Letters (part 1 of 3)

Jerome (c. AD 347–420)

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Letter 1. To Innocent.

Not only the first of the letters but probably the earliest extant composition of Jerome (c. 370 a.d.). Innocent, to whom it is addressed, was one of the little band of enthusiasts whom Jerome gathered round him in Aquileia. He followed his friend to Syria, where he died in 374 a.d. (See Letter 3., 3.) 1. You have frequently asked me, dearest Innocent, not to pass over in silence the marvellous event which has happened in our own day. I have declined the task from modesty and, as I now feel, with justice, believing myself to be incapable of it, at once because bureau language is inadequate to the divine praise, and because inactivity, acting like rust upon the intellect, has dried up any little power of expression that I have ever had. You in reply urge that in the things of God we must look not at the work which we are able to accomplish, but at the spirit in which it is undertaken, and that he can never be at a loss for words who has believed on the Word.

2. What, then, must I do? The task is beyond me, and yet I dare not decline it. I am a mere unskilled passenger, and I find myself placed in charge of a freighted ship. I have not so much as handled a rowboat on a lake, and now I have to trust myself to the noise and turmoil of the Euxine. I see the shores sinking beneath the horizon, ”sky and sea on every side”; darkness lowers over the water, the clouds are black as night, the waves only are white with foam. You urge me to hoist the swelling sails, to loosen the sheets, and to take the helm. At last I obey your commands, and as charity can do all things, I will trust in the Holy Ghost to guide my course, and I shall console myself, whatever the event. For, if our ship is wafted by the surf into the wished-for haven, I shall be content to be told that the pilotage was poor. But, if through my unpolished diction we run aground amid the rough cross-currents of language, you may blame my lack of power, but you will at least recognize my good intentions.

3. To begin, then: Vercellae is a Ligurian town, situated not far from the base of the Alps, once important, but now sparsely peopled and fallen into decay. When the consular was holding his visitation there, a poor woman and her paramour were brought before him-the charge of adultery had been fastened upon them by the husband-and were both consigned to the penal horrors of a prison. Shortly after

an attempt was made to elicit the truth by torture, and when the blood-stained hook smote the young man's livid flesh and tore furrows in his side, the unhappy wretch sought to avoid prolonged pain by a speedy death. Falsely accusing his own passions, he involved another in the charge; and it appeared that he was of all men the most miserable, and that his execution was just inasmuch as he had left to an innocent woman no means of self-defence. But the woman, stronger in virtue if weaker in sex, though her frame was stretched upon the rack, and though her hands, stained with the filth of the prison, were tied behind her, looked up to heaven with her eyes, which alone the torturer had been unable to bind, and while the tears rolled down her face, said: "Thou art witness, Lord Jesus, to whom nothing is hid, who triest the reins and the heart. [Ps. 7:9] Thou art witness that it is not to save my life that I deny this charge. I refuse to lie because to lie is sin. And as for you, unhappy man, if you are bent on hastening your death, why must you destroy not one innocent person, but two? I also, myself, desire to die. I desire to put off this hated body, but not as an adulteress. I offer my neck; I welcome the shining sword without fear; yet I will take my innocence with me. He does not die who is slain while purposing so to live."

4. The consular, who had been feasting his eyes upon the bloody spectacle, now, like a wild beast, which after once tasting blood always thirsts for it, ordered the torture to be doubled, and cruelly gnashing his teeth, threatened the executioner with like punishment if he failed to extort from the weaker sex a confession which a man's strength had not been able to keep back. 5. Send help, Lord Jesus. For this one creature of Thine every species of torture is devised. She is bound by the hair to a stake, her whole body is fixed more firmly than ever on the rack; fire is brought and applied to her feet; her sides quiver beneath the executioner's probe; even her breasts do not escape. Still the woman remains unshaken; and, triumphing in spirit over the pain of the body, enjoys the happiness of a good conscience, round which the tortures rage in vain. [Text corrupt.] The cruel judge rises, overcome with passion. She still prays to God. Her limbs are wrenched from their sockets she only turns her eyes to heaven. Another confesses what is thought their common guilt. She, for the confessor's sake, denies the confession, and, in peril of her own life, clears one who is in peril of his.

6. Meantime she has but one thing to say "Beat me, burn me, tear me, if you will; I have not done it. If you will not believe my words, a day will come when this charge shall be carefully sifted. I have One who will judge me." Wearied out at last, the torturer sighed in response to her groans; nor could he find a spot on which to inflict a fresh wound. His cruelty overcome, he shuddered to see the body he had torn. Immediately the consular cried, in a fit of passion, "Why does it surprise you, bystanders, that a woman prefers torture to death? It takes two people, most assuredly, to commit adultery; and I think it more credible that a guilty woman should deny a sin than that an innocent young man should confess one."

7. Like sentence, accordingly, was passed on both, and the condemned pair were dragged to execution. The entire people poured out to see the sight; indeed, so closely were the gates thronged by the out-rushing crowd, that you might have fancied the city itself to be migrating. At the very first stroke of the sword the head of the hapless youth was cut off, and the headless trunk rolled over in its blood. Then came the woman's turn. She knelt down upon the ground, and the shining sword was lifted over her quivering neck. But though the headsman summoned all his strength into his bared arm, the moment it touched her flesh the fatal blade stopped short, and, lightly glancing over the skin, merely grazed it sufficiently to draw blood. The striker saw, with terror, his hand unnerved, and, amazed at his defeated skill and at his drooping sword, he whirled it aloft for another stroke. Again the blade fell forceless on the woman, sinking harmlessly on her neck, as though the steel feared to touch her. The enraged and panting officer, who had thrown open his cloak at the neck to give his full strength to the blow, shook to the ground the brooch which clasped the edges of his mantle, and not noticing this, began to poise his sword for a fresh stroke. "See," cried the woman, "a jewel has fallen from your shoulder. Pick up what you have earned by hard toil, that you may not lose it."

8. What, I ask, is the secret of such confidence as this? Death draws near, but it has no terrors for her. When smitten she exults, and the executioner turns pale. Her eyes see the brooch, they fail to see the sword. And, as if intrepidity in the presence of death were not enough, she confers a favor upon her cruel foe. And now the mysterious Power of the Trinity rendered even a third blow vain. The terrified soldier, no longer trusting the blade, proceeded to apply the point to her throat, in the idea that though it might not cut, the pressure of his hand might plunge it into her flesh. Marvel unheard of through all the ages! The sword bent back to the hilt, and in its defeat looked to its master, as if confessing its inability to slay. 9. Let me call to my aid the example of the three children, who, amid the cool, encircling fire, sang hymns, [Song of the Three Holy Children] instead of weeping, and around whose turbans and holy hair the flames played harmlessly. Let me recall, too, the story of the blessed Daniel, [Dan. 6] in whose presence, though he was their natural prey, the lions crouched, with fawning tails and frightened mouths. Let Susannah also rise in the nobility of her faith before the thoughts of all; who, after she had been condemned by an unjust sentence, was saved through a youth [Daniel] inspired by the Holy Ghost. [Susannah 45] In both cases the Lord's mercy was alike shewn; for while Susannah was set free by the judge, so as not to die by the sword, this woman, though condemned by the judge, was acquitted by the sword.

10. Now at length the populace rise in arms to defend the woman. Men and women of every age join in driving away the executioner, shouting round him in a surging crowd. Hardly a man dares trust his own eyes. The disquieting news reaches

the city close at hand, and the entire force of constables is mustered. The officer who is responsible for the execution of criminals bursts from among his men, and "Staining his hoary hair with soiling dust," exclaims: "What! citizens, do you mean to seek my life? Do you intend to make me a substitute for her? However much your minds are set on mercy, and however much you wish to save a condemned woman, yet assuredly I-I who am innocent-ought not to perish." His tearful appeal tells upon the crowd, they are all benumbed by the influence of sorrow, and an extraordinary change of feeling is manifested. Before it had seemed a duty to plead for the woman's life, now it seemed a duty to allow her to be executed.

11. Accordingly a new sword is fetched, a new headsman appointed. The victim takes her place, once more strengthened only with the favor of Christ. The first blow makes her quiver, beneath the second she sways to and fro, by the third she falls wounded to the ground. Oh, majesty of the divine power highly to be extolled! She who previously had received four strokes without injury, now, a few moments later, seems to die that an innocent man may not perish in her stead. 12. Those of the clergy whose duty it is to wrap the blood-stained corpse in a winding-sheet, dig out the earth and, heaping together stones, form the customary tomb. The sunset comes on quickly, and by God's mercy the night of nature arrives more swiftly than is its wont. Suddenly the woman's bosom heaves, her eyes seek the light, her body is quickened into new life. A moment after she sighs, she looks round, she gets up and speaks. At last she is able to cry: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do unto me?" [Ps. 118:6]

13. Meantime an aged woman, supported out of the funds of the church, gave back her spirit to heaven from which it came. [Cf. Eccles. 12:7] It seemed as if the course of events had been thus purposely ordered, for her body took the place of the other beneath the mound. In the gray dawn the devil comes on the scene in the form of a constable, asks for the corpse of her who had been slain, and desires to have her grave pointed out to him. Surprised that she could have died, he fancies her to be still alive. The clergy show him the fresh turf, and meet his demands by pointing to the earth lately heaped up, taunting him with such words as these: "Yes, of course, tear up the bones which have been buried! Declare war anew against the tomb, and if even that does not satisfy you, pluck her limb from limb for birds and beasts to mangle! Mere dying is too good for one whom it took seven strokes to kill."

14. Before such opprobrious words the executioner retires in confusion, while the woman is secretly revived at home. Then, lest the frequency of the doctor's visits to the church might give occasion for suspicion, they cut her hair short and send her in the company of some virgins to a sequestered country house. There she changes her dress for that of a man, and scars form over her wounds. Yet even after the great miracles worked on her behalf, the laws still rage against her. So

true is it that, where there is most law, there, there is also most injustice. 15. But now see whither the progress of my story has brought me; we come upon the name of our friend Evagrius. So great have his exertions been in the cause of Christ that, were I to suppose it possible adequately to describe them, I should only show my own folly; and were I minded deliberately to pass them by, I still could not prevent my voice from breaking out into cries of joy. Who can fittingly praise the vigilance which enabled him to bury, if I may so say, before his death Auxentius of Milan, that curse brooding over the church? Or who can sufficiently extol the discretion with which he rescued the Roman bishop from the toils of the net in which he was fairly entangled, and showed him the means at once of overcoming his opponents and of sparing them in their discomfiture? But "Such topics I must leave to other bards, Shut out by envious straits of time and space." [Virg. G. 4:147, 148.]

I am satisfied now to record the conclusion of my tale. Evagrius seeks a special audience of the Emperor; importunes him with his entreaties, wins his favor by his services, and finally gains his cause through his earnestness. The Emperor restored to liberty the woman whom God had restored to life.

Letter 2. To Theodosius and the Rest of the Anchorites.

Written from Antioch, 374 a.d., while Jerome was still in doubt as to his future course. Theodosius appears to have been the head of the solitaries in the Syrian Desert.

How I long to be a member of your company, and with uplifting of all my powers to embrace your admirable community! Though, indeed, these poor eyes are not worthy to look upon it. Oh! that I could behold the desert, lovelier to me than any city! Oh! that I could see those lonely spots made into a paradise by the saints that throng them! But since my sins prevent me from thrusting into your blessed company a head laden with every transgression, I adjure you (and I know that you can do it) by your prayers to deliver me from the darkness of this world. I spoke of this when I was with you, and now in writing to you I repeat anew the same request; for all the energy of my mind is devoted to this one object. It rests with you to give effect to my resolve. I have the will but not the power; this last can only come in answer to your prayers. For my part, I am like a sick sheep astray from the flock. Unless the good Shepherd shall place me on his shoulders and carry me back to the fold, [Luke 15:3-5] my steps will totter, and in the very effort of rising I shall find my feet give way. I am the prodigal son [Luke 15:11-32] who although I have squandered all the portion entrusted to me by my father, have not yet bowed the knee in submission to him; not yet have I commenced to put away from me the allurements of my former excesses. And because it is only a little while since I have begun not so much to abandon my vices as to desire to abandon them, the devil now ensnares me in new toils, he puts new stumbling-blocks in my path, be encompasses me on every side.

"The seas around, and all around the main." [Virg. A. 5:9] I find myself in mid-ocean, unwilling to retreat and unable to advance. It only remains that your prayers should win for me the gale of the Holy Spirit to waft me to the haven upon the desired shore.

Letter 3. To Rufinus the Monk.

Written from Antioch, 374 a.d., to Rufinus in Egypt. Jerome narrates his travels and the events which have taken place since his arrival in Syria, particularly the deaths of Innocent and Hylas (§3). He also describes the life of Bonosus, who was now a hermit on an island in the Adriatic (§4). The main object of the letter is to induce Rufinus to come to Syria. 1. That God gives more than we ask Him for, [Cf. Eph. 3:20] and that He often grants us things which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have they entered into the heart of man," [1 Cor. 2:9] I knew indeed before from the mystic declaration of the sacred volumes; but now, dearest Rufinus, I have had proof of it in my own case. For I who fancied it too bold a wish to be allowed by an exchange of letters to counterfeit to myself your presence in the flesh, hear that you are penetrating the remotest parts of Egypt, visiting the monks and going round God's family upon earth. Oh, if only the Lord Jesus Christ would suddenly transport me to you as Philip was transported to the eunuch, [Acts, 8:26-30] and Habakkuk to Daniel, [Bel. 33-36] with what a close embrace would I clasp your neck, how fondly would I press kisses upon that mouth which has so often joined with me of old in error or in wisdom. But as I am unworthy (not that you should so come to me but) that I should so come to you, and because my poor body, weak even when well, has been shattered by frequent illnesses; I send this letter to meet you instead of coming myself, in the hope that it may bring you hither to me caught in the meshes of love's net.

2. My first joy at such unexpected good tidings was due to our brother, Heliodorus. I desired to be sure of it, but did not dare to feel sure, especially as he told me that he had only heard it from some one else, and as the strangeness of the news impaired the credit of the story. Once more my wishes hovered in uncertainty and my mind wavered, till an Alexandrian monk who had some time previously been sent over by the dutiful zeal of the people to the Egyptian confessors (in will already martyrs), impelled me by his presence to believe the tidings. Even then, I must admit I still hesitated. For on the one hand he knew nothing either of your name or country: yet on the other what he said seemed likely to be true, agreeing as it did with the hint which had already reached me. At last the truth broke upon me in all its fulness, for a constant stream of persons passing through brought the

report: ”Rufinus is at Nitria, and has reached the abode of the blessed Macarius.” At this point I cast away all that restrained my belief, and then first really grieved to find myself ill. Had it not been that my wasted and enfeebled frame fettered my movements, neither the summer heat nor the dangerous voyage should have had power to retard the rapid steps of affection. Believe me, brother, I look forward to seeing you more than the storm-tossed mariner looks for his haven, more than the thirsty fields long for the showers, more than the anxious mother sitting on the curving shore expects her son.

3. After that sudden whirlwind dragged me from your side, severing with its impious wrench the bonds of affection in which we were knit together, ”The dark blue raincloud lowered o’er my head: On all sides were the seas, on all the sky.” [Virg. A. 3:193, 194: 5:9] I wandered about, uncertain where to go. Thrace, Pontus, Bithynia, the whole of Galatia and Cappadocia, Cilicia also with its burning heat, one after another shattered my energies. At last Syria presented itself to me as a most secure harbor to a shipwrecked man. Here, after undergoing every possible kind of sickness, I lost one of my two eyes; for Innocent, the half of my soul, [Hor. C. 1:3, 8] was taken away from me by a sudden attack of fever. The one eye which I now enjoy, and which is all in all to me, is our Evagrius, upon whom I with my constant infirmities have come as an additional burden. We had with us also Hylas, the servant of the holy Melanium, who by his stainless conduct had wiped out the taint of his previous servitude. His death opened afresh the wound which had not yet healed. But as the apostle’s words forbid us to mourn for those who sleep, [1 Thess. 4:13] and as my excess of grief has been tempered by the joyful news that has since come to me, I recount this last, that, if you have not heard it, you may learn it; and that, if you know it already, you may rejoice over it with me.

4. Bonosus, your friend, or, to speak more truly, mine as well as yours, is now climbing the ladder foreshown in Jacob’s dream. [Gen. 28:12] He is bearing his cross, neither taking thought for the morrow [Matt. 6:34] nor looking back at what he has left. [Luke 9:62] He is sowing in tears that he may reap in joy. [Ps. 126:5] As Moses in a type so he in reality is lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. [Nu. 21:9] This is a true story, and it may well put to shame the lying marvels described by Greek and Roman pens. For here you have a youth educated with us in the refining accomplishments of the world, with abundance of wealth, and in rank inferior to none of his associates; yet he forsakes his mother, his sisters, and his dearly loved brother, and settles like a new tiller of Eden on a dangerous island, with the sea roaring round its reefs; while its rough crags, bare rocks, and desolate aspect make it more terrible still. No peasant or monk is to be found there. Even the little Onesimus you know of, in whose kisses he used to rejoice as in those of a brother, in this tremendous solitude no longer remains at his side. Alone upon the island-or rather not alone, for Christ is with him-he sees the glory of God, which

even the apostles saw not save in the desert. He beholds, it is true, no embattled towns, but he has enrolled his name in the new city.

Garments of sackcloth disfigure his limbs, yet so clad he will be the sooner caught up to meet Christ in the clouds. [1 Thess. 4:17] No watercourse pleasant to the view supplies his wants, but from the Lord's side he drinks the water of life. [Joh. 4:14, Joh. 19:34] Place all this before your eyes, dear friend, and with all the faculties of your mind picture to yourself the scene. When you realize the effort of the fighter then you will be able to praise his victory. Round the entire island roars the frenzied sea, while the beetling crags along its winding shores resound as the billows beat against them. No grass makes the ground green; there are no shady copses and no fertile fields. Precipitous cliffs surround his dreadful abode as if it were a prison. But he, careless, fearless, and armed from head to foot with the apostle's armor, [Eph. 6:13-17] now listens to God by reading the Scriptures, now speaks to God as he prays to the Lord; and it may be that, while he lingers in the island, he sees some vision such as that once seen by John. [Rev. 1:9, Rev. 1:10]

5. What snares, think you, is the devil now weaving? What stratagems is he preparing? Perchance, mindful of his old trick, [Gen. 3:1-6: Matt. 4:1-4] he will try to tempt Bonosus with hunger. But he has been answered already: "Man shall not live by bread alone. [Matt. 4:4] Perchance he will lay before him wealth and fame. But it shall be said to him: "They that desire to be rich fall into a trap and temptations," [1 Tim. 6:9] and "For me all glorying is in Christ. [1 Cor. 1:31] He will come, it may be, when the limbs are weary with fasting, and rack them with the pangs of disease; but the cry of the apostle will repel him: "When I am weak, then am I strong," and "My strength is made perfect in weakness. [2 Cor. 12:10, 2 Cor. 12:9] He will hold out threats of death; but the reply will be: "I desire to depart and to be with Christ. [Philip. 1:23] He will brandish his fiery darts, but they will be received on the shield of faith. [Eph. 6:16] In a word, Satan will assail him, but Christ will defend. Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus, that in Thy day I have one able to pray to Thee for me. To Thee all hearts are open, Thou searchest the secrets of the heart, [Acts 1:24, Rev. 2:23] Thou seest the prophet shut up in the fish's belly in the midst of the sea.

[Jon. 2:1, Jon. 2:2] Thou knowest then how he and I grew up together from tender infancy to vigorous manhood, how we were fostered in the bosoms of the same nurses, and carried in the arms of the same bearers; and how after studying together at Rome we lodged in the same house and shared the same food by the half savage banks of the Rhine. Thou knowest, too, that it was I who first began to seek to serve Thee. Remember, I beseech Thee, that this warrior of Thine was once a raw recruit with me. I have before me the declaration of Thy majesty: "Whosoever shall teach and not do shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. [Matt. 5:19] May he enjoy the crown of virtue, and in return for his daily martyrdoms may he

follow the Lamb robed in white raiment! [Rev. 14:4] For ”in my Father’s house are many mansions,” [John 14:2] and ”one star differeth from another star in glory. [1 Cor. 15:41] Give me strength to raise my head to a level with the saints’ heels! I willed, but he performed. Do Thou therefore pardon me that I failed to keep my resolve, and reward him with the guerdon of his deserts.

I may perhaps have been tedious, and have said more than the short compass of a letter usually allows; but this, I find, is always the case with me when I have to say anything in praise of our dear Bonosus. 6. However, to return to the point from which I set out, I beseech you do not let me pass wholly out of sight and out of mind. A friend is long sought, hardly found, and with difficulty kept. Let those who will, allow gold to dazzle them and be borne along in splendor, their very baggage glittering with gold and silver. Love is not to be purchased, and affection has no price. The friendship which can cease has never been real. Farewell in Christ.

Letter 4. To Florentius.

Sent to Florentius along with the preceding letter, which Jerome requests him to deliver to Rufinus. This Florentius was a rich Italian who had retired to Jerusalem to pursue the monastic life. Jerome subsequently speaks of him as ”a distinguished monk so pitiful to the needy that he was generally known as the father of the poor.” (Chron. ad a.d. 381.) 1. How much your name and sanctity are on the lips of the most different peoples you may gather from the fact that I commence to love you before I know you. For as, according to the apostle, ”Some men’s sins are evident going before unto judgment,” [1 Tim. 5:24, R. V] so contrariwise the report of your charity is so widespread that it is considered not so much praiseworthy to love you as criminal to refuse to do so. I pass over the countless instances in which you have supported Christ, [Matt. 25:34-40] fed, clothed, and visited Him. The aid you rendered to our brother Heliodorus in his need may well loose the utterance of the dumb. With what gratitude, with what commendation, does he speak of the kindness with which you smoothed a pilgrim’s path. I am, it is true, the most sluggish of men, consumed by an unendurable sickness; yet keen affection and desire have winged my feet, and I have come forward to salute and embrace you. I wish you every good thing, and pray that the Lord may establish our nascent friendship.

2. Our brother, Rufinus, is said to have come from Egypt to Jerusalem with the devout lady, Melanium. He is inseparably bound to me in brotherly love; and I beg you to oblige me by delivering to him the annexed letter. You must not, however, judge of me by the virtues that you find in him. For in him you will see the clearest tokens of holiness, whilst I am but dust and vile dirt, and even now, while still living, nothing but ashes. It is enough for me if my weak eyes can bear the brightness of his excellence. He has but now washed himself and is clean, yea, is made white as snow; [Cf. Ps. 51:7] whilst I, stained with every sin, wait day and night with trembling to pay the uttermost farthing. [Matt. 5:26] But since ”the Lord looseth the prisoners,” [Ps. 146:7] and resteth upon him who is of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at His words, [Isa. 66:2] perchance he may say even to me who lie in the grave of sin: ”Jerome, come forth.” [Joh. 11:43]

The reverend presbyter, Evagrius, warmly salutes you. We both with united respect salute the brother, Martinianus. I desire much to see him, but I am impeded by the chain of sickness. Farewell in Christ.

Letter 5. To Florentius.

Written a few months after the preceding (about the end of 374 a.d.) from the Syrian Desert. After dilating on his friendship for Florentius, and making a passing allusion to Rufinus, Jerome mentions certain books copies of which he desires to be sent to him. He also speaks of a runaway slave about whom Florentius had written to him. 1. Your letter, dear friend, finds me dwelling in that quarter of the desert which is nearest to Syria and the Saracens. And the reading of it rekindles in my mind so keen a desire to set out for Jerusalem that I am almost ready to violate my monastic vow in order to gratify my affection. Wishing to do the best I can, as I cannot come in person I send you a letter instead; and thus, though absent in the body, I come to you in love and in spirit. [Cf. Col. 2:5] For my earnest prayer is that our infant friendship, firmly cemented as it is in Christ, may never be rent asunder by time or distance. We ought rather to strengthen the bond by an interchange of letters. Let these pass between us, meet each other on the way, and converse with us. Affection will not lose much if it keeps up an intercourse of this kind.

2. You write that our brother, Rufinus, has not yet come to you. Even if he does come it will do little to satisfy my longing, for I shall not now be able to see him. He is too far away to come hither, and the conditions of the lonely life that I have adopted forbid me to go to him. For I am no longer free to follow my own wishes. I entreat you, therefore, to ask him to allow you to have the commentaries of the reverend Rhetitius, bishop of Augustodunum, copied, in which he has so eloquently explained the Song of Songs. A countryman of the aforesaid brother Rufinus, the old man Paul, writes that Rufinus has his copy of Tertullian, and urgently requests that this may be returned. Next I have to ask you to get written on paper by a copyist certain books which the subjoined list will show you that I do not possess. I beg also that you will send me the explanation of the Psalms of David, and the copious work on Synods of the reverend Hilary, which I copied for him at Trêves with my own hand. Such books, you know, must be the food of the Christian soul if it is to meditate in the law of the Lord day and night. [Ps. 1:2]

Others you welcome beneath your roof, you cherish and comfort, you help out of your own purse; but so far as I am concerned, you have given me everything when

once you have granted my request. And since, through the Lord's bounty, I am rich in volumes of the sacred library, you may command me in turn. I will send you what you please; and do not suppose that an order from you will give me trouble. I have pupils devoted to the art of copying. Nor do I merely promise a favor because I am asking one. Our brother, Heliodorus, tells me that there are many parts of the Scriptures which you seek and cannot find. But even if you have them all, affection is sure to assert its rights and to seek for itself more than it already has. 3. As regards the present master of your slave-of whom you have done me the honor to write-I have no doubt but that he is his kidnapper. While I was still at Antioch the presbyter, Evagrius, often reproved him in my presence. To whom he made this answer: "I have nothing to fear." He declares that his master has dismissed him. If you both want him, he is here; send him whither you will. I think I am not wrong in refusing to allow a runaway to stray farther. Here in the wilderness I cannot myself execute your orders; and therefore I have asked my dear friend Evagrius to push the affair vigorously, both for your sake and for mine. I desire your welfare in Christ.

Letter 6. To Julian, a Deacon of Antioch

This letter, written in 374 a.d., is chiefly interesting for its mention of Jerome's sister. It would seem that she had fallen into sin and had been restored to a life of virtue by the deacon, Julian. Jerome speaks of her again in the next letter (§4). It is an old saying, "Liars are disbelieved even when they speak the truth." And from the way in which you reproach me for not having written, I perceive that this has been my lot with you. Shall I say, "I wrote often, but the bearers of my letters were negligent"? You will reply, "Your excuse is the old one of all who fail to write." Shall I say, "I could not find any one to take my letters"? You will say that numbers of persons have gone from my part of the world to yours. Shall I contend that I have actually given them letters? They not having delivered them, will deny that they have received them. Moreover, so great a distance separates us that it will be hard to come at the truth. What shall I do then? Though really not to blame, I ask your forgiveness, for I think it better to fall back and make overtures for peace than to keep my ground and offer battle. The truth is that constant sickness of body and vexation of mind have so weakened me that with death so close at hand I have not been as collected as usual. And lest you should account this plea a false one, now that I have stated my case, I shall, like a pleader, call witnesses to prove it. Our reverend brother, Heliodorus, has been here; but in spite of his wish to dwell in the desert with me, he has been frightened away by my crimes. But my present wordiness will atone for my past remissness; for, as Horace says in his satire:

"All singers have one fault among their friends: They never sing when asked, unasked they never cease." [Hor. S. 1:3, 1-3] Henceforth I shall overwhelm you with such bundles of letters that you will take the opposite line and beg me not to write. I rejoice that my sister -to you a daughter in Christ-remains steadfast in her purpose, a piece of news which I owe in the first instance to you. For here where I now am I am ignorant not only as to what goes on in my native land, but even as to its continued existence. Even though the Iberian viper shall rend me with his baneful fangs, I will not fear men's judgment, seeing that I shall have God to

judge me. As one puts it: ”Shatter the world to fragments if you will: ’Twill fall upon a head which knows not fear.” [Horace, C. 3:3, 7, 8]

Bear in mind, then, I pray you, the apostle’s precept [1 Cor. 3:14] that we should make our work abiding; prepare for yourself a reward from the Lord in my sister’s salvation; and by frequent letters increase my joy in that glory in Christ which we share together.

Letter 7. To Chromatius, Jovinus, and Eusebius.

This letter (written like the preceding in 374 a.d.) is addressed by Jerome to three of his former companions in the religious life. It commends Bonosus (§3), asks guidance for the writer's sister (§4), and attacks the conduct of Lupicinus, Bishop of Stridon (§5). 1. Those whom mutual affection has joined together, a written page ought not to sunder. I must not, therefore, distribute my words some to one and some to another. For so strong is the love that binds you together that affection unites all three of you in a bond no less close than that which naturally connects two of your number. Indeed, if the conditions of writing would only admit of it, I should amalgamate your names and express them under a single symbol. The very letter which I have received from you challenges me in each of you to see all three, and in all three to recognize each. When the reverend Evagrius transmitted it to me in the corner of the desert which stretches between the Syrians and the Saracens, my joy was intense. It wholly surpassed the rejoicings felt at Rome when the defeat of Cannae was retrieved, and Marcellus at Nola cut to pieces the forces of Hannibal. Evagrius frequently comes to see me, and cherishes me in Christ as his own bowels. Yet as he is separated from me by a long distance, his departure has generally left me as much regret as his arrival has brought me joy.

2. I converse with your letter, I embrace it, it talks to me; it alone of those here speaks Latin. For hereabout you must either learn a barbarous jargon or else hold your tongue. As often as the lines-traced in a well-known hand-bring back to me the faces which I hold so dear, either I am no longer here, or else you are here with me. If you will credit the sincerity of affection, I seem to see you all as I write this. Now at the outset I should like to ask you one petulant question. Why is it that, when we are separated by so great an interval of land and sea, you have sent me so short a letter? Is it that I have deserved no better treatment, not having first written to you? I cannot believe that paper can have failed you while Egypt continues to supply its wares. Even if a Ptolemy had closed the seas, King Attalus would still have sent you parchments from Pergamum, and so by his skins you could have made up for the want of paper. The very name parchment is derived from a

historical incident of the kind which occurred generations ago. What then? Am I to suppose the messenger to have been in haste? No matter how long a letter may be, it can be written in the course of a night. Or had you some business to attend to which prevented you from writing? No claim is prior to that of affection. Two suppositions remain, either that you felt disinclined to write or else that I did not deserve a letter. Of the two I prefer to charge you with sloth than to condemn myself as undeserving. For it is easier to mend neglect than to quicken love.

3. You tell me that Bonosus, like a true son of the Fish, has taken to the water. As for me who am still foul with my old stains, like the basilisk and the scorpion I haunt the dry places. [Deut. 8:15] Bonosus has his heel already on the serpent's head, whilst I am still as food to the same serpent which by divine appointment devours the earth. [Gen. 3:14] He can scale already that ladder of which the psalms of degrees are a type; whilst I, still weeping on its first step, hardly know whether I shall ever be able to say: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. [Ps. 121:1] Amid the threatening billows of the world he is sitting in the safe shelter of his island, that is, of the church's pale, and it may be that even now, like John, he is being called to eat God's book; [Rev. 10:9, Rev. 10:10] whilst I, still lying in the sepulchre of my sins and bound with the chains of my iniquities, wait for the Lord's command in the Gospel: "Jerome, come forth. [John 11:43] But Bonosus has done more than this. Like the prophet [Jer. 13:4, Jer. 13:5] he has carried his girdle across the Euphrates (for all the devil's strength is in the loins), and has hidden it there in a hole of the rock. Then, afterwards finding it rent, he has sung: "O Lord, thou hast possessed my reins.

[Ps. 139:13] Thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving. [Ps. 116:14, Ps. 116:15, P.B.V] But as for me, Nebuchadnezzar has brought me in chains to Babylon, to the babel that is of a distracted mind. There he has laid upon me the yoke of captivity; there inserting in my nostrils a ring of iron, [Cf. 2 K. 19:28] he has commanded me to sing one of the songs of Zion. To whom I have said, "The Lord looseth the prisoners; the Lord openeth the eyes of the blind. [Pss. 137:3, Pss. 146:7, Pss. 146:8] To complete my contrast in a single sentence, whilst I pray for mercy Bonosus looks for a crown.

4. My sister's conversion is the fruit of the efforts of the saintly Julian. He has planted, it is for you to water, and the Lord will give the increase. [1 Cor. 3:6] Jesus Christ has given her to me to console me for the wound which the devil has inflicted on her. He has restored her from death to life. But in the words of the pagan poet, for her there is no safety that i do not fear. [Virg. A. 4:298] You know yourselves how slippery is the path of youth-a path on which I have myself fallen, and which you are now traversing not without fear. She, as she enters upon it, must have the advice and the encouragement of all, she must be aided by frequent letters from you, my reverend brothers. And-for "charity endureth all things," [1

Cor. 13:7] -I beg you to get from Pope Valerian a letter to confirm her resolution. A girl's courage, as you know, is strengthened when she realizes that persons in high place are interested in her.

5. The fact is that my native land is a prey to barbarism, that in it men's only God is their belly, [Phi. 3:19] that they live only for the present, and that the richer a man is the holier he is held to be. Moreover, to use a well-worn proverb, the dish has a cover worthy of it; for Lupicinus is their priest. Like lips like lettuce, as the saying goes-the only one, as Lucilius tells us, [Cic. de Fin. 5:30] at which Crassus ever laughed-the reference being to a donkey eating thistles. What I mean is that an unstable pilot steers a leaking ship, and that the blind is leading the blind straight to the pit. The ruler is like the ruled. 6. I salute your mother and mine with the respect which, as you know, I feel towards her. Associated with you as she is in a holy life, she has the start of you, her holy children, in that she is your mother. Her womb may thus be truly called golden. With her I salute your sisters, who ought all to be welcomed wherever they go, for they have triumphed over their sex and the world, and await the Bridegroom's coming, [Matt. 25:4] their lamps replenished with oil. O happy the house which is a home of a widowed Anna, of virgins that are prophetesses, and of twin Samuels bred in the Temple! [Luke 2:36, Acts 21:9, 1 Sam. 2:18] Fortunate the roof which shelters the martyr-mother of the Maccabees, with her sons around her, each and all wearing the martyr's crown! For although you confess Christ every day by keeping His commandments, yet to this private glory you have added the public one of an open confession; for it was through you that the poison of the Arian heresy was formerly banished from your city.

You are surprised perhaps at my thus making a fresh beginning quite at the close of my letter. But what am I to do? I cannot refuse expression to my feelings. The brief limits of a letter compel me to be silent; my affection for you urges me to speak. I write in haste, my language is confused and ill-arranged; but love knows nothing of order.

Letter 8. To Niceas, Sub-Deacon of Aquileia.

Niceas, the sub-deacon, had accompanied Jerome to the East but had now returned home. In after-years he became bishop of Aquileia in succession to Chromatius. The date of the letter is 374 a.d.

The comic poet Turpilius says of the exchange of letters that it alone makes the absent present. The remark, though occurring in a work of fiction, is not untrue. For what more real presence-if I may so speak-can there be between absent friends than speaking to those whom they love in letters, and in letters hearing their reply? Even those Italian savages, the Cascans of Ennius, who-as Cicero tells us in his books on rhetoric-hunted their food like beasts of prey, were wont, before paper and parchment came into use, to exchange letters written on tablets of wood roughly planed, or on strips of bark torn from the trees. For this reason men called letter-carriers tablet-bearers, and letter-writers bark-users, because they used the bark of trees. How much more then are we, who live in a civilized age, bound not to omit a social duty performed by men who lived in a state of gross savagery, and were in some respects entirely ignorant of the refinements of life. The saintly Chromatius, look you, and the reverend Eusebius, brothers as much by compatibility of disposition as by the ties of nature, have challenged me to diligence by the letters which they have showered upon me. You, however, who have but just left me, have not merely unknit our new-made friendship; you have torn it asunder-a process which Laelius, in Cicero's treatise, wisely forbids. Can it be that the East is so hateful to you that you dread the thought of even your letters coming hither?

Wake up, wake up, arouse yourself from sleep, give to affection at least one sheet of paper. Amid the pleasures of life at home sometimes heave a sigh over the journeys which we have made together. If you love me, write in answer to my prayer. If you are angry with me, though angry still write. I find my longing soul much comforted when I receive a letter from a friend, even though that friend be out of temper with me.

Letter 9. To Chrysogonus, a Monk of Aquileia.

A bantering letter to an indifferent correspondent. The date of the letter is 374 a.d. Heliodorus, who is so dear to us both, and who loves you with an affection no less deep than my own, may have given you a faithful account of my feelings towards you; how your name is always on my lips, and how in every conversation which I have with him I begin by recalling my pleasant intercourse with you, and go on to marvel at your lowliness, to extol your virtue, and to proclaim your holy love. Lynxes, they say, when they look behind them, forget what they have just seen, and lose all thought of what their eyes have ceased to behold. And so it seems to be with you. For so entirely have you forgotten our joint attachment that you have not merely blurred but erased the writing of that epistle which, as the apostle tells us, [2 Cor. 3:2] is written in the hearts of Christians. The creatures that I have mentioned lurk on branches of leafy trees and pounce on fleet roes or frightened stags. In vain their victims fly, for they carry their tormentors with them, and these rend their flesh as they run. Lynxes, however, only hunt when an empty belly makes their mouths dry. When they have satisfied their thirst for blood, and have filled their stomachs with food, satiety induces forgetfulness, and they bestow no thought on future prey till hunger recalls them to a sense of their need.

Now in your case it cannot be that you have already had enough of me. Why then do you bring to a premature close a friendship which is but just begun? Why do you let slip what you have hardly as yet fully grasped? But as such remissness as yours is never at a loss for an excuse, you will perhaps declare that you had nothing to write. Had this been so, you should still have written to inform me of the fact.

Letter 10. To Paul, an Old Man of Concordia.

Jerome writes to Paul of Concordia, a centenarian (§2), and the owner of a good theological library (§, to lend him some commentaries. In return he sends him his life (newly written) of Paul the hermit. The date of the letter is 374 a.d. 1. The shortness of man's life is the punishment for man's sin; and the fact that even on the very threshold of the light death constantly overtakes the new-born child proves that the times are continually sinking into deeper depravity. For when the first tiller of paradise had been entangled by the serpent in his snaky coils, and had been forced in consequence to migrate earthwards, although his deathless state was changed for a mortal one, yet the sentence of man's curse was put off for nine hundred years, or even more, a period so long that it may be called a second immortality. Afterwards sin gradually grew more and more virulent, till the ungodliness of the giants [Gen. 6:4] brought in its train the shipwreck of the whole world. Then when the world had been cleansed by the baptism-if I may so call it-of the deluge, human life was contracted to a short span. Yet even this we have almost altogether wasted, so continually do our iniquities fight against the divine purposes. For how few there are, either who go beyond their hundredth year, or who, going beyond it, do not regret that they have done so; according to that which the Scripture witnesses in the book of Psalms: "the days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow." [Ps. 90:10]

2. Why, say you, these opening reflections so remote and so far fetched that one might use against them the Horatian witticism: "back to the eggs which leda laid for zeus, the bard is fain to trace the war of troy?" Simply that I may describe in fitting terms your great age and hoary head as white as Christ's. [Rev. 1:14] For see, the hundredth circling year is already passing over you, and yet, always keeping the commandments of the Lord, amid the circumstances of your present life you think over the blessedness of that which is to come. Your eyes are bright and keen, your steps steady, your hearing good, your teeth are white, your voice musical, your flesh firm and full of sap; your ruddy cheeks belie your white hairs,

your strength is not that of your age. Advancing years have not, as we too often see them do, impaired the tenacity of your memory; the coldness of your blood has not blunted an intellect at once warm and wary. Your face is not wrinkled nor your brow furrowed. Lastly, no tremors palsy your hand or cause it to travel in crooked pathways over the wax on which you write. The Lord shows us in you the bloom of the resurrection that is to he ours; so that whereas in others who die by inches whilst yet living, we recognize the results of sin, in your case we ascribe it to righteousness that you still simulate youth at an age to which it is foreign. And although we see the like haleness of body in many even of those who are sinners, in their case it is a grant of the devil to lead them into sin, whilst in yours it is a gift of God to make you rejoice.

3. Tully in his brilliant speech on behalf of Flaccus describes the learning of the Greeks as ”innate frivolity and accomplished vanity.” Certainly their ablest literary men used to receive money for pronouncing eulogies upon their kings or princes. Following their example, I set a price upon my praise. Nor must you suppose my demand a small one. You are asked to give me the pearl of the Gospel, [Matt. 13:46] ”the words of the Lord,” ”pure words, even as the silver which from the earth is tried, and purified seven times in the fire,” [Ps. 12:7, P. B. V] I mean the commentaries of Fortunatian and-for its account of the persecutors-the History of Aurelius Victor, and with these the Letters of Novatian; so that, learning the poison set forth by this schismatic, we may the more gladly drink of the antidote supplied by the holy martyr Cyprian. In the mean time I have sent to you, that is to say, to Paul the aged, a Paul that is older still. I have taken great pains to bring my language down to the level of the simpler sort. But, somehow or other, though you fill it with water, the jar retains the odor which it acquired when first used. If my little gift should please you, I have others also in store which (if the Holy Spirit shall breathe favorably), shall sail across the sea to you with all kinds of eastern merchandise.

Letter 11. To the Virgins of Aemona.

Aemona was a Roman colony not far from Stridon, Jerome's birthplace. The virgins to whom the note is addressed had omitted to answer his letters, and he now writes to upbraid them for their remissness. The date of the letter is 374 a.d. This scanty sheet of paper shows in what a wilderness I live, and because of it I have to say much in few words. For, desirous though I am to speak to you more fully, this miserable scrap compels me to leave much unsaid. Still ingenuity makes up for lack of means, and by writing small I can say a great deal. Observe, I beseech you, how I love you, even in the midst of my difficulties, since even the want of materials does not stop me from writing to you.

Pardon, I beseech you, an aggrieved man: if I speak in tears and in anger it is because I have been injured. For in return for my regular letters you have not sent me a single syllable. Light, I know, has no communion with darkness, [2 Cor. 6:14] and God's handmaidens no fellowship with a sinner, yet a harlot was allowed to wash the Lord's feet with her tears, [Luke 7:37 sqq] and dogs are permitted to eat of their masters' crumbs. [Matt. 15:27] It was the Saviour's mission to call sinners and not the righteous; for, as He said Himself, "they that be whole need not a physician. [Matt. 9:12, Matt. 9:13] He wills the repentance of a sinner rather than his death, [Ezek. 33:11] and carries home the poor stray sheep on His own shoulders. [Luke 15:5] So, too, when the prodigal son returns, his father receives him with joy. [Luke 15:20] Nay more, the apostle says: "Judge nothing before the time." [1 Cor. 4:5] For "who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth." [Rom. 14:4] And "let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." [1 Cor. 10:12] "Bear ye one another's burdens." [Gal. 6:2]

Dear sisters, man's envy judges in one way, Christ in another; and the whisper of a corner is not the same as the sentence of His tribunal. Many ways seem right to men which are afterwards found to be wrong. [Cf. Prov. 14:12] And a treasure is often stowed in earthen vessels. [2 Cor. 4:7] Peter thrice denied his Lord, yet his bitter tears restored him to his place. "To whom much is forgiven, the same

loveth much." [Luke 7:47] No word is said of the flock as a whole, yet the angels joy in heaven over the safety of one sick ewe. [Luke 15:7, Luke 15:10] And if any one demurs to this reasoning, the Lord Himself has said: "Friend, is thine eye evil because I am good?" [Matt. 20:15]

Letter 12. To Antony, Monk.

The subject of this letter is similar to that of the preceding. Of Antony nothing is known except that some mss. describe him as ”of Aemona.” The date of the letter is 374 a.d. While the disciples were disputing concerning precedence our Lord, the teacher of humility, took a little child and said: ”Except ye be converted and become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” [Matt. 18:3] And lest He should seem to preach more than he practised, He fulfilled His own precept in His life. For He washed His disciples’ feet, [Joh. 13:5] he received the traitor with a kiss, [Luke 22:47] He conversed with the woman of Samaria, [Joh. 4:7] He spoke of the kingdom of heaven with Mary at His feet, and when He rose again from the dead He showed Himself first to some poor women. [Matt. 28:1, Matt. 28:9] Pride is opposed to humility, and through it Satan lost his eminence as an archangel. The Jewish people perished in their pride, for while they claimed the chief seats and salutations in the market place, [Matt. 23:6, Matt. 23:7] they were superseded by the Gentiles, who had before been counted as ”a drop of a bucket.” [Isa. 40:15] Two poor fishermen, Peter and James, were sent to confute the sophists and the wise men of the world. As the Scripture says: ”God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.” [1 Pet. 5:5] Think, brother, what a sin it must be which has God for its opponent. In the Gospel the Pharisee is rejected because of his pride, and the publican is accepted because of his humility. [Luke 18:9 sqq]

Now, unless I am mistaken, I have already sent you ten letters, affectionate and earnest, whilst you have not deigned to give me even a single line. The Lord speaks to His servants, but you, my brother servant, refuse to speak to me. Believe me, if reserve did not check my pen, I could show my annoyance in such invective that you would have to reply-even though it might be in anger. But since anger is human, and a Christian must not act injuriously, I fall back once more on entreaty, and beg you to love one who loves you, and to write to him as a servant should to his fellow-servant. Farewell in the Lord.

Letter 13. To Castorina, His Maternal Aunt.

An interesting letter, as throwing some light on Jerome's family relations. Castorina, his maternal aunt, had, for some reason, become estranged from him, and he now writes to her to effect a reconciliation. Whether he succeeded in doing so, we do not know. The date of the letter is 374 a.d.

The apostle and evangelist John rightly says, in his first epistle, that "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. [1 Joh. 3:15] For, since murder often springs from hate, the hater, even though he has not yet slain his victim, is at heart a murderer. Why, you ask, do I begin in this style? Simply that you and I may both lay aside past ill feeling and cleanse our hearts to be a habitation for God. "Be ye angry," David says, "and sin not," or, as the apostle more fully expresses it, "let not the sun go down upon your wrath. [Ps. 4:4, LXX.: Eph. 4:26] What then shall we do in the day of judgment, upon whose wrath the sun has gone down not one day but many years? The Lord says in the Gospel: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. [Matt. 5:23, Matt. 5:24] Woe to me, wretch that I am; woe, I had almost said, to you also. This long time past we have either offered no gift at the altar or have offered it whilst cherishing anger "without a cause. How have we been able in our daily prayers to say "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," [Matt. 6:12] whilst our feelings have been at variance with our words, and our petition inconsistent with our conduct?

