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IGNATIUS, who is also Theophorus, to her that has found mercy in the bounteous power¹ of the Father most High and Jesus Christ, His only Son, to the Church that is beloved and illuminated by the will of Him that willed all things which exist, in faith and love towards Jesus Christ our God; to her that has the chief place in the district of the region of the Romans,² being

¹ For the word used here cf. Luke ix. 43, A. V., 'the mighty power of God.' It denotes an exhibition of God's power which reveals His goodness and bounty.

² These words describe merely the area over which the Roman Church exercised supervision. Cf. Tertullian, *de Præscr.* 36: 'Go through the Apostolic churches, in which the very seats of the Apostles, at this very day, preside over their own places.' Others, however, have urged that Ignatius is here maintaining the absolute

worthy of God, worthy of honour, worthy of congratulation, worthy of praise, worthy of success, worthy in purity, and holding the chief place in love,¹ following the law of Christ, bearing the Father's name; which Church also I salute in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the Father; to them that are united in flesh and spirit with every one of His commandments, being wholly filled with the grace of God, without wavering, and strained clear from every foreign dye,² warmest greeting in Jesus Christ our God without blame.

I. My prayer to God has been heard, and I have been permitted to see your holy faces, so that I have gained even more than I was asking.³ For in bonds in Christ Jesus I hope to salute you, if it be God's will that I should be accounted worthy to reach the end.⁴ For the beginning is well ordained if I may attain the

supremacy of the Roman Church among the churches of the world, as though he said, 'To her that, being situate in the district of the region of the Romans, has the chief place [among churches].' But, as Lightfoot urges, in that case it is difficult to see why Ignatius did not write merely 'in Rome,' when describing the locality of the church. The text of the passage, however, is not above suspicion, and it has recently been suggested (Phillimore, *Journ. of Theol. Studies*, xix. (1918), p. 276) that Χριστοῦ should be read for χωρῶν. The passage then runs 'to her that presides over the Romans in the place of Christ.' Cf. Magn. 6, where the Greek text and Latin version read τόπον for τύπον, 'the bishop presiding in the place of God.' Cf. also Eph. 3, Smyrn. 8.

¹ As the Church of Rome had the supremacy of rank among the churches in the region around it, so too was it foremost among them in works of love. Dionysius of Corinth (c. A. D. 175) testifies to the world-wide charity of the Roman Church (Euseb. *l. E.* iv. 23).

² The 'foreign dye' is the colouring-matter which pollutes the purity of a stream. The Church had been kept pure from grave errors of doctrine and life. For the metaphor cf. Philad. 3.

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end and so receive my inheritance without hindrance. For I fear lest your very love should do me wrong. For you may easily do what you will.¹ But for me it is difficult to attain unto God, unless you spare me.

II. For I would not that you should please men, but that you should please God,² as indeed you do. For I shall never have such an opportunity of attaining unto God, nor can you, if you keep silent, be credited³ with a nobler deed. For if you keep silent and spare me, I am a word of God, but if you crave for my flesh, I shall again be a mere voice.⁴ [Nay] give me nothing

¹ Christianity had already found its way into the higher ranks of Roman society. In the reign of Domitian (95 A.D.) the consul, Flavius Clemens, a cousin of the Emperor, had been executed, and his wife banished on a charge which has been provided to have arisen from their profession of Christianity. Ignatius is afraid that influence in high quarters will result in his respite. Lucian the heathen satirist, who wrote about 165 A.D., describes the efforts made by the Christians to procure the release of their imprisoned brethren (*De morte Peregrini*, c. 12).

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³ 'Be credited,' literally, 'have your name attached to.' An allusion probably, as Zahn suggests, to the practice of craftsmen, who inscribe their names on the work they have completed. The idea of Ignatius is that his martyrdom will be a great achievement, in which they will have their part by restraining their desire to intercede for him.

