Chapter Three

The Influence of the Two Ways in Christian Literature

Chapter 2 has shown that materials similar to those in Didache 1-6 are found in a number of other early Christian writings. The close affinities between these different versions of the Two Ways (including Did 1-6) are generally explained in modern research by their – direct or indirect – dependence upon a Jewish Two Ways document which is no longer known to us. This original manual, which in some form lived on in a number of Greek versions, was probably written in Greek. The most accurate form of the lost Two Ways document, however, is retained in its Latin version, in the Doctrina Apostolorum, which survived in two mediaeval manuscripts, the Monacensis lat. 6264, fol. 102vo-103vo and the Mellicensis 597, fol. 115vo.¹

The present chapter is divided into two parts. The first part traces the influence of the Two Ways in the early church beyond the scope of the above-mentioned compilations. Because in addition to its incorporation in the Didache and in most of the other writings mentioned above, the Two Ways tradition is interpolated into other materials as well, it is hardly conceivable that the Two Ways document never existed apart from its presence in these compositions. In order to corroborate this assumption, it is of importance to know whether the indirect Christian tradition attests to the diffusion of the original Greek document and/or of its Latin translation. Are there quotations and testimonies of church fathers and of other Christian writings available evidencing an independent Two Ways tradition? A related question regards the life situation (Sitz im Leben) of this teaching within early Christianity. Of course, one might refer to its increased impact as a moral code, once a version of Two Ways was presented as sayings of individual apostles (the “Elfapostelmoral”) and was incorporated in a public regulation of the church

¹ Further, see below, Chap. 4, pp. 113-14. For the date of the Monacensis, see also Rordorf-Tuilier, La Doctrine des douze Apôtres, 203. The text of this Doctrina version is edited by Schlecht, Doctrina XII Apostolorum (1901) 101-104.

For the date of the Mellicensis and last edition of its Doctrina version, cf. also Niederwimmer, 'Doctrina Apostolorum (Cod. Mellic. 597)'.

A recension of the Doctrina, as represented in these mss., is found in Lietzmann, Die Didache and, more recently, Rordorf-Tuilier, La Doctrine des douze Apôtres, 207-210.
(Apostolic Church Order). Our concern, however, here is with the function of the Two Ways manual in its first Christian setting. The second part of this chapter investigates the influence of the Two Ways manual on the Latin church literature dating from later (Merovingian and Carolingian) periods.

The Early Christian Period

Our search for traces of the Two Ways begins in the post-apostolic period. In Stromateis I, 20, 100, 4 Clement of Alexandria quotes the following phrase: οὐ εἰς τὴν γίνομεν ἑαυτῷ ὑπακοὴν, τῷ ἑαυτοῦ προς τὴν κλοπὴν (“Child, do not be a liar, for lying leads to theft”). Although Clement does not specify his source, the text is very similar to Did 3:5 (Τέκνον μου, μη γίνον ψεύστης, ἐπειδὴ δὴ δῆμη τὸ ψεύσμα εἰς τὴν κλοπὴν). However, considering the similar version of Doctr. 3:5 (“Noli fieri mendax, quia mendacium ducit ad furturn”), it is not clear whether the quotation can be traced back to our Didache, or whether Clement may have been tributary to a separate Greek Two Ways manual instead.

Other places in Clement’s writings are relevant in this respect as well. In his rendering of the commandments of the Decalogue, he sometimes appears to allude to the text in Did 2:2: οὐ φονεύσεις, οὐ μοιχεύσεις, οὐ παραδοθήσεις, οὐ πορνεύσεις, οὐ κλέψεις... (“You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not corrupt children, you shall not fornicate, you shall not steal...”). On account of the repeated inclusion of the clause οὐ παραδοθήσεις in Stromateis III, 4, 36, 5; Protrepticus X, 108, 5; Paedagogus II, 10, 89 and III, 12, 89, which is missing in the biblical Decalogues, Clement may have had a passage in view like the one in Did 2:2. The same expression, however, is found in the Latin Doctr. 2:2 (“non puerum violabis”) in a similar list of precepts. What the discussion about these references comes down to is that Clement may have had the Didache or the Greek Two Ways document in mind here. Because he does in fact not give evidence of any acquaintance with Did 7-16, it is more likely that his source was not

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3 From the preceding phrase ὑπὸ τῆς γραφῆς most commentators conclude that Clement considered the text from which he quotes as Scripture. For a discussion, see Niederwimmer, Die Didache, 19.

4 Preceding this rendering of the (second table of) the Decalogue (ἡ δεκάδος ὑπὸ τῆς ἑκάστου in 12,89) in the last passage, we find the positive form of the Golden Rule and the double love commandment (12,88). This structure (although the Golden Rule and double love commandment appear in reverse order here) corresponds with the teaching of the Two Ways. Nevertheless, since the Golden Rule is formulated in a way which is similar to Matt 7:12 and the additional two elements are interspersed with Matthean quotations, it is difficult to decide whether this larger part of Clement’s instruction is really based upon the Two Ways.

5 It is true, the expression τὸν οἶνον, τὸ αἷμα τῆς ἁμέλου τῆς δαβίδ, ἐκχέως (“pour out the wine, the blood of the vine of David”) in Clement’s Quis dives salvetur? (29,4) echoes Did 9:2. In accordance with Niederwimmer (Die Didache, 20), however, we consider this terminology to be liturgical. It is