

**THE MARTYRDOM OF IGNATIUS,
BISHOP OF ANTIOCH, IN THE YEAR
109; AND OF POLYCARP, BISHOP
OF SMYRNA, IN THE MIDDLE OF
THE SECOND CENTURY**

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The Martyrdom of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, in the Year 109; and of Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, in the middle of the second century by Polycarp & Ignatius

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POLYCARP & IGNATIUS

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OF
IGNATIUS, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH,
IN THE YEAR 109:
AND OF
POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA,
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SECOND CENTURY:
WITH
*The Epistle of Polycarp to the Church in Philippi, and
the Epistles of Ignatius to the Churches in Ephesus, in
Magnesia, in Tralles, in Rome, in Philadelphia,
and in Smyrna; written in the year 109.*

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PREFACE.

In the following pages the reader is presented with an account of the martyrdom of two Bishops of the Christian Church at a very early period, Ignatius and Polycarp, and with some of their Epistles, which have come down even to our times, having been preserved by the good providence of God, along with the writings of other Christians of that day, inspired and uninspired.

IGNATIUS, Bishop of Antioch, during the persecution of the Church by the Emperor Trajan, was sent by him in chains from Antioch to the city of Rome, and by his command was thrown to a lion, and devoured. During his journey he was visited by many, Bishops, Presbyters, Deacons, and others, and treated with great respect and kindness; and by some of these he wrote epistles to different Churches of Asia.

IRENÆUS, Bishop of Lyons in the second century, who was born about the time he died, quotes a passage from his epistle to the Romans, in which his destined fate is alluded to. "For I am the bread of God, and shall be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God."

ORIGEN, a Presbyter of Alexandria in the beginning of the third century, while Domestrius was Bishop of that Diocess, quotes a passage from his epistle to the Ephesians.

EUSEBIUS, Bishop of Cæsarea in the beginning of the fourth century, in his ecclesiastical history, gives an account of his martyrdom, and speaks of him as "Bishop of Antioch, second in succession after Peter." He mentions his condemnation, his punishment, his journey to Rome, and his epistles to the Ephesians, the Magnesians, the Trallians, the Romans, the Philadelphians, and the Smyrneans.

ATHANASIUS, Bishop of Alexandria, in the same century, quotes a passage from the epistle of Ignatius to the Ephes-

ians. He mentions him as appointed Bishop of Antioch after the Apostles, and as one who suffered for Christ.

CHRYSOSTOM, Bishop of Constantinople in the fourth century, speaks of him in very high terms.

JEROME, a Presbyter of Rome in the fifth century, mentions his being sent to that city in chains to be thrown to wild beasts, during Trajan's persecution, and his writing epistles to the different Churches above mentioned, while on his way to Rome.

THEODORET, Bishop of Cyrus in the fifth century, speaks of him as Bishop of Antioch, and quotes three passages from his epistle to the Romans, three more from his epistle to the Ephesians, and one from that to the Trallians, in his first dialogue against some heretics of his time, and in the third dialogue he quotes a passage from his epistle to the Smyrneans.

He is mentioned also by Socrates, and by Evagrius, in their ecclesiastical histories, in the fifth century.

POLYCARP was Bishop of Smyrna in the beginning of the second century, and was put to death by the Proconsul of Asia, for the sake of Christ, in the middle of that century.

TERTULLIAN a Presbyter of Carthage in the second century, speaks of Polycarp as appointed Bishop of Smyrna by the Apostles.

IACOBUS, Bishop of Lyons in the same century, mentions him in his epistle to Florinus, in that to Victor Bishop of Rome, and in his third book against the heresies, in very high terms. In the latter he says, that "Polycarp was not only taught by the Apostles, but was conversant with many of those who had seen Christ, and was also appointed by the Apostles Bishop of the Church in Smyrna, in Asia: whom we ourselves have seen in our youth." In his epistle to Florinus he says: "So that I can tell the place in which the blessed Polycarp sat when he discoursed, and his going out and coming in, and the manner of his life, and the form of his body, and the discourses which he made to the people, and his daily conversation with John, as he told it, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord, and how he related what they told him, and what he had heard from them concerning the Lord, and concerning his miracles and his teaching: how Polycarp receiving them from eye witnesses of the life of the Word, related all things agreeably to the Scripture."

These are the interesting persons whose sufferings and whose writings are here presented to the reader.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. IGNATIUS,

BISHOP OF ANTIOCH,

By order of Trajan, Emperor of Rome, in the year 109.