⁴ There is a distinction here between *λόγος*, 'a word,' expressing the intelligible utterance of a rational being and *φωνή*, which denotes a mere irrational cry. Both words occur in the opening chapter of St. John's Gospel, *λόγος*, 'the Word,' being used of the Eternal Son of God, as Revealer of the Father, while St. John the Baptist describes himself as *φωνή*, 'a mere voice of one crying,' i. e. a mere impersonal instrument. See John i. 1, 14, 23. Thus the thought of Ignatius is, 'My death will render my life intelligible as a living message to man from God, whereas, if I am spared, my life will be as destitute of meaning as the cry of an irrational animal.'

The text of the passage, however, shows considerable variation, probably due to alteration through failure to see the above distinction. The Greek text and the Armenian version read instead of *φωνή* the word *τρέχων*, which Lightfoot understands to mean that Ignatius 'would be put back again to run the race.' Similarly the word *λόγος* has been changed to *γενήσομαι* ('I shall belong to

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more than that I may be poured out as a libation to God,¹ while yet there is an altar ready, that forming a choir in love you may sing to the Father in Jesus Christ, because God has granted that the bishop from Syria² should be found in the West, having summoned him from the East. Good it is for my sun to set from the world unto God, that it may rise unto Him.³

III. You have never grudged⁴ any man. Others you have instructed.⁵ But I would that those lessons, which you enjoin in your teaching, may endure.⁶ Only ask that I may find power within and without, that I may not only say it, but may desire it, that I may not only

God,' instead of, 'I shall be a word of God' probably because of the seeming irreverence in attributing the title, 'word of God,' to any one but our Lord.

¹ The 'libation,' the 'altar,' and the 'choir,' are suggested by the ritual of a heathen sacrifice. For a similar metaphor cf. Eph. 9.

² The genitive *Συρίας* is probably here equivalent to little more than an adjective, 'the Syrian bishop,' or 'the bishop from Syria.' It must not be understood to imply jurisdiction over the whole of Syria, as though it were the equivalent of *τῆς ἐν Συρίᾳ ἐκκλησίας*, 'bishop of the church which is in Syria.' The organization of large dioceses was of later growth, and followed the lines of Roman imperial administration. The bishop of the second and third centuries resembled, so far as the extent of his administration went, the rector of a town parish in modern times. See *Introd.* p. 34 note.

³ Ignatius plays on the words *δύσις*, 'West,' lit. 'setting of the sun,' and *ἀνατολή*, 'East,' lit. 'rising of the sun.'

⁴ *ἐβασκάνετε*, lit. 'envied.' The word is found in Gal. iii. 1, and means literally 'to bewitch,' with special reference to the power of the evil eye. The derived notion of 'envy' follows from this use. Ignatius means 'You have never grudged any one the honour of martyrdom.'

⁵ Probably a reference to the encouragement and exhortations given to previous martyrs by the Roman Christians. The particular form, however, of the following sentence rather favours the view that Ignatius is referring to some definite, written charge upon the subject, such as is found in the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, which contains exhortations to follow the example of the martyrs.

⁶ Ignatius expresses the hope that they will not depart, in his own case, from the principles of the teaching which they have given to others on the subject of martyrdom.

be called but be found a Christian. For if I be found a Christian, then can I also receive the name; then too can I be faithful when I am not visible to the world. Nothing that is visible is good.¹ For our God, Jesus Christ, is the more clearly visible now that He is in the Father.² The Work is not of persuasive eloquence,³ but Christianity is a thing of might whenever it is hated by the world.

IV. I write unto all the churches, and charge them all to know that I die willingly for God, if you hinder not. I intreat you, do not unseasonably befriend me. Suffer me to belong to the wild beasts, through whom I may attain unto God. I am God's grain, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread.⁴ Rather entice the wild beasts to become my tomb, and to leave naught of my body, that I may not, when I have fallen asleep, prove a burden to any man.⁵

¹ 'Visible,' *e.g.* material and transient. Cf. 2 Cor. iv. 18. Ignatius is speaking of the material world as it exists apart from God. On his general view of the relations of 'spirit' and 'matter,' see *Introd.* § 4.

