

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



**PATREON**

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expositor-series-1.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php)

and to God in a spiritual system, not the less real though it is not expressed in a quantitative fashion? We shall seek to answer this question in our next article.

JAMES IVERACH.

*THE NEWLY RECOVERED TREATISE OF  
IRENAEUS.*

*Des heiligen Irenäus eis ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος.* Von Dr. Karapet Mekerttschian und Dr. Erwand Minassiantz, mit einem Nachwort, etc., von Adolf Harnack. Leipzig, 1907.

THIS volume gives us a work, hitherto lost, of Irenaeus. It is true that it does not contain very much that we did not know before of Christian teaching towards the end of the second century; and yet it is important because it outlines, in a concise and simple way, the catechetical instruction communicated by a bishop of that age to an educated believer. An orthodox and cultivated clergyman of this generation contrasting this *summa theologicæ* of Irenaeus with his own beliefs will note two chief points of difference. On the one hand the importance which Irenaeus attaches to the proof from prophecy; for two-thirds of the work are an elaboration of the theme that Jesus of Nazareth was Messiah, because every phase and act of His life fulfilled and fitted in with some prophecy or another—a type of argumentation which a better informed Hebrew learning is rapidly banishing among modern divines, although it was the staple for many centuries of Christian apologetic. On the other hand, there is barely any hint of the great Christological controversies which were to rend the Church asunder in the fourth and fifth centuries. However, as Harnack notes in one passage, chap. 47, Irenaeus draws very close to the Nicene position. I translate it:

Accordingly the Father is Lord and the Son is Lord, and the Father is God, and the Son God, because he that is begotten of God

is God. And thus according to substance (*οὐσία*) and power of his essence (*or* Being) one God is shewn, although according to economic administration of our salvation both Son and Father; inasmuch as the Father of all created beings is invisible and inaccessible. They who are destined to approach God must by means of the Son have access and guidance to the Father (cp. Eph. iii. 12).

The Archimandrite Karapet is to be congratulated on his discovery of this Armenian text in the Armenian church of Erivan, where I was assured some twenty years ago that there were no manuscripts and was shown nothing. We may fairly expect more discoveries of the kind from Armenia now that there are clergymen on the spot who are learned and know what to look for. It had long been known that the works of Irenaeus existed in an ancient Armenian version. Stephanus Roszka, a Polish Armenian (1670–1739), had them in his possession, and gave many citations of them in a dictionary which he made. There was also a copy in a Madras collection of Armenian codices which was lost through shipwreck off the Cape of Good Hope in 1832.

The German translation is very accurate, and a student of Irenaeus will seldom fail to recognize with help of it the sense of the original. A few passages, of some of which Harnack in his notes remarks that they are obscure, admit of being cleared up. Thus in chap. 5 the German translator renders :

Weil nun das Wort festmacht, d. h. Fleisch werden lässt und die Wesenheit der Emanation verleiht."

And Harnack notes :

"Der Text ist an dieser Stelle wohl verderbt."

It is not really so. The Greek original can easily be restored, and ran somewhat as follows :

ἐπειδὴ οὖν ὁ λόγος στερεοῖ, τούτεστι σωματοποιεῖ καὶ οὐσίαν χαρίζεται τῷ ὄντι (or τῷ γεγονότι).

There is no need to take *eloy* in the Armenian in the sense

of *emanation*, for it constantly occurs in versions as a rendering of *δντος* or *δντι*. The word *σωματοποιέω* is also frequent in late Greek in the sense of to revive, strengthen, or refresh.

In chapter xii. the German text, "bestellte er ihn auch an und für sich zum Herrn derjenigen, welche Knechte auf ihr sind," is erroneous. The sense is this :

"Now having made man lord of the earth and of all those things which are therein, he secretly established him lord also of those who therein are servants." The word rendered *an und für sich* means *κρυφῆ* or *λάθρα*. It was because Adam was outwardly a child, that his lordship over the angels began by being hidden and secret. So of Jesus the Messiah and Second Adam the fathers held that He was hidden until His glory and perfection were manifested in Jordan. For example, Chrysostom (ed. Montf. ii. 369e): *οὐχ ὅτ' ἐτέχθη τότε πᾶσιν ἐγένετο κατάδηλος ἀλλ' ὅτ' ἐβαπτίσατο*. And Jerome: "Absconditus est et non apparuit."

