

SAINT AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

LETTERS

Epistolas

VOLUME VI · VI

SABBATISMUS

Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430)
Epistolas · Letters

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EPISTOLA CCLVI.

Officiose Augustinus ad Christinum scribit.

Domino merito praedicando, sinceriterque charissimo ac desiderantissimo fratri CHRISTINO, AUGUSTINUS, in Domino salutem.

Epistolam meam desiderare te, mihi tua epistola nuntiavit. Frater autem Jacobus ejus desiderii erga nos tui locupletior testis accessit, quia plura mihi de te suavia atque in seipso experta locutus est, quam illa parva chartula potuit. Unde tuae benignitati congratulor, et de tuo pectore christiano Domino Deo nostro, cujus haec dona sunt, gratias ago, domine merito praedicande, sinceriterque charissime ac desiderantissime frater. Quod autem petis, ut litteris te quaeram; ego te affectu quaero, qui omnes litteras superat: et ubi te quaeram quod bene intelligas, novi. Quantum autem ad me legendum attinet, magis vereor in manibus vestris loquacitatem meam reprehendi, quam eloquium requiri. Illud breviter dixerim, quod diuturna cogitatione si ruminaveris, senties quid sapiat: cum in itinere Dei faciliora et fructuosa ignava formidine fugiuntur, in itinere saeculari duriora et sterilia aerumnoso labore tolerantur. Incolumis in Christo vigeas et proficias, domine merito praedicande, sinceriterque charissime ac desiderantissime frater.

EPISTOLA CCLVII.

Augustinus Orontio, resalutans illum.

Domino eximio meritoque honorabili, et suscipiendo filio ORONTIO, AUGUSTINUS.

Ago gratias quod adventum Eximietatis tuae litteris etiam praevenire dignatus es, et ante contuitum misisti colloquium, ut tuo prius affatu quam aspectu fruere-mur, et diu desideratam notitiam epistolari solatio quodammodo praegustantes, exspectaremus avidius et ardentius, quod jucundius gratiusque caperemus, domine eximie meritoque honorabilis, et suscipiende fili. Reddo itaque meritis tuis et praecurrentibus officiis debitum resalutationis obsequium, incolumitatem tuam gaudens nuntiatam, optansque continuam. Et quod rescripta exiguitatis meae jure praerogatae benevolentiae reposcendo addidisti, dicens, Si tamen id de tanta sanctitate possumus promereri; nullo modo audeo desperare, sanctitatis ejusdem, cujus haustu pro nostro modulo aliquid sumus, ipsum fontem non solum laudandum, verum etiam nobiscum participandum, et tuae prudentiae placitum; ut Deus incomparabiliter atque incommutabiliter bonus, qui per suam potentiam tam bonae tuae mentis est institutor, sit etiam per gratiam restitutor.

LETTER 256.

Augustine writes to Christinus with courtesy.

To the lord worthily to-be-praised, sincerely most dear and most desired brother CHRISTINUS, AUGUSTINE, health in the Lord.

That you desire my letter, your letter announced to me. But our brother James has come as a more copious witness of that desire of yours toward us, because he has spoken to me more sweet things concerning you and experienced in himself, than that small paper could. Whence I congratulate your benignity, and from your Christian heart give thanks to the Lord our God, whose gifts these are, most dear and most desired brother worthily to-be-praised. But as for what you ask, that I should seek you by letters; I seek you by affection, which surpasses all letters: and where I may seek you so that you may well understand, I know. But as much as pertains to reading me, I rather fear that in your hands my loquacity may be reprehended, than my eloquence required. That I should have said briefly, which if you ruminate by long-continued meditation, you will feel what it tastes: when on the journey of God easier and fruitful things are fled from by a lazy dread, on a secular journey harder and sterile things are tolerated with distressful labor. May you flourish and profit, unharmed in Christ, most dear and most desired brother worthily to-be-praised.

LETTER 257.

Augustine to Orontius, returning his salutation.

To the distinguished lord worthily honorable, and to-be-received son ORONTIUS, AUGUSTINE.

I give thanks that you have deigned even to prevent the arrival of your Excellence by letters, and before a sight you sent a colloquy, so that we might enjoy your speech before your aspect, and foretasting in some way by epistolary solace the long-desired knowledge, we might expect more greedily and ardently that which we would take more pleasantly and gratefully, distinguished lord worthily honorable, and to-be-respected son. I return therefore to your merits and pre-running offices the due service of re-salutation, rejoicing your safety announced, and wishing it continuous. And because you added in re-demanding the rescripts of my smallness by the right of pre-rogated benevolence, saying, *If nevertheless we can merit that from such great sanctity*; in no way do I dare to despair that the very fountain of the same sanctity, by a draught of which according to our measure we are something, is not only to be praised, but even to be participated with us, and about to please your prudence; so that God incomparably and incommutably good, who through His power is the institutor of such a good mind of yours, may be also through grace the restorer.

Incolumen te Deus omnipotens felicioremque tueatur, domine eximie meritoque honorabilis, ac suscipiende fili.

EPISTOLA CCLVIII.

Augustinus Martiano veteri amico, gratulatur quod catechumenus sit factus, hortans illum ut fidelium Sacramenta percipiat.

Domino merito suscipiendo, et in Christo dilectissimo ac desiderantissimo fratri MARTIANO, AUGUSTINUS, in Domino salutem.

1. Abripui, vel potius obripui, et quodammodo furatus sum memetipsum multis occupationibus meis, ut tibi scriberem antiquissimo amico, quem tamen non habebam, quamdiu in Christo non tenebam. Nosti quippe ut definierit amicitiam Romani, ut ait quidam, maximus auctor Tullius eloquii (Lucanus, lib. 7). Dixit enim, et verissime dixit: Amicitia est rerum humanarum et divinarum cum benevolentia et charitate consensio (Cicero, Lael. 20). Tu autem, mi charissime, aliquando mihi consentiebas in rebus humanis, cum eis more vulgi frui cuperem; et mihi ad ea capessenda quorum me poenitet, favendo velificabas, imo vero vela cupiditatum mearum, cum caeteris tunc dilectoribus meis, inter praecipuos aura laudis inflabas. Porro in rebus divinis, quarum mihi illo tempore nulla eluxerat veritas, utique in maiore illius definitionis parte nostra amicitia claudicabat: erat enim rerum tantummodo humanarum, non etiam divinarum, quamvis cum benevolentia et charitate consensio.

2. Et posteaquam illa cupere destiti, tu quidem perseverante benevolentia, salvum me esse cupiebas salute mortali, et ea rerum prosperitate felicem, quam mundus optare consuevit. Et jam sic itaque aliquantum tibi erat mecum rerum humanarum benevola et chara consensio. Nunc vero quantum de te gaudeo, quibus explicem verbis, quando eum quem quoquo modo habui diu amicum, habeo jam verum amicum? Accessit enim etiam rerum consensio divinarum; quoniam qui mecum temporalem vitam quondam jucundissima benignitate duxisti, nunc spe vitae aeternae mecum esse coepisti. Modo vero etiam de rebus humanis inter nos nulla dissensio est, qui eas rerum divinarum cognitione pensamus, ne plus eis tribuamus, quam modus earum iustissime postulat; nec eas in aliquo contemptu abjiciendo, creatori earum Domino rerum coelestium atque terrestrium faciamus injuriam. Ita fit ut inter quos amicos non est rerum consensio divinarum, nec humanarum plena esse possit ac vera. Necesse est enim ut aliter quam oportet humana aestimet qui divina contemnit, nec hominem recte diligere noverit quisquis eum non diligit qui hominem fecit.

May Almighty God protect you safe and more happy, distinguished lord worthily honorable, and to-be-respected son.

LETTER 258.

Augustine to Martianus an old friend, congratulates that he has become a catechumen, exhorting him to perceive the Sacraments of the faithful.

To the lord worthily to-be-received, and in Christ most beloved and most desired brother MARTIANUS, AUGUSTINE, health in the Lord.

1. I have snatched, or rather crept away, and in some way stolen myself from my many occupations, that I might write to you an oldest friend, whom nevertheless I did not have, as long as I did not hold you in Christ. For you know how Tully, the greatest author of Roman eloquence, as someone says, defined friendship (Lucan, lib. 7). For he said, and most truly said: *Friendship is the agreement of things human and divine with benevolence and charity* (Cicero, Lael. 20). But you, my dearest, sometime agreed with me in human things, when I desired to enjoy them after the manner of the common people; and you were making sail by favoring me for those things to be caught of which it repents me, nay indeed you were inflating the sails of my cupidities, with the rest of my lovers then, among the chief ones with the aura of praise. Furthermore in divine things, of which at that time no truth had shone for me, surely in the greater part of that definition our friendship was limping; for it was an agreement of human things only, not also of divine things, although with benevolence and charity.

2. And after I ceased to desire those things, you indeed with persevering benevolence, were wishing me to be safe with mortal safety, and happy in that prosperity of things which the world is accustomed to desire. And already so for somewhat there was with me a benevolent and dear agreement of human things. But now with how many words should I explain how much I rejoice concerning you, when him whom in some way I had for a long time as a friend, I have now as a true friend? For there has been added also an agreement of divine things; since you who once led temporal life with me with most pleasant benignity, have now begun to be with me in the hope of eternal life. But now also concerning human things there is no dissension between us, who weigh them by the cognition of divine things, lest we attribute more to them, than their measure most justly demands; nor by casting them away in some contempt, may we do injury to their creator the Lord of celestial and terrestrial things. So it happens that among those friends between whom there is no agreement of divine things, neither of human things can it be full and true. For it is necessary that he should estimate human things otherwise than he ought, who contemns divine things, nor should he know how to love a man rightly whoever does not love Him who made man.

Proinde non dico, nunc mihi plenius amicus es, qui eras ex parte; sed quantum ratio indicat, nec ex parte eras, quando nec in rebus humanis mecum amicitiam veram tenebas. Rerum quippe divinarum, ex quibus recte humana pensantur, socius mihi nondum eras; sive quando nec ipse in eis eram, sive posteaquam ego eas utcumque sapere coepi, a quibus tu longe abhorrebas.

3. Nolo autem succenseas, nec tibi videatur absurdum quod illo tempore cum in vana hujus mundi aestuarem, quamvis me multum amare videreris, nondum eras amicus meus; quando nec ipse mihi amicus eram, sed potius inimicus: diligebam quippe iniquitatem; et vera quidem divina sententia est qua scriptum est in sanctis Libris, Qui autem diligit iniquitatem, odit animam suam (Psal. X, 6). Cum ergo odissem animam meam, verum amicum quomodo habere poteram, ea mihi optantem in quibus ipse meipsum patiebar inimicum? Cum vero benignitas et gratia Salvatoris nostri illuxit mihi, non secundum merita mea, sed secundum ipsius misericordiam; tu ab hac alienus, quomodo esse poteras amicus meus, qui unde beatus esse possem penitus ignorabas, et non in hoc me amabas, in quo mihi ipse jam fueram utcumque amicus effectus?

4. Gratias itaque Deo, quod te mihi amicum facere tandem aliquando dignatur. Nunc enim nobis est rerum humanarum et divinarum cum benevolentia et charitate consensio in Christo Jesu Domino nostro, verissima pace nostra. Qui duobus praeceptis cuncta praeconia divina conclusit, dicens: Diliges Dominum Deum tuum ex toto corde tuo, et ex tota anima tua, et ex tota mente tua; et, Diliges proximum tuum tanquam teipsum. In iis duobus praeceptis tota Lex pendet et Prophetiae (Matth. XXII, 37-40). In illo primo rerum divinarum, in hoc secundo rerum humanarum est cum benevolentia et charitate consensio. Haec duo si mecum firmissime teneas, amicitia nostra vera ac sempiterna erit; et non solum nos invicem, sed ipsi etiam Domino sociabit.

5. Quod ut fiat, exhortor gravitatem et prudentiam tuam ut jam etiam fidelium Sacramenta percipias: decet enim aetatem, et congruit, quantum credo, moribus tuis. Memento quid mihi dixeris profecturo, comicum quidem de Terentio, si recolis, verum, sed tamen aptissimum et utilissimum: Nunc hic dies vitam aliam affert, alios mores postulat. (Ter. Andr. Act 1, Sc. 2.) Quod si veraciter dixisti, sicut de te dubitare non debeo; jam profecto sic vivis ut sis dignus Baptismo salutari remissionem praeteritorum accipere peccatorum. Nam omnino non est cui alteri praeter Dominum Christum dicat genus humanum: Te duce si qua manent sceleris vestigia nostri, Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras. (Virg. Eclog. 4.) Quod ex Cumaeco, id est, ex Sibyllino carmine se fassus est transtulisse Virgilius; quoniam fortassis etiam illa vates aliquid de unico Salvatore in spiritu audierat, quod necesse habuit confiteri.

Therefore I do not say, now you are more fully a friend to me, who were so in part; but as much as reason indicates, not even in part were you, when not even in human things did you hold true friendship with me. For of divine things, from which human things are rightly weighed, you were not yet a socius to me; whether when you yourself were not in them, or after I began to taste them in some way, from which you were abhorring far away.

3. But I do not wish you to be incensed, nor should it seem absurd to you that at that time when I was seething in the vanity of this world, although you seemed to love me much, you were not yet my friend; when not even I myself was a friend to myself, but rather an enemy: for I was loving iniquity; and surely a true divine sentence is that by which it is written in the holy Books, **But he that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul** (Ps. 10:6). When therefore I had hated my soul, how could I have a true friend, wishing those things for me in which I myself was suffering myself as an enemy? But when the benignity and grace of our Savior shone for me, not according to my merits, but according to His own mercy; how could you, alien from this, be my friend, who were utterly ignorant whence I could be blessed, and did not love me in this, in which I had already been made in some way a friend to myself?

4. Thanks therefore to God, because He deigns to make you at last a friend to me. For now there is to us an agreement of human and divine things with benevolence and charity in Christ Jesus our Lord, our truest peace. Who concluded all divine proclamations in two precepts, saying: **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God from thy whole heart, and from thy whole soul, and from thy whole mind;** and, **Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.** In these two precepts hangeth the whole Law and the Prophets (Matt. 22:37-40). In that first is the agreement of divine things, in this second that of human things, with benevolence and charity. These two if you should hold most firmly with me, our friendship will be true and sempiternal; and will sociate us not only to each other, but also to the Lord Himself.

5. That this may be done, I exhort your gravity and prudence that you should now also perceive the Sacraments of the faithful: for it becomes your age, and is congruent, as I believe, with your manners. Remember what you said to me as I was about to depart, a verse indeed from Terence, if you recall, but nevertheless most apt and useful: **Now this day brings another life, demands other manners.** (Ter. Andr. Act 1, Sc. 2.) Which if you said truly, as I ought not to doubt concerning you; already surely you so live that you are worthy to receive the salutary Baptism for the remission of past sins. For there is altogether no other besides the Lord Christ to whom the human race says: **With Thee as leader, if any vestiges of our crime remain, they shall loose the lands from perpetual dread.** (Virg. Eclog. 4.) Which Virgil confessed himself to have translated from the Cumaean, that is, from the Sibylline poem; since perhaps even that prophetess had heard something in the spirit concerning the only Savior, which she had necessity to confess.

Haec tibi, domine merito suscipiende, et in Christo dilectissime ac desiderantissime frater, sive pauca, sive forsitan multa sint, utcumque occupatissimus scripsi: tua sumere rescripta desidero, et te nomen dedisse inter competentes, vel daturum esse, jamjamque cognoscere. Dominus Deus noster, in quem credidisti, et hic et in futuro saeculo te conservet, domine merito suscipiende, et in Christo dilectissime ac desiderantissime frater.

EPISTOLA CCLIX.

Augustinus Cornelio scortis dedito, admonens illum ut Cyprianæ uxoris defunctæ pudicitiam imitetur, si velit illius impetrare laudes.