Therefore I renew the prayer which I made a year ago in a previous letter, that the Lord's legacy of peace [John 14:27] may be indeed ours, and that my desires and your feelings may find favor in His sight. Soon we shall stand before His judgment seat to receive the reward of harmony restored or to pay the penalty for harmony broken. In case you shall prove unwilling-I hope that it may not be so-to accept my advances, I for my part shall be free. For this letter, when it is read, will insure my acquittal.

Letter 14. To Heliodorus, Monk.

Heliodorus, originally a soldier, but now a presbyter of the Church, had accompanied Jerome to the East, but, not feeling called to the solitary life of the desert, had returned to Aquileia. Here be resumed his clerical duties, and in course of time was raised to the episcopate as bishop of Altinum. The letter was written in the first bitterness of separation and reproaches Heliodorus for having gone back from the perfect way of the ascetic life. The description given of this is highly colored and seems to have produced a great impression in the West. Fabiola was so much enchanted by it that she learned the letter by heart. [See Ep. 77:9] The date is 373 or 374 a.d.

1. So conscious are you of the affection which exists between us that you cannot but recognize the love and passion with which I strove to prolong our common sojourn in the desert. This very letter-blotted, as you see, with tears-gives evidence of the lamentation and weeping with which I accompanied your departure. With the pretty ways of a child you then softened your refusal by soothing words, and I, being off my guard, knew not what to do. Was I to hold my peace? I could not conceal my eagerness by a show of indifference. Or was I to entreat you yet more earnestly? You would have refused to listen, for your love was not like mine. Despised affection has taken the one course open to it. Unable to keep you when present, it goes in search of you when absent. You asked me yourself, when you were going away, to invite you to the desert when I took up my quarters there, and I for my part promised to do so. Accordingly I invite you now; come, and come quickly. Do not call to mind old ties; the desert is for those who have left all. Nor let the hardships of our former travels deter you. You believe in Christ, believe also in His words: ”Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.” [Matt. 6:33] Take neither scrip nor staff. He is rich enough who is poor-with Christ.

2. But what is this, and why do I foolishly importune you again? Away with entreaties, an end to coaxing words. Offended love does well to be angry. You have spurned my petition; perhaps you will listen to my remonstrance. What keeps you, effeminate soldier, in your father’s house? Where are your ramparts and trenches?

When have you spent a winter in the field? Lo, the trumpet sounds from heaven! Lo, the Leader comes with clouds! [Rev. 1:7] He is armed to subdue the world, and out of His mouth proceeds a two-edged sword [Rev. 1:16] to mow down all that encounters it. But as for you, what will you do? Pass straight from your chamber to the battle-field, and from the cool shade into the burning sun? Nay, a body used to a tunic cannot endure a buckler; a head that has worn a cap refuses a helmet; a hand made tender by disuse is galled by a sword-hilt. Hear the proclamation of your King: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." [Matt. 12:30] Remember the day on which you enlisted, when, buried with Christ in baptism, you swore fealty to Him, declaring that for His sake you would spare neither father nor mother. Lo, the enemy is striving to slay Christ in your breast. Lo, the ranks of the foe sigh over that bounty which you received when you entered His service. Should your little nephew hang on your neck, pay no regard to him; should your mother with ashes on her hair and garments rent show you the breasts at which she nursed you, heed her not; should your father prostrate himself on the threshold, trample him under foot and go your way. With dry eyes fly to the standard of the cross. In such cases cruelty is the only true affection.

3. Hereafter there shall come-yes, there shall come-a day when you will return a victor to your true country, and will walk through the heavenly Jerusalem crowned with the crown of valor. Then will you receive the citizenship thereof with Paul. [Phi. 3:20, R.V] Then will you seek the like privilege for your parents. Then will you intercede for me who have urged you forward on the path of victory. I am not ignorant of the fetters which you may plead as hindrances. My breast is not of iron nor my heart of stone. I was not born of flint or suckled by a tigress. [Virg. A. 4:367] I have passed through troubles like yours myself. Now it is a widowed sister who throws her caressing arms around you. Now it is the slaves, your foster-brothers, who cry, "To what master are you leaving us?" Now it is a nurse bowed with age, and a body-servant loved only less than a father, who exclaim: "Only wait till we die and follow us to our graves." Perhaps, too, an aged mother, with sunken bosom and furrowed brow, recalling the lullaby [Pers. 3:18] with which she once soothed you, adds her entreaties to theirs. The learned may call you, if they please,

"The sole support and pillar of your house." [Virg. A. 12:59] The love of God and the fear of hell will easily break such bonds. Scripture, you will argue, bids us obey our parents. [Eph. 6:1] Yes, but whoso loves them more than Christ loses his own soul. [Matt. 10:37] The enemy takes sword in hand to slay me, and shall I think of a mother's tears? Or shall I desert the service of Christ for the sake of a father to whom, if I am Christ's servant, I owe no rites of burial, [Luke 9:59, Luke 9:60] albeit if I am Christ's true servant I owe these to all? Peter with his cowardly advice was an offence to the Lord on the eve of His passion; [Matt. 16:23] and to the brethren who strove to restrain him from going up to Jerusalem, Paul's one

answer was: ”What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” [Acts 21:13] The batteringram of natural affection which so often shatters faith must recoil powerless from the wall of the Gospel. ”My mother and my brethren are these whosoever do the will of my Father which is in heaven.” [Luke 8:21, Matt. 12:50] If they believe in Christ let them bid me God-speed, for I go to fight in His name. And if they do not believe, ”let the dead bury their dead.” [Matt. 8:22]

4. But all this, you argue, only touches the case of martyrs. Ah! my brother, you are mistaken, you are mistaken, if you suppose that there is ever a time when the Christian does not suffer persecution. Then are you most hardly beset when you know not that you are beset at all. ”Our adversary as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour,” [1 Pet. 5:8] and do you think of peace? ”He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent; his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den; he lieth in wait to catch the poor;” [Ps. 10:8, Ps. 10:9] and do you slumber under a shady tree, so as to fall an easy prey? On one side self-indulgence presses me hard; on another covetousness strives to make an inroad; my belly wishes to be a God to me, in place of Christ, [Phi. 3:19] and lust would fain drive away the Holy Spirit that dwells in me and defile His temple. [1 Cor 3:17] I am pursued, I say, by an enemy

”Whose name is Legion and his wiles untold; [Virg. A. 7:337] and, hapless wretch that I am, how shall I hold myself a victor when I am being led away a captive?” 5. My dear brother, weigh well the various forms of transgression, and think not that the sins which I have mentioned are less flagrant than that of idolatry. Nay, hear the apostle’s view of the matter. ”For this ye know,” he writes, ”that no whore-monger or unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” [Eph. 5:5] In a general way all that is of the devil savors of enmity to God, and what is of the devil is idolatry, since all idols are subject to him. Yet Paul elsewhere lays down the law in express and unmistakable terms, saying: ”Mortify your members, which are upon the earth, laying aside fornication, uncleanness, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which are idolatry, for which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh.” [Col. 3:5, Col. 3:6]

Idolatry is not confined to casting incense upon an altar with finger and thumb, or to pouring libations of wine out of a cup into a bowl. Covetousness is idolatry, or else the selling of the Lord for thirty pieces of silver was a righteous act. [Matt. 26:15] Lust involves profanation, or else men may defile with common harlots those members of Christ which should be ”a living sacrifice acceptable to God.” [Rom. 12:1] Fraud is idolatry, or else they are worthy of imitation who, in the Acts of the Apostles, sold their inheritance, and because they kept back part of the price, perished by an instant doom. [Acts 5] Consider well, my brother; nothing is yours

to keep. ”Whosoever he be of you,” the Lord says, ”that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” [Luke 14:33] Why are you such a half-hearted Christian?

6. See how Peter left his net; [Matt. 4:18-20] see how the publican rose from the receipt of custom. [Matt. 9:9] In a moment he became an apostle. ”The Son of man hath not where to lay his head,” [Matt. 8:20] and do you plan wide porticos and spacious halls? If you look to inherit the good things of the world you can no longer be a joint-heir with Christ. [Rom. 8:17] You are called a monk, and has the name no meaning? What brings you, a solitary, into the throng of men? The advice that I give is that of no inexperienced mariner who has never lost either ship or cargo, and has never known a gale. Lately shipwrecked as I have been myself, my warnings to other voyagers spring from my own fears. On one side, like Charybdis, self-indulgence sucks into its vortex the soul’s salvation. On the other, like Scylla, lust, with a smile on her girl’s face, lures it on to wreck its chastity. The coast is savage, and the devil with a crew of pirates carries irons to fetter his captives. Be not credulous, be not over-confident.The sea may be as smooth and smiling as a pond, its quiet surface may be scarcely ruffled by a breath of air, yet sometimes its waves are as high as mountains. There is danger in its depths, the foe is lurking there. Ease your sheets, spread your sails, fasten the cross as an ensign on your prow. The calm that you speak of is itself a tempest.

”Why so? you will perhaps argue; ”are not all my fellow-townsmen Christians? Your case, I reply, is not that of others. Listen to the words of the Lord: ”If thou wilt be perfect go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me. [Matt. 19:21] You have already promised to be perfect. For when you forsook the army and made yourself an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven’s sake, [Matt. 19:12] you did so that you might follow the perfect life. Now the perfect servant of Christ has nothing beside Christ. Or if he have anything beside Christ he is not perfect. And if he be not perfect when he has promised God to be so, his profession is a lie. But ”the mouth that lieth slayeth the soul. [Wisd. 1:11] To conclude, then, if you are perfect you will not set your heart on your father’s goods; and if you are not perfect you have deceived the Lord. The Gospel thunders forth its divine warning: ”Ye cannot serve two masters,” [Luke 16:13] and does any one dare to make Christ a liar by serving at once both God and Mammon? Repeatedly does He proclaim, ”If any one will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. [Luke 9:23] If I load myself with gold can I think that I am following Christ? Surely not. ”He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked. [1 Joh. 2:6]

7. I know you will rejoin that you possess nothing. Why, then, if you are so well prepared for battle, do you not take the field? Perhaps you think that you can wage war in your own country, although the Lord could do no signs in His? [Matt. 13:58]

Why not? you ask. Take the answer which comes to you with his authority: "No prophet is accepted in his own country." [Luke 4:24] But, you will say, I do not seek honor; the approval of my conscience is enough for me. Neither did the Lord seek it; for when the multitudes would have made Him a king he fled from them. [Joh. 6:15] But where there is no honor there is contempt; and where there is contempt there is frequent rudeness; and where there is rudeness there is vexation; and where there is vexation there is no rest; and where there is no rest the mind is apt to be diverted from its purpose. Again, where, through restlessness, earnestness loses any of its force, it is lessened by what it loses, and that which is lessened cannot be called perfect. The upshot of all which is that a monk cannot be perfect in his own country. Now, not to aim at perfection is itself a sin.

8. Driven from this line of defence you will appeal to the example of the clergy. These, you will say, remain in their cities, and yet they are surely above criticism. Far be it from me to censure the successors of the apostles, who with holy words consecrate the body of Christ, and who make us Christians. Having the keys of the kingdom of heaven, they judge men to some extent before the day of judgment, and guard the chastity of the bride of Christ. But, as I have before hinted, the case of monks is different from that of the clergy. The clergy feed Christ's sheep; I as a monk am fed by them. They live of the altar: [1 Cor. 9:13, 1 Cor. 9:14] I, if I bring no gift to it, have the axe laid to my root as to that of a barren tree. [Matt. 3:10] Nor can I plead poverty as an excuse, for the Lord in the gospel has praised an aged widow for casting into the treasury the last two coins that she had. [Luke 21:1-4] I may not sit in the presence of a presbyter; he, if I sin, may deliver me to Satan, "for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved. [1 Cor. 5:5] Under the old law he who disobeyed the priests was put outside the camp and stoned by the people, or else he was beheaded and expiated his contempt with his blood.

[Deut. 17:5, Deut. 17:12] But now the disobedient person is cut down with the spiritual sword, or he is expelled from the church and torn to pieces by ravening demons. Should the entreaties of your brethren induce you to take orders, I shall rejoice that you are lifted up, and fear lest you may be cast down. You will say: "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. [1 Tim. 3:1] I know that; but you should add what follows: such an one "must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, chaste, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker but patient. [1 Tim. 3:2, 1 Tim. 3:3] After fully explaining the qualifications of a bishop the apostle speaks of ministers of the third degree with equal care. "Likewise must the deacons be grave," he writes, "not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then, let them minister, being found blameless. [1 Tim. 3:8-10] Woe to the man who goes in to the supper without a wedding garment. Nothing remains for him but the stern question, "Friend, how camest thou in hither? And when he is

speechless the order will be given, ”Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[Matt. 22:11-13] Woe to him who, when he has received a talent, has bound it in a napkin; and, whilst others make profits, only preserves what he has received. His angry lord shall rebuke him in a moment. ”Thou wicked servant,” he will say, ”wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? [Luke 19:23] That is to say, you should have laid before the altar what you were not able to bear. For whilst you, a slothful trader, keep a penny in your hands, you occupy the place of another who might double the money. Wherefore, as he who ministers well purchases to himself a good degree, [1 Tim. 3:13] so he who approaches the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. [1 Cor. 11:27]

9. Not all bishops are bishops indeed. You consider Peter; mark Judas as well. You notice Stephen; look also on Nicolas, sentenced in the Apocalypse by the Lord’s own lips, [Rev. 2:6] whose shameful imaginations gave rise to the heresy of the Nicolaitans. ”Let a man examine himself and so let him come. [1 Cor. 11:28] For it is not ecclesiastical rank that makes a man a Christian. The centurion Cornelius was still a heathen when he was cleansed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Daniel was but a child when he judged the elders. Amos was stripping mulberry bushes when, in a moment, he was made a prophet. [Amos 7:14] David was only a shepherd when he was chosen to be king. [1 Sam. 16:11-13] And the least of His disciples was the one whom Jesus loved the most. My brother, sit down in the lower room, that when one less honorable comes you may be bidden to go up higher. [Luke 14:10] Upon whom does the Lord rest but upon him that is lowly and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at His word? [Isa. 66:2] To whom God has committed much, of him He will ask the more. [Luke 12:48] ”Mighty men shall be mightily tormented. [Wisd. 6:6] No man need pride himself in the day of judgment on merely physical chastity, for then shall men give account for every idle word, [Matt. 12:36] and the reviling of a brother shall be counted as the sin of murder.

[Matt. 5:21, Matt. 5:22] Paul and Peter now reign with Christ, and it is not easy to take the place of the one or to hold the office of the other. There may come an angel to rend the veil of your temple, [Matt. 27:51] and to remove your candlestick out of its place. [Rev. 2:5] If you intend to build the tower, first count the cost. [Luke 14:28] Salt that has lost its savor is good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of swine. [Matt. 5:13] If a monk fall, a priest shall intercede for him; but who shall intercede for a fallen priest?

10. At last my discourse is clear of the reefs: at last this frail bark has passed from the breakers into deep water. I may now spread my sails to the breeze; and, as I leave the rocks of controversy astern, my epilogue will be like the joyful shout of mariners. O desert, bright with the flowers of Christ! O solitude whence come the

stones of which, in the Apocalypse, the city of the great king is built! [Rev. 21:19, Rev. 21:20] O wilderness, gladdened with God's especial presence! What keeps you in the world, my brother, yon who are above the world? How long shall gloomy roofs oppress you? How long shall smoky cities immure you? Believe me, I have more light than you. Sweet it is to lay aside the weight of the body and to soar into the pure bright ether. Do you dread poverty? Christ calls the poor blessed. [Luke 6:20] Does toil frighten you? No athlete is crowned but in the sweat of his brow. Are you anxious as regards food? Faith fears no famine. Do you dread the bare ground for limbs wasted with fasting? The Lord lies there beside you. Do you recoil from an unwashed head and uncombed hair? Christ is your true head. Does the boundless solitude of the desert terrify you? In the spirit you may walk always in paradise. Do but turn your thoughts thither and you will be no more in the desert. Is your skin rough and scaly because you no longer bathe?

He that is once washed in Christ needeth not to wash again. [Joh. 13:10] To all your objections the apostle gives this one brief answer: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory" which shall come after them, "which shall be revealed in us. [Rom. 8:18] You are too greedy of enjoyment, my brother, if you wish to rejoice with the world here, and to reign with Christ hereafter.

11. it shall come, it shall come, that day when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. [1 Cor. 15:53] Then shall that servant be blessed whom the Lord shall find watching. [Matt. 24:46] Then at the sound of the trumpet [1 Thess. 4:16] the earth and its peoples shall tremble, but you shall rejoice. The world shall howl at the Lord who comes to judge it, and the tribes of the earth shall smite the breast. Once mighty kings shall tremble in their nakedness. Venus shall be exposed, and her son too Jupiter with his fiery bolts will be brought to trial; and Plato, with his disciples, will be but a fool. Aristotle's arguments shall be of no avail. You may seem a poor man and country bred, but then you shall exult and laugh, and say: Behold my crucified Lord behold my judge. This is He who was once an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and crying in a manger. [Luke 2:7] This is He whose parents were a workingman and a workingwoman. This is He, who, carried into Egypt in His mother's bosom, though He was God, fled before the face of man. This is He who was clothed in a scarlet robe and crowned with thorns. [Matt. 27:28, Matt. 27:29] This is He who was called a sorcerer and a man with a devil and a Samaritan. [Joh. 8:48] Jew, behold the hands which you nailed to the cross. Roman, behold the side which you pierced with the spear. See both of you whether it was this body that the disciples stole secretly and by night. [Matt. 27:64] For this you profess to believe.

My brother, it is affection which has urged me to speak thus; that you who now find the Christian life so hard may have your reward in that day.

Letter 15. To Pope Damasus.

This letter, written in 376 or 377 a.d., illustrates Jerome's attitude towards the see of Rome at this time held by Damasus, afterwards his warm friend and admirer. Referring lo Rome as the scene of his own baptism and as a church where the true faith has remained unimpaired (§1), and laying down the strict doctrine of salvation only within the pale of the church (§2), Jerome asks "the successor of the fisherman" two questions, viz.: (1) who is the true bishop of the three claimants of the see of Antioch, and (2) which is the correct terminology, to speak of three "hypostases" in the Godhead, or of one? On the latter question he expresses fully his own opinion.

1. Since the East, shattered as it is by the long-standing feuds, subsisting between its peoples, is bit by bit tearing into shreds the seamless vest of the Lord, "woven from the top throughout," [Joh. 19:23] since the foxes are destroying the vineyard of Christ, [Cant. 2:15] and since among the broken cisterns that hold no water it is hard to discover "the sealed fountain" and "the garden inclosed," [Cant. 4:12] I think it my duty to consult the chair of Peter, and to turn to a church whose faith has been praised by Paul. [Rom. 1:8] I appeal for spiritual food to the church whence I have received the garb of Christ. The wide space of sea and land that lies between us cannot deter me from searching for "the pearl of great price." [Matt. 13:46] "Wheresoever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together." [Matt. 24:28] Evil children have squandered their patrimony; you alone keep your heritage intact. The fruitful soil of Rome, when it receives the pure seed of the Lord, bears fruit an hundredfold; but here the seed corn is choked in the furrows and nothing grows but darnel or oats. [Matt. 13:22, Matt. 13:23] In the West the Sun of righteousness [Mal. 4:2] is even now rising; in the East, Lucifer, who fell from heaven, [Luke 10:18] has once more set his throne above the stars. [Isa. 14:12] "Ye are the light of the world," [Matt. 5:14] "ye are the salt of the earth," [Matt. 5:13] ye are "vessels of gold and of silver." Here are vessels of wood or of earth, [2 Tim. 2:20] which wait for the rod of iron, [Rev. 2:27] and eternal fire.

2. Yet, though your greatness terrifies me, your kindness attracts me. From the priest I demand the safe-keeping of the victim, from the shepherd the protection

due to the sheep. Away with all that is overweening; let the state of Roman majesty withdraw. My words are spoken to the successor of the fisherman, to the disciple of the cross. As I follow no leader save Christ, so I communicate with none but your blessedness, that is with the chair of Peter. For this, I know, is the rock on which the church is built! [Matt. 16:18] This is the house where alone the paschal lamb can be rightly eaten. [Ex. 12:22] This is the ark of Noah, and he who is not found in it shall perish when the flood prevails. [Gen. 7:23] But since by reason of my sins I have betaken myself to this desert which lies between Syria and the uncivilized waste, I cannot, owing to the great distance between us, always ask of your sanctity the holy thing of the Lord. Consequently I here follow the Egyptian confessors who share your faith, and anchor my frail craft under the shadow of their great argosies. I know nothing of Vitalis; I reject Meletius; I have nothing to do with Paulinus. He that gathers not with you scatters; [Matt. 12:30] he that is not of Christ is of Antichrist.

3. Just now, I am sorry to say, those Arians, the Campenses, are trying to extort from me, a Roman Christian, their unheard-of formula of three hypostases. And this, too, after the definition of Nicaea and the decree of Alexandria, in which the West has joined. Where, I should like to know, are the apostles of these doctrines? Where is their Paul, their new doctor of the Gentiles? I ask them what three hypostases are supposed to mean. They reply three persons subsisting. I rejoin that this is my belief. They are not satisfied with the meaning, they demand the term. Surely some secret venom lurks in the words. ”If any man refuse,” I cry, ”to acknowledge three hypostases in the sense of three things hypostatized, that is three persons subsisting, let him be anathema.” Yet, because I do not learn their words, I am counted a heretic. ”But, if any one, understanding by hypostasis essence, deny that in the three persons there is one hypostasis, he has no part in Christ.” Because this is my confession I, like you, am branded with the stigma of Sabellianism.

4. If you think fit enact a decree; and then I shall not hesitate to speak of three hypostases. Order a new creed to supersede the Nicene; and then, whether we are Arians or orthodox, one confession will do for us all. In the whole range of secular learning hypostasis never means anything but essence. And can any one, I ask, be so profane as to speak of three essences or substances in the Godhead? There is one nature of God and one only; and this, and this alone, truly is. For absolute being is derived from no other source but is all its own. All things besides, that is all things created, although they appear to be, are not. For there was a time when they were not, and that which once was not may again cease to be. God alone who is eternal, that is to say, who has no beginning, really deserves to be called an essence. Therefore also He says to Moses from the bush, ”I am that I am,” and Moses says of Him, ”I am hath sent me. [Ex. 3:14] As the angels, the sky, the earth, the seas, all existed at the time, it must have been as the absolute being that God claimed for himself that name of essence, which apparently was common

to all. But because His nature alone is perfect, and because in the three persons there subsists but one Godhead, which truly is and is one nature;

whosoever in the name of religion declares that there are in the Godhead three elements, three hypostases, that is, or essences, is striving really to predicate three natures of God. And if this is true, why are we severed by walls from Arius, when in dishonesty we are one with him? Let Ursicinus be made the colleague of your blessedness; let Auxentius be associated with Ambrose. But may the faith of Rome never come to such a pass! May the devout hearts of your people never be infected with such unholy doctrines! Let us be satisfied to speak of one substance and of three subsisting persons-perfect, equal, coeternal. Let us keep to one hypostasis, if such be your pleasure, and say nothing of three. It is a bad sign when those who mean the same thing use different words. Let us be satisfied with the form of creed which we have hitherto used. Or, if you think it right that I should speak of three hypostases, explaining what I mean by them, I am ready to submit. But, believe me, there is poison hidden under their honey; the angel of Satan has transformed himself into an angel of light. [2 Cor. 11:14] They give a plausible explanation of the term hypostasis; yet when I profess to hold it in the same sense they count me a heretic. Why are they so tenacious of a word? Why do they shelter themselves under ambiguous language? If their belief corresponds to their explanation of it, I do not condemn them for keeping it.

On the other hand, if my belief corresponds to their expressed opinions, they should allow me to set forth their meaning in my own words.

5. I implore your blessedness, therefore, by the crucified Saviour of the world, and by the consubstantial trinity, to authorize me by letter either to use or to refuse this formula of three hypostases. And lest the obscurity of my present abode may baffle the bearers of your letter, I pray you to address it to Evagrius, the presbyter, with whom you are well acquainted. I beg you also to signify with whom I am to communicate at Antioch. Not, I hope, with the Campenses; for they-with their allies the heretics of Tarsus -only desire communion with you to preach with greater authority their traditional doctrine of three hypostases.

Letter 16. To Pope Damasus.

This letter, written a few months after the preceding, is another appeal to Damasus to solve the writer's doubts. Jerome once more refers to his baptism at Rome, and declares that his one answer to the factions at Antioch is, "He who clings to the chair of Peter is accepted by me." Written from the desert in the year 377 or 378. 1. By her importunity the widow in the gospel at last gained a hearing, [Matt. 15:28] and by the same means one friend induced another to give him bread at midnight, when his door was shut and his servants were in bed. [Luke 11:7, Luke 11:8] The publican's prayers overcame God, [Luke 18:10-14] although God is invincible. Nineveh was saved by its tears from the impending ruin caused by its sin. [Jon. 3:5, Jon. 3:10] To what end, you ask, these far-fetched references? To this end, I make answer; that you in your greatness should look upon me in my littleness; that you, the rich shepherd, should not despise me, the ailing sheep. Christ Himself brought the robber from the cross to paradise, [Luke 23:43] and, to show that repentance is never too late, He turned a murderer's death into a martyrdom. Gladly does Christ embrace the prodigal son when he returns to Him; [Luke 15:20] and, leaving the ninety and nine, the good shepherd carries home on His shoulders the one poor sheep that is left. [Luke 15:5] From a persecutor Paul becomes a preacher. His bodily eyes are blinded to clear the eyes of his soul, [Acts 9:8] and he who once haled Christ's servants in chains before the council of the Jews, [Acts 8:3] lives afterwards to glory in the bonds of Christ. [2 Cor. 12:10]

2. As I have already written to you, I, who have received Christ's garb in Rome, am now detained in the waste that borders Syria. No sentence of banishment, however, has been passed upon me; the punishment which I am undergoing is self-inflicted. But, as the heathen poet says: "They change not mind but sky who cross the sea." [Hor. Epist. 1:11, 27] The untiring foe follows me closely, and the assaults that I suffer in the desert are severer than ever. For the Arian frenzy raves, and the powers of the world support it. The church is rent into three factions, and each of these is eager to seize me for its own. The influence of the monks is of long standing, and it is directed against me. I meantime keep crying: "He who clings to the chair of Peter is accepted by me." Meletius, Vitalis, and Paulinus all profess to cleave to you, and I could believe the assertion if it were made by one of them

only. As it is, either two of them or else all three are guilty of falsehood. Therefore I implore your blessedness, by our Lord's cross and passion, those necessary glories of our faith, as you hold an apostolic office, to give an apostolic decision. Only tell me by letter with whom I am to communicate in Syria, and I will pray for you that you may sit in judgment enthroned with the twelve; [Matt. 19:28] that when you grow old, like Peter, you may be girded not by yourself but by another, [Joh. 21:18] and that, like Paul, you may be made a citizen of the heavenly kingdom. [Phi. 3:20, R.V] Do not despise a soul for which Christ died.

Letter 17. To the Presbyter Marcus.

In this letter, addressed to one who seems to have had some pre-eminence among the monks of the Chalcidian desert, Jerome complains of the hard treatment meted out to him because of his refusal to take any part in the great theological dispute then raging in Syria. He protests his own orthodoxy, and begs permission to remain where he is until the return of spring, when he will retire from ”the inhospitable desert,” Written in a.d. 378 or 379. 1. I had made up my mind to use the words of the psalmist: ”While the wicked was before me I was dumb with silence; I was humbled, and I held my peace even from good ” [Ps. 39:1, 2 Vulg] and ”I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not.” [Ps. 38:13, Ps. 38:14] But charity overcomes all things, [Cf. 1 Cor. 13:7] and my regard for you defeats my determination. I am, indeed, less careful to retaliate upon my assailants than to comply with your request. For among Christians, as one has said, not he who endures an outrage is unhappy, but he who commits it.

2. And first, before I speak to you of my belief (which you know full well), I am forced to cry out against the inhumanity of this country. A hackneyed quotation best expresses my meaning: ”What savages are these who will not grant A rest to strangers, even on their sands! They threaten war and drive us from their coasts.” [Virg. A. 1:539-541]

I take this from a Gentile poet that one who disregards the peace of Christ may at least learn its meaning from a heathen. I am called a heretic, although I preach the consubstantial trinity. I am accused of the Sabellian impiety although I proclaim with unwearied voice that in the Godhead there are three distinct, real, whole, and perfect persons. The Arians do right to accuse me, but the orthodox forfeit their orthodoxy when they assail a faith like mine. They may, if they like, condemn me as a heretic; but if they do they must also condemn Egypt and the West, Damasus and Peter. Why do they fasten the guilt on one and leave his companions uncensured? If there is but little water in the stream, it is the fault, not of the channel, but of the

source. I blush to say it, but from the caves which serve us for cells we monks of the desert condemn the world. Rolling in sack-cloth and ashes, we pass sentence on bishops. What use is the robe of a penitent if it covers the pride of a king? Chains, squalor, and long hair are by right tokens of sorrow, and not ensigns of royalty. I merely ask leave to remain silent. Why do they torment a man who does not deserve their ill-will? I am a heretic, you say. What is it to you if I am? Stay quiet, and all is said.

You are afraid, I suppose, that, with my fluent knowledge of Syriac and Greek, I shall make a tour of the churches, lead the people into error, and form a schism! I have robbed no man of anything; neither have I taken what I have not earned. With my own hand [1 Cor. 4:12] daily and in the sweat of my brow [Gen. 3:19] I labor for my food, knowing that it is written by the apostle: ”If any will not work, neither shall he eat. [2 Thess. 3:10]

3. Reverend and holy father, Jesus is my witness with what groans and tears I have written all this. ”I have kept silence, saith the Lord, but shall I always keep silence? Surely not.” [Isa. 42:14, LXX] I cannot have so much as a corner of the desert. Every day I am asked for my confession of faith; as though when I was regenerated in baptism I had made none. I accept their formulas, but they are still dissatisfied. I sign my name to them, but they still refuse to believe me. One thing only will content them, that I should leave the country. I am on the point of departure. They have already torn away from me my dear brothers, who are a part of my very life. They are, as you see, anxious to depart-nay, they are actually departing; it is preferable, they say, to live among wild beasts rather than with Christians such as these. I myself, too, would be at this moment a fugitive were I not withheld by physical infirmity and by the severity of the winter. I ask to be allowed the shelter of the desert for a few months till spring returns; or if this seems too long a delay, I am ready to depart now. ”The earth is the Lord’ ? and the fulness thereof.” [Ps. 24:1] Let them climb up to heaven alone; for them alone Christ died; they possess all things and glory in all. Be it so. ”But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” [Gal. 6:14]

4. As regards the questions which you have thought fit to put to me concerning the faith, I have given to the reverend Cyril a written confession which sufficiently answers them. He who does not so believe has nopart in Christ. My faith is attested both by your ears and by those of your blessed brother, Zenobius, to whom, as well as to yourself, we all of us here send our best greeting.

Letter 22. To Eustochium.

Perhaps the most famous of all the letters. In it Jerome lays down at great length (1) the motives which ought to actuate those who devote themselves to a life of virginity, and (2) the rules by which they ought to regulate their daily conduct. The letter contains a vivid picture of Roman society as it then was-the luxury, profligacy, and hypocrisy prevalent among both men and women, besides some graphic autobiographical details (§§7, 30), and concludes with a full account ofthe three kinds of monasticism then practised in Egypt (§§34-36). Thirty years later Jerome wrote a similar letter to Demetrias (CXXX.), with which this ought to be compared. Written at Rome 384 a.d.

1. ”Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father’s house, and the king shall desire thy beauty. [Ps. 45:10, Ps. 45:11] In this forty-fourth psalm God speaks to the human soul that, following the example of Abraham, [Gen. 11:31; Gen. 12:1] it should go out from its own land and from its kindred, and should leave the Chaldeans, that is the demons, and should dwell in the country of the living, for which elsewhere the prophet sighs: ”I think to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living. [Ps. 27:13] But it is not enough for you to go out from your own land unless you forget your people and your father’s house; unless you scorn the flesh and cling to the bridegroom in a close embrace. ”Look not behind thee,” he says, ”neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed. [Gen. 19:17] He who has grasped the plough must not look behind him [Luke 9:62] or return home from the field, or having Christ’s garment, descend from the roof to fetch other raiment. [Matt. 24:17, Matt. 24:18] Truly a marvellous thing, a father charges his daughter not to remember her father. ”Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. [Joh. 8:44, R.V] So it was said to the Jews. And in another place, ”He that committeth sin is of the devil.

[1 Joh. 3:8] Born, in the first instance, of such parentage we are naturally black, and even when we have repented, so long as we have not scaled the heights of virtue, we may still say: ”I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem. [Cant. 1:5] But you will say to me, ”I have left the home of my childhood; I have forgotten my

father, I am born anew in Christ. What reward do I receive for this? The context shows-"The king shall desire thy beauty. This, then, is the great mystery. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be" not as is there said, "of one flesh," [Eph. 5:31, Eph. 5:32] but "of one spirit. Your bridegroom is not haughty or disdainful; He has"married an Ethiopian woman. [Nu. 12:1] When once you desire the wisdom of the true Solomon and come to Him, He will avow all His knowledge to you; He will lead you into His chamber with His royal hand; [Cant. 1:4] He will miraculously change your complexion so that it shall be said of you, "Who is this that goeth up and hath been made white? [Cant. 8:5, LXX]

2. I write to you thus, Lady Eustochium (I am bound to call my Lord's bride "lady"), to show yon by my opening words that my object is not to praise the virginity which you follow, and of which you have proved the value, or yet to recount the drawbacks of marriage, such as pregnancy, the crying of infants, the torture caused by a rival, the cares of household management, and all those fancied blessings which death at last cuts short. Not that married women are as such outside the pale; they have their own place, the marriage that is honorable and the bed undefiled. [Heb. 13:4] My purpose is to show you that you are fleeing from Sodom and should take warning by Lot's wife. [Gen. 19:26] There is no flattery, I can tell you, in these pages. A flatterer's words are fair, but for all that he is an enemy. You need expect no rhetorical flourishes setting you among the angels, and while they extol virginity as blessed, putting the world at your feet.

3. I would have you draw from your monastic vow not pride but fear. [Rom. 11:20] You walk laden with gold; you must keep out of the robber's way. To us men this life is a race-course we contend here, we are crowned elsewhere. No man can lay aside fear while serpents and scorpions beset his path. The Lord says: "My sword hath drunk its fill in heaven," [Isa. 34:5, R.V] and do you expect to find peace on the earth? No, the earth yields only thorns and thistles, and its dust is food for the serpent. [Gen. 3:14, Gen. 3:18] "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. [Eph. 6:12, R.V] We are hemmed in by hosts of foes, our enemies are upon every side. The weak flesh will soon be ashes: one against many, it fights against tremendous odds. Not till it has been dissolved, not till the Prince of this world has come and found no sin therein, not till then may you safely listen to the prophet's words: "Thou shall not be afraid for the terror by night nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the trouble which haunteth thee in darkness; nor for the demon and his attacks at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

[Ps. 91:5-7, Vulg] When the hosts of the enemy distress you, when your frame is fevered and your passions roused, when you say in your heart, ”What shall I do? Elisha’s words shall give you your answer, ”Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. [2 K. 6:16] He shall pray, ”Lord, open the eyes of thine handmaid that she may see. And then when your eyes have been opened you shall see a fiery chariot like Elijah’s waiting to carry you to heaven, [2 K. 2:11; 2 K. 6:17] and shall joyfully sing: ”Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken and we are escaped. [Ps. 124:7]

4. So long as we are held down by this frail body, so long as we have our treasure in earthen vessels; [2 Cor. 4:7] so long as the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, [Gal. 5:17] there can be no sure victory. ”Our adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. [1 Pet. 5:8] ”Thou makest darkness,” David says, ”and it is night: wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth. The young lions roar after their prey and seek their meat from God. [Ps. 104:20, Ps. 104:21] The devil looks not for unbelievers, for those who are without, whose flesh the Assyrian king roasted in the furnace. [Jer. 29:22] It is the church of Christ that he ”makes haste to spoil. According to Habakkuk, ”His food is of the choicest. [Hab. 1:16, LXX] A Job is the victim of his machinations, and after devouring Judas he seeks power to sift the [other] apostles. [Luke 22:31] The Saviour came not to send peace upon the earth but a sword. [Matt. 10:34] Lucifer fell, Lucifer who used to rise at dawn; [Isa. 14:12] and be who was bred up in a paradise of delight had the well-earned sentence passed upon him, ”Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord.

For he had said in his heart, ”I will exalt my throne above the stars of God,” and ”I will be like the Most High. [Isa. 14:13, Isa. 14:14] Wherefore God says every day to the angels, as they descend the ladder that Jacob saw in his dream, [Gen. 28:12] ”I have said ye are Gods and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men and fall like one of the princes. [Ps. 82:6, Ps. 82:7] The devil fell first, and since ”God standeth in the congregation of the Gods and judgeth among the Gods,” [Ps. 82:1] the apostle writes to those who are ceasing to be Gods-”Whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal and walk as men? [1 Cor. 3:3]

5. If, then, the apostle, who was a chosen vessel [Acts 9:15] separated unto the gospel of Christ, [Gal. 1:15] by reason of the pricks of the flesh and the allurements of vice keeps under his body and brings it into subjection, lest when he has preached to others he may himself be a castaway; [1 Cor. 9:27] and yet, for all that, sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin; [Rom. 7:23] if after nakedness, fasting. hunger, imprisonment, scourging and other torments, he turns back to himself and cries

"Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" [Rom. 7:24] do you fancy that you ought to lay aside apprehension? See to it that God say not some day of you: "The virgin of Israel is fallen and there is none to raise her up." [Am. 5:2] I will say it boldly, though God can do all things He cannot raise up a virgin when once she has fallen. He may indeed relieve one who is defiled from the penalty of her sin, but He will not give her a crown. Let us fear lest in us also the prophecy be fulfilled, "Good virgins shall faint." [Am. 8:13] Notice that it is good virgins who are spoken of, for there are bad ones as well. "Whosoever looketh on a woman," the Lord says, "to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." [Matt. 5:28] So that virginity may be lost even by a thought. Such are evil virgins, virgins in the flesh, not in the spirit; foolish virgins, who, having no oil, are shut out by the Bridegroom. [Matt. 25:3, Matt. 25:10]

6. But if even real virgins, when they have other failings, are not saved by their physical virginity, what shall become of those who have prostituted the members of Christ, and have changed the temple of the Holy Ghost into a brothel? Straightway shall they hear the words: "Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldaeans: for thou shalt no more becalled tender and delicate. Take the millstone and grind meal; uncover thy locks, make bare the legs, pass over the rivers; thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen. [Isa. 47:1-3] And shall she come to this after the bridal-chamber of God the Son, after the kisses of Him who is to her both kinsman and spouse? [Cant. 5:2, LXX] Yes, she of whomthe prophetic utterance once sang, "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold wrought about with divers col ours," [Ps. 45:10, P.B.V] shall be made naked, and her skirts shall be discovered upon her face. [Jer. 13:26] She shall sit by the waters of loneliness, her pitcher laid aside; and shall open her feet to every one that passeth by, and shall be polluted to the crown of her head. [Ezek. 16:25] Better had it been for her to have submitted to the yoke of marriage, to have walked in level places, than thus, aspiring to loftier heights, to fall into the deep of hell.

I pray you, let not Zion the faithful city become a harlot: [Isa. 1:21] let it not be that where the Trinity has been entertained, there demons shall dance and owls make their nests, and jackals build. [Isa. 34:15; Isa. 13:22, R.V] Let us not loose the belt that binds the breast. When lust tickles the sense mad the soft fire of sensual pleasure sheds over us its pleasing glow, let us immediately break forth and cry: "The Lord is on my side: I will not fear what the flesh can do unto me. [Pss. 118:6; Pss. 56:4] When the inner man shows signs for a time of wavering between vice and virtue, say: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God. [Ps. 42:11] You must never let suggestions of evil grow on you, or a babel of disorder win strength in your breast. Slay the enemy while he is small; and, that you may not have a crop of tares, nip the evil in the bud. Bear

in mind the warning words of the Psalmist: ”Hapless daughter of Babylon, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

[Ps. 137:9] Because natural heat inevitably kindles in a man sensual passion, he is praised and accounted happy who, when foul suggestions arise in his mind, gives them no quarter, but dashes them instantly against the rock. ”Now the Rock is Christ. [1 Cor. 10:4]

7. How often, when I was living in the desert, in the vast solitude which gives to hermits a savage dwelling-place, parched by a burning sun, how often did I fancy myself among the pleasures of Rome! I used to sit alone because I was filled with bitterness. Sackcloth disfigured my unshapely limbs and my skin from long neglect had become as black as an Ethiopian’s. Tears and groans were every day my portion; and if drowsiness chanced to overcome my struggles against it, my bare bones, which hardly held together, clashed against the ground. Of my food and drink I say nothing: for, even in sickness, the solitaries have nothing but cold water, and to eat one’s food cooked is looked upon as self-indulgence. Now, although in my fear of hell I had consigned myself to this prison, where I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I often found myself amid bevies of girls. My face was pale and my frame chilled with fasting; yet my mind was burning with desire, and the fires of lust kept bubbling up before me when my flesh was as good as dead. Helpless, I cast myself at the feet of Jesus, I watered them with my tears, I wiped them with my hair: and then I subdued my rebellious body with weeks of abstinence. I do not blush to avow my abject misery; rather I lament that I am not now what once I was.

I remember how I often cried aloud all night till the break of day and ceased not from beating my breast till tranquillity returned at the chiding of the Lord. I used to dread my very cell as though it knew my thoughts; and, stern and angry with myself, I used to make my way alone into the desert. Wherever I saw hollow valleys, craggy mountains, steep cliffs, there I made my oratory, there the house of correction for my unhappy flesh. There, also-the Lord Himself is my witness-when I had shed copious tears and had strained my eyes towards heaven, I sometimes felt myself among angelic hosts, and for joy and gladness sang: ”because of the savour of thy good ointments we will run after thee. [Cant. 1:3, Cant. 1:4]

8. Now, if such are the temptations of men who, since their bodies are emaciated with fasting, have only evil thoughts to fear, how must it fare with a girl whose surroundings are those of luxury and ease? Surely, to use the apostle’s words, ”She is dead while she liveth. [1 Tim. 5:6] Therefore, if experience gives me a right to advise, or clothes my words with credit, I would begin by urging you and warning you as Christ’s spouse to avoid wine as you would avoid poison. For wine is the first weapon used by demons against the young. Greed does not shake, nor pride

puff up, nor ambition infatuate so much as this. Other vices we easily escape, but this enemy is shut up within us, and wherever we go we carry him with us. Wine and youth between them kindle the fire of sensual pleasure. Why do we throw oil on the flame-why do we add fresh fuel to a miserable body which is already ablaze. Paul, it is true, says to Timothy "drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and for thine often infirmities. [1 Tim. 5:23] But notice the reasons for which the permission is given, to cure an aching stomach and a frequent infirmity. And lest we should indulge ourselves too much on the score of our ailments, he commands that but little shall be taken; advising rather as a physician than as an apostle (though, indeed, an apostle is a spiritual physician).

He evidently feared that Timothy might succumb to weakness, and might prove unequal to the constant moving to and fro involved in preaching the Gospel. Besides, he remembered that he had spoken of "wine wherein is excess," [Eph. 5:18] and had said, "it is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine. [Rom. 14:21] Noah drank wine and became intoxicated; but living as he did in the rude age after the flood, when the vine was first planted, perhaps he did not know its power of inebriation. And to let you see the hidden meaning of Scripture in all its fulness (for the word of God is a pearl and may be pierced on every side) after his drunkenness came the uncovering of his body; self-indulgence culminated in lust. [Gen. 9:20, Gen. 9:21] First the belly is crammed; then the other members are roused. Similarly, at a later period, "The people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play. [Ex. 32:6] Lot also, God's friend, whom He saved upon the mountain, who was the only one found righteous out of so many thousands, was intoxicated by his daughters. And, although they may have acted as they did more from a desire of offspring than from love of sinful pleasure-for the human race seemed in danger of extinction-yet they were well aware that the righteous man would not abet their design unless intoxicated. In fact he did not know what he was doing, and his sin was not wilful.

Still his error was a grave one, for it made him the father of Moab and Ammon, [Gen. 19:30-38] Israel's enemies, of whom it is said: "Even to the fourteenth generation they shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever."

9. When Elijah, in his flight from Jezebel, lay weary and desolate beneath the oak, there came an angel who raised him up and said, "Arise and eat." And he looked, and behold there was a cake and a cruse of water at his head. [1 K. 19:4-6] Had God willed it, might He not have sent His prophet spiced wines and dainty dishes and flesh basted into tenderness? When Elisha invited the sons of the prophets to dinner, he only gave them field-herbs to eat; and when all cried out with one voice: "There is death in the pot," the man of God did not storm at the cooks (for he was not used to very sumptuous fare), but caused meal to be brought, and casting it in, sweetened the bitter mess [2 K. 4:38-41] with spiritual strength as Moses had once sweetened the waters of Mara. [Exod. 15:23-25] Again, when men were sent

to arrest the prophet, and were smitten with physical and mental blindness, that he might bring them without their own knowledge to Samaria, notice the food with which Elisha ordered them to be refreshed. ”Set bread and water,” he said, ”before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master.” [2 K. 6:18-23] And Daniel, who might have had rich food from the king’s table, [Dan. 1:8] preferred the mower’s breakfast, brought to him by Habakkuk, which must have been but country fare. He was called ”a man of desires,” [Dan. 9:23, A.V. marg] because he would not eat the bread of desire or drink the wine of concupiscence.

10. There are, in the Scriptures, countless divine answers condemning gluttony and approving simple food. But as fasting is not my present theme and an adequate discussion of it would require a treatise to itself, these few observations must suffice of the many which the subject suggests. By them you will understand why the first man, obeying his belly and not God, was cast down from paradise into this vale of tears; [Ps. 84:6, R.V] and why Satan used hunger to tempt the Lord Himself in the wilderness; [Matt. 4:2, Matt. 4:3] and why the apostle cries: ”Meats for the belly and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them;” [1 Cor. 6:13] and why he speaks of the self-indulgent as men ”whose God is their belly.” [Phil. 3:19] For men invariably worship what they like best. Care must be taken, therefore, that abstinence may bring back to Paradise those whom satiety once drove out.

