

THE EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS TO THE
S M Y R N E A N S

CHAPTER I.

1 Declares his joy for their firmness in the Gospel. 4 Enlarges on the person of Christ, against such as pretend that Christ did not suffer.

IGNATIUS, who is also called Theohorus, to the church of God the Father, and of the beloved Jesus Christ, which God hath mercifully blessed with every good gift; being filled with faith and charity, so that it is wanting in no gift; most worthy of God, and fruitful in saints; the church which is at Smyrna in Asia; all through his immaculate spirit, through word of God.

2 I glorify God, even Jesus Christ, who has given you such wisdom.

3 For I have observed that you are settled 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 confirmed in love through the blood of Christ; being fully persuaded of those things which relate unto our Lord.

4 Who truly was of the race of David according to the flesh, but the Son of God according to the will and power of God; truly born of the Virgin, and baptised of John; that so all righteousness might be fulfilled by him.

5 He was also truly crucified by Pontius Pilate, and Herod the Tetrarch, being nailed for us in the flesh; by the fruits of which we are, even by his most blessed Passion;

6 That he might set up a token for all ages through his resurrection, to all his holy and faithful servants, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, in

one body of his church.

7 Now all these things he suffered for us that we might be saved; and he suffered truly, as he also truly raised up himself; and not, as some unbelievers say, that he only seemed to suffer; they themselves 'only seeming to be.'

8 And as they believe so shall it happen unto them, when being divested of the body they shall become mere spirits.

9 But I know that even after his resurrection he was in the flesh; and I believe that he is still so.

10 And when he came to those who were with Peter, he said unto them, Take, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal daemon. And straightway they felt and believed; being convinced both by his flesh and spirit.

11 For this cause they despised death, and were bound to be above it.

12 But after his resurrection he did eat and drink with them, as he was flesh; although as to his Spirit he was united to the Father.

CHAPTER II.

1 Exhorts them against heretics. 8 The danger of their doctrine.

NOW these things, beloved, I put you in mind of, not questioning but that you yourselves also believe that they are so.

2 But I arm you before-hand against certain beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but if it be possible must not meet with.

3 Only you must pray for them, that if it be the will of God they may repent; which yet will be very hard. But of this our Lord Jesus Christ has the power, who is our true life.

4 For if all these things were done only in show by our Lord, then do I also seem only to be bound:

5 And why have I given up myself to death, to the fire, to the sword, to wild beasts?

6 But now the nearer I am to the sword, the nearer I am to God: when I shall come among the wild beasts, I shall come to God.

7 Only in the name of Jesus Christ, I undergo all, to suffer together with him; he who was made a perfect man strengthening, me.

8 Whom some not knowing, do deny; or rather have been denied by him, being the advocates of death, rather than of the truth. Whom neither the prophecies, nor the law of Moses have persuaded; nor the Gospel itself, even to this day; nor the sufferings of every one of us.

9 For they think also the same things of us. For what does a man profit me, if he shall praise me, and blaspheme my Lord; not confessing that he was truly made man?

10 Now he that doth not say this, does in effect deny him, and is in death. But for the names of such as do this, they being unbelievers, I thought it not fitting to write them unto you.

11 Yea, God forbid that I should make any mention of them, till they shall repent to a true belief of Christ's passion, which is our resurrection.

12 Let no man deceive himself; both the things which are in heaven, and the glorious angels, and princes, whether visible or invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, it

shall be to them, unto condemnation.

13 He that is able to receive this, let him receive it. Let no man's place or state in the world puff him up: that which is worth all his faith and charity, to it nothing is to be preferred.

14 But consider those who are of a different opinion from us, as to what concerns the grace of Jesus Christ which is come unto us, how contrary they are to the design of God.

15 They have no regard to charity, no care of the widow, the fatherless, and the oppressed; of the bond or free, of the hungry or thirsty.

16 They abstain from the eucharist, and from the public offices; 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 again from the dead.

