

St. Ignatius of Antioch

Also called Theophorus (*ho Theophoros*); born in Syria, around the year 50; died at Rome between 98 and 117.

More than one of the earliest ecclesiastical writers have given credence, though apparently without good reason, to the legend that Ignatius was the child whom the Savior took up in His arms, as described in Mark 9:35. It is also believed, and with great probability, that, with his friend Polycarp, he was among the auditors of the Apostle St. John. If we include St. Peter, Ignatius was the third Bishop of Antioch and the immediate successor of Evodius (Eusebius, *Church History* II.3.22). Theodoret ("Dial. Immutab.", I, iv, 33a, Paris, 1642) is the authority for the statement that St. Peter appointed Ignatius to the See of Antioch. St. John Chrysostom lays special emphasis on the honor conferred upon the martyr in receiving his episcopal consecration at the hands of the Apostles themselves ("Hom. in St. Ig.", IV. 587). Natalis Alexander quotes Theodoret to the same effect (III, xii, art. xvi, p. 53).

All the sterling qualities of ideal pastor and a true soldier of Christ were possessed by the Bishop of Antioch in a preeminent degree. Accordingly, when the storm of the persecution of Domitian broke in its full fury upon the Christians of Syria, it found their faithful leader prepared and watchful. He was unremitting in his vigilance and tireless in his efforts to inspire hope and to strengthen the weaklings of his flock against the terrors of the persecution. The restoration of peace, though it was short-lived, greatly comforted him. But it was not for himself that he rejoiced, as the one great and ever-present wish of his chivalrous soul was that he might receive the fullness of Christian discipleship through the medium of martyrdom. His desire was not to remain long unsatisfied. Associated with the writings of St. Ignatius is a work called "Martyrium Ignatii", which purports to be an account by eyewitnesses of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius and the acts leading up to it. In this work, which such competent Protestant critics as Pearson and Ussher regard as genuine, the full history of that eventful journey from Syria to Rome is faithfully recorded for the edification of the Church of Antioch. It is certainly very ancient and is reputed to have been written by Philo, deacon of Tarsus, and Rheus Agathopus, a Syrian, who accompanied Ignatius to Rome. It is generally admitted, even by those who regarded it as authentic, that this work has been greatly interpolated. Its most reliable form is that found in the "Martyrium Colbertinum" which closes the mixed recension and is so called because its oldest witness is the tenth-century Codex Colbertinus (Paris).

According to these Acts, in the ninth year of his reign, Trajan, flushed with victory over the Scythians and Dacians, sought to perfect the universality of his dominion by a species of religious conquest. He decreed, therefore, that the Christians should unite with their pagan neighbors in the worship of the gods. A general persecution was threatened, and death was named as the penalty for all who refused to offer the prescribed sacrifice. Instantly alert to the danger that threatened, Ignatius availed himself of all the means within his reach to thwart the purpose of the emperor. The success of his zealous efforts did not long remain hidden from the Church's persecutors. He was soon arrested and led before Trajan, who was then sojourning in Antioch. Accused by the emperor himself of violating the imperial edict, and of inciting others to like transgressions, Ignatius valiantly bore witness to the faith of Christ. If we may believe the account given in the "Martyrium", his bearing before Trajan was characterized by inspired eloquence, sublime courage, and even a spirit of exultation. Incapable of appreciating the motives that animated him, the emperor ordered him to be put in chains and taken to Rome, there to become the food of wild beasts and a spectacle for the people.

That the trials of this journey to Rome were great we gather from his letter to the Romans (par. 5): "From Syria even to Rome I fight with wild beasts, by land and sea, by night and by day, being bound amidst ten leopards, even a company of soldiers, who only grow worse when they are kindly treated." Despite all this, his journey was a kind of triumph. News of his fate, his destination, and his probable itinerary had gone swiftly before. At several places along the road his fellow-Christians greeted him with words of comfort and reverential homage. It is probable that he embarked on his way to Rome at Seleucia, in Syria, the nearest port to Antioch, for either Tarsus in Cilicia, or Attalia in Pamphylia, and thence, as we gather from his letters, he journeyed overland through Asia Minor. At Laodicea, on the River Lycus, where a choice of routes presented itself, his guards selected the more northerly, which brought the prospective martyr through Philadelphia and Sardis, and finally to

Smyrna, where Polycarp, his fellow-disciple in the school of St. John, was bishop. The stay at Smyrna, which was a protracted one, gave the representatives of the various Christian communities in Asia Minor an opportunity of greeting the illustrious prisoner, and offering him the homage of the Churches they represented. From the congregations of Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles, deputations came to comfort him. To each of these Christian communities he addressed letters from Smyrna, exhorting them to obedience to their respective bishops, and warning them to avoid the contamination of heresy. These, letters are redolent with the spirit of Christian charity, apostolic zeal, and pastoral solicitude. While still there he wrote also to the Christians of Rome, begging them to do nothing to deprive him of the opportunity of martyrdom.

From Smyrna his captors took him to Troas, from which place he dispatched letters to the Christians of Philadelphia and Smyrna, and to Polycarp. Besides these letters, Ignatius had intended to address others to the Christian communities of Asia Minor, inviting them to give public expression to their sympathy with the brethren in Antioch, but the altered plans of his guards, necessitating a hurried departure, from Troas, defeated his purpose, and he was obliged to content himself with delegating this office to his friend Polycarp. At Troas they took ship for Neapolis. From this place their journey led them overland through Macedonia and Illyria. The next port of embarkation was probably Dyrrhachium (Durazzo). Whether having arrived at the shores of the Adriatic, he completed his journey by land or sea, it is impossible to determine. Not long after his arrival in Rome he won his long-coveted crown of martyrdom in the Flavian amphitheater. The relics of the holy martyr were borne back to Antioch by the deacon Philo of Cilicia, and Rheus Agathopus, a Syrian, and were interred outside the gates not far from the beautiful suburb of Daphne. They were afterwards removed by the Emperor Theodosius II to the Tychaeum, or Temple of Fortune which was then converted into a Christian church under the patronage of the martyr whose relics it sheltered. In 637 they were translated to St. Clement's at Rome, where they now rest. The Church celebrates the feast of St. Ignatius on 1 February.

The character of St. Ignatius, as deduced from his own and the extant writings of his contemporaries, is that of a true athlete of Christ. The triple honor of apostle, bishop, and martyr was well merited by this energetic soldier of the Faith. An enthusiastic devotion to duty, a passionate love of sacrifice, and an utter fearlessness in the defense of Christian truth, were his chief characteristics. Zeal for the spiritual well-being of those under his charge breathes from every line of his writings. Ever vigilant lest they be infected by the rampant heresies of those early days; praying for them, that their faith and courage may not be wanting in the hour of persecution; constantly exhorting them to unflinching obedience to their bishops; teaching them all Catholic truth; eagerly sighing for the crown of martyrdom, that his own blood may fructify in added graces in the souls of his flock, he proves himself in every sense a true, pastor of souls, the good shepherd that lays down his life for his sheep.

Collections

The oldest collection of the writings of St. Ignatius known to have existed was that made use of by the historian Eusebius in the first half of the fourth century, but which unfortunately is no longer extant. It was made up of the seven letters written by Ignatius whilst on his way to Rome; These letters were addressed to the Christians

- of Ephesus (*Pros Ephesious*);
- of Magnesia (*Magnesieusin*);
- of Tralles (*Trallianois*);
- of Rome (*Pros Romaious*);
- of Philadelphia (*Philadelphousin*);
- of Smyrna (*Smyrnaiois*); and
- to Polycarp (*Pros Polykarpon*).

We find these seven mentioned not only by Eusebius (*Church History* III.36) but also by St. Jerome (*De viris illust.*, c. xvi). Of later collections of Ignatian letters which have been preserved, the oldest is known as the "long recension". This collection, the author of which is unknown, dates from the latter part of the fourth century. It contains the seven genuine and six spurious letters, but even the genuine epistles were greatly interpolated to lend weight to the personal views of its author. For this reason they are incapable of bearing witness to the original form. The spurious letters in this recension are those that purport to be from Ignatius

- to Mary of Cassobola (*Pros Marian Kassoboliten*);
- to the Tarsians (*Pros tous en tarso*);
- to the Philippians (*Pros Philippesious*);
- to the Antiochenes (*Pros Antiocheis*);
- to Hero a deacon of Antioch (*Pros Erona diakonon Antiocheias*). Associated with the foregoing is
- a letter from Mary of Cassobola to Ignatius.

It is extremely probable that the interpolation of the genuine, the addition of the spurious letters, and the union of both in the long recension was the work of an Apollinarist of Syria or Egypt, who wrote towards the beginning of the fifth century. Funk identifies him with the compiler of the Apostolic Constitutions, which came out of Syria in the early part of the same century. Subsequently there was added to this collection a panegyric on St. Ignatius entitled, "Laus Heronis". Though in the original it was probably written in Greek, it is now extant only in Latin and Coptic texts. There is also a third recension, designated by Funk as the "mixed collection". The time of its origin can be only vaguely determined as being between that of the collection known to Eusebius and the long recension. Besides the seven genuine letters of Ignatius in their original form, it also contains the six spurious ones, with the exception of that to the Philippians.

In this collection is also to be found the "Martyrium Colbertinum". The Greek original of this recension is contained in a single codex, the famous Mediceo-Laurentianus manuscript at Florence. This codex is incomplete, wanting the letter to the Romans, which, however, is to be found associated with the "Martyrium Colbertinum" in the Codex Colbertinus, at Paris. The mixed collection is regarded as the most reliable of all in determining what was the authentic text of the genuine Ignatian letters. There is also an ancient Latin version which is an unusually exact rendering of the Greek. Critics are generally inclined to look upon this version as a translation of some Greek manuscript of the same type as that of the Medicean Codex. This version owes its discovery to Archbishop Ussher, of Ireland, who found it in two manuscripts in English libraries and published it in 1644. It was the work of Robert Grosseteste, a Franciscan friar and Bishop of Lincoln (c. 1250). The original Syriac version has come down to us in its entirety only in an Armenian translation. It also contains the seven genuine and six spurious letters. This collection in the original Syriac would be invaluable in determining the exact text of Ignatius, were it in existence, for the reason that it could not have been later than the fourth or fifth century. The deficiencies of the Armenian version are in part supplied by the abridged recension in the original Syriac. This abridgment contains the three genuine letters to the Ephesians, the Romans, and to Polycarp. The manuscript was discovered by Cureton in a collection of Syriac manuscripts obtained in 1843 from the monastery of St. Mary Deipara in the Desert of Nitria. Also there are three letters extant only in Latin. Two of the three purport to be from Ignatius to St. John the Apostle, and one to the Blessed Virgin, with her reply to the same. These are probably of Western origin, dating no further back than the twelfth century.

The controversy

At intervals during the last several centuries a warm controversy has been carried on by patrologists concerning the authenticity of the Ignatian letters. Each particular recension has had its apologists and its opponents. Each has been favored to the exclusion of all the others, and all, in turn, have been collectively rejected, especially by the coreligionists of Calvin. The reformer himself, in language as violent as it is uncritical (*Institutes*, 1-3), repudiates *in globo* the letters which so completely discredit his own peculiar views on ecclesiastical government. The convincing evidence which the letters bear to the Divine origin of Catholic doctrine is not conducive to predisposing non-Catholic critics in their favor, in fact, it has added not a little to the heat of the controversy. In general, Catholic and Anglican scholars are ranged on the side of the letters written to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrniots, and to Polycarp; whilst Presbyterians, as a rule, and perhaps a priori, repudiate everything claiming Ignatian authorship.

The two letters to the Apostle St. John and the one to the Blessed Virgin, which exist only in Latin, are unanimously admitted to be spurious. The great body of critics who acknowledge the authenticity of the Ignatian letters restrict their approval to those mentioned by Eusebius and St. Jerome. The six others are not defended by any of the early Fathers. The majority of those who acknowledge the Ignatian authorship of the seven letters do so conditionally, rejecting what they consider the obvious interpolations in these letters. In 1623, whilst the

controversy was at its height, Vedelius gave expression to this latter opinion by publishing at Geneva an edition of the Ignatian letters in which the seven genuine letters are set apart from the five spurious. In the genuine letters he indicated what was regarded as interpolations. The reformer Dallaeus, at Geneva, in 1666, published a work entitled "De scriptis quae sub Dionysii Areop. et Ignatii Antioch. nominibus circumferuntur", in which (lib. II) he called into question the authenticity of all seven letters. To this the Anglican Pearson replied spiritedly in a work called "Vindiciae epistolarum S. Ignatii", published at Cambridge, 1672. So convincing were the arguments adduced in this scholarly work that for two hundred years the controversy remained closed in favor of the genuineness of the seven letters. The discussion was reopened by Cureton's discovery (1843) of the abridged Syriac version, containing the letters of Ignatius to the Ephesians, Romans, and to Polycarp. In a work entitled "Vindiciae Ignatianae" (London, 1846), he defended the position that only the letters contained in his abridged Syriac recension, and in the form therein contained, were genuine, and that all others were interpolated or forged outright. This position was vigorously combated by several British and German critics, including the Catholics Denzinger and Hefele, who successfully defended the genuineness of the entire seven epistles. It is now generally admitted that Cureton's Syriac version is only an abbreviation of the original.

While it can hardly be said that there is at present any unanimous agreement on the subject, the best modern criticism favors the authenticity of the seven letters mentioned by Eusebius. Even such eminent non-Catholic critics as Zahn, Lightfoot, and Harnack hold this view. Perhaps the best evidence of their authenticity is to be found in the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, which mentions each of them by name. As an intimate friend of Ignatius, Polycarp, writing shortly after the martyr's death, bears contemporaneous witness to the authenticity of these letters, unless, indeed, that of Polycarp itself be regarded as interpolated or forged. When, furthermore, we take into consideration the passage of Irenaeus (Adv. Haer., V, xxviii, 4) found in the original Greek in Eusebius (*Church History* III.36), in which he refers to the letter to the Romans. (iv, I) in the following words: "Just as one of our brethren said, condemned to the wild beasts in martyrdom for his faith", the evidence of authenticity becomes compelling. The romance of Lucian of Samosata, "De morte peregrini", written in 167, bears incontestable evidence that the writer was not only familiar with the Ignatian letters, but even made use of them. Harnack, who was not always so minded, describes these proofs as "testimony as strong to the genuineness of the epistles as any that can be conceived of" (Expositor, ser. 3, III, p. 11).

Contents of the letters

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of the testimony which the Ignatian letters offer to the dogmatic character of Apostolic Christianity. The martyred Bishop of Antioch constitutes a most important link between the Apostles and the Fathers of the early Church. Receiving from the Apostles themselves, whose auditor he was, not only the substance of revelation, but also their own inspired interpretation of it; dwelling, as it were, at the very fountain-head of Gospel truth, his testimony must necessarily carry with it the greatest weight and demand the most serious consideration. Cardinal Newman did not exaggerate the matter when he said ("The Theology of the Seven Epistles of St. Ignatius", in "Historical Sketches", I, London, 1890) that "the whole system of Catholic doctrine may be discovered, at least in outline, not to say in parts filled up, in the course of his seven epistles". Among the many Catholic doctrines to be found in the letters are the following:

- the Church was Divinely established as a visible society, the salvation of souls is its end, and those who separate themselves from it cut themselves off from God (*Philadelphians* 3)
- the hierarchy of the Church was instituted by Christ (Introduction to *Philadelphians*; *Ephesians* 6)
- the threefold character of the hierarchy (*Magnesians* 6)
- the order of the episcopacy superior by Divine authority to that of the priesthood (*Magnesians* 6 and 13; *Smyrnæans* 8; *Trallians* 3)
- the unity of the Church (*Trallians* 6; *Philadelphians* 3; *Magnesians* 13)
- the holiness of the Church (*Smyrnæans*, *Ephesians*, *Magnesians*, *Trallians* and *Romans*)
- the catholicity of the Church (*Smyrnæans* 8); the infallibility of the Church (*Philadelphians* 3; *Ephesians* 16-17)
- the doctrine of the Eucharist (*Smyrnæans* 8), which word we find for the first time applied to the Blessed Sacrament, just as in *Smyrnæans* 8, we meet for the first time the phrase "Catholic Church", used to designate all Christians

- the Incarnation (*Ephesians* 18); the supernatural virtue of virginity, already much esteemed and made the subject of a vow (*Polycarp* 5)
- the religious character of matrimony (*Polycarp* 5)
- the value of united prayer (*Ephesians* 13)
- the primacy of the See of Rome (Introduction to *Romans* 13)

He, moreover, denounces in principle the Protestant doctrine of private judgment in matters of religion (*Philadelphians* 3), The heresy against which he chiefly inveighs is Docetism. Neither do the Judaizing heresies escape his vigorous condemnation.

