

THE EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS TO THE
PHILADELPHIANS

CHAPTER I.

Commends their bishop, whom they had sent unto him, warns them against division and schism.

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, being fixed in the concord of God, and rejoicing evermore in the passion of our Lord, and being fulfilled in all mercy through his resurrection: Which also I salute in the blood of Jesus Christ, which is our eternal and undefiled joy; especially if they are at unity with the bishop, and presbyters who are with him, and the deacons appointed according to the mind of Jesus Christ; whom he has settled according to his own will in all firmness by his Holy Spirit:

2 Which bishop I know obtained that great ministry among you, not of himself, neither by men, nor out of vain glory; but by the love of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Whose moderation I admire; who by his silence is able to do more than others with all their vain talk. For he is fitted to the commands, as the harp to its strings.

4 Wherefore my soul esteems his mind towards God most happy, knowing it to be fruitful in all virtue, and perfect; full of constancy, free from passion, and according to all the moderation of the living God.

5 Wherefore as becomes the children both of the light and of truth; flee divisions and false doctrines; but where your shepherd is, there do ye, as sheep, follow after.

6 For there are many wolves who seem worthy of belief, that with a false pleasure lead captive those that run in the course of God; but in the concord they shall find no place.

7 Abstain therefore from those evil herbs which Jesus Christ does not dress: because such are not the plantation of the Father. Not that I have found any division among you, but rather all manner of purity.

8 For as many as are of God, and of Jesus Christ, are also with their bishop. And as many as shall with repentance return into the unity of the church, even these shall also be the servants of God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ.

9 Be not deceived brethren; if any one follows him that

makes a schism in the church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If any one walks after any other opinion, he agrees not with the passion of Christ.

10 Wherefore let it be your endeavour to partake all of the same holy eucharist.

11 For there is but one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ; one cup in the unity of his blood; and one altar;

12 As also there is one bishop, together with his presbytery, and the deacons my fellow servants that so whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to the will of God.

CHAPTER II.

Desires their prayers, and to be united, but not to Judaize.

MY brethren, the love I have towards you makes me the more large; and having a great joy in you, I endeavour to secure you against danger; or rather not I, but Jesus Christ; in whom being bound, I the more fear, as being yet only on the way to suffering.

2 But your prayer to God shall make me perfect, that I may attain to that portion, which by God's mercy is allotted to me Fleeing to the Gospel as to the flesh of Christ; and to the Apostles as to the presbytery of the church.

3 Let us also love the prophets, forasmuch as they have led us to the Gospel, and to hope in Christ, and to

expect him.

4 In whom also believing they were saved in the unity of Jesus Christ; being holy men, worthy to be loved, and had in wonder;

5 Who have received testimony from Jesus Christ, and are numbered in the Gospel of our common hope.

6 But if any one shall preach the Jewish law unto you, hearken not unto him; for it is better to receive the doctrine of Christ from one that has been circumcised, than Judaism from one that has not.

7 But if either the one, or other, do not speak concerning Christ Jesus; they seem to me to be but as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, upon which are written only the names of men.

8 Flee therefore the wicked arts and snares of the prince of this world; lest at any time being oppressed by his cunning, ye grow cold in your charity. But come altogether into the same place, with an undivided heart.

9 And I bless my God that I have a good conscience towards you, and that no one among you has whereof to boast either openly or privately, that I have been burthensome to him in much or little.

10 And I wish to all, among whom I have conversed, that may not turn to a witness again them.

11 For although some would have deceived me according to the flesh, yet the spirit, being from God, is not deceived: for it knows, both whence it comes and whither it goes, and reproves the secrets of the heart.

12 I cried whilst I was among you; I spake with a loud voice: attend to the bishop, and to the presbytery, and to the deacons.

13 Now some supposed that I spake this as foreseeing the division that should come among you.

14 But he is my witness for whose sake I am in bonds that I know nothing from any man. But the spirit spake, saying on this wise: Do nothing without the bishop:

15 Keep your bodies as the temples of God: Love unity; Flee divisions; Be the followers of Christ, as he was of his Father.

16 I therefore did as became me, as a man composed to unity for where there is division, and wrath, God dwelleth not.

17 But the Lord forgives all that repent, if they return to the unity of God, and to the council of the bishop.

18 For I trust in the grace Jesus Christ that he will free you from every bond.

19 Nevertheless I exhort you that you do nothing out of strife but according to the instruction of Christ.

20 Because I have heard

some who say; unless I find written in the originals, I will not believe it to be written in the Gospel. And when I said, It is written; they answered from what lay before them in the corrupted copies.

21 But to me Jesus Christ instead of all the uncorrupted monuments in the world; together with those undefiled monuments, his cross, and death, and resurrection, and the faith which is by him; by which I desire, through your prayers, to be justified.

22 The priests indeed are good; but much better is the High Priest to whom the Holy of Holies has been committed; and who alone has been intrusted with the secrets of God.

23 He is the door of the Father; by which Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, enter in; as well as the Apostles, and the church.

24 And all these things tend to the unity which is of God. Howbeit the Gospel has somewhat in it far above all other dispensations; namely, the appearance of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, his passion and resurrection.

25 For the beloved prophets referred to him; but the Gospel is the perfection of incorruption. All therefore together are good, if ye believe with charity.

CHAPTER III.

Informs them he had heard that the persecution was stopped at Antioch: and directs them to send a messenger thither to congratulate with the church.

NOW as concerning the church of Antioch which is in Syria, seeing I am told that through your prayers and the bowels which ye have towards it in Jesus Christ, it is in peace; it will become you, as the church of God, to ordain some I deacon to go to them thither as the ambassador of God; that he may rejoice with them when they meet together, and glorify God's name.

2 Blessed be that man in Jesus, Christ, who shall be found worthy of such a ministry; and ye yourselves also shall be glorified.

3 Now if you be willing, it is not impossible for you to do this for the grace of God; as also the other neighbouring churches have sent them some bishops, some priests and some deacons.

4 As concerning Philo the deacon of Cilicia, a most worthy man, he still ministers unto me in the word of God: together with Rheus of Agathopolis a singular good person, who has followed me even from Syria, not regarding his life: These also bear witness unto you.

5 And I myself give thanks to God for you, that you receive them as the Lord shall receive you. But for

those that dishonoured them, may they be forgiven through the grace of Jesus Christ.

6 The charity of the brethren that are at Troas salutes you: from whence also I now write by Burrhurs, who was sent together with me by those of Ephesus and Smyrna, for respect sake.

7 May our Lord Jesus Christ honour them; in whom they hope, both in flesh, and soul, and spirit; in faith, in love, in unity. Fare-well in Christ Jesus our common hope.