Domino dilectissimo, et honorabili fratri CORNELIO, AUGUSTINUS.

1. Scripsisti mihi ut ad te aliquam prolixam epistolam consolatoriam darem, quod graviter optimæ uxoris morte movereris, sicut sanctum Paulinum ad Macarium fecisse meministi. Et illa quidem anima in societatem recepta fidelium atque castarum, laudes nec curat, nec quaerit humanas; sed quia propter eos fiunt ista, qui vivunt, prius est ut tu, qui consolari ejus laude desideras, ita vivas, ut illic ubi ipsa est, esse merearis. Neque enim dubito quod eam non credas ibi esse, ubi illæ sunt quæ vel adulteriis lectulum conjugalem polluerunt, vel nullo conjugio deligatæ fornicatione fluxerunt. Quare, de illius laude viro longe dissimili quasi fugare velle moestitiam, adulatio est, non consolatio. Nam si eam diligeres sicut ipsa te dilexit, servasses ei quod tibi ipsa servavit. Et cum illa, si prior obiisses, nullo modo credenda sit cuiquam fuisse nuptura; nonne si vere obitum ejus laudibus ejus consolandus doleres, ne unam quidem ac licitam post illam conjugem quaereres?

2. Hic tu dicturus es: Quid mecum aspere agis? quid dure objurgas? Nonne inter hæc verba ecce senuimus, dum vita ducitur prius finienda quam corrigenda? Vis ut ignoscam exitiabili securitati tuæ: quanto satius tu ignoscis, si non amabili, certe miserabili sollicitudini meæ? Inimico quidem animo Tullius invehebatur, et longe alia erat terrenam rempublicam gubernantis intentio, et tamen ait: Cupio, Patres conscripti, me esse clementem; cupio in tantis reipublicæ periculis non dissolutum videri (Cic. pro S. Rosc.). Quanto justius ego dico, cum ipse noveris quam tibi amicum animum geram, in aeternæ civitatis servitio constitutus minister verbi sacramentique divini: cupio, frater Corneli, me esse clementem; cupio in tantis tuis meisque periculis non dissolutum videri?

These things to you, lord worthily to-be-received, and in Christ most beloved and most desired brother, whether they be few, or perhaps many, I have written being however most occupied: I desire to receive your rescripts, and to know already that you have given your name among the competents, or are about to give it. May our Lord God, in whom you have believed, conserve you both here and in the future world, lord worthily to-be-received, and in Christ most beloved and most desired brother.

LETTER 259.

Augustine to Cornelius given to harlots, admonishing him that he should imitate the chastity of his deceased wife Cypriana, if he wishes to obtain her praises.

To the most beloved lord, and honorable brother CORNELIUS, AUGUSTINE.

1. You wrote to me that I should give to you some prolix consolatory letter, because you were gravely moved by the death of your best wife, as you remembered holy Paulinus to have done to Macarius. And that soul indeed, received into the society of the faithful and chaste, neither cares for nor seeks human praises; but because those things are done for the sake of those who live, it is first that you, who desire to be consoled by her praise, should so live, that you may merit to be there where she is. For I do not doubt that you do not believe her to be there, where those are who either by adulteries polluted the conjugal bed, or bound by no marriage flowed with fornication. Wherefore, from her praise for a man far dissimilar as if to wish to put to flight sadness, is flattery, not consolation. For if you loved her as she herself loved you, you would have served for her what she herself served for you. And since she, if you had died first, is in no way to be believed to have been about to marry anyone; would you not, if truly grieving you were to be consoled by her praises, seek not even one and licit wife after her?

2. Here you are about to say: Why do you act harshly with me? why do you sharply objurgate? Have we not behold grown old among these words, while life is led rather to be ended than corrected? You wish that I should ignore your fatal security: how much more satisfactorily do you ignore my, if not lovable, certainly miserable solicitude? With an inimical mind indeed Tully was inveighed, and far other was the intention of one governing a terrestrial republic, and yet he says: *I desire, conscript Fathers, that I should be clement; I desire in such great perils of the republic not to seem dissolved* (Cic. pro S. Rosc.). How much more justly do I say, since you yourself know how friendly a mind I bear toward you, being a minister of the divine word and sacrament constituted in the service of the eternal city: I desire, brother Cornelius, that I should be clement; I desire in such great perils of yours and mine not to seem dissolved?

3. Plebs mulierum excubat lateribus tuis, crescit in dies pellicum numerus; ejusdem autem numeri dominum, imo vero servum insatiabili per tot scorta libidine diffluentem, et laudes defunctae castae conjugis a nobis, velut ad mitigandam moestitiam suam, jure amicitiae flagitantem episcopi patienter audimus? Qui cum esses, non dicam catechumenus, sed in errore nobiscum perniciosissimo constitutus juvenis, junioribus nobis, ab hoc te vitio temperantissima voluntate correxeras, quo non post longum tempus sordidius revolutus, deinde in extremo vitae periculo baptizatus, non dicam, te sene, sed etiam nobis certe jam senibus et insuper episcopis, nondum emendaris. Vis de bonae uxoris morte per nos consolari: nos de hac tua veriore morte quis consolatur? An quia non possumus oblivisci tanta erga nos merita tua, ideo cruciandi adhuc sumus moribus tuis, ideo contemnendi, et pro nihilo habendi, quando gemimus ad te de te? Sed fatemur nos non esse aliquid ad te corrigendum ac sanandum; Deus attendatur, Christus cogitetur, Apostolus audiatur dicens: Tollens ergo membra Christi, faciam membra meretricis (I Cor. VI, 15)? Si qualiscumque episcopi amici tui verba spernis in corde tuo, corpus Domini tui cogita in corpore tuo: postremo, quomodo de die in diem differendo peccas, cum extremum diem tuum nescias?

4. Nunc probabo quas tu ab ore nostro laudes Cyprianae desideres. Certe si adhuc in schola rhetorum verba discipulis venderem, prius ab eis mercedem sumerem. Vendere tibi volo laudem pudicissimae conjugis tuae; prius mihi mercedem da, pudicitiam tuam: da, inquam, et accipe. Humanum dico propter infirmitatem tuam; puto quod non sit apud te digna Cypriana, cujus laudibus anteponis amorem concubinarum tuarum: quod utique facies, si permanere in illo amore, quam ad istas laudes pervenire malueris. Quid mihi vis extorquere poscendo, cum pro te videas esse quod posco? quid precaris subjectus, quod potes jubere correctus? Mittamus munera spiritualia conjugis tuae; tu imitationem, ego laudem. Quanquam, sicut supra dixi, laudem ab hominibus jam illa non quaerat; imitationem vero tuam tantum quaerit etiam defuncta, quantum te dilexit etiam dissimilem viva. Faciam de illa quod vis, cum tu feceris quod et ego volo et illa.

5. Si enim dives ille superbus atque impius, sicut in Evangelio Dominus loquitur, qui induebatur purpura et bysso, et epulabatur quotidie splendide, cum malorum meritorum poenas apud inferos lueret, neque de digito contempti ante janua suam pauperis aquae stillam impetrare valisset; recordatus est quinque fratres suos, et rogavit ad eos eundem pauperem mitti, cujus requiem in sinu Abrahae longe prospiciebat, ne et ipsi venirent in illum locum tormentorum (Luc. XVI, 19-28): quanto magis tua conjux te recordatur?

3. A crowd of women keeps watch at your sides, the number of harlots grows daily; and do we bishops patiently hear the lord of the same number, or rather a slave flowing down with insatiable lust through so many harlots, and demanding from us the praises of his deceased chaste wife, as if to mitigate his own sadness, by the right of friendship? Who when you were, I will not say a catechumen, but a youth constituted in a most pernicious error with us, younger than us, had corrected yourself from this vice with most temperate will, into which having revolved not after a long time more sordidly, then baptized in the extreme peril of life, I will not say, you an old man, but even we certainly now old and moreover bishops, are not yet emended. You wish to be consoled by us concerning the death of a good wife: who consoles us concerning this more true death of yours? Or because we cannot forget your so great merits toward us, are we therefore yet to be tortured by your manners, therefore to be contemned, and to be held for nothing, when we groan to you concerning you? But we confess that we are not something for correcting and healing you; let God be attended, let Christ be thought upon, let the Apostle be heard saying: *Taking then the members of Christ, shall I make them the members of a harlot?* (1 Cor. 6:15). If you spurn in your heart the words of any bishop your friend, think upon the body of your Lord in your body: finally, how do you sin by deferring from day to day, when you know not your extreme day?

4. Now I shall prove what praises of Cypriana you desire from our mouth. Certainly if I were yet selling words to disciples in the school of rhetors, I would first take the reward from them. I wish to sell to you the praise of your most modest wife; first give me the reward, your modesty: give, I say, and receive. I say a human thing on account of your infirmity; I think that Cypriana be not worthy with you, to whose praises you prefer the love of your concubines: which surely you will do, if you shall have preferred to remain in that love, than to arrive at these praises. Why do you wish to extort from me by asking, when you see it is for you what I ask? why do you pray being subject, what you can command being corrected? Let us send spiritual gifts to your wife; you imitation, I praise. Although, as I said above, she should not now seek praise from men; but she seeks only your imitation even being deceased, as much as she loved you even being dissimilar while living. I shall do concerning her what you wish, when you shall have done what both I wish and she.

5. For if that proud and impious rich man, as the Lord speaks in the Gospel, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted splendidly every day, when he was paying the penalties of evil merits among those below, and had not been strong enough to impetrate a drop of water from the finger of the poor man contemned before his gate; remembered his five brothers, and asked the same poor man to be sent to them, whose rest in the bosom of Abraham he was prospecting from afar, lest they also should come into that place of torments (Luke 16:19-28): how much more does your wife remember you?

quanto magis te casta non vult ad poenas venire moechorum, si fratres suos nec superbus ad poenas venire voluit superbiorum? et cum frater nollet fratribus in malis se esse conjunctum, quanto minus vult in bonis constituta conjux virum in malis habere separatum? Lege ipsum locum in Evangelio: Christi est vox pia; crede Deo. Doles videlicet conjugem mortuam, et putas, si eam laudavero, quod meis affatibus consolaberis; disce quod doleas, si cum illa non eris. An magis tibi dolendum est quod a me nondum laudatur, quam mihi quod a te non amatur? Nam utique si amares, cum illa esse post mortem desiderares, quo profecto non eris, si qualis es talis eris. Ama ergo cujus exis laudem, ne quod mendaciter exis, juste denegem. (Et alia manu:) Dominus nobis praestet de tua salute gaudere, domine dilectissime, et honorabilis frater.

EPISTOLA CCLX.

Audax Augustino, flagitans mitti sibi prolixiorem epistolam.

Domino vere praedicabili ac nimium suspiciendo, omnique laudum genere proseguendo patri AUGUSTINO, AUDAX, in Domino salutem.

Habeo gratiam Beatitudini tuae, quod libenter mei sumpseris tentamenta sermonis: tunc enim bonae fidei filiis datur audacia, cum paterni fontis imbribus fuerit irrorata. Provocavi itaque te, dulcis antistes, non ut praelargi pectoris pusillum libamen acciperem, sed ut ingens divitis ubertim flumen haurirem. Thesaurum sapientiae desideravi, sed minus accepi quam volui, licet minus non debet dici, sed munus, quod oraculum legis contulerit Augustinus, sacrator justitiae, instaurator spiritualis gloriae, dispensator salutis aeternae. Tam tibi mundanus orbis notus est, quam notatus; tam tu ei cognitus, quam probatus. Opto itaque sapientiae floribus pasci, et vivi fontis haustibus irrigari: praesta cupienti quod utique prosit. Potest enim seminudi roboris velamen genitale viridari, si meruerit tuis sensim fluentis augeri. Itaque humilitatis meae praesentiam spondeo non tam stilo quam voto, si Venerabilitatis tuae scripta pro visu, relegero. Divina te clementia tueatur annis innumeris, domine venerabilis.

Cur mihi fons orbis parvo sermone meavit? An minus apta suis speravit corda fluentis? Cum pateat mens omnis aquis, spectetque loquacem Religionis opem gratos da sensibus imbres, Expectat quos plena fides Christi de stipite pendens.

how much more does she, being chaste, not wish you to come to the penalties of adulterers, if not even the proud man wished his brothers to come to the penalties of the proud? and when a brother was unwilling for his brothers to be joined to him in evils, how much less does a wife constituted in goods wish to have her husband separated in evils? Read the place itself in the Gospel: it is the pious voice of Christ; believe God. You grieve forsooth for your dead wife, and you think, if I shall have praised her, that you will be consoled by my addresses; learn that you should grieve, if you shall not be with her. Or is it more to be grieved by you that she is not yet praised by me, than by me that you are not loved by her? For surely if you loved, you would desire after death to be with her, where surely you will not be, if such as you are such you shall be. Love therefore her whose praise you exact, lest what you exact mendaciously, I should justly deny. (And by another hand:) May the Lord grant to us to rejoice concerning your safety, most beloved lord and honorable brother.

LETTER 260.

Audax to Augustine, asking that a more prolix letter be sent to him.

To the father truly to-be-proclaimed and exceedingly to-be-respected, and to-be-followed with every kind of praises, father AUGUSTINE, AUDAX, health in the Lord.

I have gratitude to your Beatitude, because you have willingly taken the testaments of my speech: for then boldness is given to the sons of good faith, when it shall have been bedewed by the rains of the paternal fount. I have provoked you therefore, sweet prelate, not that I might receive a small libation of a too-large breast, but that I might draw a huge river from a rich man abundantly. I desired the treasure of wisdom, but I received less than I wished, although it ought not to be called less, but a gift, which Augustine, the sacrator of justice, the instaurator of spiritual glory, the dispenser of eternal salvation, has conferred as an oracle of the law. The mundane orb is as much known to you, as noted; you are as much known to it, as proved. I wish therefore to be fed by the flowers of wisdom, and to be irrigated by the draughts of the living fount: grant to the desiring one what surely may profit. For the genital veil of half-naked strength can grow green, if it shall merit to be increased by your senses flowing gradually. Therefore I promise the presence of my humility not so much by style as by vow, if I shall re-read the writings of your Venerability in place of a sight. May the divine clemency protect you for innumerable years, venerable lord.

Why has the fount of the world flowed for me with a small speech? Or did it hope for hearts less apt for its own flowings? Since every mind lies open to the waters, and expects the loquacious help of Religion, give grateful rains to the senses, which full faith expects hanging from the trunk of Christ.

EPISTOLA CCLXI.

Augustinus Audaci excusat occupationes suas, admonens ut vel intendat evolvendis ipsius libris, vel praesens audiat ipsum loquentem.

Domino dilectissimo et in Christo praedicando, nimiumque desiderabili fratri AUDACI, AUGUSTINUS, in Domino salutem.

1. Brevem epistolam tuam, sed plane vehementem flagitatricem prolaxae epistolae meae, non invitus, imo etiam laetus accepi. Non quod facile sufficerem aviditati, sed quod gratularer Charitati tuae; quia etsi non de idoneo expetis, bonum est tamen quod expetis. Et ad longam quidem epistolam conscribendam magis mihi otium quam facultas deficit; occupatissimo scilicet ecclesiasticis curis, a quibus pauculae temporum stillae vix recreant, vel cogitantem aliquid, vel ea quae magis urgent et mihi videntur pluribus profutura dictantem, vel reficientem corporis vires nostrae necessarias servituti. Nam verba non desunt, quibus possit multa charta compleri; sed quod a nobis in eadem sermonis prolixitate desideras, ad hoc me idoneum non esse respondeo. Thesaurum sapientiae te desiderasse dixisti, sed minus accepisse quam voluisti, cum ego ex illo thesauro mendicabunda prece quotidianam stipem rogem, vixque impetrem.

