

TEACHINGS OF THE ELDERS (FRAGMENTS)

[*These fragments are all which survive of various teachings taught by the elders who knew the twelve emissaries, or who handed down teachings taught directly by the emissaries, which are not recorded elsewhere. Many of the selections include more than merely the words of the elders, in order to provide proper context of the excerpts.*]

EXCERPT 1 (from Eirenaïos: Proof of Apostolic Preaching (3))¹

{Now, that we may not suffer anything of this kind, it is necessary for us to hold the rule of the faith without deviation, and do the commandments of God, having faith in God and fearing him as Lord and loving him as Father. Now this doing is produced by faith, for Isaiah says:

If-at-any-time you* might not have-faith,
not-even may you* have-insight.

(Isaiah 7:9)

And faith is produced by the truth; for faith rests on things that truly are. For in things that are, as they are, we have faith; and having faith in things that are, as they ever are, we keep our confidence firm in them. Therefore, since faith is the perpetuation of our salvation, it is necessary for us to bestow many pains on its maintenance, in order that we may have a true comprehension of the things that are.

Now it is faith that does this for us, even as the elders, the learners of the emissaries, have handed down to us. First of all it instructs us to keep in mind, that we have received immersion for the forgiven of sins, in the name of God the Father, and in the name of Jesus the Anointed-One, the Son of God, who was incarnate and died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit of God; and, that this immersion is the seal of eternal life, and is the new birth unto God, that we should no longer be the sons of mortal men, but of the eternal and perpetual God; and, that what is everlasting and continuing is made God,² and is over all things which are made; and all things are put under him, and all the things which are put under him are made his own. For God is not a Ruler and Lord over the things of another, but over his own; and all things belong to God. And therefore, God is Almighty, and all things are of God.}

EXCERPT 2 (from Eirenaïos: Against Heresies (2.22:5~6))³

{[But so that they might be affirming their figment from out of what is written, “to call an acceptable year of the Lord,” (Isaiah 61:2) they are saying, that he [Jesus] preached for one year only, and then suffered in the twelfth month (they have forgotten *this* against themselves) dissolving his entire affair, and carrying-away from him the age which is more necessary and more honorable than any other (that more advanced age, I mean), in which he also, while teaching, was being-before everyone universally. For how did he have learners, if he was not teaching? But how was he teaching, having not reached the age of a teacher?}

For when he came to an immersing, he was not-yet thirty years old... And they believe that he preached for only one year from the immersion, and that, completing the thirtieth year, he suffered, still existing as a juvenile and who was not having a more-advanced age.

But everyone will be made-to-confess, that the age of thirty years is the prime natural-quality of a juvenile, and it is being extended all-the-way to the fortieth year; but from the fortieth and fiftieth year, it declines already] into the senior age, which our Lord was having while he was teaching, even as the Good-Message and all the elders⁴ testify—the elders throughout Asia who have engaged with Johanan (the learner of the Lord)—Johanan himself having delivered this information to them.⁵ For Johanan remained-beside them until the times of Trajanus. But some of them did not see only Johanan, but even the other emissaries; and they heard these same things from them, and they likewise testify concerning the previously-related-matter. Whom it is more necessary for us to put-faith in?

{[In the Good-Message it is written, “You have not-yet reached fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?” (John 8:57) ...Therefore, he did not preach for only one year, nor did he suffer in the twelfth month of the year. For the time from the thirtieth year all-the-way to the fiftieth will never be one year.]]}

EXCERPT 3 (from Eirenaïos: Against Heresies (5.36:1~2))⁶

¹ This work only exists in an Armenian translation of a Greek original

² This passage is obscure, and the Armenian translator has probably misunderstood the Greek original.

³ This fragment only exists in a Latin translation of a Greek original, except for “and all the elders... Trajanus.”

⁴ [Frag2] Gk / Lat “seniors”

⁵ [Frag2] Gk / Lat add “himself” and “to them”

⁶ This first part of this fragment is extant in the original Greek up until just after the words “joined dwellings to all persons”; the rest is only available in a Latin translation of the Greek original.

And as the elders say, then [when a new heaven and a new earth have been made] indeed the ones who were considered-worthy of the pastime in the heaven will also make-room there, but the others will enjoy the luxury of the Garden, but the others will retain the brightness of the city. But everywhere the Savior will be seen, exactly-as the ones who see him will also be worthy.

