

Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans

CHAPTER 0

0:1 Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, to the Church of God the Father and of Jesus Christ the beloved, to her who hath by mercy obtained every gift, filled with faith and love, not lacking in any gift, most Godlike, and the mother of saints, to her which is in Smyrna in Asia, much joy in the blameless spirit and word of God.

CHAPTER 1

1:1 I glorify God even Jesus Christ, who hath thus made you wise; for I perceived that ye were perfected in immovable faith, as though ye were nailed to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ in flesh and in spirit, and firmly fixed in love in the blood of Christ, being fully persuaded with regard to our Lord, that he was truly of the race of David according to the flesh, the Son of God according to the will and power of God; truly born of a virgin; baptized by John, that all righteousness might be fulfilled by him;
1:2 truly nailed for us unto the cross in the flesh in the time of Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch; from the fruit of which cross are we, even from his divinely blessed passion, that he might raise up a sign unto the ages, by means of the resurrection, even unto the saints and them that believe in him, whether they be among the Jews or the Gentiles, in one body of his church.

CHAPTER 2

2:1 All these things did he suffer for our sake, to the end that we might be saved. And he truly suffered, even as he truly raised himself up; **not as certain unbelievers say, that he suffered in semblance, they themselves only existing in semblance; and even according to their opinions** shall it happen unto them, since they are bodiless and of the nature of devils.

CHAPTER 3

3:1 **For I also know and believe, that he exists in the flesh even after the resurrection.**

3:2 And when he came unto them who were with Peter he said unto them, Take, handle me, and see that I am not a spirit without a body; and straightway they touched him and believed, being convinced by his flesh and his spirit. On this account also they despised death, and were found superior to death.

3:3 But after his resurrection, he ate and drank with them, as being in the flesh, though spiritually he was united to the Father.

CHAPTER 4

4:1 These things do I exhort you, beloved, knowing that such is your faith. But I put you on your guard against beasts in human shape, whom not only doth it behove you

not to receive, but, if it is possible, not even to meet. But only pray for them, if by any means they may repent; and this is difficult, but it is in the power of Jesus Christ, our true life.

4:2 **For if these things were done by our Lord only in appearance, then in appearance only am I bound.** And why have I given myself up unto death, to fire, to sword, to wild beasts? but nearness to the sword is nearness to God; to be among the wild beasts is to be in the arms of God; only let it be in the name of Jesus Christ. I endure all things that I may suffer together with him, since he who became perfect man strengtheneth me.

CHAPTER 5

5:1 **Whom some in ignorance deny, but have rather been denied of him, being advocates of death rather than of the truth.** Whom the prophets have not convinced, nor the law of Moses, nor until now the gospel, nor the sufferings which each of us severally have endured;

5:2 for of a truth they think that our sufferings also are in appearance. For how doth a man benefit me, if he praise me but blasphemeth my Lord, not confessing that he lived in the flesh? But he who confesseth not this, hath denied him completely, being dead while he liveth.

5:3 But it hath not seemed good unto me to write their names, which are those of unbelievers; but may it not even happen unto me to remember them, until they repent of their errors with regard to the passion, which is our resurrection.

CHAPTER 6

6:1 Let no man be deceived. Even the heavenly things, and the glory of the angels, and the principalities, both visible and invisible, if they believe not on the blood of Christ, for them also is there condemnation. Let him who receiveth it, receive it in reality. Let not high place puff up any man. For the whole matter is faith and love, to which there is nothing preferable.

6:2 Consider those who hold heretical opinions with regard to the grace of Jesus Christ which hath come unto us, how opposite they are to the mind of God. They have no care for love, nor concerning the widow, nor concerning the orphan, nor concerning the afflicted, nor concerning him who is bound or loosed, nor concerning him who is hungry or thirsty. They refrain from the eucharist and from prayer, because they do not confess that the eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father of his goodness raised up.