The German version of the next sentence is also wrong, if the Armenian text is rightly printed :

Doch jene waren in ihrer Vollkommenheit, der Herr aber, d. h. der Mensch, war klein, denn er war ein Kind, und es war für ihn erforderlich so heranwachsend zur Vollkommenheit zu gelangen.

It should be rendered thus :

Notwithstanding they were in their *might*, but the lord, that is, the man, was small (=pusillus), for he was a child, and it was necessary for him to grow and thus attain to perfection.

It occurs to me, however, that the rare word *kareluthiun*, "might" may be a printer's error for *katareluthiun*, "perfection," used just afterwards. In chapter 14, beginning of 228v, the rendering "in dem ihm zukommenden Rang" gives the true sense, but in the Armenian the word *yorum* is a corruption of *yiuroum*, "in his rank and power."

In chapter 13 the German runs thus :

Gott selbst aber liess eine Verzückung über Adam kommen und liess ihn einschlafen ; und *da eine Tat aus der anderen folgt*, etc.

Harnack notes : " Nicht recht verständlich." The true sense is as follows :

But God Himself cast an ecstasy upon Adam, and put him to sleep, and in order that creature might be perfected out of creature, for there was no sleep in the garden, this (ecstasy) came upon Adam by God's will.

The idea is that it was needful for God by an express act of will to put Adam to sleep, because sleep was not natural to man before the Fall. This idea meets us in the Syriac Hymn of the Soul in the Acts of Thomas, and was common among the mediaeval cathars.<sup>1</sup>

In chapter xviii., " Vermischungen zwischen verschiedenen Elementen " is incorrect. The Armenian involves " and since *illegitimate* connexions were formed on earth, for angels had connexion with daughters of the seed of men."

In chapter xix. the German should run thus :

Bis das Gericht von Gott über die Welt durch die Sintflut in der zehnten Generation *nach den Erstgeschaffenen* kam, in welcher Noah allein als gerecht erfunden wurde.

The translators set the italicised words out of place after the word *allein* ; but Noah was not the only just man since Adam, nor does the Armenian involve this order.

In chapter xxi. fol. 231r the *vox nihili ashogi* should be corrected to *azgi*, " race," which has been used in the context just before. This also improves the sense, which must be as follows :

This is the blessing's force, that the God and Lord of all became a heritage (or possession) of Sem's race, the blessing of his piety which sprouted (or germinated) reached unto Abraham, who in descent belonged to the tenth generation of the seed of Sem.

In the preceding chapter xx. in the sentence :

Dieser ist über sein Geschlecht gekommen, da er viele Nach-

<sup>1</sup> See my note on " The Idea of Sleep in the 'Hymn of the Soul' " in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, July 1905, p. 609.

kommen auf der Erde erzeugte, während vierzehn Generationen *wild* her anwachsend, bis endlich sein Geschlecht, dem Gericht verfallen, von Gott abgemäht wurdet.

The word *wild* is probably a mistranslation of the Armenian words *i wayrast ouremn*, which seem rather to mean, "in a downward direction," as *khonarhast*, "in descent," is used below in chapter xxi. in the passage already commented on.

In chapter xxi. the text Genesis ix. 27 is rendered: "Weiten Raum schaffe Gott für Iaphet und er *wohne* in dem Haus Sems, Cham aber soll sein Knecht sein."

Why *wohne*? The Armenian *ôrhnestzé* signifies bless, and rendered literally is equivalent to *εὐλογεῖτω εἰς οἶκον*—an unusual construction. Probably the Armenian is corrupt, for *κατοικησάτω* is rendered immediately below.

The German version continues :

Und das soll bedeuten, am Ende der Zeiten ist (das Heil ?) erschienen den Ausersesehenen des Herrn aus der Berufung der Heiden, in dem Gott ihnen die Berufung erweitert hat.

The Armenian can be rendered word for word into Latin as follows, if we change the last letter *tz* of *erevetzelotz* into *y*, with which in uncials it is commonly confused :

Itidem est : in consummatione sævi germinavit (or effloruit) apparente Domino de uocatione gentium, extendens illis Deus uocationem.

In chapter xxvi., fol. 234r the German runs :

Der Finger Gottes aber ist das, was vom Vater zu dem heiligen Geist ausgestreckt ist.