2. Oraculum autem legis quomodo sum, de cujus latis atque abditis penetralibus nescio longe plura quam scio, ejusque multiplices sinus opacosque secessus adire ac penetrare non valeo sicut volo, et me non aliud quam minus dignum esse cognosco? Porro sacrator justitiae quis ego, cui me sacratum esse permagnum est? Jamvero quod instauratorem spiritualis gloriae me appellas; da veniam, multum cui loquaris ignoras: ipse quippe adhuc in hac gloria sic instauror, ut de die in diem non solum quantum accedam, sed utrum omnino aliquid accedam, latere me fatear. Dispensator plane salutis aeternae, cum caeteris innumerabilibus conservis meis sum. Quod si volens facio, mercedem habeo: si autem invitus, tantum dispensatio mihi credita est; neque enim esse salutis illius dispensatorem per verbum ac Sacramentum, jam hoc est etiam esse participem. Nam si per bonos non dispensaretur, non recte Apostolus diceret: Imitatores mei estote sicut et ego Christi (I Cor. IV, 1, 16). Rursus si per malos non dispensaretur, non de quibusdam Dominus diceret: Quae dicunt, facite; quae autem faciunt, facere nolite: dicunt enim, et non faciunt (Matth. XXIII, 3).

LETTER 261.

Augustine to Audax excuses his occupations, admonishing that he should either attend to unfolding his own books, or hear him speaking being present.

To the most beloved lord and worthily to-be-proclaimed in Christ, and exceedingly desirable brother AUDAX, AUGUSTINE, health in the Lord.

1. I received your brief letter, but plainly a vehement exacter of my prolix letter, not unwillingly, nay even joyful. Not because I should easily suffice for your avidity, but because I should congratulate your Charity; because even if you do not seek from a suitable one, it is nevertheless good what you seek. And for conscribing a long letter indeed leisure rather than faculty is lacking to me; being most occupied forsooth with ecclesiastical cares, from which very few drops of times scarcely recreate me, either thinking something, or dictating those things which more urge and seem to me about to profit more people, or refilling the forces of the body necessary for our servitude. For words are not lacking, with which much paper can be filled; but as to what you desire from us in the same prolixity of speech, I respond that I am not suitable for this. For you said that you had desired the treasure of wisdom, but had received less than you wished, when I from that treasure should ask for a daily alms with beggarly prayer, and scarcely impetrate it.

2. But how am I an *oracle of the law*, of whose wide and hidden penetralia I know far more things which I know not than what I know, and I am not strong enough to go to and penetrate its manifold bosoms and opaque recesses as I wish, and I know myself to be nothing else than less worthy? Furthermore what *sacrator of justice* am I, to whom it is very great that I should be consecrated? But truly that you call me the *instaurator of spiritual glory*; give pardon, you know not to whom you speak: for I myself as yet in this glory am so instaurated, that from day to day I confess that it is hidden from me not only how much I approach, but whether I approach anything at all. A *dispenser* plainly of *eternal salvation*, I am with innumerable others my fellow-servants. But if I do this willingly, I have a reward: but if unwillingly, only a dispensation has been credited to me; for already to be a dispenser of that salvation through word and Sacrament, this is not yet even to be a participant. For if it were not dispensed through the good, the Apostle would not rightly say: *Be ye followers of me as I also of Christ* (1 Cor. 4:1, 16). Again if it were not dispensed through the evil, the Lord would not say concerning certain ones: *The things which they say, do ye; but the things which they do, do ye not: for they say, and do not* (Matt. 23:3).

Multi ergo dispensatores sunt, per quorum ministerium pervenitur ad aeternam salutem: sed quaeritur inter dispensatores ut fidelis quis inveniatur (I Cor. IV, 2); et inter ipsos fideles, in quorum me numero ille qui non fallitur computet, alius est sic, alius autem sic (Id. VII, 7), sicut unicuique Deus partitus est mensuram fidei (Rom. XII, 3).

3. Itaque, frater charissime atque dulcissime, pascat te Dominus potius sapientiae floribus, et vivi fontis haustibus irriget. Si quid autem per operulam meam religiosissimo studio tuo conferri posse arbitraris, quia et capacem te esse intelligo, et avidum sentio; magis in alia nostra opuscula, quae multis voluminibus comprehenduntur, tibi animus intendendus est, quam per epistolas aliquid sperandum quod tuum desiderium possit explere. Aut certe in praesentia sume quod potero, quam te puto tuam nobis ideo non exhibere, quia non vis: quid enim magnum est, adjuvante Domino, ut homo liber a cujusquam loci munere venias ad nos, sive nobiscum diu futurus, sive peracto saltem pauxillo temporis rediturus?

4. Ecce pene factum est, quod in quinque versuum tuorum tertio posuisti, ut magis loquacem quam eloquentem haberes epistolam meam. Quod autem in quinto atque ultimo versu septem pedes sunt, nescio utrum numerus tuum fefellit auditum, an experiri voluisti utrum ego adhuc ista dijudicare meminerim, quae forte jam obliti sunt qui talium aliquando studiosi, postea plurimum in ecclesiasticis litteris profecerunt.

5. Psalterium a sancto Hieronymo translatum ex hebraeo non habeo. Nos autem non interpretati sumus, sed codicum latinorum nonnullas mendositates ex graecis exemplaribus emendavimus. Unde fortassis fecerimus aliquid commodius quam erat, non tamen tale quale esse debebat. Nam etiam nunc, quae forte nos tunc praeterierunt, si legentes moverint, collatis codicibus emendamus. Ita illud quod perfectum est, tecum nos quoque requirimus.

EPISTOLA CCLXII . Augustinus Ecdiciae, quae nesciente viro suo, bona sua in eleemosynam distribuerat, et vidualem habitum induerat, correctionem adhibet quam acerrimam, injungens ut super his faciat satis viro suo.

Dominae religiosissimae filiae ECDICIAE, AUGUSTINUS, in Domino salutem.

Many therefore are the dispensers, through whose ministry one arrives at eternal salvation: but it is required among dispensers that one be found faithful (1 Cor. 4:2); and among the faithful themselves, in whose number let Him who is not deceived compute me, one is thus, another however thus (Id. 7:7), as God has parted to each one the measure of faith (Rom. 12:3).

3. Therefore, most dear and sweet brother, may the Lord rather feed you with the flowers of wisdom, and irrigate you with the draughts of the living fount. But if you think that anything can be conferred by my small work to your most religious study, because I both understand you to be capable, and feel you to be avid; your mind is to be intended rather into our other small works, which are comprehended in many volumes, than that anything is to be hoped through letters which can fill your desire. Or certainly in presence take what I shall be able, which I think you therefore do not exhibit yours to us, because you do not wish: for what great thing is it, the Lord helping, that you being a free man from the duty of any place should come to us, whether about to be with us for a long time, or at least to return a little time having been passed?

4. Behold it has almost happened, what you placed in the third of your five verses, that you should have my letter rather loquacious than eloquent. But as to what in the fifth and last verse there are seven feet, I know not whether the number deceived your hearing, or you wished to try whether I yet remember how to judge these things, which perhaps those have already forgotten who, being sometime studious of such things, afterwards profited very much in ecclesiastical letters.

5. I do not have the Psalter translated from the Hebrew by holy Jerome. But we have not translated it, but have emended some faultinesses of the Latin codices from the Greek exemplars. Whence perhaps we have done something more commodious than it was, yet not such as it ought to be. For even now, those things which perhaps then passed us over, if they move us while reading, we emend the codices having been compared. So that which is perfect, we also seek with you.

LETTER 262. Augustine to Ecdicia, who, her husband being ignorant, had distributed her goods in alms, and had put on a widow's habit, applies a most sharp correction, enjoining that concerning these things she should make satisfaction to her husband.

To the most religious lady daughter ECDICIA, AUGUSTINE, health in the Lord.

1. Lectis litteris Reverentiae tuae, et earum perlatores interrogato quae interroganda restabant, vehementer dolui sic te voluisse agere cum marito, ut aedificium continentiae, quod in eo jam construi coeperat, amissa perseverantia in adulterit ruinam miserabiliter laberetur. Cum enim lugendus esset, si post continentiam votam Deo, jamque actu ipso moribusque susceptam, reverteretur ad conjugis carnem; quanto magis nunc demersus in interitum profundiorum lugendus est, qui tam abrupta dissolutione moechatur, iratus tibi, perniciosus sibi, tanquam in te acerbius saeviat, si ipse pereat? Hoc autem tantum mali accidit, dum tu ejus animum non qua debuisti moderatione tractasti: quia etsi carnali consortio jam ex consensu vobis non misceremini, in caeteris tamen rebus conjugali obsequio viro tuo mulier servire debuisti; praesertim cum ambo essetis membra corporis Christi. Et utique si maritum infidelem fidelis habuisses, agere te conversatione subdita oportuit, ut eum Domino lucrareris, sicut Apostoli monuerunt.

2. Omitto enim quod ipsam continentiam, illo nondum volente, non secundum sanam doctrinam te suscepisse cognovi. Neque enim corporis tui debito fraudandus fuit, priusquam ad illud bonum, quod superat pudicitiam conjugalem, tuae voluntati voluntas quoque ejus accederet; nisi forte non legeras nec audieras, vel non attenderas Apostolum dicentem: Bonum est homini mulierem non tangere: propter fornicationes autem unusquisque uxorem suam habeat, et unaquaeque suum virum habeat. Uxori vir debitum reddat, similiter autem et uxor viro. Uxor non habet potestatem corporis sui, sed vir: similiter autem et vir non habet potestatem corporis sui, sed mulier. Nolite fraudare invicem, nisi ex consensu ad tempus, ut vacetis orationi; et iterum ad idipsum estote, ne vos tentet Satan propter intemperantiam vestram (I Cor. VII, 1-17). Secundum haec verba apostolica, etiamsi se ipse continere voluisset, et tu noluisses, debitum tibi reddere cogeretur; et illi Deus imputaret continentiam, si non suae, sed tuae cedens infirmitati, ne in adulterii damnable flagitium caderes, maritalem tibi concubitus non negaret: quanto magis te, quam magis subjectam esse decuerat, ne ipse quoque in adulterium diabolica tentatione traheretur, in reddendo hujusmodi debito voluntati ejus obtemperare convenerat, cum tibi voluntatem continendi acceptaret Deus, quia propterea non faceres, ne periret maritus?

1. Your Reverence's letters having been read, and their bearer interrogated as to those things which remained to be interrogated, I vehemently grieved that you wished so to act with your husband, that the edifice of continence, which had already begun to be constructed in him, should miserably slide into the ruin of adultery, perseverance having been lost. For since he was to be mourned, if after continence vowed to God, and already taken up by the act itself and manners, he should return to the flesh of a spouse; how much more now is he to be mourned, submerged into a deeper destruction, who by so abrupt a dissolution commits adultery, being irate with you, pernicious to himself, as if he should rage more bitterly against you, if he himself should perish? But so much of evil happened, while you treated his mind not with that moderation with which you ought: because even if you were no longer mixed by carnal consort from consent, yet in other things as a woman you ought to serve your husband with conjugal obedience; especially when you were both members of the body of Christ. And surely if you had a faithful husband as an infidel, it behooved you to act with subject conversation, that you might gain him for the Lord, as the Apostles admonished.

2. For I omit that I have known you to have taken up that very continence, he not yet being willing, not according to sound doctrine. For he was not to be defrauded of the debt of your body, before his will also should access your will to that good which surpasses conjugal modesty; unless perhaps you had not read or heard, or had not attended the Apostle saying: *It is good for a man not to touch a woman: but on account of fornications let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.* Let the husband render the debt to the wife, but similarly also the wife to the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: similarly also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the woman. Defraud not each other, except from consent for a time, that you may be vacant for prayer; and again be for the same thing, lest Satan tempt you on account of your intemperance (1 Cor. 7:1-17). According to these apostolic words, even if he himself had wished to contain himself, and you had been unwilling, he would be compelled to render the debt to you; and God would impute continence to him, if yielding not to his own, but to your infirmity, lest you should fall into the damnable flagitiousness of adultery, he should not deny marital concubitus to you: how much more was it fitting for you, whom it had become to be more subject, lest he also should be drawn into adultery by diabolical temptation, to obey his will in rendering a debt of this kind, when God would accept the will of containing for you, because you would therefore not do it, lest the husband should perish?

3. Sed hoc, ut dixi, omitto, quoniam postea tibi nolenti sibi ad reddenda conjugalia debita consentire, ad eadem continentiae pacta ipse consensit, et tecum continentissime diu vixit, suoque consensu a peccato illo quo ei debitum carnis negabas, ipse te absolvit. Non ergo jam in tua causa ista vertitur quaestio, utrum redire debeas ad concubitum viri. Quod enim Deo pari consensu ambo voveratis, perseveranter usque in finem reddere ambo debuistis: a quo proposito si lapsus est ille, tu saltem constanter persevera. Quod te non exhortarer, nisi quia tibi ad hoc ipse consenserat. Nam si nunquam tenuisses ejus assensum, numerus te nullus defendisset annorum, sed post quantumlibet tempus me consulisses, nihil tibi aliud responderem, nisi quod ait Apostolus, Uxor non habet potestatem corporis sui, sed vir: de qua potestate sic tibi jam permiserat continentiam, ut eam tecum et ipse susciperet.

4. Sed illud est quod minus te observasse contristor, quia tanto humilior et obedientior ei obsequi in domestica conversatione debuisti, quanto ille religiosius tibi rem tam magnam etiam imitando concesserat. Non enim quia pariter temperabatis a commixtione carnali, ideo tuus maritus esse destiterat; imo vero tanto sanctius inter vos conjuges manebatis, quanto sanctiora concorditer placita servabatis. Nihil ergo de tua veste, nihil de tuo auro vel argento vel quacumque pecunia, aut rebus ullis terrenis tuis sine arbitrio ejus facere debuisti, ne scandalizares hominem qui Deo tecum majora voverat, et ab eo quod de tua carne licita potestate posset exigere, continenter abstinerat.

5. Denique factum est ut vinculum continentiae, quo se dilectus ille innexuerat, contemptus abrumperet, et iratus tibi non parceret sibi. Sicut enim mihi retulit perlator epistolae tuae, cum cognovisset quod omnia vel pene omnia quae habebas, nescio quibus duobus transeuntibus monachis tanquam pauperibus eroganda donaveris; tunc ille detestans eos tecum, et non Dei servos, sed domus alienae penetratores, et tuos captivatores et depraedatores putans, tam sanctam sarcinam quam tecum subierat, indignatus abiecit. Infirmus enim erat, et ideo tibi, quae in communi proposito fortior videbaris, non erat praesumptione turbandus, sed dilectione portandus: quia etiamsi ad ipsas eleemosynas largius faciendas forte pigrius movebatur, posset et ista condiscere, si tuis inopinatis non feriretur expensis, sed expectatis invitaretur obsequiis, ut etiam hoc quod temere sola fecisti, multo consultius dilectione concordi, multoque ordinatius et honestius ambo faceretur;

3. But this, as I said, I omit, since afterwards he himself consented to the same pacts of continence to you being unwilling to consent to him for rendering conjugal debts, and lived most continently with you for a long time, and by his own consent he himself absolved you from that sin by which you were denying the debt of the flesh to him. Therefore that question is not now turned in your cause, whether you ought to return to the concubitus of the man. For what you both had vowed to God with equal consent, you both ought to have rendered perseveringly even unto the end: from which purpose if he has slipped, you at least persevere most constantly. Which I would not exhort you, except because he himself had consented to you for this. For if you had never held his assent, no number of years would have defended you, but after however much time you should have consulted me, I would respond nothing else to you, except what the Apostle says, **The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband:** from which power he had already so permitted continence to you, that he himself also took it up with you.

But that is what I am saddened that you observed less, because you ought so much more humbly and obediently to obey him in domestic conversation, as he had more religiously conceded so great a thing to you even by imitating. For not because you were equally tempering from carnal commixture, did he therefore cease to be your husband; nay indeed you remained spouses among yourselves so much more holily, as you concordantly served more holy pleas. Therefore you ought to have done nothing concerning your dress, nothing concerning your gold or silver or whatever money, or any terrestrial things of yours without his judgment, lest you should scandalize a man who had vowed greater things with you to God, and had continently abstained from that which he could exact from your flesh with licit power.