CHAPTER 7

7:1 They, therefore, who speak against the gift of God, die disputing. But it were better for them to love, that they might also rise again.

7:2 It is, therefore, proper to abstain from such, and not to speak concerning them, either in private or in public; but to attend to the prophets, and especially to the gospel, in which the passion hath been revealed unto us, and the resurrection hath been perfected.

CHAPTER 8

8:1 But avoid divisions, as being the beginning of evils. Do ye all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ doth the Father; and follow the presbyters as the apostles; and have respect unto the deacons as unto the commandment of God. Let no one, apart from the bishop, do any of the things that appertain unto the church. Let that eucharist alone be considered valid which is celebrated in the presence of the bishop, or of him to whom he shall have entrusted it.

8:2 Wherever the bishop appear, there let the multitude be; even as wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church. It is not lawful either to baptize, or to hold a love-feast without the consent of the bishop; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that also is well pleasing unto God, to the end that whatever is done may be safe and sure.

CHAPTER 9

9:1 It is reasonable for the future to be vigilant, and while we have yet time, to repent unto God. It is well to honour God and the bishop; he who honoureth the bishop, is honoured of God; he who doeth anything without the knowledge of the bishop, serveth the devil.

9:2 Let all things, therefore, abound unto you in grace, for ye are worthy. Ye have refreshed me in all things, and Jesus Christ hath refreshed you. Ye have loved me both when absent and present. May God requite you, through whom, by enduring all things, ye shall attain unto him.

CHAPTER 10

10:1 Ye have done well in that ye have received as servants of Christ, who is God, Philo and Rheus Agathopus, who have followed me for the sake of God; who also return thanks unto the Lord in your behalf, because ye have refreshed them in every way. Nothing shall be lost unto you.

10:2 My spirit is given for yours, and my bonds, which ye have not despised, nor have been ashamed of them; nor shall the perfect faith, even Jesus Christ, be ashamed of you.

CHAPTER 11

11:1 Your prayer hath come unto the Church which is at Antioch in Syria, whence I salute all, being bound with the most godlike bonds, not being worthy to be from thence, being the last of them. But according to his will, I was thought worthy, not from any merit of which I am conscious, but of the grace of God, which I pray may be given unto me in perfection, that, by means of your prayer, I may attain unto God.

11:2 In order, therefore, that your work may be perfect, both on earth and in heaven, it is fitting, for the honour of God, that your church should elect a divine ambassador, who, when he has come unto Syria, may congratulate them that they are at peace, and have received their proper greatness, and that their own governing body has been restored to them.

11:3 It hath, therefore, appeared unto me to be a worthy thing to send some one of yours with the epistle, that he may glorify together with them the prosperity which hath happened unto them in accordance with God, and because that by your prayer it hath already attained unto the harbour. Since ye are perfect, think also such things as be perfect; for if ye are willing to do well, God is ready to grant you the opportunity.

CHAPTER 12

12:1 The love of the brethren who are in Troas saluteth you, whence also I write unto you by means of Burrhus, whom ye, together with the Ephesians your brethren, sent along with me, who hath in all respects refreshed me; and would that all imitated him, who is a pattern of the service of God. Grace shall requite him in all things;

12:2 I salute also your bishop, who is worthy of God, and your godlike presbyters, the deacons, who are my fellow-servants, and all of you, both individually and in common, in the name of Jesus Christ, in his flesh and his blood, in his passion and resurrection, both fleshly and spiritual, in the unity both of God and of yourselves. Grace be unto you, mercy, peace, and patience for ever.

CHAPTER 13

13:1 I salute the families of my brethren, together with their wives and children, and the virgins who are called widows. Fare ye well in the power of the spirit. Philo, who is with me, saluteth you.

13:2 I salute the house of Tavius, which I pray may be fixed in faith and love, both fleshly and spiritual. I salute Alce, the name desired by me, and Daphnus the incomparable, and Eutecnus, and all by name. Farewell in the grace of God.
{End of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans}