

The Reliques of the Elders Preserved in Irenaeus



The Reliques of the Elders Preserved in Irenaeus Apostolic Fathers (Lightfoot)

I. Irenaeus Heresies, Preface to Bk. I.

According to what was said of such cases by one better than we are:

the precious stone, The emerald, accounted of much worth, Is shamed by artful mimicry in glass,

whenever he is not by, who hath power to prove it, and Detect the craft so cunningly devised.

Again, when alloy of brass Is mixed with silver, who that simple is Shall easily be able to assay?

The Greek is preserved in Epiphanius Haer. xxxi. 9 (ed. Dindorf, 1859-62, 11. p. 148).

II. IRENAEUS i. 13. 3.

As he that was better than we are affirmed of such persons, A daring and shameless thing is a soul heated with empty air.

The Greek from Epiphanius Haer. xxxiv.2 (Dindorf, II. p. 220).

III. IRENAEUS i. 15. 6.

Wherefore also justly did. the divine Elder and herald of the truth exclaim against thee in verse, thus saying:

Thou idol-framer, Mark, and portent-gazer, Skill'd in the astrologer's and wizard's art, Strengthening thereby the words of thy false lore, Dazzling with signs whome'er thou lead'st astray, Strange handywork of God-

defying power Such to perform thy father Satan still Affords thee might,
by an angelic Power Azazel:—thee, by the destroyer mark'd Chosen
forerunner of the impious craft. Thus far that Elder, beloved of God.

The Greek in Epiphanius Haer. xxxiv. 11 (Dindorf 11. p. 233).

IV. IRENAEUS ii. 22. 5. IV. IRENAEUS ii. 22. 5.

But that the age of thirty years is the prime of a young man's ability, and that it reaches even to the fortieth year, every one will allow ; but after the fortieth and fiftieth year, it begins to verge towards elder age : which our Lord was of when He taught, as the Gospel and all the Elders witness, who in Asia conferred with John the Lord's disciple, to the effect that John had delivered these things unto them : for he abode with them until the times of Trajan. And some of them saw not only John, but others also of the Apostles, and had this same account from them, and witness to the aforesaid account.

The Greek from Eusebius Hist. Eccl. iii. 23. 3.

V. IRENAEUS iii. 17. 4.

As was said by one who was before us, concerning all who in any way deprave the things of God, and adulterate the truth, It is evil mingling chalk in the milk of God.

IRENAEUS iii. 17. 4 (Stieren 1. p. 516).

As one of the ancients saith, God for His part transferred the curse unto the earth, that it might not continue in the man.

(Stieren 1. p. 547).

VII. IRENAEUS preface to Bk. Iv.

For which cause they who have been before us, yea, and much better men than we, were nevertheless unable to dispute against the Valentinians, as

not knowing their system: which we in our first Book have very diligently expounded unto thee.

(Stieren I. p. 558).

VIII. IRENAEUS iv. 4. 2.

For God doeth all things in measure and order, and nothing with Him wants measure, since nothing is unnumbered. And well spake he who said that the Immeasurable Father Himself was measured in the Son : for the measure of the Father is the Son, since He even contains Him.

(Stieren 1. p. 568). The Greek from the Parallela of John Damascene.

IX. IRENAEUS iv. 27. 1—28. 1.

As I have heard from a certain Elder, who had heard from those who had seen the Apostles, and from their scholars :—that it is enough for the ancients to be reproved, as they are by the Scriptures, for what they did without counsel from the Spirit. For God, being no respecter of persons, upon things not done to His pleasure brings such reproof as is suitable. [Thus in the case of David, when on the one hand he was suffering persecution from Saul for righteousness' sake, and flying from king Saul, and avenged not himself on his enemy, and was singing of Christ's Advent, and teaching the nations wisdom, and doing all by the suggestion of the Spirit, he pleased God.

But when for lust he took to his own self Bathsheba Uriah's wife, the scripture hath said of him, But the thing etc. (2 Sam. xi. 27): and Nathan the prophet is sent unto him, to shew him his sin, that he, passing sentence on himself, and judging himself, may find mercy and forgiveness from Christ.

And he said unto him etc. (2 Sam. xii. 1—7); and goes over the rest in order, upbraiding him, and reckoning up God's favours towards him, and how he had provoked the Lord in having done this. For that such conduct pleases not God, rather great anger is hanging over his house.