But there is this distinction in the dwellings of the ones bearing the hundredfold fruit, and of the ones bearing the sixtyfold, and of the ones bearing the thirtyfold—of which, indeed, the first will be received-up into the heavens, but the others will spend-time in the Garden, but the others will dwell-in the city. And due to this, the Lord spoke, “In those places of my Father, there are many places-to-remain.” (John 14:2) For all the things are of God, who is affording the joined dwellings to all the persons, {exactly-as his word says, that a division is being given to all persons from the Father according-to who is being worthy or will be worthy. And this is the couch in which they will lie-down, those who are made-to-be-feasting, having been called to the wedding.

The elders, the learners of the emissaries, say, that this is the ordination and disposition of those who are being saved, and that they advance through such grades, and that they indeed ascend through the Spirit to the Son, but through the Son to the Father; and that in-turn the Son will yield up his work to the Father, exactly-as it has also been said by the emissary, “For it is necessary for him to be reigning up-till the time of which he might put all the enemies under his feet. A last enemy to be being rendered-inoperative is the death.” (1 Corinthians 15:25~26) For in the times of the kingdom, a righteous-one existing on the earth will forget to die already.}

EXCERPT 4 (from Eirenaïos: Against Heresies (5.5:1))

{[Therefore, where was the first human put? Quite-clearly in the Garden, exactly-as it has been written: “And God planted a garden in Eden toward the east.⁷ And there he put for himself the human whom he fashioned.” And he was thrown-out from-there into this-here world after he refused-to-hear God. (Genesis 2:8; 3:23)]}

For-this-reason, the elders (learners of the emissaries) are also saying, that the ones who have been transferred were transferred to-there.

{[For the Garden was made-ready for righteous and spirit-bearing humans, in which Paulus the emissary, after he was conveyed-into it, heard unstateable words, as to us in the time being-present (2 Corinthians 12:4).]}⁸

And the elders are saying, that the ones who have been transferred are remaining there till the complete-finish of all things, precluding the incorruptibility.

EXCERPT 5 (from Eirenaïos: Proof of Apostolic Preaching (61))⁹

{Now as to the union and concord and tranquility of the animals, which are of different kinds and by nature are opposed and hostile to each other, the elders say that so it will be at the coming of the Anointed-One when he will reign over all.}

EXCERPT 6 (from Eirenaïos: Against Heresies (5.30:1))

And this number, 666, is being laid in all the effortful and ancient written-copies of the Revelation of Johanan; and those men who have seen Johanan according-to sight¹⁰ are testifying to it.

EXCERPT 7 (Eirenaïos: Against Heresies (4.27:1~2;28:1;30:1;31:1;32:1~2))¹¹

{Exactly-as I heard from a certain elder (who had heard it from those who had seen the emissaries and from those who had learned from them): The correction out of the writing was sufficing for the old-men regarding the things which they performed without the counsel of a spirit. For while God is not a respecter¹² of persons, he was bringing-in a congruent correction on things which are not done according-to his pleasure... As with Solomon... who was taking wives from universal nations... And the alien women diverted his heart back to alien gods... And the Lord was angered on-the-basis of Solomon, for his heart was not complete with the Lord, exactly-as the heart of his father David.

(1 Kings 11:1~10)

“The writing had sufficiently rebuked him,” as the elder said, “so-that flesh might not all-together¹³ glory in the sight of the Lord. And in-behalf of this, the Lord descended into the regions which are under the earth, proclaiming-a-good-message of his advent even there, making a forgiveness of sins to be existing here to those who are putting-faith in him.”

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⁷ literally “rising-ups”

⁸ literally “being-beside”

⁹ This work only exists in an Armenian translation of a Greek original

¹⁰ literally “seeing”

¹¹ These fragments only exist in a Latin translation of a Greek original

¹² literally “accepter”

¹³ literally “universal”

“Therefore we are not needing,” as that elder¹ remarks, “to be haughty nor-yet to pronounce-guilty *the* old-men. But let we ourselves be filled-with-fear, lest perhaps, after *we have come to the knowledge of the Anointed-One*, if we might do something which is not pleasing to God, we might no longer be having a forgiveness of delinquencies² *but* instead might be being excluded from his kingdom. [[And to this idea, Paulus said, ‘For if God did not spare the branches according-to nature, perhaps-somehow he will not-even spare you, who, being an olive-tree-of-the-field, were grafted-in into the olive-tree and became a fellow-companion of its plumpness.’]]”
(Romans 11:21,17)

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Therefore, *the* righteous vindications of God, both there and here are *the* same: indeed, even there typically and temporarily and more-moderately, but here truly and always and more-austere. For *the* fire is eternal, and *the* anger of God (which will be revealed from the heaven from the face of our Lord)... presents greater punishment for those who are falling into it.