Editions

The four letters found in Latin only were printed in Paris in 1495. The common Latin version of eleven letters, together with a letter of Polycarp and some reputed works of Dionysius the Areopagite, was printed in Paris, 1498, by Lefèvre d'Etaples. Another edition of the seven genuine and six spurious letters, including the one to Mary of Cassobola, was edited by Symphorianus Champierus, of Lyons, Paris, 1516. Valentinus Paceus published a Greek edition of twelve letters (Dillingen, 1557). A similar edition was brought out at Zurich, in 1559, by Andrew Gesner; a Latin version of the work of John Brunner accompanied it. Both of these editions made use of the Greek text of the long recension. In 1644 Archbishop Ussher edited the letters of Ignatius and Polycarp. The common Latin version, with three of the four Latin letters, was subjoined. It also contained the Latin version of eleven letters taken from Ussher's manuscripts. In 1646 Isaac Voss published at Amsterdam an edition from the famous Medicean Codex at Florence. Ussher brought out another edition in 1647, entitled "Appendix Ignatiana", which contained the Greek text of the genuine epistles and the Latin version of the "Martyrium Ignatii".

In 1672 J.B. Cotelier's edition appeared at Paris, containing all the letters, genuine and supposititious, of Ignatius, with those of the other Apostolic Fathers. A new edition of this work was printed by Le Clerc at Antwerp, in 1698. It was reprinted at Venice, 1765-1767, and at Paris by Migne in 1857. The letter to the Romans was published from the "Martyrium Colbertinum" at Paris, by Ruinart, in 1689. In 1724 Le Clerc brought out at Amsterdam a second edition of Cotelier's "Patres Apostolici", which contains all the letters, both genuine and spurious, in Greek and Latin versions. It also includes the letters of Mary of Cassobola and those purporting to be from the Blessed Virgin in the "Martyrium Ignatii", the "Vindiciae Ignatianae" of Pearson, and several dissertations. The first edition of the Armenian version was published at Constantinople in 1783. In 1839 Hefele edited the Ignatian letters in a work entitled "Opera Patrum Apostolicorum", which appeared at Tübingen. Migne took his text from the third edition of this work (Tübingen, 1847). Bardenhewer designates the following as the best editions: Zahn, "Ignatii et Polycarpi epistulae martyria, fragmenta" in "Patr. apostol. opp. rec.", ed. by de Gebhardt, Harnack, Zahn, fasc. II, Leipzig, 1876; Funk, "Opp. Patr. apostol.", I, Tübingen, 1878, 1887, 1901; Lightfoot, "The Apostolic Fathers", part II, London, 1885, 1889; an English version of the letters to be found in Lightfoot's "Apostolic Fathers", London, 1907, from which are taken all the quotations of the letters in this article, and to which all citations refer.

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The Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which is at Ephesus, in Asia, deservedly most happy, being blessed in the greatness and fullness of God the Father, and predestinated before the beginning of time, that it should be always for an enduring and unchangeable glory, being united and elected through the true passion by the will of the Father, and Jesus Christ, our God: Abundant happiness through Jesus Christ, and His undefiled grace.

Chapter 1. Praise of the Ephesians

I have become acquainted with your name, much-beloved in God, which you have acquired by the habit of righteousness, according to the faith and love in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Being the followers of God, and stirring up yourselves by the blood of God, you have perfectly accomplished the work which was befitting to you. For, on hearing that I came bound from Syria for the common name and hope, trusting through your prayers to be permitted to fight with beasts at Rome, that so by martyrdom I may indeed become the disciple of Him “who gave Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God,” Ephesians 5:2 [you hastened to see me]. I received, therefore, your whole multitude in the name of God, through Onesimus, a man of inexpressible love, and your bishop in the flesh, whom I pray you by Jesus Christ to love, and that you would all seek to be like him. And blessed be He who has granted unto you, being worthy, to obtain such an excellent bishop.

Chapter 2. Congratulations and entreaties

As to my fellow-servant Burrhus, your deacon in regard to God and blessed in all things, I beg that he may continue longer, both for your honour and that of your bishop. And Crocus also, worthy both of God and you, whom I have received as the manifestation of your love, has in all things refreshed 1 Corinthians 16:18, etc. me, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ shall also refresh 1 Corinthians 16:18, etc. him; together with Onesimus, and Burrhus, and Euplus, and Fronto, by means of whom, I have, as to love, beheld all of you. May I always have joy of you, if indeed I be worthy of it. It is therefore befitting that you should in every way glorify Jesus Christ, who has glorified you, that by a unanimous obedience “you may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, and may all speak the same thing concerning the same thing,” 1 Corinthians 1:10 and that, being subject to the bishop and the presbytery, you may in all respects be sanctified.

Chapter 3. Exhortations to unity

I do not issue orders to you, as if I were some great person. For though I am bound for the name [of Christ], I am not yet perfect in Jesus Christ. For now I begin to be a disciple, and I speak to you as fellow-disciples with me. For it was needful for me to have been stirred up by you in faith, exhortation, patience, and long-suffering. But inasmuch as love suffers me not to be silent in regard to you, I have therefore taken upon me first to exhort you that you would all run together in accordance with the will of God. For even Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is the [manifested] will of the Father; as also bishops, settled everywhere to the utmost bounds [of the earth], are so by the will of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4. The same continued

Wherefore it is fitting that you should run together in accordance with the will of your bishop, which thing also you do. For your justly renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp. Therefore in your concord and harmonious love, Jesus Christ is sung. And man by man, become a choir, that being harmonious in love, and taking up the song of God in unison, you may with one voice sing to the Father through Jesus Christ, so that He may both hear you, and perceive by your works that you are indeed

the members of His Son. It is profitable, therefore, that you should live in an unblameable unity, that thus you may always enjoy communion with God.

Chapter 5. The praise of unity

For if I in this brief space of time, have enjoyed such fellowship with your bishop — I mean not of a mere human, but of a spiritual nature— how much more do I reckon you happy who are so joined to him as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ is to the Father, that so all things may agree in unity! Let no man deceive himself: if any one be not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. For if the prayer of one or two possesses Matthew 18:19 such power, how much more that of the bishop and the whole Church! He, therefore, that does not assemble with the Church, has even by this manifested his pride, and condemned himself. For it is written, “God resists the proud.” Let us be careful, then, not to set ourselves in opposition to the bishop, in order that we may be subject to God.

Chapter 6. Have respect to the bishop as to Christ Himself

Now the more any one sees the bishop keeping silence, the more ought he to revere him. For we ought to receive every one whom the Master of the house sends to be over His household, Matthew 24:25 as we would do Him that sent him. It is manifest, therefore, that we should look upon the bishop even as we would upon the Lord Himself. And indeed Onesimus himself greatly commends your good order in God, that you all live according to the truth, and that no sect has any dwelling-place among you. Nor, indeed, do you hearken to any one rather than to Jesus Christ speaking in truth.

Chapter 7. Beware of false teachers

For some are in the habit of carrying about the name [of Jesus Christ] in wicked guile, while yet they practise things unworthy of God, whom you must flee as you would wild beasts. For they are ravening dogs, who bite secretly, against whom you must be on your guard, inasmuch as they are men who can scarcely be cured. There is one Physician who is possessed both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passible and then impassible— even Jesus Christ our Lord.

Chapter 8. Renewed praise of the Ephesians

Let not then any one deceive you, as indeed you are not deceived, inasmuch as you are wholly devoted to God. For since there is no strife raging among you which might distress you, you are certainly living in accordance with God's will. I am far inferior to you, and require to be sanctified by your Church of Ephesus, so renowned throughout the world. They that are carnal cannot do those things which are spiritual, nor they that are spiritual the things which are carnal; even as faith cannot do the works of unbelief, nor unbelief the works of faith. But even those things which you do according to the flesh are spiritual; for you do all things in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 9. You have given no heed to false teachers

Nevertheless, I have heard of some who have passed on from this to you, having false doctrine, whom you did not allow to sow among you, but stopped your ears, that you might not receive those things which were sown by them, as being stones 1 Peter 2:5 of the temple of the Father, prepared for the building of God the Father, and drawn up on high by the instrument of Jesus Christ, which is the cross, John 12:32 making use of the Holy Spirit as a rope, while your faith was the means by which you ascended, and your love the way which led up to God. You, therefore, as well as all your fellow-travellers, are God-bearers, temple-bearers, Christ-bearers, bearers of holiness, adorned in all respects with the commandments of Jesus Christ, in whom also I exult that I have been thought worthy, by means of this Epistle, to converse and rejoice with you, because with respect to your Christian life you love nothing but God only.

Chapter 10. Exhortations to prayer, humility, etc

And pray without ceasing in behalf of other men. For there is in them hope of repentance that they may attain to God. See, then, that they be instructed by your works, if in no other way. Be meek in response to their wrath, humble in opposition to their boasting; to their blasphemies return your prayers; in contrast to their error, be steadfast Colossians 1:23 in the faith; and for their cruelty, manifest your gentleness. While we take care not to imitate their conduct, let us be found their brethren in all true kindness; and let us seek to be followers of the Lord (who ever more unjustly treated, more destitute, more condemned?), that so no plant of the devil may be found in you, but you may remain in all holiness and sobriety in Jesus Christ, both with respect to the flesh and spirit.

Chapter 11. An exhortation to fear God, etc

The last times have come upon us. Let us therefore be of a reverent spirit, and fear the long-suffering of God, that it tend not to our condemnation. For let us either stand in awe of the wrath to come, or show regard for the grace which is at present displayed— one of two things. Only [in one way or another] let us be found in Christ Jesus unto the true life. Apart from Him, let nothing attract you, for whom I bear about these bonds, these spiritual jewels, by which may I arise through your prayers, of which I entreat I may always be a partaker, that I may be found in the lot of the Christians of Ephesus, who have always been of the same mind with the apostles through the power of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 12. Praise of the Ephesians

I know both who I am, and to whom I write. I am a condemned man, you have been the objects of mercy; I am subject to danger, you are established in safety. You are the persons through whom those pass that are cut off for the sake of God. You are initiated into the mysteries of the Gospel with Paul, the holy, the martyred, the deservedly most happy, at whose feet may I be found, when I shall attain to God; who in all his Epistles makes mention of you in Christ Jesus.

Chapter 13. Meet together frequently for the worship of God

Take heed, then, often to come together to give thanks to God, and show forth His praise. For when you assemble frequently in the same place, the powers of Satan are destroyed, and the destruction at which he aims is prevented by the unity of your faith. Nothing is more precious than peace, by which all war, both in heaven and earth, is brought to an end.

Chapter 14. Exhortations to faith and love

None of these things is hid from you, if you perfectly possess that faith and love towards Christ Jesus 1 Timothy 1:14 which are the beginning and the end of life. For the beginning is faith, and the end is love. 1 Timothy 1:5 Now these two, being inseparably connected together, are of God, while all other things which are requisite for a holy life follow after them. No man [truly] making a profession of faith sins; 1 John 3:7 nor does he that possesses love hate any one. The tree is made manifest by its fruit; Matthew 12:33 so those that profess themselves to be Christians shall be recognised by their conduct. For there is not now a demand for mere profession, but that a man be found continuing in the power of faith to the end.

Chapter 15. Exhortation to confess Christ by silence as well as speech

It is better for a man to be silent and be [a Christian], than to talk and not to be one. It is good to teach, if he who speaks also acts. There is then one Teacher, who spoke and it was done; while even those things which He did in

silence are worthy of the Father. He who possesses the word of Jesus, is truly able to hear even His very silence, that he may be perfect, and may both act as he speaks, and be recognised by his silence. There is nothing which is hid from God, but our very secrets are near to Him. Let us therefore do all things as those who have Him dwelling in us, that we may be His temples, 1 Corinthians 6:19 and He may be in us as our God, which indeed He is, and will manifest Himself before our faces. Wherefore we justly love Him.

Chapter 16. The fate of false teachers

Do not err, my brethren. James 1:16 Those that corrupt families shall not inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 If, then, those who do this as respects the flesh have suffered death, how much more shall this be the case with any one who corrupts by wicked doctrine the faith of God, for which Jesus Christ was crucified! Such an one becoming defiled [in this way], shall go away into everlasting fire, and so shall every one that hearkens unto him.

Chapter 17. Beware of false doctrines

For this end did the Lord allow the ointment to be poured upon His head, John 12:7 that He might breathe immortality into His Church. Be not anointed with the bad odour of the doctrine of the prince of this world; let him not lead you away captive from the life which is set before you. And why are we not all prudent, since we have received the knowledge of God, which is Jesus Christ? Why do we foolishly perish, not recognising the gift which the Lord has of a truth sent to us?

Chapter 18. The glory of the cross

Let my spirit be counted as nothing for the sake of the cross, which is a stumbling-block 1 Corinthians 1:18 to those that do not believe, but to us salvation and life eternal. "Where is the wise man? Where the disputer?" 1 Corinthians 1:20 Where is the boasting of those who are styled prudent? For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost. He was born and baptized, that by His passion He might purify the water.

Chapter 19. Three celebrated mysteries

Now the virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince of this world, as was also her offspring, and the death of the Lord; three mysteries of renown, which were wrought in silence by God. How, then, was He manifested to the world? A star shone forth in heaven above all the other stars, the light of which was inexpressible, while its novelty struck men with astonishment. And all the rest of the stars, with the sun and moon, formed a chorus to this star, and its light was exceedingly great above them all. And there was agitation felt as to whence this new spectacle came, so unlike to everything else [in the heavens]. Hence every kind of magic was destroyed, and every bond of wickedness disappeared; ignorance was removed, and the old kingdom abolished, God Himself being manifested in human form for the renewal of eternal life. And now that took a beginning which had been prepared by God. Henceforth all things were in a state of tumult, because He meditated the abolition of death.

Chapter 20. Promise of another letter

If Jesus Christ shall graciously permit me through your prayers, and if it be His will, I shall, in a second little work which I will write to you, make further manifest to you [the nature of] the dispensation of which I have begun [to treat], with respect to the new man, Jesus Christ, in His faith and in His love, in His suffering and in His resurrection. Especially [will I do this] if the Lord make known to me that you come together man by man in common through grace, individually, in one faith, and in Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, being both the Son of man and the Son of God, so that you obey the bishop and the presbytery with an undivided mind, breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality, and the antidote to prevent us from dying, but [which causes] that we should live for ever in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 21. Conclusion

My soul be for yours and theirs whom, for the honour of God, you have sent to Smyrna; whence also I write to you, giving thanks unto the Lord, and loving Polycarp even as I do you. Remember me, as Jesus Christ also remembered you. Pray for the Church which is in Syria, whence I am led bound to Rome, being the last of the faithful who are there, even as I have been thought worthy to be chosen to show forth the honour of God. Farewell in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, our common hope.

