

PAPERS.

The Idiom and Vocabulary of the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.¹

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SINCE the discovery of the Sinaitic Bible in 1859, no book has created such a literary and theological sensation as the "Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," discovered and published in 1883, with great learning and ability, by the Nicomedian Metropolitan Bryennios, who may justly be styled the Tischendorf of the Eastern Church. German, French, English, and American scholars have run a race of honorable rivalry in editions, translations, and comments on this most remarkable book. Even the popular press, secular and religious, has manifested an unusual interest in the *Didache*, and every sect and theological party was anxious to find in it aid and comfort for its peculiar creed, worship, polity, and discipline. For that long-lost book promised to give a summary of the combined teaching of the inspired Apostles in the shape of a complete manual of catechetical instruction and church-membership. The great interest and significance of the *Didache* consists in filling the gap between the Apostolic age and the Church of the second century, and shedding light on that mysterious transition period between A.D. 70-150.

Much of its value depends of course on its age. Among the surest means to ascertain it is its language and vocabulary.

I shall briefly present the results of my study under three heads:

¹ This is but an abstract of the paper presented in June, 1885, by Prof. Schaff. For details the reader is referred to the author's book since published under the title: *The Oldest Church Manual called the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα Ἀποστόλων). *The Didache and Kindred Documents in the Original, with Translations and Discussions of post-Apostolic Teaching, Baptism, Worship, and Discipline, and with Illustrations and Facsimiles of the Jerusalem Manuscript.* N. York (Funk & Wagnalls), second ed. 1886, 301 pages.

1. The Vocabulary; 2. The Idiom; 3. The bearing of both on the age of composition and, by inference, on the value of the document.¹

I. *The Vocabulary.*

The <i>Didache</i> contains	2,190	words.
Its vocabulary comprises	55 ²	“
It has in common with New Testament	504	“
It has in common with classical writers	497	“
It has in common with Septuagint,	479	“
Words not found in the N. T. . .	48	
Words not found in N. T., but in Septuagint	17	(16 of them classical).
Words not found in N. T., but classical	30	(16 in Septuagint).
N. T. words used in a different sense	14	
Hapaxlegomenon, only	1,	<i>προσεξομολογέω</i> , xiv. 1; but von Gebhardt suggests <i>προεξομ.</i> , and is followed by Hilgenfeld, Harnack, and Zahn.

New words afterwards used by ecclesiastical writers 16.

These are found in Ignatius, the Ecclesiastical Canons, the Apostolical Constitutions, Athanasius, Chrysostom, etc. Among this class the most important terms are the following:—

ἐκπέτασις, xvi. 6, *an expansion* (from *ἐκπετάννυμι*, *to spread out*).

κοσμοπλάνος, xvi. 4, the *World-deceiver*, or Antichrist, suggested by Matt. xxvii. 63: *ἐκεῖνος ὁ πλάνος*, Rev. xx. 3, *ἵνα μὴ πλανήσῃ τὰ ἔθνη*, v. 10, *ὁ διάβολος ὁ πλανῶν αὐτούς*.

κυριακή, xiv. 1, used as a noun for *the Lord's Day*, with the pleonastic addition *τοῦ κυρίου*, *of the Lord*,—comp. Rev. i. 10, where *κυριακή* is used as an adjective in the same sense.

πανθαμάρτητος, v. 2, *wholly sinful*.

ὑψηλόφθαλμος, iii. 3, *lofty-eyed, wanton-eyed*.

χριστέμπορος, xii. 5, *Christ-trafficker, Christ-monger*, who makes godliness a means of gain. Comp. 1 Tim. vi. 5.

¹ See the book referred to, chap. xxv. 95 sqq.

II. *The Idiom.*

The idiom of the *Didache* is the Hellenistic dialect of the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament. The body is Greek, the soul is Hebrew, the spirit is Christian. It differs from classical Greek and agrees with the Septuagint, the Jewish Apocrapha, and Philo by the infusion of Hebraisms, such as οὐ πᾶς (לֹא כָל) for οὐδεὶς, *no one*; πρόσωπον λαμβάνειν (נִשָּׂא פָנִים), *to favor, to be partial*; the designation of Friday as παρασκευή, *preparation day* (Sabbath eve); *day and night*, for night and day, etc. The sentences are built up according to the laws of Hebrew parallelism such as we find in the sapiential literature and in the Sermon on the Mount. Altogether the style of the *Didache* most strongly resembles that of the Gospel of Matthew, from which the writer, without naming it, borrows about twenty passages, more or less closely. Among these quotations and reminiscences is the whole Lord's Prayer, as given in Matt. vi., with only four slight departures, namely, ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ for ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, the omission of τῆς before γῆς, the singular τὴν ὀφειλὴν for τὰ ὀφειλήματα, and the addition of the doxology (yet without the βασιλεία).

