



The Life, Ministry and Writings of Polycarp

Introduction:

In our consideration of the theme of Revival in the Early Church period, our historical reference point, in the person of Polycarp, provides us with a leading figure in the history of the development of the Church. While the Church was currently in a state of strength, not yet needing revival, Polycarp was a key figure in continuing the strength passed along to him from the Apostles.

When we look at Polycarp we note elements in his life and message, that if they had prevailed in the leadership of the Church there would never have been a need for revival. He honorably reflects the mentoring he had received in John the Apostle and the lives of several other of the original Apostles.

A. The Life span of Polycarp.

1. Born in approximately 57 AD.
2. Baptized at the age of 69 in approximately 126 AD .
3. Martyred at the age of 98 on February 23, 155 AD, on a Sabbath day during the Feast of Purim.

B. Historical elements in the life of Polycarp.

1. In a letter to Florinus, a Roman elder, Irenaeus writes concerning Polycarp:

I can describe the very place in which the Blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed...his personal appearance...and how he would describe his conversations with John the Apostle and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their words...I can testify in the sight of God, that if the blessed and apostolic elder had heard anything of this kind (regarding a local heretic) , he would have cried out, and stopped his ears, and said after his wont, 'O good God, for what times hast thou kept me that I should endure such things?'

- a. "Blessed" implies he was held in high and holy esteem by his peers.
 - b. Reference to his personal appearance indicates even his visage was full of the light of Christ.
 - c. His life was deeply affected by his relationship with the original Apostles.
 - d. He was a strong opponent of everything heretical.
2. In a letter to Pope Victor, Irenaeus writes:

The Asiatic Christians differed from the rest of the Church in their manner of observing Easter. While the other Churches kept the feast on a Sunday, the Asiatics celebrated it on the 14th of Nisan, whatever day of the week this might fall on. Pope Victor tried to establish uniformity, and when the Asiatic Churches refused to comply, excommunicated them.

- a. A split between the Church of Rome and the Church of Constantinople.
- b. The eastern Church, where Polycarp ministered, continued the Apostolic tradition of celebrating the Feasts of Israel and the Sabbath. It is not that these were mandated, but simply revered.
- c. While the Roman Church valued Sunday, at this period the eastern Church still had greater respect for the Sabbath.
- d. So great was the eastern Church's respect for the Feasts of Israel and the Sabbath that they actually accepted excommunication from what was rapidly becoming the recognized world Catholic Church - the one Church, because the Romanized version of the Catholic Church not only revered Sunday, as the day of Christ's resurrection, but actually required the Church to turn away from everything Jewish, including the Sabbath and Feasts, and required Sunday attendance for the gathering of the saints.
- e. From this we note indirectly the beginnings of what would ultimately cost the worldwide Church its reviving and would necessitate a revival to return it to its original Apostolic traditions.

Unfortunately, while our Protestant Reformation brethren gave us many good things, the things over which the eastern Church was excommunicated, and for which they and the original Apostles laid great emphasis, have never been restored to the Church since.

As time went by the Feasts of Israel, and indeed everything Jewish was rejected, including the Sabbath, and the mandating of Sunday worship, which none of the Apostles commanded, became the accepted standard of gathering, along with its many other new traditions and rituals.

3. In Ireneaus' famous passage on the Roman Church he writes:

It is in this letter that we see Polycarp's position as a link with the past. Just as John's long life lengthened out the Apostolic Age, so did the four score and six years of Polycarp extend the sub-Apostolic Age, during which it was possible to learn by word of mouth what the Apostles taught from those who had been their hearers. In Rome the Apostolic Age ended about A.D. 67 with the martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the sub-Apostolic Age about a quarter of a century later when St. Clement, "who had seen the blessed Apostles", died. In Asia the Apostolic Age lingered on till St. John died about A.D. 100; and the sub-Apostolic Age till 155, when St. Polycarp was martyred.

- a. Two important ages are noted:
 - 1) Apostolic Age. The age in which the original 12 Apostles lived and ministered.
 - 2) The Sub Apostolic Age. The age in which those leaders who had been personally

mentored by the original 12 lived and ministered.

First hand knowledge of the life and thinking of the 12.

- b. The Sub Apostolic Age ends with the martyrdom of Polycarp in 155 AD. We mark this as the official date for conclusion of the Early Church, as developed by the original apostles, and the beginning of the age of the rule of man in the Church of Christ.