² A paradox. Christ's true power, manifested in the life of the Church, is more clearly seen now that He has passed out of the sight of human eyes, than it was when in His earthly life He was subject to the malice and misunderstanding of men.

³ Cf. Eph. 14. 'The Work' is the Gospel. Christianity is not a matter of words but of deeds. Cf. the old motto 'taire et faire.'

⁴ Some MSS. add, after 'bread,' the words 'of Christ,' while others have 'of God,' and others omit both. The figure in this passage is suggested by the sacrificial loaves which were offered both among Jews and Gentiles. Lightfoot would see a more definite reference to the Pentecostal loaves (Lev. xxiii. 17). The 'pure' bread is that which was made of the finest flour. Ignatius is the grain which is ground by the teeth of the beasts and fitted for an offering to God.

⁵ He is thinking of the difficulties likely to attend his burial. The spurious Acts of the martyrdom vary in their account of the treatment of his reliques. The Antiochene Acts narrate (c. 6) that only the tougher parts of his reliques were left, and that these were carried back to Antioch and laid in a sarcophagus. The Roman

Then shall I truly be a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not see even my body. Intreat the Lord for me, that by these instruments¹ I may be found a sacrifice unto God. I do not enjoin you in the manner of Peter and Paul.² They were Apostles, I am a condemned man. They were free, I, until this moment, am a slave. But if I suffer, I am Jesus Christ's freedman,³ and in Him I shall arise free. Now in my bonds I am learning to give up all desires.

V. From Syria unto Rome I am fighting with wild beasts⁴ by land and sea, by night and day, bound to

Acts state that the beasts only crushed him to death, without touching his flesh, 'that his reliques might be a protection to the great city of the Romans' (c. 10). On the later history of his reliques see *Introd.* § 3.

¹ That is, the wild beasts.

² Both these Apostles had been connected with the Roman Church. Their names also appear in conjunction in the letter written by Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, c. 5. St. Peter's residence at Rome, with his martyrdom there, rests on too strong evidence to be rejected. It is explicitly mentioned by a succession of Christian writers in the latter half of the second century, *i.e.* by Dionysius of Corinth, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria. The 'Church in Babylon' in 1 Pet. v. 13 is now generally understood to refer to Rome. Finally, the Roman presbyter Gaius tells us that in his day (*circa* 200 A.D.) the tombs of the two Apostles were to be seen on the Vatican and Ostian Ways. On the other hand the evidence for their martyrdom at the same time is slender, being derived from the statement of Dionysius of Corinth, who wrote in the second half of the second century (c. 175 A.D.), and was not intimately connected with the Roman Church. Accordingly some recent scholars have rejected his statement and incline to the view that St. Peter was the survivor of St. Paul. This would help to account for the greater prominence of his name in later days in the memory of the Roman Church. See Ramsay, *Ck. in R. E.*, p. 279 ff.; Sanday, *Expositor*, IV. vii. p. 411 f.; Swete, *St. Mark*, p. xvii f.

³ 1 Cor. vii. 22.

⁴ *θηριομαχῶ*. Based on 1 Cor. xv. 32, where it is used metaphorically of human opponents. Here the usage is similar, but also looks forward to the literal fulfilment of the words in his coming death.

ten leopards,¹ that is, a company of soldiers,² whose usage grows still harsher when they are liberally treated.³ Yet through their unjust doings I am more truly learning discipleship. *Yet am I not hereby justified.*⁴ May I have joy of the beasts that are prepared for me. I pray too that they may prove expeditious with me. I will even entice them to devour me expeditiously, and not to refrain, as they have refrained from some,⁵ through fear. And even though they are not willing without constraint,⁶ I will compel them. Pardon me. I know what is expedient for me. Now I am beginning to be a disciple. May naught of things visible or invisible seek to allure⁷ me; that I may attain unto Jesus Christ.

