is recognizably the church, as we met her in Hermas, the first-born of all creation. But the 'living church' is also the body of Christ, and our author applies to Christ and his church what is said in Genesis about the first human beings: 'God made mankind male and female' (Gen 1:27). 'The male is Christ, the female is the church.' And 'the Bible and the apostles' are cited as saying that the church has not just now come into existence; it is from above.

For it was spiritual, like our Jesus, but was revealed in the last days to save us. The church, being spiritual, was manifested in

the flesh of Christ, showing us that, if anyone keeps her in the flesh and does not corrupt her, he will receive her in the Holy Spirit. The flesh is the antitype of the Spirit. So no one who corrupts the antitype will receive the real thing.

What this means, as our preacher explains, is:

Keep the flesh, so that you will receive the Spirit. If we say that the flesh is the church and the Spirit is Christ, then anyone who insults the flesh insults the church. And no one like that will share in the Spirit, which is Christ. Such is the life and incorruptibility that this flesh can receive, when the Holy Spirit cleaves to it, and no one can either explain or state what God has prepared for his chosen ones. (14.2-5)

As an argument, the author's plea is hardly cogent or even honest, but he evokes a pattern of associations which is genuinely appealing. The 'incarnation' of the church underlines the significance of the flesh as such, and of our 'fleshly' belonging to the church. Respect for the 'flesh' of the church means both respecting the flesh of Christ, in which the church became 'incarnate', and respecting in our outward behaviour the integrity of the human person and of the human society which we ordinarily call the church. It is by our belonging to the church in the flesh in an authentic way that we shall come to belong to the spiritual church, which was created before the sun and the moon. And no one can say what an immensity of blessing that will mean.

The insistence on the flesh does not mean that a merely outward religion is, after all, sufficient. Our author has warned us often enough of the importance of sincerity and whole-heartedness. What matters is the harmony and unity of flesh and soul, of inner and outer, and this is affirmed in an apocryphal text we have already encountered, which our author duly cites. After exhorting us not to become doubtful because of the apparent delay in the fulfilment of God's promises, he tells us that, when the Lord was asked when his kingdom would come, he replied, 'When the two become one, and the outer as the inner, and the male with the female, neither male nor female'.⁷ The 'two becoming one' our preacher interprets as referring to what happens when we speak the truth to each other: there is one soul, without hypocrisy, in two bodies. 'The outer as the inner' refers to the body ('the outer') and the soul ('the inner'); the soul must be manifest in good works, just as the body is manifest. And 'the male with the female, neither male nor female' means that a

brother looks at a sister without 'thinking anything feminine about her, nor does she think anything masculine about him' (12.3-5).

This last comment must be taken as alluding to the overcoming of the embarrassment attendant upon sexuality, which the apocryphal text cited by our author almost certainly mentioned.⁸ How far our author was aware of or interested in the more daring speculation that this topic engendered in some circles and the more adventurous practices that sometimes went with it, we cannot tell.⁹ He seems content with a fairly humdrum interpretation of the restoration of unity which is the antidote, brought by Christ, to the multiple fragmentation from which fallen humanity suffers.

'When you do these things, he says, the kingdom of my Father will come' (12.6). Our preacher evidently does not want to claim that 'these things' are already to be found in the Christian church. 'Paradise restored' is, for him, still something to be hoped for, not something to be acted out in the church.

However, it is not only due to our failure to live up to redemption that the coming of the kingdom is delayed. This life is a kind of athletic trial, for which we hope to be crowned in the future. And 'none of the righteous obtained quick results'. 'If God gave the just their reward in a hurry, then at once we would be practising trade, not religion, and it would appear that we were being righteous in pursuit of profit, not piety' (20.2-4). The delay in the coming of the kingdom gives us a chance to show that we are genuinely motivated by reverence for God and not just out for a quick supernatural buck.

Notes

- 1 Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 11; Didascalia, trans. R. H. Connolly (Oxford, 1929), p. 90.
- 2 Cf. S. Safrai and M. Stein (eds), *The Jewish People in the First Century*, vol. I (Assen, 1974), p. 498.
- 3 Militating against too early a date is the fact that the New Testament is cited as 'scripture' (2.4); but the lack of any reference to Gnosticism in a document so concerned about false doctrine suggest that *2 Clement* cannot be dated too far into the second century.
- 4 This seems the more plausible reading; the manuscripts are divided between 'we' and 'you'.
- 5 Cf. Hermas, Vis. 4.2, 23.6, where Hermas plays on 'hearing' (*akouō*) and 'mishearing' (*parakouō*), the latter being connected with indecisiveness (*dipsychia*). *2 Clement* never uses the more common word, *parabainō* (transgress).
- 6 This list of fasting, prayer and almsgiving, as the three essential ways of expiating one's sins, which became classic and was taken for granted in

the Middle Ages (cf. Augustine, *Sermons* 9.11.17, PL 38:88; Leo the Great, *Sermons* 12.4, PL 54:171C; William of Auxerre, *Summa Aurea* IV 11.2, ed. J. Ribailier [Grottaferrata, 1985], p. 272; Raymund of Penyafort, *Summa de Poenitentia* III [Rome, 1603], pp. 467–8), seems already to have been conventional: cf. Matthew 6; Gospel of Thomas, logion 14 (logion 104 makes it clear that these works are intended as remedies for sin).

7 Cf. above, Chapter 4, note 1.

8 In Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* III 92.2, the text runs, 'When you trample the garment of shame, and when the two become one, and the male with the female, neither male nor female'. Logion 22 and 37 in the Gospel of Thomas seem to be an amplification of the same text; the latter in particular makes it clear that a return to the unembarrassed nakedness of prelapsarian paradise is envisaged. Cf. Irenaeus, *Demonstration* 14, on the innocent sexuality of Adam and Eve before the Fall; for a later application of the same idea to the stripping off of one's clothes at baptism, cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catecheses* 2.2; for a moral, ascetic application, cf. *Liber Graduum* 15.3.

9 In the Gospel of Thomas, anyway, the overcoming of sexual differentiation is seen as a return to the aboriginal condition of Adam, before the creation of Eve, when he was effectively androgynous (cf. G. Quispel, *Makarius, das Thomasevangelium und das Lied von der Perle* [Leiden, 1967], p. 32; J. E. Ménard, *L'Évangile selon Thomas* [Leiden, 1975], pp. 113–15). The practice of chaste cohabitation (cf. above, p. 87) is probably intended as a practical demonstration of the return to prelapsarian sexual innocence.