Harnack justly notes : *das ist unklar.*

An infinitesimal change in the Armenian restores the sense, namely, the omission of the single letter *i* before *surb hogin* ; for then the sense becomes *sanctus spiritus* instead of *in sanctum spiritum*. We must then interpret the passage thus :

"And the finger of God is that Holy Spirit who is extended from the Father,"

or in Greek, keeping the Armenian order of words :

ὁ δὲ δάκτυλος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶ τὸ ἐκτενόμενον ἀπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ἅγιον πνεῦμα.

So Luke ii. 20 substitutes *finger* of God for the *Spirit of God* of Mark and Matthew ; and in early representations of Christ's baptism a hand with outstretched index is depicted over His head.

In chapters xxxii. and xxxiii. the word *ἀνακεφαλαίωσις* lies behind the Armenian words rendered *nochmaligen Vollendung*.

In chapters xxxiii. the German is hardly as literal as it might be. I should render :

And as through a virgin who disobeyed man was crushed (*allisus est*) and falling died, so also, through a virgin who listened to the word of God, man, being resuscitated (= *ἀναζωπυρούμενος*), in (or by) life received life. For the Lord came to seek afresh the lost sheep, and man was the lost. And, therefore, any other creature he became not, but from that very same which had generation (*γένος*) from Adam he preserved the likeness of the creature.

#### Chapter xxxiv. :

Auch das Vergehen, welches durch das Holz stattgefunden hatte, wurde durch den Gehorsam des Holzes aufgelöst. Indem Gott (solche Fürsprache) erhörte, ist der Menschensohn an das Holz angeschlagen.

But the Greek text ran somewhat as follows :

καὶ τὰ διὰ τοῦ ξύλου ἁμαρτήματα ἐλύθη διὰ τὴν τοῦ ξύλου ὑπακοὴν ἣν ἵπακούσας θεοῦ ὁ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου προσηλώθη τῷ ξύλῳ.

In chapter liii. is the following passage :

Und dass er wahrhaftiger Mensch werden sollte, hat er durch sein Essen im voraus angedeutet, auch dadurch dass er ihn ein Kind nennt, aber auch durch seine Namengebung—denn eben hierin besteht ein *Irrthum* in betreff des Geborenen—und er führt einen Doppelnamen.

The translator notes that the words in the parenthesis are nonsense, but a slight correction restores the sense. The word *moloruthiun*, which signifies *Irrthum*, is obviously a corruption of *soworuthiun*—"custom." In an uncial

MS. the two words are barely distinguishable from one another. So we get the following sense :

Also by reason of the calling him a child, nay even by reason of the assigning to him of a name, for this (i.e. name-giving) is a custom also in respect of the newly born.

The allusion lies of course to the rite of giving a name to a child on the eighth day after birth, which among Gentile converts took the place of circumcision. In Greek Euchologia this rite bears the title : "Prayer for the sealing of a child when it receives its name on the eighth day from its birth." It is not, of course, to be confused with baptism, with which the association of name-giving was late and secondary. Indeed the prayers of the name-giving rite assume that the child will only be baptized when it reaches full age, and it is asked that it may duly attain to the *καίρος εἶθερος*, or fitting season for full union with the Church by baptism. Irenaeus' attestation of the rite is interesting and important, inasmuch as on the strength of a passage in his works, which they distort and misunderstand, he has been claimed by Wall, Warren and others as the earliest authority for infant baptism.

A curious feature of this new tract is that it confirms and endorses the interpretation given in Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* ii. 33, 3, of John viii. 57 :

Quando enim eis dixit dominus : *Abraham pater vester exultavit ut videret diem meum, et vidit, et gavisus est, responderunt ei : Quinquaginta annos nondum habes, et Abraham vidisti? Hoc autem consequenter dicitur ei, qui iam xl annos excessit, quinquagesimum autem annum nondum attigit, non tamen multum a quinquagesimo anno absistit.*

If Jesus nearly attained to the age of fifty, He must have survived the reign of Tiberius and lasted on into that of Claudius. Accordingly in chapter lxxiv. of this new trace we find the statement that "Herod, king of the Jews, and



Pontius Pilate, procurator (*lit.* regional head) of Claudius Caesar acting in concert, condemned Jesus to be crucified."