5. Finally it happened that contempt broke asunder the bond of continence, with which that beloved one had bound himself, and being irate with you he did not spare himself. For as the bearer of your letter related to me, when he had known that you had given all or almost all which you had to I know not which two monks passing by to be distributed as to the poor; then he detesting them with you, and thinking them not servants of God, but penetrators of another's house, and your captivators and plunderers, being indignant cast away so holy a burden as he had undergone with you. For he was weak, and therefore by you, who seemed stronger in the common purpose, he was not to be disturbed by presumption, but to be borne by love: because even if he was perhaps more slowly moved to making those alms more largely, he could also learn these things, if he were not struck by your unexpected expenses, but were invited by expected obediences, so that even this which you rashly did alone, you both might do much more consultedly by concordant love, and much more ordinately and honestly;

nec blasphemarentur servi Dei, si tamen hoc fuerunt, qui marito absente atque nesciente, ab ignota muliere et ab aliena uxore tanta sumpserunt; et laudaretur Deus in operibus vestris, quorum esset tam fida societas, ut a vobis communiter teneretur, non solum summa castitas, verum etiam gloriosa paupertas.

6. Nunc autem inconsiderata festinatione attende quid feceris. Ut enim de illis monachis, a quibus te ipse non aedificatam, sed spoliata esse conqueritur, ego bene sentiam, nec homini prae ira turbatum oculum habenti, contra Dei fortasse famulos facile consentiam; numquid tantum bonum est, quod pauperum carnem largioribus eleemosynis refecisti, quantum malum est, quod viri tui mentem a tam bono proposito subruisti? An cujusquam tibi temporalis salus charior esse debuerat, quam hujus aeterna? Nonne si ampliorem misericordiam cogitans, ideo pauperibus res tuas erogare differres, ne scandalizatus maritus tuus Deo periret, uberiores tibi Deus eleemosynas imputaret? Proinde si recolis quid acquisiveras, quando lucrata fueras virum tuum, ut tecum Christo sanctiore castitate serviret; intellige per illas eleemosynas tuas, quibus cor ejus eversum est, quanto graviore damno percussa fueris, quam sunt illa lucra, quae coelestia cogitabas. Si enim habet ibi magnum locum panis fractus esurienti, quantum locum ibi credenda est habere misericordia, qua homo eripitur diabolo, tanquam leoni rugienti, et quem devoret inquirenti?

7. Neque hoc ita dicimus, ut si quisquam scandalizatus fuerit de bonis operibus nostris, ab eis desistendum putemus; sed alia causa est alienarum, alia necessariorum in societate aliqua personarum; alia fidelis, alia infidelis; alia parentum erga filios, alia filiorum erga parentes: alia postremo ea, quae in his rebus vel maxime intuenda est, viri et uxoris, ubi mulierem conjugatam non licet dicere, Facio quod volo de meo; cum et ipsa non sit sua, sed capitis sui, hoc est viri sui (Eph. V, 23). Nam sic quaedam, ut commemorat apostolus Petrus, mulieres sanctae quae in Deum sperabant, ornabant se, subjectae suis viris: sicut Sara obsequebatur Abrahae, dominum eum vocans, cujus, inquit, factae estis filiae (I Petr. III, 5, 6); cum ad Christianas, non ad Judaeas feminas loqueretur.

8. Quid autem mirum si pater communem filium nolebat hujus vitae sustentaculis a matre nudari, ignorans quid sectaturus esset, cum in aetate grandiuscula esse coepisset; utrum monachi professionem, an ecclesiasticum ministerium, an conjugalis necessitudinis vinculum? Quamvis enim ad meliora excitandi et erudiendi sint filii sanctorum, unusquisque tamen proprium donum habet a Deo; alius sic, alius autem sic (I Cor. VII, 7).

nor would the servants of God be blasphemed, if however they were this, who while the husband was absent and ignorant, took so many things from an unknown woman and from another's wife; and God would be praised in your works, whose society would be so faithful, that not only the highest chastity, but even glorious poverty would be held commonly by you.

6. But now attend to what you have done by inconsiderate haste. For even if I should think well of those monks, by whom he complains himself to have been not edified, but spoiled, nor should I easily consent against perhaps the servants of God to a man having an eye disturbed before ire; is it so much of a good, that you refected the flesh of the poor by more large alms, as it is of an evil, that you undermined the mind of your husband from so good a purpose? Or ought the temporal safety of anyone to have been more dear to you, than his eternal one? Would not God impute more abundant alms to you, if thinking of a more ample mercy, you therefore deferred to distribute your things to the poor, lest your husband being scandalized should perish to God? Therefore if you recall what you had acquired, when you had gained your husband, so that he should serve Christ with you in more holy chastity; understand through those alms of yours, by which his heart was overturned, by how much more grave a loss you were struck, than are those gains, which you were thinking celestial. For if broken bread has a great place there for the hungry, how great a place is mercy to be believed to have there, by which a man is snatched from the devil, as from a roaring lion, and seeking whom he may devour?

7. Neither do we say this so, that if anyone shall have been scandalized concerning our good works, we think that we must desist from them; but another is the cause of foreign persons, another of necessary ones in some society; another of a faithful one, another of an infidel; another of parents toward sons, another of sons toward parents: another finally that, which in these things is even most to be looked into, of husband and wife, where it is not licit for a married woman to say, I do what I wish with mine; when she herself also is not her own, but of her head, that is of her husband (Eph. 5:23). *For so some,* as the apostle Peter commemorates, *holy women who were hoping in God, adorned themselves, subject to their own husbands: as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters,* he says, *ye are made* (1 Pet. 3:5, 6); when he was speaking to Christian, not to Jewish women.

8. But what wonder if a father was unwilling for a common son to be stripped of the supports of this life by his mother, being ignorant what he would follow when he should begin to be in a more mature age; whether the profession of a monk, or ecclesiastical ministry, or the bond of conjugal necessity? For although the sons of the saints are to be excited and erudited to better things, yet every one hath his own proper gift from God; one thus, another however thus (1 Cor. 7:7).

Nisi forte talia prospiciens et praecavens reprehendendus est pater, cum beatus Apostolus dicat: Quisquis autem suis et maxime domesticis non providet, fidem denegat, et est infideli deterior (I Tim. V, 8). Cum vero de faciendis ipsis eleemosynis loqueretur, ait: Non ut aliis refectio sit, vobis autem angustia (II Cor. VIII, 13). Pariter ergo consilium de omnibus haberetis, pariter moderaremini quid thesaurizandum esset in coelo, quid ad vitae hujus sufficientiam vobis et vestris vestroque filio relinquendum, ne aliis esset refectio, vobis autem angustia. Et in his disponendis atque faciendis, si quid tibi forte melius videretur, suggereres viro reverenter, ejusdemque auctoritatem tanquam tui capitis sequeris obedieris; ut omnes qui sanum sapiunt, ad quos posset hoc bonum vestrum fama perferre, de domus vestrae fructu ac pace gauderent, et adversarius revereretur nihil habens de vobis dicere pravi.

9. Porro si de faciendis eleemosynis et in pauperes impendendis rebus tuis, de quo bono opere et magno tam evidentia praecepta sunt Domini, cum viro tuo fideli et tecum sancta continentiae pacta servante consilium communicare deberes, ejusdemque non spernere voluntatem; quanto magis de habitu atque vestitu nihil tibi praeter ejus arbitrium mutandum vel usurpandum fuit, unde nihil divinitus legimus imperatum? Scriptum est quidem, mulieres esse debere in habitu ornato; aurique circumpositio, et intortio crinium, et caetera hujusmodi quae vel ad inanem pompam vel ad illecebram formae adhiberi solent, merito reprehensa sunt (I Tim. II, 9). Sed est quidam pro modulo personae habitus matronalis a viduali veste distinctus, qui potest fidelibus conjugatis salva religionis observantia convenire. Hunc te maritus si deponere noluit, ne te velut viduam illo vivente jactares, puto quia non fuerat in hac re usque ad dissensionis scandalum perducendus, magis inobedientiae malo, quam ullius abstinentiae bono. Quid enim est absurdius, quam mulierem de humili veste viro superbire, cui te potius expediret obtemperare candidis moribus, quam nigellis vestibus repugnare? Quia etsi te indumentum monachae delectabat, etiam hoc gratius posset marito observato exoratoque sumi, quam illo inconsulto contemptoque praesumi. Quod si omnino non sineret, quid tuo proposito deperiret? Absit ut hinc displiceret Deo, quod conjuge tuo nondum defuncto, non indueris sicut Anna, sed sicut Susanna.

Unless perhaps a father prospecting and precutioning such things is to be reprehended, when the blessed Apostle says: *But whosoever provideth not for his own and especially for those of his household, denieth the faith, and is worse than an infidel* (1 Tim. 5:8). But when he was speaking concerning making those very alms, he says: *Not that there should be refection to others, but to you distress* (2 Cor. 8:13). Therefore you should have had counsel concerning all things together, you should have moderated together what was to be treasured in heaven, what was to be left for the sufficiency of this life to you and yours and your son, lest there should be refection to others, but to you distress. And in disposing and doing these things, if anything perhaps seemed better to you, you should suggest it to the man reverently, and follow the authority of him as your head obediently; so that all who taste soundly, to whom the fame of this good of yours could reach, might rejoice concerning the fruit and peace of your house, and the adversary might be revered having nothing of evil to say concerning you.

9. Furthermore if concerning making alms and spending your things on the poor, concerning which good and great work there are so evident precepts of the Lord, you ought to communicate counsel with your husband being a faithful one and serving the holy pacts of continence with you, and not to spurn the will of the same; how much more concerning habit and dress was nothing to be changed or usurped by you besides his judgment, whence we read nothing divine commanded? It is written indeed, that women ought to be in an ornate habit; and the circumposition of gold, and the twisting of hair, and other things of this kind which are accustomed to be applied either to vain pomp or to the enticement of form, are worthily reprehended (1 Tim. 2:9). But there is a certain matronly habit distinct from a widow's dress according to the measure of the person, which can suit faithful married women with the observance of religion preserved. If your husband was unwilling for you to lay this down, lest you should boast yourself as if a widow while he was living, I think that he was not to be led in this matter even to the scandal of dissension, more by the evil of inobedience, than by the good of any abstinence. For what is more absurd, than for a woman to be proud toward a man concerning a humble dress, whom it would rather expedite you to obey by white manners, than to repugn by blackish dresses? Because even if the garment of a nun delighted you, even this could be taken more gratefully, your husband having been observed and exorated, than be presumed he being unconsulted and contemned. Which if he should not permit at all, what would perish from your purpose? Far be it that you should therefore displease God, because your spouse not yet being deceased, you were not clothed as Anna, but as Susanna.

10. Neque enim et ille, qui tecum jam coeperat custodire tam magnum continentiae bonum, etiamsi conjugale non viduale voluisset ut acciperes indumentum, ad indecentem quoque te compulisset ornatum: quo etsi aliqua dura conditione cogere-
 ris, posses habere in superbo cultu cor humile. Nempe apud patres, Esther illa regina Deum timens, Deum colens, Deo subdita, marito regi alienigenae non eundem secum colenti Deum, tamen subjecta serviebat; quae cum in extremo periculo, non suo tantum, sed etiam gentis suae, qui tunc erat populus Dei, Domino prosterneretur orando, in ipsa oratione sua dixit, ita sibi esse ornatum regium, sicut pannum menstrua-
 lem (Esther XIV, 16); et ita orantem confestim exaudivit, qui cordis inspector eam verum dicere scivit. Et utique maritum habebat multarum mulierum virum, et deorum alie-
 norum falsorumque cultorem. Tu autem si et ille in proposito quod tecum susceperat, perduraret, nec a te offensus in flagitium corruisset, maritum habebas non solum fidelem, et verum Deum tecum colentem, sed etiam continentem; qui procul dubio
 propositi vestri non immemor, etsi ad conjugalia te cogeret indumenta, ad superba
 tamen ornamenta non cogeret.

11. Haec tibi scripsi, quoniam me consulendum putasti, non ut tuum rectum institutum sermone meo frangerem, sed quod te inorditate et incaute agente, viri tui factum dolerem. De cujus reparatione debes vehementissime cogitare, si vere ad Christum vis pertinere. Indue itaque humilitatem mentis, et ut te Deus conservet perseverantem, noli maritum contemnere pereuntem. Funde pro illo pias et assiduas orationes, sacrifica lacrymas tanquam vulnerati sanguinem cordis. Et scribe ad eum satisfactionem, petens veniam, quia in eum peccasti, quod praeter ejus consilium et voluntatem de rebus tuis fecisti, quod faciendum putasti, non ut te poeniteat tribuisse pauperibus, sed eum tui boni operis participem et moderatorem habere noluisse. Promitte de caetero in adjutorio Domini, si et illum suae turpitudinis poenituerit, et continentiam quam deseruit repetiverit, te illi, sicut decet, in omnibus servitutam; ne forte, ut ait Apostolus, det illi Deus poenitentiam, et resipiscat de diaboli laqueis, a quo captivus tenetur secundum ipsius voluntatem (II Tim. II, 25, 26). Filium autem vestrum, quoniam de legitimis eum et honestis nuptiis suscepistis, magis in patris quam in tua esse potestate quis nesciat? Et ideo ei negari non potest, ubicumque illum esse cognoverit, et jure poposcerit: ac per hoc ut secundum tuam voluntatem in Dei possit nutriri et erudiri sapientia, necessaria est illi etiam vestra concordia.

10. For neither would he, who had already begun to keep so great a good of continence with you, even if he had wished that you should take a conjugal not a widow's garment, have compelled you also to an indecent ornament: in which even if you were compelled by some hard condition, you could have a humble heart in proud cult. Forsooth among the fathers, that queen Esther fearing God, worshiping God, subject to God, yet subject served a husband being an alien king not worshiping the same God with her; who when she was prostrated to the Lord in praying in extreme peril, not only of hers, but also of her nation, which was then the people of God, said in her very prayer, that the royal ornament was to her as a menstrual cloth (Esther 14:16); and Him who heard her so praying immediately, who being the inspector of the heart knew her to say the truth. And surely she had a husband being a man of many women, and a worshiper of alien and false gods. But you, if he also should have perjured in the purpose which he had taken up with you, nor had fallen into flagitiousness being offended by you, had a husband not only faithful, and worshiping the true God with you, but even continent; who without doubt not unmindful of your purpose, even if he should compel you to conjugal garments, yet would not compel you to proud ornaments.

11. These things I have written to you, since you thought that I was to be consulted, not that I should break your right institute by my speech, but because you acting inordinately and incautiously, I grieved at the fact of your husband. Concerning whose reparation you ought to think most vehemently, if you truly wish to pertain to Christ. Put on therefore humility of mind, and that God may conserve you persevering, do not condemn your husband perishing. Pour out pious and assiduous prayers for him, sacrifice tears as the blood of a wounded heart. And write a satisfaction to him, asking pardon, because you sinned against him, in that besides his counsel and will you did with your things what you thought was to be done, not that it should repent you to have given to the poor, but to have been unwilling to have him as a participant and moderator of your good work. Promise for the rest in the help of the Lord, if it shall also have repented him of his turpitude, and he shall have repeated the continence which he deserted, that you will serve him, as it becomes, in all things; lest perhaps, as the Apostle says, God give him repentance, and he recover himself from the snares of the devil, by whom he is held captive according to his will (2 Tim. 2:25, 26). But as for your son, since you received him from legitimate and honest nuptials, who knows not that he is more in the father's power than in yours? And therefore he cannot be denied to him, wherever he shall have known him to be, and shall have demanded by right: and through this that he may be able to be nourished and erudited in the wisdom of God according to your will, your concord is also necessary for him.