11. You will tell me, perhaps, that, high-born as you are, reared in luxury and used to lie softly, you cannot do without wine and dainties, and would find a stricter rule of life unendurable. If so, I can only say: ”Live, then, by your own rule, since God’s rule is too hard for you.” Not that the Creator and Lord of all takes pleasure in a rumbling and empty stomach, or in fevered lungs; but that these are indispensable as means to the preservation of chastity. Job was dear to God, perfect and upright before Him; [Job 2:3] yet hear what he says of the devil: ”His strength is in the loins, and his force is in the navel.” [Job 40:16, of behemoth] The terms are chosen for decency’s sake, but the reproductive organs of the two sexes are meant. Thus, the descendant of David, who, according to the promise is to sit upon his throne, is said to come from his loins. [Ps. 132:11] And the seventy-five souls descended from Jacob who entered Egypt are said to come out of his thigh. [Gen. 46:26] So, also, when his thigh shrank after the Lord had wrestled with him, [Gen. 32:24, Gen. 32:25] he ceased to beget children. The Israelites, again, are told to celebrate the passover with loins girded and mortified. [Exod. 12:11] God says to Job: ”Gird up thy loins as a man.” [Job. 38:3] John wears a leathern girdle. [Matt. 3:4] The apostles must gird their loins to carry the lamps of the Gospel. [Luke 12:35] When Ezekiel tells us how Jerusalem is found in the plain of wandering, covered with blood, he uses the words: ”Thy navel has not been cut.” [Ezek. 16:4-6] In his assaults on men, therefore, the devil’s strength is in the loins; in his attacks on women his force is in the navel.

12. Do you wish for proof of my assertions? Take examples. Sampson was braver than a lion and tougher than a rock; alone and unprotected he pursued a thousand armed men; and yet, in Delilah's embrace, his resolution melted away. David was a man after God's own heart, and his lips had often sung of the Holy One, the future Christ; and yet as he walked upon his housetop he was fascinated by Bathsheba's nudity, and added murder to adultery. Notice here how, even in his own house, a man cannot use his eyes without danger. Then repenting, he says to the Lord: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." [Ps. 51:4] Being a king he feared no one else. So, too, with Solomon. Wisdom used him to sing her praise, and he treated of all plants "from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall;" [1 K. 4:33] and yet he went back from God because he was a lover of women. And, as if to show that near relationship is no safeguard, Amnon burned with illicit passion for his sister Tamar.

13. I cannot bring myself to speak of the many virgins who daily fall and are lost to the bosom of the church, their mother: stars over which the proud foe sets up his throne, [Isa. 14:13] and rocks hollowed by the serpent that he may dwell in their fissures. You may see many women widows before wedded, who try to conceal their miserable fall by a lying garb. Unless they are betrayed by swelling wombs or by the crying of their infants, they walk abroad with tripping feet and heads in the air. Some go so fat as to take potions, that they may insure barrenness, and thus murder human beings almost before their conception. Some, when they find themselves with child through their sin, use drugs to procure abortion, and when (as often happens) they die with their offspring, they enter the lower world laden with the guilt not only of adultery against Christ but also of suicide and child murder. Yet it is these who say: "'Unto the pure all things are pure;' [Tit. 1:15] my conscience is sufficient guide for me. A pure heart is what God looks for. Why should I abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving? [1 Tim. 4:3] And when they wish to appear agreeable and entertaining they first drench themselves with wine, and then joining the grossest profanity to intoxication, they say "Far be it from me to abstain from the blood of Christ.

And when they see another pale or sad they call her "wretch" or "manichaean; quite logically, indeed, for on their principles fasting involves heresy. When they go out they do their best to attract notice, and with nods and winks encourage troops of young fellows to follow them. Of each and all of these the prophet's words are true: "Thou hast a whore's forehead; thou refusest to be ashamed. [Jer. 3:3] Their robes have but a narrow purple stripe, it is true; and their head-dress is somewhat loose, so as to leave the hair free. From their shoulders flutters the lilac mantle which they call "maforte; they have their feet in cheap slippers and their arms tucked up tight-fitting sleeves. Add to these marks of their profession an easy gait, and you have all the virginity that they possess. Such may have eulogizers of their own,

and may fetch a higher price in the market of perdition, merely because they are called virgins. But to such virgins as these I prefer to be displeasing.

14. I blush to speak of it, it is so shocking; yet though sad, it is true. How comes this plague of the agapetae to be in the church? Whence come these unwedded wives, these novel concubines, these harlots, so I will call them, though they cling to a single partner? One house holds them and one chamber. They often occupy the same bed, and yet they call us suspicious if we fancy anything amiss. A brother leaves his virgin sister; a virgin, slighting her unmarried brother, seeks a brother in a stranger. Both alike profess to have but one object, to find spiritual consolation from those not of their kin; but their real aim is to indulge in sexual intercourse. It is on such that Solomon in the book of proverbs heaps his scorn. "Can a man take fire in his bosom," he says, "and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned?" [Prov. 6:27, Prov. 6:28]

15. We cast out, then, and banish from our sight those who only wish to seem and not to be virgins. Henceforward I may bring all my speech to bear upon you who, as it is your lot to be the first virgin of noble birth in Rome, have to labor the more diligently not to lose good things to come, as well as those that are present. You have at least learned from a case in your own family the troubles of wedded life and the uncertainties of marriage. Your sister, Blaesilla, before you in age but behind you in declining the vow of virginity, has become a widow but seven months after she has taken a husband. Hapless plight of us mortals who know not what is before us! She has lost, at once, the crown of virginity and the pleasures of wedlock. And, although, as a widow, the second degree of chastity is hers, still can you not imagine the continual crosses which she has to bear, daily seeing in her sister what she has lost herself; and, while she finds it hard to go without the pleasures of wedlock, having a less reward for her present continence? Still she, too, may take heart and rejoice. The fruit which is an hundredfold and that which is sixtyfold both spring from one seed, and that seed is chastity. [Matt. 13:8]

16. Do not court the company of married ladies or visit the houses of the high-born. Do not look too often on the life which you despised to become a virgin. Women of the world, you know, plume themselves because their husbands are on the bench or in other high positions. And the wife of the emperor always has an eager throng of visitors at her door. Why do you, then, wrong your husband? Why do you, God's bride, hasten to visit the wife of a mere man? Learn in this respect a holy pride; know that you are better than they. And not only must you avoid intercourse with those who are puffed up by their husbands' honors, who are hedged in with troops of eunuchs, and who wear robes inwrought with threads of gold. You must also shun those who are widows from necessity and not from choice. Not that they ought to have desired the death of their husbands; but that they have not welcomed the opportunity of continence when it has come. As it is, they only change their garb;

their old self-seeking remains unchanged. To see them in their capacious litters, with red cloaks and plump bodies, a row of eunuchs walking in front of them, you would fancy them not to have lost husbands but to be seeking them. Their houses are filled with flatterers and with guests.

The very clergy, who ought to inspire them with respect by their teaching and authority, kiss these ladies on the forehead, and putting forth their hands (so that, if you knew no better, you might suppose them in the act of blessing), take wages for their visits. They, meanwhile, seeing that priests cannot do without them, are lifted up into pride; and as, having had experience of both, they prefer the license of widowhood to the restraints of marriage, they call themselves chaste livers and nuns. After an immoderate supper they retire to rest to dream of the apostles.

17. Let your companions be women pale and thin with fasting, and approved by their years and conduct; such as daily sing in their hearts: "Tell me where thou feedest thy flock, where thou makest it to rest at noon," [Cant. 1:7, R.V] and say, with true earnestness, "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ. [Phil. 1:23] Be subject to your parents, imitating the example of your spouse. [Luke 2:51] Rarely go abroad, and if you wish to seek, the aid of the martyrs seek it in your own chamber. For you will never need a pretext for going out if you always go out when there is need. Take food in moderation, and never overload your stomach. For many women, while temperate as regards wine, are intemperate in the use of food. When you rise at night to pray, let your breath be that of an empty and not that of an overfull stomach. Read often, learn all that you can. Let sleep overcome you, the roll still in your hands; when your head falls, let it be on the sacred page. Let your fasts be of daily occurrence and your refreshment such as avoids satiety. It is idle to carry an empty stomach if, in two or three days' time, the fast is to be made up for by repletion. When cloyed the mind immediately grows sluggish, and when the ground is watered it puts forth the thorns of lust.

If ever you feel the outward man sighing for the flower of youth, and if, as you lie on your couch after a meal, you are excited by the alluring train of sensual desires; then seize the shield of faith, for it alone can quench the fiery darts of the devil. [Eph. 6:16] "They are all adulterers," says the prophet; "they have made ready their heart like an oven. [Hos. 7:4, Hos. 7:6, R.V] But do you keep close to the footsteps of Christ, and, intent upon His words, say: "Did not our heart burn within us by the way while Jesus opened to us the Scriptures? [Luke 24:32] and again: "Thy word is tried to the uttermost, and thy servant loveth it. [Ps. 119:140, P.B.V] It is hard for the human soul to avoid loving something, and our mind must of necessity give way to affection of one kind or another. The love of the flesh is overcome by the love of the spirit. Desire is quenched by desire. What is taken from the one increases the other. Therefore, as you lie on your couch, say again and again: "By night have I sought Him whom my soul loveth. [Cant. 3:1] "Mortify,

therefore," says the apostle, "your members which are upon the earth. [Col. 3:5] Because he himself did so, he could afterwards say with confidence: "I live, yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me. [Gal. 2:20] He who mortifies his members, and feels that he is walking in a vain show, is not afraid to say:

"I am become like a bottle in the frost. [Ps. 119:83 Vulg] Whatever there was in me of the moisture of lust has been dried out of me. And again: "My knees are weak through fasting; I forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. [Ps. 109:24; 102:5]

18. Be like the grasshopper and make night musical. Nightly wash your bed and water your couch with your tears. [Ps. 6:6, P.B.V] Watch and be like the sparrow alone upon the housetop. [Ps. 102:7] Sing with the spirit, but sing with the understanding also. [1 Cor. 14:15] And let your song be that of the psalmist: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction. [Ps. 103:2-4] Can we, any of us, honestly make his words our own: "I have eaten ashes like bread and mingled my drink with weeping? [Ps. 102:9] Yet, should we not weep and groan when the serpent invites us, as he invited our first parents, to eat forbidden fruit, and when after expelling us from the paradise of virginity he desires to clothe us with mantles of skins such as that which Elijah, on his return to paradise, left behind him on earth? [2 K. 2:13] Say to yourself: "What have I to do with the pleasures of sense that so soon come to an end? What have I to do with the song of the sirens so sweet and so fatal to those who hear it? I would not have you subject to that sentence whereby condemnation has been passed upon mankind. When God says to Eve, "In pain and in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children," say to yourself, "That is a law for a married woman, not for me.

And when He continues, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband," [Gen. 3:16] say again: "Let her desire be to her husband who has not Christ for her spouse. And when, last of all, He says, "Thou shalt surely die," [Gen. 2:17] once more, say, "Marriage indeed must end in death; but the life on which I have resolved is independent of sex. Let those who are wives keep the place and the time that properly belong to them. For me, virginity is consecrated in the persons of Mary and of Christ."

19. Some one may say, "Do you dare detract from wedlock, which is a state blessed by God?" I do not detract from wedlock when I set virginity before it. No one compares a bad thing with a good. Wedded women may congratulate themselves that they come next to virgins. "Be fruitful," God says, "and multiply, and replenish the earth." [Gen. 1:28] He who desires to replenish the earth may increase and multiply if he will. But the train to which you belong is not on earth, but in heaven. The command to increase and multiply first finds fulfilment after the expulsion from paradise, after the nakedness and the fig-leaves which speak of sexual passion. Let them marry and be given in marriage who eat their bread in the sweat of their brow;

whose land brings forth to them thorns and thistles, [Gen. 3:18, Gen. 3:19] and whose crops are choked with briars. My seed produces fruit a hundredfold. ”All men cannot receive God’s saying, but they to whom it is given.”

Some people may be eunuchs from necessity; I am one of free will. [Matt. 19:11, Matt. 19:12] ”There is a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing. There is a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together. [Eccles. 3:5] Now that out of the hard stones of the Gentiles God has raised up children unto Abraham, [Matt. 3:9] they begin to be ”holy stones rolling upon the earth. [Zech. 9:16, LXX] They pass through the whirlwinds of the world, and roll on in God’s chariot on rapid wheels. Let those stitch coats to themselves who have lost the coat woven from the top throughout; [Joh. 19:23] who delight in the cries of infants which, as soon as they see the light, lament that they are born. In paradise Eve was a virgin, and it was only after the coats of skins that she began her married life. Now paradise is your home too. Keep therefore your birthright and say: ”Return unto thy rest, O my soul. [Ps. 116:7] To show that virginity is natural while wedlock only follows guilt, what is born of wedlock is virgin flesh, and it gives back in fruit what in root it has lost. ”There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall grow out of his roots. [Isa. 11:1, LXX] The rod is the mother of the Lord-simple, pure, unsullied; drawing no germ of life from without but fruitful in singleness like God Himself.

The flower of the rod is Christ, who says of Himself: ”I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys. [Cant. 2:1] In another place He is foretold to be ”a stone cut out of the mountain without hands,” [Dan. 2:45] a figure by which the prophet signifies that He is to be born a virgin of a virgin. For the hands are here a figure of wedlock as in the passage: ”His left hand is under my head and his right hand doth embrace me. [Cant. 2:6] It agrees, also, with this interpretation that the unclean animals are led into Noah’s ark in pairs, while of the clean an uneven number is taken. [Gen. 7:2] Similarly, when Moses and Joshua were bidden to remove their shoes because the ground on which they stood was holy, [Ex. 3:5, Josh. 5:15] the command had a mystical meaning. So, too, when the disciples were appointed to preach the gospel they were told to take with them neither shoe nor shoe-latchet; and when the soldiers came to cast lots for the garments of Jesus [Joh. 19:23, Joh. 19:24] they found no boots that they could take away. For the Lord could not Himself possess what He had forbidden to His servants.

20. I praise wedlock, I praise marriage, but it is because they give me virgins. I gather the rose from the thorns, the gold from the earth, the pearl from the shell. ”Doth the plowman plow all day to sow?” [Isa. 28:24] Shall he not also enjoy the fruit of his labor? Wedlock is the more honored, the more what is born of it is loved. Why, mother, do you grudge your daughter her virginity? She has been reared on your milk, she has come from your womb, she has grown up in your

bosom. Your watchful affection has kept her a virgin. Are you angry with her because she chooses to be a king's wife and not a soldier's? She has conferred on you a high privilege; you are now the mother-in-law of God. "Concerning virgins," says the apostle, "I have no commandment of the Lord." [1 Cor. 7:25] Why was this? Because his own virginity was due, not to a command, but to his free choice. For they are not to be heard who feign him to have had a wife; for, when he is discussing continence and commending perpetual chastity, he uses the words, "I would that all men were even as I myself." And farther on, "I say, therefore, to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I." [1 Cor. 7:7, 1 Cor. 7:8] And in another place, "have we not power to lead about wives even as the rest of the apostles?" [1 Cor. 9:5] Why then has he no commandment from the Lord concerning virginity? Because what is freely offered is worth more than what is extorted by force, and to command virginity would have been to abrogate wedlock. It would have been a hard enactment to compel opposition to nature and to extort from men the angelic life; and not only so, it would have been to condemn what is a divine ordinance.

21. The old law had a different ideal of blessedness, for therein it is said: "Blessed is he who hath seed in Zion and a family in Jerusalem: [Isa. 31:9, LXX] and "Cursed is the barren who beareth not: [Isa. 54:1, LXX. (? and "Thy children shall be like olive-plants round about thy table. [Ps. 128:3] Riches too are promised to the faithful and we are told that "there was not one feeble person among their tribes. [Ps. 105:37] But now even to eunuchs it is said, "Say not, behold I am a dry tree," [Isa. 56:3] for instead of sons and daughters you have a place forever in heaven. Now the poor are blessed, now Lazarus is set before Dives in his purple. [Cf. Luke 16:19 sqq] Now he who is weak is counted strong. But in those days the world was still unpeopled: accordingly, to pass over instances of childlessness meant only to serve as types, those only were considered happy who could boast of children. It was for this reason that Abraham in his old age married Keturah; [Gen. 25:1] that Leah hired Jacob with her son's mandrakes, [Gen. 30:14-16] and that fair Rachel-a type of the church-complained of the closing of her womb. [Gen. 30:1, Gen. 30:2] But gradually the crop grew up and then the reaper was sent forth with his sickle. Elijah lived a virgin life, so also did Elisha and many of the sons of the prophets. To Jeremiah the command came: "Thou shall not take thee a wife.

[Jer. 16:2] He had been sanctified in his mother's womb, [Jer. 1:5] and now he was forbidden to take a wife because the captivity was near. The apostle gives the same counsel in different words. "I think, therefore, that this is good by reason of the present distress, namely that it is good for a man to be as he is. [1 Cor. 7:26, R.V] What is this distress which does away with the joys of wedlock? The apostle tells us, in a later verse: "The time is short: it remaineth that those who have wives be as though they had none. [1 Cor. 7:29] Nebuchadnezzar is hard at hand. The lion is bestirring himself from his lair. What good will marriage be to me if it is to end

in slavery to the haughtiest of kings? What good will little ones be to me if their lot is to be that which the prophet sadly describes: ”The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the young children ask for bread and no man breaketh it unto them”? [Lam. 4:4] In those days, as I have said, the virtue of continence was found only in men: Eve still continued to travail with children.

But now that a virgin has conceived [Isa. 7:14] in the womb and has borne to us a child of which the prophet says that ”Government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father,” [Isa. 9:6] now the chain of the curse is broken. Death came through Eve, but life has come through Mary. And thus the gift of virginity has been bestowed most richly upon women, seeing that it has had its beginning from a woman. As soon as the Son of God set foot upon the earth, He formed for Himself a new household there; that, as He was adored by angels in heaven, angels might serve Him also on earth. Then chaste Judith once more cut off the head of Holofernes. Then Haman-whose name means iniquity-was once more burned in fire of his own kindling. [Esther 7:10] Then James and John forsook father and net and ship and followed the Saviour: neither kinship nor the world’s ties, nor the care of their home could hold them back. Then were the words heard: ”Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. [Mark 8:34] For no soldier goes with a wife to battle. Even when a disciple would have buried his father, the Lord forbade him, and said: ”Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.

[Matt. 8:20-22] So you must not complain if you have but scanty house-room. In the same strain, the apostle writes: ”He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married careth for the things of the world how she may please her husband. [1 Cor. 7:32-34]

22. How great inconveniences are involved in wedlock and how many anxieties encompass it I have, I think, described shortly in my treatise-published against Helvidius -on the perpetual virginity of the blessed Mary. It would be tedious to go over the same ground now; and any one who pleases may draw from that fountain. But lest I should seem wholly to have passed over the matter, I will just say now that the apostle bids us pray without ceasing, [1 Thess. 5:17] and that he who in the married state renders his wife her due [1 Cor. 7:3, R.V] cannot so pray. Either we pray always and are virgins, or we cease to pray that we may fulfil the claims of marriage. Still he says: ”If a virgin marry she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh.” [1 Cor. 7:28] At the outset I promised that I should say little or nothing of the embarrassments of wedlock, and now I give you

notice to the same effect. If you want to know from how many vexations a virgin is free and by how many a wife is fettered you should read Tertullian "to a philosophic friend," and his other treatises on virginity, the blessed Cyprian's noble volume, the writings of Pope Damasus in prose and verse, and the treatises recently written for his sister by our own Ambrose. In these he has poured forth his soul with such a flood of eloquence that he has sought out, set forth, and put in order all that bears on the praise of virgins.

23. We must proceed by a different path, for our purpose is not the praise of virginity but its preservation. To know that it is a good thing is not enough: when we have chosen it we must guard it with jealous care. The first only requires judgment, and we share it with many; the second calls for toil, and few compete with us in it. "He that shall endure unto the end," the Lord says, "the same shall be saved," [Matt. 24:13] and "many are called but few are chosen." [Matt. 20:16; Matt. 22:14] Therefore I conjure you before God and Jesus Christ and His elect angels to guard that which you have received, not readily exposing to the public gaze the vessels of the Lord's temple (which only the priests are by right allowed to see), that no profane person may look upon God's sanctuary. Uzzah, when he touched the ark which it was not lawful to touch, was struck down suddenly by death. [2 Sam. 6:6, 2 Sam. 6:7] And assuredly no gold or silver vessel was ever so dear to God as is the temple of a virgin's body. The shadow went before, but now the reality is come. You indeed may speak in all simplicity, and from motives of amiability may treat with courtesy the veriest strangers, but unchaste eyes see nothing aright. They fail to appreciate the beauty of the soul, and only value that of the body. Hezekiah showed God's treasure to the Assyrians, [2 Kings 20:12, 2 Kings 20:13] who ought never to have seen what they were sure to covet. The consequence was that Judaea was torn by continual wars, and that the very first things carried away to Babylon were these vessels of the Lord. We find Belshazzar at his feast and among his concubines (vice always glories in defiling what is noble) drinking out of these sacred cups. [Dan. 5:1-3]

24. Never incline your ear to words of mischief. For men often say an improper word to make trial of a virgin's steadfastness, to see if she hears it with pleasure, and if she is ready to unbend at every silly jest. Such persons applaud whatever you affirm and deny whatever you deny; they speak of you as not only holy but accomplished, and say that in you there is no guile. "Behold," say they, "a true hand-maid of Christ; behold entire singleness of heart. How different from that rough, unsightly, countrified fright, who most likely never married because she could never find a husband." Our natural weakness induces us readily to listen to such flatterers; but, though we may blush and reply that such praise is more than our due, the soul within us rejoices to hear itself praised.

Like the ark of the covenant Christ's spouse should be overlaid with gold within and without; [Ex. 25:11] she should be the guardian of the law of the Lord. Just as the ark contained nothing but the tables of the covenant, [1 K. 8:9] so in you there should be no thought of anything that is outside. For it pleases the Lord to sit in your mind as He once sat on the mercy-seat and the cherubims. [Ex. 25:22] As He sent His disciples to loose Him the foal of an ass that he might ride on it, so He sends them to release you from the cares of the world, that leaving the bricks and straw of Egypt, you may follow Him, the true Moses, through the wilderness and may enter the land of promise. Let no one dare to forbid you, neither mother nor sister nor kinswoman nor brother: "The Lord hath need of you. [Matt. 21:1-3] Should they seek to hinder you, let them fear the scourges that fell on Pharaoh, who, because he would not let God's people go that they might serve Him, [Ex. 7:16] suffered the plagues described in Scripture. Jesus entering into the temple cast out those things which belonged not to the temple. For God is jealous and will not allow the father's house to be made a den of robbers. [Matt. 21:12, Matt. 21:13, R.V] Where money is counted, where doves are sold, where simplicity is stifled where, that is, a virgin's breast glows with cares of this world;

straightway the veil of the temple is rent, [Matt. 27:51] the bridegroom rises in anger, he says: "Your house is left unto you desolate. [Matt. 23:38] Read the gospel and see how Mary sitting at the feet of the Lord is set before the zealous Martha. In her anxiety to be hospitable Martha was preparing a meal for the Lord and His disciples; yet Jesus said to her: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But few things are needful or one. And Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her. [Luke 10:41, Luke 10:42] Be then like Mary; prefer the food of the soul to that of the body. Leave it to your sisters to run to and fro and to seek how they may fitly welcome Christ. But do you, having once for all cast away the burden of the world, sit at the Lord's feet and say: "I have found him whom my soul loveth; I will hold him, I will not let him go. [Cant. 3:4] And He will answer: "My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. [Cant. 6:9] Now the mother of whom this is said is the heavenly Jerusalem. [Gal. 4:26]

25. Ever let the privacy of your chamber guard you; ever let the Bridegroom sport with you within. [Cf. Gen. 26:8] Do you pray? You speak to the Bridegroom. Do you read? He speaks to you. When sleep overtakes you He will come behind and put His hand through the hole of the door, and your heart shall be moved for Him; and you will awake and rise up and say: "I am sick of love." [Cant. 5:2, Cant. 5:4, Cant. 5:8] Then He will reply: "A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." [Cant. 4:12]

Go not from home nor visit the daughters of a strange land, though you have patriarchs for brothers and Israel for a father. Dinah went out and was seduced. Do

not seek the Bridegroom in the streets; do not go round the corners of the city. For though you may say: ”I will rise now and go about the city: in the streets and in the broad ways I will seek Him whom my soul loveth,” and though you may ask the watchmen: ”Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? [Cant. 3:2, Cant. 3:3] no one will deign to answer you. The Bridegroom cannot be found in the streets: ”Strait and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life. [Matt. 7:14] So the Song goes on: ”I sought him but I could not find him: I called him but he gave me no answer. [Cant. 3:2; Cant. 5:6] And would that failure to find Him were all. You will be wounded and stripped, you will lament and say: ”The watchmen that went about the city found me: they smote me, they wounded me, they took away my veil from me. [Cant. 5:7] Now if one who could say: ”I sleep but my heart waketh,” [Cant. 5:2] and ”A bundle of myrrh is my well beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts”; [Cant. 1:13] if one who could speak thus suffered so much because she went abroad, what shall become of us who are but young girls;

of us who, when the bride goes in with the Bridegroom, still remain without? Jesus is jealous. He does not choose that your face should be seen of others. You may excuse yourself and say: ”I have drawn close my veil, I have covered my face and I have sought Thee there and have said: ’Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest Thy flock, where Thou makest it to rest at noon. For why should I be as one that is veiled beside the flocks of Thy companions?’” [Cant. 1:7, R.V] Yet in spite of your excuses He will be wroth, He will swell with anger and say: ”If thou know not thyself, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed thy goats beside the shepherd’s tents. [Cant. 1:8, LXX] You may be fair, and of all faces yours may be the dearest to the Bridegroom; yet, unless you know yourself, and keep your heart with all diligence, [Prov. 4:23] unless also you avoid the eyes of the young men, you will be turned out of My bride-chamber to feed the goats, which shall be set on the left hand. [Matt. 25:33]

26. These things being so, my Eustochium, daughter, lady, fellow-servant, sister-these names refer the first to your age, the second to your rank, the third to your religious vocation, the last to the place which you hold in my affection-hear the words of Isaiah: ”Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation” of the Lord ”be overpast. [Isa. 26:20] Let foolish virgins stray abroad, but for your part stay at home with the Bridegroom; for if you shut your door, and, according to the precept of the Gospel, [Matt. 6:6] pray to your Father in secret, He will come and knock, saying: ”Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man ...open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. [Rev. 3:20] Then straightway you will eagerly reply: ”It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled. It is impossible that you should refuse, and say: ”I have put off my coat how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? [Cant. 5:2, Cant. 5:3] Arise forthwith and

open. Otherwise while you linger He may pass on and you may have mournfully to say: ”I opened to my beloved, but my beloved was gone. [Cant. 5:6] Why need the doors of your heart be closed to the Bridegroom?

Let them be open to Christ but closed to the devil according to the saying: ”If the spirit of him who hath power rise up against thee, leave not thy place. Daniel, in that upper story to which he withdrew when he could no longer continue below, had his windows open toward Jerusalem. [Dan. 6:10, LXX] Do you too keep your windows open, but only on the side where light may enter and whence you may see the eye of the Lord. Open not those other windows of which the prophet says: ”Death is come up into our windows. [Jer. 9:21]

27. You must also be careful to avoid the snare of a passion for vainglory. ”How,” Jesus says, ”can ye believe which receive glory one from another? [Joh. 5:44, R.V] What an evil that must be the victim of which cannot believe! Let us rather say: ”Thou art my glorying,” [Jer. 9:24] and ”He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord,” [1 Cor. 1:31] and ”If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ,” [Gal. 1:10] and ”Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world; [Gal. 6:14, R.V. marg] and once more: ”In God we boast all the day long; my soul shall make her boast in the Lord. [Pss. 44:8; Pss. 34:2] When you do alms, let God alone see you. When you fast, be of a cheerful countenance. [Matt. 6:3, Matt. 6:16-18] Let your dress be neither too neat nor too slovenly; neither let it be so remarkable as to draw the attention of passers-by, and to make men point their fingers at you. Is a brother dead? Has the body of a sister to be carried to its burial? Take care lest in too often performing such offices you die yourself. Do not wish to seem very devout nor more humble than need be, lest you seek glory by shunning it.

For many, who screen from all men’s sight their poverty, charity, and fasting, desire to excite admiration by their very disdain of it, and strangely seek for praise while they profess to keep out of its way. From the other disturbing influences which make men rejoice, despond, hope, and fear I find many free; but this is a defect which few are without, and he is best whose character, like a fair skin, is disfigured by the fewest blemishes. I do not think it necessary to warn you against boasting of your riches, or against priding yourself on your birth, or against setting yourself up as superior to others. I know your humility; I know that you can say with sincerity: ”Lord, my heart is not haughty nor mine eyes lofty; [Ps. 131:1] I know that in your breast as in that of your mother the pride through which the devil fell has no place. It would be time wasted to write to you about it; for there is no greater folly than to teach a pupil what he knows already. But now that you have despised the boastfulness of the world, do not let the fact inspire you with new boastfulness. Harbor not the secret thought that having ceased to court attention in garments of gold you may begin to do so in mean attire. And when you come into a room full

of brothers and sisters, do not sit in too low a place or plead that you are unworthy of a footstool.

Do not deliberately lower your voice as though worn out with fasting; nor, leaning on the shoulder of another, mimic the tottering gait of one who is faint. Some women, it is true, disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. [Matt. 6:16] As soon as they catch sight of any one they groan, they look down; they cover up their faces, all but one eye, which they keep free to see with. Their dress is sombre, their girdles are of sackcloth, their hands and feet are dirty; only their stomachs-which cannot be seen-are hot with food. Of these the psalm is sung daily: "The Lord will scatter the bones of them that please themselves. Others change their garb and assume the mien of men, being ashamed of being what they were born to be-women. They cut off their hair and are not ashamed to look like eunuchs. Some clothe themselves in goat's hair, and, putting on hoods, think to become children again by making themselves look like so many owls.

28. But I will not speak only of women. Avoid men, also, when you see them loaded with chains and wearing their hair long like women, contrary to the apostle's precept, [1 Cor. 11:14] not to speak of beards like those of goats, black cloaks, and bare feet braving the cold. All these things are tokens of the devil. Such an one Rome groaned over some time back in Antimus; and Sophronius is a still more recent instance. Such persons, when they have once gained admission to the houses of the high-born, and have deceived "silly women laden with sins, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," [2 Tim. 3:6, 2 Tim. 3:7] feign a sad mien and pretend to make long fasts while at night they feast in secret. Shame forbids me to say more, for my language might appear more like invective than admonition. There are others-I speak of those of my own order-who seek the presbyterate and the diaconate simply that they may be able to see women with less restraint. Such men think of nothing but their dress; they use perfumes freely, and see that there are no creases in their leather shoes. Their curling hair shows traces of the tongs; their fingers glisten with rings; they walk on tiptoe across a damp road, not to splash their feet. When you see men acting in this way, think of them rather as bridegrooms than as clergymen.

Certain persons have devoted the whole of their energies and life to the single object of knowing the names, houses, and characters of married ladies. I will here briefly describe the head of the profession, that from the master's likeness you may recognize the disciples. He rises and goes forth with the sun; he has the order of his visits duly arranged; he takes the shortest road; and, troublesome old man that he is, forces his way almost into the bedchambers of ladies yet asleep. If he sees a pillow that takes his fancy or an elegant table-cover-or indeed any article of household furniture-he praises it, looks admiringly at it, takes it into his hand, and, complaining that he has nothing of the kind, begs or rather extorts it from the

owner. All the women, in fact, fear to cross the news-carrier of the town. Chastity and fasting are alike distasteful to him. What he likes is a savory breakfast-say off a plump young crane such as is commonly called a cheeper. In speech he is rude and forward, and is always ready to bandy reproaches. Wherever you turn he is the first man that you see before you. Whatever news is noised abroad he is either the originator of the rumor or its magnifier. He changes his horses every hour; and they are so sleek and spirited that you would take him for a brother of the Thracian king.

29. Many are the stratagems which the wily enemy employs against us. "The serpent," we are told, "was more subtile than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." [Gen. 3:1] And the apostle says: "We are not ignorant of his devices." [2 Cor. 2:11] Neither an affected shabbiness nor a stylish smartness becomes a Christian. If there is anything of which you are ignorant, if you have any doubt about Scripture, ask one whose life commends him, whose age puts him above suspicion, whose reputation does not belie him; one who may be able to say: "I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Or if there should be none such able to explain, it is better to avoid danger at the price of ignorance than to court it for the sake of learning. Remember that you walk in the midst of snares, and that many veteran virgins, of a chastity never called in question, have, on the very threshold of death, let their crowns fall from their hands.

If any of your handmaids share your vocation, do not lift up yourself against them or pride yourself because you are their mistress. You have all chosen one Bridegroom; you all sing the same psalms; together you receive the Body of Christ. Why then should your thoughts be different? You must try to win others, and that you may attract the more readily you must treat the virgins in your train with the greatest respect. If you find one of them weak in the faith, be attentive to her, comfort her, caress her, and make her chastity your treasure. But if a girl pretends to have a vocation simply because she desires to escape from service, read aloud to her the words of the apostle: "It is better to marry than to burn." [1 Cor. 7:9] Idle persons and busybodies, whether virgins or widows; such as go from house to house calling on married women and displaying an unblushing effrontery greater than that of a stage parasite, cast from you as you would the plague. For "evil communications corrupt good manners," [1 Cor. 15:33] and women like these care for nothing but their lowest appetites. They will often urge you, saying, "My dear creature, make the best of your advantages, and live while life is yours," and "Surely you are not laying up money for your children." Given to wine and wantonness, they instill all manner of mischief into people's minds, and induce even the most austere to indulge in enervating pleasures. And "when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ they will marry, having condemnation because they have rejected their first faith." [1 Tim. 5:11, 1 Tim. 5:12]

Do not seek to appear over-eloquent, nor trifle with verse, nor make yourself gay with lyric songs. And do not, out of affectation, follow the sickly taste [Persius 1:104] of married ladies who, now pressing their teeth together, now keeping their lips wide apart, speak with a lisp, and purposely clip their words, because they fancy that to pronounce them naturally is a mark of country breeding. Accordingly they find pleasure in what I may call an adultery of the tongue. For "what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?" [2 Cor. 6:14, 2 Cor. 6:15] How can Horace go with the psalter, Virgil with the gospels, Cicero with the apostle? Is not a brother made to stumble if he sees you sitting at meat in an idol's temple? [1 Cor. 8:10] Although "unto the pure all things are pure," [Tit. 1:15] and "nothing is to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving," [1 Tim. 4:4] still we ought not to drink the cup of Christ, and, at the same time, the cup of devils. [1 Cor. 10:21] Let me relate to you the story of my own miserable experience.

30. Many years ago, when for the kingdom of heaven's sake I had cut myself off from home, parents, sister, relations, and-harder still-from the dainty food to which I had been accustomed; and when I was on my way to Jerusalem to wage my warfare, I still could not bring myself to forego the library which I had formed for myself at Rome with great care and toil. And so, miserable man that I was, I would fast only that I might afterwards read Cicero. After many nights spent in vigil, after floods of tears called from my inmost heart, after the recollection of my past sins, I would once more take up Plautus. And when at times I returned to my right mind, and began to read the prophets, their style seemed rude and repellent. I failed to see the light with my blinded eyes; but I attributed the fault not to them, but to the sun. While the old serpent was thus making me his plaything, about the middle of Lent a deep-seated fever fell upon my weakened body, and while it destroyed my rest completely-the story seems hardly credible-it so wasted my unhappy frame that scarcely anything was left of me but skin and bone. Meantime preparations for my funeral went on; my body grew gradually colder, and the warmth of life lingered only in my throbbing breast. Suddenly I was caught up in the spirit and dragged before the judgment seat of the Judge;

and here the light was so bright, and those who stood around were so radiant, that I cast myself upon the ground and did not dare to look up. Asked who and what I was I replied: "I am a Christian. But He who presided said: "Thou liest, thou art a follower of Cicero and not of Christ. For 'where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.'" [Matt. 6:21] Instantly I became dumb, and amid the strokes of the lash-for He had ordered me to be scourged-I was tortured more severely still by the fire of conscience, considering with myself that verse, "In the grave who shall give thee thanks? [Ps. 6:5] Yet for all that I began to cry and to bewail myself, saying: "Have mercy upon me, O Lord: have mercy upon me. Amid the sound of the scourges this cry still made itself heard. At last the bystanders, failing down

before the knees of Him who presided, prayed that He would have pity on my youth, and that He would give me space to repent of my error. He might still, they urged, inflict torture on me, should I ever again read the works of the Gentiles. Under the stress of that awful moment I should have been ready to make even still larger promises than these. Accordingly I made oath and called upon His name, saying: "Lord, if ever again I possess worldly books, or if ever again I read such, I have denied Thee.

Dismissed, then, on taking this oath, I returned to the upper world, and, to the surprise of all, I opened upon them eyes so drenched with tears that my distress served to convince even the incredulous. And that this was no sleep nor idle dream, such as those by which we are often mocked, I call to witness the tribunal before which I lay, and the terrible judgment which I feared. May it never, hereafter, be my lot to fall under such an inquisition! I profess that my shoulders were black and blue, that I felt the bruises long after I awoke from my sleep, and that thenceforth I read the books of God with a zeal greater than I had previously given to the books of men.

31. You must also avoid the sin of covetousness, and this not merely by refusing to seize upon what belongs to others, for that is punished by the laws of the state, but also by not keeping your own property, which has now become no longer yours. "If have not been faithful," the Lord says, "in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" [Luke 16:12] "That which is another man's" is a quantity of gold or of silver, while "that which is our own" is the spiritual heritage of which it is elsewhere said: "The ransom of a man's life is his riches." [Prov. 13:8, R.V] "No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." [Matt. 6:24] Riches, that is; for in the heathen tongue of the Syrians riches are called mammon. The "thorns" which choke our faith [Matt. 13:7, Matt. 13:22] are the taking thought for our life. [Matt. 6:25] Care for the things which the Gentiles seek after [Matt. 6:32] is the root of covetousness.

But you will say: "I am a girl delicately reared, and I cannot labor with my hands. Suppose that I live to old age and then fall sick, who will take pity on me?" Hear Jesus speaking to the apostles: "Take no thought what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them." [Matt. 6:25, Matt. 6:26] Should clothing fail you, set the lilies before your eyes. Should hunger seize you, think of the words in which the poor and hungry are blessed. Should pain afflict you, read "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities," and "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure." [2 Cor. 12:10, 2 Cor. 12:7] Rejoice in all God's judgments; for does

not the psalmist say: ”The daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O Lord”? [Ps. 97:8] Let the words be everon your lips: ”Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither;” [Job 1:21] and ”We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” [1 Tim. 6:7]

32. To-day you may see women cramming their wardrobes with dresses, changing their gowns from day to day, and for all that unable to vanquish the moths. Now and then one more scrupulous wears out a single dress; yet, while she appears in rags, her boxes are full. Parchments are dyed purple, gold is melted into lettering, manuscripts are decked with jewels, while Christ lies at the door naked and dying. When they hold out a hand to the needy they sound a trumpet; [Matt. 6:2] when they invite to a love-feast they engage a crier. I lately saw the noblest lady in Rome-I suppress her name, for I am no satirist-with a band of eunuchs before her in the basilica of the blessed Peter. She was giving money to the poor, a coin apiece; and this with her own hand, that she might be accounted more religious. Hereupon a by no means uncommon incident occurred. An old woman, ”full of years and rags,” ran forward to get a second coin, but when her turn came she received not a penny but a blow hard enough to draw blood from her guilty veins.

”The love of money is the root of all evil,” [1 Tim. 6:10] and the apostle speaks of covetousness as being idolatry. [Col. 3:5] ”Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.” [Matt. 6:33] The Lord will never allow a righteous soul to perish of hunger. ”I have been young,” the psalmist says, ”and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread.” [Ps. 37:25] Elijah is fed by ministering ravens. [1 Kings 17:4, 1 Kings 17:6] The widow of Zarephath, who with her sons expected to die the same night, went without food herself that she might feed the prophet. He who had come to be fed then turned feeder, for, by a miracle, he filled the empty barrel. [1 Kings 17:9-16] The apostle Peter says: ”Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ rise up and walk.” [Acts 3:6] But now many, while they do not say it in words, by their deeds declare: ”Faith and pity have I none; but such as I have, silver and gold, these I will not give thee.” ”Having food and raiment let us be therewith content.” [1 Tim. 6:8] Hear the prayer of Jacob: ”If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, then shall the Lord be my God.” [Gen. 28:20, Gen. 28:21] He prayed only for things necessary; yet, twenty years afterwards, he returned to the land of Canaan rich in substance. and richer still in children. [Gen. 32:5, Gen. 32:10] Numberless are the instances in Scripture which teach men to ”Beware of covetousness.” [Luke 12:15]

33. As I have been led to touch to the subject-it shall have a treatise to itself if Christ permit-I will relate what took place not very many years ago at Nitria. A brother, more thrifty than covetous, and ignorant that the Lord had been sold for

thirty pieces of silver, [Matt. 26:15] left behind him at his death a hundred pieces of money which he had earned by weaving linen. As there were about five thousand monks in the neighborhood, living in as many separate cells, a council was held as to what should be done. Some said that the coins should be distributed among the poor; others that they should be given to the church, while others were for sending them hack to the relatives of the deceased. However, Macarius, Pambo, Isidore and the rest of those called fathers, speaking by the Spirit, decided that they should be interred with their owner, with the words: "Thy money perish with thee." [Acts 8:20] Nor was this too harsh a decision; for so great fear has fallen upon all throughout Egypt, that it is now a crime to leave after one a single shilling.

34. As I have mentioned the monks, and know that you like to hear about holy things, lend an ear to me for a few moments. There are in Egypt three classes of monks. First, there are the coenobites, called in their Gentile language Sauses, or, as we should say, men living in a community. Secondly, there are the anchorites, who live in the desert, each man by himself, and are so called because they have withdrawn from human society. Thirdly, there is the class called Remoboth, a very inferior and little regarded type, peculiar to my own province, or, at least, originating there. These live together in twos and threes, but seldom in larger numbers, and are bound by no rule; but do exactly as they choose. A portion of their earnings they contribute to a common fund, out of which food is provided for all. In most cases they reside in cities and strongholds; and, as though it were their workmanship which is holy, and not their life, all that they sell is extremely dear. They often quarrel because they are unwilling, while supplying their own food, to be subordinate to others. It is true that they compete with each other in fasting; they make what should be a private concern an occasion for a triumph. In everything they study effect: their sleeves are loose, their boots bulge, their garb is of the coarsest. They are always sighing, or visiting virgins, or sneering at the clergy; yet when a holiday comes, they make themselves sick-they eat so much.

35. Having then rid ourselves of these as of so many plagues, let us come to that more numerous class who live together, and who are, as we have said, called Coenobites. Among these the first principle of union is to obey superiors and to do whatever they command. They are divided into bodies of ten and of a hundred, so that each tenth man has authority over nine others, while the hundredth has ten of these officers under him. They live apart from each other, in separate cells. According to their rule, no monk may visit another before the ninth hour; except the deans above mentioned, whose office is to comfort, with soothing words, those whose thoughts disquiet them. After the ninth hour they meet together to sing psalms and read the Scriptures according to usage. Then when the prayers have ended and all have sat down, one called the father stands up among them and begins to expound the portion of the day. While he is speaking the silence is profound; no man ventures to look at his neighbor or to clear his throat. The speaker's praise

is in the weeping of his hearers. Silent tears roll down their cheeks, but not a sob escapes from their lips. Yet when he begins to speak of Christ's kingdom, and of future bliss, and of the glory which is to come, every one may be noticed saying to himself, with a gentle sigh and uplifted eyes: "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!

For then would I fly away and be at rest. [Ps. 55:6] After this the meeting breaks up and each company of ten goes with its father to its own table. This they take in turns to serve each for a week at a time. No noise is made over the food; no one talks while eating. Bread, pulse and greens form their fare, and the only seasoning that they use is salt. Wine is given only to the old, who with the children often have a special meal prepared for them to repair the ravages of age and to save the young from premature decay. When the meal is over they all rise together, and, after singing a hymn, return to their dwellings. There each one talks till evening with his comrade thus: "Have you noticed so-and-so? What grace he has How silent he is! How soberly he walks! If any one is weak they comfort him; or if he is fervent in love to God, they encourage him to fresh earnestness. And because at night, besides the public prayers, each man keeps vigil in his own chamber, they go round all the cells one by one, and putting their ears to the doors, carefully ascertain what their occupants are doing. If they find a monk slothful, they do not scold him; but, dissembling what they know, they visit him more frequently, and at first exhort rather than compel him to pray more.

Each day has its allotted task, and this being given in to the dean, is by him brought to the steward. This latter, once a month, gives a scrupulous account to their common father. He also tastes the dishes when they are cooked, and, as no one is allowed to say, "I am without a tunic or a cloak or a couch of rushes," he so arranges that no one need ask for or go without what he wants. In case a monk falls ill, he is moved to a more spacious chamber, and there so attentively nursed by the old men, that he misses neither the luxury of cities nor a mother's kindness. Every Lord's day they spend their whole time in prayer and reading; indeed, when they have finished their tasks, these are their usual occupations. Every day they learn by heart a portion of Scripture. They keep the same fasts all the year round, but in Lent they are allowed to live more strictly. After Whitsuntide they exchange their evening meal for a midday one; both to satisfy the tradition of the church and to avoid overloading their stomachs with a double supply of food.

A similar description is given of the Essenes by Philo, Plato's imitator; also by Josephus, [Josephus, The Jewish War, 2:8] the Greek Livy, in his narrative of the Jewish captivity. 36. As my present subject is virgins, I have said rather too much about monks. I will pass on, therefore, to the third class, called anchorites, who go from the monasteries into the deserts, with nothing but bread and salt. Paul introduced this way of life; Antony made it famous, and-to go farther back still-John the Baptist set the first example of it. The prophet Jeremiah describes one

such in the words: ”It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him, he is filled full with reproach. For the Lord will not east off forever.” The struggle of the anchorites and their life-in the flesh, yet not of the flesh-I will, if you wish, explain to you at some other time. I must now return to the subject of covetousness, which I left to speak of the monks. With them before your eyes you will despise, not only gold and silver in general, but earth itself and heaven. United to Christ, you will sing, ”The Lord is my portion.” [Lam. 3:24]

37. Farther, although the apostle bids us to ”pray without ceasing,” [1 Thess. 5:17] and although to the saints their very sleep is a supplication, we ought to have fixed hours of prayer, that if we are detained by work, the time may remind us of our duty. Prayers, as every one knows, ought to be said at the third, sixth and ninth hours, at dawn and at evening. No meal should be begun without prayer, land before leaving table thanks should be returned to the Creator. We should rise two or three times in the night, and go over the parts of Scripture which we know by heart. When we leave the roof which shelters us, prayer should be our armor; and when we return from the street we should pray before we sit down, and not give the frail body rest until the soul is fed. In every act we do, in every step we take, let our hand trace the Lord’s cross. Speak against nobody, and do not slander your mother’s son. [Ps. 50:20] ”Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? To his own lord he standeth or falleth; yea, he shall be made to stand, for the Lord hath power to make him stand. [Rom. 14:4, R.V] If you have fasted two or three days, do not think yourself better than others who do not fast. You fast and are angry; another eats and wears a smiling face. You work off your irritation and hunger in quarrels.

