

TERTILLIANS “APOLOGY” - CHAPTER XXXIX – PART 1 – PARAPHRASED

“SEE HOW THEY LOVE ONE ANOTHER” SECTION

Some place charges of evil against Christians so I will explain how their ‘peculiarities’ are for positive good.

We are a body, a group of people, bound together by this religion, that we openly profess, that has unity, discipline and a bond of a common hope.

We come together hoping to engage God as a congregation with our united prayers, and God seems to really like us doing this. We also pray for emperors and their ministers, for everyone with authority, and we also pray for the world, its welfare, its peace and for a delay in the bringing of the end time.

We read our sacred Bible texts with regard to our current situations, and find help in understanding our past or in our being prepared for our futures. It is through these sacred words that our faith is nourished, our hope is animated, our confidence grows stronger and by repeating them often we build good habits.

When we gather, we also encourage, or rebuke if any censure is needed. If someone has sinned so badly that they may need to be separated from us, from our prayer and conversations, there is great care taken in any judgement as we know we are acting in the sight of God. The Elders who we have set over ourselves have not paid to have been given that honour, they have it because their character has been recognised. In the things of God, there is no buying or selling of any sort.

While we have funds, they have not come from anyone buying any favours, this faith has no price that can be paid. Instead, each month, when they like, our people make small donations. They are not compulsory and are given with pleasure. It is all voluntary. They are, so to speak, gifts given as a deposit of their faith.

And these gifts are not given to be spent on feasting or drinking, but to help, and if necessary, bury the poor who cannot afford a funeral. We help orphans or older people confined to their houses and the funds are also held to assist those in need who struggle or have been persecuted because of their faith in the cause of God’s Church.

But it seems that Christians are criticised precisely because of their noble deeds, that are all done in love. It is said of us:

“See how they love one another – they must do what they do because really, they hate each other – they’re ready to die for one another because they just want to die anyway.”