EPISTOLA CCLXIII . Augustinus Sapidæ virgini, renuntiat se accepisse tunicam ipsius manibus contextam fratri, quem ipsa mortuum lugebat; jamque eam, quod Sapidæ praeberi sibi solatium expetierat, induisse: caeterum adhortans ad uberiores verioresque consolationem usurpandam ex Scripturarum divinarum fide.

Dominae religiosissimae et sanctae filiae SAPIDAE, AUGUSTINUS, in Domino salutem.

1. Accepi quod de justis et piis laboribus manuum tuarum me accipere voluisti, ne te gravius contristarem, quam potius consolandam viderem: praesertim quia hoc ipsum tuum non parvum deputasti esse solatium, si eam, quam germano tuo sancto Dei ministro feceras tunicam, ego induerer; cum jam a terra morientium recedens nullis rebus corruptibilibus indigeret. Feci ergo quod desiderasti, et quaecumque hoc existima veris, vel quantulumcumque solatium, tuo erga fratrem pectori non negavi. Missam abs te tunicam accepi, et quando haec ad te scripsi, ea me vestire jam coeperam. Bono animo esto; sed multo melioribus, multoque majoribus consolationibus utere, ut nubilum tui cordis humana infirmitate contractum, serenetur auctoritate divina: et perseveranter ita vive, ut cum fratre vivas; quoniam sic mortuus est tuus frater, ut vivat.

2. Est quidem materies lacrymarum, quod germanum dilectorem tuum, teque plurimum pro tua vita et sacrae virginitatis professione reverentem, diaconum Carthaginensis Ecclesiae non vides, sicut solebas, intrantem et exeuntem, et in sui ecclesiastici officii strenuitate versantem; et honorifica illa ab eo verba non audis, quae tuae germanitatis sanctitati, morigero, pio et officioso impendebat affectu. Haec cum cogitantur, et consuetudinis violentia requiritur, cor pungitur, et tanquam sanguis cordis fletus exoritur. Sed sursum sit cor, et sicci erunt oculi. Neque enim quia ista, quae tibi moeres esse subtracta, suo temporali cursu praeterierunt, ideo periit illa charitas qua Timotheus Sapidam dilexit, et diligit: manet illa servata in thesauro suo, et abscondita est cum Christo in Domino. Qui diligunt aurum, numquid perdunt quando recondunt? nonne tunc de illo, quantum fieri potest, securiores fiunt, cum remotum a suis oculis locis tutioribus servant? Itane vero terrena cupiditas munitius se habere putat, si non videat id quod amat; et coelestis charitas dolet, tanquam amiserit quod in horrea superna praemiserit.

LETTER 263. Augustine to Sapida a virgin, renounces that he has received a tunic woven by her hands for her brother, whom she was mourning as dead; and already that he has put it on, because Sapida had desired solace to be provided to her; for the rest exhorting to take up a more abundant and truer consolation from the faith of the divine Scriptures.

To the most religious lady and holy daughter SAPIDA, AUGUSTINE, health in the Lord.

1. I received what you wished me to receive from the just and pious labors of your hands, lest I should sadden you more gravely, whom I rather saw to-be-consolated: especially because you deputed this very thing to be no small solace of yours, if I should put on that tunic which you had made for your brother a holy minister of God; since already receding from the land of the dying he should need no corruptible things. I did therefore what you desired, and however you shall have estimated this, or how small soever a solace, I did not deny it to your breast toward your brother. I received the tunic sent by you, and when I wrote these things to you, I had already begun to clothe myself with it. Be of good mind; but use much better and much greater consolations, so that the cloud of your heart contracted by human infirmity, may be made serene by divine authority: and perseveringly so live, that you may live with your brother; since your brother so died, that he may live.

2. There is indeed material for tears, that you do not see your brother who loved you, and who revered you very much for your life and profession of sacred virginity, a deacon of the Church of Carthage, as you were accustomed, entering and going out, and conversing in the strenuousness of his ecclesiastical office; and you do not hear those honorific words from him, which he was bestowing with compliant, pious and dutiful affection upon the sanctity of your brotherhood. When these things are thought upon, and are required by the violence of custom, the heart is pricked, and weeping arises as the blood of the heart. But let the heart be upwards, and the eyes will be dry. For neither because these things, which you mourn to have been subtracted from you, passed by in their temporal course, did that charity therefore perish with which Timothy loved Sapida, and loves: that remains saved in its own treasure, and is hidden with Christ in the Lord. Do those who love gold lose it when they store it away? do they not then become more secure concerning it, as much as can be, when they serve it removed from their eyes in safer places? Thus truly does terrestrial cupidity think that it has itself more fortifiedly, if it should not see that which it loves; and celestial charity grieves, as if it had lost what it had sent before into the supernal barns.

Sapida, quod vocaris attende, et quae sursum sunt sape, ubi Christus est ad dexteram Dei sedens (Coloss. III, 1-3); qui pro nobis dignatus est mori, ut viveremus etiam mortui; et ne mors ipsa ab homine, tanquam consumptura hominem, timeretur; nec mortuorum quisquam, pro quibus vita mortua est, tanquam vitam perdiderit, doleatur. Haec atque hujusmodi tua sint divina solatia quibus erubescat et cedat humana tristitia.

3. Non quidem succensendum est de charis mortuis dolori mortalium; sed diuturnus dolor non debet esse fidelium. Si ergo contristata es, jam sit satis; nec sic contristeris quemadmodum Gentes, quae spem non habent (I Thess. IV, 12). Non enim constriari prohibuit Paulus apostolus, cum hoc diceret, sed sic contristari quemadmodum Gentes, quae spem non habent. Nam et Martha et Maria, piaae sorores et fideles, resurrectorum suum fratrem Lazarum flebant, quamvis eum tunc ad hanc vitam rediturum esse nescirent: et ipse Dominus eundem, quem fuerat resuscitaturus, Lazarum flevit (Joan. XI, 19-35); nimirum ut fleamus etiam nos eos mortuos quos ad veram vitam resurrecturos credimus, etsi non jussit praecepto, concessit exemplo. Nec frustra Scriptura dicit in libro Ecclesiastico, In mortuo produc lacrymas, et quasi dira perpeusus incipe tamentationem: sed paulo post ait, et consolare propter iristitiam; a tristitia enim procedit mors, et tristitia cordis flectet fortitudinem (Eccli. XXXVIII, 16-19).

4. Frater tuus, filia, mente vivit, carne dormit; numquid qui dormit, non adjiciet ut resurgat (Psal. XL, 9)? Deus qui spiritum ejus jam suscepit, restituet ei corpus suum, quod non perdendum abstulit, sed reddendum distulit. Nulla est igitur causa tristitiae diuturnae, quia potior est causa laetitiae sempiternae. Quandoquidem germani tui nec pars ipsa mortalis, quae in terra sepulta est, tibi peribit; in qua tibi praesentabatur, per quam te alloquebatur, tecumque colloquebatur; ex qua promebat vocem sic tuis auribus notam, quemadmodum faciem tuis oculis offerebat, ita ut ubicumque sonuisset, etiam non visus soleret agnosci. Haec enim vivorum sensibus subtrahuntur, ut dolorem faciat absentia mortuorum. Sed quando nec ipsa in aeternum corpora peribunt, uti nec capillus capitis peribit (Luc. XXI, 18), et ad tempus deposita sic recipientur, ut nunquam ulterius deponantur, sed in melius demutata firmentur; profecto major est causa gratulationis in spe inaestimabilis aeternitatis, quam causa moeroris in re brevissimi temporis. Hanc spem non habent Gentes, nescientes Scripturas neque virtutem Dei (Matth. XXII, 29); qui potest perdita reparare, et vivificare mortua, et redintegrare corrupta, et separata iterum jungere, et corrupta atque finita deinceps sine fine servare.

Sapida, attend to what you are called, and taste those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God (Coloss. 3:1-3); who deigned to die for us, that we might live even being dead; and lest death itself should be feared by man, as if about to consume man; nor should anyone of the dead, for whom life died, be mourned as if he had lost life. Let these and such-like things be your divine solaces by which human sadness may blush and yield.

3. One must not indeed be incensed at the grief of mortals concerning dear dead ones; but there ought not to be long-continued grief of the faithful. If therefore you have been saddened, let it now be enough; nor should you be so saddened as the Gentiles, who have no hope (1 Thess. 4:12). For Paul the apostle did not prohibit being saddened, when he said this, but so to be saddened as the Gentiles, who have no hope. For both Martha and Mary, pious and faithful sisters, were weeping for their brother Lazarus about to rise again, although they knew not that he was then about to return to this life: and the Lord Himself wept for the same Lazarus, whom He was about to resuscitate (John 11:19-35); doubtless that we also should weep for those dead ones whom we believe about to rise again to true life, even if He did not order it by precept, He conceded it by example. Nor in vain does Scripture say in the book of Ecclesiasticus, *Over the dead bring forth tears, and as having suffered dire things begin lamentation:* but a little after it says, *and console thyself on account of sadness; for from sadness proceedeth death, and the sadness of the heart shall bend strength* (Ecclus. 38:16-19).

4. Your brother, daughter, lives in mind, sleeps in flesh; will he not who sleeps, add that he should rise again (Ps. 40:9)? God who has already received his spirit, will restore to him his body, which He took away not to be lost, but deferred to be rendered. There is therefore no cause for long-continued sadness, because the cause of sempiternal gladness is more powerful. Since indeed not even that mortal part of your brother, which is buried in the earth, will perish for you; in which he was presented to you, through which he was addressing you, and talking with you; from which he was bringing forth a voice so known to your ears, just as he was offering a face to your eyes, so that wherever it had sounded, even not seen he was accustomed to be recognized. For these things are subtracted from the senses of the living, that the absence of the dead may make grief. But when not even those bodies will perish for eternity, as neither a hair of the head will perish (Luke 21:18), and being laid aside for a time will be so received, that they may never further be laid aside, but being changed into better may be firmed; surely greater is the cause of congratulation in the hope of inestimable eternity, than the cause of mourning in a thing of shortest time. This hope the Gentiles have not, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God (Matt. 22:29); who can repair lost things, and vivify dead things, and reintegrate corrupted things, and join again separated things, and preserve corrupted and finished things henceforth without end.

Haec facturum se esse promisit, qui ex his fidem fecit, quae jam promissa perfecit. Haec tecum sermocinetur fides tua, quoniam non fraudabitur spes tua, etsi nunc differatur charitas tua: haec meditare; his uberius et verius consolare. Si enim, quia vestior (quoniam ille non potuit) ea veste quam fratri texueras, te aliquid consolatur; quanto debes amplius et certius consolari, quia cui fuerat praeparata, tunc incorruptibili indumento nullo egens, incorruptione atque immortalitate vestietur!

EPISTOLA CCLXIV Consolatur Maximam piam feminam, quae aegre admodum et perturbato aliquantum animo videbat noxiis erroribus periclitari provinciam suam (forte Hispaniam, ubi «perniciosae doctrinae animas, multo infelicius quam corpora barbaricus gladius, trucidabant,» quando inde Orosius in Africam venit, uti dicitur supra in Epist. 166, n. 2, et in Orosii Commonitorio, tom. 6).

Honorabili et eximiae atque in membris Christi laudabili famulae Dei MAXIMAE, AUGUSTINUS, in Domino salutem.

1. Quantum nos tuum studium sanctum laetificat, tantum rursus contristat quod per errores noxios et perniciosissimos provinciam vestram nimium periclitari significas. Sed quia ista futura praedicta sunt, mirandum non est quod exsurgant, sed vigilandum ne noceant. Haec autem Deus liberator noster exurgere non permetteret, nisi sanctis ejus etiam per hujusmodi tentationes erudiri expediret. Comparant sibi quidem illi sua voluntate perversa, et praesentis meritum caecitatis et futuri aeterni supplicii, si per contumaciam indociles fuerint, seque, cum in hac vita sunt, corrigere atque emendare neglexerint. Verumtamen, sicut ipsi male utuntur bonis Dei, qui facit solem suum oriri super bonos et malos, et pluit super justos et injustos (Matth. V, 45); qui eos per patientiam suam ad poenitentiam vocat, cum thesaurizant sibi iram in die irae, et revelationis justi iudicii Dei (Rom. II, 4, 5): sicut ergo ipsi benignitate et patientia, id est bonis Dei male utuntur, dum non corriguntur; sic contra, Deus etiam malis eorum bene utitur, non solum ad justitiam suam, qua eis digna in fine retribuet, sed etiam ad exercitationem et provectum sanctorum suorum, ut ex ipsa etiam malorum perversitate boni proficiant, et probentur, et manifestentur; sicut Apostolus ait, Oportet haereses esse, ut probati manifesti fiant inter vos (I Cor. XI, 19).

He promised that He would do these things, who made faith from these things, which being already promised He perfected. Let your faith talk these things with you, since your hope will not be defrauded, even if your charity be now deferred: meditate on these things; by these be more abundantly and truly consoled. For if, because I am clothed (since he could not) with that garment which you had woven for your brother, something consoles you; how much more and more certainly ought you to be consoled, because for whom it had been prepared, then needing no garment, he will be clothed with incorruption and immortality!

LETTER 264. He consoles Maxima a pious woman, who was seeing with quite a bit of difficulty and a somewhat perturbed mind her province (perhaps Spain, where "pernicious doctrines were slaughtering souls, much more unhappily than the barbaric sword the bodies," when Orosius came thence into Africa, as is said above in Epist. 166, n. 2, and in Orosius's *Commonitory*, tom. 6) to be endangered by noxious errors.

To the honorable and distinguished and in the members of Christ laudable hand-maid of God MAXIMA, AUGUSTINE, health in the Lord.

1. As much as your holy study gladdens us, so much on the other hand it saddens us that you signify your province to be exceedingly endangered through noxious and most pernicious errors. But because these things were predicted as about to be, it is not to be wondered at that they arise, but to be watched lest they harm. But God our liberator would not permit these things to arise, unless it were expedient for His saints to be erudited even through temptations of this kind. Those indeed compare for themselves by their own perverse will, both the merit of present blindness and of future eternal punishment, if through contumacy they shall have been indocile, and shall have neglected to correct and emend themselves while they are in this life. Nevertheless, just as they themselves use badly the goods of God, who makes His sun to rise over the good and the evil, and rains over the just and the unjust (Matt. 5:45); who calls them through His patience to repentance, while they treasure up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath, and of the revelation of the just judgment of God (Rom. 2:4, 5): as therefore they use badly the benignity and patience, that is the goods of God, while they are not corrected; so on the contrary, God uses well even their evils, not only for His own justice, by which He will retribute worthy things to them in the end, but even for the exercise and progress of His saints, so that from the very perversity of the evil the good may profit, and be proved, and be manifested; as the Apostle says, *It behooveth that there be heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you* (1 Cor. 11:19).

2. Nam si nullus etiam malorum bonus usus esset Deo ad utilitatem electorum suorum, qui etiam de malo Judae tantum bonum nobis praestitit, ut Christi sanguine redimeremur; poterat eos aut nasci non permittere, quos malos futuros esse praesciebat, aut in ipso eorum initio malignitatis extinguere: sed tantum eos permittit esse, quantum novit expedire atque sufficere admonendae atque exercendae sanctae domui suae. Ideo nostram de illis tristitiam consolatur: quia et ipsa tristitia quam pro illis habemus, nos relevat; illos autem in sua perversitate perseverantes gravat. Gaudium vero quod percipimus quando aliqui ex eis correcti in melius commutantur, et sanctorum societati copulantur, nulli gaudio in hac vita comparari potest. Propterea scriptum est: Fili, si sapiens fueris, tibi sapiens eris et proximis tuis; si autem malus evaseris, solus hauries mala (Prov. IX, 12). Quia cum gaudemus de fidelibus et justis, et illis et nobis prodest bonum eorum; cum autem contristamur de infidelibus et iniquis, illis solis nocet et eorum malitia et nostra tristitia: nos autem etiam hoc plurimum adjuvat apud Deum, quod pro eis misericorditer contristamur, et pro ipsa tristitia congemiscimus et oramus. Unde honorabilis et in Christo laudabilis famula Dei, et moestitiam tuam de talibus, et vigilantiam atque cautelam contra tales, quam tuis litteris expressisti, multum approbo et laudo: atque ut in hac via perseveranter ambules, pro meis viribus, quia hoc exigis, et hortor, et moneo ut miserearis eorum tanquam simplex ut columba, caveas autem illos tanquam astuta sicut serpens (Matth. X, 16); desque operam, quantum potes, ut qui tibi adhaerent, tecum in recta fide permaneant, aut ad fidem rectam, si forte in aliquo aliqui depravati sunt, corrigantur.