He uses food in moderation and gives God thanks. [Rom. 14:6, R.V] Daily Isaiah cries: ”Is it such a fast that I have chosen, saith the Lord? [Isa. 58:5] and again: ”In the day of your fast ye find your own pleasure, and oppress all your laborers. Behold ye fast for strife and contention, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. How fast ye unto me? [Isaiah 58:3, Isaiah 58:4, R.V. marg] What kind of fast can his be whose wrath is such that not only does the night go down upon it, but that even the moon’s changes leave it unchanged?

38. Look to yourself and glory in your own success and not in others’ failure. Some women care for the flesh and reckon up their income and daily expenditure: such are no fit models for you. Judas was a traitor, but the eleven apostles did not waver. Phygellus and Alexander made shipwreck; but the rest continued to run the race of faith. [1 Tim. 1:19, 1 Tim. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:15] Say not: ”So-and-so enjoys her own property, she is honored of men, her brothers and sisters come to see her. Has she then ceased to be a virgin?” In the first place, it is doubtful if she is a virgin. For

"the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh upon the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." [1 Sam. 16:7] Again, she may be a virgin in body and not in spirit. According to the apostle, a true virgin is "holy both in body and in spirit." [1 Cor. 7:34] Lastly, let her glory in her own way. Let her override Paul's opinion and live in the enjoyment of her good things But you and I must follow better examples.

Set before you the blessed Mary, whose surpassing purity made her meet to be the mother of the Lord. When the angel Gabriel came down to her, in the form of a man, and said: "Hail, thou that art highly favored; the Lord is with thee," [Luke 1:28] she was terror-stricken and unable to reply, for she had never been saluted by a man before. But, on learning who he was, she spoke, and one who had been afraid of a man conversed fearlessly with an angel. Now you, too, may be the Lord's mother. "Take thee a great roll and write in it with a man's pen Maher-shalal-hash-baz." And when you have gone to the prophetess, and have conceived in the womb, and have brought forth a son, say: "Lord, we have been with child by thy fear, we have been in pain, we have brought forth the spirit of thy salvation, which we have wrought upon the earth." [Isa. 26:18, Vulg] Then shall your Son reply: "Behold my mother and my brethren." [Matt. 12:49] And He whose name you have so recently inscribed upon the table of your heart, and have written with a pen upon its renewed surface [Prov. 7:3; Jer. 31:33] -He, after He has recovered the spoil from the enemy, and has spoiled principalities and powers, nailing them to His cross [Col. 2:14, Col. 2:15] -having been miraculously conceived, grows up to manhood; and, as He becomes older, regards you no longer as His mother, but as His bride. To be as the martyrs, or as the apostles, or as Christ, involves a hard struggle, but brings with it a great reward.

All such efforts are only of use when they are made within the church's pale; we must celebrate the passover in the one house, [Exod. 12:46] we must enter the ark with Noah, [1 Peter 3:20, 1 Peter 3:21] we must take refuge from the fall of Jericho with the justified harlot, Rahab. [James 2:25] Such virgins as there are said to be among the heretics and among the followers of the infamous Manes must be considered, not virgins, but prostitutes. For if-as they allege-the devil is the author of the body, how can they honor that which is fashioned by their foe? No; it is because they know that the name virgin brings glory with it, that they go about as wolves in sheep's clothing. [Matt. 7:15] As antichrist pretends to be Christ, such virginsassume an honorable name, that they may the better cloak a discreditable life. Rejoice, my sister; rejoice, my daughter; rejoice, my virgin; for you have resolved to be, in reality, that which others insincerely feign.

39. The things that I have here set forth will seem hard to her who loves not Christ. But one who has come to regard all the splendor of the world as off-scourings, and to hold all things under the sun as vain, that he may win Christ; [Phil. 3:8] one who

has died with his Lord and risen again, and has crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; [Rom. 6:4; Gal. 5:24] he will boldly cry out: ”Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” and again: ”I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.” [Rom. 8:35, Rom. 8:38, Rom. 8:39]

For our salvation the Son of God is made the Son of Man. Nine months He awaits His birth in the womb, undergoes the most revolting conditions, and comes forth covered with blood, to be swathed in rags and covered with caresses. He who shuts up the world in His fist [Cp. Ps. 95:4, Ps. 95:5; Isa. 40:12] is contained in the narrow l limits of a manger. I say nothing of thethirty years during which he lives in obscurity, satisfied with the poverty of his parents. [Luke 2:51, Luke 2:52] When He is scourged He holds His peace; when He is crucified, He prays for His crucifiers. ”What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” [Ps. 116:12, Ps. 116:13, Ps. 116:15] The only fitting return that we can make to Him is to give blood for blood; and, as we are redeemed by the blood of Christ, gladly to lay down our lives for our Redeemer. What saint has ever won his crown without first contending for it? Righteous Abel is murdered. Abraham is in danger of losing his wife. And, as I must not enlarge my book unduly, seek for yourself: you will find that all holy men have suffered adversity. Solomon alone lived in luxury and perhaps it was for this reason that he fell. For ”whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” [Heb. 12:6] Which is best-for a short time to do battle, to carry stakes for the palisades, to bear arms, to faint under heavy bucklers, that ever afterwards we may rejoice as victors? or to become slaves forever, just because we cannot endure for a single hour? [Cp. Matt. 26:40]

40. Love finds nothing hard; no task is difficult to the eager. Think of all that Jacob bore for Rachel, the wife who had been promised to him. ”Jacob,” the Scripture says, ”served seven years for Rachel. And they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her. [Gen. 29:20] Afterwards he himself tells us what he had to undergo. ”In the day the drought consumed me and the frost by night. [Gen. 31:40] So we must love Christ and always seek His embraces. Then everything difficult will seem easy; all things long we shall account short; and smitten with His arrows, [Ps. 38:2] we shall say every moment: ”Woe is me that I have prolonged my pilgrimage. [Ps. 120:5, Vulg] For ”the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. [Rom. 8:18] For ”tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed. [Rom. 5:3-5] When your lot seems hard to bear

read Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians: "In labors more abundant; in stripes above measure; in prisons more frequent; in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. [2 Cor. 11:23-27] Which of us can claim the veriest fraction of the virtues here enumerated? Yet it was these which afterwards made him bold to say: "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day. [2 Tim. 4:7, 2 Tim. 4:8]

But we, if our food is less appetizing than usual, get sullen, and fancy that we do God a favor by drinking watered wine. And if the water brought to us is a trifle too warm, we break the cup and overturn the table and scourge the servant in fault until blood comes. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." [Matt. 11:12] Still, unless you use force you will never seize the kingdom of heaven. Unless you knock importunately you will never receive the sacramental bread. [Luke 11:5-8] Is it not truly violence, think you, when the flesh desires to be as God and ascends to the place whence angels have fallen [Is. 14:12, Is. 14:13] to judge angels?

41. Emerge, I pray you, for a while from your prison-house, and paint before your eyes the reward of your present toil, a reward which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man. [1 Cor. 2:9] What will be the glory of that day when Mary, the mother of the Lord, shall come to meet you, accompanied by her virgin choirs! When, the Red Sea past and Pharaoh drowned with his host, Miriam, Aaron's sister, her timbrel in her hand, shall chant to the answering women: "Sing ye unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. [Ex. 15:20, Ex. 15:21] Then shall Thecla fly with joy to embrace you. Then shall your Spouse himself come forward and say: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away, for lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. [Cant. 2:10, Cant. 2:11] Then shall the angels say with wonder: "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun? [Cant. 6:10] "The daughters shall see you and bless you; yea, the queens shall proclaim and the concubines shall praise you. [Cant. 6:9] And, after these, yet another company of chaste women will meet you. Sarah will come with the wedded; Anna, the I daughter of Phanuel, with the widows. In the one band you will find your natural mother and in the other your spiritual.

The one will rejoice in having borne, the other will exult in having taught you. Then truly will the Lord ride upon his ass, and thus enter the heavenly Jerusalem. Then the little ones (of whom, in Isaiah, the Saviour says: ”Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me” [Isa. 8:18]) shall lift up palms of victory and shall sing with one voice: ”Hosanna in the highest, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, hosanna in the highest. [Matt. 21:9] Then shall the ”hundred and forty and four thousand” hold their harps before the throne and before the elders and shall sing the new song. And no man shall have power to learn that song save those for whom it is appointed. ”These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. [Rev. 14:1-4] As often as this life’s idle show tries to charm you; as often as you see in the world some vain pomp, transport yourself in mind to Paradise, essay to be now what you will be hereafter, and you will hear your Spouse say: ”Set me as a sunshade in thine heart and as a seal upon thine arm. And then, strengthened in body as well as in mind, you, too, will cry aloud and say: ”Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. [Cant. 8:7]

Letter 23. To Marcella.

Jerome writes to Marcella to console her for the loss of a friend who, like herself, was the head of a religious society at Rome. The news of Lea's death had first reached Marcella when she was engaged with Jerome in the study of the 73d psalm. Later in the day he writes this letter in which, after extolling Lea, he contrasts her end with that of the consul-elect, Vettius Agorius Praetextatus,a man of great ability and integrity, whom he declares to be now "in Tartarus." Written at Rome in 384 a.d. 1. To-day, about the third hour, just as I was beginning to read with you the seventy-second psalm -the first, that is, of the third books-and to explain that its title belonged partly to the second book and partly to the third-the previous book, I mean, concluding with the words "the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended," [Ps. 72:20] and the next commencing with the words "a psalm of Asaph" -and just as I had come on the passage in which the righteous man declares: "If I say, I will speak thus; behold I should offend against the generation of thy children," [Ps. 73:15] a verse which is differently rendered in our Latin version: -suddenly the news came that our most saintly friend Lea had departed from the body. As was only natural, you turned deadly pale; for there are few persons, if any, who do not burst into tears when the earthen vessel breaks. [2 Cor. 4:7] But if you wept it was not from doubt as to her futurelot, but only because you had not rendered to her the last sad offices which are due to the dead. Finally, as we were still conversing together, a second message informed us that her remains had been already conveyed to Ostia.

2. You may ask what is the use of repeating all this. I will reply in the apostle's words, "much every way." is now in Tartarus. Who can sufficiently eulogize our dear Lea's mode of living? So complete was her conversion to the Lord that, becoming the head of a monastery, she showed herself a true mother to the virgins in it, wore coarse sackcloth instead of soft raiment, passed sleepless nights in prayer, and instructed her companions even more by example than by precept. So great was her humility that she, who had once been the mistress of many, was accounted the servant of all; and certainly, the less she was reckoned an earthly mistress the more she became a servant of Christ. She was careless of her dress, neglected her

hair, and ate only the coarsest food. Still, in all that she did, she avoided ostentation that she might not have her reward in this world. [Cf. Matt. 6:2]

3. Now, therefore, in return for her short toil, Lea enjoys everlasting felicity; she is welcomed into the choirs of the angels; she is comforted in Abraham's bosom. And, as once the beggar Lazarus saw the rich man, for all his purple, lying in torment, so does Lea see the consul, not now in his triumphal robe but clothed in mourning, and asking for a drop of water from her little finger. [Luke 16:19-24] How great a change have we here! A few days ago the highest dignitaries of the city walked before him as he ascended the ramparts of the capitol like a general celebrating a triumph; the Roman people leapt up to welcome and applaud him, and at the news of his death the whole city was moved. Now he is desolate and naked, a prisoner in the foulest darkness, and not, as his unhappy wife falsely asserts, set in the royal abode of the milky way. On the other hand Lea, who was always shut up in her one closet, who seemed poor and of little worth, and whose life was accounted madness, [Wisd. 5:4] now follows Christ and sings, "Like as we have heard, so have we seen in the city of our God." [Ps. 48:8]

4. And now for the moral of all this, which, with tears and groans, I conjure you to remember. While we run the way of this world, we must not clothe ourselves with two coats, that is, with a twofold faith, or burthen ourselves with leathern shoes, that is, with dead works; we must not allow scrips filled with money to weigh us down, or lean upon the staff of worldly power. [Matt. 10:10] We must not seek to possess both Christ and the world. No; things eternal must take the place of things transitory; [2 Cor. 4:18] and since, physically speaking, we daily anticipate death, if we wish for immortality we must realize that we are but mortal.

Letter 24. To Marcella.

Concerning the virgin Asella. Dedicated to God before her birth, Marcella's sister had been made a church-virgin at the age of ten. From that time she had lived a life of the severest asceticism, first as a member and then as the head of Marcella's community upon the Aventine. Jerome, who subsequently wrote her a letter (XLV) on his departure from Rome, now holds her up as a model to be admired and imitated. Written at Rome a.d. 384. 1. Let no one blame my letters for the eulogies and censures which are contained in them. To arraign sinners is to admonish those in like case, and to praise the virtuous is to quicken the zeal of those who wish to do right. The day before yesterday I spoke to you concerning Lea of blessed memory, and I had hardly done so, when I was pricked in my conscience. It would be wrong for me, I thought, to ignore a virgin after speaking of one who, as a widow, held a lower place. Accordingly, in my present letter, I mean to give you a brief sketch of the life of our dear Asella. Please do not read it to her; for she is sure to be displeased with eulogies of which she is herself the object. Show it rather to the young girls of your acquaintance, that they may guide themselves by her example, and may take her behavior as the pattern of a perfect life.

2. I pass over the facts that, before her birth, she was blessed while still in her mother's womb, and that, virgin-like, she was delivered to her father in a dream in a bowl of shining glass brighter than a mirror. And I say nothing of her consecration to the blessed life of virginity, a ceremony which took place when she was hardly more than ten years old, a mere babe still wrapped in swaddling clothes. For all that comes before works should be counted of grace; [Rom. 11:6] although, doubtless, God foreknew the future when He sanctitled Jeremiah as yet unborn, [Jer. 1:5] when He made John to leap in his mother's womb, [Luke 1:41] and when, before the foundation of the world, He set apart Paul to preach the gospel of His son. [Eph. 1:4] 3. I come now to the life which after her twelfth year she, by her own exertion, chose, laid hold of, held fast to, entered upon, and fulfilled. Shut up in her narrow cell she roamed through paradise. Fasting was her recreation and hunger her refreshment. If she took food it was not from love of eating, but because of bodily exhaustion; and the bread and salt and cold water to which she restricted herself sharpened her appetite more than they appeased it.

But I have almost forgotten to mention that of which I should have spoken first. When her resolution was still fresh she took her gold necklace made in the lamprey pattern (so called because bars of metal are linked together so as to form a flexible chain), and sold it without her parents' knowledge. Then putting on a dark dress such as her mother had never been willing that she should wear, she concluded her pious enterprise by consecrating herself forthwith to the Lord. She thus showed her relatives that they need hope to wring no farther concessions from one who, by her very dress, had condemned the world.

4. To go on with my story, her ways were quiet and she lived in great privacy. In fact, she rarely went abroad or spoke to a man. More wonderful still, much as she loved her virgin sister, she did not care to see her. She worked with her own hands, for she knew that it was written: "If any will not work neither shall he eat." [2 Thess. 3:10] To the Bridegroom she spoke constantly in prayer and psalmody. She hurried to the martyrs' shrines unnoticed. Such visits gave her pleasure, and the more so because she was never recognized. All the year round she observed a continual fast, remaining without food for two or three days! at a time; but when Lent came she hoisted-if I may so speak-every stitch of canvas and fasted well-nigh from week's end to week's end with "a cheerful countenance." [Matt. 6:17] Whatwould perhaps be incredible, were it not that "with God all things are possible," [Matt. 19:26] is that she lived this life until her fiftieth year without weakening her digestion or bringing on herself the pain of colic. Lying on the dry ground did not affect her limbs, and the rough sackcloth that she wore failed to make her skin either foul or rough. With a sound body and a still sounder soul [Cf. Juvenal, Sat. 10:356] she sought all her delight in solitude, and found for herself a monkish hermitage in the centre of busy Rome.

5. You are better acquainted with all this than I am, and the few details that I have given I have learned from you. So intimate are you with Asella that you have seen, with your own eyes, her holy knees hardened like those of a camel from the frequency of her prayers. I merely set forth what I can glean from you. She is alike pleasant in her serious moods and serious in her pleasant ones: her manner, while winning, is always grave, and while grave is always winning. Her pale face indicates continence but does not betoken ostentation. Her speech is silent and her silence is speech. Her pace is neither too fast nor too slow. Her demeanor is always the same. She disregards refinement and is careless about her dress. When she does attend to it it is without attending. So entirely consistent has her life been that here in Rome. the centre of vain shows, wanton license, and idle pleasure, where to be humble is to be held spiritless, the good praise her conduct and the bad do not venture to impugn it. Let widows and virgins imitate her, let wedded wives make much of her, let sinful women fear her, and let bishops look up to her.

Letter 27. To Marcella.

In this letter Jerome defends himself against the charge of having altered the text of Scripture, and shows that he has merely brought the Latin Version of the N.T. into agreement with the Greek original. Written at Rome 384 a.d.

1. After I had written my former letter, containing a few remarks on some Hebrew words, a report suddenly reached me that certain contemptible creatures were deliberately assailing me with the charge that I had endeavored to correct passages in the gospels, against the authority of the ancients and the opinion of the whole world. Now, though I might-as far as strict right goes-treat these persons with contempt (it is idle to play the lyre for an ass), yet, lest they should follow their usual habit and reproach me with superciliousness, let them take my answer as follows: I am not so dull-wilted nor so coarsely ignorant (qualities which they take for holiness, calling themselves the disciples of fishermen as if men were made holy by knowing nothing)-I am not, I repeat, so ignorant as to suppose that any of the Lord's words is either in need of correction or is not divinely inspired; but the Latin manuscripts of the Scriptures are proved to be faulty by the variations which all of them exhibit, and my object has been to restore them to the form of the Greek original, from which my detractors do not deny that they have been translated. If they dislike water drawn from the clear spring, let them drink of the muddy streamlet, and when they come to read the Scriptures. let them lay aside the keen eye which they turn on woods frequented by game-birds and waters abounding in shellfish. Easily satisfied in this instance alone, let them, if they will, regard the words of Christ as rude sayings, albeit that over these so many great intellects have labored for so many ages rather to divine than to expound the meaning of each single word. Let them charge the great apostle with want of literary skill, although it is said of him that much learning made him mad. [Acts 26:24]

2. I know that as you read these words you will knit your brows, and fear that my freedom of speech is sowing the seeds of fresh quarrels; and that, if you could, you would gladly put your finger on my mouth to prevent me from even speaking of things which others do not blush to do. But, I ask you, wherein have I used too great license? Have I ever embellished my dinner plates with engravings of idols?

Have I ever, at a Christian banquet, set before the eyes of virgins the polluting spectacle of Satyrs embracing bacchanals? or have I ever assailed any one in too bitter terms? Have I ever complained of beggars turned millionaires? Have I ever censured heirs for the funerals which they have given to their benefactors? The one thing that I have unfortunately said has been that virgins ought to live more in the company of women than of men, and by this I have made the whole city look scandalized and caused every one to point at me the finger of scorn. "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head," [Ps. 69:4] and I am become "a proverb to them." [Ps. 69:11] Do you suppose after this that I will now say anything rash?

3. But "when I set the wheel rolling I began to form a wine flagon; how comes it that a waterpot is the result?" Lest Horace laugh at me I come back to my two-legged asses, and din into their ears, not the music of the lute, but the blare of the trumpet. They may say if they will, "rejoicing in hope; serving the time," but we will say"rejoicing in hope; serving the Lord." They may see fit to receive an accusation against a presbyter unconditionally; but we will say in the words of Scripture, "Against an eider receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all." [1 Tim. 5:19, 1 Tim. 5:20] They may choose to read, "It is a man's saying, and worthy of all acceptation;" we are content to err with the Greeks, that is to say with the apostle himself, who spoke Greek. Our version, therefore, is, it is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation." [1 Tim. 1:15] Lastly, let them take as much pleasure as they please in their Gallican "geldings;" we will be satisfied with the simple "ass" of Zechariah, loosed from its halter and made ready for the Saviour's service, which received the Lord on its back, and so fulfilled Isaiah's prediction: "Blessed is he that soweth beside all waters, where the ox and the ass tread under foot." [Isa. 32:20, LXX]

Letter 31. To Eustochium.

Jerome writes to thank Eustochium for some presents sent to him by her on the festival of St. Peter. He also moralizes on the mystical meaning of the articles sent. The letter should be compared with Letter 44., of which the theme is similar. Written at Rome in 384 a.d. (on St. Peter's Day). 1. Doves, bracelets, and a letter are outwardly but small gifts to receive from a virgin, but the action which has prompted them enhances their value. And since honey may not be offered in sacrifice to God, [Lev. 2:11] you have shown skill in taking off their overmuch sweetness and making them pungent-if I may so say-with a dash of pepper. For nothing that is simply pleasurable or merely sweet can please God. Everything must have in it a sharp seasoning of truth. Christ's passover must be eaten with bitter herbs. [Ex. 12:8] 2. It is true that a festival such as the birthday of Saint Peter should be seasoned with more gladness than usual; still our merriment must not forget the limit set by Scripture, and we must not stray too far from the boundary of our wrestling-ground. Your presents, indeed, remind me of the sacred volume, for in it Ezekiel decks Jerusalem with bracelets, [Ezek. 16:11] Baruch receives letters from Jeremiah, and the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove at the baptism of Christ. [Matt. 3:16] But to give you, too, a sprinkling of pepper and to remind you of my former letter, I send you to-day this three-fold warning. Cease not to adorn yourself with good works-the true bracelets of a Christian woman. [Tim. 2:10] Rend not the letter written on your heart [2 Cor. 3:2] as the profane king cut with his penknife that delivered to him by Baruch. [Jer 36:23] Let not Hosea say to you as to Ephraim, "Thou art like a silly dove." [Hos 7:11]

My words are too harsh, you will say, and hardly suitable to a festival like the present. If so, you have provoked me to it by the nature of your own gifts. So long as you put bitter with sweet, you must expect the same from me, sharp words that is, as well as praise. 3. However, I do not wish to make light of your gifts, least of all the basket of fine cherries, blushing with such a virgin modesty that I can fancy them freshly gathered by Lucullus himself. For it was he who first introduced the fruit at Rome after his conquest of Pontus and Armenia; and the cherry tree is so called because he brought it from Cerasus. Now as the Scriptures do not mention cherries, but do speak of a basket of figs, [Jer. 24:1-3] I will use these instead to

point my moral. May you be made of fruits such as those which grow before God's temple and of which He says,"Behold they are good, very good." [Jer. 24:3] The Saviour likes nothing that is half and half, and, while he welcomes the hot and does not shun the cold, he tells us in the Apocalypse that he will spew the lukewarm out of his mouth. [Rev. 3:15, Rev. 3:16] Wherefore we must be careful to celebrate our holy day not so much with abundance of food as with exultation of spirit. For it is altogether unreasonable to wish to honor a martyr by excess who himself, as you know, pleased God by fasting. When you take food always recollect that eating should be followed byreading, and also by prayer. And if, by taking this course, you displease some, repeat to yourself the words of the Apostle: "If I yet pleased men I should not be the servant of Christ" [Gal. 1:10]

Letter 32. To Marcella.

Jerome writes that he is busy collating Aquila's Greek version of the Old Testament with the Hebrew, inquires after Marcella's mother, and forwards the two preceding letters (XXX., XXXI.). Written at Rome in 384 a.d. 1. There are two reasons for the shortness of this letter, one that its bearer is impatient to start, and the other that I am too busy to waste time on trifles. You ask what business can be so urgent as to stop me from a chat on paper. Let me tell you, then, that for some time past I have been comparing Aquila's version of the Old Testament with the scrolls of the Hebrew, to see if from hatred to Christ the synagogue has changed the text; and-to speak frankly to a friend-I have found several variations which confirm our faith. After having exactly revised the prophets, Solomon, the psalter, and the books of Kings, I am now engaged on Exodus (called by the Jews, from its opening words, Eleh shemôth [Exod. 1:1, twmy hl]), and when I have finished this I shall go on to Leviticus. Now you see why I can let no claim for a letter withdraw me from my work. However, as I do not wish my friend Currentius to run altogether in vain, I have tacked on to this little talk two letters which I am sending to your sister Paula, and to her dear child Eustochium. Read these, and if you find them instructive or pleasant, take what I have said to them as meant for you also.

2. I hope that Albina, your mother and mine, is well. In bodily health, I mean, for I doubt not of her spiritual welfare. Pray salute her for me, and cherish her with double affection, both as a Christian and as a mother.

Letter 33. To Paula.

The below is the partial translation from NPNF. A fuller translation can be found in _v2 of this file. A fragment of a letter in which Jerome institutes a comparison between the industry as writers of M. T. Varro and Origen. It is noteworthy as passing an unqualified eulogium upon Origen, which contrasts strongly with the tone adopted by the writer in subsequent years (see, e.g., Letter 84.). Its date is probably 384 a.d. 1. Antiquity marvels at Marcus Terentius Varro, because of the countless books which he wrote for Latin readers; and Greek writers are extravagant in their praise of their man of brass, because he has written more works than one of us could so much as copy. But since Latin ears would find a list of Greek writings tiresome, I shall confine myself to the Latin Varro. I shall try to show that we of to-day are sleeping the sleep of Epimenides, and devoting to the amassing of riches the energy which our predecessors gave to sound, if secular, learning.

2. Varro’s writings include forty-five books of antiquities, four concerning the life of the Roman people. 3. But why, you ask me, have I thus mentioned Varro and the man of brass? Simply to bring to your notice our Christian man of brass, or, rather, man of adamant -Origen, I mean-whose zeal for the study of Scripture has fairly earned for him this latter name. Would you learn what monuments of his genius he has left us? The following list exhibits them. His writings comprise thirteen books on Genesis, two books of Mystical Homilies, notes on Exodus, notes on Leviticus, * * * * also single books, four books on First Principles, two books on the Resurrection, two dialogues on the same subject. 4. So, you see, the labors of this one man have surpassed those of all previous writers, Greek and Latin. Who has ever managed to read all that he has written? Yet what reward have his exertions brought him? He stands condemned by his bishop, Demetrius, only the bishops of Palestine, Arabia, Phenicia, and Achaia dissenting. Imperial Rome consents to his condemnation, and even convenes a senate to censure him, not-as the rabid hounds who now pursue him cry-because of the novelty or heterodoxy of his doctrines, but because men could not tolerate the incomparable eloquence and knowledge which, when once he opened his lips, made others seem dumb.

5. I have written the above quickly and incautiously, by the light of a poor lantern. You will see why, if you think of those who to-day represent Epicurus and Aristippus.

letter_033_v2

The below is Roger Pearse's version from: roger-pearse.com

30. TO PAULA.

1. Antiquity marvels at Marcus Terentius Varro, because of the countless books which he wrote for Latin readers; and Greek writers are extravagant in their praise of their man of brass, because he has written more works than one of us could so much as copy. But since Latin ears would find a list of Greek writings tiresome, I shall confine myself to the Latin Varro. I shall try to show that we of today are sleeping the sleep of Epimenides, and devoting to the amassing of riches the energy which our predecessors gave to sound, if secular, learning. 2. Varro's writings include:

45 books of antiquities, 4 concerning the life of the Roman people, 15 on Images, 76 "Logistorikwn", 15 on the Latin Language, 9 of disciplines, 5 on Latin speech, 5 of Plautine questions, 3 of Annals, 3 on the origin of the Latin language, 3 of poetry, 3 on the origins of the stage, 3 on the actions of the stage, 3 on the acts on the stage, 3 on descriptions, 3 on the propriety of writers, 3 on libraries, 3 on readings, 3 on the similarity of words, 3 on embassies, 3 of "suasiones", 3 on Pompey, 10 "singulares", 3 on persons, 15 on the civil law, an epitome in 9 books from the 42 books of antiquities, an epitome in 4 books from the 15 books on Images, an epitome in 9 books from the 15 books on the Latin language, 9 books on the principles of numbers, 3 books on rustic matters, 1 book on preventative health, 3 books on his own life, 3 books on the form of philosophy, 3 books on urban matters, 150 books of Menippean satires, 10 books of poetry, 22 books of orations, 6 books of pseudo-tragedies, 4 books of satires and many others, which it would be wearisome to enumerate. I have barely listed half of the index, and it is overwhelming to the readers.

3. But by contrast our age has learned men, and they know in which waters fish were born, and on what shore an oyster grew. We have no doubts concerning the flavour of thrushes, Paxamus and Apicius are ever in our hands, our eyes on our possessions, our senses on the plates, and, if one of the philosophers or Christians, who are the true philosophers, with worn cloak and grubby tunic fails to pay atten-

tion to the reading, he is thrown out with a jeer as if mad. 4. But why, you ask me, have I thus mentioned Varro and the man of brass? Simply to bring to your notice our Christian man of brass, or, rather, man of adamant — Origen, I mean— whose zeal for the study of Scripture has fairly earned for him this latter name. Would you learn what monuments of his genius he has left us? The following list exhibits them. His writings comprise:

13 books on Genesis, 2 books of mystical homilies, excerpta[2] Exodus, excerpta on Leviticus, 10 books of “Stromata”, 36 books on Isaiah, likewise excerpta on Isaiah, 1 book on Hosea concerning Ephraim, commentary on Hosea, 2 books on Joel, 6 books on Amos, 1 book on Jonah, 3 books on Micaiah, 2 books on Nahum, 3 books on Habakuk, 2 books on Wisdom, 1 book on Haggai, 2 books on the beginning of Zechariah, 2 books on Malachi, 28 books on Ezekiel, excerpta on the Psalms from the start to [Psalm] 15, again 1 book on Psalm 1, 1 book on Psalm 2, 1 book on Psalm 3, 1 book on Psalm 4, 1 book on Psalm 5, 1 book on Psalm 6, 1 book on Psalm 7, 1 book on Psalm 8, 1 book on Psalm 9, 1 book on Psalm 10, 1 book on Psalm 11, 1 book on Psalm 12, 1 book on Psalm 13, 1 book on Psalm 14, 1 book on Psalm 15, 1 book on Psalm 16, 1 book on Psalm 20, 1 book on Psalm 24, 1 book on Psalm 29, 1 book on Psalm 38, 1 book on Psalm 40, 2 books on Psalm 43, 3 books on Psalm 44, 1 book on Psalm 45, 1 book on Psalm 46, 2 books on Psalm 50, 1 book on Psalm 51, 1 book on Psalm 52, 1 book on Psalm 53, 1 book on Psalm 57, 1 book on Psalm 58, 1 book on Psalm 59, 1 book on Psalm 62, 1 book on Psalm 63, 1 book on Psalm 64, 1 book on Psalm 65, 1 book on Psalm 68, 1 book on Psalm 70, 1 book on Psalm 71, 1 book on the beginning of Psalm 70 part 2 (?), 2 books on Psalm 103. 3 books on Proverbs, excerpta on Ecclesiastes. 10 books on the Song of Songs, and 2 other books (tomos), which he wrote on this in his youth, 5 books (tomos) on the Lamentations of Jeremiah, likewise 4 books “Monobibia, Periarchon”, 2 books on the resurrection and two other dialogues on the resurrection, 1 book on various questions on Proverbs, dialogue against Candidus the Valentinian, a book on martyrdom.

On the New Testament: 25 books on Matthew, 32 books on John, 1 book of excerpta on various parts of John, 15 books on Luke, 15 books on the letter of the apostle Paul to the Romans, 25 books on the letter to the Galatians, 3 books on the letter to the Ephesians, 1 book on the letter to the Philippians, 2 books on the letter to the Colossians, 3 books on the 1st letter to the Thessalonians, 1 book on the 2nd letter to the Thessalonians, 1 book on the letter to Titus, 1 book on the letter to Philemon. Again homilies on the Old Testament: 17 homilies on Genesis, 8 homilies on Exodus, 11 homilies on Leviticus, 28 homilies on Numbers, 13 homilies on Deuteronomy, 26 homilies on Joshua son of Nun, 9 homilies on the book of Judges, 8 homilies on the passover [=Easter?], 4 homilies on the 1st book of Kings, 22 homilies on Job, 7 homilies on Parables, 8 homilies on Ecclesiastes, 2 homilies on the Song of Songs, 32 homilies on Isaiah, 14 homilies on Jeremiah, 12 homilies on Ezekiel.

On the Psalms: 1 homily on Psalm 3, 1 homily on Psalm 4, 1 homily on Psalm 8, 1 homily on Psalm 12, 3 homilies on Psalm 15, 1 homily on Psalm 16, 1 homily on Psalm 18, 1 homily on Psalm 22, 1 homily on Psalm 23, 1 homily on Psalm 24, 1 homily on Psalm 25, 1 homily on Psalm 26, 1 homily on Psalm 27, 5 homilies on Psalm 36, 2 homilies on Psalm 37, 2 homilies on Psalm 38, 2 homilies on Psalm 39, 1 homily on Psalm 49, 1 homily on Psalm 51, 2 homilies on Psalm 52, 1 homily on Psalm 54, 7 homilies on Psalm 67, 2 homilies on Psalm 71, 3 homilies on Psalm 72, 3 homilies on Psalm 73, 1 homily on Psalm 74, 1 homily on Psalm 75, 3 homilies on Psalm 76, 9 homilies on Psalm 77, 4 homilies on Psalm 79, 2 homilies on Psalm 80, 1 homily on Psalm 81, 3 homilies on Psalm 82, 1 homily on Psalm 83, 2 homilies on Psalm 84, 1 homily on Psalm 85, 1 homily on Psalm 87, 1 homily on Psalm 108, 1 homily on Psalm 110, 3 homilies on Psalm 118, 1 homily on Psalm 120, 2 homilies on Psalm 121, 2 homilies on Psalm 122, 2 homilies on Psalm 123, 2 homilies on Psalm 124, 1 homily on Psalm 125, 1 homily on Psalm 127, 1 homily on Psalm 128, 1 homily on Psalm 129, 1 homily on Psalm 131, 2 homilies on Psalm 132, 2 homilies on Psalm 133, 2 homilies on Psalm 134, 4 homilies on Psalm 135, 2 homilies on Psalm 137, 4 homilies on Psalm 138, 2 homilies on Psalm 139, 3 homilies on Psalm 144, 1 homily on Psalm 145, 1 homily on Psalm 146, 1 homily on Psalm 147, 1 homily on Psalm 148, excerpta on the whole psalter.

Homilies on the New Testament: 25 homilies on the gospel “kata Matqaion”, 39 homilies on the gospel “kata Loukan”, 17 homilies on the Acts of the Apostles, 11 homilies on the 2nd letter to the Corinthians, 2 homilies on the letter to the Thessalonians, 7 homilies on the letter to the Galatians, 1 homily on the letter to Titus, 18 homilies on the letter to the Hebrews. 1 homily on peace, an exhortation to Pionia, [a homily] on fasting, 2 homilies on monogramy and trigamy, 2 homilies on Tarsus, by Origen, Firmianus and Gregory, likewise 2 books of excerpta of letters by Origen and by others to him — the letter of Hesiphodorus on the case of Origen in 2 books — 9 books of his letters to various people, 2 books of other letters, likewise a letter in 2 books as an apologia for his works. 5. So, you see, the labors of this one man have surpassed those of all previous writers, Greek and Latin. Who has ever managed to read all that he has written? Yet what reward have his exertions brought him? He stands condemned by his bishop, Demetrius, only the bishops of Palestine, Arabia, Phenicia, and Achaia dissenting. Imperial Rome consents to his condemnation, and even convenes a senate to censure him, not— as the rabid hounds who now pursue him cry— because of the novelty or heterodoxy of his doctrines, but because men could not tolerate the incomparable eloquence and knowledge which, when once he opened his lips, made others seem dumb.

6. I have written the above quickly and incautiously, by the light of a poor lantern. You will see why, if you think of those who today represent Epicurus and Aristippus.

Letter 38. To Marcella.

Blaesilla, the daughter of Paula and sister of Eustochium, had lost her husband seven months after her marriage, A dangerous illness had then led to her conversion, and she was now famous throughout Rome for the length to which she carried her austerities. Many censured her for what they deemed her fanaticism, and Jerome, as her spiritual adviser, came in for some of the blame. In the present letter he defends her conduct, and declares that persons who cavil at lives like hers have no claim to be considered Christians. Written at Rome in 385 a.d. 1. When Abraham is tempted to slay his son the trial only serves to strengthen his faith. When Joseph is sold into Egypt, his sojourn there enables him to support his father and his brothers. When Hezekiah is panic-stricken at the near approach of death, his tears and prayers obtain for him a respite of fifteen years, If the faith of the apostle, Peter, is shaken by his Lord's passion, it is that, weeping bitterly, he may hear the soothing words: "Feed my sheep." [Luke 22:54-62; Joh. 21:16] If Paul, that ravening wolf, [Gen. 49:27] that little Benjamin, [Ps. 68:27] is blinded in a trance, it is that he may receive his sight, and may be led, by the sudden horror of surrounding darkness, to call Him Lord Whom before he persecuted as man. [Acts 9:3-18]

2. So is it now, my dear Marcella, with our beloved Blaesilla. The burning fever from which we have seen her suffering unceasingly for nearly thirty days has been sent to teach her to renounce her over-great attention to that body which the worms must shortly devour. The Lord Jesus has come to her in her sickness, and has taken her by the hand, and behold, she arises and ministers unto Him. [Cf. Mark 1:30, Mark 1:31] Formerly her life savored somewhat Of carelessness; and, fast bound in the bands of wealth, she lay as one dead in the tomb of the world. But Jesus was moved with indignation, [John 11:38, R.V. marg] and was troubled in spirit, and cried aloud and said, Blaesilla, come forth. [Joh. 11:38-44] She, at His call, has arisen and has come forth, and sits at meat with the Lord. [Joh. 12:2] The Jews, if they will, may threaten her in their wrath; they may seek to slay her, because Christ has raised her up. [Joh. 12:10] It is enough that the apostles give God the glory. Blaesilla knows that her life is due to Him who has given it back to her. She knows that now she can clasp the feet of Him whom but a little while ago she dreaded as

her judge. [Luke 7:38] Then life had all but forsaken her body, and the approach of death made her gasp and shiver. What succour did she obtain in that hour from her kinsfolk? What comfort was there in their words lighter than smoke? She owes no debt to you, ye unkindly kindred, now that she is dead to the world and alive unto Christ. [Rom. 6:11] The Christian must rejoice that it is so, and he that is vexed must admit that he has no claim to be called a Christian.

3. A widow who is "loosed from the law of her husband" [Rom. 7:2] has, for her one duty, to continue a widow. But, you will say, a sombre dress vexes the world. In that case, John the Baptist would vex it, too; and yet, among those that are born of women, there has not been a greater than he. [Luke 7:28] He was called an angel; he baptized the Lord Himself, and yet he was clothed in raiment of camel's hair, and girded with a leathern girdle. [Matt. 3:4] Is the world displeased because a widow's food is coarse? Nothing can be coarser than locusts, and yet these were the food of John. The women who ought to scandalize Christians are those who paint their eyes and lips with rouge and cosmetics; whose chalked faces, unnaturally white, are like those of idols; upon whose cheeks every chance tear leaves a furrow; who fail to realize that years make them old; who heap their heads with hair not their own; who smooth their faces, and rub out the wrinkles of age; and who, in the presence of their grandsons, behave like trembling school-girls. A Christian woman should blush to do violence to nature, or to stimulate desire by bestowing care upon the flesh. "They that are in the flesh," the apostle tells us, "cannot please God." [Rom. 8:8]

4. In days gone by our dear widow was extremely fastidious in her dress, and spent whole days before her mirror to correct its deficiencies. Now she boldly says: "We all with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." [2 Cor. 3:18, R.V] In those days maids arranged her hair, and her head, which had done no harm, was forced into a waving head-dress. Now she leaves her hair alone, and her only head-dress is a veil. In those days the softest feather-bed seemed hard to her, and she could scarcely find rest on a pile of mattresses. Now she rises eager for prayer, her shrill voice cries Alleluia before every other, she is the first to praise her Lord. She kneels upon the bare ground, and with frequent tears cleanses a face once defiled with white lead. After prayer comes the singing of psalms, and it is only when her neck aches and her knees totter, and her eyes begin to close with weariness, that she gives them leave reluctantly to rest. As her dress is dark, lying on the ground does not soil it. Cheap shoes permit her to give to the poor the price of gilded ones. No gold and jewels adorn her girdle; it is made of wool, plain and scrupulously clean. It is intended to keep her clothes right, and not to cut her waist in two. Therefore, if the scorpion looks askance upon her purpose, and with alluring words tempts her once more to eat of the forbidden tree, she must crush him beneath her feet with a curse, and say, as he lies dying in his allotted dust:

[Gen. 3:14] ”Get thee behind me, Satan.” [Matt. 16:23] Satan means adversary, [1 Pet. 5:8] and one who dislikes Christ’s commandments, is more than Christ’s adversary; he is anti-christ.

5. But what, I ask you, have we ever done that men should be offended at us? Have we ever imitated the apostles? We are told of the first disciples that they forsook their boat and their nets, and even their aged father. [Matt. 4:18-22] The publican stood up from the receipt of custom and followed the Saviour once for all. [Matt. 9:9] And when a disciple wished to return home, that he might take leave of his kinsfolk, the Master’s voice refused consent. [Luke 9:61, Luke 9:62] A son was even forbidden to bury his father, [Matt. 8:21] as if to show that it is sometimes a religious duty to be undutiful for the Lord’s sake. [Luke 14:26] With us it is different. We are held to be monks if we refuse to dress in silk. We are called sour and severe if we keep sober and refrain from excessive laughter. The mob salutes us as Greeks and impostors if our tunics are fresh and clean. They may deal in still severer witticisms if they please; they may parade every fat paunch they can lay hold of, to turn us into ridicule. Our Blaesilla will laugh at their efforts, and will bear with patience the taunts of all such croaking frogs, for she will remember that men called her Lord, Beelzebub. [Matt. 10:25]

Letter 39. To Paula.

Blaesilla died within three months of her conversion, and Jerome now writes to Paula to offer her his sympathy and, if possible, to moderate her grief. He asks her to remember that Blaesilla is now in paradise, and so far to control herself as to prevent enemies of the faith from cavilling at her conduct. Then he concludes with the prophecy (since more than fulfilled) that in his writings Blaesilla's name shall never die. Written at Rome in 389 a.d.

1. "Oh that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears: that I might weep," not as Jeremiah says, "For the slain of my people," [Jer. 9:1] nor as Jesus, for the miserable fate of Jerusalem, [Luke 19:41] but for holiness, mercy, innocence, chastity, and all the virtues, for all are gone now that Blaesilla is dead. For her sake I do not grieve, but for myself I must; my loss is too great to be borne with resignation. Who can recall with dry eyes the glowing faith which induced a girl of twenty to raise the standard of the Cross, and to mourn the loss of her virginity more than the death of her husband? Who can recall without a sigh the earnestness of her prayers, the brilliancy of her conversation, the tenacity of her memory, and the quickness of her intellect? Had you heard her speak Greek you would have deemed her ignorant of Latin; yet when she used the tongue of Rome her words were free from a foreign accent. She even rivalled the great Origen in those acquirements which won for him the admiration of Greece. For in a few months, or rather days, she so completely mastered the difficulties of Hebrew as to emulate her mother's zeal in learning and singing the psalms. Her attire was plain, but this plainness was not, as it often is, a mark of pride.

Indeed, her self-abasement was so perfect that she dressed no better than her maids, and was only distinguished from them by the greater ease of her walk. Her steps tottered with weakness, her face was pale and quivering, her slender neck scarcely upheld her head. Still she always had in her hand a prophet or a gospel. As I think of her my eyes fill with tears, sobs impede my voice, and such is my emotion that my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth. As she lay there dying, her poor frame parched with burning fever, and her relatives gathered round her bed, her last words were: "Pray to the Lord Jesus, that He may pardon me, because

what I would have done I have not been able to do. Be at peace, dear Blaesilla, in full assurance that your garments are always white. [Eccles. 9:8] For yours is the purity of an everlasting virginity. I feel confident that my words are true: conversion can never be too late. The words to the dying robber are a pledge of this: ”Verily I say unto thee, today shall thou be with me in paradise. [Luke 23:43] When at last her spirit was delivered from the burden of the flesh, and had returned to Him who gave it; [Cf. Eccles. 12:7] when, too, after her long pilgrimage, she had ascended up into her ancient heritage, her obsequies were celebrated with customary splendor. People of rank headed the procession, a pail madeof cloth of gold covered her bier.

But I seemed to hear a voice from heaven, saying: ”I do not recognize these trappings; such is not the garb I used to wear; this magnificence is strange to me.”

2. But what is this? I wish to check a mother’s weeping, and I groan myself. I make no secret of my feelings; this entire letter is written in tears. Even Jesus wept for Lazarus because He loved him. [John 11:35, John 11:36] But he is a poor comforter who is overcome by his own sighs, and from whose afflicted heart tears are wrung as well as words. Dear Paula, my agony is as great as yours. Jesus knows it, whom Blaesilla now follows; the holy angels know it, whose company she now enjoys. I was her father in the spirit, her foster-father in affection. Sometimes I say: ”Let the day perish wherein I was born,” [Job 3:3, cf. Jer. 20:14] and again, ”Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth. [Jer. 15:10] I cry: ”Righteous art thou, O Lord ...yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? [Jer. 12:1] and ”as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, and I said: How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most high? Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.