And hereupon David was pricked to the heart, and said, I have sinned against the Lord (2 Sam. xii. 13), and afterwards he chanted the psalm of confession, waiting for the coming of the Lord, Who washes and cleanses the man who had been bound in sin.

And so it is also concerning Solomon; as long as he went on to judge rightly, and to declare wisdom, and was building the figure of the true Temple, and setting forth the glories of God, and announcing the peace which should come to the Gentiles, and prefiguring the Kingdom of Christ, and was speaking his three thousand parables on the coming of the Lord, and his five thousand songs, by way of hymn to God, and gathering accounts of God's wisdom in the Creation, after the manner of a natural philosopher, from every tree, and from every herb, and from all fowls and quadrupeds and fishes, and saying, Will God indeed etc. (1 Kings viii. 27), he both pleased God, and was admired by all, and all the kings of the Earth sought his face, to hear his wisdom which God had given him, and the Queen of the South came to him from the ends of the earth, to know the wisdom which was in him ; who also, as the Lord saith, will rise again in the judgment with the generation of those who hear His words and believe not in Him, and will pass sentence upon them : because, while she submitted herself to the wisdom declared by the servant of God, they despised that wisdom which was given by the Son of God. For Solomon was a servant; but Christ the Son of God, and the Lord of Solomon. Well then, as long as he served God without offence, and ministered to His purposes, so long he was glorified : but when he took wives of all nations, and permitted them to set up idols in Israel, the Scripture hath said of him, And King Solomon was a lover etc. (1 Kings xi. x, 4, 6, 9).] The rebuke laid on him by Scripture was sufficient, as that Elder affirmed, that no flesh might glory before the Lord.

And therefore, he said, the Lord descended to the parts under the earth, announcing to them also the good news of His coming; there being remission of sins for such as believe on Him. [And those all believed on Him, who were hoping for Him : i.e., who foretold His coming and ministered to His purposes, righteous men and prophets and patriarchs: whose sins He forgave, even as He forgave ours, neither ought we to impute the same unto them, unless we despise the grace of God. For as

they did not charge us with our irregularities, which we wrought before Christ was manifested in us ; so neither is it just for us to charge the like, before the coming of Christ, on such as sinned. For all men need the glory of God (Rom. iii. 23), and are justified not of themselves, but by the coming of the Lord—those I mean who look steadily on His Light.

And their deeds, he said, were written for our admonition : to teach us, first of all, that our God and theirs is one and the same; a God, Whom sins please not, though wrought by renowned persons : and next that we should abstain from evils.

[For if those of old time who went before us in God's special graces, for whom the Son of God had not yet suffered, were visited with such disgrace, if they transgressed in some one thing, and became slaves to fleshly concupiscence; what shall this generation suffer, as many as have despised the coming of the Lord, and turned utter slaves to their own pleasures ?

And they indeed had our Lord's death for the healing and remission of their sins : but for those who now sin Christ shall no more die, for death shall no more have dominion over Him ; but the Son shall come in the glory of the , Father, exacting from His agents and stewards the money which He lent them, with usury : and to whom He gave most, of them will He require most]

We ought not therefore, said that Elder, to be proud, nor to reproach the ancients, but ourselves to fear, lest haply, after the knowledge of Christ, if we do anything which pleases not God, we no longer have remission of our sins, but find ourselves shut out of His Kingdom. And to this lie referred Paul's saying, For if He spared not etc. (Rom. xi. 17, 21).

In like manner again the transgressions of the people, you see, unwritten down, not for their sake who did then transgress, but for our rebulci and that we might know that it is one and the same God, against Whom they sinned, and against Whom sin even now certain of those who arc .-.to have believed. And this again, he said, the Apostle did most clearly point

out, saying in the Epistle to the Corinthians, For I would not have etc. (1 Cor. x. 1—12).

