

THE EPISTLE OF IGNATIUS TO THE
TRALLIANS

CHAPTER I.

1 Acknowledges the coming of their bishop. **5** Commends them for their subjection to their bishop, priests, and deacons; and exhorts them to continue in it: **15** is afraid even of his over-great desire to suffer, lest it should be prejudicial to him.

IGNATTUS, 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, having peace through the flesh and blood, and passion of Jesus Christ our hope; in the resurrection which is by him: which also I salute in its fullness, continuing in the apostolical character, wishing all joy and happiness unto it.

2 I have heard of your blameless and constant disposition through patience, which not only appears in your outward conversation, but is naturally rooted and grounded in you.

3 In like manner as Polybius your bishop has declared unto me, who came to me to Smyrna, by the will of God and Jesus Christ, and so rejoiced together with me in my bonds for Jesus Christ, that in effect I saw your whole church in him.

4 Having therefore received

testimony of your good will towards me for God's sake, by him; I seemed to find you, as also I knew that ye were the followers of God.

5 For whereas ye are subject to your bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to one to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ who died for us, that so believing in his death, ye might escape death.

6 It is therefore necessary, that as ye do, so without your bishop you should do nothing: also be ye subject to your presbyters, as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ our hope; in whom if we walk, we shall be found in him.

7 The deacons also, as being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must by all means please ye. For they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the church of God. Wherefore they must avoid all offences, as they would do fire.

8 In like manner let us reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ; and the bishop as the Father; and the presbyters as the Sanctuary of God, and college of the Apostles.

9 Without these there is no church; concerning all which, I am persuaded that ye think after the very same manner;

for I have received, and even now have with me, the pattern of your love, in your bishop.

10 Whose very look is instructive; and whose mildness powerful: whom I am persuaded, the very Atheists themselves cannot but reverence.

11 But because I have a love towards you, I will not write any more sharply unto you about this matter, though I very well might but now I have done so, lest being a condemned man, I should seem to prescribe to you as an Apostle.

12 I have great knowledge in God; but I refrain myself, lest I should perish in my boasting.

13 For now I ought the more to fear, and not to hearken to those that would puff me up.

14 For they that speak to me, in my praise, chasten me.

15 For I indeed desire to suffer, but I cannot tell whether I am worthy so to do.

16 And this desire, though to others it does not appear, yet to myself it is for that very reason the more violent. I have, therefore, need of moderation; by which the prince of this world is destroyed.

17 Am I not able to write to you of heavenly things?—But I fear lest I should harm you, who are yet but babes in Christ; (excuse me this care;) and lest perchance being not

able to receive them, ye should be choked with them.

18 For even I myself, although I am in bonds, yet am not therefore able to understand heavenly things;

19 As the assembly of angels, and the several companies of them, under their respective princes; things visible and invisible: but in these I am yet a learner.

20 For many things are wanting to us, that we come not short of God.

CHAPTER II.

1 Warns them against heretics, 4 exhorts them to humility and unity, 10 and briefly sets before them the true doctrine concerning Christ.

EXHORT you therefore, or rather not I, but the love of Jesus Christ; that ye use none but christian nourishment; abstaining from pasture which is of another kind, I mean heresy.

2 For they that are heretics, confound together the doctrine of Jesus Christ, with their own poison: whilst they seem worthy of belief:

3 As men give a deadly potion mixed with sweet wine; which he who drinks of, does with the treacherous pleasure sweetly drink in his own death.

4 Wherefore guard yourself against such persons; and that you will do, if you are not puffed up; but continue

inseparable from Jesus Christ our God, and from your bishop, and from the commands of the Apostles.

5 He that is within the altar, is pure; but he that is without, namely, does anything without the bishop, the presbyters, and deacons, is not pure in his conscience.

6 Not that I know there is any thing of this nature among you; but I fore-arm you, as being greatly beloved by me, foreseeing the snares of the devil.

7 Wherefore putting on meekness, renew yourselves in faith, which is the flesh of the Lord; and in charity, which is the blood of Jesus Christ.

8 Let no man have any grudge against his neighbour. Give no occasion to the Gentiles; lest by means of a few foolish men, the whole congregation of God be evil spoken of.

9 For woe to that man through whose vanity my name is blasphemed by any.

10 Stop your ears therefore, as often as any one shall speak contrary to Jesus Christ, who was of the race of David; by the Virgin Mary.

11 Who was truly born, and did eat and drink; was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; was truly crucified and dead; both those in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, being spectators of it:

12 Who, was also truly raised from the dead by his

Father, after the same manner as HE will also raise up us who believe in him by Christ Jesus; without whom we have no true life.

13 But if, as some who are Atheists, that is to say infidels, pretend, that he seemed to suffer, (they themselves only seeming to exist) why then am I bound? — Why do I desire to fight with beasts?—Therefore do I die in vain: therefore I will not speak falsely against the Lord.

14 Flee therefore these evil sprouts which bring forth deadly fruit; of which if any one taste, he shall presently die.

15 For these are not the plants of the Father; seeing if they were, they would appear to be the branches of the cross, and their fruit would be incorruptible; by which he invites you through his passion, who are members of him.

16 For the head cannot be without its members, God having promised a union with himself.

CHAPTER III.

He again exhorts to unity, and desires their prayers for himself, and for his church at Antioch.

I SALUTE you from Smyrna, together with the churches of God that are present with me; who have refreshed me in all things, both in the flesh and in the spirit.

2 My bonds, which I carry about me for the sake of Christ, (beseeching him that I may attain unto God) exhort you that you continue in concord among yourselves, and in prayer with one another.

3 For it becomes everyone of you, especially the presbyters, to refresh the bishop, to the honour of the Father of Jesus Christ, and of the Apostles.

4 I beseech you, that you hearken to me in love; that I may not by those things which I write, rise up in witness against you.

5 Pray also for me; who, through the mercy of God, stand in need of your prayers, that I may be worthy of the portion which I am about to obtain, and that I be not found a reprobate.

6 The love of those who are at Smyrna and Ephesus salute you. Remember in your prayers the church of Syria, from which I am not worthy to be called, being one of the least of it.

7 Fare ye well in Jesus Christ; being subject to your bishop as to the command of God; and so like. wise to the presbytery.

8 Love every one his brother with an unfeigned heart. My soul be your expiation, not only now, but when I shall have attained unto God; for I am yet under danger.

9 But the Father is faithful in Jesus Christ, to fulfil both

mine and your petition; in whom may ye be found unblamable.