About this page

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The Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the [Church] blessed in the grace of God the Father, in Jesus Christ our Saviour, in whom I salute the Church which is at Magnesia, near the Mæander, and wish it abundance of happiness in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1. Reason of writing the epistle

Having been informed of your godly love, so well-ordered, I rejoiced greatly, and determined to commune with you in the faith of Jesus Christ. For as one who has been thought worthy of the most honourable of all names, in those bonds which I bear about, I commend the Churches, in which I pray for a union both of the flesh and spirit of Jesus Christ, the constant source of our life, and of faith and love, to which nothing is to be preferred, but especially of Jesus and the Father, in whom, if we endure all the assaults of the prince of this world, and escape them, we shall enjoy God.

Chapter 2. I rejoice in your messengers

Since, then, I have had the privilege of seeing you, through Damas your most worthy bishop, and through your worthy presbyters Bassus and Apollonius, and through my fellow-servant the deacon Sotio, whose friendship may I ever enjoy, inasmuch as he is subject to the bishop as to the grace of God, and to the presbytery as to the law of Jesus Christ, [I now write to you].

Chapter 3. Honour your youthful bishop

Now it becomes you also not to treat your bishop too familiarly on account of his youth, but to yield him all reverence, having respect to the power of God the Father, as I have known even holy presbyters do, not judging rashly, from the manifest youthful appearance [of their bishop], but as being themselves prudent in God, submitting to him, or rather not to him, but to the Father of Jesus Christ, the bishop of us all. It is therefore fitting that you should, after no hypocritical fashion, obey [your bishop], in honour of Him who has willed us [so to do], since he that does not so deceives not [by such conduct] the bishop that is visible, but seeks to mock Him that is invisible. And all such conduct has reference not to man, but to God, who knows all secrets.

Chapter 4. Some wickedly act independently of the bishop

It is fitting, then, not only to be called Christians, but to be so in reality: as some indeed give one the title of bishop, but do all things without him. Now such persons seem to me to be not possessed of a good conscience, seeing they are not stedfastly gathered together according to the commandment.

Chapter 5. Death is the fate of all such

Seeing, then, all things have an end, these two things are simultaneously set before us— death and life; and every one shall go unto his own place. For as there are two kinds of coins, the one of God, the other of the world, and each of these has its special character stamped upon it, [so is it also here.] The unbelieving are of this world; but the believing have, in love, the character of God the Father by Jesus Christ, by whom, if we are not in readiness to die into His passion, His life is not in us.

Chapter 6. Preserve harmony

Since therefore I have, in the persons before mentioned, beheld the whole multitude of you in faith and love, I exhort you to study to do all things with a divine harmony, while your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the apostles, along with your deacons, who are most dear to me, and are entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father before the beginning of time, and in the end was revealed. Do all then, imitating the same divine conduct, pay respect to one another, and let no one look upon his neighbour after the flesh, but continually love each other in Jesus Christ. Let nothing exist among you that may divide you; but be united with your bishop, and those that preside over you, as a type and evidence of your immortality.

Chapter 7. Do nothing without the bishop and presbyters

As therefore the Lord did nothing without the Father, being united to Him, neither by Himself nor by the apostles, so neither do anything without the bishop and presbyters. Neither endeavour that anything appear reasonable and proper to yourselves apart; but being come together into the same place, let there be one prayer, one supplication, one mind, one hope, in love and in joy undefiled. There is one Jesus Christ, than whom nothing is more excellent. Therefore run together as into one temple of God, as to one altar, as to one Jesus Christ, who came forth from one Father, and is with and has gone to one.

Chapter 8. Caution against false doctrines

Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace. For the divinest prophets lived according to Christ Jesus. On this account also they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace to fully convince the unbelieving that there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word, not proceeding forth from silence, and who in all things pleased Him that sent Him.

Chapter 9. Let us live with Christ

If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death— whom some deny, by which mystery we have obtained faith, and therefore endure, that we may be found the disciples of Jesus Christ, our only Master— how shall we be able to live apart from Him, whose disciples the prophets themselves in the Spirit did wait for Him as their Teacher? And therefore He whom they rightly waited for, having come, raised them from the dead. Matthew 27:52

Chapter 10. Beware of Judaizing

Let us not, therefore, be insensible to His kindness. For were He to reward us according to our works, we should cease to be. Therefore, having become His disciples, let us learn to live according to the principles of Christianity. For whosoever is called by any other name besides this, is not of God. Lay aside, therefore, the evil, the old, the sour leaven, and be changed into the new leaven, which is Jesus Christ. Be salted in Him, lest any one among you should be corrupted, since by your savour you shall be convicted. It is absurd to profess Christ Jesus, and to Judaize. For Christianity did not embrace Judaism, but Judaism Christianity, that so every tongue which believes might be gathered together to God.

Chapter 11. I write these things to warn you

These things [I address to you], my beloved, not that I know any of you to be in such a state; but, as less than any of you, I desire to guard you beforehand, that you fall not upon the hooks of vain doctrine, but that you attain to full assurance in regard to the birth, and passion, and resurrection which took place in the time of the government of Pontius Pilate, being truly and certainly accomplished by Jesus Christ, who is our hope, 1 Timothy 1:1 from which may no one of you ever be turned aside.

Chapter 12. You are superior to me

May I enjoy you in all respects, if indeed I be worthy! For though I am bound, I am not worthy to be compared to any of you that are at liberty. I know that you are not puffed up, for you have Jesus Christ in yourselves. And all the more when I commend you, I know that you cherish modesty of spirit; as it is written, "The righteous man is his own accuser." Proverbs 18:17

Chapter 13. Be established in faith and unity

Study, therefore, to be established in the doctrines of the Lord and the apostles, that so all things, whatsoever you do, may prosper both in the flesh and spirit; in faith and love; in the Son, and in the Father, and in the Spirit; in the beginning and in the end; with your most admirable bishop, and the well-compacted spiritual crown of your presbytery, and the deacons who are according to God. Be subject to the bishop, and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father, according to the flesh, and the apostles to Christ, and to the Father, and to the Spirit; that so there may be a union both fleshly and spiritual.

Chapter 14. Your prayers requested

Knowing as I do that you are full of God, I have but briefly exhorted you. Be mindful of me in your prayers, that I may attain to God; and of the Church which is in Syria, whence I am not worthy to derive my name: for I stand in need of your united prayer in God, and your love, that the Church which is in Syria may be deemed worthy of being refreshed by your Church.

Chapter 15. Salutations

The Ephesians from Smyrna (whence I also write to you), who are here for the glory of God, as you also are, who have in all things refreshed me, salute you, along with Polycarp, the bishop of the Smyrnæans. The rest of the Churches, in honour of Jesus Christ, also salute you. Fare well in the harmony of God, you who have obtained the inseparable Spirit, who is Jesus Christ.

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The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the holy Church which is at Tralles, in Asia, beloved of God, the Father of Jesus Christ, elect, and worthy of God, possessing peace through the flesh, and blood, and passion of Jesus Christ, who is our hope, through our rising again to Him, which also I salute in its fullness, and in the character, and wish abundance of happiness.

Chapter 1. Acknowledgment of their excellence

I KNOW that you possess an unblameable and sincere mind in patience, and that not only in present practice, but according to inherent nature, as Polybius your bishop has shown me, who has come to Smyrna by the will of God and Jesus Christ, and so sympathized in the joy which I, who am bound in Christ Jesus, possess, that I beheld your whole multitude in him. Having therefore received through him the testimony of your good-will, according to God, I gloried to find you, as I knew you were, the followers of God.

Chapter 2. Be subject to the bishop, etc

For, since you are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, you appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ, who died for us, in order, by believing in His death, you may escape from death. It is therefore necessary that, as you indeed do, so without the bishop you should do nothing, but should also be subject to the presbytery, as to the apostle of Jesus Christ, who is our hope, in whom, if we live, we shall [at last] be found. It is fitting also that the deacons, as being [the ministers] of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, should in every respect be pleasing to all. For they are not ministers of meat and drink, but servants of the Church of God. They are bound, therefore, to avoid all grounds of accusation [against them], as they would do fire.

Chapter 3. Honour the deacons, etc

In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the sanhedrim of God, and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these, there is no Church. Concerning all this, I am persuaded that you are of the same opinion. For I have received the manifestation of your love, and still have it with me, in your bishop, whose very appearance is highly instructive, and his meekness of itself a power; whom I imagine even the ungodly must reverence, seeing they are also pleased that I do not spare myself. But shall I, when permitted to write on this point, reach such a height of self-esteem, that though being a condemned man, I should issue commands to you as if I were an apostle?

Chapter 4. I have need of humility

I have great knowledge in God, but I restrain myself, lest, I should perish through boasting. For now it is needful for me to be the more fearful; and not give heed to those that puff me up. For they that speak to me [in the way of commendation] scourge me. For I do indeed desire to suffer, but I know not if I be worthy to do so. For this longing, though it is not manifest to many, all the more vehemently assails me. I therefore have need of meekness, by which the prince of this world is brought to nought.

Chapter 5. I will not teach you profound doctrines

Am I not able to write to you of heavenly things? But I fear to do so, lest I should inflict injury on you who are but babes [in Christ]. Pardon me in this respect, lest, as not being able to receive [such doctrines], you should be

strangled by them. For even I, though I am bound [for Christ], yet am not on that account able to understand heavenly things, and the places of the angels, and their gatherings under their respective princes, things visible and invisible. Without reference to such abstruse subjects, I am still but a learner [in other respects]; for many things are wanting to us, that we come not short of God.

Chapter 6. Abstain from the poison of heretics

I therefore, yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, entreat you that you use Christian nourishment only, and abstain from herbage of a different kind; I mean heresy. For those [that are given to this] mix up Jesus Christ with their own poison, speaking things which are unworthy of credit, like those who administer a deadly drug in sweet wine, which he who is ignorant of does greedily take, with a fatal pleasure leading to his own death.

Chapter 7. The same continued

Be on your guard, therefore, against such persons. And this will be the case with you if you are not puffed up, and continue in intimate union with Jesus Christ our God, and the bishop, and the enactments of the apostles. He that is within the altar is pure, but he that is without is not pure; that is, he who does anything apart from the bishop, and presbytery, and deacons, such a man is not pure in his conscience.

Chapter 8. Be on your guard against the snares of the devil

Not that I know there is anything of this kind among you; but I put you on your guard, inasmuch as I love you greatly, and foresee the snares of the devil. Wherefore, clothing yourselves with meekness, be renewed in faith, that is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, that is the blood of Jesus Christ. Let no one of you cherish any grudge against his neighbour. Give no occasion to the Gentiles, lest by means of a few foolish men the whole multitude [of those that believe] in God be evil spoken of. For, “Woe to him by whose vanity my name is blasphemed among any.” Isaiah 52:5

Chapter 9. Reference to the history of Christ

Stop your ears, therefore, when any one speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly born, and ate and drank. He was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; He was truly crucified, and [truly] died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. He was also truly raised from the dead, His Father quickening Him, even as after the same manner His Father will so raise up us who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart from whom we do not possess the true life.

Chapter 10. The reality of Christ's passion

But if, as some that are without God, that is, the unbelieving, say, that He only seemed to suffer (they themselves only seeming to exist), then why am I in bonds? Why do I long to be exposed to the wild beasts? Do I therefore die in vain? Am I not then guilty of falsehood against [the cross of] the Lord?

Chapter 11. Avoid the deadly errors of the Docetæ

Flee, therefore, those evil offshoots [of Satan], which produce death-bearing fruit, whereof if any one tastes, he instantly dies. For these men are not the planting of the Father. For if they were, they would appear as branches of the cross, and their fruit would be incorruptible. By it He calls you through His passion, as being His members. The head, therefore, cannot be born by itself, without its members; God, who is [the Saviour] Himself, having promised their union.

Chapter 12. Continue in unity and love

I salute you from Smyrna, together with the Churches of God which are with me, who have refreshed me in all things, both in the flesh and in the spirit. My bonds, which I carry about with me for the sake of Jesus Christ (praying that I may attain to God), exhort you. Continue in harmony among yourselves, and in prayer with one another; for it becomes every one of you, and especially the presbyters, to refresh the bishop, to the honour of the Father, of Jesus Christ, and of the apostles. I entreat you in love to hear me, that I may not, by having written, be a testimony against you. And also pray for me, who have need of your love, along with the mercy of God, that I may be worthy of the lot for which I am destined, and that I may not be found reprobate.

Chapter 13. Conclusion

The love of the Smyrnæans and Ephesians salutes you. Remember in your prayers the Church which is in Syria, from which also I am not worthy to receive my appellation, being the last of them. Fare well in Jesus Christ, while you continue subject to the bishop, as to the command [of God], and in like manner to the presbytery. And, every man, love one another with an undivided heart. Let my spirit be sanctified by yours, not only now, but also when I shall attain to God. For I am as yet exposed to danger. But the Father is faithful in Jesus Christ to fulfil both mine and your petitions: in whom may you be found unblameable.

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The Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which has obtained mercy, through the majesty of the Most High Father, and Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son; the Church which is beloved and enlightened by the will of Him that wills all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ our God, which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honour, worthy of the highest happiness, worthy of praise, worthy of obtaining her every desire, worthy of being deemed holy, and which presides over love, is named from Christ, and from the Father, which I also salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father: to those who are united, both according to the flesh and spirit, to every one of His commandments; who are filled inseparably with the grace of God, and are purified from every strange taint, [I wish] abundance of happiness unblameably, in Jesus Christ our God.

Chapter 1. As a prisoner, I hope to see you

Through prayer to God I have obtained the privilege of seeing your most worthy faces, and have even been granted more than I requested; for I hope as a prisoner in Christ Jesus to salute you, if indeed it be the will of God that I be thought worthy of attaining unto the end. For the beginning has been well ordered, if I may obtain grace to cling to my lot without hindrance unto the end. For I am afraid of your love, lest it should do me an injury. For it is easy for you to accomplish what you please; but it is difficult for me to attain to God, if you spare me.

Chapter 2. Do not save me from martyrdom

For it is not my desire to act towards you as a man-pleaser, but as pleasing God, even as also you please Him. For neither shall I ever have such [another] opportunity of attaining to God; nor will you, if you shall now be silent, ever be entitled to the honour of a better work. For if you are silent concerning me, I shall become God's; but if you show your love to my flesh, I shall again have to run my race. Pray, then, do not seek to confer any greater favour upon me than that I be sacrificed to God while the altar is still prepared; that, being gathered together in love, you may sing praise to the Father, through Christ Jesus, that God has deemed me, the bishop of Syria, worthy to be sent for from the east unto the west. It is good to set from the world unto God, that I may rise again to Him.

Chapter 3. Pray rather that I may attain to martyrdom

You have never envied any one; you have taught others. Now I desire that those things may be confirmed [by your conduct], which in your instructions you enjoin [on others]. Only request in my behalf both inward and outward strength, that I may not only speak, but [truly] will; and that I may not merely be called a Christian, but really be found to be one. For if I be truly found [a Christian], I may also be called one, and be then deemed faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world. Nothing visible is eternal. "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." For our God, Jesus Christ, now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed [in His glory]. Christianity is not a thing of silence only, but also of [manifest] greatness.

Chapter 4. Allow me to fall a prey to the wild beasts

I write to the Churches, and impress on them all, that I shall willingly die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech of you not to show an unseasonable good-will towards me. Allow me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather entice the wild

beasts, that they may become my tomb, and may leave nothing of my body; so that when I have fallen asleep [in death], I may be no trouble to any one. Then shall I truly be a disciple of Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body. Entreat Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be found a sacrifice [to God]. I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments unto you. They were apostles; I am but a condemned man: they were free, while I am, even until now, a servant. But when I suffer, I shall be the freed-man of Jesus, and shall rise again emancipated in Him. And now, being a prisoner, I learn not to desire anything worldly or vain.