On the other hand, the style and language of the *Didache* differs from the post-Apostolic and patristic Greek by these Hebraisms (which soon disappeared except in Scripture quotations), and by the absence of technical ecclesiastical and dogmatic terms, or later meanings of New Testament terms. *E.g.*, χειροτονέω in classical writers and in the New Testament means *to stretch out the hand* (χείρ), or *to vote by show of hands*, hence *to elect, to appoint* (see Acts xiv. 23; 2 Cor. viii. 19), and is used in the same sense in the *Didache* (xv. 1); but in the Apostolical Constitutions and the Apostolical Canons, it means *to ordain*. Hence the Apostolical Constitutions in the parallel passage (vii. 31) substitute προχειρίσασθε for χειροτονήσατε.

III. *The Age of the Didache.*

The bearing of these linguistic facts upon the question of the age is in favor of the greatest antiquity. They point to the second half of the first century. There is nothing in the vocabulary and language of the *Didache* which might not have been written by a Jewish-Christian contemporary of the Apostles and Evangelists. The few words which do not occur in the New Testament were either in classical or Hellenistic use at the time, or coined from New

Testament ideas and words (as *κοσμοπλάνας*, *χριστέμπορος*, and *πανθαμάρτητος*), and hence they readily passed into patristic usage.

This conclusion is sustained by the contents of the *Didache*. It betrays throughout apostolical and post-Apostolic surroundings. To judge from the argument of silence, it was written before the conclusion of the New Testament canon, before the Pauline theology had pervaded the Church, before the existence of annual church festivals, before the heresies of Ebionism and Gnosticism, before the establishment of episcopacy as distinct from the presbyterate, before any dogmas were formulated, and before a distinct creed, such as the Apostles' Creed, or any of the ante-Nicene rules of faith was required from the baptismal candidates.

The *Didache*, moreover, presupposes and clearly exhibits the most primitive state of catechetical teaching, worship, and discipline. The eucharist and agape were still one feast, as in the first Epistle to the Corinthians. The eucharistic prayers and thanksgiving, in chaps. ix., x., and xi., are the simplest liturgical prayers, and far shorter than those contained in the Clementine and other liturgies of the Nicene age. The bishops are still identical with the presbyters, as in the Acts, in the Pastoral Epistles, and in Phil. i. 1. A secondary class of Apostles or travelling Evangelists carry on the spread of the Gospel among the unconverted. The prophets in the New Testament sense preach, exhort, and comfort the converts, and likewise move from place to place, or are settled in a particular locality; while bishops and deacons, elected and supported by the people, attend to the wants of local churches.

All these considerations would lead us up almost to the middle of the first century, or at all events to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (which is not alluded to either as a future or as a past event).

But on the other hand, the Gospel of Matthew was already in existence, for the *Didache* is chiefly built on it, and we can hardly put that Gospel before A.D. 60 or 66. The Didachographer seems also to have some slight acquaintance with Luke and Acts and some epistles of Paul. He uses a number of phrases which are characteristically Johannean, as "Holy Father," "eternal life," "to be perfected in love." The chief argument in favor of the *post*-Apostolic origin of the work is the extreme improbability that an anonymous writer should have undertaken to summarize the teaching of the Twelve Apostles during their lifetime. It is true James the Elder, Peter, Paul, and James the Lord's Brother died martyrs before the

destruction of Jerusalem ; but Philip and John survived that event, and the beloved disciple saw the closing years of the first century.

We may therefore safely assign the *Didache* to a Jewish-Christian disciple of the Apostles, probably of Palestine or Syria, between A.D. 80 and 100.

The author must be ranked with the Apostolical Fathers so-called, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Barnabas, and Hermas, and the *Didache* will hereafter be treated in every work on the Canon and in every church history as one of the most important and interesting documents of the post-Apostolic age.