[Ps. 73:2, 3, 11, 12, Vulg] But again I recall other words, ”If I say I will speak thus, behold I should offend against the generation of thy children. [Ps. 73:15] Do not great waves of doubt surge up over my soul as over yours? How comes it, I ask, that godless men live to old age in the enjoyment of this world’s riches? How comes it that untutored youth and innocent childhood are cut down while still in the bud? Why is it that children three years old or two, and even unweaned infants, are possessed with devils, covered with leprosy, and eaten up with jaundice, while godless men and profane, adulterers and murderers, have health and strength to blaspheme God? Are we not told that the unrighteousness of the father does not fall upon the son, [Ezek. 18:20] and that ”the soul that sinneth it shall die? [Ezek. 18:4] Or if the old doctrine holds good that the sins of the fathers must be visited upon the children, [Ex. 20:5] an old man’s countless sins cannot fairly be avenged upon a harmless infant. And I have said: ”Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain,

and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued. [Ps. 73:13, Ps. 73:14] Yet when I have thought of these things, like the prophet I have learned to say: ”When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

[Ps. 73:16, Ps. 73:17] Truly the judgments of the Lord are a great deep. [Ps. 36:6] ”O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! [Rom. 11:33] God is good, and all that He does must be good also. Does He decree that I must lose my husband? I mourn my loss, but because it is His will I bear it with resignation. Is an only son snatched from me? The blow is hard, yet it can be borne, for He who has taken away is He who gave. [Job 1:21] If I become blind a friend’s reading will console me. If I become deaf I shall escape from sinful words, and my thoughts shall be of God alone. And if, besides such trials as these, poverty, cold, sickness, and nakedness oppress me, I shall wait for death, and regard them as passing evils, soon to give way to a better issue. Let us reflect on the words of the sapiential psalm: ”Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments. [Ps. 119:137] Only he can speak thus who in all his troubles magnifies the Lord, and, putting down his sufferings to his sins, thanks God for his clemency.

The daughters of Judah, we are told, rejoiced, because of all the judgments of the Lord. [Ps. 97:8] Therefore, since Judah means confession, and since every believing soul confesses its faith, [Rom. 10:10] he who claims to believe in Christ must rejoice in all Christ’s judgments. Am I in health? I thank my Creator. Am I sick? In this case, too, I praise God’s will. For ”when I am weak, then am I strong;” and the strength of the spirit is made perfect in the weakness of the flesh. Even an apostle must bear what he dislikes, that ailment for the removal of which he besought the Lord thrice. God’s reply was: ”My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” [2 Cor. 12:8, 2 Cor. 12:9, 2 Cor. 12:10] Lest he should be unduly elated by his revelations, a reminder of his human weakness was given to him, just as in the triumphal car of the victorious general there was always a slave to whisper constantly, amid the cheerings of the multitude, ”Remember that thou art but man.”

3. But why should that be hard to bear which we must one day ourselves endure? And why do we grieve for the dead? We are not born to live forever. Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah, Peter, James, and John, Paul, the ”chosen vessel,” [Acts 9:15] and even the Son of God Himself have all died; and are we vexed when a soul leaves its earthly tenement? Perhaps he is taken away, ”lest that wickedness should alter his understanding ...for his soul pleased the Lord: therefore hasted he to take him away from the people” [Wisd. 4:11, Wisd. 4:14] -lest in life’s long journey he should lose his way in some trackless maze. We should indeed mourn for the dead, but only for him whom Gehenna receives, whom Tartarus devours, and for whose

punishment the eternal fire burns. But we who, in departing, are accompanied by an escort of angels, and met by Christ Himself, should rather grieve that we have to tarry yet longer in this tabernacle of death. [2 Cor. 5:4] For ”whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. [2 Cor. 5:6] Our one longing should be that expressed by the psalmist: ”Woe is me that my pilgrimage is prolonged, that I have dwelt with them that dwell in Kedar, that my soul hath made a far pilgrimage. [Ps. 120:5, 6, Vulg] Kedar means darkness, and darkness stands for this present world (for, we are told, ”the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not” [Joh. 1:5]).

Therefore we should congratulate our dear Blaesilla that she has passed from darkness to light, [Eph. 5:8] and has in the first flush of her dawning faith received the crown of her completed work. Had she been cut off (as f pray that none may be) while her thoughts were full of worldly desires and passing pleasures, then mourning would indeed have been her due, and no tears shed for her would have been too many. As it is, by the mercy of Christ she, four months ago, renewed her baptism in her vow of widowhood, and for the rest of her days spurned the world, and thought only of the religions life. Have you no fear, then, lest the Saviour may say to you: ”Are you angry, Paula, that your daughter has become my daughter? Are you vexed at my decree, and do you, with rebellious tears, grudge me the possession of Blaesilla? You ought to know what my purpose is both for you and for yours. You deny yourself food, not to fast but to gratify your grief; and such abstinence is displeasing to me. Such fasts are my enemies. I receive no soul which forsakes the body against my will. A foolish philosophy may boast of martyrs of this kind; it may boast of a Zeno a Cleombrotus, or a Cato. My spirit rests only upon him ”that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word.

[Isa. 66:2] Is this the meaning of your vow to me that you would lead a religious life? Is it for this that you dress yourself differently from other matrons, and array yourself in the garb of a nun? Mourning is for those who wear silk dresses. In the midst of your tears the call will come, and you, too, must die; yet you flee from me as from a cruel judge, and fancy that you can avoid failing into my hands. Jonah, that headstrong prophet, once fled from me, yet in the depths of the sea he was still mine. [Jon. 2:2-7] If you really believed your daughter to be alive, you would not grieve that she had passed to a better world. This is the commandment that I have given you through my apostle, that you sorrow not for them that sleep, even as the Gentiles, which have no hope. [1 Thess. 4:13] Blush, for you are put to shame by the example of a heathen. The devil’s handmaid is better than mine. For, while she imagines that her unbelieving husband has been translated to heaven, you either do not or will not believe that your daughter is at rest with me.”

4. Why should I not mourn, you say? Jacob lint on sackcloth for Joseph, and when all his family gathered round him, refused to be comforted. ”I will go down,” he

said, ”into the grave unto my son mourning. [Gen. 37:35] David also mourned for Absalom, covering his face, and crying: ”O my son, Absalom ...my son, Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son! [2 Sam. 18:33] Moses, [Deut. 34:8] too, and Aaron, [Nu. 20:29] and the rest of the saints were mourned for with a solemn mourning. The answer to your reasoning issimple. Jacob, it is true, mourned for Joseph, whom he fancied slain, and thought tomeet only in the grave (his words were: ”I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning”), but he only did so because Christ had not yet broken open the door of paradise, nor quenched with his blood the flaming sword and the whirling of the guardian cherubim. (Hence in the story of Dives and Lazarus, Abraham and the beggar, though really in a place of refreshment, are described as being in hell. [Apud inferos-Luke 16:23]) And David, who, after interceding in vain for the life of his infant child, refused to weep for it, knowing that it had not sinned, did well to weep for a son who had been a parricide-in will, if not in deed.

[2 Sam. 17:1-4] And when we read that, for Moses and Aaron, lamentation was made after ancient custom, this ought not to surprise us, for even in the Acts of the Apostles, in the full blaze of the gospel, we see that the brethren at Jerusalem made great lamentation for Stephen. [Acts 8:2] This great lamentation, however, refers not to the mourners, but to the funeral procession and to the crowds which accompanied it. This is what the Scripture says of Jacob: ”Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph and his brethren”; and a few lines farther on: ”And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a great company. Finally, ”they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation. [Gen. 1:7-10] This solemn lamentation does not impose prolonged weeping upon the Egyptians, but simply describes the funeral ceremony. In like manner, when we read of weeping made for Moses and Aaron, [Nu. 20:29; Deut. 34:6-8] this is all that is meant.

I cannot adequately extol the mysteries of Scripture, nor sufficiently admire the spiritual meaning conveyed in its most simple words. We are told, for instance, that lamentation was made for Moses; yet when the funeral of Joshua is described [Josh. 24:30] no mention at all is made of weeping. The reason, of course, is that under Moses-that is under the old Law-all men were bound by the sentence passed on Adam’s sin, and when they descended into hell were rightly accompanied with tears. For, as the apostle says, ”death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned. [Rom. 5:14] But under Jesus, that is, under the Gospel of Christ, who has unlocked for us the gate of paradise, death is accompanied, not with sorrow, but with joy. The Jews go on weeping to this day; they make bare their feet, they crouch in sackcloth, they roll in ashes. And to make their superstition complete, they follow a foolish custom of the Pharisees, and eat lentils, to show, it would seem, for what poor fare they have lost their birthright. [Gen. 25:34] Of

course they are right to weep, for as they do not believe in the Lord's resurrection they are being made ready for the advent of antichrist. But we who have put on Christ [Gal. 3:27] and according to the apostle are a royal and priestly race, [1 Pet. 2:9] we ought not to grieve for the dead.

"Moses," the Scripture tells us, "said unto Aaron and unto Eleazar, and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left: Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; lest ye die, and lest wrath come upon all the people. [Lev. 10:6, Lev. 10:12] Rend not your clothes, he says, neither mourn as pagans, lest you die. For, for us sin is death. In this same book, Leviticus, there is a provision which may perhaps strike some as cruel, yet is necessary to faith: the high priest is forbidden to approach the dead bodies of his father and mother, of his brothers and of his children; [Lev. 21:10-12] to the end, that no grief may distract a soul engaged in offering sacrifice to God, and wholly devoted to the Divine mysteries. Are we not taught the same lesson in theGospel in other words? Is not the disciple forbidden to say farewell to his home or to bury his dead father? [Luke 9:59-62] Of the high priest, again, it is said: "He shall not go out of the sanctuary, and the sanctification of his God shall not be contaminated, for the anointing oil of his God is upon him.

[Lev. 21:12, Vulg] Certainly, now that we have believed in Christ, and bear Him within us, by reason of the oil of His anointing which we have received, [1 Joh. 2:27] we ought not to depart from His temple-that is, from our Christian profession-we ought not to go forth to mingle with the unbelieving Gentiles, but always to remain within, as servants obedient to the will of the Lord.

5. I have spoken plainly, lest you might ignorantly suppose that Scripture sanctions your grief; and that, if you err, you have reason on your side. And, so far, my words have been addressed to the average Christian woman. But now it will not be so. For in your case, as I well know, renunciation of the world has been complete; you have rejected and trampled on the delights of life, and you give yourself daily to fasting, to reading, and to prayer. Like Abraham, [Gen. 12:1-4] you desire to leave your country and kindred, to forsake Mesopotamia and the Chaldaeans, to enter into the promised land. Dead to the world before your death, you have spent all your mere worldly substance upon the poor, or have bestowed it upon your children. I am the more surprised, therefore, that you should act in a manner which in others would justly call for reprehension. You call to mind Blaesilla's companionship, her conversation, and her endearing ways; and you cannot endure the thought that you have lost them all. I pardon you the tears of a mother, but I ask you to restrain your grief. When I think of the parent I cannot blame you for weeping: but when I think of the Christian and the recluse, the mother disappears from my view. Your wound is still fresh, and ant touch of mine, however gentle, is more likely to inflame than to heal it. Yet why do you not try to overcome by reason a grief which time must inevitably assuage?

Naomi, fleeing because of famine to the land of Moab, there lost her husband and her sons. Yet when she was thus deprived of her natural protectors, Ruth, a stranger, never left her side. [Ruth 1] And see what a great thing it is to comfort a lonely woman Ruth, for her reward, is made an ancestress of Christ. [Matt. 1:5] Consider the great trials which Job endured, and you will see that you are over-delicate. Amid the ruins of his house, the pains of his sores, his countless bereavements, and, last of all, the snares laid for him by his wife, he still lifted up his eyes to heaven, and maintained his patience unbroken. I know what you are going to say "All this befell him as a righteous man, to try his righteousness. Well, choose which alternative you please. Either you are holy, in which case God is putting your holiness to the proof; or else you are a sinner, in which case you have no right to complain. For if so, you endure far less than your deserts.

Why should I repeat old stories? Listen to a modern instance. The holy Melanium, eminent among Christians for her true nobility (may the Lord grant that you and I may have part with her in His day!), while the dead body of her husband was still unburied, still warm, had the misfortune to lose at one stroke two of her sons. The sequel seems incredible, but Christ is my witness that my words are true. Would you not suppose that in her frenzy she would have unbound her hair, and rent her clothes, and torn her breast? Yet not a tear fell from her eyes. Motionless she stood there; then casting herself at the feet of Christ, she smiled, as though she held Him with her hands. "Henceforth, Lord," she said, "I will serve Thee more readily, for Thou hast freed me from a great burden." But perhaps her remaining children overcame her determination. No, indeed; she set so little store by them that she gave up all that she had to her only son, and then, in spite of the approaching winter, took ship for Jerusalem.

6. Spare yourself, I beseech you, spare Blaesilla, who now reigns with Christ; at least spare Eustochium, whose tender years and inexperience depend on you for guidance and instruction. Now does the devil rage and complain that he is set at naught, because he sees one of your children exalted in triumph. The victory which he failed to win over her that is gone he hopes to obtain over her who still remains. Too great affection towards one's children is disaffection towards God. Abraham gladly prepares to slay his only son, and do you complain if one child out of several has received her crown? I cannot say what I am going to say without a groan. When you were carried fainting out of the funeral procession, whispers such as these were audible in the crowd. "Is not this what we have often said. She weeps for her daughter, killed with fasting. She wanted her to marry again, that she might have grandchildren. How long must we refrain from driving these detestable monks out of Rome? Why do we not stone them or hurl them into the Tiber? They have misled this unhappy lady; that she is not a nun from choice is clear. No heathen mother ever wept for her children as she does for Blaesilla. What sorrow, think you, must not Christ have endured when He listened to such words

as these! And how triumphantly must Satan have exulted, eager as he is to snatch your soul!

Luring you with the claims of a grief which seems natural and right, and always keeping before you the image of Blaesilla, his aim is to slay the mother of the victress, and then to fall upon her forsaken sister. I do not speak thus to terrify you. The Lord is my witness that I address you now as though I were standing at His judgment seat. Tears which have no meaning are an object of abhorrence. Yours are detestable tears, sacrilegious tears, unbelieving tears; for they know no limits, and bring you to the verge of death. You shriek and cry out as though on fire within, and do your best to put an end to yourself. But to you and others like you Jesus comes in His mercy and says: ”Why weepest thou? the damsel is not dead but sleepeth. [Mark 5:39] The bystanders may laugh him to scorn; such unbelief is worthy of the Jews. If you prostrate yourself in grief at your daughter’s tomb you too will hear the chiding of the angel, ”Why seek ye the living among the dead? [Luke 24:5] It was because Mary Magdalene had done this that when she recognized the Lord’s voice calling her and fell at His feet, He said to her: ”Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; [Joh. 20:17] that is to say, you are not worthy to touch, as risen, one whom you suppose still in the tomb.

7. What crosses and tortures, think you, must not our Blaesilla endure to see Christ angry with you, though it be but a little! At this moment she cries to you as you weep: ”If ever you loved me, mother, if I was nourished at your breast, if I was taught by your precepts, do not grudge me my exaltation, do not so act that we shall be separated forever. Do you fancy that I am alone? In place of you I now have Mary the mother of the Lord. Here I see many whom before I have not known. My companions are infinitely better than any that I had on earth. Here I have the company of Anna, the prophetess of the Gospel; [Luke 2:36, Luke 2:37] and-what should kindle in you more fervent joy-I have gained in three short months what cost her the labor of many years to win. Both of us widows indeed, we have been both rewarded with the palm of chastity. Do you pity me because I have left the world behind me? It is I who should, and do, pity you who, still immured in its prison, daily fight with. anger, with covetousness, with lust, with this or that temptation leading the soul to ruin. If you wish to be indeed my mother, you must please Christ. She is not my mother who displeases my Lord.” Many other things does she say which here I pass over; she prays also to God for you. For me, too, I feel sure, she makes intercession and asks God to pardon my sins in return for the warnings and advice that I bestowed on her, when to secure her salvation I braved the ill will of her family.

8. Therefore, so long as breath animates my body, so long as I continue in the enjoyment of life, I engage, declare, and promise that Blaesilla’s name shall be forever on my tongue, that my labors shall be dedicated to her honor, and that my

talents shall be devoted to her praise. No page will I write in which Blaesilla's name shall not occur Wherever the records of my utterance shall find their way, thither she, too, will travel with my poor writings. Virgins, widows, monks and priests, as they read, will see how deeply her image is impressed upon my mind. Everlasting remembrance will make up for the shortness of her life. Living as she does with Christ in heaven, she will live also on the lips of men. The present will soon pass away and give place to the future, and that future will judge her without partiality and without prejudice. As a childless widow she will occupy a middle place between Paula, the mother of children, and Eustochium the virgin. In my writings she will never die. She will hear me conversing of her always, either with her sister or with her mother.

Letter 40. To Marcella.

Onasus, of Segesta, the subject of this letter, was among Jerome's Roman opponents. He is here held up to ridicule in a manner which reflects little credit on the writer's urbanity. The date of the letter is 385 a.d. 1. The medical men called surgeons pass for being cruel, but really deserve pity. For is it not pitiful to cut away the dead flesh of another man with merciless knives without being moved by his pangs? Is it not pitiful that the man who is curing the patient is callous to his sufferings, and has to appear as his enemy? Yet such is the order of nature. While truth is always bitter, pleasantness waits upon evil-doing. Isaiah goes naked without blushing as a type of captivity to come. [Isa. 20:2] Jeremiah is sent from Jerusalem to the Euphrates (a river in Mesopotamia), and leaves his girdle to be marred in the Chaldaean camp, among the Assyrians hostile to his people. [Jer. 13:6, Jer. 13:7] Ezekiel is told to eat bread made of mingled seeds and sprinkled with the dung of men and cattle. [Ezek. 4:9-16] He has to see his wife die without shedding a tear. [Ezek. 24:15-18] Amos is driven from Samaria. [Amos 7:12, Amos 7:13] Why is he driven from it? Surely in this case as in the others, because he was a spiritual surgeon, who cut away the parts diseased by sin and urged men to repentance. The apostle Paul says: "Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" [Gal. 4:16] And so the Saviour Himself found it, from whom many of the disciples went back because His sayings seemed hard. [John 6:60, John 6:66]

2. It is not surprising, then, that by exposing their faults I have offended many. I have arranged to operate on a cancerous nose; let him who suffers from wens tremble. I wish to rebuke a chattering daw; let the crow realize that she is offensive. Yet, after all, is there but one person in Rome "Whose nostrils are disfigured by a scar?" [Virg. A. 6:497] Is Onasus of Segesta alone in puffing out his cheeks like bladders and balancing hollow phrases on his tongue? I say that certain persons have, by crime, perjury, and false pretences, attained to this or that high position. How does it hurt you who know that the charge does not touch you? I laugh at a pleader who has no clients, and sneer at a penny-a-liner's eloquence. What does it matter to you who are such a refined speaker? It is my whim to inveigh against mercenary priests. You are rich already, why should you be angry? I wish to shut

up Vulcan and burn him in his own flames. Are you his guest or his neighbor that you try to save an idol's shrine from the fire? I choose to make merry over ghosts and owls and monsters of the Nile; and whatever I say, you take it as aimed at you. At whatever fault I point my pen, you cry out that you are meant. You collar me and drag me into court and absurdly charge me with writing satires when I only write plain prose!

So you really think yourself a pretty fellow just because you have a lucky name! Why it does not follow at all. A brake is called a brake just because the light does not break through it. The Fates are called "sparers," just because they never spare. The Furies are spoken of as gracious, because they show no grace. And in common speech Ethiopians go by the name of silverlings. Still, if the showing up of faults always angers you, I will soothe you now with the words of Persius: "May you be a catch for my lord and lady's daughter! May the pretty ladies scramble for you! May the ground you walk on turn to a rose-bed!" [Pers. 2:37, 38] 3. All the same, I will give you a hint what features to hide if you want to look your best. Show no nose upon your face and keep your mouth shut. You will then stand some chance of being counted both handsome and eloquent.

Letter 41. To Marcella.

An effort having been made to convert Marcella to Montanism, Jerome here summarizes for her its leading doctrines, which he contrasts with those of the Church. Written at Rome in 385 a.d. 1. As regards the passages brought together from the gospel of John with which a certain votary of Montanus has assailed you, passages in which our Saviour promises that He will go to the Father, and that He will send the Paraclete [Joh. 14:28; Joh. 15:26] -as regards these, the Acts of the Apostles inform us both for what time the promises were made, and at what time they were actually fulfilled. Ten days had elapsed, we are told, from the Lord's ascension and fifty from His resurrection, when the Holy Spirit came down, and the tongues of the believers were cloven, so that each spoke every language. Then it was that, when certain persons of those who as yetbelieved not declared that the disciples were drunk with new wine, Peter standing in the midst of the apostles, and of all the concourse said: "Ye men of Judaea and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants, and on my handmaidens will pour out ...of my spirit." [Acts 2:14-18]

2. If, then, the apostle Peter, upon whom the Lord has founded the Church, [Matt. 16:18] has expressly said that the prophecy and promise of the Lord were then and there fulfilled, how can we claim another fulfilment for ourselves? if the Montanists reply that Philip's four daughters prophesied [Acts 21:9] at a later date, and that a prophet is mentioned named Agabus, [Acts 11:28; Acts 21:10, Acts 21:11] and that in the partition of the spirit, prophets are spoken of as well as apostles, teachers and others, [1 Cor. 12:28; cf. Eph. 4:11] and that Paul himself prophesied many things concerning heresies still future, and the end of the world; we tell them that we do not so much reject prophecy-for this is attested by the passion of the Lord-as refuse to receive prophets whose utterances fail to accord with the Scriptures old and new.

3. In the first place we differ from the Montanists regarding the rule of faith. We distinguish the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as three persons, but unite them as one substance. They, on the other hand, following the doctrine of Sabellius, force the Trinity into the narrow limits of a single personality. We, while we do not encourage them, yet allow second marriages, since Paul bids the younger widows to marry. [1 Tim. 5:14] They suppose a repetition of marriage a sin so awful that he who has committed it is to be regarded as an adulterer. We, according to the apostolic tradition (in which the whole world is at one with us), fast through one Lent yearly; whereas they keep three in the year as though three saviours had suffered. I do not mean, of course, that it is unlawful to fast at other times through the year-always excepting Pentecost -only that while in Lent it is a duty of obligation, at other seasons it is a matter of choice. With us, again, the bishops occupy the place of the apostles, but with them a bishop ranks not first but third. For while they put first the patriarchs of Pepusa in Phrygia, and place next to these the ministers called stewards, the bishops are relegated to the third or almost the lowest rank. No doubt their object is to make their religion more pretentious by putting that last which we put first.

Again they close the doors of the Church to almost every fault, whilst we read daily, "I desire the repentance of a sinner rather than his death," [Ezek. 18:23] and "Shall they fall and not arise, saith the Lord," [Jer. 8:4] and once more "Return ye backsliding children and I will heal your backslidings. [Jer. 3:22] Their strictness does not prevent them from themselves committing grave sins, far from it; but there is this difference between us and them, that, whereas they in their self-righteousness blush to confess their faults, we do penance for ours, and so more readily gain pardon for them.

4. I pass over their sacraments of sin, made up as they are said to be, of sucking children subjected to a triumphant martyrdom. I prefer, I say, not to credit these; accusations of blood-shedding may well be false. But I must confute the open blasphemy of men who say that God first determined in the Old Testament to save the world by Moses and the prophets, but that finding Himself unable to fulfil His purpose He took to Himself a body of the Virgin, and preaching under the form of the Son in Christ, underwent death for our salvation. Moreover that, when by these two steps He was unable to save the world, He last of all descended by the Holy Spirit upon Montanus and those demented women Prisca and Maximilia; and that thus the mutilated and emasculate Montanus possessed a fulness of knowledge such as was never claimed by Paul; for he was content to say, "We know in part, and we prophesy in part," and again, "Now we see through a glass darkly." [1 Cor. 13:9, 1 Cor. 13:12]

These are statements which require no refutation. To expose the infidelity of the Montanists is to triumph over it. Nor is it necessary that in so short a letter as this

I should overthrow the several absurdities which they bring forward. You are well acquainted with the Scriptures; and, as I take it, you have written, not because you have been disturbed by their cavils, but only to learn my opinion about them.

Letter 42. To Marcella.

At Marcella's request Jerome explains to her what is "the sin against the Holy Ghost" spoken of by Christ, and shows Novatian's explanation of it to be untenable. Written at Rome in 385 a.d.

1. The question you send is short and the answer is clear. There is this passage in the gospel: "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world nor in the world to come. [Matt. 12:32] Now if Novatian affirms that none but Christian renegades can sin against the Holy Ghost, it is plain that the Jews who blasphemed Christ were not guilty of this sin. Yet they were wicked husbandmen, they had slain the prophets, they were then compassing the death of the Lord; [Matt. 21:33] and so utterly lost were they that the Son of God told them that it was they whom he had come to save. [Matt. 18:11] It must be proved to Novatian, therefore, that the sin which shall never be forgiven is not the blasphemy of men disembowelled by torture who in their agony deny their Lord, but is the captious clamor of those who, while they see that God's works are the fruit of virtue, ascribe the virtue to a demon and declare the signs wrought to belong not to the divine excellence but to the devil. And this is the whole gist of our Saviour's argument, when He teaches that Satan cannot be cast out by Satan, and that his kingdom is not divided against itself.

[Matt. 12:25, Matt. 12:26] If it is the devil's object to injure God's creation, how can he wish to cure the sick and to expel himself from the bodies possessed by him? Let Novatian prove that of those who have been compelled to sacrifice before a judge's tribunal any has declared of the things written in the gospel that they were wrought not by the Son of God but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils; [Matt. 12:24] and then he will be able to make good his contention that this is the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost which shall never be forgiven.

2. But to put a more searching question still: let Novatian tell us how he distinguishes speaking against the Son of Man from blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. For I maintain that on his principles men who have denied Christ under persecution have only spoken against the Son of Man, and have not blasphemed the Holy

Ghost. For when a man is asked if he is a Christian, and declares that he is not; obviously in denying Christ, that is the Son of Man, he does no despite to the Holy Ghost. But if his denial of Christ involves a denial of the Holy Ghost, this heretic can perhaps tell us how the Son of Man can be denied without sinning against the Holy Ghost. If he thinks that we are here intended by the term Holy Ghost to understand the Father, no mention at all of the Father is made by the denier in his denial. When the apostle Peter, taken aback by a maid's question, denied the Lord, did he sin against the Son of Man or against the Holy Ghost? If Novatian absurdly twists Peter's words, "I know not the man," [Matt. 26:74] to mean a denial not of Christ's Messiahship but of His humanity, he will make the Saviour a liar, for He foretold [Matt. 26:33-35; Joh. 13:38] that He Himself, that is His divine Sonship, must be denied. Now, when Peter denied the Son of God, he wept bitterly and effaced his threefold denial by a threefold confession.

[Joh. 21:15-17] His sin, therefore, was not the sin against the Holy Ghost which can never be forgiven. It is obvious, then, that this sin involves blasphemy, calling one Beelzebub for his actions, whose virtues prove him to be God. If Novatian can bring an instance of a renegade who has called Christ Beelzebub, I will at once give up my position and admit that after such a fall the denier can win no forgiveness. To give way under torture and to deny oneself to be a Christian is one thing, to say that Christ is the devil is another. And this you will yourself see if you read the passage [Viz. Matt. 12:32, quoted above] attentively.

3. I ought to have discussed the matter more fully, but some friends have visited my humble abode, and I cannot refuse to givemyself up to them. Still, as it might seem arrogant not to answer you at once, I have compressed a wide subject into a few words, and have sent you not a letter but an explanatory note.

Letter 43. To Marcella.

Jerome draws a contrast between his daily life and that of Origen, and sorrowfully admits his own shortcomings. He then suggests to Marcella the advantages which life in the country offers over life in town, and hints that he is himself disposed to make trial of it. Written at Rome in 385 a.d. 1. Ambrose who supplied Origen, true man of adamant and of brass, with money, materials and amanuenses to bring out his countless books-Ambrose, in a letter to his friend from Athens, states that they never took a meal together without something being read, and never went to bed till some portion of Scripture had been brought home to them by a brother's voice. Night and day, in fact, were so ordered that prayer only gave place to reading-and reading to prayer. 2. Have we, brute beasts that we are, ever hone the like? Why, we yawn if we read for over an hour; we rub our foreheads and vainly try to suppress our languor. And then, after this great feat, we plunge for relief into worldly business once more.

I say nothing of the meals with which we dull our faculties, and I would rather not estimate the time that we spend in paying and receiving visits. Next we fall into conversation; we waste our words, we attack people behind their backs, we detail their way of living, we carp at them and are carped at by them in turn. Such is the fare that engages our attention at dinner and afterwards. Then, when our guests have retired, we make up our accounts, and these are sure to cause us either anger or anxiety. The first makes us like raging lions, and the second seeks vainly to make provision for years to come. We do not recollect the words of the Gospel: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" [Luke 12:20] The clothing which we buy is designed not merely for use but for display. Where there is a chance of saving money we quicken our pace, speak promptly, and keep our ears open. If we hear of household losses-such as often occur-our looks become dejected and gloomy. The gain of a penny fills us with joy; the loss of a half-penny plunges us into sorrow. One man is of so many minds that the prophet's prayer is: "Lord, in thy city scatter their image." [Ps. 73:20, Vulg] For created as we are in the image of God and after His likeness, [Gen. 1:26] it is our own wickedness which makes us assume masks. Just as on the stage the same actor now figures as a brawny Hercules, now softens into

a tender Venus, now shivers in the role of Cybele; so we-who, if we were not of the world, would be hated by the world [Joh. 15:19] -for every sin that we commit have a corresponding mask.

3. Wherefore, seeing that we have journeyed for much of our life through a troubled sea, and that our vessel has been in turn shaken by raging blasts and shattered upon treacherous reefs, let us, as soon as may be, make for the haven of rural quietude. There such country dainties as milk and household bread, and greens watered by our own hands, will supply us with coarse but harmless fare. So living, sleep will not call us away from prayer, nor satiety from reading. In summer the shade of a tree will afford us privacy. In autumn the quality of the air and the leaves strewn under foot will invite us to stop and rest. In springtime the fields will be bright with flowers, and our psalms will sound the sweeter for the twittering of the birds. When winter comes with its frost and snow, I shall not have to buy fuel, and, whether I sleep or keep vigil, shall be warmer than in town. At least, so far as I know, I shall keep off the cold at less expense. Let Rome keep to itself its noise and bustle, let the cruel shows of the arena go on, let the crowd rave at the circus, let the playgoers revel in the theatres and-for I must not altogether pass over our Christian friends-let the House of Ladies [Ps. 73:28] hold its daily sittings. It is good for us to cleave to the Lord, and to put our hope in the Lord God, so that when we have exchanged our present poverty for the kingdom of heaven, we may be able to exclaim: ”Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” [Ps. 73:25] Surely if we can find such blessedness in heaven we may well grieve to have sought after pleasures poor and passing here upon earth. Farewell.

Letter 44. To Marcella.

Marcella had sent some small articles as a present (probably to Paula and Eustochium) and Jerome now writes in their name to thank her for them. He notices the appropriateness of the gifts, not only to the ladies, but also to himself. Written at Rome in 385 a.d. When absent in body we are wont to converse together in spirit. [Cf. Col. 2:5] Each of us does what he or she can. You send us gifts, we send you back letters of thanks. And as we are virgins who have taken the veil, it is our duty to show that hidden meanings lurk under your nice presents. Sackcloth, then, is a token of prayer and fasting, the chairs remind us that a virgin should never stir abroad, and the wax tapers that we should look for the bridegroom's coming with our lights burning. [Matt. 25:1] The cups also warn us to mortify the flesh and always to be ready for martyrdom. "How bright," says the psalmist,"is the cup of the Lord, intoxicating them that drink it!" Moreover, when you offer to matrons little fly-flaps to brush away mosquitoes, it is a charming way of hinting that they should at once check voluptuous feelings, for "dying flies," we are told, "spoil sweet ointment." [Eccles. 10:1, Vulg] In such presents, then, as these, virgins can find a model, and matrons a pattern. To me, too, your gifts convey a lesson, although one of an opposite kind. For chairs suit idlers, sackcloth does for penitents, and cups are wanted for thethirsty. And I shall be glad to light your tapers, if only to banish the terrors of the night and the fears of an evil conscience.

Letter 45. To Asella.

After leaving Rome for the East, Jerome writes to Asella to refute the calumnies by which he had been assailed, especially as regards his intimacy with Paula and Eustochium. Written on board ship at Ostia, in August, 385 a.d. 1. Were I to think myself able to requite your kindness I should be foolish. God is able in my stead to reward a soul which is consecrated to Him. So unworthy, indeed, am I of your regard that I have never ventured to estimate its value or even to wish that it might be given me for Christ's sake. Some consider me a wicked man, laden with iniquity; and such language is more than justified by my actual sins. Yet in dealing with the bad you do well to account them good. It is dangerous to judge another man's servant; [Rom. 14:4] and to speak evil of the righteous is a sin not easily pardoned. The day will surely come when you and I shall mourn for others; for not a few will be in the flames

2. I am said to be an infamous turncoat, a slippery knave, one who lies and deceives others by Satanic arts. Which is the safer course, I should like to know, to invent or credit these charges against innocent persons, or to refuse to believe them, even of the guilty? Some kissed my hands, yet attacked me with the tongues of vipers; sympathy was on their lips, but malignant joy in their hearts. The Lord saw them and had them in derision, [Ps. 2:4] reserving my poor self and them for judgment to come. One would attack my gait or my way of laughing; another would find something amiss in my looks; another would suspect the simplicity of my manner. Such is the company in which I have lived for almost three years.

It often happened that I found myself surrounded with virgins, and to some of these I expounded the divine books as best I could. Our studies brought about constant intercourse, this soon ripened into intimacy, and this, in turn, produced mutual confidence. If they have ever seen anything in my conduct unbecoming a Christian let them say so. Have I taken any one's money? Have I not disdained all gifts, whether small or great? Has the chink of any one's coin been heard in my hand? [Cf. 1 Sam. 12:3] Has my language been equivocal, or my eye wanton? No; my sex is my one crime, and even on this score I am not assailed, save when there is a talk of Paula going to Jerusalem. Very well, then. They believed my accuser

when he lied; why do they not believe him when he retracts? He is the same man now that he was then, and yet he who before declared me guilty now confesses that I am innocent. Surely a man's words under torture are more trustworthy than in moments of gayety, except, indeed, that people are prone to believe falsehoods designed to gratify their ears, or, worse still, stories which, till then uninvented, they have urged others to invent.

3. Before I became acquainted with the family of the saintly Paula, all Rome resounded with my praises. Almost every one concurred in judging me worthy of the episcopate. Damasus, of blessed memory, spoke no words but mine. Men called me holy, humble, eloquent. Did I ever cross the threshold of a light woman? Was I ever fascinated by silk dresses, or glowing gems, or rouged faces, or display of gold? Of all the ladies in Rome but one had power to subdue me, and that one was Paula. She mourned and fasted, she was squalid with dirt, her eyes were dim from weeping. For whole nights she would pray to the Lord for mercy, and often the rising sun found her still at her prayers. The psalms were her only songs, the Gospel her whole speech, continence her one indulgence, fasting the staple of her life. The only woman who took my fancy was one whom I had not so much as seen at table. But when I began to revere, respect, and venerate her as her conspicuous chastity deserved, all my former virtues forsook me on the spot.

4. Oh! envy, that dost begin by tearing thyself! Oh! cunning malignity of Satan, that dost always persecute things holy! Of all the ladies in Rome, the only ones that caused scandal were Paula and Melanium, who, despising their wealth and deserting their children, uplifted the cross of the Lord as a standard of religion. Had they frequented the baths, or chosen to use perfumes, or taken advantage of their wealth and position as widows to enjoy life and to be independent, they would have been saluted as ladies of high rank and saintliness. As it is, of course, it is in order to appear beautiful that they put on sackcloth and ashes, and they endure fasting and filth merely to go down into the Gehenna of fire! As if they could not perish with the crowd whom the mob applauds! If it were Gentiles or Jews who thus assailed their mode of life, they would at least have the consolation of failing to please only those whom Christ Himself has failed to please. But, shameful to say, it is Christians who thus neglect the care of their own households, and, disregarding the beams in their own eyes, look for motes in those of their neighbors. [Matt. 7:3] They pull to pieces every profession of religion, and think that they have found a remedy for their own doom, if they can disprove the holiness of others, if they can detract from every one, if they can show that those who perish are many, and sinners, a great multitude.

5. You bathe daily; another regards such over-niceness as defilement. You surfeit yourself on wild fowl and pride yourself on eating sturgeon; I, on the contrary, fill my belly with beans. You find pleasure in troops of laughing girls; I prefer Paula

and Melanium who weep. You covet what belongs to others; they disdain what is their own. You like wines flavored with honey; they drink cold water, more delicious still. You count as lost what you cannot have, eat up, and devour on the moment; they believe in the Scriptures, and look for good things to come. And if they are wrong, and if the resurrection of the body on which they rely is a foolish delusion, what does it matter to you? We, on our side, look with disfavor on such a life as yours. You can fatten yourself on your good things as much as you please; I for my part prefer paleness and emaciation. You suppose that men like me are unhappy; we regard you as more unhappy still. Thus we reciprocate each other's thoughts, and appear to each other mutually insane.

6. I write this in haste, dear Lady Asella, as I go on board, overwhelmed with grief and tears; yet I thank my God that I am counted worthy of the world's hatred. [Joh. 15:18] Pray for me that, after Babylon, I may see Jerusalem once more; that Joshua, the son of Josedech, may have dominion over me, [Haggai 1:1] and not Nebuchadnezzar, that Ezra, whose name means helper, may come and restore me to my own country. I was a fool in wishing to sing the Lord's song in a strange land, [Ps. 137:4] and in leaving Mount Sinai, to seek the help of Egypt. I forgot that the Gospel warns us [Luke 10:30-35] that he who goes down from Jerusalem immediately fails among robbers, is spoiled, is wounded, is left for dead. But, although priest and Levite may disregard me, there is still the good Samaritan who, when men said to him, "Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil," [Joh. 8:48] disclaimed having a devil, but did not disclaim being a Samaritan, [Joh. 8:49] this being the Hebrew equivalent for our word guardian. Men call me a mischief-maker, and I take the title as a recognition of my faith. For I am but a servant, and the Jews still call my master a magician. The apostle, [I.e. Paul. See 2. Cor. 6:9] likewise, is spoken of as a deceiver. There hath no temptation taken me but such as is common to man. [1 Cor. 10:13] How few distresses have I endured, I who am yet a soldier of the cross! Men have laid to my charge a crime of which I am not guilty; but I know that I must enter the kingdom of heaven through evil report as well as through good. [2 Cor. 6:8]

7. Salute Paula and Eustochium, who, whatever the world may think, are always mine in Christ. Salute Albina, your mother, and Marcella, your sister; Marcellina also, and the holy Felicitas; and say to them all: "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, [Rom. 14:10] and there shall be revealed the principle by which each has lived." And now, illustrious model of chastity and virginity, remember me, I beseech you, in your prayers, and by your intercessions calm the waves of the sea.

Letter 46. Paula and Eustochium to Marcella.

Jerome writes to Marcella in the name of Paula and Eustochium, describing the charms of the Holy Land. and urging her to leave Rome and to join her old companions at Bethlehem. Much of the letter is devoted to disposing of the objection that since the Passion of Christ the Holy Land has been under a curse. The date of the letter is a.d. 386. It is written from Bethlehem, which now becomes Jerome's home for the remainder of his life. 1. Love cannot be measured, impatience knows no bounds, and eagerness can brook no delay. Wherefore we, oblivious of our weakness, and relying more on our will than our capacity, desire-pupils though we be-to instruct our mistress. We are like the sow in the proverb, which sets up to teach the goddess of invention. You were the first to set our tinder alight; the first, by precept and example, to urge us to adopt our present life. As a hen gathers her chickens, so did you take us under your wing. [2 Esdras. 1:30; Matt. 23:37] And will you now let us fly about at random with no mother near us? Will you leave us to dread the swoop of the hawk and the shadow of each passing bird of prey? Separated from you, we do what we can: we utter our mournful plaint, and more by sobs than by tears we adjure you to give back to us the Marcella whom we love. She is mild, she is suave, she is sweeter than the sweetest honey. She must not, therefore, be stern and morose to us, whom her winning ways have roused to adopt a life like her own.

2. Assuming that what we ask is for the best, our eagerness to obtain it is nothing to be ashamed of. And if all the Scriptures agree with our view, we are not too bold in urging you to a course to which you have yourself often urged us.

What are God's first words to Abraham? "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred unto a land that I will show thee. [Gen. 12:1] The patriarch-the first to receive a promise of Christ-is here told to leave the Chaldees, to leave the city of confusion [I.e. Babel-Gen. 11:9] and its rehoboth [Gen. 10:11] or broad places; to leave also the plain of Shinar, where the tower of pride had been raised to heaven. [Gen. 11:2, Gen. 11:4] He has to pass through the waves of this world, and to ford

its rivers; those by which the saints sat down and wept when they remembered Zion, [Ps. 137:1] and Chebar's flood, whence Ezekiel was carried to Jerusalem by the hair of his head. [Ezek. 8:3] All this Abraham undergoes that he may dwell in a land of promise watered from above, and not like Egypt, from below, [Deut. 11:10] no producer of herbs for the weak and ailing, [Rom. 14:2] but a land that looks for the early and the latter rain from heaven. [Deut. 11:14] It is a land of hills and valleys, [Dt. 11:11] and stands high above the sea. The attractions of the world it entirely wants, but its spiritual attractions are for this all the greater. Mary, the mother of the Lord, left the lowlands and made her way to the hill country, when, after receiving the angel's message, she realized that she bore within her womb the Son of God.

[Luke 1:26-31, Luke 1:39] When of old the Philistines had been overcome, when their devilish audacity had been smitten, when their champion had fallen on his face to the earth, [1 Sam. 17:49] it was from this city that there went forth a procession of jubilant souls, a harmonious choir to sing our David's victory over tens of thousands. [1 Sam. 18:6, 1 Sam. 18:7] Here, too, it was that the angel grasped his sword, and while he laid waste the whole of the ungodly city, marked out the temple of the Lord in the threshing floor of Ornan, king of the Jebusites. [1 Chron. 21:15, 1 Chron. 21:18; 2 Chron. 3:1] Thus early was it made plain that Christ's church would grow up, not in Israel, but among the Gentiles. Turn back to Genesis, [Gen. 14:18] and you will find that this was the city over which Melchizedek held sway, that king of Salem who, as a type of Christ, offered to Abraham bread and wine, and even then consecrated the mystery which Christians consecrate in the body and blood of the Saviour.

3. Perhaps you will tacitly reprove us for deserting the order of Scripture, and letting our confused account ramble this way and that, as one thing or another strikes us. If so, we say once more what we said at the outset: love has no logic, and impatience knows no rule. In the Song of Songs the precept is given as a hard one: "Regulate your love towards me." [Cant. 2:4 b, Vulg. Hebrew = A.V] And so we plead that, if we err, we do so not from ignorance but from feeling. Well, then, to bring forward something still more out of place, we must go back to yet remoter times. Tradition has it that in this city, nay, more, on this very spot, Adam lived and died. The place where our Lord was crucified is called Calvary, because the skull of the primitive man was buried there. So it came to pass that the second Adam, that is the blood of Christ, as it dropped from the cross, washed away the sins of the buried protoplast, the first Adam, and thus the words of the apostle were fulfilled: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." [Eph. 5:14]

It would be tedious to enumerate all the prophets and holy men who have been sent forth from this place. All that is strange and mysterious to us is familiar and natural

to this city and country. By its very names, three in number, it proves the doctrine of the trinity. For it is called first Jebus, then Salem, then Jerusalem: names of which the first means ”down-trodden,” the second ”peace,” and the third ”vision of peace.” For it is only by slow stages that we reach our goal; it is only after we have been trodden down that we are lifted up to see the vision of peace. Because of this peace Solomon, the man of peace, was born there, and ”in peace was his place made.” [Ps. 76:2, LXX] King of kings, and lord of lords, his name and that of the city show him to be a type of Christ. Need we speak of David and his descendants, all of whom reigned here? As Judaea is exalted above all other provinces, so is this city exalted above all Judaea. To speak more tersely, the glory of the province is derived from its capital; and whatever fame the members possess is in every case due to the head.

4. You have long been anxious to break forth into speech; the very letters we have formed perceive it, and our paper already understands the question you are going to put. You will reply to us by saying: it was so of old, when ”the Lord loved the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob,” and when her foundations were in the holy mountains. [Ps. 87:1, Ps. 87:2] Even these verses, however, are susceptible of a deeper interpretation. But things are changed since then. The risen Lord has proclaimed intones of thunder: ”Your house is left unto you desolate.” With tears He has prophesied its downfall: ”O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate.” [Matt. 23:37, Matt. 23:38] The veil of the temple has been rent; [Matt. 27:51] an army has encompassed Jerusalem, it has been stained by the blood of the Lord. Now, therefore, its guardian angels have forsaken it and the grace of Christ has been withdrawn. Josephus, himself a Jewish writer, asserts [Bellum Judaicum, 6:5] that at the Lord’s crucifixion there broke from the temple voices of heavenly powers, saying: ”Let us depart hence.” These and other considerations show that where grace abounded there did sin much more abound. [Rom. 5:20] Again, when the apostles received the command: ”Go ye and teach all nations,” [Matt. 28:19] and when they said themselves: ”It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you ...lo we turn to the Gentiles,” [Acts 13:46] then all the spiritual importance of Judaea and its old intimacy with God were transferred by the apostles to the nations.

5. The difficulty is strongly stated, and may well puzzle even those proficient in Scripture; but for all that, it admits of an easy solution. The Lord wept for the fall of Jerusalem, [Luke 19:41] and He would not have done so if He did not love it. He wept for Lazarus because He loved him. [Joh. 11:35, Joh. 11:36] The truth is that it was the people who sinned and not the place. The capture of a city is involved in the slaying of its inhabitants. If Jerusalem was destroyed, it was that its people might

be punished; if the temple was overthrown, it was that its figurative sacrifices might be abolished. As regards its site, lapse of time has but invested it with fresh grandeur. The Jews of old reverenced the Holy of Holies, because of the things contained in it-the cherubim, the mercy-seat, the ark of the covenant, the manna, Aaron's rod, and the golden altar. [Heb. 9:3-5] Does the Lord's sepulchre seem less worthy of veneration? As often as we enter it we see the Saviour in His grave clothes, and if we linger we see again the angel sitting at His feet, and the napkin folded at His head. [John 20:6, John 20:7, John 20:12] Long before this sepulchre was hewn out by Joseph, its glory was foretold in Isaiah's prediction, "his rest shall be glorious," [Isa. 11:10] meaning that the place of the Lord's burial should be held in universal honor.

