

if she were guilty of treachery to the Queen and the laws of the realm by furnishing a traitor with the means of escape, she answered that she most certainly was. Moreover, never had she done anything she repented less 'than the delivering of that innocent lamb from those bloody wolves'. One can almost hear that pleasure in producing strong language in a righteous cause that any woman of spirit longs to experience at some time of her life.

Nothing would induce her to disclose the whereabouts of the priest and she was sentenced to death. At the same time she was assured that the Queen was merciful and that if she would beg Her Majesty's pardon and go to the Protestant church she would be set free, otherwise she must look forward to certain death.

'As to the Queen', said Margaret calmly, 'I have never offended Her Majesty, and it is not just to confess a fault by asking pardon for it where there is none.' Concerning her connivance at the priest's escape, she believed that the Queen would have done the same herself—again the robust roll of the Elizabethan tongue—'if she had the bowels of a woman and had known the treatment he endured'. She had long been convinced, she said, that it was unlawful for her to go to their church and—the British habit of understatement seems to have been even then in evidence—she saw no reason to change her mind now.

'I am willing', she said, 'to lay down not one life only but many if I had them, rather than betray my conscience and act against God and his holy religion.'

She was hanged at Tyburn, 30th August, 1558, showing such steadfast cheerfulness and eagerness to die for the love of God that the spectators, even those who had merely come to gawp in ghoulish enjoyment, were deeply impressed.



## LETTER OF ST IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH TO ST POLYCARP

*Translated by P. T. A. D. ALLEN*

*St Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, was convicted about the year A.D. 110 of being a Christian and sentenced to be taken to Rome, there to be thrown to the lions. Accordingly in the custody of ten Roman soldiers he*

*travelled from Antioch to Smyrna, where he was entertained hospitably by St Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, and the members of his congregation. There too he met sympathetic delegations from most of the Churches belonging to places on his route to Rome. From Smyrna he proceeded to Troas, where he wrote his letter to St Polycarp to thank him for his hospitality and to advise him on his duties as a bishop. The tone of his advice is that of a forthright zealous elder to a much younger man, of whose devotion to God he was well assured, but whose character may have seemed not forcible enough to enable him to master the material and spiritual difficulties that would surely arise.*

*St Ignatius and St Polycarp each died a martyr's death: St Ignatius was thrown to the lions in Rome about the year A.D. 110; St Polycarp was burnt at the stake in Smyrna about the year A.D. 155.*

**I**GNATIUS, also called Theophorus, sends every good wish to Polycarp, bishop of the Church of Smyrna, whose own bishop is God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Because I am well aware of your devotion to God, fixed as though upon an immovable rock, I esteem it a very great honour to have been accorded the privilege of meeting face to face your saintly self. May it prove for me a lasting blessing, through God's goodwill. Press on, I urge you, in your course with the grace which is your garment, exhorting all men to win salvation. Justify your office by diligent attention to all material as well as spiritual matters. Take thought for unity, than which there is no greater blessing. Bear the burdens of all men, as the Lord bears the burden of yourself. Be patient with all in [the spirit of] love. Devote yourself unceasingly to prayer, and pray for greater understanding than you [now] possess. Keep constant watch as master of an unsleeping spirit. Take a personal interest in everyone to whom you speak, as is the way of God. Bear the infirmities of all, like a master athlete. The heavier the toil, the greater the reward.

II. If you love your good disciples only, you have no charity; you should rather with all humility subdue the more unruly. Not every wound is treated with the same salve. Check feverish outbreaks with [cooling] liquid medicines. In everything be wary as a serpent, and harmless always as a dove. You are made up of body and soul that you may handle fittingly matters visible to your eyes; pray that things invisible also may be made plain to you, so

that you may lack nothing, and abound in every spiritual gift. The times call upon you to win your way to God, even as the pilot calls for winds, and the storm-tossed mariner for a port. Be sober as God's athlete, the prize is immortality and eternal life. Of this you also are convinced. My bonds, which you have treated in such loving fashion, and I myself are a ransom for you, whatever may occur.

III. Be not dismayed at those who seem worthy of your trust yet teach strange doctrines. Stand fast as an anvil under blows. It is the mark of a great athlete to suffer blows yet conquer. Above all things it is necessary because of God to bear everything with patience, so that he may bear with us. Be more zealous than you are. Study the signs of the times. Look up to him who is above time—the Ageless, the Invisible who became visible for us—to him whom we could never touch, who was above all suffering, yet suffered for us, and bore with patience all things for our sakes.

