

0030-0100 – Ignatius Antiochensis – Epistola Secunda ad Ephesios

The Second Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians

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The Second Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians¹¹⁴⁶

Ignatius, who is [also called] Theophorus, to the Church which is blessed in the greatness of God the Father, and perfected; to her who was selected¹¹⁴⁷ from eternity, that she might be at all times for glory, which abideth, and is unchangeable, and is perfected and chosen in the purpose of truth by the will of the Father of Jesus Christ our God; to her who is worthy of happiness; to her who is at Ephesus, in Jesus Christ, in joy which is unblameable: [wishes] abundance of happiness.

Chapter I.

Inasmuch as your name, which is greatly beloved, is acceptable to me in God, [your name] which ye have acquired by nature, through a right and just will, and also by the faith and love of Jesus Christ our Saviour, and ye are imitators of God, and are fervent in the blood of God, and have speedily completed a work congenial to you; [for] when ye heard that I was bound,¹¹⁴⁸ so as to be able to do nothing for the sake of the common name and hope (and I hope, through your prayers, that I may be devoured by beasts at Rome, so that by means of this of which I have been accounted worthy, I may be endowed with strength to be a disciple of God), ye were diligent to come and see me. Seeing, then, that we have become acquainted with your multitude¹¹⁴⁹ in the name of God, by Onesimus, who is your bishop, in love which is unutterable, whom I pray that ye love in Jesus Christ our Lord, and that all of you imitate his example,¹¹⁵⁰ for blessed is He who has given you such a bishop, even as ye deserve [to have].¹¹⁵¹

Chapter III.¹¹⁵²

But inasmuch as love does not permit me to be silent in regard to you, on this account I have been forward to entreat of you that ye would be diligent in the will of God.

¹¹⁴⁶ Another inscription is, "Epistle the Second, which is to the Ephesians."

¹¹⁴⁷ Literally, "separated."

¹¹⁴⁸ Literally, "bound for actions."

¹¹⁴⁹ Cureton renders, "have received your abundance," probably referring the words to gifts sent by the Ephesians to Ignatius.

¹¹⁵⁰ Literally, "be in his image."

¹¹⁵¹ There is no Apodosis, unless it be found in what follows.

¹¹⁵² The following clause is the whole of chap. iii. in the Greek, which is represented in the Syriac.

Chapter VIII.¹¹⁵³

For, so long as there is not implanted in you any one lust which is able to torment you, behold, ye live in God. I rejoice in you, and offer supplication¹¹⁵⁴ on account of you, Ephesians, a Church which is renowned in all ages. For those who are carnal are not able to do spiritual things, nor those that are spiritual carnal things; in like manner as neither can faith [do] those things which are foreign to faith, nor want of faith [do] what belongs to faith. For those things which ye have done in the flesh, even these are spiritual, because ye have done everything in Jesus Christ.

Chapter IX.

And ye are prepared for the building of God the Father, and ye are raised up on high by the instrument of Jesus Christ, which is the cross; and ye are drawn by the rope, which is the Holy Spirit; and your pulley is your faith, and your love is the way which leadeth up on high to God.

Chapter X.

Pray for all men; for there is hope of repentance for them, that they may be counted worthy of God. By your works especially let them be instructed. Against their harsh words be ye conciliatory, by meekness of mind and gentleness. Against their blasphemies do ye give yourselves to prayer; and against their error be ye armed with faith. Against their fierceness be ye peaceful and quiet, and be ye not astounded by them. Let us, then, be imitators of our Lord in meekness, and strive who shall more especially be injured, and oppressed, and defrauded.



Chapter XIV.¹¹⁵⁵

The work is not of promise,¹¹⁵⁶ unless a man be found in the power of faith, even to the end.

¹¹⁵³ Chaps. iv. v. vi. vii. of the Greek are totally omitted in the Syriac.

¹¹⁵⁴ Thus Cureton renders the words, referring in confirmation to the Peshito version of Phil. i. 4, but the meaning is doubtful.

¹¹⁵⁵ Chaps. xi. xii. xiii. of the Greek are totally wanting in the Syriac, and only these few words of chaps. xiv. and xv. are represented.

¹¹⁵⁶ The meaning seems to be that mere profession, without continuous practice, is nothing.

Chapter XV.

It is better that a man should be silent while he is something, than that he should be talking when he is not; that by those things which he speaks he should act, and by those things of which he is silent he should be known.

Chapter XVIII.¹¹⁵⁷

My spirit bows in adoration to the cross, which is a stumbling-block to those who do not believe, but is to you for salvation and eternal life.

Chapter XIX.

There was concealed from the ruler of this world the virginity of Mary and the birth of our Lord, and the three renowned mysteries¹¹⁵⁸ which were done in the tranquillity of God from the star. And here, at the manifestation of the Son, magic began to be destroyed, and all bonds were loosed; and the ancient kingdom and the error of evil was destroyed. Henceforward all things were moved together, and the destruction of death was devised, and there was the commencement of that which was perfected in God.¹¹⁵⁹

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The Third Epistle of the Same St. Ignatius¹¹⁶⁰

¹¹⁵⁷ Chaps. xvi. and xvii. of the Greek are totally wanting in the Syriac.

¹¹⁵⁸ Literally, “the mysteries of the shout.” The meaning is here confused and obscure. See the Greek.

¹¹⁵⁹ Chaps. xx. and xxi. of the Greek are altogether wanting in the Syriac. [N.B.—See spurious Epistle to Philippians, cap. 4, *infra*. This concealment from Satan of the mystery of the incarnation is the explanation, according to the Fathers, of his tempting the Messiah, and prompting His crucifixion. Also, Christ the more profoundly humbled himself, “ne subtilis ille diaboli oculus magnum hoc pietatis deprehenderet sacramentum” (St. Bernard, opp. ii. 1944). Bernard also uses this opinion very strikingly (opp. ii. 1953) in one of his sermons, supposing that Satan discovered the secret too late for his own purpose, and then prompted the outcry, *Come down from the cross*, to defeat the triumph of the second Adam. (Comp. St. Mark i. 24 and St. Luke iv. 34, where, after the first defeat of the tempter, this demon suspects the second Adam, and tries to extort the secret).]

¹¹⁶⁰ Another inscription is, “The Third Epistle.”