¹ It has been urged that the use of this word is an anachronism and a proof that this letter is not genuine, the word not being found in any writer of the second century. Lightfoot, however, refers to its use in a rescript of the Emperors Marcus and Commodus (A.D. 177-180), and a still earlier use by Galen about half a century after the time of Ignatius. The word is probably of Roman origin, and Lightfoot shows that it was already in process of formation in the time of Pliny some thirty or forty years before this time. Syrian leopards are mentioned by Vopiscus as having been exhibited by the Emperor Probus. See Lightfoot *in loco*.

² His escort consisted of ten soldiers, who relieved one another in turn. Like St. Paul (Acts xxviii. 16, 20), Ignatius was attached by a 'coupling-chain' to a guard by night and day.

³ This probably refers to the sums of money given to the soldiers by friends of Ignatius to procure for him better treatment. This common Christian practice is alluded to in Lucian's famous satire on the Christians, *De Morte Peregrini*, c. 12.

⁴ 1 Cor. iv. 4.

⁵ Cf. Euseb. *H. E.* viii. 7, where similar instances are cited in the case of the Egyptian martyrs. Similar incidents are recorded of the martyrs of Vienne in 177 A.D. (Euseb. *H. E.* v. 1). In the present passage Ramsay, following Zahn, thinks that there is a reference to the story of Thecla as contained in a first-century document on which he supposes the Acts of Paul and Thecla to be based (*Ch. in R. Emp.* pp. 381, 404).

⁶ Lightfoot, however, translates 'to devour me, though I am ready.'

⁷ *ζηλώσαι*. Cf. Gal. iv. 17; 2 Cor. xi. 2. In both those passages, and probably in the present passage, there is the idea of assiduous attention. Lightfoot, however, understands the word to mean 'envy.'

Come fire and cross and conflicts with wild beasts.¹ wrenching of bones, mangling of limbs, crushing of the whole body ; come grievous torments of the devil upon me,—only may they aid me in attaining unto Jesus Christ.

VI. The furthest bounds of the universe, and the kingdoms of this world shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die for the sake of Jesus Christ than to reign over the boundaries of the earth. Him I seek Who died for us. Him I desire, Who rose [for our sakes]. My travail-pains are upon me.² Forgive me, brethren. Hinder me not from entering into life : desire not my death. Bestow not upon the world him who desires to be God's ; nor tempt me with the things of this life. Suffer me to receive pure light. When I come thither then shall I be a man indeed. Suffer me to be an imitator of the passion of my God. If any man has Him dwelling in him, let him understand what I desire, and have fellow-feeling with me, knowing what constrains me.

VII. The prince of this world³ desires to make me his spoil⁴ and corrupt my purpose towards God. Let none of you then who are at hand assist him. Rather be on my side, that is, belong to God. Use not the words 'Jesus Christ' and yet desire the world. Let not envy make its dwelling within you. Even though I should come and intreat you, hearken not even to me, but rather trust these words which I write unto you. For I write unto you in the midst of life, enamoured

¹ The Greek text and the Armenian Version in the Martyrology add here 'gashes and rendings.'

² Ignatius represents both mother and child. The pains are the agonies of martyrdom, which result in the birth of the new Ignatius, born into the higher life.

³ Cf. Eph. 17 note.

⁴ Cf. Mark iii. 27.

of death. My Love¹ has been crucified, and there is not within me any fire of earthly desire,² but only water that lives³ and speaks in me,⁴ and says from within me, 'Come hither to the Father.' I have no pleasure in the food of corruption nor in the pleasures of this material life. I desire God's bread,⁵ which is the flesh of Christ, Who is of the seed of David,⁶ and for drink I desire His blood, which is love incorruptible.⁷

¹ *ἔρωσ*. This word has been understood in two widely different senses—

(a) Zahn and Lightfoot understand it to mean 'love' in the lower sense of 'lust,' 'passion.' According to this view Ignatius declares that he has crucified the carnal passions of his nature. In the only two passages of the LXX where the word occurs, it bears this sense. See Prov. vii. 18, xxx. 16. It does not occur in the N. T., which uses *ἀγάπη* to denote 'love.'