4. Apostolic Succession.

It was during the time of Irenaeus, who was mentored by Polycarp, that the doctrine of Apostolic succession began to gain acceptance. It is not clear as to whether Polycarp himself supported this concept, but it was becoming well established after his death during the ministry of Irenaeus. To this day the Church has never fully recovered from the error of apostolic succession and the cascade of ideas attached to leadership which had no basis in the early apostolic teaching.

In the third book of his treatise "Against Heresies", Irenaeus makes his celebrated appeal to **the "successions" of the bishops** in all the Churches.

He writes:

In order then to know what the Apostles taught, we must have recourse to the "successions" of bishops throughout the world.

While it is not the direct purpose of this study to delve deeply into this dangerous doctrine, it is important to note how quickly this doctrine develops after the death of the Apostles. It is amazing what the mind of man will do in exalting himself to a place of authority and control over the people of God.

This doctrine alone accounts for more of the loss of divine blessing on the Early Church than probably anything else. There is absolutely no biblical support for such a doctrine, but strong personalities such as Clement of Rome and Irenaeus of Asia began to insist that this "had" to have been the intent of the original Apostles. In their mind there was no way to maintain order and doctrinal unity in the Church apart from the stringent control systems of man.

This alone contributed to the entire papal development of the Catholic Church, as well as on through the Reformation, in terms of special titles of leadership authority, such as Bishop, Pastor, and Senior Pastor. While Jesus' Church was always to have clear leadership, evidenced by the spiritual authority of Christ in those He raised up to oversee His Church, such leadership was always and only to be a reflection of His authority, rather than an authority based in title and position. Such truth has been largely lost to the Church.

In deference to current spiritual realities, it must be said, that while many modern Church leaders allow for themselves to be given such titles and positions, much of this is more due to historical Church tradition, than due to actual errors of attitude and abuse of leadership authority. Many today hold such titles and positions with the utmost grace and servant attitude, and for this we rejoice. Perhaps in time all titles and positions may be removed from the notion of Church leadership, and return to the simpler understanding of servant leaders, caring for the flock.

Of Polycarp he says, "he was not only taught by the Apostles, and lived in familiar relationship with many that had seen Christ, but also received his appointment in Asia from the Apostles as Bishop in the Church of Smyrna".

Whether this is actual fact, or something credited to the Apostles, that never actually came from them, we may never know. What we know is that men were adept at justifying their beliefs and did so by claiming to have Apostolic authority in doing it.

5. The battle with Heretics.

Ireanaeus then continues, "there are those who heard him (Polycarp) tell how John, the disciple of the Lord, when he went to take a bath in Ephesus, and saw Cerinthus within, rushed away from the room without bathing, with the words 'Let us flee lest the room should fall in, for Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within'. Yea, and Polycarp himself, also, when on one occasion Marcion confronted him and said 'Recognise us', replied, 'Ay, ay, I recognise the first-born of Satan' ".

If you will study carefully the guiding influences towards Apostolic succession and the development of extreme papal authority you will find that the historical problems associated with heretical beliefs created a tremendous problem for the Early Church that they combated by assigning great honor and power to certain individuals who seemed greatly gifted in confronting such heretics and their heresies.

Indeed, the entire development of the Christian traditions and doctrines of men can be traced to these two factors. Heresy and Apostolic succession turned the ship of the Early Church away from the simple, relational, non hierarchical, home fellowshipped brethren, into a powerful institutional sea of religious traditions.

C. The Martyrdom of Polycarp.

1. The Smyrnaean letter describing St. Polycarp's martyrdom:

Polycarp's martyrdom is described in a letter from the Church of Smyrna, to the Church of Philomelium "and to all the brotherhoods of the holy and universal Church"

a. Note this early reference to the "Holy and Universal (Catholic) Church."

Both good and bad can be noted in this. It is good that they maintained a universal desire for unity of the body. It is unfortunate that this ultimately led to the institutionalization of the Church and to papal hierarchy. While hierarchy survives, to one degree or another, in both the Catholic and Protestant Church, not all modern titled leaders embody the true error of despotic hierarchy.

b. The story of Polycarp's martyrdom.

Polycarp was persuaded by his friends to leave the city and conceal himself in a farm-house. Here he spent his time in prayer, "and while praying he fell into a trance three days before his apprehension; and he saw his pillow burning with fire. And he turned and said to those that were with him, 'it must needs be that I shall be burned alive' ".

