

FRAGMENTS FROM THE LOST WRITINGS OF JUSTIN

by Justin Martyr

Surviving fragments from the lost writings of Justin Martyr, the second-century Christian philosopher and apologist. These scattered pieces preserve glimpses of works that did not survive in complete form.

20 Chapters

Table of Contents

0. Fragments From The Lost Writings Of Justin
1. Fragment I.
2. Fragment II.
3. Fragment III.
4. Fragment IV.
5. Fragment V.
6. Fragment VI.
7. Fragment VII.
8. Fragment VIII.
9. Fragment IX.
10. Fragment X.
11. Fragment XI.
12. Fragment XII.
13. Fragment XIII.
14. Fragment XIV.
15. Fragment XV.
16. Fragment XVI.
17. Fragment XVII.
18. Fragment XVIII.
19. Fragment XIX.

Fragments From The Lost Writings Of Justin

Fragment I.

The most admirable Justin rightly declared that the aforesaid demons [2636] resembled robbers. --
Tatian's Address to the Greeks, chap. xviii.

Fragment II.

And Justin well said in his book against Marcion, that he would not have believed the Lord Himself, if He had announced any other God than the Fashioner and Maker [of the world], and our Nourisher. But since, from the one God, who both made this world and formed us, and contains as well as administers all things, there came to us the only-begotten Son, summing up His own workmanship in Himself, my faith in Him is stedfast, and my love towards the Father is immoveable, God bestowing both upon us. -- Irenæus: Heresies, iv.6.

Fragment III.

Justin well said: Before the advent of the Lord, Satan never ventured to blaspheme God, inasmuch as he was not yet sure of his own damnation, since that was announced concerning him by the prophets only in parables and allegories. But after the advent of the Lord learning plainly from the discourses of Christ and His apostles that eternal fire was prepared for him who voluntarily departed from God and for all who, without repentance, persevere in apostasy, then, by means of a man of this sort, he, as if already condemned, blasphemes that God who inflicts judgment upon him, and imputes the sin of his apostasy to his Maker, instead of to his own will and predilection. -- Irenæus: Heresies, v.26.

Fragment IV.

Expounding the reason of the incessant plotting of the devil against us, he declares: Before the advent of the Lord, the devil did not so plainly know the measure of his own punishment, inasmuch as the divine prophets had but enigmatically announced it; as, for instance, Isaiah, who in the person of the Assyrian tragically revealed the course to be followed against the devil. But when the Lord appeared, and the devil clearly understood that eternal fire was laid up and prepared for him and his angels, he then began to plot without ceasing against the faithful, being desirous to have many companions in his apostasy, that he might not by himself endure the shame of condemnation, comforting himself by this cold and malicious consolation. -- From the writings of John of Antioch.

Fragment V.

And Justin of Neapolis, a man who was not far separated from the apostles either in age or excellence, says that that which is mortal is inherited, but that which is immortal inherits; and that the flesh indeed dies, but the kingdom of heaven lives. -- From Methodius On the Resurrection, in Photius.

Fragment VI.

Neither is there straitness with God, nor anything that is not absolutely perfect. -- From manuscript of the writings of Justin.

Fragment VII.

We shall not injure God by remaining ignorant of Him, but shall deprive ourselves of His friendship.

Fragment VIII.

The unskilfulness of the teacher proves destructive to his disciples, and the carelessness of the disciples entails danger on the teacher, and especially should they owe their negligence to his want of knowledge.

Fragment IX.

The soul can with difficulty be recalled to those good things from which it has fallen, and is with difficulty dragged away from those evils to which it has become accustomed. If at any time thou showest a disposition to blame thyself, then perhaps, through the medicine of repentance, I should cherish good hopes regarding thee. But when thou altogether despisest fear, and rejectest with scorn the very faith of Christ, it were better for thee that thou hadst never been born from the womb. -- From the writings of John of Damascus.

Fragment X.

By the two birds [2637] Christ is denoted, both dead as man, and living as God. He is likened to a bird, because He is understood and declared to be from above, and from heaven. And the living bird, having been dipped in the blood of the dead one, was afterwards let go. For the living and divine Word was in the crucified and dead temple [of the body], as being a partaker of the passion, and yet impassible to God. By that which took place in the running [2638] water, in which the wood and the hyssop and the scarlet were dipped, is set forth the bloody passion of Christ on the cross for the salvation of those who are sprinkled with the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. Wherefore the material for purification was not provided chiefly with reference to leprosy, but with regard to the forgiveness of sins, that both leprosy might be understood to be an emblem of sin, and the things which were sacrificed an emblem of Him who was to be sacrificed for sins. For this reason, consequently, he ordered that the scarlet should be dipped at the same time in the water, thus predicting that the flesh should no longer possess its natural [evil] properties. For this reason, also, were there the two birds, the one being sacrificed in the water, and the other dipped both in the blood and in the water and then sent away, just as is narrated also respecting the goats. The goat that was sent away presented a type of Him who taketh away the sins of men. But the two contained a representation of the one economy of God incarnate. For He was wounded for our transgressions, and He bare the sins of many, and He was delivered for our iniquities. -- From manuscript of writings of Justin.

