

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.

CHAP. III.

Informes them he had heard that the persecution was stopped at Antioch, and directs them to send a messenger hitherto 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 some¹ 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 deacons.

4 As concerning Philo the deacon of Cilicia, a most worthy² man, he still ministers unto me in the word of God: together with Rheus³ 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 Burrhus, 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. Farewell in Christ Jesus our common hope.

The EPISTLE of IGNATIUS to the SMYRNÆANS.

CHAP. 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 really suffer.*

IGNATIUS, who is also called Theophorus, to the church of God the Father, and of the beloved Jesus Christ, which God hath mercifully⁴ blessed with every good gift; being filled with

faith and charity, so that this is wanting in no gift; most worthy of God, and fruitful in saints: the church which is at Smyrna in Asia; all joy, through his immaculate spirit, and the word of God.

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

3 For I have observed that

Messenger or Minister. ² Vid. Vossius, a martyr or confessor. Vid. Annot. in loc. ³ Vid. Vossius Annot. in Ep. ad. Smyrn. p. 261. See chap. iii. v. 11. ⁴ Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 25.

you are settled in an immovable 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 ¹unto 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 baptized of John; that so ²all 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 ³up 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 ⁴seeming to be.

8 And as they believe so shall it happen unto them; when being divested of the body they shall become ⁵mere spirits.

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

10 And when he came to those who were with Peter, ⁶he said

unto them, Take, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal dæmon. And straightway they felt and believed; being convinced both by his flesh and spirit.

11 For this cause they despised death, and were found to be above ⁷it.

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.

CHAP. II.

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

NOW these things, beloved, ¹put you in mind of, not questioning but that you yourselves also ²believe 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 shew 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

¹ Unto the Lord. ² Matt. iii. 15. ³ Vid. Voss. Annot. in loc. ⁴ i. e. Christians. ⁵ Incorporeal and dæmoniac. ⁶ Ex. Evang. Sec. Hebr. See Dr. Grabe Spicileg. tom. ii. p. 26. ⁷ Death. ⁸ Admonish. ⁹ Have so.

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 ¹ 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, ² it shall be to them to condemnation.

13 ³ He that is able to receive this, let him receive it. Let no man's ⁴ place or state in the world puff him up: that which is worth all his faith and charity, to which 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 ⁵ 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: ⁶ but much better would it be for them to ⁷ 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 private nor in public.

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.

CHAP. 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 anything 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,

¹ Had true flesh. ² It is. ³ Matt. xix. 12. ⁴ Vid. Epist. Interpol. ⁵ Vid. Annot. Coteler. in loc. Or, Prayers. ⁶ Vid. Coteler. Annot. ⁷ Love.

or by him to whom the bishop has given his consent.

4 Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the ¹people also be: as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic church.

5 It is not lawful without the bishop, neither to baptize, nor ²to 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 ³repent whilst there is yet time to return unto God.

7 It is a good thing 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 anything without his knowledge, ⁴ministers 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, from whom whilst ye undergo all things, ye shall attain unto him.

11 Ye have done well in that ye have received Philo, and Rheus ⁵Agathopus, who followed me ⁶for 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 ⁷things. ⁸Nor shall any thing that you have done be lost to you.

13 My ⁹soul 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 ¹⁰churches; being not worthy to be called ¹¹from 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, ¹²that your church appoint some worthy delegate, 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 ¹³state, 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 harbor.

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 ¹⁴enable you thereunto.

¹ Multitude. ² Make a love-feast. ³ Return to a sound mind. ⁴ Does worship. ⁵ Vid. Voss. Annot. in loc. ⁶ Unto. ⁷ Ways. ⁸ Vid. Epist. Interpol. ⁹ Spirit. ¹⁰ All the. ¹¹ *i. e.* the bishop of that church. ¹² Vid. Voss. Annot. in loc. ¹³ Bulk, greatness. ¹⁴ Help you.

20 The love of the brethren that are at Troas salute you; from whence 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.

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 the² 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,³ together with the incomparable Daphnus, and Eutechnus, and all by name.

27 Farewell in the grace of God.

¶ To the Smyrncæans from Troas.

The EPISTLE of IGNATIUS to POLYCARP.

CHAP. I.

Blesses God for the firm establishment of Polycarp in the faith, and gives him particular directions for improving it.

IGNATIUS, who is also called Theophorus, to Polycarp, bishop of the church⁴ which is at Smyrna; their overseer, but rather himself overlooked by God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ: all happiness.

2 Having known that thy mind towards God, is fixed as it were upon an immovable rock; I exceedingly give thanks, that I have been thought worthy to behold thy⁵ blessed face, in which may I always rejoice in God.

3 Wherefore I beseech thee by the grace of God with which thou art clothed, to press forward in thy course, and to exhort all others that they may be saved.

4 Maintain thy place with all care⁶ both of flesh and spirit: Make it thy endeavour to preserve unity, than which nothing is better. Bear with all men, even as the Lord with thee.

5 Support all in love, as also thou dost. ⁷ Pray without ceasing: ask more understanding than what thou already hast. Be watchful, having thy spirit always awake.

6 Speak to every one⁸ according as God shall enable thee. Bear the⁹ infirmities of all, as a perfect combatant; where the labour is great, the gain¹⁰ is the more.

7 If thou shalt love the good disciples, what thank is it? But rather do thou subject to thee those that are mischievous, in meekness.

¹ Vid. Voss. Annot. in loc. ² i. e. The deaconesses. See the reason for the name, Voss. Annot. in loc. Add. Coteler. ib. ³ See Voss. Annot. ex Epist. Interpol. ⁴ of the Smyrncæans. ⁵ Innocent. ⁶ Vid. 1 Cor. vii. 34. ⁷ Be at leisure to, etc. ⁸ Vid. Voss. in loc. aliter Vet. Lat. Interpr. ⁹ The diseases. ¹⁰ Is much.