When his pursuers were on his track he went to another farm-house. Finding him gone they put two slave boys to the torture, and one of them betrayed his place of concealment. Herod, head of the police, sent a body of men to arrest him on Friday evening. Escape was still possible, but the old man refused to flee, saying, "the will of God be done". He came down to meet his pursuers, conversed affably with them, and ordered food to be set before them. While they were eating he prayed, "remembering all, high and low, who at any time had come in his way, and the Catholic Church throughout the world". Then he was led away.

- a. We note his strong prayer life.
- b. For those who claim the gifts of the Spirit, including visions, ended with the Apostle John, here we have testimony that God continued to lead His people through the means of visions.
- c. Note his integrity. Rather than allow others to die because of him, he sacrificed himself so as to protect them.
- d. Note his loving and grace oriented attitude. He fed his persecutors.

Herod and Herod's father, Nicetas, met him and took him into their carriage, where they tried to prevail upon him to save his life. Finding they could not persuade him, they pushed him out of the carriage with such haste that he bruised his shin. He followed on foot till they came to the Stadium, where a great crowd had assembled, having heard the news of his apprehension. "As Polycarp entered into the Stadium a voice came to him from heaven: 'Be strong, Polycarp, and play the man'. And no one saw the speaker, but those of our people who were present heard the voice." It was to the proconsul, when he urged him to curse Christ, that Polycarp made his celebrated reply: "Fourscore and six years have I served Him, and he has done me no harm. How then can I curse my King that saved me." When the proconsul had done with the prisoner it was too late to throw him to the beasts, for the sports were closed. It was decided, therefore, to burn him alive. The crowd took it upon itself to collect fuel, "the Jews more especially assisting in this with zeal, as is their wont" (cf. the Martyrdom of Pionius). The fire, "like the sail of a vessel filled by the wind, made a wall round the body" of the martyr, leaving it unscathed. The executioner was ordered to stab him, thereupon, "there came forth a quantity of blood so that it extinguished the fire".

- e. Strong in faith to the end.
- f. Note the hatred of the Jews.

It was for this Jewish hatred of the Christians, that six things took place in the Early Church period:

- 1) Christians completely separated themselves from Judaism, rejecting its Feasts and Sabbaths, due to the intense rejection of the Jews, and not by any apostolic teaching.
- 2) Sunday was chosen as the acceptable day of worship, over Friday/Saturday and the Sabbath. Note also, such a development was not a direct result of any apostolic teaching.

- 3) Christians grew to place the entire blame upon the Jews for the crucifixion of Christ, and diminished the involvement of Pilate the Gentile.
 - 4) From these things antisemitism began to grow into a great fire.
 - 5) Before long both the Christians and the secular Gentile populace focused their hatred and venom on the Jews in antisemitism.
 - 6) In time, the Christians, to further separate themselves from the Roman hatred of Jews, accepted their pagan holidays to further evidence their separation from everything Jewish, and to avoid any persecution in connection with them. Thus, over time such holidays at Lent, Christmas, Easter, and Halloween, all developed from this transition.
- g. The date of his martyrdom.

The martyrdom took place on a Saturday which fell on 23 February. Now there are two possible years for this, 155 and 166. The choice depends upon which of two possible dates Quadratus was proconsul of Asia. By means of the chronological data supplied by the rhetorician Aelius Aristides in certain autobiographical details which he furnishes, Waddington who is followed by Lightfoot ("St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp", I, 646 sq.), arrived at the conclusion that Quadratus was proconsul in 154-55 (the proconsul's year of office began in May).

And, 155 must be approximately correct if St. Polycarp was appointed bishop by John the Apostle prior to his death.

The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians

Polycarp, and the presbyters with him, to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi: Mercy to you, and peace from God Almighty, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, be multiplied.

It is significant to note here that while it is understandable, and even laudable, that Polycarp, due to his relationship with John and his obvious intense spirituality, was accorded great honor and prestige among the brethren, it was an entirely unnecessary conclusion that because he was such a man he must be separated from among the brethren and considered to be something of a papal figure "over" the entire Asia Minor Church.

We know from studying this period of history that Jesus' words in Matthew 20 were soon to lose a measure of influence among the Church.

Matthew 20:25-28

25 But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Note: This epistle, as in all the apostolic epistles, was not written to a "Pastor" to then be read to "his" congregation. It was written to the entire Church. The notion of a Church belonging to a pastor was yet a few years ahead of Polycarp.

Chapter I.-Praise of the Philippians.