3. De homine autem quem suscepit Verbum Dei, cum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis (Joan. I, 14), emendarem aliquid, si in eo quod credis, falsum aut perversum invenirem. Hoc ergo crede quod credis, quia in illo homine totam naturam nostram suscepit Filius Dei, id est et animam rationalem et carnem mortalem sine peccato. Infirmittatis enim nostrae particeps factus est, non iniquitatis, ut per infirmitatem communem, solveret iniquitatem nostram, et adduceret nos ad justitiam suam, bibens mortem de nostro, et propinans vitam de suo. Sed si habes aliquam scripturam eorum, in qua asserunt quod huic fidei sit contrarium, dignare eam mittere, ut non solum fidem nostram dicamus, sed eorum quoque perfidiam, quantum possumus, refellamus. Sine dubio enim hoc ipsum, quod perverse et impie sentiunt, aliquibus testimoniis divinarum Scripturarum conantur astruere: in quibus eis ostendendum est quam non recte intelligant Litteras sacras conscriptas ad fidelium salutem; tanquam si quisquam se medicinalibus ferramentis graviter vexet, quae utique non ad vulnerandum, sed ad sanandum sunt instituta.

2. For if there were no good use even of the evil for God for the utility of His elect, who even from the evil of Judas provided so much of a good to us, that we should be redeemed by the blood of Christ; He could either not permit them to be born, whom He foreknew would be evil, or extinguish them in the very beginning of their malignancy: but He permits them to be so much, as He knows to be expedient and to suffice for the admonishing and exercising of His holy house. Therefore He consoles our sadness concerning them: because even that very sadness which we have for them, relieves us; but it weighs down those who persevere in their perversity. But the joy which we perceive when some of them being corrected are changed into better, and are coupled to the society of the saints, can be compared to no joy in this life. Therefore it is written: *Son, if thou shalt be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself and thy neighbors; but if thou shalt escape being evil, thou alone shalt draw evils* (Prov. 9:12). Because when we rejoice concerning the faithful and just, their good profits both them and us; but when we are saddened concerning the infidel and iniquitous, both their malice and our sadness harms them alone: but this also helps us very much with God, that we are mercifully saddened for them, and we groan together and pray for that very sadness. Whence, honorable and in Christ laudable handmaid of God, both your sadness concerning such ones, and the vigilance and caution against such ones, which you expressed by your letters, I much approve and praise: and that you should walk perseveringly in this way, according to my forces, because you exact this, I both exhort and move you that you should pity them as simple as a dove, but avoid them as astute as a serpent (Matt. 10:16); and give effort, as much as you can, that those who adhere to you, may remain with you in the right faith, or be corrected to the right faith, if perhaps some have been depraved in anything.

3. But concerning the man whom the Word of God took up, when it was made flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), I would emend anything, if I should find in that which you believe, anything false or perverse. Therefore believe this which you believe, because in that man the Son of God took up our whole nature, that is both a rational soul and mortal flesh without sin. For He was made a participant of our infirmity, not of iniquity, so that through common infirmity, He might loose our iniquity, and lead us to His own justice, drinking death from ours, and propining life from His own. But if you have any writing of theirs, in which they assert what is contrary to this faith, deign to send it, so that we may not only say our faith, but also rehell their perfidy, as much as we can. For without doubt this very thing, which they think perversely and impiously, they try to astruel with some testimonies of the divine Scriptures: in which it is to be shown to them how not rightly they understand the sacred Letters conscribed for the salvation of the faithful; as if anyone should gravely vex himself with medicinal iron tools, which surely were instituted not for wounding, but for healing.

Multum autem laboravimus et laboramus, quantum Dominus donat, contra diversos errores arguendos. Sed laborum nostrorum opuscula si forte habere desideras, mitte qui tibi describant. Voluit enim Deus ut hoc facillime possis, qui tibi dedit unde possis.

EPISTOLA CCLXV.

Augustinus Seleucianae, de baptismo et poenitentia Petri, contra quemdam novatianum.

Religiosissimae et in Christi dilectione honorandae famulae Dei SELEUCIANAE, AUGUSTINUS episcopus, in Domino salutem.

1. Lectis litteris tuis de salute vestra laetatus, ad ea quae scripsisti, respondere non distuli. Et primum miratus sum quomodo dicat novatianus iste Petrum baptizatum non fuisse, cum paulo superius scripseris eum dixisse quod Apostoli fuerint baptizati. Unde illi videatur quod inter Apostolos baptizatos Petrus non fuerit baptizatus, ignoro: et ideo exemplum epistolae tuae, ne forsitan tu non habeas, misi tibi, in quo diligentius consideres ad ea me respondere quae inveni in litteris tuis; si enim notarius non mendose excepit aut scripsit, nescio quale cor habeat qui cum Apostolos baptizatos dicat, Petrum baptizatum negat.

2. Quod autem Petrus dicitur egisse poenitentiam, cavendum est ne ita putetur egisse, quomodo agunt in Ecclesia qui proprie poenitentes vocantur. Et quis hoc ferat, ut primum Apostolorum, inter tales poenitentes numerandum putemus? Poenituit enim eum negasse Christum, quod ejus indicant lacrymae: sic enim scriptum est, quia flevit amare (Matth. XXVI, 75). Nondum enim fuerant resurrectione Domini confirmati, et illo adventu Spiritus sancti qui apparuit die Pentecostes, vel illa inspiratione quam demonstravit Dominus posteaquam resurrexit a mortuis, cum insufflavit in eorum faciem, dicens: Accipite Spiritum sanctum (Joan. XX, 22).

3. Unde recte dici potest, quia cum Petrus negavit Dominum, nondum fuerant Apostoli baptizati; non tamen aqua, sed Spiritu sancto. Hoc enim eis dixit postquam resurrexit, et conversatus est cum eis: Joannes quidem baptizavit aqua, vos autem Spiritu sancto baptizabimini, quem et accepturi estis non post multos hos dies (Act. I, 5). Aliqui autem codices habent, Vos autem Spiritu sancto incipietis baptizari: sed sive dicatur, baptizabimini, sive dicatur, incipietis baptizari, ad rem nihil interest.

But we have labored much and do labor, as much as the Lord grants, against various errors to be argued. But if perhaps you desire to have the small works of our labors, send those who may describe them for you. For God willed that you should be able to do this most easily, who gave to you whence you could.

LETTER 265.

Augustine to Seleuciana, concerning the baptism and repentance of Peter, against a certain Novatianist.

To the most religious handmaid of God and to-be-honored in the love of Christ SELEUCIANA, AUGUSTINE bishop, health in the Lord.

1. Your letters having been read I rejoiced concerning your safety, and to those things which you wrote, I did not defer to respond. And first I wondered how that Novatianist says Peter not to have been baptized, when a little above you wrote him to have said that the Apostles had been baptized. Whence it may seem to him that among the baptized Apostles Peter was not baptized, I am ignorant: and therefore I sent to you an exemplar of your letter, lest perhaps you do not have it, in which you may consider more diligently that I respond to those things which I found in your letters; for if the notary did not mendaciously take down or write, I know not what kind of heart he has who when he says the Apostles were baptized, denies Peter to have been baptized.

2. But regarding what is said of Peter having done penance (*poenitentiam*), we must take care lest it be thought he did it in the way those do in the Church who are properly called penitents. And who would bear this, that we should think the first of the Apostles was to be numbered among such penitents? For he repented of having denied Christ, which his tears indicate: for thus it is written, that he wept bitterly (Matth. XXVI, 75). For they had not yet been confirmed by the resurrection of the Lord, and by that advent of the Holy Spirit which appeared on the day of Pentecost, or by that inspiration which the Lord demonstrated after He rose from the dead, when He breathed upon their faces, saying: Receive the Holy Spirit (John XX, 22).

3. Whence it can rightly be said, that when Peter denied the Lord, the Apostles had not yet been baptized; not indeed with water, but with the Holy Spirit. For He said this to them after He rose, and conversed with them: John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, whom you are also about to receive not after many of these days (Acts I, 5). But some codices have, But you shall begin to be baptized with the Holy Spirit: but whether it be said, you shall be baptized, or it be said, you shall begin to be baptized, it is of no consequence to the matter.

Nam in quibuscumque codicibus invenitur, baptizabitis, aut, incipietis baptizare, mendosi sunt; qui ex graecis facillime convincuntur. Si autem dicimus aqua non fuisse baptizatos, metuendum est ne graviter in eis erremus, ne demus hominibus auctoritatem contemnendi Baptismum; quem usque adeo non contemnendum ipsa apostolica disciplina commendat, ut Cornelius centurio et ii qui cum illo erant, etiam jam accepto Spiritu sancto, fuerint baptizati (Id. X, 48).

4. Sicut antiqui justi si non circumciderentur, non erat eis peccatum; postea vero quam jussit Deus ut circumcideretur Abraham ejusque posteritas, jam si non fieret, grave peccatum fuit: sic etiam postquam Dominus Christus in Ecclesia sua sacramentum Novi Testamenti pro circumcisione carnis sanctum baptismum dedit, et apertissime dixit, Si quis non renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu sancto, non intrabit in regnum coelorum (Joan. III, 5), jam non debemus quaerere quando quisque fuerit baptizatus; sed quoscumque legimus in corpore Christi, quod est Ecclesia, pertinere ad regnum coelorum, nonnisi baptizatos intelligere debemus: nisi forte quos angustia passionis invenit, et nolentes negare Christum, antequam baptizarentur occisi sunt, quibus ipsa passio pro Baptismo deputata est. Sed numquid hoc possumus de Apostolis dicere, qui usque adeo longum tempus habuerunt quo baptizarentur, ut alios etiam baptizaverint? Sed non omnia quae facta sunt, etiam scripta inveniuntur; verumtamen facta esse ex caeteris documentis probantur. Scriptum est quando baptizatus sit apostolus Paulus (Act. IX, 18), et scriptum non est quando baptizati sint alii Apostoli; verumtamen etiam ipsos baptizatos intelligere debemus: quemadmodum scriptum est quando baptizatae sint plebes Ecclesiarum in Jerusalem (Id. II, 41) et Samaria (Id. VIII, 12); quando autem baptizatae sint aliae plebes gentium, quibus Apostoli Epistolas miserunt, non est utique scriptum, et tamen etiam ipsas baptizatas utique minime dubitamus propter illam Domini sententiam, Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aqua et Spiritu sancto, non intrabit in regnum coelorum.

5. Utrumque autem de Domino scriptum est, et quia baptizabat plures quam Joannes, et quia ipse non baptizabat, sed discipuli ejus; ut intelligeremus et ipsum quidem baptizasse praesentia majestatis, non tamen ipsum baptizasse manibus suis. Ipsius enim erat Baptismi sacramentum; ad Discipulos autem baptizandi ministerium pertinebat. Tunc ergo quando dicit Joannes evangelista in Evangelio suo, Post haec exiit Jesus et discipuli ejus in Judaeam terram, et illic morabatur cum eis, et baptizabat (Joan. III, 22): tunc paulo post de illo loquens ait, Ut ergo cognovit Jesus quia audierunt Pharisei quod Jesus plures discipulos faceret, et baptizaret plures quam Joannes (quanquam Jesus ipse non baptizaret, sed discipuli ejus), reliquit Judaeam, et abiit iterum in Galilaeam (Id. IV, 1-3).

For in whatever codices it is found, you shall baptize, or, you shall begin to baptize, they are faulty; which are most easily convinced from the Greek. But if we say they were not baptized with water, it is to be feared lest we err gravely concerning them, lest we give to men the authority of contemning Baptism; which the apostolic discipline itself commends as so much not to be contemned, that Cornelius the centurion and those who were with him, even having already received the Holy Spirit, were baptized (Id. X, 48).

4. Just as if the ancient just were not circumcised, it was not a sin for them; but after God commanded that Abraham and his posterity be circumcised, then if it were not done, it was a grave sin: so also after the Lord Christ gave in His Church the sacrament of the New Testament for the circumcision of the flesh, namely holy baptism, and most openly said, Unless anyone be reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven (John III, 5), now we ought not to ask when each one was baptized; but whomever we read in the body of Christ, which is the Church, to belong to the kingdom of heaven, we ought to understand as nothing but baptized: unless perhaps those whom the straits of passion found, and unwilling to deny Christ, were killed before they were baptized, to whom the passion itself was deputed for Baptism. But can we say this of the Apostles, who had so ample a time in which they might be baptized, that they even baptized others? But not all things that were done are also found written; nevertheless they are proved to have been done from other documents. It is written when the apostle Paul was baptized (Acts IX, 18), and it is not written when the other Apostles were baptized; nevertheless we ought to understand them also to have been baptized: just as it is written when the peoples of the Churches in Jerusalem (Id. II, 41) and Samaria (Id. VIII, 12) were baptized; but when the other peoples of the gentiles were baptized, to whom the Apostles sent Epistles, it is surely not written, and yet we by no means doubt that they also were baptized on account of that sentence of the Lord, Unless anyone be reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

5. But both things are written concerning the Lord, both that He baptized more than John, and that He Himself did not baptize, but His disciples; so that we might understand both that He indeed baptized by the presence of His majesty, yet that He Himself did not baptize with His own hands. For the sacrament of Baptism was His own; but the ministry of baptizing pertained to the Disciples. Then therefore when John the evangelist says in his Gospel, After these things Jesus and His disciples went out into the land of Judea, and there He tarried with them, and baptized (John III, 22): then a little after speaking of Him he says, When therefore Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made more disciples, and baptized more than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea, and went again into Galilee (Id. IV, 1-3).

Tunc ergo quando ab Jerosolymis exiit cum discipulis suis in Judaeam terram, et illic morabatur cum eis, baptizabat non per seipsum, sed per discipulos suos; quos intelligimus jam fuisse baptizatos, sive baptismo Joannis, sicut nonnulli arbitrantur, sive quod magis credibile est, baptismo Christi. Neque enim ministerium baptizandi defugeret, ut haberet baptizatos servos, per quos caeteros baptizaret, qui non defugit memorabilis illius humilitatis ministerium, quando eis lavit pedes; et petenti Petro ut non tantum pedes, verum etiam manus et caput ei lavaret, respondit, Qui lotus est non indiget nisi ut pedes lavet, sed est mundus totus (Id. XIII, 10): ubi intelligitur quod jam Petrus baptizatus fuerat.

6. Quomodo autem iste dicat, quod in epistola tua posuisti, quod Apostoli dederint poenitentiam pro Baptismo, non evidenter expressum est. Si enim pro Baptismo ideo dicit, quia per poenitentiam remittuntur peccata, habet aliquid rationis quod dicit. Sed talis poenitenta post Baptismum potest utilis esse, si quis peccaverit. Iste autem quoniam negat post Baptismum dari poenitentiae locum, cum dicit, sicut scripsisti, poenitentiam solam ante Baptismum esse; datur intelligi sic eum dixisse quod Apostoli dederint poenitentiam pro Baptismo, ut ante Baptismum eam dederint, atque ii quibus data sit, postea non fuerint baptizati, quia eis illa pro Baptismo fuit: quod Novatianos dicere nunquam audiui. Unde quaere diligenter, ne forte alicujus alterius erroris sit, et novatianum se esse confingat, vel putet. Aut si et hoc Novatiani dicunt, nescio: illud tamen scio, quoniam quisquis hoc dicit, a regula fidei catholicae, et a doctrina Christi et Apostolorum prorsus alienus est.