Chapter 5. I desire to die

From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, I mean a band of soldiers, who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse. But I am the more instructed by their injuries [to act as a disciple of Christ]; “yet am I not thereby justified.”

1 Corinthians 4:4 May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily, and not deal with me as with some, whom, out of fear, they have not touched. But if they be unwilling to assail me, I will compel them to do so. Pardon me [in this]: I know what is for my benefit. Now I begin to be a disciple. And let no one, of things visible or invisible, envy me that I should attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let tearings, breakings, and dislocations of bones; let cutting off of members; let shatterings of the whole body; and let all the dreadful torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ.

Chapter 6. By death I shall attain true life

All the pleasures of the world, and all the kingdoms of this earth, shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth. “For what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?” Him I seek, who died for us: Him I desire, who rose again for our sake. This is the gain which is laid up for me. Pardon me, brethren: do not hinder me from living, do not wish to keep me in a state of death; and while I desire to belong to God, do not give me over to the world. Allow me to obtain pure light: when I have gone there, I shall indeed be a man of God. Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God. If any one has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire, and let him have sympathy with me, as knowing how I am straitened.

Chapter 7. Reason of desiring to die

The prince of this world would fain carry me away, and corrupt my disposition towards God. Let none of you, therefore, who are [in Rome] help him; rather be on my side, that is, on the side of God. Do not speak of Jesus Christ, and yet set your desires on the world. Let not envy find a dwelling-place among you; nor even should I, when present with you, exhort you to it, be persuaded to listen to me, but rather give credit to those things which I now write to you. For though I am alive while I write to you, yet I am eager to die. My love has been crucified, and there is no fire in me desiring to be fed; but there is within me a water that lives and speaks, saying to me inwardly, Come to the Father. I have no delight in corruptible food, nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham; and I desire the drink of God, namely His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life.

Chapter 8. Be favourable to me

I no longer wish to live after the manner of men, and my desire shall be fulfilled if you consent. Be willing, then, that you also may have your desires fulfilled. I entreat you in this brief letter; give credit to me. Jesus Christ will reveal these things to you, [so that you shall know] that I speak truly. He is the mouth altogether free from falsehood, by which the Father has truly spoken. Pray for me, that I may attain [the object of my desire]. I have not written to you according to the flesh, but according to the will of God. If I shall suffer, you have wished [well] to me; but if I am rejected, you have hated me.

Chapter 9. Pray for the church in Syria

Remember in your prayers the Church in Syria, which now has God for its shepherd, instead of me. Jesus Christ alone will oversee it, and your love [will also regard it]. But as for me, I am ashamed to be counted one of them; for indeed I am not worthy, as being the very last of them, and one born out of due time. 1 Corinthians 15:8-9 But I have obtained mercy to be somebody, if I shall attain to God. My spirit salutes you, and the love of the Churches that have received me in the name of Jesus Christ, and not as a mere passer-by. For even those Churches which were not near to me in the way, I mean according to the flesh, have gone before me, city by city, [to meet me.]

Chapter 10. Conclusion

Now I write these things to you from Smyrna by the Ephesians, who are deservedly most happy. There is also with me, along with many others, Crocus, one dearly beloved by me. As to those who have gone before me from Syria to Rome for the glory of God, I believe that you are acquainted with them; to whom, [then,] make known that I am at hand. For they are all worthy, both of God and of you; and it is becoming that you should refresh them in all things. I have written these things unto you, on the day before the ninth of the Kalends of September (that is, on the twenty-third day of August). Fare well to the end, in the patience of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, which is at Philadelphia, in Asia, which has obtained mercy, and is established in the harmony of God, and rejoices unceasingly in the passion of our Lord, and is filled with all mercy through his resurrection; which I salute in the blood of Jesus Christ, who is our eternal and enduring joy, especially if [men] are in unity with the bishop, the presbyters, and the deacons, who have been appointed according to the mind of Jesus Christ, whom He has established in security, after His own will, and by His Holy Spirit.

Chapter 1. Praise of the bishop

Which bishop, I know, obtained the ministry which pertains to the common [good], not of himself, neither by men, Galatians 1:1 nor through vainglory, but by the love of God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; at whose meekness I am struck with admiration, and who by his silence is able to accomplish more than those who vainly talk. For he is in harmony with the commandments [of God], even as the harp is with its strings. Wherefore my soul declares his mind towards God a happy one, knowing it to be virtuous and perfect, and that his stability as well as freedom from all anger is after the example of the infinite meekness of the living God.

Chapter 2. Maintain union with the bishop

Wherefore, as children of light and truth, flee from division and wicked doctrines; but where the shepherd is, there follow as sheep. For there are many wolves that appear worthy of credit, who, by means of a pernicious pleasure, carry captive 2 Timothy 3:6 those that are running towards God; but in your unity they shall have no place.

Chapter 3. Avoid schismatics

Keep yourselves from those evil plants which Jesus Christ does not tend, because they are not the planting of the Father. Not that I have found any division among you, but exceeding purity. For as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ are also with the bishop. And as many as shall, in the exercise of repentance, return into the unity of the Church, these, too, shall belong to God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ. Do not err, my brethren. If any man follows him that makes a schism in the Church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If any one walks according to a strange opinion, he agrees not with the passion [of Christ.].

Chapter 4. Have but one Eucharist, etc

Take heed, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to [show forth] the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: that so, whatsoever you do, you may do it according to [the will of] God.

Chapter 5. Pray for me

My brethren, I am greatly enlarged in loving you; and rejoicing exceedingly [over you], I seek to secure your safety. Yet it is not I, but Jesus Christ, for whose sake being bound I fear the more, inasmuch as I am not yet perfect. But your prayer to God shall make me perfect, that I may attain to that portion which through mercy has been allotted me, while I flee to the Gospel as to the flesh of Jesus, and to the apostles as to the presbytery of the Church. And let us also love the prophets, because they too have proclaimed the Gospel, and placed their hope in Him, and waited for Him; in whom also believing, they were saved, through union to Jesus Christ, being holy

men, worthy of love and admiration, having had witness borne to them by Jesus Christ, and being reckoned along with [us] in the Gospel of the common hope.

Chapter 6. Do not accept Judaism

But if any one preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him. For it is better to hearken to Christian doctrine from a man who has been circumcised, than to Judaism from one uncircumcised. But if either of such persons do not speak concerning Jesus Christ, they are in my judgment but as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, upon which are written only the names of men. Flee therefore the wicked devices and snares of the prince of this world, lest at any time being conquered by his artifices, grow weak in your love. But be all joined together with an undivided heart. And I thank my God that I have a good conscience in respect to you, and that no one has it in his power to boast, either privately or publicly, that I have burdened any one either in much or in little. And I wish for all among whom I have spoken, that they may not possess that for a testimony against them.

Chapter 7. I have exhorted you to unity

For though some would have deceived me according to the flesh, yet the Spirit, as being from God, is not deceived. For it knows both whence it comes and whither it goes, John 3:8 and detects the secrets [of the heart]. For, when I was among you, I cried, I spoke with a loud voice: Give heed to the bishop, and to the presbytery and deacons. Now, some suspected me of having spoken thus, as knowing beforehand the division caused by some among you. But He is my witness, for whose sake I am in bonds, that I got no intelligence from any man. But the Spirit proclaimed these words: Do nothing without the bishop; keep your bodies as the temples of God; love unity; avoid divisions; be the followers of Jesus Christ, even as He is of His Father.

Chapter 8. The same continued

I therefore did what belonged to me, as a man devoted to unity. For where there is division and wrath, God does not dwell. To all them that repent, the Lord grants forgiveness, if they turn in penitence to the unity of God, and to communion with the bishop. I trust [as to you] in the grace of Jesus Christ, who shall free you from every bond. And I exhort you to do nothing out of strife, but according to the doctrine of Christ. When I heard some saying, If I do not find it in the ancient Scriptures, I will not believe the Gospel; on my saying to them, It is written, they answered me, That remains to be proved. But to me Jesus Christ is in the place of all that is ancient: His cross, and death, and resurrection, and the faith which is by Him, are undefiled monuments of antiquity; by which I desire, through your prayers, to be justified.

Chapter 9. The Old Testament is good: the New Testament is better

The priests indeed are good, but the High Priest is better; to whom the holy of holies has been committed, and who alone has been trusted with the secrets of God. He is the door of the Father, by which enter in Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets, and the apostles, and the Church. All these have for their object the attaining to the unity of God. But the Gospel possesses something transcendent [above the former dispensation], viz., the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, His passion and resurrection. For the beloved prophets announced Him, but the Gospel is the perfection of immortality. All these things are good together, if you believe in love.

Chapter 10. Congratulate the Antiochans on the close of the persecution

Since, according to your prayers, and the compassion which you feel in Christ Jesus, it is reported to me that the Church which is at Antioch in Syria possesses peace, it will become you, as a Church of God, to elect a deacon to act as the ambassador of God [for you] to [the brethren there], that he may rejoice along with them when they

are met together, and glorify the name [of God]. Blessed is he in Jesus Christ, who shall be deemed worthy of such a ministry; and you too shall be glorified. And if you are willing, it is not beyond your power to do this, for the sake of God; as also the nearest Churches have sent, in some cases bishops, and in others presbyters and deacons.

Chapter 11. Thanks and salutation

Now, as to Philo the deacon, of Cilicia, a man of reputation, who still ministers to me in the word of God, along with Rheus Agathopus, an elect man, who has followed me from Syria, not regarding his life—these bear witness in your behalf; and I myself give thanks to God for you, that you have received them, even as the Lord you. But may those that dishonoured them be forgiven through the grace of Jesus Christ! The love of the brethren at Troas salutes you; whence also I write to you by Burrhus, who was sent along with me by the Ephesians and Smyrnæans, to show their respect. May the Lord Jesus Christ honour them, in whom they hope, in flesh, and soul, and faith, and love, and concord! Fare well in Christ Jesus, our common hope.

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The Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father, and of the beloved Jesus Christ, which has through mercy obtained every kind of gift, which is filled with faith and love, and is deficient in no gift, most worthy of God, and adorned with holiness: the Church which is at Smyrna, in Asia, wishes abundance of happiness, through the immaculate Spirit and word of God.

Chapter 1. Thanks to God for your faith

I GLORIFY God, even Jesus Christ, who has given you such wisdom. For I have observed that you are perfected in an immoveable faith, as if you were nailed to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit, and are established in love through the blood of Christ, being fully persuaded with respect to our Lord, that He was truly of the seed of David according to the flesh, Romans 1:3 and the Son of God according to the will and power of God; that He was truly born of a virgin, was baptized by John, in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled Matthew 3:15 by Him; and was truly, under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch, nailed [to the cross] for us in His flesh. Of this fruit we are by His divinely-blessed passion, that He might set up a standard Isaiah 5:26, Isaiah 49:22 for all ages, through His resurrection, to all His holy and faithful [followers], whether among Jews or Gentiles, in the one body of His Church.

Chapter 2. Christ's true passion

Now, He suffered all these things for our sakes, that we might be saved. And He suffered truly, even as also He truly raised up Himself, not, as certain unbelievers maintain, that He only seemed to suffer, as they themselves only seem to be [Christians]. And as they believe, so shall it happen unto them, when they shall be divested of their bodies, and be mere evil spirits.

Chapter 3. Christ was possessed of a body after His resurrection

For I know that after His resurrection also He was still possessed of flesh, and I believe that He is so now. When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, "Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit." And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced both by His flesh and spirit. For this cause also they despised death, and were found its conquerors. And after his resurrection He ate and drank with them, as being possessed of flesh, although spiritually He was united to the Father.

Chapter 4. Beware of these heretics

I give you these instructions, beloved, assured that you also hold the same opinions [as I do]. But I guard you beforehand from those beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but, if it be possible, not even meet with; only you must pray to God for them, if by any means they may be brought to repentance, which, however, will be very difficult. Yet Jesus Christ, who is our true life, has the power of [effecting] this. But if these things were done by our Lord only in appearance, then am I also only in appearance bound. And why have I also surrendered myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to the wild beasts? But, [in fact,] he who is near to the sword is near to God; he that is among the wild beasts is in company with God; provided only he be so in the name of Jesus Christ. I undergo all these things that I may suffer together with Him, Romans 8:17 He who became a perfect man inwardly strengthening me. Philippians 4:13

Chapter 5. Their dangerous errors

Some ignorantly deny Him, or rather have been denied by Him, being the advocates of death rather than of the truth. These persons neither have the prophets persuaded, nor the law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day, nor the sufferings we have individually endured. For they think also the same thing regarding us. For what does any one profit me, if he commends me, but blasphemes my Lord, not confessing that He was [truly] possessed of a body? But he who does not acknowledge this, has in fact altogether denied Him, being enveloped in death. I have not, however, thought good to write the names of such persons, inasmuch as they are unbelievers. Yea, far be it from me to make any mention of them, until they repent and return to [a true belief in] Christ's passion, which is our resurrection.

Chapter 6. Unbelievers in the blood of Christ shall be condemned

Let no man deceive himself. Both the things which are in heaven, and the glorious angels, and rulers, both visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, shall, in consequence, incur condemnation. "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." Matthew 19:12 Let not [high] place puff any one up: for that which is worth all is faith and love, to which nothing is to be preferred. But consider those who are of a different opinion with respect to the grace of Christ which has come unto us, how opposed they are to the will of God. They have no regard for love; no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed; of the bond, or of the free; of the hungry, or of the thirsty.

Chapter 7. Let us stand aloof from such heretics

They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again. Those, therefore, who speak against this gift of God, incur death in the midst of their disputes. But it were better for them to treat it with respect, that they also might rise again. It is fitting, therefore, that you should keep aloof from such persons, and not to speak of them either in private or in public, but to give heed to the prophets, and above all, to the Gospel, in which the passion [of Christ] has been revealed to us, and the resurrection has been fully proved. But avoid all divisions, as the beginning of evils.

Chapter 8. Let nothing be done without the bishop

See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles; and reverence the deacons, as being the institution of God. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop. Let that be deemed a proper Eucharist, which is [administered] either by the bishop, or by one to whom he has entrusted it. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God, so that everything that is done may be secure and valid.

Chapter 9. Honour the bishop

Moreover, it is in accordance with reason that we should return to soberness [of conduct], and, while yet we have opportunity, exercise repentance towards God. It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honours the bishop has been honoured by God; he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil. Let all things, then, abound to you through grace, for you are worthy. You have refreshed me in all things, and Jesus Christ [shall refresh] you. You have loved me when absent as well as when present. May God recompense you, for whose sake, while you endure all things, you shall attain unto Him.

Chapter 10. Acknowledgment of their kindness

You have done well in receiving Philo and Rheus Agathopus as servants of Christ our God, who have followed me for the sake of God, and who give thanks to the Lord in your behalf, because you have in every way refreshed them. None of these things shall be lost to you. May my spirit be for you, and my bonds, which you have not despised or been ashamed of; nor shall Jesus Christ, our perfect hope, be ashamed of you.

Chapter 11. Request to them to send a messenger to Antioch

Your prayer has reached to the Church which is at Antioch in Syria. Coming from that place bound with chains, most acceptable to God, I salute all; I who am not worthy to be styled from thence, inasmuch as I am the least of them. Nevertheless, according to the will of God, I have been thought worthy [of this honour], not that I have any sense [of having deserved it], but by the grace of God, which I wish may be perfectly given to me, that through your prayers I may attain to God. In order, therefore, that your work may be complete both on earth and in heaven, it is fitting that, for the honour of God, your Church should elect some worthy delegate; so that he, journeying into Syria, may congratulate them that they are [now] at peace, and are restored to their proper greatness, and that their proper constitution has been re-established among them. It seems then to me a becoming thing, that you should send some one of your number with an epistle, so that, in company with them, he may rejoice over the tranquility which, according to the will of God, they have obtained, and because that, through your prayers, they have now reached the harbour. As persons who are perfect, you should also aim at those things which are perfect. For when you are desirous to do well, God is also ready to assist you.