I have greatly rejoiced with you in our Lord Jesus Christ, because ye have followed the example of true love [as displayed by God], and have accompanied, as became you, those who were bound in chains, the fitting ornaments of saints, and which are indeed the diadems of the true elect of God and our Lord; and because the strong root of your faith, spoken of in days long gone by, endureth even until now, and bringeth forth fruit to our Lord Jesus Christ, who for our sins suffered even unto death, [but] "whom God raised from the dead, having loosed the bands of the grave." "In whom, though now ye see Him not, ye believe, and believing, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory;" into which joy many desire to enter, knowing that "by grace ye are saved, not of works," but by the will of God through Jesus Christ.

Elements to note:

1. *A great value on the love of God.*
2. *Care for the persecuted.*
3. *Strong faith.*
4. *Quotations of Paul the Apostle.*

Chapter II.-An Exhortation to Virtue.

"Wherefore, girding up your loins," "serve the Lord in fear" and truth, as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and error of the multitude, and "believed in Him who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and gave Him glory," and a throne at His right hand. To Him all things in heaven and on earth are subject. Him every spirit serves. He comes as the Judge of the living and the dead. His blood will God require of those who do not believe in Him. But He who raised Him up from the dead will raise up us also, if we do His will, and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, false witness; "not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing," or blow for blow, or cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord said in His teaching: "Judge not, that ye be not judged; forgive, and it shall be forgiven unto you; be merciful, that ye may obtain mercy; with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again; and once more, "Blessed are the poor, and those that are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of God."

Elements to note:

1. *Walk holy and serve God.*
2. *Being peace makers.*
3. *Avoid critical attitudes.*
4. *Value on persecution.*

Chapter III.-Expressions or Personal Unworthiness.

These things, brethren, I write to you concerning righteousness, not because I take anything upon myself, but because ye have invited me to do so. For neither I, nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul. He, when among you, accurately and stedfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive. And when absent from you, he wrote you a letter, which, if you carefully study, you will find to be the means of building you up in that faith which has been given you, and which, being followed by hope, and preceded by love towards God, and Christ, and our neighbor, "is the mother of us all." For if any one be inwardly

possessed of these graces, he hath fulfilled the command of righteousness, since he that hath love is far from all sin.

Elements to note:

1. *A value on righteousness.*
2. *Profound respect for Paul the Apostle.*
3. *An historical reference to the book of Philippians.*
4. *Another powerful reference to the love of God.*

Chapter IV.-Various Exhortations.

"But the love of money is the root of all evils." Knowing, therefore, that "as we brought nothing into the world, so we can carry nothing out," let us arm ourselves with the armour of righteousness; and let us teach, first of all, ourselves to walk in the commandments of the Lord. Next, [teach] your wives [to walk] in the faith given to them, and in love and purity tenderly loving their own husbands in all truth, and loving all [others] equally in all chastity; and to train up their children in the knowledge and fear of God. Teach the widows to be discreet as respects the faith of the Lord, praying continually for all, being far from all slandering, evil-speaking, false-witnessing, love of money, and every kind of evil; knowing that they are the altar of God, that He clearly perceives all things, and that nothing is hid from Him, neither reasonings, nor reflections, nor any one of the secret things of the heart.

Elements to note:

1. *The dangers of love of money.*
2. *Value on the commandments of Christ.*
3. *Role of women in marriage and home.*
4. *Exhortation for widows to live a godly life.*

Chapter V.-The Duties of Deacons, Youths, and Virgins.

Knowing, then, that "God is not mocked," we ought to walk worthy of His commandment and glory. In like manner should the deacons be blameless before the face of His righteousness, as being the servants of God and Christ, and not of men. They must not be slanderers, double-tongued, or lovers of money, but temperate in all things, compassionate, industrious, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the servant of all. If we please Him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according as He has promised to us that He will raise us again from the dead, and that if we live worthily of Him, "we shall also reign together with Him," provided only we believe. In like manner, let the young men also be blameless in all things, being especially careful to preserve purity, and keeping themselves in, as with a bridle, from every kind of evil. For it is well that they should be cut off from the lusts that are in the world, since "every lust wars against the spirit; " and "neither fornicators, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God," nor those who do things inconsistent and unbecoming. Wherefore, it is needful to abstain from all these things, being subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ. The virgins also must walk in a blameless and pure conscience.