6. How, then, you will say, do we read in the apocalypse written by John: "The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall ...kill them [that is, obviously, the prophets], and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified? [Rev. 11:7, Rev. 11:8, R.V] If the great city where the Lord was crucified is Jerusalem, and if the place of His crucifixion is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt; then as the Lord was crucified at Jerusalem, Jerusalem must be Sodom and Egypt. Holy Scripture, I reply first of all, cannot contradict itself. One book cannot invalidate the drift of the whole. A single verse cannot annul the meaning of a book. Ten lines earlier in the apocalypse it is written: "Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. [Rev. 11:2] The apocalypse was written by John long after the Lord's passion, yet in it he speaks of Jerusalem as the holy city. But if so, how can he spiritually call it Sodom and Egypt? It is no answer to say that the Jerusalem which is called holy is the heavenly one which is to be, while that which is called Sodom is the earthly one tottering to its downfall.

For it is the Jerusalem to come that is referred to in the description of the beast, "which shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and shall make war against the two prophets, and shall overcome them and kill them, and their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city. [Rev. 11:7, Rev. 11:8] At the close of the book it is farther described thus: "And the city lieth four-square, and the length of it and the breadth are the same as the height; and he measured the city with the golden reed twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the walls thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold" [Rev. 21:16-18] -and so on. Now where there is a square there can be neither length nor breadth. And what kind of measurement is that which makes length and breadth equal to height? And

how can there be walls of jasper, or a whole city of pure gold; its foundations and its streets of precious stones, and its twelve gates each glowing with pearls?

7. Evidently this description cannot be taken literally (in fact, it is absurd to suppose a city the length, breadth and height of which are all twelve thousand furlongs), and therefore the details of it must be mystically understood. The great city which Cain first built and called after his son [Gen. 4:17] must be taken to represent this world, which the devil, that accuser of his brethren, that fratricide who is doomed to perish, has built of vice cemented with crime, and filled with iniquity. Therefore it is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. Thus it is written, ”Sodom shall return to her former estate,” [Ezek. 16:55] that is to say, the world must be restored as it has been before. For we cannot believe that Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim [Deut. 29:23] are to be built again: they must be left to lie in ashes forever. We never read of Egypt as put for Jerusalem: it always stands for this world. To collect from Scripture the countless proofs of this would be tedious: I shall adduce but one passage, a passage in which this world is most clearly called Egypt. The apostle Jude, the brother of James, writes thus in his catholic epistle: ”I will, therefore, put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this how that Jesus, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. [Jude 5] And, lest you should fancy Joshua the son of Nun to be meant, the passage goes on thus:

”And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. [Jude 6] Moreover, to convince you that in every place where Egypt, Sodom and Gomorrah are named together it is not these spots, but the present world, which is meant, he mentions them immediately in this sense. ”Even as Sodom and Gomorrah,” he writes, ”and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. [Jude 7] But what need is there to collect more proofs when, after the passion and the resurrection of the Lord, the evangelist Matthew tells us: ”The rocks rent, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city and appeared unto many”? [Matt. 27:51, Matt. 27:53] We must not interpret this passage straight off, as many people absurdly do, of the heavenly Jerusalem: the apparition there of the bodies of the saints could be no sign to men of the Lord’s rising. Since, therefore, the evangelists and all the Scriptures speak of Jerusalem as the holy city, and since the psalmist commands us to worship the Lord ”at his footstool;

[Ps. 132:7] allow no one to call it Sodom and Egypt, for by it the Lord forbids men to swear because”it is the city of the great king. [Matt. 5:35]

8. The land is accursed, you say, because it has drunk in the blood of the Lord. On what grounds, then, do men regard as blessed those spots where Peter and Paul, the leaders of the Christian host, have shed their blood for Christ? If the confession of men and servants is glorious, must there not be glory likewise in the confession of their Lord and God? Everywhere we venerate the tombs of the martyrs; we apply their holy ashes to our eyes; we even touch them, if we may, with our lips. And yet some think that we should neglect the tomb in which the Lord Himself is buried. If we refuse to believe human testimony, let us at least credit the devil and his angels. [Matt. 25:41] For when in front of the Holy Sepulchre they are driven out of those bodies which they have possessed, they moan and tremble as if they stood before Christ's judgment-seat, and grieve, too late that they have crucified Him in whose presence they now cower. If-as a wicked theory maintains-this holy place has, since the Lord's passion, become an abomination, why was Paul in such haste to reach Jerusalem to keep Pentecost in it? [Acts 20:16] Yet to those who held him back he said: "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." [Acts 21:13] Need I speak of those other holy and illustrious men who, after the preaching of Christ, brought their votive gifts and offerings to the brethren who were at Jerusalem?

9. Time forbids me to survey the period which has passed since the Lord's ascension, or to recount the bishops, the martyrs, the divines, who have come to Jerusalem from a feeling that their devotion and knowledge would be incomplete and their virtue without the finishing touch, unless they adored Christ in the very spot where the gospel first flashed from the gibbet. If a famous orator blames a man for having learned Greek at Lilybaeum instead of at Athens, and Latin in Sicily instead of at Rome (on the ground, obviously, that each province has its own characteristics), can we suppose a Christian's education complete who has not visited the Christian Athens?

10. In speaking thus we do not mean to deny that the kingdom of God is within us, [Luke 17:21] or to say that there are no holy men elsewhere; we merely assert in the strongest manner that those who stand first throughout the world are here gathered side by side. We ourselves are among the last, not the first; yet we have come hither to see the first of all nations. Of all the ornaments of the Church our company of monks and virgins is one of the finest; it is like a fair flower or a priceless gem. Every man of note in Gaul hastens hither. The Briton, "sundered from our world," no sooner makes progress in religion than he leaves the setting sun in quest of a spot of which he knows only through Scripture and common report. Need we recall the Armenians, the Persians, the peoples of India and Arabia? Or those of our neighbor, Egypt, so rich in monks; of Pontus and Cappadocia; of Caele-Syria and Mesopotamia and the teeming east? In fulfilment of the Saviour's words, "Wherever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together," [Luke 17:37]

they all assemble here and exhibit in this one city the most varied virtues. Differing in speech, they are one in religion, and almost every nation has a choir of its own. Yet amid this great concourse there is no arrogance, no disdain of self-restraint; all strive after humility, that greatest of Christian virtues. Whosoever is last is here regarded as first. [Cf.

Matt. 19:30] Their dress neither provokes remark nor calls for admiration. In whatever guise a man shows himself he is neither censured nor flattered. Long fasts help no one here. Starvation wins no deference, and the taking of food in moderation is not condemned. ”To his own master” each one ”standeth or falleth. [Rom. 14:4] No man judges another lest he be judged of the Lord. [Matt. 7:1] Backbiting, so common in other parts, is wholly unknown here. Sensuality and excess are far removed from us. And in the city there are so many places of prayer that a day would not be sufficient to go round them all.

11. But, as every one praises most what is within his reach, let us pass now to the cottage-inn which sheltered Christ and Mary. [Luke 2:7] With what expressions and what language can we set before you the cave of the Saviour? The stall where he cried as a babe can be best honored by silence; for words are inadequate to speak its praise. Where are the spacious porticoes? Where are the gilded ceilings? Where are the mansions furnished by the miserable toil of doomed wretches? Where are the costly halls raised by untitled opulence for man’s vile body to walk in? Where are the roofs that intercept the sky, as if anything could be finer than the expanse of heaven? Behold, in this poor crevice of the earth the Creator of the heavens was born; here He was wrapped in swaddling clothes; here He was seen by the shepherds; here He was pointed out by the star; here He was adored by the wise men. This spot is holier, me-thinks, than that Tarpeian rock which has shown itself displeasing to God by the frequency with which it has been struck by lightning.

12. Read the apocalypse of John, and consider what is sung therein of the woman arrayed in purple, and of the blasphemy written upon her brow, of the seven mountains, of the many waters, and of the end of Babylon. ”Come out of her, my people,” so the Lord says, ”that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. [Rev. 18:4] Turn back also to Jeremiah and pay heed to what he has written of like import: ”Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul. [Jer. 51:6] For ”Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit. [Rev. 18:2] It is true that Rome has a holy church, trophies of apostles and martyrs, a true confession of Christ. The faith has been preached there by an apostle, heathenism has been trodden down, the name of Christian is daily exalted higher and higher. But the display, power, and size of the city, the seeing and the being seen, the paying and the receiving of visits, the alternate flattery and detraction, talking and listening, as well as the

necessity of facing so great a throng even when one is least in the mood to do so-all these things are alike foreign to the principles and fatal to the repose of the monastic life.

For when people come in our way we either see them coming and are compelled to speak, or we do not see them and lay ourselves open to the charge of haughtiness. Sometimes, also, in returning visits we are obliged to pass through proud portals and gilded doors and to face the clamor of carping lackeys. But, as we have said above, in the cottage of Christ all is simple and rustic: and except for the chanting of psalms there is complete silence. Wherever one turns the laborer at his plough sings alleluia, the toiling mower cheers himself with psalms, and the vine-dresser while he prunes his vine sings one of the lays of David. These are the songs of the country; these, in popular phrase, its love ditties: these the shepherd whistles; these the tiller uses to aid his toil.

13. But what are we doing? Forgetting what is required of us, we are taken up with what we wish. Will the time never come when a breathless messenger shall bring the news that our dear Marcella has reached the shores of Palestine, and when every band of monks and every troop of virgins shall unite in a song of welcome? In our excitement we are already hurrying to meet you: without waiting for a vehicle, we hasten off at once on foot. We shall clasp you by the hand, we shall look upon your face; and when, after long waiting, we at last embrace you, we shall find it hard to tear ourselves away. Will the day never come when we shall together enter the Saviour's cave, and together weep in the sepulchre of the Lord with His sister and with His mother? [Joh. 19:25] Then shall we touch with our lips the wood of the cross, and rise in prayer and resolve upon the Mount of Olives with the ascending Lord. [Acts 1:9, Acts 1:12] We shall see Lazarus come forth bound with grave clothes, [Joh. 11:43, Joh. 11:44] we shall look upon the waters of Jordan purified for the washing of the Lord. [Matt. 3:13] Thence we shall pass to the folds of the shepherds, [Luke 2:8] we shall pray together in the mausoleum of David. [1 K. 2:10] We shall see the prophet, Amos, upon his crag blowing his shepherd's horn.

We shall hasten, if not to the tents, to the monuments of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and of their three illustrious wives. We shall see the fountain in which the eunuch was immersed by Philip. [Acts 8:36] We shall make a pilgrimage to Samaria, and side by side venerate the ashes of John the Baptist, of Elisha, [2 K. 13:21] and of Obadiah. We shall enter the very caves where in the time of persecution and famine the companies of the prophets were fed. [1 K. 18:3, 1 K. 18:4] If only you will come, we shall go to see Nazareth, as its name denotes, the flower of Galilee. Not far off Cana will be visible, where the water was turned into wine. [Joh. 2:1-11] We shall make our way to Tabor, [Matt. 17:1-9] and see the tabernacles there which the Saviour shares, not, as Peter once wished, with Moses and Elijah, but with the

Father and with the Holy Ghost. Thence we shall come to the Sea of Gennesaret, and when there we shall see the spots where the five thousand were filled with five loaves, [Matt. 14:15, sqq] and the font thousand with seven. [Matt. 15:32, sqq] The town of Nain will meet our eyes, at the gate of which the widow's son was raised to life. [Luke 7:11, sqq] Hermon too will be visible, and the torrent of Endor, at which Sisera was vanquished.

[Ps. 83:9, Ps. 83:10] Our eyes will look also on Capernaum, the scene of so many of our Lord's signs-yes, and on all Galilee besides. And when, accompanied by Christ, we shall have made our way back to our cave through Shiloh and Bethel, and those other places where churches are set up like standards to commemorate the Lord's victories, then we shall sing heartily, we shall weep copiously, we shall pray unceasingly. Wounded with the Saviour's shaft, we shall say one to another: "I have found Him whom my soul loveth; I will hold Him and will not let Him go. [Cant. 3:4, Vulg]

Letter 47. To Desiderius.

Jerome invites two of his old friends at Rome, Desiderius and his sister (or wife) Serenilla, to join him at Bethlehem. It is possible but not probable that this Desiderius is the same with Desiderius of Aquitaine, who afterwards induced Jerome to write against Vigilantius. An interval of seven years separates this letter (of which the date is 393 a.d.) from the preceding, and all the letters written during this period have wholly perished. 1. Surprised as I have been, my excellent friend, to read the language which your kindness has prompted you to hold concerning me, I have rejoiced that I possess the testimony of one both eloquent and sincere; but when I turn from you to myself I feel vexed that, owing to my unworthiness, your words of praise and eulogy rather weigh me down than lift me up. You know, of course, that I make it a principle to raise the standard of humility, and to prepare for scaling the heights by walking for the present in the lowest places. For what am I or what is my significance that I should have the voice of learning raised to bear witness of me, or that the palm of eloquence should be laid at my feet by one whose style is so charming that it has almost deterred me from writing a letter at all? I must, however, make the attempt in order that charity which seeks not her own [1 Cor. 13:5] but always her neighbor's good, may at least return a compliment, since it cannot convey a lesson.

2. I offer my congratulations to you and to your holy and revered sister, [I.e. his wife. Cf. 1 Cor. 9:5] Serenilla, who, true to her name, has trodden down the troubled waves of the world, and has passed to Christ's calm haven: a happiness which-if we may trust the augury of your name-is in store for you also. For we read that the holy Daniel was called"a man of desires," and the friend of God, because he desired to know His mysteries. Therefore, I do with pleasure what the revered Paula has asked of me. I urge and implore you both by the charity of the Lord that you will give your presence to us, and that a visit to the holy places may induce you to enrich us with this great gift. Even supposing that you do not care for our society, it is still your duty as believers to worship on the spot where the Lord's feet once stood and to see for yourselves the still fresh traces of His birth, His cross, and His passion.

3. Several of my little pieces have flown away out of their nest, and have rashly sought for themselves the honor of publication. I have not sent you any lest I should send works which you already have. But if you care to borrow copies of them, you can do so either from our holy sister, Marcella, who has her abode upon the Aventine, or from that holy man, Domnio, who is the Lot of our times. [Cf. 2 Peter 2:7, 2 Peter 2:8] Meantime, I look for your arrival, and will give you all I have when you once come; or, if any hindrances prevent you from joining us, I will gladly send you such treatises as you shall desire. Following the example of Tranquillus and of Apollonius the Greek, I have written a book concerning illustrious men from the apostles [Cf. 1 Cor. 15:8, 1 Cor. 15:9] time to our own; and after enumerating a great number I have put myself down on the last page as one born out of due time, and the least of all Christians. Here I have found it necessary to give a short account of my writings down to the fourteenth year of the Emperor Theodosius. If you find, on procuring this treatise from the persons mentioned above, that there are any pieces mentioned which you have not already got, I will have them copied for you by degrees, if you wish it.

Letter 48. To Pammachius.

An ”apology” for the two books ”against Jovinian” which Jerome had written a short time previously, and of which he had sent copies to Rome. These Pammachius and his other friends had withheld from publication, thinking that Jerome had unduly exalted virginity at the expense of marriage. He now writes to make good his position, and to do this makes copious extracts from the obnoxious treatise. The date of the letter is 393 or 394 a.d. 1. Your own silence is my reason for not having written hitherto. For I feared that, if I were to write to you without first hearing from you, you would consider me not so much a conscientious as a troublesome correspondent. But, now that I have been challenged by your most delightful letter, a letter which calls upon me to defend my views by an appeal to first principles, I receive my old fellow-learner, companion, and friend with open arms, as the saying goes; and I look forward to having in you a champion of my poor writings; if, that is to say, I can first conciliate your judgment to give sentence in my favor, and can instruct my advocate in all those points on which I am assailed. For both your favorite, Cicero, and before him-in his one short treatise-Antonius, write to this effect, that the chief requisite for victory is to acquaint one’s self carefully with the case which one has to plead.

2. Certain persons find fault with me because in the books which I have written against Jovinian I have been excessive (so they say) in praise of virginity and in depreciation of marriage; and they affirm that to preach up chastity till no comparison is left between a wife and a virgin is equivalent to a condemnation of matrimony. If I remember aright the point of the dispute, the question at issue between myself and Jovinian is that he puts marriage on a level with virginity, while I make it inferior; he declares that there is little or no difference between the two states, I assert that there is a great deal. Finally-a result due under God to your agency-he has been condemned because he has dared to set matrimony on an equality with perpetual chastity. Or, if a virgin and a wife are to be looked on as the same, how comes it that Rome has refused to listen to this impious doctrine? A virgin owes her being to a man, but a man does not owe his to a virgin. There can be no middle course. Either my view of the matter must be embraced, or else that of Jovinian. If I am blamed for putting wedlock below virginity, he must be praised for putting

the two states on a level. If, on the other hand, he is condemned for supposing them equal, his condemnation must be taken as testimony in favor of my treatise.

If men of the world chafe under the notion that they occupy a position inferior to that of virgins, I wonder that clergymen and monks-who both live celibate lives-refrain from praising what they consistently practise. They cut themselves off from their wives to imitate the chastity of virgins, and yet they will have it that married women are as good as these. They should either be joined again to their wives whom they have renounced, or, if they persist in living apart from them, they will have to confess-by their lives if not by their words-that, in preferring virginity to marriage, they have chosen the better course, Am I then a mere novice in the Scriptures, reading the sacred volumes for the first time? And is the line there drawn between virginity and marriage so fine that I have been unable to observe it? I could know nothing, forsooth, of the saying, "Be not righteous overmuch! [Eccl. 7:16, see Ag. Jov. 1:14] Thus, while I try to protect myself on one side, I am wounded on the other; to speak more plainly still, while I close with Jovinian in hand-to-hand combat, Manichaeus stabs me in the back. Have I not, I would ask, in the very forefront of my work set the following preface: [Against Jov. 1:3] "We are no disciples of Marcion or of Manichaeus, to detract from marriage. Nor are we deceived by the error of Tatian, the chief of the Encratites, into supposing all cohabitation unclean.

For he condemns and reprobates not marriage only, but foods also which God has created for us to enjoy. [1 Tim. 4:3] We know that in a large house there are vessels not only of silver and of gold, but of wood also and of earth. [2 Tim. 2:20] We know, too, that on the foundation of Christ which Paul the master builder has laid, some build up gold, silver, and precious stones; others, on the contrary, hay, wood, and stubble. [1 Cor. 3:10-12] We are not ignorant that 'marriage is honorable ...and the bed undefiled.' [Heb. 13:4] We have read the first decree of God: 'Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.' [Gen. 1:28] But while we allow marriage, we prefer the virginity which springs from it. Gold is more precious than silver, but is silver on that account the less silver? Is it an insult to a tree to prefer its apples to its roots or its leaves? Is it an injury to corn to put the ear before the stalk and the blade? As apples come from the tree and grain from the straw, so virginity comes from wedlock. Yields of one hundredfold, of sixtyfold, and of thirtyfold [Matt. 13:8] may all come from one soil and from one sowing, yet they will differ widely in quantity. The yield thirtyfold signifies wedlock, for the joining together of the fingers to express that number, suggestive as it is of a loving gentle kiss or embracing, aptly represents the relation of husband and wife.

The yield sixtyfold refers to widows who are placed in a position of distress and tribulation. Accordingly, they are typified by that finger which is placed under the other to express the number sixty; for, as it is extremely trying when one has

once tasted pleasure to abstain from its enticements, so the reward of doing this is proportionately great. Moreover, a hundred-I ask the reader to give me his best attention-necessitates a change from the left hand to the right; but while the hand is different the fingers are the same as those which on the left hand signify married women and widows; only in this instance the circle formed by them indicates the crown of virginity."

3. Does a man who speaks thus, I would ask you, condemn marriage? If I have called virginity gold, I have spoken of marriage as silver. I have set forth that the yields an hundredfold, sixtyfold, and thirtyfold-all spring from one soil and from one sowing, although in amount they differ widely. Will any of my readers be so unfair as to judge me, not by my words, but by his own opinion? At any rate, I have dealt much more gently with marriage than most Latin and Greek writers; who, by referring the hundredfold yield to martyrs, the sixtyfold to virgins, and the thirtyfold to widows, show that in their opinion married persons are excluded from the good ground and from the seed of the great Father. But, lest it might be supposed that, though cautious at the outset, I was imprudent in the remainder of my work, have I not, after marking out the divisions of it, on coming to the actual questions immediately introduced the following: [Ag. Jov. 1:4] "I ask all of you of both sexes, at once those who are virgins and continent and those who are married or twice married, to aid my efforts with your prayers." Jovinian is the foe of all indiscriminately, but can I condemn as Manichaean heretics persons whose prayers I need and whose assistance I entreat to help me in my work?

4. As the brief compass of a letter does not suffer us to delay too long on a single point, let us now pass to those which remain. In explaining the testimony of the apostle, "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise, also, the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife," [1 Cor. 7:4] we have subjoined the following: [Ag. Jov. 1:7] "The entire question relates to those who are living in wedlock, whether it is lawful for them to put away their wives, a thing which the Lord also has forbidden in the Gospel. [Matt. 19:9] Hence, also, the apostle says: 'It is good for a man not to touch' a wife or 'a woman,' [1 Cor. 7:1] as if there were danger in the contact which he who should so touch one could not escape. Accordingly, when the Egyptian woman desired to touch Joseph he flung away his cloak and fled from her hands. [Gen. 39:12, Gen. 39:13] But as he who has once married a wife cannot, except by consent, abstain from intercourse with her or repudiate her, so long as she does not sin, he must render unto his wife her due, [1 Cor. 7:3, R.V] because he has of his own free will bound himself to render it under compulsion.

Can one who declares that it is a precept of the Lord that wives should not be put away, and that what God has joined together man must not, without consent, put asunder [Matt. 19:6] -can such an one be said to condemn marriage? Again, in the

verses which follow, the apostle says: ”But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. [1 Cor. 7:7] In explanation of this saying we made the following remarks: [Ag. Jov. 1:8] ”What I myself would wish, he says, is clear. But since there are diversities of gifts in the church, [1 Cor. 12:4] I allow marriage as well, that I may not appear to condemn nature. Reflect, too, that the gift of virginity is one thing, that of marriage another. For had there been one reward for married women and for virgins he would never, after giving the counsel of continence, have gone on to say: ’But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that.’ Where each class has its proper gift, there must be some distinction between the classes. I allow that marriage, as well as virginity, is the gift of God, but there is a great difference between gift and gift.

Finally, the apostle himself says of one who had lived in incest and afterwards repented: ’Contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him and comfort him,’ [2 Cor. 2:7] and ’To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also.’ [2 Cor. 2:10] And, lest we might suppose a man’s gift to be but a small thing, he has added: ’For if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the sight of Christ.’ [2 Cor. 2:10] The gifts of Christ are different. Hence Joseph as a type of Him had a coat of many colors. [Gen. 37:23] So in the forty-fourth psalm we read of the Church: ’Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in a vesture of gold, wrought about with divers colors.’ [Ps. 45:10, P.B.V] The apostle Peter, too, speaks (of husbands and wives) ’as being heirs together of the manifold grace of God.’ [1 Pet. 3:7; 1 Pet. 4:10] In Greek the expression is still more striking, the word used being ”ποικίλη”, that is, ’many-colored.’”

5. I ask, then, what is the meaning of men’s obstinate determination to shut their eyes and to refuse to look on what is as clear as day? I have said that there are diversities of gifts in the Church, and that virginity is one gift and wedlock another. And shortly after I have used the words: ”I allow marriage also to be a gift of God, but there is a great difference between gift and gift. Can it be said that I condemn that which in the clearest terms I declare to be the gift of God? Moreover, if Joseph is taken as a type of the Lord, his coat of many colors is a type of virgins and widows, celibates and wedded. Can any one who has any part in Christ’s tunic be regarded as an alien? Have we not spoken of the very queen herself-that is, the Church of the Saviour-as wearing a vesture of gold wrought about with divers colors? Moreover, when I came to discuss marriage in connection with the following verses, [1 Cor. 7:8-10] I still adhered to the same view. [Ag. Jov. 1:10] ”This passage,” I said, ”has indeed no relation to the present controversy; for, following the decision of the Lord, the apostle teaches that a wife must not be put away saving for fornication, and that, if she has been put away, she cannot during the lifetime of her husband marry another man, or, at any rate, that she ought, if possible, to be reconciled to her husband.

In another verse he speaks to the same effect: 'The wife is bound ...as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband; [Rom. 7:2] she is at liberty to be married to, whom she will; only in the Lord,' [1 Cor. 7:39] that is to a Christian. Thus the apostle, while he allows a second or a third marriage in the Lord, forbids even a first with a heathen."

6. I ask my detractors to open their ears and to realize the fact that I have allowed second and third marriages "in the Lord. If, then, I have not condemned second and third marriages, how can I have proscribed a first? Moreover, in the passage where I interpret the words of the apostle, "Is any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised" [1 Cor. 7:18] (a passage, it is true, which some most careful interpreters of Scripture refer to the circumcision and slavery of the Law), do I not in the clearest terms stand up for the marriage-tie? My words are these: [Ag. Jov. 1:11] "'If any man is called in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised.' You had a wife, the apostle says, when you believed. Do not fancy your faith in Christ to be a reason for parting from her. For 'God hath called us in peace.' [1 Cor. 7:15, R.V] 'Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing but the keeping of the commandments of God.' [1 Cor. 7:19] Neither celibacy nor wedlock is of the slightest use without works, since even faith, the distinguishing mark of Christians, if it have not works, is said to be dead, [Jas. 2:17] and on such terms as these the virgins of Vesta or of Juno, who was constant to one husband, might claim to be numbered among the saints. And a little further on he says: 'Art thou called being a servant, care not for it;

but, if thou mayest be made free, use it rather;' [1 Cor. 7:21] that is to say, if you have a wife, and are bound to her, and render her her due, and have not power of your own body-or, to speak yet more plainly-if you are the slave of a wife, do not allow this to cause you sorrow, do not sigh over the loss of your virginity. Even if you can find pretexts for parting from her to enjoy the freedom of chastity, do not seek your own welfare at the price of another's ruin. Keep your wife for a little, and do not try too hastily to overcome her reluctance. Wait till she follows your example. If you only have patience, your wife will some day become your sister."

7. In another passage we have discussed the reasons which led Paul to say: "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. [1 Cor. 7:25] Here also, while we have ex-tolled virginity, we have been careful to give marriage its due. [Ag. Jov. 1:12] "Had the Lord commanded virginity," we said, "He would have seemed to condemn marriage and to do away with that seed-plot of humanity from which virginity itself springs. Had He cut away the root how could He have looked for fruit? Unless He had first laid the foundations, how could He have built the edifice or crowned it with a roof made to cover its whole extent? If we have spoken

of marriage as the root whose fruit is virginity, and if we have made wedlock the foundation on which the building or the roof of perpetual chastity is raised, which of my detractors can be so captious or so blind as to ignore the foundation on which the fabric and its roof are built, while he has before his eyes both the fabric and the roof themselves? Once more, in another place, we have brought forward the testimony of the apostle to this effect: ”Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. [1 Cor. 7:21] To this we have appended the following remarks: [Ag.

Jov. 1:12] ”Each of us has his own sphere allotted to him. Let me have mine, and do you keep yours. If you are bound to a wife, do not put her away. If I am loosed from a wife, let me not seek a wife. Just as I do not loose marriage-ties when they are once made, so do you refrain from binding together what at present is loosed from such ties. Yet another passage bears unmistakable testimony to the view which we have taken of virginity and of wedlock: [Ag. Jov. 1:13] ”The apostle casts no snare upon us, [1 Cor. 7:35] nor does he compel us to be what we do not wish. He only urges us to what is honorable and seemly, inciting us earnestly to serve the Lord, to be anxious always to please Him, and to took for His will which He has prepared for us to do. We are to be like alert and armed soldiers, who immediately execute the orders given to them and perform them without that travail of mind which, according to the preacher, is given to the men of this world ’to be exercised therewith.’” [Eccles. 1:13; Eccles. 3:10] At the end, also, of our comparison of virgins and married women we have summed up the discussion thus: [Ag. Jov. 1:13] ”When one thing is good and another thing is better; when that which is good has a different reward from that which is better;

and when there are more rewards than one, then, obviously, there exists a diversity of gifts. The difference between marriage and virginity is as great as that between not doing evil and doing good-or, to speak more favorably still, as that between what is good and what is still better.”

8. In the sequel we go on to Speak thus: [Ag. Jov. 1:14] ”The apostle, in concluding his discussion of marriage and of virginity, is careful to observe a mean course in discriminating between them, and, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, he keeps to the King’s highway, [Nu. 20:17] and thus fulfils the injunction, ’Be not righteous overmuch.’ [Eccles. 7:16] Moreover, when he goes on to compare monogamy with digamy, he puts digamy after monogamy, just as before he subordinated marriage to virginity. Do we not clearly show by this language what is typified in the Holy Scriptures by the terms right and left, and also what we take to be the meaning of the words ”Be not righteous overmuch”? We turn to the left if, following the lust of Jews and Gentiles, we burn for sexual intercourse; we turn to the right if, following the error of the Manichaeans, we under a pretence of chastity entangle ourselves in the meshes of unchastity. But we keep to the King’s

highway if we aspire to virginity yet refrain from condemning marriage. Can any one, moreover, be so unfair in his criticism of my poor treatise as to allege that I condemn first marriages, when he reads my opinion on second ones as follows: [Ag.

Jov. 1:14] "The apostle, it is true, allows second marriages, but only to such women as are bent upon them, to such as cannot contain, [1 Cor. 7:9] lest 'when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ they marry, having condemnation because they have rejected their first faith,' [1 Tim. 5:11, 1 Tim. 5:12, R.V] and he makes this concession because many 'are turned aside after Satan.' [1 Tim. 5:15] But they will be happier if they abide as widows. To this he immediately adds his apostolical authority, 'after my judgment.' Moreover, lest any should consider that authority, being human, to be of small weight, he goes on to say, 'and I think also that I have the spirit of God.' [1 Cor. 7:40] Thus, where he urges men to continence he appeals not to human authority, but to the Spirit of God; but when he gives them permission to marry he does not mention the Spirit of God, but allows prudential considerations to turn the balance, relaxing the strictness of his code in favor of individuals according to their several needs. Having thus brought forward proofs that second marriages are allowed by the apostle, we at once added the remarks which follow: [Ag. Jov. 1:14] "As marriage is permitted to virgins by reason of the danger of fornication, and as what in itself is not desirable is thus made excusable, so by reason of the same danger widows are permitted to marry a second time.

For it is better that a woman should know one man (though he should be a second husband or a third) than that she should know several. In other words, it is preferable that she should prostitute herself to one rather than to many. Calumny may do its worst. We have spoken here not of a first marriage, but of a second, of a third, or (if you like) of a fourth. But lest any one should apply my words (that it is better for a woman to prostitute herself to one man than to several) to a first marriage when my whole argument dealt with digamy and trigamy, I marked my own view of these practices with the words: [Ag. Jov. 1:15] "'All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient.' [1 Cor. 6:12] I do not condemn digamists nor yet trigamists, nor even, to put an extreme, case, octogamists. I will make a still greater concession: I am ready to receive even a whore-monger, if penitent. In every case where fairness is possible, fair consideration must be shown."

9. My calumniator should blush at his assertion that I condemn first marriages when he reads my words just now quoted: "I do not condemn digamists or trigamists, or even, to put an extreme case, octogamists. Not to condemn is one thing, to commend is another. I may concede a practice as allowable and yet not praise it as meritorious. But if I seem severe in saying, "In every case where fairness is possible, fair consideration must be shown," no one, I fancy, will judge me either cruel or stern who reads that the places prepared for virgins and for

wedded persons are different from those prepared for trigamists, octogamists, and penitents. That Christ Himself, although in the flesh a virgin, was in the spirit a monogamist, having one wife, even the Church, [Eph. 5:23, Eph. 5:24] I have shown in the latter part of my argument. [Ag. Jov. 1:9] And yet I am supposed to condemn marriage! I am said to condemn it, although I use such words as these: [Ag. Jov. 1:23] ”It is an undoubted fact that the levitical priests were descended from the stock of Aaron, Eleazar, and Phinehas; and, as all these were married men, we might well be confronted with them if, led away by the error of the Encratites, we were to contend that marriage is in itself deserving of condemnation. Here I blame Tatian, the chief of the Encratites, for his rejection of marriage, and yet I myself am said to condemn it!

Once more, when I contrast virgins with widows, my own words show what my view is concerning wedlock, and set forth the threefold gradation which I propose of virgins, widows-whether in practice or in fact -and wedded wives. ”I do not deny”-these are my words [Ag. Jov. 1:33] -”the blessedness of widows who continue such after their baptism, nor do I undervalue the merit of wives who live in chastity with their husbands; but, just as widows receive a greater reward from God than wives obedient to their husbands, they, too, must be content to see virgins preferred before themselves.”

10. Again, when explaining the witness of the apostle to the Galatians, ”By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified,” I have spoken to the following effect: ”Marriages also are works of the law. And for this reason there is a curse upon such as do not produce offspring. They are permitted, it is true, even under the Gospel; but it is one thing to concede an indulgence to what is a weakness and quite another to promise a reward to what is a virtue.” See my express declaration that marriage is allowed in the Gospel, yet that those who are married cannot receive the rewards of chastity so long as they render their due one to another. If married men feel indignant at this statement, let them vent their anger not on me but on the Holy Scriptures; nay, more, upon all bishops, presbyters, and deacons, and the whole company of priests and levites, who know that they cannot offer sacrifices if they fulfil the obligations of marriage. Again, when I adduce evidence from the Apocalypse, [Ag. Jov. 1:40] is it not clear what view I take concerning virgins, widows, and wives? ”These are they who sing a new song [Rev. 14:3] which no man can sing except he be a virgin. These are ’the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb,’ [Rev. 14:4] and they are without spot. If virgins are the first fruits unto God, then widows and wives who live in continence must come after the first fruits-that is to say, in the second place and in the third.” We place widows, then, and wives in the second place and in the third, and for this we are charged by the frenzy of a heretic with condemning marriage altogether.

11. Throughout the book I have made many remarks in a tone of great moderation on virginity, widowhood, and marriage. But for the sake of brevity, I will here adduce but one passage, and that of such a kind that no one, I think, will be found to gainsay it save some one who wishes to prove himself malicious or mad. In describing our Lord's visit to the marriage at Cana in Galilee, [Joh. 2:1, Joh. 2:2] after some other remarks I have added these: [Ag. Jov. 1:40] "He who went but once to a marriage has taught us that a woman should marry but once; and this fact might tell against virginity if we failed to give marriage its due place-after virginity that is, and chaste widowhood. But, as it is only heretics who condemn marriage and tread under foot the ordinance of God, we listen with gladness to every word said by our Lord in praise of marriage. For the Church does not condemn marriage, but only subordinates it. It does not reject it altogether, but regulates it, knowing (as I have said above) that 'in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor and some to dishonor. If a man, therefore, purge himself ...he shall be a vessel unto honor meet ...and prepared unto every good work.'" [2 Tim. 2:20, 2 Tim. 2:21] I listen with gladness, I say here, to every word said by the apostle in praise of marriage.

Do I listen with gladness to the praise of marriage, and do I yet condemn marriage? The Church, I say, does not condemn wedlock, but subordinates it. Whether you like it or not, marriage is subordinated to virginity and widowhood. Even when marriage continues to fulfil its function, the Church does not condemn it, but only subordinates it; it does not reject it, but only regulates it. It is in your power, if you will, to mount the second step of chastity. Why are you angry if, standing on the third and lowest step, you will not make haste to go up higher?

12. Since, then, I have so often reminded my reader of my views; and since I have picked my way like a prudent traveller over every inch of the road, stating repeatedly that, while I receive marriage as a thing in itself admissible, I yet prefer continence, widowhood, and virginity, the wise and generous reader ought to have judged what seemed hard sayings by my general drift, and not to have charged me with putting forward inconsistent opinions in one and the same book. For who is so dull or so inexperienced in writing as to praise and to condemn one and the same object, as to destroy what he has built up, and to build up what he has destroyed; and when he has vanquished his opponent, to turn his sword, last of all against himself? Were my detractors country bred or unacquainted with the arts of rhetoric or of logic, I should pardon their want of insight; nor should I censure them for accusing me if I saw that their ignorance was in fault and not their will. As it is men of intellect who have enjoyed a liberal education make it their object less to understand me than to wound me, and for such I have this short answer, that they should correct my faults and not merely censure me for them. The lists are open, I cry; your enemy has marshalled his forces, his position is plain, and (if I may quote Virgil [Virg. A. 11:374, 5])-

"The foeman calls you: meet him face to face." Such men should answer their opponent. They ought to keep within the limits of debate, and not to wield the schoolmaster's rod. Their books should aim at showing in what my statements have fallen short of the truth, and in what they have exceeded it. For, although I will not listen to fault-finders, I will follow the advice of teachers. To direct the fighter how to fight when you yourself occupy a post of vantage on the wall is a kind of teaching that does not commend itself; and when you are yourself bathed in perfumes, it is unworthy to charge a bleeding soldier with cowardice. Nor in saying this do I lay myself open to a charge of boasting that while others have slept I only have entered the lists. My meaning simply is that men who have seen me wounded in this warfare may possibly be a little too cautious in their methods of fighting. I would not have you engage in an encounter in which you will have nothing to do but to protect yourself, your right hand remaining motionless while your left manages your shield. You must either strike or fall. I cannot account you a victor unless I see your opponent put to the sword.

13. You are, no doubt, men of vast acquirements; but we too have studied in the schools, and, like you, we have learned from the precepts of Aristotle-or, rather, from those which he has derived from Gorgias-that there are different ways of speaking; and we know, among other things, that he who writes for display uses one style, and he who writes to convince, another. In the former case the debate is desultory; to confute the opposer, now this argument is adduced and now that. One argues as one pleases, saying one thing while one means another. To quote the proverb, "With one hand one offers bread, in the other one holds a stone. [Plaut. Aul. 2:2, 18] In the latter case a certain frankness and openness of countenance are necessary. For it is one thing to start a problem and another to expound what is already proved. The first calls for a disputant, the second for a teacher. I stand in the thick of the fray, my life in constant danger: you who profess to teach me are a man of books. "Do not," you say, "attack unexpectedly or wound by a side-thrust. Strike straight at your opponent. You should be ashamed to resort to feints instead of force. As if it were not the perfection of fighting to menace one part and to strike another.

Read, I beg of you, Demosthenes or Cicero, or (if you do not care for pleaders whose aim is to speak plausibly rather than truly) read Plato, Theophrastus, Xenophon, Aristotle, and the rest of those who draw their respective rills of wisdom from the Socratic fountain-head. Do they show any openness? Are they devoid of artifice? Is not every word they say filled with meaning? And does not this meaning always make for victory? Origen, Methodius, Eusebius, and Apollinaris write at great length against Celsus and Porphyry. Consider how subtle are the arguments, how insidious the engines with which they overthrow what the spirit of the devil has wrought. Sometimes, it is true, they are compelled to say not what they think but what is needful; and for this reason they employ against their opponents the asser-

tions of the Gentiles themselves. I say nothing of the Latin authors, of Tertullian, Cyprian, Minutius, Victorinus, Lactantius, Hilary, lest I should appear not so much to be defending myself as to be assailing others. I will only mention the Apostle Paul, whose words seem to me, as often as I hear them, to be not words, but peals of thunder. Read his epistles, and especially those addressed to the Romans, to the Galatians, and to the Ephesians, in all of which he stands in the thick of the battle, and you will see how skilful and how careful he is in the proofs which he draws from the Old Testament, and how warily he cloaks the object which he has in view.

His words seem simplicity itself: the expressions of a guileless and unsophisticated person-one who has no skill either to plan a dilemma or to avoid it. Still, whichever way you look, they are thunderbolts. His pleading halts, yet he carries every point which he takes up. He turns his back upon his foe only to overcome him; he simulates flight, but only that he may slay. He, then, if any one, ought to be calumniated; we should speak thus to him: ”The proofs which yon have used against the Jews or against other heretics bear a different meaning in their own contexts to that which they bear in your epistles. We see passages taken captive by your pen and pressed into service to win you a victory which in the volumes from which they are taken have no controversial bearing at all. May he not reply to us in the words of the Saviour: ”I have one mode of speech for those that are without and another for those that are within; the crowds hear my parables, but their interpretation is for my disciples alone”? [Matt. 13:10-17] The Lord puts questions to the Pharisees, but does not elucidate them. To teach a disciple is one thing; to vanquish an opponent, another. ”My mystery is for me,” says the prophet; ”my mystery is for me and for them that are mine. [Isa. 24:16, Vulg]

14. You are indignant with me because I have merely silenced Jovinian and not instructed him. You, do I say? Nay, rather, they who grieve to hear him anathematized, and who impeach their own pretended orthodoxy by eulogizing in another the heresy which they hold themselves. I should have asked him, forsooth, to surrender peaceably! I had no right to disregard his struggles and to drag him against his will into the bonds of truth! I might use such language had the desire of victory induced me to say anything counter to the rule laid down in Scripture, and had I taken the line-so often adopted by strong men in controversy-of justifying the means by the result. As it is, however, I have been an exponent of the apostle rather than a dogmatist on my own account; and my function has been simply that of a commentator. Anything, therefore, which seems a hard saying should be imputed to the writer expounded by me rather than to me the expounder; unless, indeed, he spoke otherwise than he is represented to have done, and I have by an unfair interpretation wrested the plain meaning of his words. If any one charges me with this disingenuousness let him prove his charge from the Scriptures themselves.

I have said in my book, [Ag. Jov. 1:7] ”If ’it is good for a man not to touch a woman,’ then it is bad for him to touch one, for bad, and bad only, is the opposite of good. But, if though bad it is made venial, then it is allowed to prevent something which would be worse than bad,” and so on down to the commencement of the next chapter. The above is my comment upon the apostle’s words: ”It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” [1 Cor. 7:1, 1 Cor. 7:2] In what way does my meaning differ from that intended by the apostle? Except that where he speaks decidedly I do so with hesitation. He defines a dogma, I hazard an inquiry. He openly says: ”It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” I timidly ask if it is good for a man not to touch one. If I thus waver, I cannot be said to speak positively. He says: ”It is good not to touch.” I add what is a possible antithesis to ”good.” And immediately afterwards I speak thus: [Ag. Jov. 1:7] ”Notice the apostle’s carefulness. He does not say: ’It is good for a man not to have a wife,’ but, ’It is good for a man not to touch a woman’; as if there is danger in the very touching of one-danger which he who touches cannot escape.” You see, therefore, that I am not expounding the law as to husbands and wives, but simply discussing the general question of sexual intercourse-how in comparison with chastity and virginity, the life of angels, ”It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”

”Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher, ”all is vanity.” [Eccles. 1:2] But if all created things are good, [Gen. 1:31; 1 Tim. 4:4] as being the handiwork of a good Creator, how comes it that all things are vanity? If the earth is vanity, are the heavens vanity too?-and the angels, the thrones, the dominations, the powers, and the rest of the virtues? No; if things which are good in themselves as being the handiwork of a good Creator are called vanity, it is because they are compared with things which are better still. For example, compared with a lamp, a lantern is good for nothing; compared with a star, a lamp does not shine at all; the brightest star pales before the moon; put the moon beside the sun, and it no longer looks bright; compare the sun with Christ, and it is darkness. ”I am that I am,” God says; [Ex. 3:14] and if you compare all created things with Him they have no existence. ”Give not thy sceptre,” says Esther, ”unto them that be nothing” [Esth. 14:11] -that is to say, to idols and demons. And certainly they were idols and demons to whom she prayed that she and hers might not be given over. In Job also we read how Bildad says of the wicked man: ”His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and destruction as a king shall trample upon him. The companions also of him who is not shall abide in his tabernacle.” [Job 18:14, 15 Vulg] This evidently relates to the devil, who must be in existence, otherwise he could not be said to have companions. Still, because he is lost to God, he is said not to be.

Now it was in a similar sense that I declared it to be a bad thing to touch a woman-I did not say a wife-because it is a good thing not to touch one. And I added: [Ag. Jov. 1:7] ”I call virginity fine corn, wedlock barley, and fornication cow-dung. Surely

both corn and barley are creatures of God. But of the two multitudes miraculously supplied in the Gospel the larger was fed upon barley loaves, and the smaller on corn bread. ”Thou, Lord,” says the psalmist, ”shalt save both man and beast. [Ps. 36:7, P.B.V] I have myself said the same thing in other words, when I have spoken of virginity as gold and of wedlock as silver. [Ag. Jov. 1:3] Again, in discussing [Ag. Jov. 1:40] the one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed virgins who were not defiled with women, [Rev. 14:1, Rev. 14:4] I have tried to show that all who have not remained virgins are reckoned as defiled when compared with the perfect chastity of the angels and of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if any one thinks it hard or reprehensible that I have placed the same interval between virginity and wedlock as there is between fine corn and barley, let him read the book of the holy Ambrose ”On Widows,” and he will find, among other statements concerning virginity and marriage, the following: ”The apostle has not expressed his preference for marriage so unreservedly as to quench in men the aspiration after virginity;

he commences with a recommendation of continence, and it is only subsequently that he stoops to mention the remedies for its opposite. And although to the strong he has pointed out the prize of their high calling, [Phil. 3:14] yet he suffers none to faint by the way; [Matt. 15:32] whilst he applauds those who lead the van, he does, not despise those who bring up the rear. For he had himself learned that the Lord Jesus gave to some barley bread, lest they should faint by the way, but offered to others His own body, that they should strive to attain His kingdom; [Matt. 26:26, Matt. 26:29] and immediately afterwards: ”The nuptial tie, then, is not to be avoided as a crime, but to be refused as a hard burden. For the law binds the wife to bring forth children in labor and in sorrow. Her desire is to be to her husband that he should rule over her. [Gen. 3:16] It is not the widow, then, but the bride, who is handed over to labor and sorrow in childbearing. It is not the virgin, but the married woman, who is subjected to the sway of a husband. And in another place, ”Ye are bought,” says the apostle, ”with a price; [1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Cor. 7:23] be not therefore the servants of men. [Cf. Eph. 6:6] You see how clearly he defines the servitude which attends the married state. And a little farther on:

”If, then, even a good marriage is servitude, what must a bad one be, in which husband and wife cannot sanctify, but only mutually destroy each other? What I have said about virginity and marriage diffusely, Ambrose has stated tersely and pointedly, compressing much meaning into a few words. Virginity is described by him as a means of recommending continence, marriage as a remedy for incontinence. And when he descends from broad principles to particular details, he significantly holds out to virgins the prize of the high calling, yet comforts the married, that they may not faint by the way. While eulogizing the one class, he does not despise the other. Marriage he compares to the barley bread set before the multitude, virginity to the body of Christ given to the disciples. There is much less difference, it seems to me, between barley and fine corn than between barley and the body of

Christ. Finally, he speaks of marriage as a hard burden, to be avoided if possible, and as a badge of the most unmistakable servitude. He makes, also, many other statements, which he has followed up at length in his three books "On Virgins."