Harnack points out that Irenaeus must have set the crucifixion A.D. 41 at the earliest, for in that year Claudius succeeded Caligula. Pontius Pilate, however, had long before this quitted Judaea. Irenaeus' ignorance, if it be such, of so well known a fact is extraordinary; and goes far to shake our faith in his testimony to any historical fact whatever. Harnack rightly points out that the writer of the Fourth Gospel must himself have believed that Jesus attained the age of forty-six, since, in addition to the passage above adduced by Irenaeus, we read (John ii. 21) that the temple that was forty-six years in building, signified the temple of his own body. The task may fairly be left to those who still uphold the Johannine authorship of this Gospel of explaining its chronology. As a rule they are as eager to reject Irenaeus' interpretation of this—after all the only straightforward interpretation—as they are to accept his evidence about the authorship of the Gospel in question.

Another point of interest in this tract is the passage, chapter ix., about the seven heavens, over each of which a special angel or spirit wields authority. The seven spirits are those enumerated in Isaiah xi. 2, of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, piety or reverence. The lowest firmament immediately over our heads "is full of the fear of this Spirit which illumines the heavens." For an account of the belief in seven heavens I may refer the reader to Dr. Charles' edition of the Slavonic Secrets of Enoch, and Cumont, *Religions orient.* 1907, p. 152.

It is interesting to note that in this tract, chapter iii., Irenaeus bases "baptism for remission of sins in (*or, into*) the name of God the Father and in the name of Jesus Christ,

Son of God made flesh, and who died and rose again, and into the Holy Spirit of God," not on the text Matthew xxviii. 19, but on the traditional faith handed down to him "by the elders, the disciples of the apostles." It may be inferred that he was, if not ignorant of the T.R. of Matthew xxviii. 19, at least temporarily forgetful of it. In the Latin version of the *Adv. haer.* the text is indeed cited in book iii. 18, 1; though it is there so incongruous with the context that I suspect the text Acts i. 5 to have originally been read. Unfortunately the Armenian version of the *Adv. haer.* discovered along with this hitherto lost tract, only comprises books iv. and v., and can therefore shed no light on this point. The circumstance, however, that in book iv., xii. (iv. 7) the newly recovered Armenian assigns the *Magnificat* to Elizabeth (as do the Clermont and Voss MSS. of the Latin) proves that some of the Latin codices have been overworked by a corrector. The passage in this new treatise is so important that I translate it integrally:

Now, inasmuch as faith is constitutive (= *συνέκτικος*) of our salvation, it is right and needful to exercise great solicitude for it, that we may have our apprehension of facts a true one. Now, faith assigns (or guarantees) us this just as the elders, the disciples of the Apostles, handed (it) down. In the first place it prescribes remembrance of the fact that we have received baptism for the remission of sin into name of God the Father and into name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made flesh and dead and risen, and into Holy Spirit of God; and that this baptism is seal of eternal life and rebirth into God, so that we become sons, no longer of mortal men, but of the eternal and everlasting God.

Why should Irenaeus, if he had before him the direct precept of the Lord to baptize in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt. xxviii. 19), thus invoke the tradition of the elders? Why represent this baptism as received from them? For that is the force of the phrase *we have received*, answering, as it does, to *handed down* in the preceding sentence. I do not suggest that the

elders did not represent such baptism as instituted by Christ Himself. Of course they did. But I do maintain that it is one thing for Matthew the Apostle (who in Irenaeus' opinion penned the First Gospel) to have handed down the precept so to baptize, and quite another thing for elders who were but pupils of the disciples to have mediated the transmission, and to be the guarantors of its correctness. Moreover, the true formulae as here given is quite unlike that of Matthew xxviii. 19. There one and the same name includes Father, Son and Spirit. Here *name* is given before both Father and Son, but pointedly omitted before the Holy Spirit.

We welcome the promise of the Editor to publish before long a corpus of all the portions of Irenaeus which exist in Armenian, especially of the last two books of the *Adv. haer.* For the two older MSS. of the Latin version suffer from lacunas in the fifth book, and are also defective towards the end. Comparing the Armenian version of Irenaeus with other old Armenian versions, e.g. of Philo, Chrysostom, and the Bible, I have not the least doubt but that it belongs to the golden age of that literature, and is as old as A.D. 450. I cannot understand why the Editor sets it as late as 650 to 750. That the earliest citations of it occur in the Monophysite writers of that age is no proof that it was not made much earlier. Still less can I understand how he can for a minute doubt that a Greek original, rather than a Syriac one, underlies it. From beginning to end it shows none of the Syriasms so frequent in Armenian versions made from Syriac, such as those of the History of Eusebius and of the Homilies of Aphraat.

FRED C. CONYBEARE.