Elements to note:

1. *Principles for godly living.*
2. *Leadership serve God, not men.*
3. *Some confusion of beliefs is evident. His statement "If we please Him in this present world, we shall receive also the future world, according as He has promised to us that He will raise us again from the dead, and that if we live worthily of Him, "we shall also reign together with Him," provided only we believe." appears to be the beginning of a shift away from Paul's clear*

- understanding of the grace of God, to a works emphasis that soon captured the Church.*
4. *Note two important things in reference to the leadership:*
 - a. *Only a reference to two categories - Presbyters and Deacons, not three - Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. This will change soon after Polycarp passes on. Too bad!*
 - b. *A beginning of an emphasis on special obedience to the position leadership held, rather than simply to the spiritual authority of Christ evident in their lives and the Word they brought. While he will qualify it carefully "as unto God and Christ," this will soon be largely lost, and what will be more emphasized will be submission to leadership "period." Men will begin to develop their own sense of power, connect it with their titles and positions, and "rule over" the people rather than "serve under" them. We see tinges of it even here. We maintain that spiritual authority still resides in the calling of the leader, but that it is far more an authority based on an accurate communication of the "Word of the Lord," rather than based in a title or position.*

Chapter VI.-The Duties of Presbyters and Others.

And let the presbyters be compassionate and merciful to all, bringing back those that wander, visiting all the sick, and not neglecting the widow, the orphan, or the poor, but always "providing for that which is becoming in the sight of God and man; " abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unjust judgment; keeping far off from all covetousness, not quickly crediting [an evil report] against any one, not severe in judgment, as knowing that we are all under a debt of sin. If then we entreat the Lord to forgive us, we ought also ourselves to forgive; for we are before the eyes of our Lord and God, and "we must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and must every one give an account of himself." Let us then serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, even as He Himself has commanded us, and as the apostles who preached the Gospel unto us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Lord [have alike taught us]. Let us be zealous in the pursuit of that which is good, keeping ourselves from causes of offence, from false brethren, and from those who in hypocrisy bear the name of the Lord, and draw away vain men into error.

Elements to note:

1. *Note the call to character and servanthood in the leadership.*
2. *Servanthood leadership rather than harsh and despotic judgmental leadership.*

Chapter VII.-Avoid the Docetae, and Persevere in Fasting and Prayer.

"For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist; " and whosoever does not confess the testimony of the cross, is of the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of the Lord to his own lusts, and says that there is neither a resurrection nor a judgment, he is the first-born of Satan. Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning; "watching unto prayer," and persevering in fasting; beseeching in our supplications the all-seeing God "not to lead us into temptation ," as the Lord has said: "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Elements to note:

1. *The Docetae are the Docetists who believed that Jesus was a good man upon whom the Spirit of Christ settled on during His earthly ministry, but left Him at the cross. They did not accept Jesus as the "God/Man." He wasn't God in the flesh. This was a very strong heresy in the latter period of the Apostles and on into the sub Apostolic period.*
2. *Prayer.*
3. *Fasting.*
4. *Love for the Word.*

Chapter VIII.-Persevere in Hope and Patience.

Let us then continually persevere in our hope, and the earnest of our righteousness, which is Jesus Christ, "who bore our sins in His own body on the tree," "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth," but endured all things for us, that we might live in Him. Let us then be imitators of His patience; and if we suffer for His name's sake, let us glorify Him. For He has set us this example in Himself, and we have believed that such is the case.

Elements to note:

1. *Perseverance is obviously a strong element of Polycarp's message. He emphasizes this all through his letter. Believer's found it very hard, in the face of persecution and trials, to maintain faith.*
2. *A clear emphasis on the essence of faith, that being "look at Jesus..."*

Chapter IX.-Patience Inculcated.

I exhort you all, therefore, to yield obedience to the word of righteousness, and to exercise all patience, such as ye have seen [set] before your eyes, not only in the case of the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others among yourselves, and in Paul himself, and the rest of the apostles. [This do] in the assurance that all these have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and that they are [now] in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom also they suffered. For they loved not this present world, but Him who died for us, and for our sakes was raised again by God from the dead.

Elements to note:

1. *A strong value placed on living examples of godliness in leadership.*
2. *Promise of eternal rewards.*

Chapter X.-Exhortation to the Practice of Virtue.

Stand fast, therefore, in these things, and follow the example of the Lord, being firm and unchangeable in the faith, loving the brotherhood, and being attached to one another, joined together in the truth, exhibiting the meekness of the Lord in your relationship with one another, and despising no one. When you can do good, defer it not, because "alms delivers from death." Be all of you subject one to another having your conduct blameless among the Gentiles,"that ye may both receive praise for your good works, and the Lord may not be blasphemed through you. But woe to him by whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed! Teach, therefore, sobriety to all, and manifest it also in your own conduct.