[Whereas therefore the Apostle declares, in a way which admits not of doubt or gainsaying, that it is one and the same God, Who both judged the things which then were, and searches out those which now are, and since he tells us the purpose of their being set down : unlearned and daring and senseless withal are all those proved to be, who take occasion from the sin of them of old time, and the disobedience of the greater part of them, to affirm that their God (Who is also the Maker of the world) is a different Being from the Father taught by Christ, and is in decay, and that it is this latter who is mentally received by every one of them. Because they consider not, that as in that case God was not well pleased with the greater part of them, being sinners, so also in this case many are called but few chosen (S. Matt. xx. 16): as among them the unjust and idolaters and fornicators lost their life, so also among us. For both the Lord proclaims that such are sent into the eternal fire, and the Apostle saith, Know ye not etc. (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10).

And in proof that he said this not to those who are without, but to us, lest we be cast out of the Kingdom of God, for doing some such thing, he hath subjoined, And these things etc. (1 Cor. vi. 11).

And as in that case those were condemned and cast out, who did evil, and led the rest astray, so in this case also the very eye is dug out which gives offence, and the foot, and the hand, that the rest of the body perish not alike. And we have it ordained, If any is named etc. (1 Cor. v. 11). And again the Apostle saith, Let no man deceive you etc. (Eph. v. 6, 7).

And as then the condemnation of them that sinned imparted itself also to the rest, in that they were pleased with them, and they held converse together : so here also a little leaven corrupteth the whole mass (1 Cor. v. 6). And as there God's anger came down against the unrighteous, here also saith the Apostle in like manner, For the wrath of God etc. (Rom. i. 18). And as there upon the Egyptians, who were punishing Israel unjustly, vengeance from God took place, so here also ; since both the Lord saith, And shall not God etc. (S. Luke xviii. 7, 8), and the Apostle in the Epistle

to the Thessalonians declares as follows, Since it is a righteous thing etc. (2 Thess. i. 6—10).]

Both here therefore and there is the same righteousness of God in maintaining God's cause. There indeed it is done typically, and for a certain time, and with comparative moderation; but here truly, and for ever, and more severely. For the fire is eternal; and the anger of God which shall be revealed from heaven from the countenance of our Lord brings a greater penalty on those who incur it: as David also saith, But the countenance etc. (Ps. xxxiv. 16). This being so, the Elders used to declare those persons to be very senseless, who from what befel God's disobedient people of old try to bring in another Father: objecting the great things which the Lord when He came had done to save those who received Him, in His pity for them ; but saying nothing of His judgment and of all that is to happen to such as have heard His words and fulfilled them not; and how it were good for them if they had not been born : and how it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the judgment than for that city which received not the words of His disciples.

(Stieren 1. p. 648 sq.).

X. IRENAEUS iv. 30. 1—31. 1.

Those again who upbraid and charge us with the circumstance, that the people by command of God, on point of departure, received of the Egyptians vessels of all sorts and apparel, and so went away, from which stores the Tabernacle also was made in the wilderness, prove themselves ignorant of God's ways of justification, and of His providences; as that Elder likewise used to say. [Since, had not God permitted this in the typical journey, no man could at this day be saved in our real journey, i.e., in the faith wherein we are established, whereby we have been taken out of the number of the Gentiles. For we are all accompanied by some property, moderate or large, which we have gotten out of the Mammon of iniquity. For whence are the houses in which we dwell, and the garments which we put on, and the furniture which we use, and all the rest of what serves us for our daily life, but out of what in our Gentile state we gained by avarice, or what we have received from Gentile parents, or kinsmen, or

friends, who acquired it by injustice? Not to say that even now, while we are in the faith, we gain. For who sells, and desires not to gain from the buyer? And who buys, and would not fain be dealt with by the seller to his profit? Again, what person in business does not carry on his business, that so he may get his bread thereby? And how is it with those believers who are in the royal court? Have they not goods from among the things which are Caesar's, and doth not each one of them according to his ability impart unto such as have not? The Egyptians were debtors to the people not only for their goods but for their life also, through the former kindness of the Patriarch Joseph: but in what respect are the Gentiles debtors to us, from whom we receive both profit and the commodities of life? Whatsoever they gain with toil, that we, being in the faith, use without toil.

Besides, the people were serving the Egyptians in the worst of servitude, as saith the Scripture, And the Egyptians violently etc. (Exod. i. 13, 14), and with much toil they built them fortified cities, adding to their stores fm many years, and in every kind of servitude; whereas the others, over and above their ingratitude toward them, were fain even to destroy them utterly.

