

THE CHRISTIAN SENTINEL.

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved.—HAB. ii. 1.

Rev. A. H. BURWELL, Editor.]

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EPISTLE OF ST. IGNATIUS

TO THE EPHESIANS.

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which is at Ephesus, in Asia, most deservedly happy; being blessed through the greatness and fullness of God the Father, and predestinated before the world began, that it should be always unto an enduring and unchangeable glory; being united and chosen through his true passion, according to the will of the Father, and Jesus Christ our God; all happiness, by Jesus Christ, and his undefiled Grace.

1. I HAVE heard of your name, much beloved in God, which ye have very justly attained by a habit of righteousness, according to the faith and love which is in Jesus Christ our Saviour: how that being followers of God, and stirring up yourselves by the blood of Christ, ye have perfectly accomplished the work that was conatural unto you. For hearing that I came bound from Syria, for the common name and hope, [viz. of Christ,] trusting through your prayers to fight with beasts at Rome; that so by suffering I may become indeed the disciple of him who gave himself to God, an offering and sacrifice for us, [ye hastened to see me.] I received therefore, in the name of God, your whole multitude in Onesimus; who by inexpressible love is ours, but according to the flesh is your Bishop: whom I beseech you by Jesus Christ, to love; and that you would all strive to be like unto him. And blessed be God, who has granted unto you, who are so worthy of him, to enjoy such an excellent Bishop.

2. For what concerns my fellow servant Burrhus, and your most blessed deacon in things pertaining to God; I entreat you that he may tarry longer both for your's and your Bishop's honor. And Crocus also worthy both our God and you, whom I have received as the pattern of your love, has in all things refreshed me, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ shall also refresh him; together with Onesimus, and Burrhus, and Euplus, and Fronto, in whom I have as to your charity, seen all of you. And may I always have joy of you, if I shall be worthy of it. It is therefore fitting that you should by all means glorify Jesus Christ who hath glorified you: that by a uniform obedience ye may be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; and may all speak the same things concerning every thing; and that being subject to your Bishop, and the Presbytery, ye may be wholly and thoroughly sanctified.

3. These things I prescribe to you not as if I were somebody extraordinary: for though I am bound for his name, I am not yet perfect in Christ Jesus. But now I begin to learn, and I speak to you as fellow-disciples together with me. For I ought to have been stirred up by you, in faith, in admonition, in patience, in long suffering; but forasmuch as charity suffers me not to be silent towards you, I have first taken upon me to exhort you, that ye would all run together according to the will of God. For even Jesus Christ, our insuperable life, is sent by the will of the Father; as the bishops, appointed unto the utmost bounds of the earth, are by the will of Jesus Christ.

4. Wherefore it will become you to run together according to the will of your Bishop, as also ye do. For your famous Presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the Bishop, as the strings are to the harp. Therefore in your concord, and agreeing charity, Jesus Christ is sung: and every single person among you makes up the Chorus: that so being all consonant in love, and taking up the song of God, ye may in a perfect unity, with one voice, sing to the Father by Jesus Christ; to the end that he may both hear you,

and perceive by your works, that ye are indeed the members of his Son: wherefore it is profitable for you to live in an unblamable unity, that so ye may always have a fellowship with God.

5. For if I in this little time have had such a familiarity with your Bishop, I mean not to carnal, but spiritual acquaintance with him; how much more must I think you happy who are so joined to him, as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father; that so all things may agree in the same unity? Let no man deceive himself: if a man be not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. For if the prayer of one or two be of such force, as we are told, [Matt. xviii. 19.] how much more powerful shall that of the Bishop and the whole Church be? He therefore that does not come together into the same place with it, is proud, and has already condemned himself. For it is written, "God resisteth the proud." [James iv. 6.] Let us take heed thereof, that we do not set ourselves against the Bishop, that we may be subject to God.

6. The more any one sees his Bishop silent, the more let him revere him. For whomsoever the master of the house sends to be over his own household, we ought in like manner to receive him, as we would do him that sent him. It is therefore evident that we ought to look upon the bishop, even as we would do upon the Lord himself. And indeed Onesimus himself does greatly commend your good order in God: that you all live according to the truth, and that no heresy dwells among you. For neither do ye hearken to any one more than to Jesus Christ speaking to you in truth.

7. For some there are who carry about the name of Christ in deceitfulness, but do things unworthy of God; whom ye must flee as ye would do so many wild beasts. For they are ravening dogs, who bite secretly: against whom ye must guard yourselves, as men hardly to be cured. There is one physician, both fleshly and spiritual; made and not made; God incarnate; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passable, then impassable; even Jesus Christ our Lord.

8. Wherefore let no man deceive you; as indeed neither are ye deceived, being wholly the servants of God. For inasmuch as there is no contention, nor strife among you, to trouble you, ye must needs live according to God's will. My soul be for yours; and I myself the expiatory offering* for your Church of Ephesus, so famous throughout the world. They that are of the flesh cannot do the works of the Spirit; neither they that are of the Spirit the works of the flesh. As he that has faith, cannot be an infidel: nor he that is an infidel have faith. But even those things which ye do according to the flesh are spiritual; forasmuch as ye do all things in Jesus Christ.

9. Nevertheless I have heard of some who have passed by you, having perverse doctrine: whom ye did not suffer to sow among you; but stopped your ears, that ye might not receive those things that were sown by them: as being the stones of the temple of the Father, prepared for his building; and drawn up on high by the cross of Christ, as by an engine; using the Holy Ghost as the rope; your faith being your support; and your charity the way that leads unto God. Ye are therefore, with all you companions in the same journey, full of God; his spiritual temples, full of Christ, full of holiness; adorned in all things with the commands of Christ: in whom also I rejoice that I have been thought worthy by this present Epistle to converse, and joy together with you; that with respect to the other life, ye love nothing but God only.

* To appease the heathen persecutors.—Ed.
(To be Continued.)