Chapter 12. Salutations

The love of the brethren at Troas salutes you; whence also I write to you by Burrhus, whom you sent with me, together with the Ephesians, your brethren, and who has in all things refreshed me. And I would that all may imitate him, as being a pattern of a minister of God. Grace will reward him in all things. I salute your most worthy bishop, and your very venerable presbytery, and your deacons, my fellow-servants, and all of you individually, as well as generally, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in His flesh and blood, in His passion and resurrection, both corporeal and spiritual, in union with God and you. Grace, mercy, peace, and patience, be with you for evermore!

Chapter 13. Conclusion

I salute the families of my brethren, with their wives and children, and the virgins who are called widows. Be strong, I pray, in the power of the Holy Ghost. Philo, who is with me, greets you. I salute the house of Tavius, and pray that it may be confirmed in faith and love, both corporeal and spiritual. I salute Alce, my well-beloved, and the incomparable Daphnus, and Eutecnus, and all by name. Fare well in the grace of God.

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The Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to Polycarp, Bishop of the Church of the Smyrnæans, or rather, who has, as his own bishop, God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: [wishes] abundance of happiness.

Chapter 1. Commendation and exhortation

Having obtained good proof that your mind is fixed in God as upon an immoveable rock, I loudly glorify [His name] that I have been thought worthy [to behold] your blameless face, which may I ever enjoy in God! I entreat you, by the grace with which you are clothed, to press forward in your course, and to exhort all that they may be saved. Maintain your position with all care, both in the flesh and spirit. Have a regard to preserve unity, than which nothing is better. Bear with all, even as the Lord does with you. Support all in love, as also you do. Give yourself to prayer without ceasing. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Implore additional understanding to what you already have. Be watchful, possessing a sleepless spirit. Speak to every man separately, as God enables you. Bear the infirmities of all, as being a perfect athlete [in the Christian life]: where the labour is great, the gain is all the more.

Chapter 2. Exhortations

If you love the good disciples, no thanks are due to you on that account; but rather seek by meekness to subdue the more troublesome. Every kind of wound is not healed with the same plaster. Mitigate violent attacks [of disease] by gentle applications. Be in all things “wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove.” Matthew 10:16 For this purpose you are composed of both flesh and spirit, that you may deal tenderly with those [evils] that present themselves visibly before you. And as respects those that are not seen, pray that [God] would reveal them unto you, in order that you may be wanting in nothing, but may abound in every gift. The times call for you, as pilots do for the winds, and as one tossed with tempest seeks for the haven, so that both you [and those under your care] may attain to God. Be sober as an athlete of God: the prize set before you is immortality and eternal life, of which you are also persuaded. In all things may my soul be for yours, and my bonds also, which you have loved.

Chapter 3. Exhortations

Let not those who seem worthy of credit, but teach strange doctrines, 1 Timothy 1:3, 1 Timothy 6:3 fill you with apprehension. Stand firm, as does an anvil which is beaten. It is the part of a noble athlete to be wounded, and yet to conquer. And especially, we ought to bear all things for the sake of God, that He also may bear with us. Be ever becoming more zealous than what you are. Weigh carefully the times. Look for Him who is above all time, eternal and invisible, yet who became visible for our sakes; impalpable and impassible, yet who became passible on our account; and who in every kind of way suffered for our sakes.

Chapter 4. Exhortations

Let not widows be neglected. Be, after the Lord, their protector and friend. Let nothing be done without your consent; neither do anything without the approval of God, which indeed you do not, inasmuch as you are steadfast. Let your assembling together be of frequent occurrence: seek after all by name. Do not despise either male or female slaves, yet neither let them be puffed up with conceit, but rather let them submit themselves the more, for the glory of God, that they may obtain from God a better liberty. Let them not long to be set free [from slavery] at the public expense, that they be not found slaves to their own desires.

Chapter 5. The duties of husbands and wives

Flee evil arts; but all the more discourse in public regarding them. Speak to my sisters, that they love the Lord, and be satisfied with their husbands both in the flesh and spirit. In like manner also, exhort my brethren, in the name of Jesus Christ, that they love their wives, even as the Lord the Church. Ephesians 5:25 If any one can continue in a state of purity, to the honour of Him who is Lord of the flesh, let him so remain without boasting. If he begins to boast, he is undone; and if he reckon himself greater than the bishop, he is ruined. But it becomes both men and women who marry, to form their union with the approval of the bishop, that their marriage may be according to God, and not after their own lust. Let all things be done to the honour of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

Chapter 6. The duties of the Christian flock

Give heed to the bishop, that God also may give heed to you. My soul be for theirs that are submissive to the bishop, to the presbyters, and to the deacons, and may my portion be along with them in God! Labour together with one another; strive in company together; run together; suffer together; sleep together; and awake together, as the stewards, and associates, and servants of God. Please Him under whom you fight, and from whom you receive your wages. Let none of you be found a deserter. Let your baptism endure as your arms; your faith as your helmet; your love as your spear; your patience as a complete panoply. Let your works be the charge assigned to you, that you may receive a worthy recompense. Be long-suffering, therefore, with one another, in meekness, as God is towards you. May I have joy of you for ever!

Chapter 7. Request that Polycarp would send a messenger to Antioch

Seeing that the Church which is at Antioch in Syria is, as report has informed me, at peace, through your prayers, I also am the more encouraged, resting without anxiety in God, if indeed by means of suffering I may attain to God, so that, through your prayers, I may be found a disciple [of Christ]. It is fitting, O Polycarp, most blessed in God, to assemble a very solemn council, and to elect one whom you greatly love, and know to be a man of activity, who may be designated the messenger of God; and to bestow on him this honour that he may go into Syria, and glorify your ever active love to the praise of Christ. A Christian has not power over himself, but must always be ready for the service of God. Now, this work is both God's and yours, when you shall have completed it to His glory. For I trust that, through grace, you are prepared for every good work pertaining to God. Knowing, therefore, your energetic love of the truth, I have exhorted you by this brief Epistle.

Chapter 8. Let other churches also send to Antioch

Inasmuch as I have not been able to write to all the Churches, because I must suddenly sail from Troas to Neapolis, as the will [of the emperor] enjoins, [I beg that] you, as being acquainted with the purpose of God, will write to the adjacent Churches, that they also may act in like manner, such as are able to do so sending messengers, and the others transmitting letters through those persons who are sent by you, that you may be glorified by a work which shall be remembered for ever, as indeed you are worthy to be. I salute all by name, and in particular the wife of Epitropus, with all her house and children. I salute Attalus, my beloved. I salute him who shall be deemed worthy to go [from you] into Syria. Grace shall be with him for ever, and with Polycarp that sends him. I pray for your happiness for ever in our God, Jesus Christ, by whom continue in the unity and under the protection of God, I salute Alce, my dearly beloved. Fare well in the Lord.

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The Martyrdom of Ignatius

Chapter 1. Desire of Ignatius for martyrdom

When Trajan, not long since, succeeded to the empire of the Romans, Ignatius, the disciple of John the apostle, a man in all respects of an apostolic character, governed the Church of the Antiochians with great care, having with difficulty escaped the former storms of the many persecutions under Domitian, inasmuch as, like a good pilot, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the earnestness of his teaching, and by his [constant] spiritual labour, he resisted the flood that rolled against him, fearing [only] lest he should lose any of those who were deficient in courage, or apt to suffer from their simplicity. Wherefore he rejoiced over the tranquil state of the Church, when the persecution ceased for a little time, but was grieved as to himself, that he had not yet attained to a true love to Christ, nor reached the perfect rank of a disciple. For he inwardly reflected, that the confession which is made by martyrdom, would bring him into a yet more intimate relation to the Lord. Wherefore, continuing a few years longer with the Church, and, like a divine lamp, enlightening every one's understanding by his expositions of the [Holy] Scriptures, he [at length] attained the object of his desire.

Chapter 2. Ignatius is condemned by Trajan

For Trajan, in the ninth year of his reign, being lifted up [with pride], after the victory he had gained over the Scythians and Dacians, and many other nations, and thinking that the religious body of the Christians were yet wanting to complete the subjugation of all things to himself, and [thereupon] threatening them with persecution unless they should agree to worship dæmons, as did all other nations, thus compelled all who were living godly lives either to sacrifice [to idols] or die. Wherefore the noble soldier of Christ [Ignatius], being in fear for the Church of the Antiochians, was, in accordance with his own desire, brought before Trajan, who was at that time staying at Antioch, but was in haste [to set forth] against Armenia and the Parthians. And when he was set before the Emperor Trajan, [that prince] said unto him, “Who are you, wicked wretch, who settest yourself to transgress our commands, and persuadest others to do the same, so that they should miserably perish?” Ignatius replied, “No one ought to call Theophorus wicked; for all evil spirits have departed from the servants of God. But if, because I am an enemy to these [spirits], you call me wicked in respect to them, I quite agree with you; for inasmuch as I have Christ the King of heaven [within me], I destroy all the devices of these [evil spirits].” Trajan answered, “And who is Theophorus?” Ignatius replied, “He who has Christ within his breast.” Trajan said, “Do we not then seem to you to have the gods in our mind, whose assistance we enjoy in fighting against our enemies?” Ignatius answered, “You are in error when you call the dæmons of the nations gods. For there is but one God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that are in them; and one Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, whose kingdom may I enjoy.” Trajan said, “Do you mean Him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?” Ignatius replied, “I mean Him who crucified my sin, with him who was the inventor of it, and who has condemned [and cast down] all the deceit and malice of the devil under the feet of those who carry Him in their heart.” Trajan said, “Do you then carry within you Him that was crucified?” Ignatius replied, “Truly so; for it is written, 'I will dwell in them, and walk in them.' ” 2 Corinthians 6:16 Then Trajan pronounced sentence as follows: “We command that Ignatius, who affirms that he carries about within him Him that was crucified, be bound by soldiers, and carried to the great [city] Rome, there to be devoured by the beasts, for the gratification of the people.” When the holy martyr heard this sentence, he cried out with joy, “I thank you, O Lord, that You have vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love towards You, and have made me to be bound with iron chains, like Your Apostle Paul.” Having spoken thus, he then, with delight, clasped the chains about him; and when he had first prayed for the Church, and commended it with tears to the Lord, he was hurried away by the savage cruelty of the soldiers, like a distinguished ram the leader of a goodly flock, that he might be carried to Rome, there to furnish food to the bloodthirsty beasts.

Chapter 3. Ignatius sails to Smyrna

Wherefore, with great alacrity and joy, through his desire to suffer, he came down from Antioch to Seleucia, from which place he set sail. And after a great deal of suffering he came to Smyrna, where he disembarked with great joy, and hastened to see the holy Polycarp, [formerly] his fellow disciple, and [now] bishop of Smyrna. For they had both, in old times, been disciples of St. John the Apostle. Being then brought to him, and having communicated to him some spiritual gifts, and glorying in his bonds, he entreated of him to labour along with him for the fulfilment of his desire; earnestly indeed asking this of the whole Church (for the cities and Churches of Asia had welcomed the holy man through their bishops, and presbyters, and deacons, all hastening to meet him, if by any means they might receive from him some spiritual gift), but above all, the holy Polycarp, that, by means of the wild beasts, he soon disappearing from this world, might be manifested before the face of Christ.

Chapter 4. Ignatius writes to the churches

And these things he thus spoke, and thus testified, extending his love to Christ so far as one who was about to secure heaven through his good confession, and the earnestness of those who joined their prayers to his in regard to his [approaching] conflict; and to give a recompense to the Churches, who came to meet him through their rulers, sending letters of thanksgiving to them, which dropped spiritual grace, along with prayer and exhortation. Wherefore, seeing all men so kindly affected towards him, and fearing lest the love of the brotherhood should hinder his zeal towards the Lord, while a fair door of suffering martyrdom was opened to him, he wrote to the Church of the Romans the Epistle which is here subjoined.

Chapter 5. Ignatius is brought to Rome

Having therefore, by means of this Epistle, settled, as he wished, those of the brethren at Rome who were unwilling [for his martyrdom]; and setting sail from Smyrna (for Christophorus was pressed by the soldiers to hasten to the public spectacles in the mighty [city] Rome, that, being given up to the wild beasts in the sight of the Roman people, he might attain to the crown for which he strove), he [next] landed at Troas. Then, going on from that place to Neapolis, he went [on foot] by Philippi through Macedonia, and on to that part of Epirus which is near Epidamnus; and finding a ship in one of the seaports, he sailed over the Adriatic Sea, and entering from it on the Tyrrhene, he passed by the various islands and cities, until, when Puteoli came in sight, he was eager there to disembark, having a desire to tread in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul. Acts 28:13-14 But a violent wind arising did not allow him to do so, the ship being driven rapidly forwards; and, simply expressing his delight over the love of the brethren in that place, he sailed by. Wherefore, continuing to enjoy fair winds, we were reluctantly hurried on in one day and a night, mourning [as we did] over the coming departure from us of this righteous man. But to him this happened just as he wished, since he was in haste as soon as possible to leave this world, that he might attain to the Lord whom he loved. Sailing then into the Roman harbour, and the unhallowed sports being just about to close, the soldiers began to be annoyed at our slowness, but the bishop rejoicingly yielded to their urgency.

Chapter 6. Ignatius is devoured by the beasts at Rome

They pushed forth therefore from the place which is called Portus; and (the fame of all relating to the holy martyr being already spread abroad) we met the brethren full of fear and joy; rejoicing indeed because they were thought worthy to meet with Theophorus, but struck with fear because so eminent a man was being led to death. Now he enjoined some to keep silence who, in their fervent zeal, were saying that they would appease the people, so that they should not demand the destruction of this just one. He being immediately aware of this through the Spirit, and having saluted them all, and begged of them to show a true affection towards him, and having dwelt [on this point] at greater length than in his Epistle, and having persuaded them not to envy him hastening to the Lord, he then, after he had, with all the brethren kneeling [beside him], entreated the Son of God in behalf of the Churches, that a stop might be put to the persecution, and that mutual love might continue among the brethren, was led with all haste into the amphitheatre. Then, being immediately thrown in, according to the command of Cæsar given some time ago, the public spectacles being just about to close (for it was then a solemn day, as they deemed it, being that which is called the thirteenth in the Roman tongue, on which the people were wont to assemble in more than ordinary numbers), he was thus cast to the wild beasts close beside

the temple, that so by them the desire of the holy martyr Ignatius should be fulfilled, according to that which is written, “The desire of the righteous is acceptable Proverbs 10:24 [to God],” to the effect that he might not be troublesome to any of the brethren by the gathering of his remains, even as he had in his Epistle expressed a wish beforehand that so his end might be. For only the harder portions of his holy remains were left, which were conveyed to Antioch and wrapped in linen, as an inestimable treasure left to the holy Church by the grace which was in the martyr.