What then was unrighteously done, if they took a little out of much, and if those who might have had much property, and gone away rich, had they not served them, went away poor, receiving for their heavy servitude very scanty wages? So, if any free person, carried away violently by some one, and serving him many years and increasing his goods, should afterwards, upon gaining some little support, be suspected of having some small portion of his master's property (whereas in fact he goes off with a very little, out of his own many toils and of the other's great gain) and if this were charged on him by any one as a wrong; the judge himself will rather appear unjust towards him who had been reduced to slavery by force. Now of like sort are the aforesaid, who blame the people for taking to themselves a little out of much, yet blame not themselves, who have made no due return according to the merit of their parents, but rather, reducing them into most heavy servitude, have obtained from them very great advantage. And while they charge the Jews with unjust dealings, for receiving, as we said before, in a few little vessels uncoined gold and silver; of themselves (for the truth shall be spoken, ridiculous as it may

appear to some) they say that they do justly in bearing about in their girdles stamped gold and silver and copper from others' toils, with the inscription and image of Caesar upon it.

But if we and they are compared, which will seem to have received more honestly ? The people from the Egyptians, who were in all their debtors, or we from the Romans and other Gentiles, those even who owe us no such debt ? Rather by them the world hath peace, and we walk on the highways and sail whithersoever we will without fear. Against this sort of objector then, our Lord's saying will be applicable, Thou hypocrite etc. (S. Matt, vii. 5).

For, if he who lays this to thy charge, and glories in his knowledge, is cut off from the assembly of the Gentiles, and there is nothing of others' property with him ; if he be simply naked and barefoot, and haunt the mountains without a home, like some of those animals which eat grass : he will obtain pardon, as not knowing what is needed in our manner of life. But if he take from men his share in the property of others, as it is called, while he finds fault with the type of the same, he proves himself to be most unjust, and turns back on himself the aforesaid accusation.] For he will be convicted of carrying about what is another's, and of desiring what is not his own : and with a view to this, they report, the Lord said, Judge not that ye etc. (S. Matt. vii. i, 2). [Not of course that we rebuke not sinners, or consent to things done amiss, but that we judge not unfairly God's ways of ordering things, whereas He hath provided in righteousness whatsoever shall be profitable. Thus, because He knew that we would make a good use of our substance, which we should have, receiving it from another, He that hath two coats, saith He, let him impart etc. (S. Luke iii. 11). Again, For I was an hungred etc. (S. Matt. xxv. 35, 36). Again, When thou doest alms etc. (S. Matt. vi. 3) : and all other acts of bounty upon which we are justified, redeeming our own as it were by what was another's. And when I say, Another's, I do not mean that the world is alien from God, but that we receive from others and possess the aforesaid gifts, even as they from the Egyptians who knew not God ; and by these same we build up for ourselves the tabernacle of God. For with doers of good God dwelleth : as saith the Lord, Make to yourselves friends etc. (S. Luke xvi. 9). For whatsoever things we had acquired, when we were heathens,

by unrighteousness, those same, now we have believed, we turn to the Lord's service, and so are justified.

These things were then of necessity practised in type beforehand, and out of those materials the tabernacle of God is wrought; in which matter, as we have explained, both they received justly, and we were prophetically indicated, how that we should begin to wait on God with things not our own. For all that journey of the people, whereby God brought them out of Egypt, was the type and image of the Church's journey, which was to take place from among the Gentiles ; which journey accordingly ends also with leading her hence into her inheritance, which not indeed Moses the servant of God, but Jesus the Son of God, will give her to inherit. And if any one will look more carefully at what the Prophets say of the end, and at all that John the Lord's disciple saw in the Apocalypse, he will find the Gentiles generally enduring the same plagues, which at that time Egypt in particular endured.]

By statements of this kind touching the ancients did that Elder console us, and say that concerning those faults, which the Scriptures themselves have laid to the charge of Patriarchs and Prophets, we must not reproach them, nor be like Ham, who scoffed at the disgrace of his father, and fell into the curse; but we must give thanks to God for them, inasmuch as their sins were forgiven them in the coming of our Lord. For that (his word it is) they give thanks and exult in our salvation.

