

# DIDACHE

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## Chapter I

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<sup>1</sup> There are two Ways, one of Life and one of Death, and there is a great difference between the two Ways.

<sup>2</sup> The Way of Life is this: “First, you shall love the God who made you, secondly, your neighbour as yourself; and whatsoever you would not have done to yourself, do not to another.”<sup>[1]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Now, the teaching of these words is this: “Bless those that curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for those that persecute you. For what credit is it to you if you love those that love you? Do not even the heathen do the same?” But, for your part, “love those that hate you,” and you will have no enemy.

<sup>4</sup> “Abstain from carnal” and bodily “lusts.” “If any man strike you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek also,” and you will be perfect. “If any man impress you to go with him one mile, go with him two. If any man takes your coat, give him your shirt also. If any man will take from you what is yours, refuse it not” - not even if you can.<sup>[2]</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Give to everyone that asks of you, and do not refuse, for the Father's will is that we give to all from the gifts we have received. Blessed is he that gives according to the mandate; for he is innocent. Woe to him who receives; for if any man receive alms under pressure of need he is innocent; but he who receives it without need shall be tried as to why he took and for what, and being in prison he shall be examined as to his deeds, and “he shall not come out until he pays the last farthing.”

<sup>6</sup> But concerning this it was also said, “Let your alms sweat into your hands until you know to whom you are giving.”

## Chapter II

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<sup>1</sup> But the second commandment of the teaching is this:

<sup>2</sup> “You shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery”; you shall not commit sodomy; you shall not commit fornication; you shall not steal; you shall not use magic;

you shall not use philtres; you shall not procure abortion, you shall not commit infanticide; “you shalt not covet your neighbor’s goods”;

<sup>3</sup> you shall not commit perjury, “you shall not bear false witness”; you shall not speak evil; you shall not bear malice.

<sup>4</sup> You shall not be double-minded nor double-tongued, for to be double-tongued is the snare of death.

<sup>5</sup> Your speech shall not be false nor vain, but completed in action.

<sup>6</sup> You shall not be covetous nor extortionate, nor a hypocrite, nor malignant, nor proud; you shall make no evil plan against thy neighbour.

<sup>7</sup> You shall hate no man; but some you shall reprove,<sup>[3]</sup> and for some shall you pray, and some you shall love more than you own life.

### **Chapter III**

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<sup>1</sup> My child, flee from every evil man and from all like him.

<sup>2</sup> Be not proud, for pride leads to murder, nor jealous, nor contentious, nor passionate, for from all these murders are engendered.

<sup>3</sup> My child, be not lustful, for lust leads to fornication, nor a speaker of base words, nor a lifter up of the eyes, for from all these is adultery engendered.

<sup>4</sup> My child, regard not omens, for this leads to idolatry; neither be an enchanter, nor an astrologer, nor a magician, neither wish to see these things, for from them idolatry is engendered.

<sup>5</sup> My child, be not a liar, for lying leads to theft, nor a lover of money, nor vain-glorious, for from all these things are thefts engendered.

<sup>6</sup> My child, be not a grumbler, for this leads to blasphemy, nor stubborn, nor a thinker of evil, for from all these are blasphemies engendered,

<sup>7</sup> but be “meek, for the meek shall inherit the earth;”

<sup>8</sup> be long-suffering, and merciful and guileless, and quiet, and good, and ever fearing the words that you have heard.

<sup>9</sup> You shall not exalt yourself, nor let you soul be presumptuous. You soul shall not

consort with the lofty, but you shall walk with righteous and humble men.

<sup>10</sup> Receive the accidents that befall to you as good, knowing that nothing happens without God.

## **Chapter IV**

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<sup>1</sup> My child, you shall remember, day and night, him who speaks the word of God to you, and you shalt honor him as the Lord, for where the Lord's nature is spoken of, there is he present.

<sup>2</sup> And you shall seek daily the presence of the saints, that you may find rest in their words.