7. Agunt enim homines ante Baptismum poenitentiam de suis prioribus peccatis, ita tamen ut etiam baptizentur, sicut scriptum est in Actibus Apostolorum, loquente Petro ad Judaeos et dicente: Agite poenitentiam, et baptizetur unusquisque vestrum in nomine Domini Jesu Christi; et dimittentur vobis peccata vestra (Act. II, 38). Agunt etiam homines poenitentiam, si post Baptismum ita peccaverint, ut excommunicari et postea reconciliari mereantur: sicut in omnibus Ecclesiis illi qui proprie poenitentes appellantur. De tali enim poenitentia locutus est apostolus Paulus, ubi ait: Ne iterum cum venero humiliet me Deus apud vos; et lugeam multos ex iis qui ante peccaverunt, et non egerunt poenitentiam super immunditia, et luxuria, et fornicatione quam egerunt (II Cor. XII, 21): neque enim scribebat ista, nisi eis qui jam baptizati fuerant. Habemus etiam in Actibus Apostolorum, Simonem jam baptizatum, cum pecunia vellet emere ut per impositionem manus ejus daretur Spiritus sanctus, admonitum a Petro ut de hoc gravi peccato ageret poenitentiam (Act. VIII, 18-23).

Then therefore when He went out from Jerusalem with His disciples into the land of Judea, and there He tarried with them, He baptized not through Himself, but through His disciples; whom we understand to have already been baptized, whether with the baptism of John, as some think, or what is more credible, with the baptism of Christ. For He would not shun the ministry of baptizing, so as to have baptized servants through whom He might baptize others, He who did not shun the ministry of that memorable humility, when He washed their feet; and to Peter asking that He wash not only his feet, but also his hands and his head, He responded, He who is washed needs not except that he wash his feet, but is clean all over (Id. XIII, 10): where it is understood that Peter had already been baptized.

6. But how that man says, what you have placed in your letter, that the Apostles gave penance (*poenitentiam*) in place of Baptism, is not evidently expressed. For if he says "in place of Baptism" for this reason, because through penance sins are remitted, what he says has something of reason. But such penance after Baptism can be useful, if anyone has sinned. But this man, since he denies that a place for penance is given after Baptism, when he says, as you wrote, that penance is only before Baptism; it is given to be understood that he spoke thus, that the Apostles gave penance in place of Baptism, so that they gave it before Baptism, and those to whom it was given were not afterwards baptized, because that was for them in place of Baptism: which I have never heard the Novatianists say. Whence inquire diligently, lest perhaps he be of some other error, and feign or think himself to be a Novatianist. Or if the Novatianists say this also, I do not know: this however I know, that whoever says this is altogether alien from the rule of the catholic faith, and from the doctrine of Christ and the Apostles.

For men do penance before Baptism for their prior sins, yet in such a way that they are also baptized, as it is written in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter speaking to the Jews and saying: Do penance, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and your sins shall be forgiven you (Acts II, 38). Men also do penance, if after Baptism they have so sinned that they deserve to be excommunicated and afterwards reconciled: just as in all Churches those who are properly called penitents. For of such penance the apostle Paul spoke, where he says: Lest again when I come God should humble me among you; and I should mourn many of those who sinned before, and have not done penance over the uncleanness, and luxury, and fornication which they have done (II Cor. XII, 21): for he was not writing these things except to those who had already been baptized. We have also in the Acts of the Apostles, Simon having already been baptized, when he wished to buy with money that through the imposition of his hand the Holy Spirit might be given, admonished by Peter that he should do penance for this grave sin (Acts VIII, 18-23).

8. Est etiam poenitentia bonorum et humilium fidelium pene quotidiana, in qua pectora tundimus dicentes: Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris (Matth. VI, 12). Neque enim ea nobis dimitti volumus, quae dimissa non dubitamus in Baptismo; sed illa utique quae humanae fragilitati, quamvis parva, tamen crebra subrepunt: quae si collecta contra nos fuerint, ita nos gravabunt et opprimunt, sicut unum aliquod grande peccatum. Quid enim interest ad naufragium, utrum uno grandi fluctu navis operiatur et obruatur, an paulatim subrepens aqua in sentinam, et per negligentiam derelicta atque contempta, impleat navem atque submergat? Propter haec jejunia et eleemosynae et orationes invigilant: in quibus cum dicimus, Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus, manifestamus habere nos quod nobis dimittatur; atque in iis verbis humiliantes animas nostras, quotidianam quodammodo agere poenitentiam non cessamus. Ad ea quae scripsisti, puto me breviter sed sufficienter respondisse: superest ut ille non sit contentiosus, propter quem lucrandum ad me tales litteras destinandas putasti.

EPISTOLA CCLXVI.

Augustinus Florentinae puellae studiosae, offerens suam docendi operam, si proferat quid velit exponi.

Dominae eximiae, meritoque honorabili in Christo ac suscipiendae filiae FLORENTINAE, AUGUSTINUS episcopus, in Domino salutem.

1. Sanctum propositum tuum, et invisceratus cordi tuo timor Domini castus permanens in saeculum saeculi, (Psal. XVIII, 10) curam pro te nostram non solum in precibus apud Deum, verum etiam in admonitionibus ad te ipsam non mediocriter suscitatur. Quod quidem in epistolis meis, quas ad matrem Reverentiae tuae debito mihi cum honore nominandam dedi, non semel feci. Sed quia hoc mihi rescribere dignata est, prius te velle accipere litteras meas; tunc demum, si quid forte opus esset tibi ex ministerio meo, quod venerando studio tuo omniumque talium, quantum possum, libera servitute debere me novi, non te esse taciturnam et rescribendo insinuaturnam: ecce feci quod te voluisses, quamvis non per te, comperi; ne viderer tibi ostium fiducia inhumaniter claudere: superest ut promas ipsa, si quid ex me quaerendum putas. Aut enim scio quod inquisieris, et non negabo: aut ita nescio, ut nullo fidei salutisque detrimento nesciam, et de hoc etiam teipsam, si potuero, faciam reddita ratione securam. Aut certe, si et nescio, et tamen sciendum est, vel impetrabo a Domino ne tibi desim; nam saepe officium impertiendi meritum est accipiendi: vel ita tibi respondebo, ut noveris pro hac ipsa re quam pariter nescimus, ad quem pulsare debeamus.

8. There is also the almost daily penance of the good and humble faithful, in which we beat our breasts saying: Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matth. VI, 12). For we do not wish those things to be forgiven us, which we do not doubt were forgiven in Baptism; but those things surely which, although small, yet frequent, creep upon human fragility: which if they were collected against us, would so weigh us down and oppress us, as some one large xsin. For what difference does it make for a shipwreck, whether the ship be covered and overwhelmed by one large wave, or whether water creeping little by little into the bilge, and through negligence abandoned and contemned, fill the ship and submerge it? On account of these things fasts and alms and prayers keep watch: in which when we say, Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive, we manifest that we have what is to be forgiven us; and in these words humbling our souls, we do not cease to do, in a certain way, daily penance. To those things which you wrote, I think I have responded briefly but sufficiently: it remains that he may not be contentious, for whose sake you thought such letters were to be destined to me.

LETTER 266.

Augustine to the studious girl Florentina, offering his work of teaching, if she should bring forth what she wishes to be expounded.

To the extraordinary lady, and deservedly to-be-honored in Christ and to-be-received daughter FLORENTINA, AUGUSTINE bishop, health in the Lord.

1. Your holy purpose, and the chaste fear of the Lord (Ps. XVIII, 10) remaining forever and ever, en-viscerated in your heart, excites our care for you not moderately not only in prayers before God, but also in admonitions to yourself. Which indeed I did not once do in my letters, which I gave to the mother of your Reverence, to-be-named by me with due honor. But because she deigned to write back this to me, that you first wished to receive my letters; then at last, if perhaps there should be any need for you from my ministry, which I know I owe to your venerable study and that of all such, as much as I can, by a free servitude, that you would not be silent and would intimate by writing back: behold I have done what I found you to have willed, although not through yourself; lest I should seem to shut the door of confidence inhumanely against you: it remains that you yourself bring forth, if you think anything is to be inquired from me. For either I know what you shall have inquired, and I will not deny it: or I so know not, that with no detriment of faith and safety I know not, and concerning this I will also make yourself secure, if I can, a reason having been rendered. Or certainly, if I also know not, and yet it is to be known, either I will impetrate from the Lord that I be not wanting to you; for often the office of imparting is a merit for receiving: or I will so respond to you, that you may know for this very matter which we equally know not, at whom we ought to knock.

2. Haec ideo praelocutus sum, ne te pro certo speres quidquid a me quaesiveris audituram, et cum hoc non provenierit, audacter potius quam prudenter me fecisse arbitreris, quod tibi quaerendi si quid voles, facultatem dedi. Hoc enim feci non doctor perfectus, sed cum docendis perficiendus, domina eximia, meritoque honorabilis in Christo ac suscipienda filia. Equidem etiam in iis rebus quas utcumque scio, magis te cupio esse scientem, quam scientiae nostrae indigentem. Neque enim, ut quod scimus doceamus, aliorum ignorantiam optare debemus: multo quippe melius omnes sumus docibiles Deo; quod utique in illa superna patria, cum in nobis completum fuerit quod promissum est, perficietur, ut non dicat homo proximo suo, Cognosce Dominum: omnes enim cognoscent eum, sicut scriptum est, a minore usque ad majorem eorum (Jerem. XXXI, 34). Et sollicitissime cavendum est in docendo superbiae vitium, quod in discendo non ita est. Unde et sancta Scriptura nos admonet, dicens: Sit omnis homo velox ad audiendum, tardus autem ad loquendum (Jacobi I, 19): et ille in Psalmo ait, Auditui meo dabis exultationem et laetitiam; continuoque subjicit, Et exultabunt ossa humiliata (Psal. L, 10). Vidit enim in audiendo facillime servari humilitatem, quae difficilis est in docendo; quoniam necesse est ut doctor habeat superiorem locum, ubi laboriosum est obtinere ne subrepat elatio.

3. Videsne quemadmodum periclitemur a quibus hoc exspectatur, ut non solum doctores simus, verum etiam cum simus homines, divina doceamus? Sed laborum periculorumque nostrorum singulare est solatium, cum ita proficitis, ut illo perveniat ubi nullius hominis doctoris egeatis. Isto autem periculo non tantum nos; nam ad illum de quo dicturus sum, quid sumus nos? non ergo nos tantum periculo isto, sed etiam ille Doctor Gentium periclitatum se esse testatur, cum dicit: Ne magnitudine revelationum mearum extollar, datus est mihi stimulus carnis (II Cor. XII, 7) etc. Unde et ipse Dominus, tumoris hujus admirabilis medicus, Nolite, inquit, ab hominibus vocari Rabbi; unus est enim magister vester Christus (Matth. XXIII, 8): quod retinens idem ipse Doctor Gentium dicit, Neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat; sed qui incrementum dat Deus (I Cor. III, 7). Hoc et ille meminit qui in natis mulierum quanto magnus erat (Matth. XI, 11), tanto se in omnibus humiliabat (Eccli. III, 20), indignum se affirmans qui Christi calceamenta portaret (Luc. III, 16). Quid enim aliud ostendit ubi ait: Qui habet sponsam, sponsus est; amicus autem sponsi stat et audit eum, et gaudio gaudet propter vocem sponsi (Joan. III, 29)? Hic est ille auditus, de quo paulo ante commemoravi in Psalmo positum: Auditui meo dabis exultationem et laetitiam, et exultabunt ossa humiliata.

2. I have pre-spoken these things for this reason, lest you should hope for certain that you would hear whatever you should have asked from me, and when this should not happen, you should think me to have acted more boldly than prudently, because I gave to you the faculty of asking if you should wish anything. For I did this not as a perfect teacher, but as one to-be-perfected with those to-be-taught, extraordinary lady, and deservedly to-be-honored in Christ and to-be-received daughter. Indeed even in those things which I know in whatever way, I desire you rather to be knowing, than in need of our knowledge. For we ought not, so that we may teach what we know, to wish for the ignorance of others: for much better are we all teachable by God; which surely in that supernal fatherland, when what was promised shall have been completed in us, shall be perfected, so that man may not say to his neighbor, Know the Lord: for all shall know Him, as it is written, from the least even to the greatest of them (Jerem. XXXI, 34). And the vice of pride is most solicitously to be guarded against in teaching, which is not so in learning. Whence also holy Scripture admonishes us, saying: Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak (James I, 19): and he in the Psalm says, To my hearing you shall give exultation and gladness; and immediately he added, And the humbled bones shall exult (Ps. L, 10). For he saw that in hearing humility is most easily preserved, which is difficult in teaching; since it is necessary that the teacher have a superior place, where it is laborious to obtain that elation should not creep in.

3. Do you see how we are in peril from whom this is expected, that we should not only be teachers, but also since we are men, that we should teach divine things? But there is a singular solace of our labors and perils, when you thus profit, that you arrive there where you should stand in need of no human teacher. But in this peril not only we are; for compared to him of whom I am about to speak, what are we? therefore not only we are in this peril, but also that Teacher of the Gentiles testifies himself to have been in peril, when he says: Lest I should be extolled by the magnitude of my revelations, there was given to me a sting of the flesh (II Cor. XII, 7) etc. Whence also the Lord Himself, the admirable physician of this tumor, says: Be not called Rabbi by men; for one is your master, Christ (Matth. XXIII, 8): which the same Teacher of the Gentiles retaining says, Neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; but God who gives the increase (I Cor. III, 7). This also he remembered who among those born of women was so great (Matth. XI, 11), yet so much humbled himself in all things (Eccli. III, 20), affirming himself unworthy to carry the shoes of Christ (Luke III, 16). For what else does he show where he says: He who has the bride, is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom stands and hears him, and rejoices with joy on account of the voice of the bridegroom (John III, 29)? This is that hearing, of which a little before I commemorated as placed in the Psalm: To my hearing you shall give exultation and gladness, and the humbled bones shall exult.

4. Proinde tanto me certius, tanto solidius, tanto sanius gaudere scias de fide et spe et dilectione tua, quanto minus indigueris, non tantum a me quidquam discere, sed ab ullo prorsus hominum. Verumtamen, quia cum illic essem, te quidem per aetatem verecundante, boni parentes et amantissimi bonorum studiorum tuorum, quanto pietatis veraeque sapientiae ardore flagrares, mihi intimare dignati sunt, et benevolentissime petierunt ne tibi instruendae, in quo opus esset, meam operulam denegarem; admonendam te his litteris credidi, secundum supra dictas optiones, ut quaeras quod vis, ne sim superfluous, si conatus fuero docere quod scis: dum tamen firmissime teneas, quod etsi aliquid salubriter per me scire potueris, ille te docebit qui est interioris hominis magister interior, qui in corde tuo tibi ostendit verum esse quod dicitur; quia neque qui plantat est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat Deus.

EPISTOLA CCLXVII.

Augustinus Fabiolae peregrinationem suam in hac vita moleste ferenti, de praesentia animorum nexu amicitiae vincitorum.

Dominae religiosissimae et praestantissimae, et in Christi charitate laudabili filiae FABIOLAE, AUGUSTINUS, in Domino salutem.

