

The Epistle of St Ignatius to The Italians



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Apostolic Fathers (Lightfoot)

1:1 Ignatius, who is also Theophorus, unto her that is beloved by God the Father of Jesus Christ;

1:2 to the holy church which is in Tralles of Asia, elect and worthy of God,

1:3 having peace in flesh and spirit through the passion of Jesus Christ, who is our hope through our resurrection unto Him;

1:4 which church also I salute in the Divine plenitude after the apostolic fashion, and I wish her abundant greeting.

1:5 I have learned that ye have a mind unblameable and stedfast in patience,

1:6 not from habit, but by nature, according as Polybius your bishop informed me, who by the will of God and of Jesus Christ visited me in Smyrna;

1:7 and so greatly did he rejoice with me in my bonds in Christ Jesus, that in him I beheld the whole multitude of you.

1:8 Having therefore received your godly benevolence at his hands, I gave glory, forasmuch as I had found you to be imitators of God, even as I had learned.

2:1 For when ye are obedient to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, it is evident to me that ye are living not after men but after Jesus Christ, who died for us, that believing on His death ye might escape death.

2:2 It is therefore necessary, even as your wont is, that ye should do nothing without the bishop;

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2:3 but be ye obedient also to the presbytery, as to the Apostles of Jesus Christ our hope;

2:4 for if we live in Him, we shall also be found in Him.

2:5 And those like-wise who are deacons of the mysteries of Jesus Christ must please all men in all ways.

2:6 For they are not deacons of meats and drinks but servants of the Church of God.

2:7 It is right therefore that they should beware of blame as of fire.

3:1 In like manner let all men respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, even as they should respect the bishop as being a type of the Father and the presbyters as the council of God and as the college of Apostles.

3:2 Apart from these there is not even the name of a church.

3:3 And I am persuaded that ye are so minded as touching these matters:

3:4 for I received the example of your love, and I have it with me,

3:5 in the person of your bishop, whose very demeanour is a great lesson, while his gentleness is power-a man to whom I think even the godless pay reverence.

3:6 Seeing that I love you I thus spare you, though I might write more sharply on his behalf:

3:7 but I did not think myself competent for this, that being a convict I should order you as though I were an Apostle.

4:1 I have many deep thoughts in God:

4:2 but I take the measure of myself, lest I perish in my boasting.

4:3 For now I ought to be the more afraid and not to give heed to those that would puff me up for they that say these things to me are a scourge

to me.

4:4 For though I desire to suffer, yet I know not whether I am worthy:

4:5 for the envy of the devil is unseen indeed by many, but against me it wages the fiercer war.

4:6 So then I crave gentleness, whereby the prince of this world is brought to nought.

5:1 Am I not able to write to you of heavenly things?

5:2 But I fear lest I should cause you harm being babes.

5:3 So bear with me, lest not being able to take them in, ye should be choked.

5:4 For I myself also, albeit I am in bonds and can comprehend heavenly things and the arrays of the angels and the musterings of the principalities,

5:5 things visible and things invisible-I myself am not yet by reason of this a disciple.

5:6 For we lack many things, that God may not be lacking to us.

6:1 I exhort you therefore-yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ-take ye only Christian food, and abstain from strange herbage, which is heresy:

6:2 for these men do even mingle poison with Jesus Christ, imposing upon others by a show of honesty,

6:3 like persons administering a deadly drug with honied wine, so that one who knoweth it not, fearing nothing, drinketh in death with a baneful delight.

7:1 Be ye therefore on your guard against such men.

7:2 And this will surely be, if ye be not puffed up and if ye be inseparable from [God] Jesus Christ and from the bishop and from the ordinances of the Apostles.

7:3 He that is within the sanctuary is clean;

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7:4 but lie that is without the sanctuary is not clean, that is, he that doeth aught without the bishop and presbytery and deacons, this man is not clean in his conscience.

8:1 Not indeed that I have known of any such thing among you, but I keep watch over you betimes, as my beloved, for I foresee the snares of the devil.

8:2 Do ye therefore arm yourselves with gentleness and recover yourselves in faith which is the flesh of the Lord, and in love which is the blood of Jesus Christ.

8:3 Let none of you bear a grudge against his neighbour.

8:4 Give no occasion to the Gentiles, lest by reason of a few foolish men the godly multitude be blasphemed:

8:5 for {Woe unto him through whom My name is vainly blasphemed before some.

8:6 } 9. Text missing

8:7 Be ye deaf therefore, when any man speaketh to you apart from Jesus Christ,

8:8 who was of the race of David, who was the Son of Mary, who was truly born and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate,

8:9 was truly crucified and died in the sight of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the earth;

8:10 who moreover was truly raised from the dead, His Father having raised Him,

8:11 who in the like fashion will so raise us also who believe on Him-His Father, I say, will raise us-in Christ Jesus, apart from whom we have not true life.

10:1 But if it were as certain persons who are godless, that is unbelievers, say, that He suffered only in semblance, being themselves mere semblance, why am I in bonds?

10:2 And why also do I desire to fight with wild beasts?

10:3 So I die in vain.

10:4 Truly then I lie against the Lord.

11:1 Shun ye therefore those vile offshoots that gender a deadly fruit, whereof if a man taste, forthwith he dieth.

11:2 For these men are not the Father's planting for if they had been, they would have been seen to be branches of the Cross, and their fruit imperishable-the Cross whereby He through His passion inviteth us, being His members.

11:3 Now it cannot be that a head should be found without members, seeing that God promiseth union,, and this union is Himself.

12:1 I salute you from Smyrna, together with the churches of God that are present with me;

12:2 men who refreshed me in all ways both in flesh and in spirit.

12:3 My bonds exhort you, which for Jesus Christ's sake I bear about, entreating that I may attain unto God;

12:4 abide ye in your concord and in prayer one with another.

12:5 For it becometh you severally, and more especially the presbyters, to cheer the soul of your bishop unto the honour of the Father [and to the honour] of Jesus Christ and of the Apostles.

12:6 I pray that ye may hearken unto me in love, lest I be for a testimony against you by having so written.

12:7 And pray ye also for me who have need of your love in the mercy of God, that I may be vouchsafed the lot which I am eager to attain, to the end that I be not found reprobate.

13:1 The love of the Smyrnaeans and Ephesians saluteth you.

13:2 Remember in your prayers the church which is in Syria;

13:3 whereof [also] I am not worthy to be called a member, being the very last of them.

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13:4 Fare ye well in Jesus Christ, submitting yourselves to the bishop as to the commandment, and likewise also to the presbytery;

13:5 and each of you severally love one another with undivided heart.



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