<sup>3</sup> You shall not desire a schism, but shall reconcile those that strive. You shall give righteous judgment; you shall favor no man's person in reprovng transgression.

<sup>4</sup> You shall not be of two minds whether it shall be or not.

<sup>5</sup> Be not one who stretches out his hands to receive, but shuts them when it comes to giving.

<sup>6</sup> From what you have gained by you hands you shall give a ransom for your sins.

<sup>7</sup> You shall not hesitate to give, nor shall you grumble when thou give, for you shall know who is the good Paymaster of the reward.

<sup>8</sup> You shall not turn away the needy, but shall share everything with your brother, and shall not say that it is your own, for if you are sharers in the imperishable, how much more in the things which perish?

<sup>9</sup> You shall not withhold discipline from you son or daughter, but thou shall teach them the fear of God from their youth.

<sup>10</sup> You shall not order in anger your servant or handmaid, who hope in the same God, lest they cease to fear the God who is over you both; for he comes not to call men with respect of persons, but those whom the Spirit has prepared.

<sup>11</sup> But do you who are servants be subject to your masters, as to God's representative, in reverence and fear.

<sup>12</sup> You shall hate all hypocrisy, and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord.

<sup>13</sup> You shall not forsake the commandments of the Lord, but you shall keep what you received, “adding nothing to it and taking nothing away.”

<sup>14</sup> In the congregation you shall confess your transgressions, and you shall not enter into prayer with an evil conscience. This is the Way of Life.

## **Chapter V**

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<sup>1</sup> But the Way of Death is this: First of all, it is wicked and full of cursing, murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, witchcrafts, charms, robberies, false witness, hypocrisies, a double heart, fraud, pride, malice, stubbornness, covetousness, foul speech, jealousy, impudence, haughtiness, boastfulness.

<sup>2</sup> Persecutors of the good, haters of truth, lovers of lies, knowing not the reward of righteousness, not cleaving to the good nor to righteous judgment, spending wakeful nights not for good but for wickedness, from whom meekness and patience is far, lovers of vanity, following after reward, unmerciful to the poor, not working for him who is oppressed with toil, without knowledge of him who made them, murderers of children, corrupters of God's creatures, turning away the needy, oppressing the distressed, advocates of the rich, unjust judges of the poor, altogether sinful; may you be delivered, my children, from all these.

## **Chapter VI**

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<sup>1</sup> See “that no one make you to err” from this Way of the teaching, for he teaches you without God.

<sup>2</sup> For if you can bear the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect, but if you cannot, do what you can.

<sup>3</sup> And concerning food, bear what you can, but keep strictly from that which is offered to idols, for it is the worship of dead gods.

## **Chapter VII**

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<sup>1</sup> Concerning baptism, baptize thus: Having first rehearsed all these things, “baptize, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” in running water;

<sup>2</sup> but if you have no running water, baptize in other water, and if you cannot in cold, then in warm.

<sup>3</sup> But if you have neither, pour water three times on the head “in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

<sup>4</sup> And before the baptism let the baptizer and the one who is to be baptized fast, and any others who are able. And you shall bid the one who is to be baptized to fast one or two days before.

## **Chapter VIII**

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<sup>1</sup> Let not your fasts be with the hypocrites, for they fast on Mondays and Thursdays, but do you fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

<sup>2</sup> And do not pray as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in his Gospel, pray thus: “Our Father, who is in Heaven, hallowed be your Name, your Kingdom come, your will be done, as in Heaven so also upon earth; give us this day our daily<sup>[4]</sup> bread, and forgive us our debt as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into trial, but deliver us from the Evil One, for yours is the power and the glory for ever.”

<sup>3</sup> Pray thus three times a day.

## **Chapter IX**

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<sup>1</sup> And concerning the Eucharist, hold<sup>[5]</sup> Eucharist thus:

<sup>2</sup> First concerning the Cup, “We give thanks to you, our Father, for the Holy Vine of David your son, which you made known to us through your son Jesus; to you be glory for ever.”