But in respect of those things, for which the Scriptures reprove them not, but simply state the facts, we must not, he said, become accusers (for we are not more exact than God, nor can we be above our master), but look out for the typical meaning. For none of all the things, which are set down in the Scriptures without definite censure, is without its force.

(Stieren I. p. 658 sq.)



XI. IRENAEUS iv. 32. 1.

In the same way also did that older disciple of the Apostles reason about the two Testaments: declaring that both are indeed from one and the same God; and that there is no other God, besides Him Who made and formed us, nor any strength in their argument, who say that this world of ours was made either by Angels, or by any kind of Power, or by some other God. [For if a person once withdraw himself from the Creator of all things, and grant that the world with which we are concerned is made by some different God, or through another, such an one must needs fall into much absurdity and many contradictions; for which he will render no reasons with either appearance or substance of truth. And therefore such as introduce other doctrines, hide from us the opinion which they themselves have concerning God; knowing the unsoundness and futility of their own doctrine, and fearing to be overcome, and so to have their salvation endangered.]

(Stieren 1. p. 664)

XII. IRENAEUS iv. 41. 2

For the word 'son,' as a certain person also before us hath said, has two meanings: one is naturally such, as being born a son; while another is counted for a son, because he is made such: notwithstanding the difference between the born and the made.

(Stieren I. p. 709)

XIII. IRENAEUS v. 5. 1.

Where then was the first man placed? In paradise plainly, as it is written; and he was cast out thence into this world, owing to his disobedience. Wherefore also the Elders, disciples of the Apostles, say that those who were translated were translated thither (for paradise was prepared for righteous and inspired men, whither also the Apostle Paul was carried and heard words unspeakable, to us at least in this present life), and that they

who are translated remain there until the end of all things, precluding immortality.

(Stieren 1. p. 727). The Greek from the Parallela of John Damascene. preserved in Ireneus.

XIV. IRENAEUS v. 17. 4.

For since by wood we lost Him, by wood again He was made manifest unto all, shewing forth the length and height and depth and breadth in Himself ; and as one of those who have gone before said, by the divine extension of His Hands gathering the two peoples together unto one God.

(Stieren 1.p.765). The Greek from Cod. Coisl. 211.

XV. IRENAEUS v. 30. 1.

Now such being the state of the case, and this number being set down in all the good and old copies, and testimony being given by the persons themselves who had seen John with their eyes, and reason teaching us that the number of the name of the Beast, according to the reckoning of the Greeks, by the letters therein, will have 600, and 60, and 6.....some, I know not how, have erred, following a particular reading, and have taken liberties with the middle number of the name, subtracting the value of fifty, and choosing to have one decade instead of six.

(Stieren 1.p.798). The Greek from Eusebius Hist. Eccl. v. 8. 5, and the Parallela of John Damascene.

XVI. IRENAEUS v.33.3.

As the Elders, who saw John the disciple of the Lord, relate that they had heard from him, how the Lord used to teach concerning those times, and to say.....

(Stieren 1.p.809). See above, Fragments of Papias, No. xiv. p. 521 & p.533.

XVII. IRENAEUS v. 36. 1, 2.

As the Elders say, then also shall they which have been deemed worthy of the abode in heaven go thither, while others shall enjoy the delight of paradise, and others again shall possess the brightness of the city; for in every place the Saviour shall be seen, according as they shall be worthy who see Him. They say moreover that this is the distinction between the habitation of them that bring forth a hundred-fold, and them that bring forth sixty-fold, and them that bring forth thirty-fold ; of whom the first shall be taken up into the heavens, and the second shall dwell in paradise, and the third shall inhabit the city ; and that therefore our Lord has said, In My Father's abode are many mansions ; for all things are of God, Who giveth to all their appropriate dwelling, [according as His Word saith that allotment is made unto all by the Father, according as each man is, or shall be, worthy. And this is the banqueting-table at which those shall recline who are called to the marriage and take part in the feast.] The Elders, the disciples of the Apostles, say that this is the arrangement and disposal of them that are being saved, and that they advance by such steps, and ascend through the Spirit to the Son, and through the Son to the Father, the Son at length yielding His work to the Father, as it is said also by the Apostle, For He must reign until He putteth all enemies under His feet.

**(Stieren 1.p.818). The Greek from the Appendix to Anastasius
Quaestiones in S. Scripturam No. 74.**



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