Fragment XI.

When God formed man at the beginning, He suspended the things of nature on his will, and made an experiment by means of one commandment. For He ordained that, if he kept this, he should partake of immortal existence; but if he transgressed it, the contrary should be his lot. Man having been thus made, and immediately looking towards transgression, naturally became subject to corruption. Corruption then becoming inherent in nature, it was necessary that He who wished to save should be one who destroyed the efficient cause of corruption. And this could not otherwise be done than by the life which is according to nature being united to that which had received the corruption, and so destroying the corruption, while preserving as immortal for the future that which had received it. It was therefore necessary that the Word should become possessed of a body, that He might deliver us from the death of natural corruption. For if, as ye [2639] say, He had simply by a nod warded off death from us, death indeed would not have approached us on account of the expression of His will; but none the less would we again have become corruptible, inasmuch as we carried about in ourselves that natural corruption. -- Leontius against Eutychians, etc., book ii.

Fragment XII.

As it is inherent in all bodies formed by God to have a shadow, so it is fitting that God, who is just, should render to those who choose what is good, and to those who prefer what is evil, to every one according to his deserts. -- From the writings of John of Damascus.

Fragment XIII.

He speaks not of the Gentiles in foreign lands, but concerning [the people] who agree with the Gentiles, according to that which is spoken by Jeremiah: "It is a bitter thing for thee, that thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord thy God, that of old thou hast broken thy yoke, and torn asunder thy bands, and said, I will not serve Thee, but will go to every high hill, and underneath every tree, and there shall I become dissolute in my fornication." [2640] -- From manuscript of the writings of Justin.

Fragment XIV.

Neither shall light ever be darkness as long as light exists, nor shall the truth of the things pertaining to us be controverted. For truth is that than which nothing is more powerful. Every one who might speak the truth, and speaks it not, shall be judged by God. -- Manuscript and works of John of Damascus.

Fragment XV.

And the fact that it was not said of the seventh day equally with the other days, "And there was evening, and there was morning," is a distinct indication of the consummation which is to take place in it before it is finished, as the fathers declare, especially St. Clement, and Irenæus, and Justin the martyr and philosopher, who, commenting with exceeding wisdom on the number six of the sixth day, affirms that the intelligent soul of man and his five susceptible senses were the six works of the sixth day. Whence also, having discoursed at length on the number six, he declares that all things which have been framed by God are divided into six classes, -- viz., into things intelligent and immortal, such as are the angels; into things reasonable and mortal, such as mankind; into things sensitive and irrational, such as cattle, and birds, and fishes; into things that can advance, and move, and are insensible, such as the winds, and the clouds, and the waters, and the stars; into things which increase and are immoveable, such as the trees; and into things which are insensible and immoveable, such as the mountains, the earth, and such like. For all the creatures of God, in heaven and on earth, fall under one or other of these divisions, and are circumscribed by them. -- From the writings of Anastasius.

Fragment XVI.

Sound doctrine does not enter into the hard and disobedient heart; but, as if beaten back, enters anew into itself.

Fragment XVII.

As the good of the body is health, so the good of the soul is knowledge, which is indeed a kind of health of soul, by which a likeness to God is attained. -- From the writings of John of Damascus.

Fragment XVIII.

To yield and give way to our passions is the lowest slavery, even as to rule over them is the only liberty. The greatest of all good is to be free from sin, the next is to be justified; but he must be reckoned the most unfortunate of men, who, while living unrighteously, remains for a long time unpunished. Animals in harness cannot but be carried over a precipice by the inexperience and badness of their driver, even as by his skilfulness and excellence they will be saved. The end contemplated by a philosopher is likeness to God, so far as that is possible. -- From the writings of Antonius Melissa.

Fragment XIX.

[The words] of St. Justin, philosopher and martyr, from the fifth part of his Apology: [2641] -- I reckon prosperity, O men, to consist in nothing else than in living according to truth. But we do not live properly, or according to truth, unless we understand the nature of things. It escapes them apparently, that he who has by a true faith come forth from error to the truth, has truly known himself, not, as they say, as being in a state of frenzy, but as free from the unstable and (as to every variety of error) changeable corruption, by the simple and ever identical truth. -- From the writings of John of Damascus.

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