Quanquam rescripta reddideris, sic tamen legi litteras Sanctitatis tuae, ut eis respondere debitum duxerim. Doluisti enim peregrinationem, qua contingit perpetuo gaudere cum sanctis; et desiderium supernae patriae, ubi jam non terrarum spatio dividemur, sed semper unius contemplatione laetabimur, merito praetulisti, Felix es talia fideliter cogitando; amando felicior; et ideo eris etiam felicissima consequendo. Sed etiam nunc diligentius intueri unde magis dicamur absentes; utrum quia nostra invicem corpora non videmus, an quia signa non damus et recipimus animorum, quod est colloqui. Puto enim quod, licet longinquis regionibus corpore separati, si nostras cogitationes nosse possemus, magis essemus nobiscum, quam si uno in loco alter alterutrum conspicantes taciti sederemus, nulla vocibus signa sensus intimi proferentes, nullis corporum motibus nostros animos indicantes. Quocirca intelligis ideo unumquemque sibi esse praesentio rem quam alterum alteri, quod unusquisque sibi magis quam alteri notus est; non faciem suam, quae, nisi adsit speculum, gestatur et latet, sed conscientiam contuendo, quam et clausis oculis videt. Quanta est igitur etiam vita, quae pro magno habetur, nostra?

4. Therefore you may know me to rejoice so much more certainly, so much more solidly, so much more sanely concerning your faith and hope and love, as you should have less need to learn anything not only from me, but from any man at all. Nevertheless, because when I was there, you indeed being bashful through age, your good parents and most loving of your good studies, deigned to intimate to me with how great an ardor of piety and true wisdom you were burning, and most benevolently asked lest I should deny my small work for your instruction, in what there was need; I believed that you were to be admonished by these letters, according to the above said options, so that you may ask what you wish, lest I be superfluous, if I should have attempted to teach what you know: provided however you hold most firmly, that even if you could know anything healthfully through me, He will teach you who is the interior teacher of the interior man, who in your heart shows to you that what is said is true; because neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

LETTER 267.

Augustine to Fabiola grieving for her pilgrimage in this life, concerning the presence of minds bound by the bond of friendship.

To the most religious and most excellent lady, and in the charity of Christ to-be-praised daughter FABIOLA, AUGUSTINE, health in the Lord.

Although you have rendered rescripts, yet I have thus read the letters of your Holiness, that I have thought it a duty to respond to them. For you have grieved for the pilgrimage, by which it happens to rejoice perpetually with the saints; and the desire of the supernal fatherland, where now we shall not be divided by the space of lands, but shall always be gladdened by the contemplation of the One, you have deservedly preferred. You are happy in thinking such things faithfully; happier in loving; and therefore you will also be most happy in attaining. But even now look more diligently whence we may more be said to be absent; whether because we do not see our bodies in turn, or because we do not give and receive signs of our minds, which is to converse. For I think that, although separated in body in far regions, if we could know our thoughts, we would be more with ourselves, than if sitting silent in one place beholding one another, bringing forth no signs of the intimate sense with voices, indicating our minds with no movements of the bodies. Wherefore you understand that for this reason each one is more present to himself than another to another, because each one is better known to himself than to another; not by beholding his face, which, unless a mirror be present, is carried and is hidden, but by beholding his conscience, which he sees even with closed eyes. How great therefore is also our life, which is held as great?

EPISTOLA CCLXVIII . Fascius quidam aere alieno obrutus ad ecclesiam confugerat; cujus creditoribus, mutua accepta pecunia, Augustinus satisfacit: eam publica collatione per Christi fideles orat pro Fascio reddi.

Dominis dilectissimis et desiderantissimis, sanctae plebi cui ministro, membris Christi, AUGUSTINUS, in Domino salutem.

1. Notissima mihi et probatissima devotio Sanctitatis vestrae in Domino nostro Jesu Christo fiduciam dedit, ut etiam absens praesumerem unde praesens gaudere consuevi: qui semper spiritu vobiscum sum; non solum quia gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi tantae suavitatis fragrare non cessat, sed etiam quia me ipsum, qui vobis in Evangelio servio, angustiam pati non permittitis. Cum enim frater noster Fascius debito decem et septem solidorum ab oppigneratoribus urgeretur ut redderet, quod ad praesens unde explicaret se non inveniebat; ne corporalem pateretur injuriam, ad auxilium sanctae ecclesiae convolvavit: illi etiam exactores cum proficisci cogerentur, et ideo dilationem dare non possent, gravissimis me querelis oneraverunt, ita ut eis illum traderem: aut quod sibi deberi ostendebant, unde acciperent providerem. Cumque obtulissem Fascio ut vestram Sanctitatem de necessitatibus ejus alloquerer; pudore deterritus, ne facerem deprecatus est. Ita ego majore necessitate coarctatus, a fratre nostro Macedonio decem et septem solidos accepi, quos in causam ejus continuo dedi, promittente illo quod ad certum diem cum eis reddendis posset occurrere; et consentiente ut si non posset occurrere, sermo de illo fieret ad vestram misericordiam, quam fraternam fratribus exhibere consuevistis.

2. Nunc ergo quoniam absens est, restat ut subveniatis, non illi, quem nemo compellat absentem, sed pollicitationi meae, cujus existimatio vobis semper est praesens. Jam enim dies ad quem se promiserat occursurum, transactus est; et ego ei qui solidos suos fidei meae commisit, quid respondeam non invenio, nisi ut faciam quod me facturum esse promisi. Sed quoniam non sum de hac re commonitus, ut die sancto Pentecostes, quando aderat major vestra frequentia, sermonem inde facerem; peto ut has litteras pro lingua mea praesente habere dignemini, admonente vos et exhortante in cordibus vestris Deo et Domino nostro cui credidistis, qui nunquam discedit a vobis timentibus et honorantibus nomen suum. In quo vobis et nos semper conjuncti sumus, quamvis corpore a vobis profecti esse videamur; qui vobis de isto bonorum operum semine messem vitae aeternae promittit, dicente Apostolo: Bonum autem facientes non deficiamus; tempore enim suo metemus infatigabiles. Itaque, dum tempus habemus, operemur bonum ad omnes, maxime autem ad domesticos fidei (Galat. VI, 9, 10).

LETTER 268. A certain Fascius overwhelmed by debt had fled to the church; to whose creditors, money having been received as a loan, Augustine satisfied: he prays that it be repaid for Fascius by a public collation through the faithful of Christ.

To the most beloved and most longed-for lords, to the holy people to whom I minister, members of Christ, AUGUSTINE, health in the Lord.

1. Your Holiness's most known and most proved devotion in our Lord Jesus Christ has given me confidence, so that even while absent I might presume upon that which when present I was accustomed to rejoice in: I who am always with you in spirit; not only because the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ does not cease to burn with such sweetness, but also because you do not permit me myself, who serve you in the Gospel, to suffer straits. For when our brother Fascius was being urged by pledge-takers to return a debt of seventeen solidi, which at present he did not find whence he might disentangle himself; lest he should suffer corporal injury, he flew to the aid of the holy church: those exactors also since they were compelled to set out, and therefore could not give a delay, burdened me with most grave complaints, so that I should deliver him to them: or that I should provide whence they might receive what they showed was owed to them. And when I had offered to Fascius that I should speak to your Holiness concerning his necessities; deterred by shame, he prayed that I should not do it. Thus I, constrained by a greater necessity, received seventeen solidi from our brother Macedonius, which I immediately gave for his cause, he promising that on a certain day he could occur with them to be returned; and consenting that if he could not occur, a word should be made concerning him to your mercy, which you have been accustomed to exhibit fraternally to brothers.

2. Now therefore since he is absent, it remains that you should subvene, not to him, whom no one compels while absent, but to my promise, the estimation of which is always present to you. For already the day on which he had promised himself to be about to occur, has passed; and I find not what I may respond to him who committed his solidi to my faith, except that I should do what I promised I would do. But since I was not commonished concerning this matter, so that on the holy day of Pentecost, when your greater frequency was present, I might make a sermon therefrom; I ask that you deign to have these letters in place of my present tongue, God and our Lord in whom you have believed admonishing you and exhorting in your hearts, He who never departs from you who fear and honor His name. In whom we also are always joined to you, although in body we seem to have departed from you; He who promises to you from this seed of good works a harvest of eternal life, the Apostle saying: But doing good let us not fail; for in its own time we shall reap unfailing. Therefore, while we have time, let us work good to all, but especially to those of the household of faith (Gal. VI, 9, 10).

Quoniam ergo domesticus fidei est, christianus fidelis, catholicus frater noster, pro cuius supplenda necessitate vos peto ut faciatis quod Dominus imperat; sine tristitia, sine murmuratione, et cum laetitia et hilaritate facite Deo enim creditis, non homini; quia ille promittit vos nihil eorum quae misericorditer facitis, perdituros, sed in illo die cum usuris immortalibus recepturos (Matth. XXV, 34-40): et quoniam ipse Apostolus dicit, Hoc autem dico, Qui parce seminat, parce et metet (II Cor. IX, 6); intelligere debetis tempus esse ut donum vitae aeternae, cum adhuc in ista vita sumus, festinanter et alacriter comparemus: quia cum finis saeculi venerit, non dabitur nisi eis qui per fidem sibi hoc emerunt, antequam videre potuissent.

3. Scripsi etiam presbyteris, ut si quid minus fuerit post collationem Sanctitatis vestrae, compleant ex eo quod habet ecclesia, dum tamen vos secundum quod placet, hilariter offeratis: quia sive de vestro sive de ecclesia detur, omnia Dei sunt, et devotio vestra dulcior erit thesauris ecclesiae; sicut Apostolus dicit, Non quia quaero datum, sed requiro fructum (Philip. IV, 17). Laetificate ergo cor meum, quia de fructibus vestris gaudere cupio: vos enim estis arbores Dei, quas assiduis imbribus etiam per nostrum ministerium rigare dignatur. Tueatur vos Dominus ab omni malo et hic et in futuro saeculo, domini dilectissimi, et desiderantissimi fratres.

EPISTOLA CCLXIX.

Augustinus Nobilio episcopo, significans ad dedicationem novae fabricae se venire non posse.

Beatissimo ac venerabile fratri et consacerdoti NOBILIO, AUGUSTINUS.

Tanta est solemnitas ad quam me affectus tuae Fraternitatis invitat, ut corpusculum meum ad vos traheret voluntas, nisi teneret infirmitas. Possem venire si hiems non esset; possem hiemem contemnere, si juvenis essem: aut enim ferret rigorem temporis fervor aetatis, aut temperaret frigus aetatis fervor aestatis. Nunc hieme iter tam prolixum non suffero cum annositate algida quam mecum fero, domine beatissime, sancte ac venerabile frater ac consacerdos. Salutationem debitam reddo meritis tuis: salutem vero meam commendo precibus tuis, poscens et ipse a Deo Domino ut dedicationem tantae fabricae pacis prosperitas prosequatur.

EPISTOLA CCLXX. Augustino Anonymus (non enim Hieronymus, uti ex stilo liquet, tametsi in ipsius Epistolis haec edita sit numero 40), significans se moerore gravi affectum quod ipsum cum Severo simul non repperit in urbe Leges, et quanto ipsum amore prosequatur exponens.

Since therefore he is of the household of faith, a faithful Christian, our catholic brother, for the supplying of whose necessity I ask you to do what the Lord commands; without sadness, without murmuring, and with joy and hilarity do it: for you believe in God, not in man; because He promises that you shall lose nothing of those things which you do mercifully, but shall receive them on that day with immortal usuries (Matth. XXV, 34-40): and since the Apostle himself says, But this I say, He who sows sparingly, shall also reap sparingly (II Cor. IX, 6); you ought to understand that it is time so that we may prepare the gift of eternal life, while yet we are in this life, hastily and alacrity: because when the end of the world shall have come, it shall not be given except to those who through faith bought this for themselves, before they could have seen.

3. I have also written to the priests, that if anything should be less after the collation of your Holiness, they may complete it from that which the church has, provided however you offer hilariously according to what pleases you: because whether it be given from yours or from the church, all things are of God, and your devotion will be sweeter than the treasures of the church; as the Apostle says, Not because I seek the gift, but I require the fruit (Philip. IV, 17). Gladden therefore my heart, because I desire to rejoice concerning your fruits: for you are the trees of God, which He deigns to water with assiduous rains even through our ministry. May the Lord protect you from all evil both here and in the future world, most beloved lords, and most longed-for brothers.

LETTER 269.

Augustine to Bishop Nobilius, signifying that he cannot come to the dedication of a new fabric.

To the most blessed and venerable brother and fellow-priest NOBILIUS, AUGUSTINE.

Such is the solemnity to which the affection of your Fraternity invites me, that my small body would be drawn to you by my will, unless infirmity held it. I could come if it were not winter; I could condemn the winter, if I were a young man: for either the fervor of age would bear the rigor of the time, or the fervor of summer would temper the cold of age. Now in winter I do not suffer so long a journey with the cold agedness which I carry with me, most blessed lord, holy and venerable brother and fellow-priest. I render the due salutation to your merits: but I commend my safety to your prayers, asking also myself from God the Lord that the prosperity of peace may follow the dedication of such a great fabric.

LETTER 270. Anonymous to Augustine (for it is not Jerome, as is clear from the style, although it was published among his Epistles at number 40), signifying himself to be affected with grave mourning because he did not find him together with Severus in the city of Leges, and expounding with how much love he follows him.

Cum in urbem Leges anteriori tempore commeassem, nimium sum contristatus quod te totum ibidem minime potui reperire. Inveni enim te medium, et, ut ita dicam, partem animae tuae, Severum charissimum, de quo ex parte gavisus sum. Perfecte enim gauderem, si te totum invenirem: unde ex parte qua te repereram, gratulabar; et propter partem tuam quam nequaquam cernebam, omnibus modis contristabar. Proinde dixi animae meae, Quare tristis es, et quare conturbas me? Spera in Deo (Psal. XLI, 6), et faciet praesentem amicum quem diligis. Unde confido in Domino et spero quod me faciet de tua visione gratulari. O si oculis cerni dilectio posset! profecto videres quanta apud te nostra esset dilectio. Aut enim aequiparans dilectioni tuae, magnum tibi afferret imitationis studium. Ergo, quia in Domino te diligo, dilige diligentem. Et ut caeteri tecum diligant, per ecclesiasticam auctoritatem hortare. Nam quod petis in litteris tuis, ut ego pro te orem; id recte facerem, si ego ipse a peccatis liber essem, ut pro aliis liceret orare. Et ideo te admoneo ut orationes assiduas animi tui pro me emittas ad Dominum: et memor professionis, illam ante oculos tuos constituas diem, in qua justus ab auditu malo non timebit (Psal. III, 7); et ideo justus non timebit, quia non audiet, «Vade in ignem aeternum,» sed, «Veni, benedicte Patris mei, percipe regnum» (Matth. XXV, 41, 34). Ad quod nos perducatur qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

When I had traveled to the city of Leges in a former time, I was too much saddened because I could by no means find the whole of you there. For I found the half of you, and, as I might so say, a part of your soul, the most dear Severus, concerning whom I rejoiced in part. For I would rejoice perfectly, if I should find the whole of you: whence from the part in which I had found you, I was congratulating; and on account of your part which I by no means discerned, I was saddened in all ways. Therefore I said to my soul, Why are you sad, and why do you disturb me? Hope in God (Ps. XLI, 6), and He will make present the friend whom you love. Whence I confide in the Lord and hope that He will make me to congratulate concerning your vision. O if love could be discerned by the eyes! surely you would see how great our love was with you. For either equaling your love, it would bring to you a great study of imitation. Therefore, because in the Lord I love you, love the one loving you. And so that the others with you may love, exhort through ecclesiastical authority. For what you ask in your letters, that I should pray for you; I would rightly do that, if I myself were free from sins, so that it might be allowed to pray for others. And therefore I admonish you that you should emit assiduous prayers of your mind to the Lord for me: and mindful of your profession, place before your eyes that day, in which the just man shall not fear from evil hearing (Ps. CXI, 7); and therefore the just shall not fear, because he shall not hear, "Go into eternal fire," but, "Come, blessed of my Father, perceive the kingdom" (Matth. XXV, 41, 34). To which may He lead us who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.