IV. Let not widows lack your care; after the Lord it is you who must take thought for them. Let nothing be done against your authority, and yourself do nothing against the will of God, as indeed it is your practice. Stand firm. You should hold more frequent meetings; seek out everyone by name. Do not look down on male or female slaves, but let them not for their part become puffed up, rather let them carry out their duties with greater zeal to the glory of God, that they may win from God a better freedom. Let them not yearn for freedom purchased from the common fund, lest they be found to be slaves of their own inordinate desires.

V. Beware of the snares of Satan, or rather preach against them. Call upon the sisterhood to love the Lord and be content with their husbands in body and in spirit. Similarly exhort the brethren in the name of Jesus Christ to love their wives, as the Lord loves his Church. If anyone can remain steadfast in continence for honour of the flesh of our Lord let him refrain from boasting; if he boasts, he shall be brought to naught; and if it becomes known to anyone except the bishop, he shall be utterly undone. It is fitting for those who marry, both men and women, to wed with the approval of the bishop, that their marriage may be in accordance with the teaching of our Lord, and not to satisfy their passions. Let everything be done to honour God.

VI. (*To Polycarp's congregation.*) Hold fast to the bishop, that

God may hold fast to you. I give my life as an offering for those who obey the bishop, the presbyters and the deacons. May it be my lot to share with them a portion in the kingdom of God. Share each other's labours, together wrestle, run together, suffer, sleep, awake together as stewards of God, as his lieutenants, his servants. Satisfy him whose soldiers you are, from whom you receive your pay. Let none be found a deserter. Let your baptism ever be your armament, your faith your helmet, love your spear, endurance your shield and buckler. Let your works be your reserves of pay, that you may receive a final settlement worthy of you. Be long-suffering with each other, as God is with you. May I be wholly blessed in you.

VII. Since, as has been made clear to me, the Church of Antioch in Syria, through your prayers, is now at peace, I too have felt more cheerful for God has set my mind at rest, and if haply through suffering I may win my way to God, may I be found at the resurrection to be your disciple. Therefore, most blessed Polycarp, it is now appropriate for you to call a meeting of your most godly councillors and to appoint some fearless person whom you love to be your delegate, who may be called a courier of God. Your delegate you should instruct to proceed to Syria and set forth fully for the glory of God your fearless love for your sister Church of Antioch. This is a work of God and of yourselves when you complete it. For I trust in his grace that you are ready for well-doing in a matter that appertains to him. Knowing your intense sincerity, I have set forth my request thus very shortly.

VIII. Since in accordance with the will of God I must sail at once from Troas to Neapolis, I am unable to write to all the Churches. Will you therefore please write to the remaining Churches ahead of me, and request them to carry out a like commission? Some will be able themselves to send delegates, others letters by the hand of the delegates sent by you, so that thus you all may win glory before God for a work of everlasting remembrance. You are worthy of this trust.

I salute you all by name, and especially the wife of Epitropus with her and her children's whole household, and Attalus my dear friend. I salute too the delegate who shall be appointed to visit Syria. The grace of God will be with him always, and with Polycarp who sent him. I pray that in everything you may be strong in Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom may you con-

tinue in unity with God and under his governance. I salute Alce, a beloved friend. Farewell in the name of the Lord.



### GAMALIEL

*(After mature reflection, the Editor has withdrawn the notice of dismissal given to Gamaliel in a moment of exasperation, and is pleased to continue the wise man in his employment.)*

Q. The knowledge of the truth revealed by God, and the validity of the means of salvation, depend very largely on the human mind and will, both so liable to error. How much certitude can one have of divine truth, seeing that knowledge of the dogmas of faith depends largely on man's fallible word? How much certitude can one have of the validity of the sacraments, since their administration depends so much on human beings so liable to make mistakes even with the best of intentions? Is it not possible for example for a particular priest or bishop to have been invalidly baptized? In that case his orders would be invalid, and hence all his celebrations of mass and his absolutions.

So it seems that one can only *presume* that a particular priest really is a priest, or a particular host validly consecrated, or a particular absolution validly given; and one can only *presume* that one has been correctly informed when one reads or is told that such and such a doctrine is of faith. In view of all this uncertainty, how can one get that peace of soul, that comfort from the divine eucharistic presence, and that confidence in the reception of sacramental grace which surely is so desirable for one's spiritual life?

CONVERT

A. I want to answer two things: first that the uncertainties you set out are real and inescapable, and secondly that you are taking altogether too tragic a view of them, indeed an unrealistic view of them. Let us take first the question of our knowledge of revealed truth. It depends, in the last resort, not on what other people tell us, not even on what the Church or the Pope tell us,