15. From all which considerations it is clear that I have said nothing at all new concerning virginity and marriage, but have followed in all respects the judgment of older writers-of Ambrose, that is to say, and others who have discussed the doctrines of the Church. "And I would sooner follow them in their faults than copy the dull pedantry of the writers of to-day. Let married men, if they please, swell with rage because I have said, [Ag. Jov. 1:7] "I ask you, what kind of good thing is that which forbids a man to pray, and which prevents him from receiving the body of Christ? When I do my duty as a husband, I cannot fulfil the requirements of continence. The same apostle, in another place, commands us to pray always. [1 Th. 5:17] "But if we are always to pray we must never yield to the claims of wedlock for, as often as I render her due to my wife, I incapacitate myself for prayer. When I spoke thus it is clear that I relied on the words of the apostle: "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to ...prayer. [1 Cor. 7:5] The Apostle Paul tells us that when we have intercourse with our wives we cannot pray. If, then, sexual intercourse prevents what is less important-that is, prayer-how much more does it prevent what is more important-that is, the reception of the body of Christ?

Peter, too, exhorts us to continence, that our "prayers be not hindered. [1 Pet. 3:7] How, I should like to know, have I sinned in all this? What have I done? How have I been in fault? If the waters of a stream are thick and muddy, it is not the river-bed which is to blame, but the source. Am I attacked because I have ventured to add to the words of the apostle these words of my own: "What kind of good thing is that which prevents a man from receiving the body of Christ? If so, I will make answer briefly thus: Which is the more important, to pray or to receive Christ's body? Surely to receive Christ's body. If, then, sexual intercourse hinders the less important thing, much more does it hinder that which is the more important.

I have said in the same treatise [Ag. Jov. 1:20] that David and they that were with him could not have lawfully eaten the shew-bread had they not made answer that for three days they had not been defiled with women [1 Sam. 21:4, 1 Sam. 21:5] -not, of course, with harlots, intercourse with whom was forbidden by the law, but with their own wives, to whom they were lawfully united. Moreover, when the people were about to receive the law on Mount Sinai they were commanded to keep away from their wives for three days. [Ex. 19:15] I know that at Rome it is customary for the faithful always to receive the body of Christ, a custom which I neither censure nor indorse. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. [Rom. 14:5] But I appeal to the consciences of those persons who after indulging in sexual intercourse on the same day receive the communion-having first, as Persius

puts it, ”washed off the night in a flowing stream,” [Pers. 2:16] and I ask such why they do not presume to approach the martyrs or to enter the churches. Is Christ of one mind abroad and of another at home? What is unlawful in church cannot be lawful at home. Nothing is hidden from God. ”The night shineth as the day” before Him. [Ps. 139:11, Ps. 139:12] Let each man examine himself, and so let him approach the body of Christ.

[Cf. 1 Cor. 11:28] Not, of course, that the deferring of communion for one day or for two makes a Christian any the holier or that what I have not deserved to-day I shall deserve to-morrow or the day after. But if I grieve that I have not shared in Christ’s body it does help me to avoid for a little while my wife’s embraces, and to prefer to wedded love the love of Christ. A hard discipline, you will say, and one not to be borne. What man of the world could bear it? He that can bear it, I reply, let him bear it; [Cf. Matt. 19:12] he that cannot must look to himself. it is my business to say, not what each man can do or will do, but what the Scriptures inculcate.

16. Again, objection has been taken to my comments on the apostle in the following passage: [Against Jov. 1:8] ”But lest any should suppose from the context of the words before quoted (namely, ’that ye may give yourselves ...to prayer and come together again’) that the apostle desires this consummation, and does not merely concede it to obviate a worse downfall, he immediately adds, ’that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.’ [1 Cor. 7:5] ’And come together again.’ What a noble indulgence the words convey! One which he blushes to speak of in plainer words, which he prefers only to Satan’s temptation, and which has its root in incontinence. Do we labor to expound this as a dark saying when the writer has himself explained his meaning? ”I speak this,” he says, ’by way of permission, and not as a command.’ [1 Cor. 7:6, Vulg] Do we still hesitate to speak of wedlock as a thing permitted instead of as a thing enjoined? or are we afraid that such permission will exclude second or third marriages or some other case?’ What have I said here which the apostle has not said? The phrase, I suppose, ”which he blushes to speak of in plainer words. I imagine that when he says ”come together,” and does not mention for what, he takes a modest way of indicating what he does not like to name openly-that is, sexual intercourse. Or is the objection to the words which follow-”which he prefers only to Satan’s temptation, and which has its root in incontinence”?

Are they not the very words of the apostle, only differently arranged-”that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency”? Or do people cavil because I said, ”Do we still hesitate to speak of wedlock as a thing permitted instead of as a thing enjoined? If this seems a hard saying, it should be ascribed to the apostle, who says, ”But I speak this by way of permission, and not as a command,” and not to me, who, except that I have rearranged their order, have changed neither the words nor their meaning.

17. The shortness of a letter compels me to hasten on. I pass, accordingly, to the points which remain. "I say," remarks the apostle, "to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn. [1 Cor. 7:8, 1 Cor. 7:9] This section I have interpreted thus: [Ag. Jov. 1:9] "When he has granted to those who are married the use of wedlock, and has made clear his own wishes and concessions, he passes on to those who are unmarried or widows, and sets before them his own example. He calls them happy if they abide even as he, [1 Cor. 7:8] but he goes on, 'if they cannot contain, let them marry.' He thus repeats his former language, 'but only to avoid fornication,' and 'that Satan tempt you not for your incontinence.' And when he says, 'If they cannot contain, let them marry,' he gives as a reason for his words that 'it is better to marry than to burn.' It is only good to marry, because it is bad to burn. But take away the fire of lust, and he will not say 'it is better to marry.' For a thing is said to be better in antithesis to something which is worse, and not simply in contrast with what is admittedly good. It is as though he said, 'It is better to have one eye than none.'" Shortly afterwards, apostrophizing the apostle, I spoke thus:

[Ag. Jov. 1:9] "If marriage is good in itself, do not compare it with a conflagration, but simply say, 'It is good to marry.' I must suspect the goodness of a thing which only becomes a lesser evil in the presence of a greater one. I, for my part, would have it not a lighter evil but a downright good. The apostle wishes unmarried women and widows to abstain from sexual intercourse, incites them to follow his own example, and calls them happy if they abide even as he. But if they cannot contain, and are tempted to quench the fire of lust by fornication rather than by continence, it is better, he tells them, to marry than to burn. Upon which precept I have made this comment: "It is good to marry, simply because it is bad to burn," not putting forward a view of my own, but only explaining the apostle's precept, "It is better to marry than to burn; that is, it is better to take a husband than to commit fornication. If, then, you teach that burning or fornication is good, the good will still be surpassed by what is still better. But if marriage is only a degree better than the evil to which it is preferred, it cannot be of that unblemished perfection and blessedness which suggest a comparison with the life of angels. Suppose I say, "It is better to be a virgin than a married woman; in this case I have preferred to what is good what is still better.

But suppose I go a step further and say, "It is better to marry than to commit fornication; in that case I have preferred, not a better thing to a good thing, but a good thing to a bad one. There is a wide difference between the two cases; for, while virginity is related to marriage as better is to good, marriage is related to fornication as good is to bad. How, I should like to know, have I sinned in this explanation? My fixed purpose was not to bend the Scriptures to my own wishes, but simply to say what I took to be their meaning. A commentator has no business

to dilate on his own views; his duty is to make plain the meaning of the author whom he professes to interpret. For, if he contradicts the writer whom he is trying to expound, he will prove to be his opponent rather than his interpreter. When I am freely expressing my own opinion, and not commenting upon the Scriptures, then any one that pleases may charge me with having spoken hardly of marriage. But if he can find no ground for such a charge, he should attribute such passages in my commentaries as appear severe or harsh to the author commented on, and not to me, who am only his interpreter.

18. Another charge brought against me is simply intolerable! It is urged that in explaining the apostle's words concerning husbands and wives, "Such shall have trouble in the flesh," I have said: [Ag. Jov. 1:13] "We in our ignorance had supposed that in the flesh at least wedlock would have rejoicing. But if married persons are to have trouble in the flesh, the only thing in which they seemed likely to have pleasure, what motive will be left to make women marry? for, besides having trouble in spirit and soul, they will also have it even in the flesh." [1 Th. 5:23] Do I condemn marriage if I enumerate its troubles, such as the crying of infants, the death of children the chance of abortion, domestic losses, and so forth? Whilst Damasus of holy memory was still living, I wrote a book against Helvidius "On the Perpetual Virginity of the Blessed Mary," in which, duly to extol the bliss of virginity, I was forced to say much of the troubles of marriage. Did that excellent man-versed in Scripture as he was, and a virgin doctor of the virgin Church-find anything to censure in my discourse? Moreover, in the treatise which I addressed to Eustochium I used much harsher language regarding marriage, and yet no one was offended at it. Nay, every lover of chastity strained his ears to catch my eulogy of continence. Read Tertullian, read Cyprian, read Ambrose, and either accuse me with them or acquit me with them. My critics resemble the characters of Plautus. Their only wit lies in detraction; and they try to make themselves out men of learning by assailing all parties in turn. Thus they bestow their censure impartially upon myself and upon my opponent, and maintain that we are both beaten, although one or other of us must have succeeded.

Moreover, when in discussing digamy and trigamy I have said, [Ag. Jov. 1:14] "It is better for a woman to know one man, even though he be a second husband or a third, than several; it is more tolerable for her to prostitute herself to one man than to many," have I not immediately subjoined my reason for so saying? "The Samaritan woman in the Gospel, when she declares that her present husband is her sixth, is rebuked by the Lord on the ground that he is not her husband." For my own part, I now once more freely proclaim that digamy is not condemned in the Church-no, nor yet trigamy-and that a woman may marry a fifth husband, or a sixth, or a greater number still just as lawfully as she may marry a second; but that, while such marriages are not condemned, neither are they commended. They are meant as alleviations of an unhappy lot, and in no way redound to the glory of

continence. I have spoken to the same effect elsewhere. [Ag. Jov. 1:15] "When a woman marries more than once-whether she does so twice or three times matters little-she ceases to be a monogamist. 'All things are lawful …but all things are not expedient.' [1 Cor. 6:12] I do not condemn digamists or trigamists, or even, to put an impossible case, octogamists. Let a woman have an eighth husband if she must; only let her cease to prostitute herself."

19. I will come now to the passage in which I am accused of saying that-at least according to the true Hebrew text-the words "God saw that it was good" [Gen. 1:10] are not inserted after the second day of the creation, as they are after the first, third, and remaining ones, and of adding immediately the following comment: [Ag. Jov. 1:16] "We are meant to understand that there is something not good in the number two, separating us as it does from unity, and prefiguring the marriage-tie. Just as in the account of Noah's ark all the animals that enter by twos are unclean, but those of which an uneven number is taken are clean. [Gen. 7:2] In this statement a passing objection is made to what I have said concerning the second day, whether on the ground that the words mentioned really occur in the passage, although I say that they do not occur, or because, assuming them to occur, I have understood them in a sense different from that which the context evidently requires. As regards the non-occurrence of the words in question (viz., "God saw that it was good"), let them take not my evidence, but that of all the Jewish and other translators-Aquila namely, Symmachus, and Theodotion.

But if the words, although occurring in the account of the other days, do not occur in the account of this, either let them give a more plausible reason than I have done for their non-occurrence, or, failing such, let them, whether they like it or not, accept the suggestion which I have made. Furthermore, if in Noah's ark all the animals that enter by twos are unclean, whilst those of which an uneven number is taken are clean, and if there is no dispute about the accuracy of the text, let them explain if they can why it is so written. But if they cannot explain it, then, whether they will or not, they must embrace my explanation of the matter. Either produce better fare and ask me to be your guest, or else rest content with the meal that I offer you, however poor it may be. [Cf. Hor. Ep. 1:6, 67, 68]

I must now mention the ecclesiastical writers who have dealt with this question of the odd number. They are, among the Greeks, Clement, Hippolytus, Origen, Dionysius, Eusebius, Didymus; and, among ourselves, Tertullian, Cyprian, Victorinus, Lactantius, Hilary. What Cyprian said to Fortunatus about the number seven is clear from the letter which he sent to him. Or perhaps I ought to bring forward the reasonings of Pythagoras, Archytas of Tarentum, and Publius Scipio in (Cicero's) sixth book "Concerning the Common Weal." If my detractors will not listen to any of these I will make the grammar schools shout in their ears the words of Virgil: Uneven numbers are the joy of God. [Virg. E. 8:75]

20. To say, as I have done, that virginity is cleaner than wedlock, that the even numbers must give way to the odd, that the types of the Old Testament establish the truth of the Gospel: this, it appears, is a great sin subversive of the churches and intolerable to the world. The remaining points which are censured in my treatise are, I take it, of less importance, or else resolve themselves into this. I have, therefore, refrained from answering them, both that I may not exceed the limit at my disposal, and that I may not seem to distrust your intelligence, knowing as I do that you are ready to be my champion even before I ask you. With my last breath, then, I protest that neither now nor at any former time have I condemned marriage. I have merely answered an opponent without any fear that they of my own party would lay snares for me. I extol virginity to the skies, not because I myself possess it, but because, not possessing it, I admire it all the more. Surely it is a modest and ingenuous confession to praise in others that which you lack yourself. The weight of my body keeps me fixed to the ground, but do I fail to admire the flying birds or to praise the dove because, in the words of Virgil, [Virg. A. 5:217] it

"Glides on its liquid path with motionless swift wings?" Let no man deceive himself, let no man, giving ear to the voice of flattery, rush upon ruin. The first virginity man derives from his birth, the second from his second birth. The words are not mine; it is an old saying, "No man can serve two masters;" [Matt. 6:24] that is, the flesh and the spirit. For "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other," so that we cannot do the things that we would. [Gal. 5:17] When, then, anything in my little work seems to you harsh, have regard not to my words, but to the Scripture, whence they are taken.

21. Christ Himself is a virgin; [Ag. Jov. 1:31] and His mother is also a virgin; yea, though she is His mother, she is a virgin still. For Jesus has entered in through the closed doors, [Joh. 20:19] and in His sepulchre-a new one hewn out of the hardest rock-no man is laid either before Him or after Him. [Joh. 19:41] Mary is "a garden enclosed ...a fountain sealed," [Cant. 4:12] and from that fountain flows, according to Joel, the river which waters the torrent bed either of cords or of thorns; of cords being those of the sins by which we were beforetime bound, [Cf. Prov. 5:22] the thorns those which choked the seed the goodman of the house had sown. [Matt. 13:7] She is the east gate, spoken of by the prophet Ezekiel, [Ezek. 44:2, Ezek. 44:3] always shut and always shining, and either concealing or revealing the Holy of Holies; and through her "the Sun of Righteousness," [Mal. 4:2] our "high priest after the order of Melchizedek," [Heb. 5:10] goes in and out. Let my critics explain to me how Jesus can have entered in through closed doors when He allowed His hands and His side to be handled, and showed that He had bones and flesh, [Joh. 20:19, Joh. 20:27] thus proving that His was a true body and no mere phantom of one, and I will explain how the holy Mary can be at once a mother and a virgin. A mother before she was wedded, she remained a virgin after bearing her son.

Therefore, as I was going to say, the virgin Christ and the virgin Mary have dedicated in themselves the first fruits of virginity for both sexes. The apostles have either been virgins or, though married, have lived celibate lives. Those persons who are chosen to be bishops, priests, and deacons are either virgins or widowers; or at least when once they have received the priesthood, are vowed to perpetual chastity. Why do we delude ourselves and feel vexed if while we are continually straining after sexual indulgence, we find the palm of chastity denied to us? We wish to fare sumptuously, and to enjoy the embraces of our wives, yet at the same time we desire to reign with Christ among virgins and widows. Shall there be but one reward, then, for hunger and for excess, for filth and for finery, for sackcloth and for silk? Lazarus, [Luke 16:19-25] in his lifetime, received evil things, and the rich man, clothed in purple, fat and sleek, while he lived enjoyed the good things of the flesh but, now that they are dead, they occupy different positions. Misery has given place to satisfaction, and satisfaction to misery. And it rests with us whether we will follow Lazarus or the rich man.

Letter 49. To Pammachius.

Jerome encloses the preceding letter, thanks Pammachius for his efforts to suppress his treatise "against Jovinian," but declares these to be useless, and exhorts him, if he still has any hesitation in his mind, to turn to the Scriptures and the commentaries made upon them by Origen and others. Written at the same time as the preceding letter. 1. Christian modesty sometimes requires us to be silent even to our friends, and to nurse our humility in peace, where the renewal of an old friendship would expose us l to the charge of self-seeking. Thus, when you have kept silence I have kept silence too, and have not cared to remonstrate with you, lest I should be thought more anxious to conciliate a person of influence than to cultivate a friend. But, now that it has become a duty to reply to your letter, I will endeavor always to be beforehand with you, and not so much to answer your queries as to write independently of them. Thus, if I have shown my modesty hitherto by silence, I will henceforth show it still more by coming forward to speak.

2. I quite recognize the kindness and forethought which have induced you to withdraw from circulation some copies of my work against Jovinian. Your diligence, however, has been of no avail, for several people coming from the city have repeatedly read aloud to me passages which they have come across in Rome. In this province, also, the books have already been circulated; and, as you have read yourself in Horace, "Words once uttered cannot be recalled." I am not so fortunate as are most of the writers of the day-able, that is, to correct my trifles whenever I like. When once I have written anything, either my admirers or my ill-wishers-from different motives, but with equal zeal-sow my work broadcast among the public; and their language, whether it is that of eulogy or of criticism, is apt to run to excess. They are guided not by the merits of the piece, but by their own angry feelings. Accordingly, I have done what I could. I have dedicated to you a defence of the work in question, feeling sure that when you have read it you will yourself satisfy the doubts of others on my behalf; or else, if you too turn up your nose at the task, you will have to explain in some new manner that section of the apostle in which he discusses virginity and marriage.

3. I do not speak thus that I may provoke you to write on the subject yourself-although I know your zeal in the study of the sacred writings to be greater than my own-but that you may compel my tormentors to do so. They are educated; in their own eyes no mean scholars; competent not merely to censure but to instruct me. If they write on the subject, my view will be the sooner neglected when it is compared with theirs. Read, I pray you, and diligently consider the words of the apostle, and you will then see that-with a view to avoid misrepresentation-I have been much more gentle towards married persons than he was disposed to be. Origen, Dionysius, Pierius, Eusebius of Caesarea, Didymus, Apollinaris, have used great latitude in the interpretation of this epistle. When Pierius, sifting and expounding the apostle's meaning, comes to the words, "I would that all men were even as I myself," [1 Cor. 7:7] he makes this comment upon them: "In saying this Paul plainly preaches abstinence from marriage." Is the fault here mine, or am I responsible for harshness? Compared with this sentence of Pierius, all that I have ever written is mild indeed. Consult the commentaries of the above-named writers and take advantage of the Church libraries; you will then more speedily finish as you would wish the enterprise which you have so happily begun.

4. I hear that the hopes of the entire city are centred in you, and that bishop and people are, agreed in wishing for your exaltation. To be a bishop is much, to deserve to be one is more. If you read the books of the sixteen prophets which I have rendered into Latin from the Hebrew; and if, when you have done so, you express satisfaction with my labors, the news will encourage me to take out of my desk some other works now shut up in it. I have lately translated Job into our mother tongue: you will be able to borrow a copy of it from your cousin, the saintly Marcella. Read it both in Greek and in Latin, and compare the old version with my rendering. You will then clearly see that the difference between them is that between truth and falsehood. Some of my commentaries upon the twelve prophets I have sent to the reverend father Domnio, also the four books of Kings-that is, the two called Samuel and the two called Malâchim. If you care to read these you will learn for yourself how difficult it is to understand the Holy Scriptures, and particularly the prophets; and how through the fault of the translators passages which for the Jews flow clearly on for us abound with mistakes. Once more, you must not in my small writings look for any such eloquence as that which for Christ's sake you disregard in Cicero. A version made for the use of the Church, even though it may possess a literary charm, ought to disguise and avoid it as far as possible; in order that it may not speak to the idle schools and few disciples of the philosophers, but may address itself rather to the entire human race.

Letter 50. To Domnio.

Domnio, a Roman (called in Letter 45. ”the Lot of our time”), had written to Jerome to tell him that an ignorant monk had been traducing his books ”against Jovinian.” Jerome, in reply, sharply rebukes the folly of his critic and comments on the want of straightforwardness in his conduct. He concludes the letter with an emphatic restatement of his original position. Written in 394 a.d. 1. Your letter is full at once of affection and of complaining. The affection is your own, which prompts you unceasingly to warn me of impending danger, and which makes you on my behalf ”Of safest things distrustful and afraid.” [Virg. A. 4:298]

The complaining is of those who have no love for me, and seek an occasion against me in my sins. They speak against their brother, they slander their own mother’s son. [Ps. 50:20] You write to me of these-nay, of one in particular-a lounger who is to be seen in the streets, at crossings, and in public places; a monk who is a noisy news-monger, clever only in detraction, and eager, in spite of the beam in his own eye, to remove the mote in his neighbor’s. [Matt. 7:3-5] And you tell me that he preaches publicly against me, gnawing, rending, and tearing asunder with his fangs the books that I have written against Jovinian. You inform me, moreover, that this home-grown dialectician, this mainstay of the Plautine company, has read neither the ”Categories” of Aristotle nor his treatise ”On Interpretation,” nor his ”Analytics,” nor yet the ”Topics” of Cicero, but that, moving as he does only in uneducated circles, and frequenting no society but that of weak women, he ventures to construct illogical syllogisms and to unravel by subtle arguments what he is pleased to call my sophisms. How foolish I have been to suppose that without philosophy there can be no knowledge of these subjects; and to account it a more important part of composition to erase than to write! In vain have I perused the commentaries of Alexander; to no purpose has a skilled teacher used the ”Introduction” of Porphyry to instruct me in logic; and-to make light of human learning-I have gained nothing at all by having Gregory of Nazianzum and Didymus as my catechists in the Holy Scriptures. My acquisition of Hebrew has been wasted labor; and so also has been the daily study which from my youth I have bestowed upon the Law and the Prophets, the Gospels and the Apostles.

2. Here we have a man who has reached perfection without a teacher, so as to be a vehicle of the spirit and a self-taught genius. He surpasses Cicero in eloquence, Aristotle in argument, Plato in discretion, Aristarchus in learning, Didymus, that man of brass, in the number of his books; and not only Didymus, but all the writers of his time in his knowledge of the Scriptures. It is reported that you have only to give him a theme and he is always ready-like Carneades -to argue on this side or on that, for justice or against it. The world escaped a great danger, and civil actions and suits concerning succession were saved from a yawning gulf on the day when, despising the bar, he transferred himself to the Church. For, had he been unwilling, who could ever have been proved innocent? And, if he once began to reckon the points of the case upon his fingers, and to spread his syllogistic nets, what criminal would his pleading have failed to save? Had he but stamped his foot, or fixed his eyes, or knitted his brow, or moved his hand, or twirled his beard, he would at once have thrown dust in the eyes of the jury. No wonder that such a complete Latinist and so profound a master of eloquence overcomes poor me, who-as I have been some time away (from Rome), and without opportunities for speaking Latin-am half a Greek if not altogether a barbarian. No wonder, I say, that he overcomes me when his eloquence has crushed Jovinian in person. Good Jesus! what! even Jovinian that great and clever man! So clever, indeed, that no one can understand his writings, and that when he sings it is only for himself-and for the muses!

3. Pray, my dear father, warn this man not to hold language contrary to his profession, and not to undo with his words the chastity which he professes by his garb. Whether he elects to be a virgin or a married celibate-and the choice must rest with himself-he must not compare wives with virgins, for that would be to have striven in vain against Jovinian’s eloquence. He likes, I am told, to visit the cells of widows and virgins, and to lecture them with his brows knit on sacred literature. What is it that he teaches these poor women in the privacy of their own chambers? Is it to feel assured that virgins are no better than wives? Is it to make the most of the flower of their age, to eat and drink, to frequent the baths, to live in luxury, and not to disdain the use of perfumes? Or does he preach to them chastity, fasting, and neglect of their persons? No doubt the precepts that he inculcates are full of virtue. But if so, let him admit publicly what he says privately. Or, if his private teaching is the same as his public, he should keep aloof altogether from the society of girls.

He is a young man-a monk, and in his own eyes an eloquent one (do not pearls fall from his lips, and are not his elegant phrases sprinkled with comic salt and humor?)-I am surprised, therefore, that he can without a blush frequent noblemen’s houses, pay constant visits to married ladies, make our religion a subject of contention, distort the faith of Christ by misapplying words, and-in addition to all this-detract from one who is his brother in the Lord. He may, however, have supposed me to be in error (for ”in many things we offend all,” and ”if any man offend not in word

he is a perfect man" [Jas. 3:2]). In that case he should have written to convict me or to question me, the course taken by Pammachius, a man of high attainments and position. To this latter I defended myself as best I could, and in a lengthy letter explained the exact sense of my words. He might at least have copied the diffidence which led you to extract and arrange such passages as seemed to give offence; asking me for corrections or explanations, and not supposing me so mad that in one and the same book I should write for marriage and against it.

4. Let him spare himself, let him spare me, let him spare the Christian name. Let him realize his position as a monk, not by talking and arguing, but by holding his peace and sitting still. Let him read the words of Jeremiah: "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him." [Lam. 3:27, Lam. 3:28] Or if he has really the right to apply the censor's rod to all writers, and fancies himself a man of learning because he alone understands Jovinian (you know the proverb: Balbus best knows what Balbus means); yet, as Atilius reminds us, "we are not all writers." Jovinian himself-an unlettered man of letters if ever there was one-will with most justice proclaim the fact to him. "That the bishops condemn me," he says, "is not reason but treason. I want no answers from nobodies, who, while they have authority to put me down, have not the wit to teach me. Let one write against me who has a tongue that I can understand, and whom to vanquish will be to vanquish all.

"I know full well: believe me, I have felt The hero's force when rising o'er his shield He hurls his whizzing spear." [Virgil, Aen. 11:283, 284] He is strong in argument, intricate and tenacious, one to fight with his head down. Often has he cried out against me in the streets from late one night till early the next. He is a well-built man, and his thews are those of an athlete. Secretly I believe him to be a follower of my teaching. He never blushes or stops to weigh his words: his only aim is to speak as loud as possible. So famous is he for his eloquence that his sayings are held up as models to our curly-headed youngsters. [Persius 1:29] How often, when I have met him at meetings, has he aroused my wrath and put me into a passion! How often has he spat upon me, and then departed spat upon! But these are vulgar methods, and any of my followers can use them. I appeal to books, to those memorials which must be handed down to posterity. Let us speak by our writings, that the silent reader may judge between us; and that, as I have a flock of disciples, he may have one also-flatterers and parasites worthy of the Gnatho and Phormio who is their master."

5. It is no difficult matter, my dear Domnio, to chatter at street corners or in apothecaries' shops and to pass judgment on the world. "So-and-so has made a good speech, so-and-so a bad one; this man knows the Scriptures, that one is crazy; this man talks glibly, that never says a word at all. But who considers him worthy thus to judge every one? To make an outcry against a man in every street, and

to heap, not definite charges, but vague imputations, on his head, is nothing. Any buffoon or litigiously disposed person can do as much. Let him put forth his hand, put pen to paper, and bestir himself; let him write books and prove in them all he can. Let him give me a chance of replying to his eloquence. I can return bite for bite, if I like; when hurt myself, I can fix my teeth in my opponent. I too have had a liberal education. As Juvenal says, "I also have often withdrawn my hand from the ferule. [Juv. 1:15] Of me, too, it may be said in the words of Horace, "Flee from him; he has hay on his horn. But I prefer to be a disciple of Him who says, "I gave my back to the smiters ...I hid not my face from shame and spitting. [Isa. 50:6] When He was reviled He reviled not again.

[1 Pet. 2:23] After the buffeting, the cross, the scourge, the blasphemies, at the very last He prayed for His crucifiers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. [Luke 23:34] I, too, pardon the error of a brother. He has been deceived, I feel sure, by the art of the devil. Among the women he was held clever and eloquent; but, when my poor writings reached Rome, dreading me as a rival, he tried to rob me of my laurels. No man on earth, he resolved, should please his eloquent self, unless such as commanded respect rather than sought it, and showed themselves men to be feared more than favored. A man of consummate address, he desired, like an old soldier, with one stroke of the sword to strike down both his enemies, and to make clear to every one that, whatever view he might take, Scripture was always with him. Well, he must condescend to send me his account of the matter, and to correct my indiscreet language, not by censure but by instruction. If he tries to do this, he will find that what seems forcible on a lounge is not equally forcible in court; and that it is one thing to discuss the doctrines of the divine law amid the spindles and work-baskets of girls and another to argue concerning them among men of education.

As it is, without hesitation or shame, he raises again and again the noisy shout, "Jerome condemns marriage," and, whilst he constantly moves among women with child, crying infants, and marriage-beds, he suppresses the words of the apostle just to cover me-poor me-with odium. However, when he comes by and by to write books and to grapple with me at close quarters, then he will feel it, then he will stick fast; Epicurus and Aristippus will not be near him then; the swineherds will not come to his aid; the prolific sow will not so much as grunt. For I also may say, with Turnus:

"Father, I too can launch a forceful spear, And when I strike blood follows from the wound." [Virg. A. 12:50, 51] But if he refuses to write, and fancies that abuse is as effective as criticism, then, in spite of all the lands and seas and peoples which lie between us, he must hear at least the echo of my cry, "I do not condemn marriage," "I do not condemn wedlock." Indeed-and this I say to make my meaning quite clear

to him-I should like every one to take a wife who, because they get frightened in the night, cannot manage to sleep alone.

Letter 51. From Epihanius, Bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, to John, Bishop of Jerusalem.

A coolness had arisen between these two bishops in connection with the Origenistic controversy, which at this time was at its height. Epiphanius had openly charged John with being an Origenist, and had also uncanonically conferred priests' orders on Jerome's brother Paulinian, in order that the monastery at Bethlehem might henceforth be entirely independent of John. Naturally, John resented this conduct and showed his resentment. The present letter is a kind of half-apology made by Epiphanius for what he had done, and like all such, it only seems to have made matters worse. The controversy is fully detailed in the treatise "Against John of Jerusalem" in this volume, esp. §11-14. An interesting paragraph (§9) narrates how Epiphanius destroyed at Anablatha a church-curtain on which was depicted "a likeness of Christ or of some saint"-an early instance of the iconoclastic spirit. Originally written in Greek, the letter was (by the writer's request) rendered into Latin by Jerome. Its date is 394 a.d.To the lord bishop and dearly beloved brother, John, Epiphanius sends greeting.

1. It surely becomes us, dearly beloved, not to abuse our rank as clergy, so as to make it an occasion of pride, but by diligently keeping and observing God's commandments, to be in reality what in name we profess to be. For, if the Holy Scriptures say, "Their lots shall not profit them," [Jer. 12:13, LXX] what pride in our clerical position will be able to avail us who sin not only in thought and feeling, but in speech? I have heard, of course, that you are incensed against me, that you are angry, and that you threaten to write about me-not merely to particular places and provinces, but to the uttermost ends of the earth. Where is that fear of God which should make us tremble with the trembling spoken of by the Lord-"Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment"? [Matt. 5:22] Not that I greatly care for your writing what you please. For Isaiah tells us [Isa. 18:2, LXX] of letters written on papyrus and cast upon the waters-missives

soon carried away by time and tide. I have done you no harm, I have inflicted no injury upon you, I have extorted nothing from you by violence. My action concerned a monastery whose inmates were foreigners in no way subject to your provincial jurisdiction. Moreover their regard for my insignificance and for the letters which I frequently addressed to them had commenced to produce a feeling of dislike to communion with you.

Feeling, therefore, that too great strictness or scrupulosity on my part might have the effect of alienating them from the Church with its ancient faith, I ordained one of the brothers deacon, and after he had ministered as such, admitted him to the priesthood. You should, I think, have been grateful to me for this, knowing, as you surely must, that it is the fear of God which has compelled me to act in this way, and particularly when you recollect that God's priesthood is everywhere the same, and that I have simply made provision for the wants of the Church. For, although each individual bishop of the Church has under him churches which are placed in his charge, and although no man may stretch himself beyond his measure, [Cf. 2 Cor. 10:14] yet the love of Christ, which is without dissimulation, [Rom. 12:9] is set up as an example to us all; and we must consider not so much the thing done as the time and place, the mode and motive, of doing it. I saw that the monastery contained a large number of reverend brothers, and that the reverend presbyters, Jerome and Vincent, through modesty and humility, were unwilling to offer the sacrifices permitted to their rank, and to labor in that part of their calling which ministers more than any other to the salvation of Christians.

I knew, moreover, that you could not find or lay hands on this servant of God who had several times fled from you simply because he was reluctant to undertake the onerous duties of the priesthood, and that no other bishop could easily find him. Accordingly, I was a good deal surprised when, by the ordering of God, he came to me with the deacons of the monastery and others of the brethren, to make satisfaction to me for some grievance or other which I had against them. While, therefore, the Collect was being celebrated in the church of the villa which adjoins our monastery-he being quite ignorant and wholly unsuspicious of my purpose-I gave orders to a number of deacons to seize him and to stop his mouth, lest in his eagerness to free himself he might adjure me in the name of Christ. First of all, then, I ordained him deacon, setting before him the fear of God, and forcing him to minister; for he made a hard struggle against it, crying out that he was unworthy, and protesting that this heavy burden was beyond his strength. It was with difficulty, then, that I overcame his reluctance, persuading him as well as I could with passages from Scripture, and setting before him the commandments of God. And when he had ministered in the offering of the holy sacrifices, once more with great difficulty I closed his mouth and ordained him presbyter.

Then, using the same arguments as before, I induced him to sit in the place set apart for the presbyters. After this I wrote to the reverend presbyters and other brothers of the monastery, chiding them for not having written to me about him. For a year before I had heard many of them complain that they had no one to celebrate for them the sacraments of the Lord. All then agreed in asking him to undertake the duty, pointing out how great his usefulness would be to the community of the monastery. I blamed them for omitting to write to me and to propose that I should ordain him, when the opportunity was given to them to do so.

2. All this I have done, as I said just now, relying on that Christian love which you, I feel sure, cherish towards my insignificance; not to mention the fact that I held the ordination in a monastery, and not within the limits of your jurisdiction. How truly blessed is the mildness and complacency of the bishops of (my own) Cyprus, as well as their simplicity, though to your refinement and discrimination it appears deserving only of God's pity! For many bishops in communion with me have ordained presbyters in my province whom I had been unable to capture, and have sent to me deacons and subdeacons whom I have been glad to receive. I myself, too, have urged the bishop Philo of blessed memory, and the reverend Theoprepus, to make provision for the Church of Christ by ordaining presbyters in those churches of Cyprus which, although they were accounted to belong to my see, happened to be close to them, and this for the reason that my province was large and straggling. But for my part I have never ordained deaconesses nor sent them into the provinces of others, nor have I done anything to rend the Church. Why, then, have you thought fit to be so angry and indignant with me for that work of God which I have wrought for the edification of the brethren, and not for their destruction?

[2 Cor. 10:8] Moreover, I have been much surprised at the assertion which you have made to my clergy, that you sent me a message by that reverend presbyter, the abbot Gregory, that I was to ordain no one, and that I promised to comply, saying, "Am I a stripling, or do I not know the canons? By God's word I am telling you the truth when I say that I know and have heard nothing of all this, and that I have not the slightest recollection of using any language of the sort. As, however, I have had misgivings, lest possibly, being only a man, I may have forgotten this among so many other matters, I have made inquiry of the reverend Gregory, and of the presbyter Zeno, who is with him. Of these, the abbot Gregory replies that he knows nothing whatever about the matter, while Zeno says that the presbyter Rufinus, in the course of some desultory remarks, spoke these words. "Will the reverend bishop, think you, venture to ordain any persons? but that the conversation went no further. I, Epiphanius, however, have never either received the message or answered it. Do not, then, dearly beloved, allow your anger to overcome you or your indignation to get the better of you, lest, you should disquiet yourself in vain; and lest you should be thought to be putting forward this grievance only to get

scope for tendencies of another kind, and thus to have sought out an occasion of sinning.

It is to avoid this that the prophet prays to the Lord, saying: ”Turn not aside my heart to words of wickedness, to making excuses for my sins. [Ps. 141:4, acc. to the Gallican Psalter]

3. This also I have been surprised to hear, that certain persons who are in the habit of carrying tales backwards and forwards, and of always adding something fresh to what they have heard, to stir up grievances and disputes between brothers, have succeeded in disquieting you by saying that, when I offer sacrifices to God, I am wont to say this prayer on your behalf: ”Grant, O Lord, to John grace to believe aright. Do not suppose me so untutored as to be capable of saying this so openly. To tell you the simple truth, my dearest brother, although I continually use this prayer mentally, I have never confided it to the ears of others, lest I should seem to dishonor you. But when I repeat the prayers required by the ritual of the mysteries, then I say on behalf of all and of you as well as others, ”Guard him, that he may preach the truth,” or at least this, ”Do Thou, O Lord, grant him Thine aid, and guard him, that he may preach the word of truth,” as occasion offers itself for the words, and as the turn comes for the particular prayer. Wherefore I beseech you, dearly beloved, and, casting myself down at your feet, I entreat you to grant to me and to yourself this one prayer, that you would save yourself, as it is written, ”from an untoward generation. [Acts 2:40] Withdraw, dearly beloved, from the heresy of Origen and from all heresies.

For I see that all your indignation has been roused against me simply because I have told you that you ought not to eulogize one who is the spiritual father of Arius, and the root and parent of all heresies. And when I appealed to you not to go astray, and warned you of the consequences, you traversed my words, and reduced me to tears and sadness; and not me only, but many other Catholics who were present. This I take to be the origin of your indignation and of your passion on the present occasion. On this account you threaten to send out letters against me, and to circulate your version of the matter in all directions; and thus, while with a view to defending your heresy you kindle men’s passions against me, you break through the charity which I have shown towards you, and act with so little discretion that you make me regret that I have held communion with you, and that I have by so doing upheld the erroneous opinions of Origen.

4. I speak plainly. To use the language of Scripture, I do not spare to pluck out my own eye if it cause me to offend, nor to cut off my hand and my foot if they cause me to do so. [Matt. 18:8, Matt. 18:9] And you must be treated in the same way whether you are my eyes, or my hands, or my feet. For what Catholic, what Christian who adorns his faith with good works, can hear with calmness Origen’s teaching and counsel, or believe in his extraordinary preaching? ”The Son,” he tells us, ”cannot

see the Father, and the Holy Spirit cannot see the Son. These words occur in his book "On First Principles; thus we read, and thus Origen has spoken. "For as it is unsuitable to say that the Son can see the Father, it is consequently unsuitable to suppose that the Spirit can see the Son. [First Principles, 1:1; 2:4] Can any one, moreover, brook Origen's assertion that men's souls were once angels in heaven, and that having sinned in the upper world, they have been cast down into this, and have been confined in bodies as in barrows or tombs, to pay the penalty for their former sins; and that the bodies of believers are not temples of Christ, [1 Cor. 6:15, 1 Cor. 6:19] but prisons of the condemned? Again, he tampers with the true meaning of the narrative by a false use of allegory, multiplying words without limit; and undermines the faith of the simple by the most varied arguments.

Now he maintains that souls, in Greek the "cool things," from a word meaning to be cool, are so called because in coming down from the heavenly places to the lower world they have lost their former heat; [First Principles 2:8] and now, that our bodies are called by the Greeks chains, from a word meaning chain, or else (on the analogy of our own Latin word) "things fallen," because our souls have fallen from heaven; and that the other word for body which the abundance of the Greek idiom supplies is by many taken to mean a funeral monument, because the soul is shut up within it in the same way as the corpses of the dead are shut up in tombs and barrows. If this doctrine is true what becomes of our faith? Where is the preaching of the resurrection? Where is the teaching of the apostles, which lasts on to this day in the churches of Christ? Where is the blessing to Adam, and to his seed, and to Noah and his sons? "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. [Gen. 1:28; Gen. 9:7] According to Origen, these words must be a curse and not a blessing; for he turns angels into human souls, compelling them to leave the place of highest rank and to come down lower, as though God were unable through the action of His blessing to grant souls to the human race, had the angels not sinned, and as though for every birth on earth there must be a fall in heaven.

We are to give up, then, the teaching of apostles and prophets, of the law, and of our Lord and Saviour Himself, in spite of His language loud as thunder in the gospel. Origen, on the other hand, commands and urges-not to say binds-his disciples not to pray to ascend into heaven, lest sinning once more worse than they had sinned on earth they should be hurled down into the world again. Such foolish and insane notions he generally confirms by distorting the sense of the Scriptures and making them mean what they do not mean at all. He quotes this passage from the Psalms: "Before thou didst humble me by reason of my wickedness, I went wrong; and this, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; [Ps. 116:7] this also, "Bring my soul out of prison; [Ps. 142:7] and this, "I will make confession unto the Lord in the land of the living," although there can be no doubt that the meaning of the divine Scripture is different from the interpretation by which he unfairly wrests it to the support of his own heresy. This way of acting is common to the Manichaeans,

the Gnostics, the Ebionites, the Marcionites, and the votaries of the other eighty heresies, all of whom draw their proofs from the pure well of the Scriptures, not, however, interpreting it in the sense in which it is written, but trying to make the simple language of the Church's writers accord with their own wishes.

5. Of one position which he strives to maintain I hardly know whether it calls for my tears or my laughter. This wonderful doctor presumes to teach that the devil will once more be what he at one time was, that he will return to his former dignity and rise again to the kingdom of heaven. Oh horror! that a man should be so frantic and foolish as to hold that John the Baptist, Peter, the apostle and evangelist John, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest of the prophets, are made co-heirs of the devil in the kingdom of heaven! I pass over his idle explanation of the coats of skins, [In his note on Gen. 3:21] and say nothing of the efforts and arguments he has used to induce us to believe that these coats of skins represent human bodies. Among many other things, he says this: "Was God a tanner or a saddler, that He should prepare the hides of animals, and should stitch from them coats of skins for Adam and Eve? "It is clear," he goes on, "that he is speaking of human bodies. If this is so, how is it that before the coats of skins, and the disobedience, and the fall from paradise, Adam speaks not in an allegory, but literally, thus: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; [Gen. 2:23] or what is the ground of the divine narrative, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept;

and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman" [Gen. 2:21, Gen. 2:22] for him? Or what bodies can Adam and Eve have covered with fig-leaves after eating of the forbidden tree? [Gen. 3:7] Who can patiently listen to the perilous arguments of Origen when he denies the resurrection of this flesh, as he most clearly does in his book of explanations of the first psalm and in many other places? Or who can tolerate him when he gives us a paradise in the third heaven, and transfers that which the Scripture mentions from earth to the heavenly places, and when he explains allegorically all the trees which are mentioned in Genesis, saying in effect that the trees are angelic potencies, a sense which the true drift of the passage does not admit? For the divine Scripture has not said, "God put down Adam and Eve upon the earth," but "He drove them out of the paradise, and made them dwell over against the paradise. [Gen. 3:23, LXX] He does not say "under the paradise. "He placed ...cherubims and a flaming sword ...to keep the way of the tree of life. [Gen. 3:24] He says nothing about an ascent to it. "And a river went out of Eden. [Gen. 2:10] He does not say "went down from Eden. "It was parted and became into four heads.

The name of the first is Pison ...and the name of the second is Gihon. [Gen. 2:10, Gen. 2:11, Gen. 2:13] I myself have seen the waters of Gihon, have seen them with my bodily eyes. It is this Gihon to which Jeremiah points when he says, "What hast

thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink the muddy water of Gihon? [Jer. 2:18, LXX. and Vulg] I have drunk also from the great river Euphrates, not spiritual but actual water, such as you can touch with your hand and imbibe with your mouth. But where there are rivers which admit of being seen and of being drunk, it follows that there also there will be fig-trees and other trees; and it is of these that the Lord says, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. [Gen. 2:16] They are like other trees and timber, just as the rivers are like other rivers and waters. But if the water is visible and real, then the fig-tree and the rest of the timber must be real also, and Adam and Eve must have been originally formed with real and not phantasmal bodies, and not, as Origen would have us believe, have afterwards received them on account of their sin. But, you say, "we read that Saint Paul was caught up to the third heaven, into paradise. You explain the words rightly: "When he mentions the third heaven, and then adds the word paradise, he shows that heaven is in one place and paradise in another.

Must not every one reject and despise such special pleading as that by which Origen says of the waters that are above the firmament [In his note on Gen. 1:7] that they are not waters, but heroic beings of angelic power, and again of the waters that are over the earth-that is, below the firmament-that they are potencies of the contrary sort-that is, demons? If so, why do we read in the account of the deluge that the windows of heaven were opened, and that the waters of the deluge prevailed? in consequence of which the fountains of the deep were opened, and the whole earth was covered with the waters. [Gen. 7:11]

6. Oh! the madness and folly of those who have forsaken the teaching of the book of Proverbs, "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother," [Prov. 6:20] and have turned to error, and say to the fool that he shall be their leader, and do not despise the foolish things which are said by the foolish man, even as the scripture bears witness, "The foolish man speaketh foolishly, and his heart understandeth vanity. [Isa. 32:6, Vulg] I beseech you, dearly beloved, and by the love which I feel towards you, I implore you-as though it were my own members on which I would have pity -by word and letter to fulfil that which is written, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? [Ps. 139:21] Origen's words are the words of an enemy, hateful and repugnant to God and to His saints; and not only those which I have quoted, but countless others. For it is not now my intention to argue against all his opinions. Origen has not lived in my day, nor has he robbed me. I have not conceived a dislike to him nor quarrelled with him because of an inheritance or of any worldly matter;

but-to speak plainly-I grieve, and grieve bitterly, to see numbers of my brothers, and of those in particular who show the most promise, and have reached the highest rank in the sacred ministry, deceived by his persuasive arguments, and made

by his most perverse teaching the food of the devil, whereby the saying is fulfilled: "He derides every stronghold, and his fare is choice, and he hath gathered captives as the sand. [Hab. 1:10, 16, 9, LXX] But may God free you, my brother, and the holy people of Christ which is intrusted to you, and all the brothers who are with you, and especially the presbyter Rufinus, from the heresy of Origen, and other heresies, and from the perdition to which they lead. For, if for one word or for two opposed to the faith many heresies have been rejected by the Church, how much more shall he be held a heretic who has contrived such perverse interpretations and such mischievous doctrines to destroy the faith, and has in fact declared himself the enemy of the Church! For, among other wicked things, he has presumed to say this, too, that Adam lost the image of God, although Scripture nowhere declares that he did. Were it so, never would all the creatures in the world be subject to Adam's seed-that is, to the entire human race; yet, in the words of the apostle, everything "is tamed and hath been tamed of mankind.