17 And for this cause contradicting the gift of God, they die in their disputes; but much better would it be for them to receive it, that they might one day rise through it.

18 It will therefore become you. to abstain from such persons, and not to speak with them, neither in public nor in private.

19 But to hearken to the prophets, and especially to the Gospel, in which both Christ's passion is manifested unto us, and his resurrection perfectly declared.

20 But flee all divisions, as the beginning of evils.

CHAPTER III.

1 Exhorts them to follow their bishop and pastors; but especially their bishop. 6 Thanks them for their kindness, 11 and acquaints them with the ceasing of the persecution at Antioch.

SEE that ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ, the Father; and the

presbytery, as the Apostles; and reverence the deacons, as the command of God.

2 Let no man do any thing of what belongs to the church separately from the bishop.

3 Let that eucharist be looked upon as well established, which is either offered by the bishop, or by him to whom the bishop has given. his consent.

4 Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people also be: as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic church.

5 It is not lawful without the bishop; neither to baptize, nor to celebrate the Holy Communion but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing unto God; that so whatever is done, may be sure and well done.

6 For what remains, it is very reasonable that we should repent whilst there is yet time to return unto God.

7 It is a good thin to have a due regard both to God, and to the bishop: he that honours the bishop, shall be honoured of God; but he that does any thing without his knowledge, ministers unto the devil.

8 Let all things therefore abound to you in charity; seeing that ye are worthy.

9 Ye have refreshed me in all things; so shall Jesus Christ you. Ye have loved me both when I was present with you, and now being absent, ye cease not to do so.

10 May God be your reward, for whom whilst ye undergo all things, ye shall attain unto him.

11 Ye have done well in that ye have received Philo, and Rheus Agathopus, who followed me for the word of God, as the deacons of Christ our God.

12 Who also gave thanks unto the

Lord for you, forasmuch as ye have refreshed them in all things. Nor shall any thing that you have done be lost to you.

13 My soul be for yours, and my bonds which ye have not despised, nor been ashamed of. Wherefore neither shall. Jesus Christ, our perfect faith, be ashamed of you.

14 Your prayer is come to the church of Antioch, which is in Syria. From whence being sent bound with chains becoming God. I salute the churches; being not worthy to be called from thence, as being the least among them.

15 Nevertheless by the will of God I have been thought worthy of this honour; not for that I think I have deserved it, but by the grace of God;

16 Which I wish may be perfectly given unto me, that through your prayers I may attain unto God.

17 And therefore, that your work may be fully accomplished, both upon earth and in heaven; it will be fitting, and for the honour of God, that your church appoint some worthy delgate, who being come as far as Syria, may rejoice together with them that they are in peace; and that they are again restored to their former state, and have again received their proper body.

18 Wherefore I should think it a worthy action, to send some one from you with an epistle, to congratulate with them their peace in God; and that through your prayers, they have now gotten to their harbour.

19 For inasmuch as ye are perfect yourselves, you ought to think those things that are perfect. For when you are desirous to do well, God is ready to enable you there. unto.

20 The love of the brethren that are at Troas salute you; from whence I write to you by Burrhus whom ye

sent with me, together with the Ephesians, your brethren; and who has in all Things refreshed me.

21 And I would to God that all would imitate him, as being a pattern of the ministry of God. May his grace fully reward him.

22 I salute your very worthy bishop, and your venerable presbytery; and your deacons, my fellow-servants; and all of you in general, and every one in particular, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in his flesh and blood; in his passion and resurrection both fleshly and spiritually; and in the unity of God with you.

23 Grace be with you, and mercy, and peace, and patience, for evermore.

24 I salute the families of my brethren, with their wives and children; and the virgins that are called widows. Be strong in the power of the Holy Ghost. Philo, who is present with me salutes you.

25 I salute the house of Tavian, and pray that it may be strengthened in faith and charity, both of flesh and spirit.

26 I salute Alce my well-beloved, together with the incomparable Daphnus, and Eutechnus, and all by name.

27 Farewell in the grace of God.