<sup>3</sup> And concerning the broken Bread: “We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you made known to us through Jesus your son. To you be glory for ever.

<sup>4</sup> As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was brought together and became one, so let your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your Kingdom, for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.”

<sup>5</sup> But let none eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized in the Lord's Name. For concerning this also did the Lord say, “Give not that which is holy to the dogs.”

## **Chapter X**

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<sup>1</sup> But after you are satisfied with food, give thanks in the following way:

<sup>2</sup> “We give thanks to you, O Holy Father, for your Holy Name which you made to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you made known to us through Jesus your Child. To you be glory for ever.

<sup>3</sup> You, Lord Almighty, created all things for your Name's sake, and gave food and drink to men for their enjoyment, that they might give thanks to you, but us have you blessed with spiritual food and drink and eternal light through your Child.

<sup>4</sup> Above all we give thanks to you for you are mighty. To you be glory for ever.

<sup>5</sup> Remember, Lord, your Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in your love, and gather it together in its holiness from the four winds to your kingdom which you have prepared for it. For yours is the power and the glory for ever.

<sup>6</sup> Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If any man be holy, let him come! If any man be not, let him repent: Maranatha,<sup>[6]</sup> Amen.”

<sup>7</sup> But suffer the prophets to hold Eucharist as they will.

## **Chapter XI**

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<sup>1</sup> Whosoever then comes and teaches you all these things aforesaid, receive him.

<sup>2</sup> But if the teacher himself be perverted and teach another doctrine to destroy these things, do not listen to him, but if his teaching be for the increase of righteousness and knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord.

<sup>3</sup> And concerning the Apostles and Prophets, act thus according to the ordinance of the Gospel.<sup>[7]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Let every Apostle who comes to you be received as the Lord,

<sup>5</sup> but let him not stay more than one day, or if need be a second as well; but if he stay three days, he is a false prophet.

<sup>6</sup> And when an Apostle goes forth let him accept nothing but bread till he reach his night's lodging; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet.

<sup>7</sup> Do not test or examine any prophet who is speaking in a spirit, “for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven.”

<sup>8</sup> But not everyone who speaks in a spirit is a prophet, except he has the behavior of the Lord. From his behavior, then, the false prophet and the true prophet shall be known.

<sup>9</sup> And no prophet who orders a meal in a spirit shall eat of it: otherwise he is a false prophet.

<sup>10</sup> And every prophet who teaches the truth, if he does not what he teaches is a false prophet.

<sup>11</sup> But no prophet who has been tried and is genuine, though he enact a worldly mystery<sup>[8]</sup> of the Church, if he teach not others to do what he does himself, shall be judged by you: for he has his judgment with God, for so also did the prophets of old.

<sup>12</sup> But whosoever shall say in a spirit ‘Give me money, or something else,’ you shall not listen to him; but if he tells you to give on behalf of others in want, let none judge him.

## **Chapter XII**

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<sup>1</sup> Let everyone who “comes in the Name of the Lord” be received; but when you have tested him you shall know him, for you shall have understanding of true and false.<sup>[9]</sup>

<sup>2</sup> If he who comes is a traveller, help him as much as you can, but he shall not remain with you more than two days, or, if need be, three.

<sup>3</sup> And if he wishes to settle among you and has a craft, let him work for his bread.

<sup>4</sup> But if he has no craft provide for him according to your understanding, so that no man shall live among you in idleness because he is a Christian.

<sup>5</sup> But if he will not do so, he is making traffic of Christ; beware of such.

## **Chapter XIII**

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<sup>1</sup> But every true prophet who wishes to settle among you is “worthy of his food.”

<sup>2</sup> Likewise a true teacher is himself worthy, like the workman, of his food.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore you shall take the first fruit of the produce of the winepress and of the threshing-floor and of oxen and sheep, and shall give them as the firstfruits to the prophets, for they are your high priests.

<sup>4</sup> But if you have not a prophet, give to the poor.