(b) An interpretation which has been current since the time of Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, refers *ἔρωσ* objectively to Christ. 'My Love has been crucified.' And so the words were commonly understood by later writers. This interpretation is rejected by Zahn and Lightfoot, but it has found a fresh defender in Dr. C. Bigg (*Bampton Lectures*, p. viii f.). He shows fairly conclusively that *ἔρωσ* and its cognates may be used in a higher sense, and also that *ἔρωσ* may be used of the object of love. This sense agrees too with the context. Ignatius is 'in love' with death, 'because Christ, his Beloved, is crucified, and perfect union with Him will be attained by death.' His love for Christ draws him away from material things. On the whole this interpretation, perhaps, suits best the highly imaginative fervour of the passage.

² Reading with Zahn and Lightfoot *φιλόβλον* = 'loving matter,' 'carnal.'

³ The phrase 'living water' recalls John iv. 10, 11. For its use in connection with the Spirit, see John vii. 38-39.

⁴ The words *καὶ λαλοῦν* ('water . . . that speaketh') are probably corrupt. If retained they must be held to refer to the prophetic power said to be imparted by certain springs to those who drank them. Lightfoot thinks that the longer Greek recension has here preserved the true text, *ἀλλόμενον* for *καὶ λαλοῦν*. This would present a further parallel to St. John's Gospel (iv. 14), and the passage would run, 'water that lives and springs up.'

⁵ Cf. John vi. 33, and the section John vi. 48-59.

⁶ Cf. Eph. 18. Ignatius may have the Docetic teachers in mind. Only if Christ has become truly incarnate, is it possible for our manhood to be united with God.

⁷ See note on Trall. 8. The parallelism of that passage suggests

VIII. I desire no longer to live the common life of men. And this will be granted, if it is your desire. Desire it, that you too may be desired. In a short letter I entreat you. Believe me, Jesus Christ shall make this clear to you, that I speak truly—even He Who is the Mouth which cannot speak falsely, whereby the Father spake [truly]. Intreat for me, that I may attain in the Holy Spirit. I write not unto you after the flesh, but after the mind of God. If I suffer, it is because you desired it. If I be rejected, it is because of your hatred.

IX. Remember in your prayer¹ the Church in Syria, since it hath God as its shepherd² in my room. Jesus Christ alone shall be its bishop³—together with your love. But as for me, I am ashamed to be spoken of as one of them. Nor indeed am I worthy, since I am the last of them and one born out of due time;⁴ but I have received mercy that I should be some one, if haply I may attain unto God. My spirit salutes you, as also does the love of the churches which received me in the name of Jesus Christ, not as one that merely passed by, for even the churches which lay not⁵ naturally near to my route went before me from city to city.⁶

X. I write this unto you from Smyrna by the hand of the Ephesians⁷ who are worthy of congratulation.

that the clause 'which is love incorruptible' refers to 'His Blood.' Then love is regarded as the means of union with the incarnate Christ, or, better still, as the fruit and issue of that union. Zahn, however, refers the words to the whole preceding sentence. 'The participation in the flesh and blood of Christ is love incorruptible.' He sees in it a reference to the Agape or Love-Feast.

¹ Cf. Eph. 21.

² Cf. 1 Pet. ii. 25, v. 2.

³ Cf. Polyc. inscr.

⁴ Suggested by 1 Cor. xv. 8 sq. See Introd. § 3.

⁵ The shorter Syriac version omits the negative.

⁶ That is, to prepare his welcome.

⁷ So Lightfoot. But it is possible that here, as in Philad. 11, Smyrn. 12, the preposition used (*διὰ*) refers to the bearer rather

There is with me also, along with many others, Crocus, a name dear to me. Concerning those who went before me from Syria to Rome unto the glory of God I believe that you have received full tidings. Inform them also of my approach. For they are all worthy of God and of you, and it is fitting that you should in every way refresh them. I am writing this to you on the 9th day before the Kalends of September. Farewell unto the end in patient abiding for Jesus Christ.

than to the scribe of the epistle. Cf. Polycarp, *Phil.* 14, and 1 Pet. v. 12, in the former of which the bearer seems referred to.