Chapter 7. Ignatius appears in a vision after his death

Now these things took place on the thirteenth day before the Kalends of January, that is, on the twentieth of December, Sura and Senecio being then the consuls of the Romans for the second time. Having ourselves been eye-witnesses of these things, and having spent the whole night in tears within the house, and having entreated the Lord, with bended knees and much prayer, that He would give us weak men full assurance respecting the things which were done, it came to pass, on our falling into a brief slumber, that some of us saw the blessed Ignatius suddenly standing by us and embracing us, while others beheld him again praying for us, and others still saw him dropping with sweat, as if he had just come from his great labour, and standing by the Lord. When, therefore, we had with great joy witnessed these things, and had compared our several visions together, we sang praise to God, the giver of all good things, and expressed our sense of the happiness of the holy [martyr]; and now we have made known to you both the day and the time [when these things happened], that, assembling ourselves together according to the time of his martyrdom, we may have fellowship with the champion and noble martyr of Christ, who trod under foot the devil, and perfected the course which, out of love to Christ, he had desired, in Christ Jesus our Lord; by whom, and with whom, be glory and power to the Father, with the Holy Spirit, for evermore! Amen.

About this page

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Spurious Epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch

Epistle to the Tarsians

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which is at Tarsus, saved in Christ, worthy of praise, worthy of remembrance, and worthy of love: Mercy and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, be ever multiplied.

Chapter 1. His own sufferings: exhortation to steadfastness

From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts: not that I am devoured by brute beasts, for these, as you know, by the will of God, spared Daniel, but by beasts in the shape of men, in whom the merciless wild beast himself lies hid, and pricks and wounds me day by day. But none of these hardships “move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself,” Acts 20:24 in such a way as to love it better than the Lord. Wherefore I am prepared for [encountering] fire, wild beasts, the sword or the cross, so that only I may see Christ my Saviour and God, who died for me. I therefore, the prisoner of Christ, who am driven along by land and sea, exhort you: “stand fast in the faith,” 1 Corinthians 16:13 and be steadfast, “for the just shall live by faith;” Habakkuk 2:4; Galatians 3:11 be unwavering, for “the Lord causes those to dwell in a house who are of one and the same character.”

Chapter 2. Cautions against false doctrine

I have learned that certain of the ministers of Satan have wished to disturb you, some of them asserting that Jesus was born [only] in appearance, was crucified in appearance, and died in appearance; others that He is not the Son the Creator, and others that He is Himself God over all. Others, again, hold that He is a mere man, and others that this flesh is not to rise again, so that our proper course is to live and partake of a life of pleasure, for that this is the chief good to beings who are in a little while to perish. A swarm of such evils has burst in upon us. But you have not “given place by subjection to them, no, not for one hour.” Galatians 2:5 For you are the fellow citizens as well as the disciples of Paul, who “fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum,” Romans 15:19 and bore about “the marks of Christ” in his flesh. Galatians 6:17

Chapter 3. The true doctrine respecting Christ

Mindful of him, by all means know that Jesus the Lord was truly born of Mary, being made of a woman; and was as truly crucified. For, says he, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus.” Galatians 6:14 And He really suffered, and died, and rose again. For says [Paul], “If Christ should become passible, and should be the first to rise again from the dead.” And again, “In that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He lives, He lives unto God.” Romans 6:10 Otherwise, what advantage would there be in [becoming subject to] bonds, if Christ has not died? What advantage in patience? What advantage in [enduring] stripes? And why such facts as the following: Peter was crucified; Paul and James were slain with the sword; John was banished to Patmos; Stephen was stoned to death by the Jews who killed the Lord? But, [in truth,] none of these sufferings were in vain; for the Lord was really crucified by the ungodly.

Chapter 4. Continuation

And [know, moreover], that He who was born of a woman was the Son of God, and He that was crucified was “the first-born of every creature,” Colossians 1:15 and God the Word, who also created all things. For says the apostle, “There is one God, the Father, of whom are all things; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things.” 1 Corinthians 8:6 And again, “For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man

Christ Jesus;" 1 Timothy 2:5 and, "By Him were all things created that are in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Colossians 1:16-17

Chapter 5. Refutation of the previously mentioned errors

And that He Himself is not God over all, and the Father, but His Son, He [shows when He] says, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." John 20:17 And again, "When all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall He also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." 1 Corinthians 15:28 Wherefore it is one [Person] who put all things under, and who is all in all, and another [Person] to whom they were subdued, who also Himself, along with all other things, becomes subject [to the former].

Chapter 6. Continuation

Nor is He a mere man, by whom and in whom all things were made; for "all things were made by Him." John 1:3 "When He made the heaven, I was present with Him; and I was there with Him, forming [the world along with Him], and He rejoiced in me daily." And how could a mere man be addressed in such words as these: "Sit at My right hand?" And how, again, could such an one declare: "Before Abraham was, I am?" John 8:58 And, "Glorify Me with Your glory which I had before the world was?" John 17:5 What man could ever say, "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me?" John 6:38 And of what man could it be said, "He was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world: He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not?" How could such a one be a mere man, receiving the beginning of His existence from Mary, and not rather God the Word, and the only-begotten Son? For "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, John 1:1 and the Word was God." And in another place, "The Lord created Me, the beginning of His ways, for His ways, for His works. Before the world did He found Me, and before all the hills did He beget Me."

Chapter 7. Continuation

And that our bodies are to rise again, He shows when He says, "Verily I say unto you, that the hour comes, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." And [says] the apostle, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

1 Corinthians 15:53 And that we must live soberly and righteously, he [shows when he] says again, "Be not deceived: neither adulterers, nor effeminate persons, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor fornicators, nor revilers, nor drunkards, nor thieves, can inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 6:9 And again, "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised; our preaching therefore is vain, and your faith is also vain: you are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. If the dead rise not, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

1 Corinthians 15:13-32 But if such be our condition and feelings, wherein shall we differ from asses and dogs, who have no care about the future, but think only of eating, and of indulging such appetites as follow after eating? For they are unacquainted with any intelligence moving within them.

Chapter 8. Exhortations to holiness and good order

May I have joy of you in the Lord! Be sober. Lay aside, every one of you, all malice and beast-like fury, evil-speaking, calumny, filthy speaking, ribaldry, whispering, arrogance, drunkenness, lust, avarice, vainglory, envy, and everything akin to these. "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." Romans 13:14 You presbyters, be subject to the bishop; you deacons, to the presbyters; and you, the people, to the presbyters and the deacons. Let my soul be for theirs who preserve this good order; and may the Lord be with them continually!

Chapter 9. Exhortations to the discharge of relative duties

You husbands, love your wives; and you wives, your husbands. You children, reverence your parents. You parents, “bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4 Honour those [who continue] in virginity, as the priestesses of Christ; and the widows [that persevere] in gravity of behaviour, as the altar of God. You servants, wait upon your masters with [respectful] fear. You masters, issue orders to your servants with tenderness. Let no one among you be idle; for idleness is the mother of want. I do not enjoin these things as being a person of any consequence, although I am in bonds [for Christ]; but as a brother, I put you in mind of them. The Lord be with you!

Chapter 10. Salutations

May I enjoy your prayers! Pray that I may attain to Jesus. I commend unto you the Church which is at Antioch. The Churches of Philippi, whence also I write to you, salute you. Philo, your deacon, to whom also I give thanks as one who has zealously ministered to me in all things, salutes you. Agathopus, the deacon from Syria, who follows me in Christ, salutes you. “Salute one another with a holy kiss.” 1 Peter 5:14 I salute you all, both male and female, who are in Christ. Fare well in body, and soul, and in one Spirit; and do not forget me. The Lord be with you!

Epistle to the Antiochians

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church sojourning in Syria, which has obtained mercy from God, and been elected by Christ, and which first Acts 11:26 received the name Christ, [wishes] happiness in God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 1. Cautions against error

The Lord has rendered my bonds light and easy since I learned that you are in peace, that you live in all harmony both of the flesh and spirit. “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called,” Ephesians 4:1 guarding against those heresies of the wicked one which have broken in upon us, to the deceiving and destruction of those that accept of them; but that you give heed to the doctrine of the apostles, and believe both the law and the prophets: that you reject every Jewish and Gentile error, and neither introduce a multiplicity of gods, nor yet deny Christ under the pretence of [maintaining] the unity of God.

Chapter 2. The true doctrine respecting God and Christ

For Moses, the faithful servant of God, when he said, “The Lord your God is one Lord,” Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29 and thus proclaimed that there was only one God, did yet immediately confess also our Lord when he said, “The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha fire and brimstone from the Lord.” Genesis 19:24 And again, “And God said, Let Us make man after our image: and so God made man, after the image of God made He him.” Genesis 1:26-27 And further “In the image of God made He man.” Genesis 5:1, Genesis 9:6 And that [the Son of God] was to be made man [Moses shows when] he says, “A prophet shall the Lord raise up unto you of your brethren, like me.”

Chapter 3. The same continued

The prophets also, when they speak as in the person of God, [saying,] “I am God, the first [of beings], and I am also the last, and besides Me there is no God,” Isaiah 44:6 concerning the Father of the universe, do also speak of our Lord Jesus Christ. “A Son,” they say, “has been given to us, on whose shoulder the government is from above; and His name is called the Angel of great counsel, Wonderful, Counsellor, the strong and mighty God.” Isaiah 9:6 And concerning His incarnation, “Behold, a virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son; and

they shall call his name Immanuel.” Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23 And concerning the passion, “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, I also was an innocent lamb led to be sacrificed.” Isaiah 53:7; Jeremiah 11:19

Chapter 4. Continuation

The Evangelists, too, when they declared that the one Father was “the only true God,” John 17:3 did not omit what concerned our Lord, but wrote: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.” John 1:1 And concerning the incarnation: “The Word,” says [the Scripture], “became flesh, and dwelt among us.” John 1:14 And again: “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Matthew 1:1 And those very apostles, who said “that there is one God,” 1 Corinthians 8:4, 6; Galatians 3:20 said also that “there is one Mediator between God and men.” Ephesians 4:5-6; 1 Timothy 2:5 Nor were they ashamed of the incarnation and the passion. For what says [one]? “The man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself” 1 Timothy 2:5 for the life and salvation of the world.

Chapter 5. Denunciation of false teachers

Whosoever, therefore, declares that there is but one God, only so as to take away the divinity of Christ, is a devil, and an enemy of all righteousness. He also that confesses Christ, yet not as the Son of the Maker of the world, but of some other unknown being, different from Him whom the law and the prophets have proclaimed, this man is an instrument of the devil. And he that rejects the incarnation, and is ashamed of the cross for which I am in bonds, this man is antichrist. Moreover, he who affirms Christ to be a mere man is accursed, according to the [declaration of the] prophet, Jeremiah 17:5 since he puts not his trust in God, but in man. Wherefore also he is unfruitful, like the wild myrtle-tree.

Chapter 6. Renewed cautions

These things I write to you, you new olive-tree of Christ, not that I am aware you hold any such opinions, but that I may put you on your guard, as a father does his children. Beware, therefore, of those that hasten to work mischief, those “enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose glory is in their shame.” Philippians 3:18-19 Beware of those “dumb dogs,” those trailing serpents, those scaly dragons, those asps, and basilisks, and scorpions. For these are subtle wolves, and apes that mimic the appearance of men.

Chapter 7. Exhortation to consistency of conduct

You have been the disciples of Paul and Peter; do not lose what was committed to your trust. Keep in remembrance Euodias, your deservedly-blessed pastor, into whose hands the government over you was first entrusted by the apostles. Let us not bring disgrace upon our Father. Let us prove ourselves His true-born children, and not bastards. You know after what manner I have acted among you. The things which, when present, I spoke to you, these same, when absent, I now write to you. “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema.” 1 Corinthians 16:22 Be followers of me. 1 Corinthians 4:16 My soul be for yours, when I attain to Jesus. Remember my bonds. Colossians 4:18

Chapter 8. Exhortations to the presbyters and others

You presbyters, “feed the flock which is among you,” 1 Peter 5:2 till God shall show who is to hold the rule over you. For “I am now ready to be offered,” 2 Timothy 4:6 that I “may win Christ.” Philippians 3:8 Let the deacons know of what dignity they are, and let them study to be blameless, that they may be the followers of Christ. Let the people be subject to the presbyters and the deacons. Let the virgins know to whom they have consecrated themselves.

Chapter 9. Duties of husbands, wives, parents, and children

Let the husbands love their wives, remembering that, at the creation, one woman, and not many, was given to one man. Let the wives honour their husbands, as their own flesh; and let them not presume to address them by their names. 1 Peter 3:6 Let them also be chaste, reckoning their husbands as their only partners, to whom indeed they have been united according to the will of God. You parents, impart a holy training to your children. You children, “honour your parents, that it may be well with you.”

Chapter 10. Duties of masters and servants

You masters, do not treat your servants with haughtiness, but imitate patient Job, who declares, “I did not despise the cause of my man-servant, or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me. For what in that case shall I do when the Lord makes an inquisition regarding me?” Job 31:13-14 And you know what follows. You servants, do not provoke your masters to anger in anything, lest you become the authors of incurable mischiefs to yourselves.

Chapter 11. Inculcation of various moral duties

Let no one addicted to idleness eat, 2 Thessalonians 3:10 lest he become a wanderer about, and a whoremonger. Let drunkenness, anger, envy, reviling, clamour, and blasphemy “be not so much as named among you.”

Ephesians 5:3 Let not the widows live a life of pleasure, lest they wax wanton against the word.

1 Timothy 5:6, 11 Be subject to Cæsar in everything in which subjection implies no [spiritual] danger. Provoke not those that rule over you to wrath, that you may give no occasion against yourselves to those that seek for it. But as to the practice of magic, or the impure love of boys, or murder, it is superfluous to write to you, since such vices are forbidden to be committed even by the Gentiles. I do not issue commands on these points as if I were an apostle; but, as your fellow-servant, I put you in mind of them.

Chapter 12. Salutations

I salute the holy presbytery. I salute the sacred deacons, and that person most dear to me, whom may I behold, through the Holy Spirit, occupying my place when I shall attain to Christ. My soul be in place of his. I salute the sub-deacons, the readers, the singers, the doorkeepers, the labourers, the exorcists, the confessors. I salute the keepers of the holy gates, the deaconesses in Christ. I salute the virgins betrothed to Christ, of whom may I have joy in the Lord Jesus. I salute the people of the Lord, from the smallest to the greatest, and all my sisters in the Lord.

Chapter 13. Salutations continued

I salute Cassian and his partner in life, and their very dear children. Polycarp, that most worthy bishop, who is also deeply interested in you, salutes you; and to him I have commended you in the Lord. The whole Church of the Smyrnæans, indeed, is mindful of you in their prayers in the Lord. Onesimus, the pastor of the Ephesians, salutes you. Damas, the bishop of Magnesia, salutes you. Polybius, bishop of the Trallians, salutes you. Philo and Agathopus, the deacons, my companions, salute you, “Salute one another with a holy kiss.”

2 Corinthians 13:12

Chapter 14. Conclusion

I write this letter to you from Philippi. May He who is alone unbegotten, keep you steadfast both in the spirit and in the flesh, through Him who was begotten before time began! And may I behold you in the kingdom of Christ! I salute him who is to bear rule over you in my stead: may I have joy of him in the Lord! Fare well in God, and in Christ, being enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

Epistle to Hero, a Deacon of Antioch

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to Hero, the deacon of Christ, and the servant of God, a man honoured by God, and most dearly loved as well as esteemed, who carries Christ and the Spirit within him, and who is my own son in faith and love: Grace, mercy, and peace from Almighty God, and from Christ Jesus our Lord, His only-begotten Son, “who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from the present evil world,” Galatians 1:4 and preserve us unto His heavenly kingdom.

