

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 ROMANS

Ignatius who is also called Theophorus; to the Church which has obtained mercy from the Majesty of the Most High Father, and his only begotten Son Jesus Christ; beloved, and illuminated through the will of Him who willeth all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ our God, which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans; and which I salute in the name of Jesus Christ, [as being] united both in flesh and spirit to all his commands, and filled with the grace of God; [all joy] in Jesus Christ our God.

1. FORASMUCH as I have at last obtained through my prayers to God, to see your faces, which I much desired to do; being bound in Christ Jesus, I hope ere long to salute you if it shall be the will of God to grant me to attain unto the end I long for. For the beginning is well disposed, if I shall but have grace, without hindrance, to receive what is appointed for me. But I fear your love lest it do me an injury. For it is easy for you to do what you please, but it will be hard for me to attain unto God if you spare me.

2. But I would not that ye should please men, but God; whom also ye do please. For neither shall I ever hereafter have such an opportunity of going unto God; nor will you, if ye shall now be silent, ever be entitled to a better work. For if you shall be silent in my behalf, I shall be made partaker of God. But if you shall love my body, I shall have my course again to run. Wherefore ye cannot do me a greater kindness, than to suffer me to be sacrificed unto God, now that the altar is already prepared: that when ye shall be gathered together in love, you may give thanks to the Father through Christ Jesus, that he has vouchsafed to bring a Bishop of Syria unto you, being called from the east unto the west. For it is good for me to set from the world, unto God; that I may rise again unto him.

3. Ye have never envied any one; ye have taught others. I would therefore that ye should now do those things yourselves, which in your instructions you have prescribed to others. Only pray for me, that God would give me both inward and outward strength, that I may not only say, but will; nor only called a Christian, but be found one. For if I shall be found a Christian, I may then deservedly be called one; and be thought faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world. Nothing is good, that is seen. For even our God, Jesus Christ, now that he is in the Father, does so much the more appear. A Christian is not a work of opinion; but of greatness of mind [especially when he is hated by the world.]

4. I write to the Churches, and signify to them all, that I am willing to die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech you that you show not an unreasonable good will towards me. Suffer me to be food to the wild beasts by whom I shall attain unto God. For I am the wheat of God; and I shall be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather encourage the beasts, that they may become my sepulchre; and may leave nothing of my body; that being dead, I may not be troublesome to any. Then shall I be truly the disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body. Pray therefore unto Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be made the sacrifice of God. I do not, as Peter and Paul, command you.—They were Apostles, I a condemned man; they were free, but I am even to this day a servant; but if I suffer, I shall then become

the freeman of Jesus Christ, and shall rise free. And now, being in bonds, I learn, not to desire any thing.

5. From Syria even unto Rome, I fight with beasts both by sea and land; both night and day; being bound to ten leopards, that is to say, to such a band of Soldiers: who though treated with all manner of kindness, are the worse for it. But I am the more instructed by their injuries; "yet am I therefore not justified."—[1. Cor. iv. 4.] May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; which also I wish may exercise all their fierceness upon me; and whom for that end I will encourage, that they may be sure to devour me, and not serve me as they have done some, whom out of fear they have not touched. But, and if they will not do it willingly, I will provoke them to it. Pardon me in this matter; I know what is profitable for me. Now I begin to be a disciple: [Luke xiv. 27.] nor shall any thing move me, whether visible or invisible, that I may attain to Christ Jesus. Let fire and the cross; let the companies of wild beasts, let breakings of bones, and tearing of members; let the shattering in pieces of the whole body, and all the wicked torments of the devil come upon me, only let me enjoy Jesus Christ.

6. All the ends of the world, and the kingdoms of it, will profit me nothing: I would rather die for Jesus Christ, than rule to the utmost ends of the earth. Him I seek who died for us; Him I desire that rose again for us. This is the gain that is laid up for me. Pardon me; my brethren, ye shall not hinder me from living: [nor seeing I desire to go to God, may you separate me from him, for the sake of this world; nor seduce me by any of the desires of it.] Suffer me to enter into pure light; where being come, I shall be indeed the servant of God. Permit me to imitate the passion of my God. If any one has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire, and let him have compassion on me, as knowing how I am straightened.

7. The Prince of this world would fain carry me away, and corrupt my resolution towards my God. Let none of you therefore help him: rather do ye join with me, that is, with God. Do not speak with Jesus Christ, and yet covet the world. Let not any envy dwell with you: no not though I myself when I shall become unto you, should exhort you to it, yet do not ye hearken to me; but rather believe what I now write to you. For though I am alive at the writing this, yet my desire is to die. My love is crucified; [and the fire that is within me does not desire any water; but being alive and springing within me, says,] come to the Father. [I take no pleasure in the food of corruption, nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, [of the seed of David; and the drink that I long for] is his blood, which is incorruptible love.]

8. I have no desire to live any longer after the manner of men, neither shall I, if you consent. Be ye therefore willing, that ye yourselves also may be pleasing to God. I exhort you in a few words: I pray you believe me. Jesus Christ will show you that I speak truly. My mouth is without deceit, and the Father hath truly spoken by it. Pray therefore for me, that I may accomplish what I desire. I have not written to you after the flesh, but according to the will of God. If I shall suffer, ye have loved me: but if I shall be rejected, ye have hated me.

9. Remember in your prayers the Church of Syria, which now enjoys God for its shepherd instead of me: Let Jesus Christ only oversee it, and your charity. But I am even ashamed to be reckoned as one of them: for neither am I worthy, being the least among them, and as one born out of due season. But through mercy I have obtained to be somebody, if I shall get unto God,