<sup>5</sup> If you make bread, take the firstfruits, and give it according to the commandment.

<sup>6</sup> Likewise when you open a jar of wine or oil, give the firstfruits to the prophets.

<sup>7</sup> Of money also and clothes, and of all your possessions, take the firstfruits, as it seem best to you, and give according to the commandment.

#### **Chapter XIV**

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<sup>1</sup> On the Lord's Day of the Lord come together, break bread and hold Eucharist, after confessing your transgressions that your offering may be pure;

<sup>2</sup> but let none who has a quarrel with his fellow join in your meeting until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice be not defiled.

<sup>3</sup> For this is that which was spoken by the Lord, "In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great king," says the Lord, "and my name is wonderful among the nations."

#### **Chapter XV**

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<sup>1</sup> Appoint therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, meek men, and not lovers of money, and truthful and approved, for they also minister to you the ministry of the prophets and teachers.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore do not despise them, for they are your honorable men together with the prophets and teachers.

<sup>3</sup> And reprove one another not in wrath but in peace as you find in the Gospel, and let none speak with any who has done a wrong to his neighbour, nor let him hear a word from you until he repents.

<sup>4</sup> But your prayers and alms and all your acts perform as you find in the Gospel of our Lord.

#### **Chapter XVI**

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<sup>1</sup> "Watch" over your life: "Let your lamps" be not quenched "and your loins" be not unguided, but be "ready," for ye know not "the hour in which our Lord comes."

<sup>2</sup> But be frequently gathered together seeking the things which are profitable for your souls, for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you except you be found perfect at the last time;

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<sup>3</sup> for in the last days the false prophets and the corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall change to hate;

<sup>4</sup> for as lawlessness increases they shall hate one another and persecute and betray, and then shall appear the deceiver of the world as a Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders and the earth shall be given over into his hands and he shall commit iniquities which have never been since the world began.

<sup>5</sup> Then shall the creation of mankind come to the fiery trial and “many shall be offended” and be lost, but “they who endure” in their faith “shall be saved” by the curse itself.<sup>[10]</sup>

<sup>6</sup> And “then shall appear the signs” of the truth. First the sign spread out in Heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet, and third the resurrection of the dead:

<sup>7</sup> but not of all the dead, but as it was said, “The Lord shall come and all his saints with him.”

<sup>8</sup> Then shall the world “see the Lord coming on the clouds of Heaven.”

### Original footnotes

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1. This is the so-called “negative form of the Golden Rule.” It is found in some manuscripts in the “Apostolic decrees” in Acts 15:28, and is, in various forms, met with in Jewish and early Christian literature.
2. The Greek is literally “for thou art not even able”; but this makes no sense, and though an emendation is difficult the sense must be something like that given by the translation—unless, indeed, the whole phrase be merely a flippant gloss, which has been erroneously taken into the texts.
3. On the ground of a comparison with Jude 22 f. etc., some think that “and some thou shalt pity” ought to be added.
4. This is the traditional translation of ἐπιούσιον, but it is by no means certain that it is correct. The word has from the beginning been a puzzle, and its meaning is not clearly known. See further any good commentary on the gospels.
5. The translation fails to preserve the play on the words, which might be rendered “concerning the giving of thanks, give thanks thus, etc.” But this would obscure the fact that eucharistia is here quite clearly “Eucharist” (cf. verse 5).
6. A transliteration of Aramaic words meaning “Our Lord! Come!”
7. It is unknown to what ordinance the writer refers.

8. This passage has never been satisfactorily explained: it probably refers to a tendency among some prophets to introduce forms of worship, or of illustration of their teaching, of doubtful propriety, if so the reference below to the prophets of old is perhaps an allusion to Hosea (Hos. 1, 2 ff.).
9. Literally, “right and left understanding.” The meaning is obscure; but there seem to be other traces in early literature of a doctrine that each curse also contained the elements of a counterbalancing power to salvation. There is a valuable and long note on the subject in Rendel Harris's edition of the Didache.