The elder was showing *these persons to be* extremely insensible, who, (out of *the things* which fall-upon *the ones* who long-ago were not heeding God), are trying to be introducing another Father, out of setting *down things* contrary to what *the* Lord did *while* coming to save those who received him, commiserating them, but being-silent about his judgment and whatever will happen to those who heard his accounts if he might not do them. And *the elder used to show* that it would have been better for them had they not been birthed, and that it will be will be more-tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in judgment than for that city which does not receive *the* account of his learners.

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Truly, those who are reproaching and imputing, because *while the* population of *Israel* was going to depart from out of *Egypt*, they, with *the* direction of God, took vessels of all kinds and vestments from *the* Egyptians and so went-off (out of which the tent was also being made in *the* desert, are proving themselves to be being-ignorant of *the* justifications of God and of his dispositions, as the elder was saying. For if God might not *have* consented this in *the* typical departure, no-one would be able to be saved today in our true departure, that is, in *the* faith in which we are being constituted, through which we are being exempted from *the* number of *the* nations.

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While describing certain such *things* about *the* ancients, the *elder* was remaking us and was saying, “Indeed, about those delinquencies about which *the* writings themselves are rebuking *the* fatherland-chiefs and *the* prophets, it is not necessary for us to be reproaching them, nor-yet to be made-to-be like Ham, who ridiculed the shame of his father and fell into a curse, *but* instead to give thanks to God in their behalf, because, in *the* advent of our Lord, their sins were being forgiven to them.”
(Genesis 9:22)

For he also was saying, *that* they gave thanks *for* and were made-to-glory in our salvation. “But about *things* which *the* writings are not rebuking, *but* instead were simply set *down*, we ought not to be being made-to-be accusers. For we are not more-diligent than God, and-neither are we being able to be above *the* teacher; instead let us search for a type. For not-one of those *things* (whichever *ones* have been set *down* unaccused in *the* writings) is idle.”

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Likewise, *the* elder,³ a learner of *the* emissaries, was also disputing about *the* two covenants, showing that both are truly from one and *the* same God. For⁴ there is no other God besides him who made and fashioned us, and-neither is their account having any firmness who are saying that this world which is ours is having been made either by messengers, or by another power whatsoever, or from another God...

[[Every account will also seem consistent to him who has *their* faith in one God, if he also diligently reads *the* writings among those who are elders in *the* assembly, among whom is *the* emissaric teaching, exactly-as I demonstrated. For all *the* emissaries taught, indeed, *that* there were indeed two covenants among⁵ *the* two peoples; but, *that* it is one and *the* same God who disposed both covenants for *the* utility of humans (according-to whom *the* covenants were being given) who were commencing faith in God.]]

¹ literally “senior” (The translator of Irenaeus into Latin translates Greek “elder” to both Latin “elder” and “senior” without discrimination.

² [FG07] AR “sins”

³ literally “senior” (The translator of Irenaeus into Latin translates Greek “elder” to both Latin “elder” and “senior” without discrimination.

⁴ [FG07] AR / others omit “For”

⁵ literally “in”

EXCERPT 8 (from Justinus the Testifier: First Apology 61:9-10)

[Regarding water immersion.]

And for *this practice of water immersion*, we also learned this account from the emissaries: Since we were being-ignorant of our first birth (having been birthed according-to obligation out of a moist seeding according-to a mixing of the *union* of our⁶ parents to one-another), and we have come-to-be nourished-up in customs *which are* base and wicked, so-that we might not be remaining children of obligation nor-even of ignorance, *but* instead *children* of choosing and experience, *and* might also obtain, in the water, a forgiveness of sins in-behalf-of *the things* which we sinned-before, there is named-on the *one* who chose for himself to be rebirthed and *who* changed-his-mind on-the-basis of *the things* having been sinned: the name of the Father and Master, God of the Whole *Creation*.