Chapter 1. Exhortations to earnestness and moderation

I Exhort you in God, that you add [speed] to your course, and that you vindicate your dignity. Have a care to preserve concord with the saints. Bear [the burdens of] the weak, that “you may fulfil the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2 Devote yourself to fasting and prayer, but not beyond measure, lest you destroy yourself thereby. Do not altogether abstain from wine and flesh, for these things are not to be viewed with abhorrence, since [the Scripture] says, “You shall eat the good things of the earth.” Isaiah 1:19 And again, “You shall eat flesh even as herbs.” Genesis 9:3 And again, “Wine makes glad the heart of man, and oil exhilarates, and bread strengthens him.” But all are to be used with moderation, as being the gifts of God. “For who shall eat or who shall drink without Him? For if anything be beautiful, it is His; and if anything be good, it is His.” Give attention to reading, 1 Timothy 4:13 that you may not only yourself know the laws, but may also explain them to others, as the earnest servant of God. “No man that wars entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier; and if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.” 2 Timothy 2:4 I that am in bonds pray that my soul may be in place of yours.

Chapter 2. Cautions against false teachers

Every one that teaches anything beyond what is commanded, though he be [deemed] worthy of credit, though he be in the habit of fasting, though he live in continence, though he work miracles, though he have the gift of prophecy, let him be in your sight as a wolf in sheep's clothing, Matthew 7:15 labouring for the destruction of the sheep. If any one denies the cross, and is ashamed of the passion, let him be to you as the adversary himself. “Though he gives all his goods to feed the poor, though he remove mountains, though he give his body to be burned,” 1 Corinthians 13:2 let him be regarded by you as abominable. If any one makes light of the law or the prophets, which Christ fulfilled at His coming, let him be to you as antichrist. If any one says that the Lord is a mere man, he is a Jew, a murderer of Christ.

Chapter 3. Exhortations as to ecclesiastical duties

“Honour widows that are widows indeed.” 1 Timothy 5:3 Be the friend of orphans; for God is “the Father of the fatherless, and the Judge of the widows.” Do nothing without the bishops; for they are priests, and you a servant of the priests. They baptize, offer sacrifice, ordain, and lay on hands; but you minister to them, as the holy Stephen did at Jerusalem to James and the presbyters. Do not neglect the sacred meetings [of the saints]; inquire after every one by name. “Let no man despise your youth, but be an example to the believers, both in word and conduct.” 1 Timothy 4:12

Chapter 4. Servants and women are not to be despised

Be not ashamed of servants, for we possess the same nature in common with them. Do not hold women in abomination, for they have given you birth, and brought you up. It is fitting, therefore, to love those that were the authors of our birth (but only in the Lord), inasmuch as a man can produce no children without a woman. It is right, therefore, that we should honour those who have had a part in giving us birth. “Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man,” 1 Corinthians 11:11 except in the case of those who were first formed. For the body of Adam was made out of the four elements, and that of Eve out of the side of Adam. And, indeed, the altogether peculiar birth of the Lord was of a virgin alone. [This took place] not as if the lawful union

[of man and wife] were abominable, but such a kind of birth was fitting to God. For it became the Creator not to make use of the ordinary method of generation, but of one that was singular and strange, as being the Creator.

Chapter 5. Various relative duties

Flee from haughtiness, “for the Lord resists the proud.” James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5 Abhor falsehood, for says [the Scripture], “You shall destroy all them that speak lies.” Guard against envy, for its author is the devil, and his successor Cain, who envied his brother, and out of envy committed murder. Exhort my sisters to love God, and be content with their own husbands only. In like manner, exhort my brethren also to be content with their own wives. Watch over the virgins, as the precious treasures of Christ. Be long-suffering, Proverbs 14:29 that you may be great in wisdom. Do not neglect the poor, in so far as you are prosperous. For “by alms and fidelity sins are purged away.”

Chapter 6. Exhortations to purity and caution

Keep yourself pure as the habitation of God. You are the temple of Christ. You are the instrument of the Spirit. You know in what way I have brought you up. Though I am the least of men, seek to follow me, be an imitator of my conduct. I do not glory in the world, but in the Lord. I exhort Hero, my son; “but let him that glories, glory in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 1:31; 2 Corinthians 10:17 May I have joy of you, my dear son, whose guardian may He be who is the only unbegotten God, and the Lord Jesus Christ! Do not believe all persons, do not place confidence in all; nor let any man get the better of you by flattery. For many are the ministers of Satan; and “he that is hasty to believe is light of heart.” Sirach 19:4

Chapter 7. Solemn charge to Hero, as future bishop of Antioch

Keep God in remembrance, and you shall never sin. Be not double-minded James 1:6, 8 in your prayers; for blessed is he who doubts not. For I believe in the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in His only-begotten Son, that God will show me, Hero, upon my throne. Add speed, therefore, to your course. I charge you before the God of the universe, and before Christ, and in the presence of the Holy Spirit, and of the ministering ranks [of angels], keep in safety that deposit which I and Christ have committed to you, and do not judge yourself unworthy of those things which have been shown by God [to me] concerning you. I hand over to you the Church of Antioch. I have commended you to Polycarp in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Chapter 8. Salutations

The bishops, Onesimus, Bitus, Damas, Polybius, and all they of Philippi (whence also I have written to you), salute you in Christ. Salute the presbytery worthy of God: salute my holy fellow deacons, of whom may I have joy in Christ, both in the flesh and in the spirit. Salute the people of the Lord, from the smallest to the greatest, every one by name; whom I commit to you as Moses did [the Israelites] to Joshua, who was their leader after him. And do not reckon this which I have said presumptuous on my part; for although we are not such as they were, yet we at least pray that we may be so, since indeed we are the children of Abraham. Be strong, therefore, O Hero, like a hero, and like a man. For from henceforth you shall lead Deuteronomy 31:7, 23 in and out the people of the Lord that are in Antioch, and so “the congregation of the Lord shall not be as sheep which have no shepherd.” Numbers 27:17

Chapter 9. Concluding salutations and instructions

Salute Cassian, my host, and his most serious-minded partner in life, and their very dear children, to whom may “God grant that they find mercy of the Lord in that day,” 2 Timothy 1:18 on account of their ministrations to us, whom also I commend to you in Christ. Salute by name all the faithful in Christ that are at Laodicea. Do not neglect those at Tarsus, but look after them steadily, confirming them in the Gospel. I salute in the Lord, Maris the bishop of Neapolis, near Anazarbus. Salute also Mary my daughter, distinguished both for gravity and erudition, as also “the Church which is in her house.” Colossians 4:15 May my soul be in place of hers: she is

the very pattern of pious women. May the Father of Christ, by His only-begotten Son, preserve you in good health, and of high repute in all things, to a very old age, for the benefit of the Church of God! Farewell in the Lord, and pray that I may be perfected.

Epistle to the Philippians

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church of God which is at Philippi, which has obtained mercy in faith, and patience, and love unfeigned: Mercy and peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, “who is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe.” 1 Timothy 4:10

Chapter 1. Reason for writing the epistle

Being mindful of your love and of your zeal in Christ, which you have manifested towards us, we thought it fitting to write to you, who display such a godly and spiritual love to the brethren, to put you in remembrance of your Christian course, “that you all speak the same thing, being of one mind, thinking the same thing, and walking by the same rule of faith,” as Paul admonished you. For if there is one God of the universe, the Father of Christ, “of whom are all things;” 1 Corinthians 8:6 and one Lord Jesus Christ, our [Lord], “by whom are all things;” 1 Corinthians 8:6 and also one Holy Spirit, who wrought 1 Corinthians 12:11 in Moses, and in the prophets and apostles; and also one baptism, which is administered that we should have fellowship with the death of the Lord; and also one elect Church; there ought likewise to be but one faith in respect to Christ. For “there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is through all, and in all.” Ephesians 4:5

Chapter 2. Unity of the three divine persons

There is then one God and Father, and not two or three; One who is; and there is no other besides Him, the only true [God]. For “the Lord your God,” says [the Scripture], “is one Lord.” Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29 And again, “Has not one God created us? Have we not all one Father?” Malachi 2:10 And there is also one Son, God the Word. For “the only-begotten Son,” says [the Scripture], “who is in the bosom of the Father.” John 1:18 And again, “One Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 8:6 And in another place, “What is His name, or what His Son's name, that we may know?” Proverbs 30:4 And there is also one Paraclete. For “there is also,” says [the Scripture], “one Spirit,” Ephesians 4:4 since “we have been called in one hope of our calling.” 1 Corinthians 12:13 And again, “We have drunk of one Spirit,” Ephesians 4:4 with what follows. And it is manifest that all these gifts [possessed by believers] “works one and the self-same Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:11 There are not then either three Fathers, or three Sons, or three Paracletes, but one Father, and one Son, and one Paraclete. Wherefore also the Lord, when He sent forth the apostles to make disciples of all nations, commanded them to “baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” Matthew 28:19 not unto one [person] having three names, nor into three [persons] who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honour.

Chapter 3. Christ was truly born, and died

For there is but One that became incarnate, and that neither the Father nor the Paraclete, but the Son only, [who became so] not in appearance or imagination, but in reality. For “the Word became flesh.” John 1:14 For “Wisdom built for herself a house.” Proverbs 9:1 And God the Word was born as man, with a body, of the Virgin, without any intercourse of man. For [it is written], “A virgin shall conceive in her womb, and bring forth a son.” Isaiah 7:14 He was then truly born, truly grew up, truly ate and drank, was truly crucified, and died, and rose again. He who believes these things, as they really were, and as they really took place, is blessed. He who believes them not is no less accursed than those who crucified the Lord. For the prince of this world rejoices when any one denies the cross, since he knows that the confession of the cross is his own destruction. For that is

the trophy which has been raised up against his power, which when he sees, he shudders, and when he hears of, is afraid.

Chapter 4. The malignity and folly of Satan

And indeed, before the cross was erected, he (Satan) was eager that it should be so; and he “wrought” [for this end] “in the children of disobedience.” Ephesians 2:2 He wrought in Judas, in the Pharisees, in the Sadducees, in the old, in the young, and in the priests. But when it was just about to be erected, he was troubled, and infused repentance into the traitor, and pointed him to a rope to hang himself with, and taught him [to die by] strangulation. He terrified also the silly woman, disturbing her by dreams; and he, who had tried every means to have the cross prepared, now endeavoured to put a stop to its erection; not that he was influenced by repentance on account of the greatness of his crime (for in that case he would not be utterly depraved), but because he perceived his own destruction [to be at hand]. For the cross of Christ was the beginning of his condemnation, the beginning of his death, the beginning of his destruction. Wherefore, also, he works in some that they should deny the cross, be ashamed of the passion, call the death an appearance, mutilate and explain away the birth of the Virgin, and calumniate the [human] nature itself as being abominable. He fights along with the Jews to a denial of the cross, and with the Gentiles to the calumniating of Mary, who are heretical in holding that Christ possessed a mere phantasmal body. For the leader of all wickedness assumes manifold forms, beguiler of men as he is, inconsistent, and even contradicting himself, projecting one course and then following another. For he is wise to do evil, but as to what good may be he is totally ignorant. And indeed he is full of ignorance, on account of his voluntary want of reason: for how can he be deemed anything else who does not perceive reason when it lies at his very feet?

Chapter 5. Apostrophe to Satan

For if the Lord were a mere man, possessed of a soul and body only, why do you mutilate and explain away His being born with the common nature of humanity? Why do you call the passion a mere appearance, as if it were any strange thing happening to a [mere] man? And why do you reckon the death of a mortal to be simply an imaginary death? But if, [on the other hand,] He is both God and man, then why do you call it unlawful to style Him “the Lord of glory,” 1 Corinthians 2:8 who is by nature unchangeable? Why do you say that it is unlawful to declare of the Lawgiver who possesses a human soul, “The Word was made flesh,” John 1:14 and was a perfect man, and not merely one dwelling in a man? But how came this magician into existence, who of old formed all nature that can be apprehended either by the senses or intellect, according to the will of the Father; and, when He became incarnate, healed every kind of disease and infirmity? Matthew 4:23, Matthew 9:35

Chapter 6. Continuation

And how can He be but God, who raises up the dead, sends away the lame sound of limb, cleanses the lepers, restores sight to the blind, and either increases or transmutes existing substances, as the five loaves and the two fishes, and the water which became wine, and who puts to flight your whole host by a mere word? And why do you abuse the nature of the Virgin, and style her members disgraceful, since you displayed such of old in public processions, and ordered them to be exhibited naked, males in the sight of females, and females to stir up the unbridled lust of males? But now these are reckoned by you disgraceful, and you pretend to be full of modesty, you spirit of fornication, not knowing that then only anything becomes disgraceful when it is polluted by wickedness. But when sin is not present, none of the things that have been created are shameful, none of them evil, but all very good. But inasmuch as you are blind, you revile these things.

Chapter 7. Continuation: inconsistency of Satan

And how, again, does Christ not at all appear to you to be of the Virgin, but to be God over all, and the Almighty? Say, then, who sent Him? Who was Lord over Him? And whose will did He obey? And what laws did He fulfil, since He was subject neither to the will nor power of any one? And while you deny that Christ was born, you affirm that the unbegotten was begotten, and that He who had no beginning was nailed to the cross, by

whose permission I am unable to say. But your changeable tactics do not escape me, nor am I ignorant that you are wont to walk with slanting and uncertain steps. And you are ignorant who really was born, you who pretend to know everything.

Chapter 8. Continuation: ignorance of Satan

For many things are unknown to you; [such as the following]: the virginity of Mary; the wonderful birth; Who it was that became incarnate; the star which guided those who were in the east; the Magi who presented gifts; the salutation of the archangel to the Virgin; the marvellous conception of her that was betrothed; the announcement of the boy-forerunner respecting the son of the Virgin, and his leaping in the womb on account of what was foreseen; the songs of the angels over Him that was born; the glad tidings announced to the shepherds; the fear of Herod lest his kingdom should be taken from him; the command to slay the infants; the removal into Egypt, and the return from that country to the same region; the infant swaddling-bands; the human registration; the nourishing by means of milk; the name of father given to Him who did not beget; the manger because there was not room [elsewhere]; no human preparation [for the Child]; the gradual growth, human speech, hunger, thirst, journeyings, weariness; the offering of sacrifices and then also circumcision, baptism; the voice of God over Him that was baptized, as to who He was and whence [He had come]; the testimony of the Spirit and the Father from above; the voice of John the prophet when it signified the passion by the appellation of “the Lamb;” the performance of various miracles, manifold healings; the rebuke of the Lord ruling both the sea and the winds; evil spirits expelled; you yourself subjected to torture, and, when afflicted by the power of Him who had been manifested, not having it in your power to do anything.

Chapter 9. Continuation: ignorance of Satan

Seeing these things, you were in utter perplexity. And you were ignorant that it was a virgin that should bring forth; but the angels' song of praise struck you with astonishment, as well as the adoration of the Magi, and the appearance of the star. You reverted to your state of [wilful] ignorance, because all the circumstances seemed to you trifling; for you deemed the swaddling-bands, the circumcision, and the nourishment by means of milk contemptible: these things appeared to you unworthy of God. Again, beheld a man who remained forty days and nights without tasting human food, along with ministering angels at whose presence you shuddered, when first of all you had seen Him baptized as a common man, and knew not the reason thereof. But after His [lengthened] fast you again assumed your wonted audacity, and tempted Him when hungry, as if He had been an ordinary man, not knowing who He was. For you said, “If you be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” Matthew 4:3 Now, this expression, “If you be the Son,” is an indication of ignorance. For if you had possessed real knowledge, you would have understood that the Creator can with equal ease both create what does not exist, and change that which already has a being. And you tempted by means of hunger Him who nourishes all that require food. And you tempted the very “Lord of glory,” 1 Corinthians 2:8 forgetting in your malevolence that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” For if you had known that He was the Son of God, you would also have understood that He who had kept his body from feeling any want for forty days and as many nights, could have also done the same for ever. Why, then, does He suffer hunger? In order to prove that He had assumed a body subject to the same feelings as those of ordinary men. By the first fact He showed that He was God, and by the second that He was also man.