Elements to note:

1. *Emphasis on "Community."*
2. *Caring for the needy. This is something that so much characterized the Early Church.*
3. *Notice subject to one another, not just subject to leaders. This is a good balance of grace.*
4. *Exhortation to a worthy walk.*

Chapter XI.-Expression of Grief on Account of Valens.

I am greatly grieved for Valens, who was once a presbyter among you, because he so little

understands the place that was given him [in the Church]. I exhort you, therefore, that ye abstain from covetousness, and that ye be chaste and truthful. "Abstain from every form of evil." For if a man cannot govern himself in such matters, how shall he enjoin them on others? If a man does not keep himself from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the heathen. But who of us are ignorant of the judgment of the Lord? "Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world?" as Paul teaches. But I have neither seen nor heard of any such thing among you, in the midst of whom the blessed Paul laboured, and who are commended in the beginning of his Epistle. For he boasts of you in all those Churches which alone then knew the Lord; but we [of Smyrna] had not yet known Him. I am deeply grieved, therefore, brethren, for him (Valens) and his wife; to whom may the Lord grant true repentance! And be ye then moderate in regard to this matter, and "do not count such as enemies," but call them back as suffering and straying members, that ye may save your whole body. For by so acting ye shall edify yourselves.

Elements to note:

1. *Apostacy is preceded by:*
 - a. *Covetousness*
 - b. *Loss of chastity*
 - c. *Lies tolerated*
 - d. *Allowance for lesser forms of evil*
2. *Concern for Valens and his wife:*
 - a. *Expressed in grief*
 - b. *Prayer for his repentance*
 - c. *Grace attitude to be expressed towards them*
 - d. *Go after them*

Chapter XII.-Exhortation to Various Graces.

For I trust that ye are well versed in the Sacred Scriptures, and that nothing is hid from you; but to me this privilege is not yet granted. It is declared then in these Scriptures, "Be ye angry, and sin not," and, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Happy is he who remembers this, which I believe to be the case with you. But may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Son of God, and our everlasting High Priest, build you up in faith and truth, and in all meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, forbearance, and purity; and may He bestow on you a lot and portion among His saints, and on us with you, and on all that are under heaven, who shall believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who "raised Him from the dead. Pray for all the saints. Pray also for kings, and potentates, and princes, and for those that persecute and hate you, and for the enemies of the cross, that your fruit may be manifest to all, and that ye may be perfect in Him.

Elements to note:

1. *Warnings about anger.*
2. *Exhortation to Christian virtue.*
3. *Pray for persecutors rather than hate them.*

Chapter XIII.-Concerning the Transmission of Epistles.

Both you and Ignatius wrote to me, that if any one went [from this area] into Syria, he should carry your letter with him; which request I will attend to if I find a fitting opportunity, either personally, or through some other acting for me, that your desire may be fulfilled. The Epistles of Ignatius written by him to us, and all the rest [of his Epistles] which we have by us, we have sent to you, as you requested. They are subjoined to this Epistle, and by them ye may be greatly profited; for they treat of faith and patience, and all things that tend to edification in our Lord. Any more certain

information you may have obtained respecting both Ignatius himself, and those that were with him, have the goodness to make known to us.

Elements to note:

1. *The “you” of “both you and Ignatius wrote to me,” is a reference to the entire Church. It is so beautiful to note that at this stage of the Church, leaders and their flocks were considered “one” and none were owned or controlled by the other. All were equally valued, and all submitted to one another. Nobody but Jesus owned the Church at this stage of Church history.*
2. *Great value was placed on the writings and ministry of Ignatius.*
3. *His message was faith and patience, just like Polycarp’s.*

Chapter XIV.-Conclusion.

These things I have written to you by Crescens, whom up to the present time I have recommended unto you, and do now recommend. For he has acted blamelessly among us, and I believe also among you. Moreover, ye will hold his sister in esteem when she comes to you. Be ye safe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Elements to note:

1. *A word of commendation for a key brother.*
2. *This evidences how ministers’ credibility was developed among the brethren.*

What a wonderful brother and leader this Polycarp was. May the Lord grant to the Church many like him as He restores and revives His Church back to former days, when men were purer, had less of a desire to control and dominate, and more of a desire to lead in servanthood, purity, and humility.