EXCERPT 9 (from Origenes: Commentary on Romans 5:9)⁷

{Finally, it was also directed in *the* law for a sacrificial-victim to be offered for a little-one⁸ who is being birthed: A pair of turtledoves or two young-birds of doves. (Exodus 13:2 & Leviticus 12:8). One of which *is* for a sin, and *the* other in a holocaust. For what sin is this one dove being offered? Is a little-one newly brought-forth able to already sin? But it also has a sin for which a sacrificial-victim is being directed to be being offered, from which someone is being denied to be clean “not-even if his life would be one day...” (Job 14:5)}

To *this reason*, the assembly also received from *the* emissaries a tradition of giving an immersion even to little-ones. For they to whom *the* secrets of divine mysteries have been committed, were knowing that there is in all *persons the* innate filths of sin, which are needed to be bathed-off through water and spirit. {On account of these⁹ *things*, even *the* body itself is being named “a body of sins”}.

POSSIBLE EXCERPT 1 (from Eirenaeos: Against Heresies (4.41:2))¹⁰

{For “son”, exactly-as someone before me said, is being understood in-two-ways: Indeed, *the* one according-to nature, because he is birthed a son; but *the* other, according-to *the* fact that he was made to be so, is being reputed to be a son. There being a difference between “birthed” and “made”.}

POSSIBLE EXCERPT 2 (from Eirenaeos: Against Heresies (5.17:4))

[Regarding Jesus extending his hands while dying on the cross.]

And, as a certain *man* of the *ones* who have went-before¹¹ *us* was declaring, “Through the divine¹² extending of the hands, congregating the two peoples to¹³ one god.” {For indeed the hands *are* two, because two peoples have also been dispersed into the limits of the earth. But a head *in the* middle *is* one, because one *is* God, the *God* who *is* above all, and through all, and in us all.}

POSSIBLE EXCERPT 3 (from Eirenaeos: Against Heresies (1.15:6))

For-this-reason, even righteously and suitably to your recklessness such-as-this, had the divine elder and preacher of the truth stepped-on you, after he spoke in this-manner:

Marcus, you idol-maker, and watcher-of-ports,
being-experienced-in¹⁴ astrological and magical art,
through which you are making-mighty the teachings of the
misleading,
showing signs to the *ones* who *are* being misled by you,
undertakings of a defective¹⁵ power,
which, an Adversary, being as a father to you, is supplying for you
to be making through a messengeric power of Azazel,
having you for a forerunner of an anti-god craftiness.

And these, indeed, *are the words* of the god-loved elder.

POSSIBLE EXCERPT 4 (from Eirenaeos: Against Heresies (3.17:4))

{As a certain *man* superior to us said (concerning all who by any measure are depraving *things* which are of God and adulterating *the* truth:

White-lime-plaster is evilly being mixed in *the* milk of God.)

POSSIBLE EXCERPTS 5 & 6 (Clemens of Alexandria (Eusebios 6.14:4-5))

[Clemens of Alexandria says:]

⁶ literally “the”

⁷ This fragment only exists in a Latin translation of a Greek original

⁸ The Latin Vulgate sometimes translates the Greek word “little-ones” and sometimes “infants” to this word, but the context makes it clear that at least an “infant” is being referred to.

⁹ literally “which”

¹⁰ This fragment only exists in a Latin translation of a Greek original

¹¹ literally “stepped-before”

¹² [PS2] Gk / Lat omit “divine”

¹³ literally “into”

¹⁴ literally “being-tried-in”

¹⁵ literally “putting-a-hand-ins of standing-away-froms”

But already, as the happy elder was saying, since the Lord, being an emissary of the Almighty, was sent-by-letter to Hebrews, Paulus through moderation (as one who would have been commissioned into the nations) is not enrolling himself *as* an emissary of *the* Hebrews, both due to the honor toward the Lord, as-well-as due to what he also sent-by-letter to the Hebrews out of *his* surplus, being a preacher and emissary of *other* nations.

But back-again, in the same books, Clemens has set a tradition of the from-above elders about the ordering of the good-messages, having *it* in this manner:

He was saying, *that* the *ones* of the good-messages including the genealogies were written-beforehand, but *that* the *Good-Message* according-to Marcus has this stewardship: After Petros preached the account publicly in Roma and after he spoke-out the Good-Message by-means-of a spirit, the *ones* being-present,¹ being many, exhorted Marcus (as having followed him from-far *back* and having remembered the *things* *which* were said) to write-up the *things* which have been stated. But after he made the Good-Message, he shared *it* with the *ones* *who* were beseeching *to* have it. After Petros recognized this,² he neither propellingly prevented nor propelled *it*. However, Johanan, last *of* all, seeing that the bodily *facts* have been made-clear in the good-messages, after he was propelled by the *ones* known-to *him*, after he was borne-by-God by-means-of a spirit, made a spiritual good-message.

¹ literally "being-beside"

² literally "which"