1. WHEN Trajan not long since came to the Roman empire, Ignatius, the disciple of St. John the Apostle [and Evangelist,] a man in all things like unto the Apostles, governed the Church of Antioch with all care. Who being scarcely able to escape the storms of the many persecutions before under Domitian, as a good governor, by the helm of prayer and fasting, by the constancy of his doctrine and spiritual labour, withstood the raging floods; fearing lest they should sink those who either wanted courage, or were not well grounded in the faith.

2. Wherefore the persecution being at present somewhat abated, he rejoiced greatly at the tranquillity of his Church: yet was troubled as to himself, that he had not attained to a true love of Christ, nor was come up to the pitch of a perfect disciple. For he thought that the confession which is made by martyrdom, would bring him to a yet more close and intimate union with the Lord. Wherefore continuing a few years longer with the Church, and after the manner of a divine lamp, illuminating the hearts of the faithful by the exposition of holy Scriptures, he attained to what he had desired.

3. For Trajan, in the nineteenth year of his empire, being lifted up with his victory over the Scythians and Dacians, and many other nations; and thinking that the religious company of Christians was yet wanting to his absolute and universal dominion; and thereupon threatening them that they should be persecuted, unless they would choose to worship the devil, with all other nations; fear obliged all such as lived religiously, either to sacrifice or to die. Wherefore

our brave soldier of Christ, being in fear for the Church of Antioch, was voluntarily brought before Trajan; who was at that time there on his way to Armenia, and the Parthians, against whom he was hastening.

4. Being come into the presence of the emperor Trajan; the emperor asked him, saying: "What a wicked wretch art thou, thus to endeavour to transgress our commands, and to persuade others also to do likewise to their destruction?" Ignatius answered, "No one ought to call Theophorus after such a manner; forasmuch as all wicked spirits are departed far from the servants of God. But if because I am a trouble to those evil spirits, you call me wicked, with reference to them, I confess the charge; for having within me Christ the heavenly King, I dissolve all the snares of the devils."

5. Trajan replied; "And who is Theophorus?" Ignat. "He who has Christ in his breast." Trajan, "And do not we then seem to thee to have the Gods within us, who fight for us against our enemies?" Ignat. "You err, in that you call the evil spirits of the heathens, Gods. For there is but one God, who made Heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that are in them; and *one Jesus Christ* his only begotten son; whose kingdom may I enjoy."

6. Trajan, "His kingdom you say who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?" Ignat. "His who crucified my sin, with the inventor of it; and has put all the deceit and malice of the devil under the feet of those who carry him in their heart." Trajan, "Dost thou then carry him who was crucified within thee?" Ignat. "I do; for it is written, I will dwell in them and walk in them," [2 Cor. vi. 16.] Then Trajan pronounced this sentence against him; Forasmuch as Ignatius has confessed that he carries about within himself him that was crucified, we command that he be carried bound by soldiers to the great Rome, there to

be thrown to the beasts, for the entertainment of the people.

7. When the holy martyr heard this sentence he cried out with joy, "I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast vouchsafed to honour me with a perfect love towards thee; and hast made me to be put into iron bonds with thy apostle Paul." Having said this, he with joy put his bonds about him; and having first prayed for the Church, and commended it with tears unto the Lord, he was hurried away, like a choice ram, the leader of a good flock, by the brutish soldiers, in order to his being carried to Rome, there to be devoured by the blood-thirsty beasts.

8. Wherefore with much readiness and joy, out of his desire to suffer, he left Antioch, and came to Seleucia; from whence he was to sail. And after a great deal of toil, being come to Smyrna, he left the ship with great gladness, and hastened to see the holy Polycarp his fellow-scholar, who was Bishop there; for they had both of them been formerly the disciples of St. John.

9. Being brought to him, and communicating to him some spiritual gifts, and glorying in his bonds; he entreated first of all the whole Church (for the Churches and cities of Asia attended this holy man by their Bishops and Priests and Deacons, all hastening to him, if by any means they might receive some part of his spiritual gift) but more particularly Polycarp, to contend with God in his behalf; that being suddenly taken by the beasts from the world, he might appear before the face of Christ. And this he thus spake and testified, extending so much his love for Christ, as one who was about to receive Heaven through his own good confession, and the earnest contention of those who prayed together with him: and to return a recompence to the Churches, who came to meet him by their governors, he sent letters of thanks to them, which distilled spiritual grace, with