Chapter 10. Continuation: audacity of Satan

Then dare you, who fell “as lightning” Luke 10:18 from the very highest glory, to say to the Lord, “Cast yourself down from hence” Matthew 4:6 [to Him] to whom the things that are not are reckoned as if they were, Romans 4:17 and to provoke to a display of vainglory Him that was free from all ostentation? And did you pretend to read in Scripture concerning Him: “For He has given His angels charge concerning You, and in their hands they shall bear You up, lest you should dash Your foot against a stone?” Matthew 4:6 At the same time you pretended to be ignorant of the rest, furtively concealing what [the Scripture] predicted concerning you and your servants: “You shall tread upon the adder and the basilisk; the lion and the dragon shall you trample under foot.”

Chapter 11. Continuation: audacity of Satan

If, therefore, you are trodden down under the feet of the Lord, how do you tempt Him that cannot be tempted, forgetting that precept of the lawgiver, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God?” Deuteronomy 6:16 Yea, you even dare, most accursed one, to appropriate the works of God to yourself, and to declare that the dominion over these was delivered to you. Luke 4:6 And you set forth your own fall as an example to the Lord, and promise to give Him what is really His own, if He would fall down and worship you. Matthew 4:9 And how did you not shudder, O you spirit more wicked through your malevolence than all other wicked spirits, to utter such words against the Lord? Through your appetite were you overcome, and through your vainglory were you brought to dishonour: through avarice and ambition you [now] draw on [others] to ungodliness. You, O Belial, dragon, apostate, crooked serpent, rebel against God, outcast from Christ, alien from the Holy Spirit, exile from the ranks of the angels, reviler of the laws of God, enemy of all that is lawful, who rose up against the first-formed of men, and drove forth [from obedience to] the commandment [of God] those who had in no respect injured you; you who raised up against Abel the murderous Cain; you who took arms against Job: do you say to the Lord, “If You will fall down and worship me?” Oh what audacity! Oh what madness! You runaway slave, you incorrigible slave, do you rebel against the good Lord? Do you say to so great a Lord, the God of all that either the mind or the senses can perceive, “If You will fall down and worship me?”

Chapter 12. The meek reply of Christ

But the Lord is long-suffering, and does not reduce to nothing him who in his ignorance dares [to utter] such words, but meekly replies, “Get you hence, Satan.” Matthew 4:10 He does not say, “Get behind Me,” for it is not possible that he should be converted; but, “Begone, Satan,” to the course which you have chosen. “Begone” to those things to which, through your malevolence, you have been called. For I know Who I am, and by Whom I have been sent, and Whom it behooves Me to worship. For “you shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.” Matthew 4:10; Deuteronomy 6:13 I know the one [God]; I am acquainted with the only [Lord] from whom you have become an apostate. I am not an enemy of God; I acknowledge His pre-eminence; I know the Father, who is the author of my generation.

Chapter 13. Various exhortations and directions

These things, brethren, out of the affection which I entertain for you, I have felt compelled to write, exhorting you with a view to the glory of God, not as if I were a person of any consequence, but simply as a brother. Be subject to the bishop, to the presbyters, and to the deacons. Love one another in the Lord, as being the images of God. Take heed, you husbands, that you love your wives as your own members. You wives also, love your husbands, as being one with them in virtue of your union. If any one lives in chastity or continence, let him not be lifted up, lest he lose his reward. Do not lightly esteem the festivals. Despise not the period of forty days, for it comprises an imitation of the conduct of the Lord. After the week of the passion, do not neglect to fast on the fourth and sixth days, distributing at the same time of your abundance to the poor. If any one fasts on the Lord's Day or on the Sabbath, except on the paschal Sabbath only, he is a murderer of Christ.

Chapter 14. Farewells and cautions

Let your prayers be extended to the Church of Antioch, whence also I as a prisoner am being led to Rome. I salute the holy bishop Polycarp; I salute the holy bishop Vitalius, and the sacred presbytery, and my fellow-servants the deacons; in whose stead may my soul be found. Once more I bid farewell to the bishop, and to the presbyters in the Lord. If any one celebrates the passover along with the Jews, or receives the emblems of their feast, he is a partaker with those that killed the Lord and His apostles.

Chapter 15. Salutations. Conclusion

Philo and Agathopus the deacons salute you. I salute the company of virgins, and the order of widows; of whom may I have joy! I salute the people of the Lord, from the least unto the greatest. I have sent you this letter

through Euphаний the reader, a man honoured of God, and very faithful, happening to meet with him at Rhegium, just as he was going on board ship. Remember my bonds Colossians 4:18 that I may be made perfect in Christ. Fare well in the flesh, the soul, and the spirit, while you think of things perfect, and turn yourselves away from the workers of iniquity, who corrupt the word of truth, and are strengthened inwardly by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Epistle of Maria the Proselyte to Ignatius

Greeting

Maria, a proselyte of Jesus Christ, to Ignatius Theophorus, most blessed bishop of the apostolic Church which is at Antioch, beloved in God the Father, and Jesus: Happiness and safety. We all beg for you joy and health in Him.

Chapter 1. Occasion of the epistle

Since Christ has, to our wonder, been made known among us to be the Son of the living God, and to have become man in these last times by means of the Virgin Mary, of the seed of David and Abraham, according to the announcements previously made regarding Him and through Him by the company of the prophets, we therefore beseech and entreat that, by your wisdom, Maris our friend, bishop of our native Neapolis, which is near Zarbus, and Eulogius, and Sobelus the presbyter, be sent to us, that we be not destitute of such as preside over the divine word as Moses also says, “Let the Lord God look out a man who shall guide this people, and the congregation of the Lord shall not be as sheep which have no shepherd.” Numbers 27:16-17

Chapter 2. Youth may be allied with piety and discretion

But as to those whom we have named being young men, do not, you blessed one, have any apprehension. For I would have you know that they are wise about the flesh, and are insensible to its passions, they themselves glowing with all the glory of a hoary head through their own intrinsic merits, and though but recently called as young men to the priesthood. Now, call into exercise your thoughts through the Spirit that God has given to you by Christ, and you will remember that Samuel, while yet a little child, was called a seer, and was reckoned in the company of the prophets, that he reprov'd the aged Eli for transgression, since he had honoured his infatuated sons above God the author of all things, and had allowed them to go unpunished, when they turned the office of the priesthood into ridicule, and acted violently towards your people.

Chapter 3. Examples of youthful devotedness

Moreover, the wise Daniel, while he was a young man, passed judgment on certain vigorous old men, showing them that they were abandoned wretches, and not [worthy to be reckoned] elders, and that, though Jews by extraction, they were Canaanites in practice. And Jeremiah, when on account of his youth he declined the office of a prophet entrusted to him by God, was addressed in these words: “Say not, I am a youth; for you shall go to all those to whom I send you, and you shall speak according to all that I command you; because I am with you.” Jeremiah 1:7 And the wise Solomon, when only in the twelfth year of his age, had wisdom to decide the important question concerning the children of the two women, when it was unknown to whom these respectively belonged; so that the whole people were astonished at such wisdom in a child, and venerated him as being not a mere youth, but a full-grown man. And he solved the hard questions of the queen of the Ethiopians, which had profit in them as the streams of the Nile [have fertility], in such a manner that that woman, though herself so wise, was beyond measure astonished.

Chapter 4. The same subject continued

Josiah also, beloved of God, when as yet he could scarcely speak articulately, convicts those who were possessed of a wicked spirit as being false in their speech, and deceivers of the people. He also reveals the deceit of the demons, and openly exposes those that are no gods; yea, while yet an infant he slays their priests, and overturns their altars, and defiles the place where sacrifices were offered with dead bodies, and throws down the temples, and cuts down the groves, and breaks in pieces the pillars, and breaks open the tombs of the ungodly, that not a relic of the wicked might any longer exist. To such an extent did he display zeal in the cause of godliness, and prove himself a punisher of the ungodly, while he as yet faltered in speech like a child. David, too, who was at once a prophet and a king, and the root of our Saviour according to the flesh, while yet a youth is anointed by Samuel to be king. 1 Samuel 16 For he himself says in a certain place, "I was small among my brethren, and the youngest in the house of my father."

Chapter 5. Expressions of respect for Ignatius

But time would fail me if I should endeavour to enumerate all those that pleased God in their youth, having been entrusted by God with either the prophetic, the priestly, or the kingly office. And those which have been mentioned may suffice, by way of bringing the subject to your remembrance. But I entreat you not to reckon me presumptuous or ostentatious [in writing as I have done]. For I have set forth these statements, not as instructing you, but simply as suggesting the matter to the remembrance of my father in God. For I know my own place, and do not compare myself with such as you. I salute your holy clergy, and your Christ-loving people who are ruled under your care as their pastor. All the faithful with us salute you. Pray, blessed shepherd, that I may be in health as respects God.

Epistle to Mary at Neapolis, Near Zarbus

Greeting

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to her who has obtained mercy through the grace of the most high God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Lord, who died for us, to Mary, my daughter, most faithful, worthy of God, and bearing Christ [in her heart], wishes abundance of happiness in God.

Chapter 1. Acknowledgment of her excellence and wisdom

Sight indeed is better than writing, inasmuch as, being one of the company of the senses, it not only, by communicating proofs of friendship, honours him who receives them, but also, by those which it in turn receives, enriches the desire for better things. But the second harbour of refuge, as the phrase runs, is the practice of writing, which we have received, as a convenient haven, by your faith, from so great a distance, seeing that by means of a letter we have learned the excellence that is in you. For the souls of the good, O you wisest of women! resemble fountains of the purest water; for they allure by their beauty passers-by to drink of them, even though these should not be thirsty. And your intelligence invites us, as by a word of command, to participate in those divine draughts which gush forth so abundantly in your soul.

Chapter 2. His own condition

But I, O blessed woman, not being now so much my own master as in the power of others, am driven along by the varying wills of many adversaries, being in one sense in exile, in another in prison, and in a third in bonds. But I pay no regard to these things. Yea, by the injuries inflicted on me through them, I acquire all the more the character of a disciple, that I may attain to Jesus Christ. May I enjoy the torments which are prepared for me, seeing that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy [to be compared] with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Romans 8:18

Chapter 3. He had complied with her request

I have gladly acted as requested in your letter, having no doubt respecting those persons whom you proved to be men of worth. For I am sure that you bore testimony to them in the exercise of a godly judgment, and not through the influence of carnal favour. And your numerous quotations of Scripture passages exceedingly delighted me, which, when I had read, I had no longer a single doubtful thought respecting the matter. For I did not hold that those things were simply to be glanced over by my eyes, of which I had received from you such an incontrovertible demonstration. May I be in place of your soul, because you love Jesus, the Son of the living God. Wherefore also He Himself says to you, “I love them that love Me; and those that seek Me shall find peace.”

Chapter 4. Commendation and exhortation

Now it occurs to me to mention, that the report is true which I heard of you while you were at Rome with the blessed father Linus, whom the deservedly-blessed Clement, a hearer of Peter and Paul, has now succeeded. And by this time you have added a hundred-fold to your reputation; and may you, O woman, still further increase it. I greatly desired to come unto you, that I might have rest with you; but “the way of man is not in himself.” Jeremiah 10:23 For the military guard [under which I am kept] hinders my purpose, and does not permit me to go further. Nor indeed, in the state I am now in, can I either do or suffer anything. Wherefore deeming the practice of writing the second resource of friends for their mutual encouragement, I salute your sacred soul, beseeching of you to add still further to your vigour. For our present labour is but little, while the reward which is expected is great.

Chapter 5. Salutations and good wishes

Avoid those that deny the passion of Christ, and His birth according to the flesh: and there are many at present who suffer under this disease. But it would be absurd to admonish you on other points, seeing that you are perfect in every good work and word, and able also to exhort others in Christ. Salute all that are like-minded with yourself, and who hold fast to their salvation in Christ. The presbyters and deacons, and above all the holy Hero, salute you. Cassian my host salutes you, as well as my sister, his wife, and their very dear children. May the Lord sanctify you for evermore in the enjoyment both of bodily and spiritual health, and may I see you in Christ obtaining the crown!

First Epistle to St. John

Ignatius, and the brethren who are with him, to John the holy presbyter.

We are deeply grieved at your delay in strengthening us by your addresses and consolations. If your absence be prolonged, it will disappoint many of us. Hasten then to come, for we believe that it is expedient. There are also many of our women here, who are desirous to see Mary [the mother] of Jesus, and wish day by day to run off from us to you, that they may meet with her, and touch those breasts of hers which nourished the Lord Jesus, and may inquire of her respecting some rather secret matters. But Salome also, [the daughter of Anna,] whom you love, who stayed with her five months at Jerusalem, and some other well-known persons, relate that she is full of all graces and all virtues, after the manner of a virgin, fruitful in virtue and grace. And, as they report, she is cheerful in persecutions and afflictions, free from murmuring in the midst of penury and want, grateful to those that injure her, and rejoices when exposed to troubles: she sympathizes with the wretched and the afflicted as sharing in their afflictions, and is not slow to come to their assistance. Moreover, she shines forth gloriously as contending in the fight of faith against the pernicious conflicts of vicious principles or conduct. She is the lady of our new religion and repentance, and the handmaid among the faithful of all works of piety. She is indeed devoted to the humble, and she humbles herself more devotedly than the devoted, and is wonderfully magnified by all, while at the same time she suffers detraction from the Scribes and Pharisees. Besides these points, many relate to us numerous other things regarding her. We do not, however, go so far as to believe all in every particular; nor do we mention such to you. But, as we are informed by those who are worthy of credit, there is in Mary the mother of Jesus an angelic purity of nature allied with the nature of humanity. And such reports as

these have greatly excited our emotions, and urge us eagerly to desire a sight of this (if it be lawful so to speak) heavenly prodigy and most sacred marvel. But do you in haste comply with this our desire; and fare well. Amen.

Second Epistle to St. John

His friend Ignatius to John the holy presbyter.

If you will give me leave, I desire to go up to Jerusalem, and see the faithful saints who are there, especially Mary the mother, whom they report to be an object of admiration and of affection to all. For who would not rejoice to behold and to address her who bore the true God from her own womb, provided he is a friend of our faith and religion? And in like manner [I desire to see] the venerable James, who is surnamed Just, whom they relate to be very like Christ Jesus in appearance, in life, and in method of conduct, as if he were a twin-brother of the same womb. They say that, if I see him, I see also Jesus Himself, as to all the features and aspect of His body. Moreover, [I desire to see] the other saints, both male and female. Alas! Why do I delay? Why am I kept back? Kind teacher, bid me hasten [to fulfil my wish], and fare well. Amen.

The Epistle of Ignatius to the Virgin Mary

Her friend Ignatius to the Christ-bearing Mary.

You ought to have comforted and consoled me who am a neophyte, and a disciple of your [beloved] John. For I have heard things wonderful to tell respecting your [son] Jesus, and I am astonished by such a report. But I desire with my whole heart to obtain information concerning the things which I have heard from you, who was always intimate and allied with Him, and who was acquainted with [all] His secrets. I have also written to you at another time, and have asked you concerning the same things. Fare well; and let the neophytes who are with me be comforted of you, and by you, and in you. Amen.

Reply of the Blessed Virgin to this Letter

The lowly handmaid of Christ Jesus to Ignatius, her beloved fellow disciple.

The things which you have heard and learned from John concerning Jesus are true. Believe them, cling to them, and hold fast the profession of that Christianity which you have embraced, and conform your habits and life to your profession. Now I will come in company with John to visit you, and those that are with you. Stand fast in the faith, 1 Corinthians 16:13 and show yourself a man; nor let the fierceness of persecution move you, but let your spirit be strong and rejoice in God your Saviour. Luke 1:47 Amen.

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