

an account of his martyrdom. "He was a man," say the writers, "in all things like unto the apostles, that as a good governor by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his doctrine and spiritual labor, he opposed himself to the floods of the adversary, and that he was like a divine lamp, illuminating the hearts of the faithful by his exposition of the Holy Scriptures."

Ignatius being thus faithful in the work appointed to him, could not escape persecution, as the Lord Jesus, when on earth, informed his disciples—"Behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves"—"they shall cast you out of the synagogues, yea the time cometh that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service." And so it was in the experience of this good man. It appears from some expressions in his Epistle that he had undergone many troubles while engaged in ministering the Gospel, and these continued as they doubtless were through so many years, would be instrumental in leading him to long earnestly for the reward which the Lord bestows on the faithful, and this desire, as will appear, he was now about to obtain.

The Roman Emperor, Trajan, being in Antioch, took offence against the Christians, because of their not worshipping the Idols which himself and the rest of his people worshipped, and threatened them with violence if they refused to comply. Ignatius having come before Trajan, in behalf of himself and of the flock committed to his care, Trajan said to him, "What a wretch art thou thus to endeavour to transgress our commands, and to persuade others also to do likewise to their destruction."—

*Ignatius answered*, "No one ought to call Theophorus after such a manner, for as much as all wicked spirits are departed far from the servants of God. But if because I am a trouble to those evil spirits you call me wicked, with reference to them, I confess the charge; for having Christ the Heavenly King, I dissolve all the snares of the devils."

*Trajan replied*, "And who is Theophorus?"

*Ignatius*. "He who has Christ in his breast."

*Trajan*. "And do not we then seem to thee to have the Gods within us, who fight for us against our enemies?"

*Ignatius*. "You err in that you call the evil spirits of the heathens, Gods. For there is but one God who made heaven and earth, and the sea and all that are in them; and one Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, whose kingdom may I enjoy."

*Trajan*. "His kingdom, you say, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?"

*Ignatius*. "His who crucified my sin with the

inventor of it, and has put all the deceit and malice of the devil under the feet of those who carry him in their heart."

*Trajan*. "Dost thou then carry him who was crucified within thee?"

*Ignatius*. "I do, for it is written, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them.'"

Then Trajan pronounced this sentence against him: "For as much as Ignatius has confessed that he carries about with himself, Him who was crucified, we command that he be carried bound by soldiers to the Great Rome, there to be thrown to the wild beasts for the entertainment of the people." When Ignatius heard this sentence, he gave thanks that he was accounted worthy to suffer in the cause of Christ, and to be bound in irons after the manner of the Apostle Paul; and before he was led away, he prayed for the Church and commended it to the Lord.

Some have professed to wonder that Trajan should have sent him so long a voyage to Rome, when he might with less trouble to himself, have ordered him to be thrown to the wild beasts in Antioch. But it does not appear there is much ground for wonder, as Trajan gives the reason for this part of the sentence—it was for the entertainment of the people at the great Rome; and doubtless this reason could not so well have applied to the people in Antioch seeing the long residence of such a person as Ignatius among them, must in some measure, have conciliated his enemies. And the violent death of one revered because of his age and virtues could not have been acceptable to the people; whereas, in Rome where he was a stranger, the idolaters hearing of him only as a christian, would rejoice in his fall—viewing it as a victory over the faith of the Gospel. It should be remembered, moreover, as the Lord hath said, that not a hair shall fall from the head of his people without his permission; and he makes the wrath of man to praise him, so it might be supposed he would make this Emperor, who had stretched out his hand to persecute his people, an instrument in getting glory to his name, howbeit he meant not so in his heart. And this the history of the transaction has manifested; for when we follow the progress of Ignatius to the place of suffering, he is rather like one proceeding in a triumph, and out of the fulness of his consolation capable of bestowing blessings upon others, than like an afflicted prisoner going to die. His example would animate those christians and their pastors who were witnesses of his faith and patience; and not only so, but he continues to instruct the men of distant generations who hear the