[Jas. 3:7] For never would all things be subjected to men if men had not-together with their authority over all-the image of God. But the divine Scripture conjoins and associates with this the grace of the blessing which was conferred upon Adam and upon the generations which descended from him. No one can by twisting the meaning of words presume to say that this grace of God was given to one only, and that he alone was made in the image of God (he and his wife, that is, for while he was formed of clay she was made of one of his ribs), but that those who were subsequently conceived in the womb and not born as was Adam did not possess God's image, for the Scripture immediately subjoins the following statement: "And Adam lived two hundred and thirty years, and knew Eve his wife, and she bare him a son in his image and after his likeness, and called his name Seth. And again, in the tenth generation, two thousand two hundred and forty-two years afterwards, God, to vindicate His own image and to show that the grace which He had given to men still continued in them, gives the following commandment: "Flesh ...with the blood thereof shall ye not eat. And surely your blood will I require at the hand of every man that sheddeth it; for in the image of God have I made man.

From Noah to Abraham ten generations passed away, [Gen. 11:10-26] and from Abraham's time to David's, fourteen more, [Matt. 1:17] and these twenty-four generations make up, taken together, two thousand one hundred and seventeen years. Yet the Holy Spirit in the thirty-ninth psalm, while lamenting that all men walk in a vain show, and that they are subject to sins, speaks thus: "For all that every man walk eth in the image. Also after David's time, in the reign of Solomon his son, we read a somewhat similar reference to the divine likeness. For in the book of Wisdom, which is inscribed with his name, Solomon says: "God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of His own eternity. [Wisd. 2:23] And again, about eleven hundred and eleven years afterwards, we read in the New Testament that men have not lost the image of God. For James, an apostle and brother

of the Lord, whom I have mentioned above-that we may not be entangled in the snares of Origen-teaches us that man does possess God's image and likeness. For, after a somewhat discursive account of the human tongue, he has gone on to say of it: "It is an unruly evil ...therewith bless we God, even the Father and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

[Jas. 3:8, 9] Paul, too, the "chosen vessel," [Acts. 9:15] who in his preaching has fully maintained the doctrine of the gospel, instructs us that man is made in the image and after the likeness of God. "A man," he says, "ought not to wear long hair, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God. [1 Cor. 11:7] He speaks of "the image" simply, but explains the nature of the likeness by the word "glory."

7. Instead of the three proofs from Holy Scripture which you said would satisfy you if I could produce them, behold I have given you seven. Who, then, will put up with the follies of Origen? I will not use a severer word and so make myself like him or his followers, who presume at the peril of their soul to assert dogmatically whatever first comes into their head, and to dictate to God, whereas they ought either to pray to Him or to learn the truth from Him. For some of them say that the image of God which Adam had previously received was lost when he sinned. Others surmise that the body which the Son of God was destined to take of Mary was the image of the Creator. Some identify this image with the soul, others with sensation, others with virtue. These make it baptism, those assert that it is in virtue of God's image that man exercises universal sway. Like drunkards in their cups, they ejaculate now this, now that, when they ought rather to have avoided so serious a risk, and to have obtained salvation by simple faith, not denying the words of God. To God they ought to have left the sure and exact knowledge of His own gift, and of the particular way in which He has created men in His image and after His likeness. Forsaking this course, they have involved themselves in many subtle questions, and through these they have been plunged into the mire of sin.

But we, dearly beloved, believe the words of the Lord, and know that God's image remains in all men, and we leave it to Him to know in what respect man is created in His image. And let no one be deceived by that passage in the epistle of John, which some readers fail to understand, where he says: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall See Him as He is. [1 Joh. 3:2] For this refers to the glory which is then to be revealed [1 Pet. 5:1] to His saints; just as also in another place we read the words "from glory to glory," [2 Cor. 3:18] of which glory the saints have even in this world received an earnest and a small portion. At their head stands Moses, whose face shone exceedingly, and was bright with the brightness of the sun. [Exod. 34:29 sqq.; 2 Cor. 3:7] Next to him comes Elijah, who was caught up into heaven in a chariot of fire, [2 Kings 2:11] and did not feel the effects of the flame. Stephen, too, when he was being stoned, had the face of

an angel visible to all. [Acts 6:15] And this which we have verified in a few cases is to be understood of all, that what is written may be fulfilled. ”Every one that sanctifieth himself shall be numbered among the blessed.

For, ”blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. [Matt. 5:8]

8. These things being so, dearly beloved, keep watch over your own soul and cease to murmur against me. For the divine Scripture says: ”Neither murmur ye [one against another] as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of serpents.” [1 Cor. 10:10] Rather give way to the truth and love me who love both you and the truth. And may the God of peace, according to His mercy, grant to us that Satan may be bruised under the feet of Christians, [Rom. 16:20] and that every occasion of evil may be shunned, so that the bond of love and peace may not be rent asunder between us, or the preaching of the right faith be anywise hindered.

9. Moreover, I have heard that certain persons have this grievance against me: When I accompanied you to the holy place called Bethel, there to join you in celebrating the Collect, after the use of the Church, I came to a villa called Anablatha and, as I was passing, saw a lamp burning there. Asking what place it was, and learning it to be a church, I went in to pray, and found there a curtain hanging on the doors of the said church, dyed and embroidered. It bore an image either of Christ or of one of the saints; I do not rightly remember whose the image was. Seeing this, and being loth that an image of a man should be hung up in Christ’s church contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures, I tore it asunder and advised the custodians of the place to use it as a winding sheet for some poor person. They, however, murmured, and said that if I made up my mind to tear it, it was only fair that I should give them another curtain in its place. As soon as I heard this, I promised that I would give one, and said that I would send it at once. Since then there has been some little delay, due to the fact that I have been seeking a curtain of the best quality to give to them instead of the former one, and thought it right to send to Cyprus for one.

I have now sent the best that I could find, and I beg that you will order the presbyter of the place to take the curtain which I have sent from the hands of the Reader, and that you will afterwards give directions that curtains of the other sort-opposed as they are to our religion-shall not be hung up in any church of Christ. A than of your uprightness should be careful to remove an occasion of offence unworthy alike of the Church of Christ and of those Christians who are committed to your charge. Beware of Palladius of Galatia-a man once dear to me, but who now sorely needs God’s pity-for he preaches and teaches the heresy of Origen; and see to it that he does not seduce any of those who are intrusted to your keeping into the perverse ways of his erroneous doctrine. I pray that you may fare well in the Lord.

Letter 52. To Nepotian.

Nepotian, the nephew of Heliodorus (for whom see Letter 14.), had, like his uncle, abandoned the military for the clerical calling, and was now a presbyter at Altinum, where Heliodorus was bishop. The letter is a systematic treatise on the duties of the clergy and on the rule of life which they ought to adopt. It had a great vogue, and called forth much indignation against Jerome. Its date is 394 a.d. 1. Again and again you ask me, my dear Nepotian, in your letters from over the sea, to draw for you a few rules of life, showing how one who has renounced the service of the world to become a monk or a clergyman may keep the straight path of Christ, and not be drawn aside into the haunts of vice. As a young man, or rather as a boy, and while I was curbing by the hard life of the desert the first onslaughts of youthful passion, I sent a letter of remonstrance to your reverend uncle, Heliodorus, which, by the tears and complainings with which it was filled, showed him the feelings of the friend whom he had deserted. In it I acted the part suited to my age, and as I was still aglow with the methods and maxims of the rhetoricians, I decked it out a good deal with the flourishes of the schools. Now, however, my head is gray, my brow is furrowed, a dewlap like that of an ox hangs from my chin, and, as Virgil says,

”The chilly blood stands still around my heart.” Elsewhere he sings: ”Old age bears all, even the mind, away.” And a little further on: ”So many of my songs are gone from me, And even my very voice has left me now.” [Virgil, Ec. 9:51, 54, 55] 2. But that I may not seem to quote only profane literature, listen to the mystical teaching of the sacred writings. Once David had been a man of war, but at seventy age had chilled him so that nothing would make him warm. A girl is accordingly sought from the coasts of Israel-Abishag the Shunamite-to sleep with the king and warm his aged frame. [1 K. 1:1-4] Does it not seem to you-if you keep to the letter that killeth [2 Cor. 3:6] -like some farcical story or some broad jest from an Atellan play? A chilly old man is wrapped up in blankets, and only grows warm in a girl’s embrace. Bathsheba was still living, Abigail was still left, and the remainder of those wives and concubines whose names the Scripture mentions. Yet they are all rejected as cold, and only in the one young girl’s embrace does the old man become warm. Abraham was far older than David; still, so long as Sarah lived he sought

no other wife. Isaac counted twice the years of David, yet never felt cold with Rebekah, old though she was. I say nothing of the antediluvians, who, although after nine hundred years their limbs must have been not old merely, but decayed with age, had no recourse to girls' embraces. Moses, the leader of the Israelites, counted one hundred and twenty years, yet sought no change from Zipporah.

3. Who, then, is this Shunamite, this wife and maid, so glowing as to warm the cold, yet so holy as not to arouse passion in him whom she warmed? [1 K. 1:4] Let Solomon, wisest of men, tell us of his father's favorite; let the man of peace recount to us the embraces of the man of war. [1 Chr. 28:3] "Get wisdom," he writes, "get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not and she shall preserve thee: love her and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her and she shall promote thee. She shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee." [Prov. 4:5-9] Almost all bodily excellences alter with age, and while wisdom alone increases all things else decay. Fasts and vigils and almsdeeds become harder. So also do sleeping on the ground, moving from place to place, hospitality to travellers, pleading for the poor, earnestness and steadfastness in prayer, the visitation of the sick, manual labor to supply money for alms-giving. All acts, in short, of which the body is the medium decrease with its decay.

Now, there are young men still full of life and vigor who, by toil and burning zeal, as well as by holiness of life and constant prayer to the Lord Jesus, have obtained knowledge. I do not speak of these, or say that in them the love of wisdom is cold, for this withers in many of the old by reason of age. What I mean is that youth, as such, has to cope with the assaults of passion, and amid the allurements of vice and the tinglings of the flesh is stifled like a fire among green boughs, and cannot develop its proper brightness. But when men have employed their youth in commendable pursuits and have meditated on the law of the Lord day and night, [Ps. 1:2] they learn with the lapse of time, fresh experience and wisdom come as the years go by, and so from the pursuits of the past their old age reaps a harvest of delight. Hence that wise man of Greece, Themistocles, perceiving, after the expiration of one hundred and seven years, that he was on the verge of the grave, is reported to have said that he regretted extremely having to leave life just when he was beginning to grow wise. Plato died in his eighty-first year, his pen still in his hand. Isocrates completed ninety years and nine in the midst of literary and scholastic work.

I say nothing of other philosophers, such as Pythagoras, Democritus, Xenocrates, Zeno, and Cleanthes, who in extreme old age displayed the vigor of youth in the pursuit of wisdom. I pass on to the poets, Homer, Hesiod, Simonides, Stesichorus, who all lived to a great age, yet at the approach of death sang each of them a

swan song sweeter than their wont. Sophocles, when charged by his sons with dotage on account of his advanced years and his neglect of his property, read out to his judges his recently composed play of Oedipus, and made so great a display of wisdom-in spite of the inroads of time-that he changed the decorous silence of the law court into the applause of the theatre. And no wonder, when Cato the censor, that most eloquent of Romans, in his old age neither blushed at the thought of learning Greek nor despaired of succeeding. Homer, for his part, relates that from the tongue of Nestor, even when quite aged and helpless, there flowed speech sweeter than honey.

Even the very name Abishag in its mystic meaning points to the greater wisdom of old men. For the translation of it is, ”My father is over and above,” or ”my father’s roaring. The term ”over and above” is obscure, but in this passage is indicative of excellence, and implies that the old have a larger stock of wisdom, and that it even overflows by reason of its abundance. In another passage ”over and above” forms an antithesis to ”necessary. Moreover, Abishag, that is, ”roaring,” is properly used of the sound which the waves make, and of the murmur which we hear coming from the sea. From which it is plain that the thunder of the divine voice dwells in old men’s ears with a volume of sound beyond the voices of men. Again, in our tongue Shunamite means ”scarlet,” a hint that the love of wisdom becomes warm and glowing through religious study. For though the color may point to the mystery of the Lord’s blood, it also sets forth the warm glow of wisdom. Hence it is a scarlet thread that in Genesis the midwife binds upon the hand of Pharez-Pharez ”the divider,” so called because he divided the partition which had before separated two peoples. [Gen. 38:28, Gen. 38:29] So, too, with a mystic reference to the shedding of blood, it was a scarlet cord which the harlot Rahab (a type of the church) hung in her window to preserve her house in the destruction of Jericho.

[Josh. 2:18] Hence, in another place Scripture says of holy men: ”These are they which came from the warmth of the house of the father of Rechab. [1 Chron. 2:55, Vulg] And in the gospel the Lord says: ”I am come to cast fire upon the earth, and fain am I to see it kindled. [Luke 12:49] This was the fire which, when it was kindled in the disciples’ hearts, constrained them to say: ”Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures? [Luke 24:32]

4. To what end, you ask, these recondite references? To show that you need not expect from me boyish declamation, flowery sentiments, a meretricious style, and at the close of every paragraph the terse and pointed aphorisms which call forth approving shouts from those who hear them. Let Wisdom alone embrace me; let her nestle in my bosom, my Abishag who grows not old. Undefiled truly is she, and a virgin forever for although she daily conceives and unceasingly brings to the birth, like Mary she remains undeflowered. When the apostle says ”be fervent in

spirit," [Rom. 12:11] he means "be true to wisdom." And when our Lord in the gospel declares that in the end of the world-when the shepherd shall grow foolish, according to the prophecy of Zechariah [Zech. 11:15] -"the love of many shall wax cold," [Matt. 24:12] He means that wisdom shall decay. Hear, therefore-to quote the sainted Cyprian-"words forcible rather than elegant." Hear one who, though he is your brother in orders, is in years your father; who can conduct you from the cradle of faith to spiritual manhood; and who, while he builds up stage by stage the rules of holy living, can instruct others in instructing you. I know, of course, that from your reverend uncle, Heliodorus, now a bishop of Christ, you have learned and are daily learning all that is holy; and that in him you have before you a rule of life and a pattern of virtue. Take, then, my suggestions for what they are worth, and compare my precepts with his. He will teach you the perfection of a monk, and I shall show you the whole duty of a clergyman.

5. A clergyman, then, as he serves Christ's church, must first understand what his name means; and then, when he realizes this, must endeavor to be that which he is called. For since the Greek word "κλῆρος" means "lot," or "inheritance," the clergy are so called either because they are the lot of the Lord, or else because the Lord Himself is their lot and portion. Now, he who in his own person is the Lord's portion, or has the Lord for his portion, must so bear himself as to possess the Lord and to be possessed by Him. He who possesses the Lord, and who says with the prophet, "The Lord is my portion," [Pss. 16:5; Pss. 73:26] can hold to nothing beside the Lord. For if he hold to something beside the Lord, the Lord will not be his portion. Suppose, for instance, that he holds to gold or silver, or possessions or inlaid furniture; with such portions as these the Lord will not deign to be his portion. I, if I am the portion of the Lord, and the line of His heritage, [Ps. 16:5, Ps. 16:6] receive no portion among the remaining tribes; but, like the Priest and the Levite, I live on the tithe, [Nu. 18:24] and serving the altar, am supported by its offerings. [1 Cor. 9:13] Having food and raiment, I shall be content with these, [1 Tim. 6:8] and as a disciple of the Cross shall share its poverty. I beseech you, therefore, and

"Again and yet again admonish you;" do not look to your military experience for a standard of clerical obligation. Under Christ's banner seek for no worldly gain, lest having more than when you first became a clergyman, you hear men say, to your shame, "Their portion shall not profit them." Welcome poor men and strangers to your homely board, that with them Christ may be your guest. A clergyman who engages in business, and who rises from poverty to wealth, and from obscurity to a high position, avoid as you would the plague. For "evil communications corrupt good manners." [1 Cor. 15:33] You despise gold; he loves it. You spurn wealth; he eagerly pursues it. You love silence, meekness, privacy; he takes delight in talking and effrontery, in squares, and streets, and apothecaries' shops. What unity of feeling can there be where there is so wide a divergency of manners?

A woman's foot should seldom, if ever, cross the threshold of your home. To all who are Christ's virgins show the same regard or the same disregard. Do not linger under the same roof with them, and do not rely on your past continence. You cannot be holier than David or wiser than Solomon. Always bear in mind that it was a woman who expelled the tiller of paradise from his heritage. In case you are sick one of the brethren may attend you; your sister also or your mother or some woman whose faith is approved with all. But if you have no persons so connected with you or so marked out by chaste behaviour, the Church maintains many elderly women who by their ministrations may oblige you and benefit themselves so that even your sickness may bear fruit in the shape of almsdeeds. I know of cases where the recovery of the body has but preluded the sickness of the soul. There is danger for you in the service of one for whose face you constantly watch. If in the course of your clerical duty you have to visit a widow or a virgin, never enter the house alone. Let your companions be persons association with whom will not disgrace you. If you take a reader with you or an acolyte or a psalm-singer, let their character not their garb be their adornmentlet them use no tongs to curl their hair; rather let their mien be an index of their chastity.

You must not sit alone with a woman or see one without witnesses. If she has anything confidential to disclose, she is sure to have some nurse or housekeeper, some virgin, some widow, some married woman. She cannot be so friendless as to have none save you to whom she can venture to confide her secret. Beware of all that gives occasion for suspicion; and, to avoid scandal, shun every act that may give colour to it. Frequent gifts of handkerchiefs and garters, of face-cloths and dishes first tasted by the giver-to say nothing of notes full of fond expressions-of such things as these a holy love knows nothing. Such endearing and alluring expressions as 'my honey' and 'my darling,' 'you who are all my charm and my delight' the ridiculous courtesies of lovers and their foolish doings, we blush for on the stage and abhor in men of the world. How much more do we loathe them in monks and clergymen who adorn the priesthood by their vows while their vows are adorned by the priesthood. I speak thus not because I dread such evils for you or for men of saintly life, but because in all ranks and callings and among both men and women there are found both good and bad and in condemning the bad I commend the good.

6. Shameful to say, idol-priests, play-actors, jockeys, and prostitutes can inherit property: clergymen and monks alone lie under a legal disability, a disability enacted not by persecutors but by Christian emperors. I do not complain of the law, but I grieve that we have deserved a statute so harsh. Cauterizing is a good thing, no doubt; but how is it that I have a wound which makes me need it? The law is strict and far-seeing, yet even so rapacity goes on unchecked. By a fiction of trusteeship we set the statute at defiance; and, as if imperial decrees outweigh the mandates of Christ, we fear the laws and despise the Gospels. If heir there must

be, the mother has first claim upon her children, the Church upon her flock-the members of which she has borne and reared and nourished. Why do we thrust ourselves in between mother and children?

It is the glory of a bishop to make provision for the wants of the poor; but it is the shame of all priests to amass private fortunes. I who was born (suppose) in a poor man's house, in a country cottage, and who could scarcely get of common millet and household bread enough to fill an empty stomach, am now come to disdain the finest wheat flour and honey. I know the several kinds of fish by name. I can tell unerringly on what coast a mussel has been picked. I can distinguish by the flavour the province from which a bird comes. Dainty dishes delight me because their ingredients are scarce and I end by finding pleasure in their ruinous cost. I hear also of servile attention shewn by some towards old men and women when these are childless. They fetch the basin, beset the bed and perform with their own hands the most revolting offices. They anxiously await the advent of the doctor and with trembling lips they ask whether the patient is better. If for a little while the old fellow shews signs of returning vigour, they are in agonies. They pretend to be delighted, but their covetous hearts undergo secret torture. For they are afraid that their labours may go for nothing and compare an old man with a clinging to life to the patriarch Methuselah. How great a reward might they have with God if their hearts were not set on a temporal prize! With what great exertions do they pursue an empty heritage! Less labour might have purchased for them the pearl of Christ.

7. Read the divine scriptures constantly; never, indeed, let the sacred volume be out of your hand. Learn what you have to teach. "Hold fast the faithful word as you have been taught that you may be able by sound doctrine to exhort and convince the gainsayers. Continue thou in the things that thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;" [Titus, 1:9; 2 Tim. 3:14] and "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope and faith that are in you." [1 Pet. 3:15] Do not let your deeds belie your words; lest when you speak in church someone may mentally reply "Why do you not practise what you profess? Here is a lover of dainties turned censor! his stomach is full and he reads us a homily on fasting. As well might a robber accuse others of covetousness." In a priest of Christ mouth mind, and hand should be at one.

Be obedient to your bishop and welcome him as the parent of your soul. Sons love their fathers and slaves fear their masters. "If I be a father," He says, "where is mine honour? And if I am a master where is my fear? [Mal. 1:6] in your case the bishop combines in himself many titles to your respect. He is at once a monk, a prelate, and an uncle who has before now instructed you in all holy things. This also I say that the bishops should know themselves to be priests not lords. Let

them render to the clergy the honour which is their due that the clergy may offer to them the respect which belongs to bishops. There is a witty saying of the orator Domitius which is here to the point: ”Why am I to recognize you as leader of the Senate when you will not recognize my rights as a private member? [Cicero, de Orat. 3:1] We should realize that a bishop and his presbyters are like Aaron and his sons. As there is but one Lord and one Temple; so also should there be but one ministry. Let us ever bear in mind the charge which the apostle Peter gives to priests: ”feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint but willingly as God would have you; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage but being ensamples to the flock,” and that gladly;

that ”when the chief-shepherd shall appear ye may receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. [1 Pet. 5:4] It is a bad custom which prevails in certain churches for presbyters to be silent when bishops are present on the ground that they would be jealous or impatient hearers. ”If anything,” writes the apostle Paul, ”be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be comforted; and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace. [1 Cor. 14:30-33] ”A wise son maketh a glad father; [Prov. 10:1] and a bishop should rejoice in the discrimination which has led him to choose such for the priests of Christ.

8. When teaching in church seek to call forth not plaudits but groans. Let the tears of your hearers be your glory. A presbyter’s words ought to be seasoned by his reading of scripture. Be not a declaimer or a ranter, one who gabbles without rhyme or reason; but shew yourself skilled in the deep things and versed in the mysteries of God. To mouth your words and by your quickness of utterance astonish the unlettered crowd is a mark of ignorance. Assurance often explains that of which it knows nothing; and when it has convinced others imposes on itself. My teacher, Gregory of Nazianzus, when I once asked him to explain Luke’s phrase ”σάββατον δευτερόπρωτον”, that is ”the second-first Sabbath,” playfully evaded my request saying: ”I will tell you about it in church, and there, when all the people applaud me, you will be forced against your will to know what you do not know at all. For, if you alone remain silent, every one will put you down for a fool. There is nothing so easy as by sheer volubility to deceive a common crowd or an uneducated congregation: such most admire what they fail to understand. Hear Marcus Tullius, the subject of that noble eulogy: ”You would have been the first of orators but for Demosthenes: he would have been the only one but for you. Hear what in his speech for Quintus Gallius he has to say about unskilled speakers and popular applause and then you will not be the sport of such illusions.

"What I am telling you," said he, "is a recent experience of my own. One who has the name of a poet and a man of culture has written a book entitled Conversations of Poets and Philosophers. In this he represents Euripides as conversing with Menander and Socrates with Epicurus-men whose lives we know to be separated not by years but by centuries. Nevertheless he calls forth limitless applause and endless acclamations. For the theatre contains many who belong to the same school as he: like him they have never learned letters."

9. In dress avoid sombre colours as much as bright ones. Showiness and slovenliness are alike to be shunned; for the one savours of vanity and the other of pride. To go about without a linen scarf on is nothing: what is praiseworthy is to be without money to buy one. It is disgraceful and absurd to boast of having neither napkin nor handkerchief and let to carry a well-filled purse. Some bestow a trifle on the poor to receive a larger sum themselves and under the cloak of almsgiving do but seek for riches. Such are almshunters rather than almsgivers. Their methods are those by which birds, beasts, and fishes are taken. A morsel of bait is put on the hook-to land a married lady's purse! The church is committed to the bishop; let him take heed whom he appoints to be his almoner. It is better for me to have no money to give away than shamelessly to beg what I mean to hoard. It is arrogance too to wish to seem more liberal than he who is Christ's bishop. "All things are not open to us all." In the church one is the eye, another is the tongue, another the hand, another the foot, others ears, belly, and so on. Read Paul's epistle to the Corinthians and learn how the one body is made up of different members. [1 Cor. 12:12-27] The rude and simple brother must not suppose himself a saint just because he knows nothing; and he who is educated and eloquent must not measure his saintliness merely by his fluency. Of two imperfect things holy rusticity is better than sinful eloquence.

10. Many build churches nowadays; their walls and pillars of glowing marble, their ceilings glittering with gold, their altars studded with jewels. Yet to the choice of Christ's ministers no heed is paid, And let no one allege against me the wealth of the temple in Judaea, its table, its lamps, its censers, its dishes, its cups, its spoons, [Mortariola. See Nu. 7:24, Vulg] and the rest of its golden vessels. If these were approved by the Lord it was at a time when the priests had to offer victims and when the blood of sheep was the redemption of sins. They were figures typifying things still future and were "written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come. [1 Cor. 10:11] But now our Lord by His poverty has consecrated the poverty of His house. Let us, therefore, think of His cross and count riches to be but dirt. Why do we admire what Christ calls "the mammon of unrighteousness"? [Luke 16:9] Why do we cherish and love what it is Peter's boast not to possess? [Acts 3:6] Or if we insist on keeping to the letter and find the mention of gold and wealth so pleasing, let us keep to everything else as well as the gold. Let the bishops of Christ be bound to marry wives, who must be virgins. [Levit. 21:14]

Let the best-intentioned priest be deprived of his office if he bear a scar and be disfigured. [Levit. 21:17-23] Let bodily leprosy be counted worse than spots upon the soul.

Let us be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, [Gen. 1:28] but let us slay no lamb and celebrate no mystic passover, for where there is no temple, [Deut. 16:5] the law forbids these acts. Let us pitch tents in the seventh month [Levit. 23:40-42] and noise abroad a solemn fast with the sound of a horn. [Joel 2:15] But if we compare all these things as spiritual with things which are spiritual; [1 Cor. 2:13] and if we allow with Paul that "the Law is spiritual" [Rom. 7:14] and call to mind David's words: "open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law; [Ps. 119:18] and if on these grounds we interpret it as our Lord interprets it-He has explained the Sabbath in this way: [Matt. 12:1-9] then, rejecting the superstitions of the Jews, we must also reject the gold; or, approving the gold, we must approve the Jews as well. For we must either accept them with the gold or condemn them with it.

11. Avoid entertaining men of the world, especially those whose honours make them swell with pride. You are the priest of Christ-one poor and crucified who lived on the bread of strangers. It is a disgrace to you if the consul's lictors or soldiers keep watch before your door, and if the Judge of the province has a better dinner with you than in his own palace. If you plead as an excuse your wish to intercede for the unhappy and the oppressed, I reply that a worldly judge will defer more to a clergyman who is self-denying than to one who is rich; he will pay more regard to your holiness than to your wealth. Or if he is a man who will not hear the clergy on behalf of the distressed except over the bowl, I will readily forego his aid and will appeal to Christ who can help more effectively and speedily than any judge. Truly "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." [Ps. 118:8, Ps. 118:9]

Let your breath never smell of wine lest the philosopher's words be said to you: "instead of offering me a kiss you are giving me a taste of wine." Priests given to wine are both condemned by the apostle [1 Tim. 3:3] and forbidden by the old Law. Those who serve the altar, we are told, must drink neither wine nor shechar. Now every intoxicating drink is in Hebrew called shechar whether it is made of corn or of the juice of apples, whether you distil from the honeycomb a rude kind of mead or make a liquor by squeezing dates or strain a thick syrup from a decoction of corn. Whatever intoxicates and disturbs the balance of the mind avoid as you would wine. I do not say that we are to condemn what is a creature of God. The Lord Himself was called a "wine-bibber" and wine in moderation was allowed to Timothy because of his weak stomach. I only require that drinkers should observe that limit which their age, their health, or their constitution requires. But if without drinking wine at all I am aglow with youth and am inflamed by the heat of my blood

and am of a strong and lusty habit of body, I will readily forego the cup in which I cannot but suspect poison. The Greeks have an excellent saying which will perhaps bear translation,

Fat bellies have no sentiments refined. 12. Lay upon yourself only as much fasting as you can bear, and let your fasts be pure, chaste, simple, moderate, and not superstitious. What good is it to use no oil if you seek after the most troublesome and out-of-the-way kinds of food, dried figs, pepper, nuts, dates, fine flour, honey, pistachios? All the resources of gardening are strained to save us from eating household bread; and to pursue dainties we turn our backs on the kingdom of heaven. There are some, I am told, who reverse the laws of nature and the race; for they neither eat bread nor drink water but imbibe thin decoctions of crushed herbs and beet-juice-not from a cup but from a shell. Shame on us that we have no blushes for such follies and that we feel no disgust at such superstition! To crown all, in the midst of our dainties we seek a reputation for abstinence. The strictest fast is bread and water. But because it brings with it no glory and because we all of us live on bread and water, it is reckoned no fast at all but an ordinary and common matter.

13. Do not angle for compliments, lest, while you win the popular applause, you do despite to God. "If I yet pleased men," says the apostle, "I should not be the servant of Christ." [Gal. 1:10] He ceased to please men when he became Christ's servant Christ's soldier marches on through good report and evil report, [2 Cor. 6:8] the one on the right hand and the other on the left. No praise elates him, no reproaches crush him. He is not puffed up by riches, nor does he shrink into himself because of poverty. Joy and sorrow he alike despises. The sun does not burn him by day nor the moon by night. [Ps. 121:6] Do not pray at the corners of the streets, [Matt. 6:5] lest the applause of men interrupt the straight course of your prayers. Do not broaden your fringes and for show wear phylacteries, [Matt. 23:5] or, despite of conscience, wrap yourself in the self-seeking of the Pharisee. Would you know what mode of apparel the Lord requires? Have prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude. Let these be the four quarters of your horizon, let them be a four-horse team to bear you, Christ's charioteer, at full speed to your goal. No necklace can be more precious than these; no gems can form a brighter galaxy. By them you are decorated, you are girt about, you are protected on every side. They are your defence as well as your glory; for every gem is turned into a shield.

14. Beware also of a blabbing tongue and of itching ears. Neither detract from others nor listen to detractors. "Thou sittest," says the psalmist, "and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done and I kept silence; thou thoughtest wickedly that I was such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes." [Ps. 50:20, Ps. 50:21] Keep your tongue from cavilling and watch over your words. Know that

in judging others you are passing sentence on yourself and that you are yourself guilty of the faults which you blame in them. It is no excuse to say: ”if others tell me things I cannot be rude to them.” No one cares to speak to an unwilling listener. An arrow never lodges in a stone: often it recoils upon the shooter of it. Let the detractor learn from your unwillingness to listen not to be so ready to detract. Solomon says:-”meddle not with them that are given to detraction: for their calamity shall rise suddenly; and who knoweth the destruction of them both?” [Prov. 24:21, 22, Vulg] -of the detractor, that is, and of the person who lends an ear to his detraction.

15. It is your duty to visit the sick, to know the homes and children of ladies who are married, and to guard the secrets of noblemen. Make it your object, therefore, to keep your tongue chaste as well as your eyes. Never discuss a woman’s figure nor let one house know what is going on in another. Hippocrates, before he will teach his pupils, makes them take an oath and compels them to swear fealty to him. He binds them over to silence, and prescribes for them their language, their gait, their dress, their manners. How much more reason have we to whom the medicine of the soul has been committed to love the houses of all Christians as our own homes. Let them know us as comforters in sorrow rather than as guests in time of mirth. That clergyman soon becomes an object of contempt who being often asked out to dinner never refuses to go.

16. Let us never seek for presents and rarely accept them when we are asked to do so. For ”it is more blessed to give than to receive.” [Acts 20:35] Somehow or other the very man who begs leave to offer you a gift holds you the cheaper for your acceptance of it; while, if you refuse it, it is wonderful how much more he will come to respect you. The preacher of continence must not be a maker of marriages. Why does he who reads the apostle’s words ”it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none” [1 Cor. 7:29] -why does he press a virgin to marry? Why does a priest, who must be a monogamist, [1 Tim. 3:2] urge a widow to marry again? How can the clergy be managers and stewards of other men’s households, when they are bidden to disregard even their own interests? To wrest a thing from a friend is theft but to cheat the Church is sacrilege. When you have received money to be doled out to the poor, to be cautious or to hesitate while crowds are starving is to be worse than a robber; and to subtract a portion for yourself is to commit a crime of the deepest dye. I am tortured with hunger and are you to judge what will satisfy my cravings? Either divide immediately what you have received, or, if you are a timid almoner, send the donor to distribute his own gifts. Your purse ought not to remain full while I am in need. No one can look after what is mine better than I can. He is the best almoner who keeps nothing for himself.

17. You have compelled me, my dear Nepotian, in spite of the castigation which my treatise on Virginity has bad to endure-the one which I wrote for the saintly

Eustochium at Rome: -you have compelled me after ten years have passed once more to open my mouth at Bethlehem and to expose myself to the stabs of every tongue. For I could only escape from criticism by writing nothing-a course made impossible by your request; and I knew when I took up my pen that the shafts of all gainsayers would be launched against me. I beg such to hold their peace and to desist from gainsaying: for I have written to them not as to opponents but as to friends. I have not inveighed against those who sin: I have but warned them to sin no more. My judgment of myself has been as strict as my judgment of them. When I have wished to remove the mote from my neighbour's eye, I have first east out the beam in my own. [Matt. 7:3-5] I have calumniated no one. Not a name has been hinted at. My words have not been aimed at individuals and my criticism of shortcomings has been quite general. If any one wishes to be angry with me he will have first to own that he himself suits my description.

Letter 53. To Paulinus.

Jerome urges Paulinus, bishop of Nola, (for whom see Letter 58.) to make a diligent study of the Scriptures and to this end reminds him of the zeal for learning displayed not only by the wisest of the pagans but also by the apostle Paul. Then going through the two Testaments in detail he describes the contents of the several books and the lessons which may be learned from them. He concludes with an appeal to Paulinus to divest himself wholly of his earthly wealth and to devote himself altogether to God. Written in 394 a.d. 1. Our brother Ambrose along with your little gifts has delivered to me a most charming letter which, though it comes at the beginning of our friendship, gives assurance of tried fidelity and of long continued attachment. A true intimacy cemented by Christ Himself is not one which depends upon material considerations, or upon the presence of the persons, or upon an insincere and exaggerated flattery; but one such as ours, wrought by a common fear of God and a joint study of the divine scriptures.

We read in old tales that men traversed provinces, crossed seas, and visited strange peoples, simply to see face to face persons whom they only knew from books. Thus Pythagoras visited the prophets of Memphis; and Plato, besides visiting Egypt and Archytas of Tarentum, most carefully explored that part of the coast of Italy which was formerly called Great Greece. In this way the influential Athenian master with whose lessons the schools of the Academy resounded became at once a pilgrim and a pupil choosing modestly to learn what others had to teach rather than over confidently to propound views of his own. Indeed his pursuit of learning-which seemed to fly before him all the world over-finally led to his capture by pirates who sold him into slavery to a cruel tyrant. Thus he became a prisoner, a bondman, and a slave; yet, as he was always a philosopher, he was greater still than the man who purchased him. Again we read that certain noblemen journeyed from the most remote parts of Spain and Gaul to visit Titus Livius, [Cf. Quint. X. 1:32] and listen to his eloquence which flowed like a fountain of milk. Thus the fame of an individual had more power to draw men to Rome than the attractions of the city itself; and the age displayed an unheard of and noteworthy portent in the shape of men who, entering the great city, bestowed their attention not upon it but upon something else.

Apollonius too was a traveller-the one I mean who is called the sorcerer by ordinary people and the philosopher by such as follow Pythagoras. He entered Persia, traversed the Caucasus and made his way through the Albanians, the Scythians, the Massagetae, and the richest districts of India. At last, after crossing that wide river the Pison, [Gen. 2:11] he came to the Brahmans. There he saw Hiarcas [Philostratus 3:7] sitting upon his golden throne and drinking from his Tantalus-fountain, and heard him instructing a few disciples upon the nature, motions, and orbits of the heavenly bodies. After this he travelled among the Elamites, the Babylonians, the Chaldeans, the Medes, the Assyrians, the Parthians, the Syrians, the Phenicians, the Arabians, and the Philistines. Then returning to Alexandria he made his way to Ethiopia to see the gymnosophists and the famous table of the sun spread in the sands of the desert. [Herod. 3:17, 18] Everywhere he found something to learn, and as he was always going to new places, he became constantly wiser and better. Philostratus has written the story of his life at length in eight books.

2. But why should I confine my allusions to the men of this world, when the Apostle Paul, the chosen vessel [Acts 9:15] the doctor of the Gentiles, who could boldly say: ”Do ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me?” [2 Cor. 13:3] knowing that he really had within him that greatest of guests-when even he after visiting Damascus and Arabia ”went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and abode with him fifteen days.” [Gal. 1:17, Gal. 1:18] For he who was to be a preacher to the Gentiles had to be instructed in the mystical numbers seven and eight. And again fourteen years after he took Barnabas and Titus and communicated his gospel to the apostles lest by any means he should have run or had run in vain. [Gal. 2:1, Gal. 2:2] Spoken words possess an indefinable hidden power, and teaching that passed directly from the mouth of the speaker into the ears of the disciples is more impressive than any other. When the speech of Demosthenes against Aeschines was recited before the latter during his exile at Rhodes, amid all the admiration and applause he sighed ”if you could but have heard the brute deliver his own periods!

3. I do not adduce these instances because I have anything in me from which you either can or will learn a lesson, but to show you that your zeal and eagerness to learn-even though you cannot rely on help from me-are in themselves worthy of praise. A mind willing to learn deserves commendation even when it has no teacher. What is of importance to me is not what you find but what you seek to find. Wax is soft and easy to mould even where the hands of craftsman and modeller are wanting to work it. It is already potentially all that it can be made. The apostle Paul learned the Law of Moses and the prophets at the feet of Gamaliel and was glad that he had done so, for armed with this spiritual armour, he was able to say boldly ”the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; armed with these we war ”casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; and being in a readiness

to revenge all disobedience. [2 Cor. 10:4-6] He writes to Timothy who had been trained in the holy writings from a child exhorting him to study them diligently [2 Tim. 3:14, 2 Tim. 3:15] and not to neglect the gift which was given him with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

[1 Tim. 4:14] To Titus he gives commandment that among a bishop's other virtues (which he briefly describes) he should be careful to seek a knowledge of the scriptures: A bishop, he says, must hold fast "the faithful word as he hath been taught that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. [Tit. 1:9] In fact want of education in a clergyman prevents him from doing good to any one but himself and much as the virtue of his life may build up Christ's church, he does it an injury as great by failing to resist those who are trying to pull it down. The prophet Haggai says-or rather the Lord says it by the mouth of Haggai-"Ask now the priests concerning the law. [Hag. 2:11] For such is the important function of the priesthood to give answers to those who question them concerning the law. And in Deuteronomy we read "Ask thy father and he will shew thee; thy elders and they will tell thee. [Deut. 32:7] Also in the one hundred and nineteenth psalm "thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. David too, in the description of the righteous man whom he compares to the tree of life in paradise, amongst his other excellences speaks of this, "His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

[Ps. 1:2] In the close of his most solemn vision Daniel declares that "the righteous shall shine as the stars; and the wise, that is the learned, as the firmament. [Dan. 12:3] You can see, therefore, how great is the difference between righteous ignorance and instructed righteousness. Those who have the first are compared with the stars, those who have the second with the heavens. Yet, according to the exact sense of the Hebrew, both statements may be understood of the learned, for it is to be read in this way:-"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. Why is the apostle Paul called a chosen vessel? [Acts 9:15] Assuredly because he is a repertory of the Law and of the holy scriptures. The learned teaching of our Lord strikes the Pharisees dumb with amazement, and they are filled with astonishment to find that Peter and John know the Law although they have not learned letters. For to these the Holy Ghost immediately suggested what comes to others by daily study and meditation; and, as it is written, [1 Thess. 4:9] they were "taught of God. The Saviour had only accomplished his twelfth year when the scene in the temple took place; [Luke 2:46] but when he interrogated the elders concerning the Law His wise questions conveyed rather than sought information.

4. But perhaps we ought to call Peter and John ignorant, both of whom could say of themselves, "though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge. [2 Cor. 11:6] Was John a mere fisherman, rude and untaught? If so, whence did he get the words

”In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God. [Joh. 1:1] Logos in Greek has many meanings. It signifies word and reason and reckoning and the cause of individual things by which those which are subsist. All of which things we rightly predicate of Christ. This truth Plato with all his learning did not know, of this Demosthenes with all his eloquence was ignorant. ”I will destroy,” it is said, ”the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. [1 Cor. 1:19] The true wisdom must destroy the false, and, although the foolishness of preaching [1 Cor. 1:21] is inseparable from the Cross, Paul speaks ”wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought,” but he speaks ”the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world. [1 Cor. 2:6, 1 Cor. 2:7] God’s wisdom is Christ, for Christ, we are told, is ”the power of God and the wisdom of God.

[1 Cor. 1:24] He is the wisdom which is hidden in a mystery, of which also we read in the heading of the ninth psalm ”for the hidden things of the son. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He also who was hidden in a mystery is the same that was foreordained before the world. Now it was in the Law and in the Prophets that he was foreordained and prefigured. For this reason too the prophets were called seers, [1 Sam. 9:9] because they saw Him whom others did not see. Abraham saw His day and was glad. [Joh. 8:56] The heavens which were sealed to a rebellious people were opened to Ezekiel. ”Open thou mine eyes,” saith David, ”that I may behold wonderful things out of thy Law. [Ps. 119:18] For ”the law is spiritual” [Rom. 7:14] and a revelation is needed to enable us to comprehend it and, when God uncovers His face, to behold His glory.

5. In the apocalypse a book is shewn sealed with seven seals, [Rev. 5:1] which if you deliver to one that is learned saying, Read this, he will answer you, I cannot, for it is sealed. [Isa. 29:11] How many there are to-day who fancy themselves learned, yet the scriptures are a sealed book to them, and one which they cannot open save through Him who has the key of David, ”he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth.” [Rev. 3:7] In the Acts of the Apostles the holy eunuch (or rather ”man” for so the scripture calls him [Acts 8:27]) when reading Isaiah he is asked by Philip ”Understandest thou what thou readest?”, makes answer:-”How can I except some man should guide me?” [Acts 8:30, Acts 8:31] To digress for a moment to myself, I am neither holier nor more diligent than this eunuch, who came from Ethiopia, that is from the ends of the world, to the Temple leaving behind him a queen’s palace, and was so great a lover of the Law and of divine knowledge that he read the holy scriptures even in his chariot. Yet although he had the book in his hand and took into his mind the words of the Lord, nay even had them on his tongue and uttered them with his lips, he still knew not Him, whom-not knowing-he worshipped in the book. Then Philip came and shewed him Jesus, who was concealed beneath the letter. Wondrous excellence of the teacher!

In the same hour the eunuch believed and was baptized; he became one of the faithful and a saint. He was no longer a pupil but a master; and he found more in the church's font there in the wilderness than he had ever done in the gilded temple of the synagogue.

6. These instances have been just touched upon by me (the limits of a letter forbid a more discursive treatment of them) to convince you that in the holy scriptures you can make no progress unless you have a guide to shew you the way. I say nothing of the knowledge of grammarians, rhetoricians, philosophers, geometers, logicians, musicians, astronomers, astrologers, physicians, whose several kinds of skill are most useful to mankind, and may be ranged under the three heads of teaching, method, and proficiency. I will pass to the less important crafts which require manual dexterity more than mental ability. Husbandmen, masons, carpenters, workers in wood and metal, wool-dressers and fullers, as well as those artisans who make furniture and cheap utensils, cannot attain the ends they seek without instruction from qualified persons.As Horace says "Doctors alone profess the healing art And none but joiners ever try to join." 7. The art of interpreting the scriptures is the only one of which all men everywhere claim to be masters. To quote Horace again

"Taught or untaught we all write poetry." [Hor. Ep. II. 1:117] The chatty old woman, the doting old man, and the wordy sophist, one and all take in hand the Scriptures, rend them in pieces and teach them before they have learned them. Some with brows knit and bombastic words, balanced one against the other philosophize concerning the sacred writings among weak women. Others-I blush to say it-learn of women what they are to teach men; and as if even this were not enough, they boldly explain to others what they themselves by no means understand. I say nothing of persons who, like myself have been familiar with secular literature before they have come to the study of the holy scriptures. Such men when they charm the popular ear by the finish of their style suppose every word they say to be a law of God. They do not deign to notice what Prophets and apostles have intended but they adapt conflicting passages to suit their own meaning, as if it were a grand way of teaching-and not rather the faultiest of all-to misrepresent a writer's views and to force the scriptures reluctantly to do their will. They forget that we have read centos from Homer and Virgil; but we never think of calling the Christless Maro a Christian because of his lines:-

Now comes the Virgin back and Saturn's reign, "Now from high heaven comes a Child newborn." [Virg. E. 4:6, 7] Another line might be addressed by the Father to the Son:- "Hail, only Son, my Might and Majesty." [Virg. A. 1:664] And yet another might follow the Saviour's words on the cross:- "Such words he spake and there transfixed remained." [Virg. A. 2:650] But all this is puerile, and resembles the

sleight-of-hand of a mountebank. It is idle to try to teach what you do not know, and-if I may speak with some warmth-is worse still to be ignorant of your ignorance.

8. Genesis, we shall be told, needs no explanation; its topics are too simple-the birth of the world, the origin of the human race, the division of the earth, the confusion of tongues, and the descent of the Hebrews into Egypt! Exodus, no doubt, is equally plain, containing as it does merely an account of the ten plagues, the decalogue, and sundry mysterious and divine precepts! The meaning of Leviticus is of course self-evident, although every sacrifice that it describes, nay more every word that it contains, the description of Aaron's vestments, and all the regulations connected with the Levites are symbols of things heavenly! The book of Numbers too-are not its very figures, and Balaam's prophecy, and the forty-two camping places in the wilderness so many mysteries? Deuteronomy also, that is the second law or the foreshadowing of the law of the gospel,-does it not, while exhibiting things known before, put old truths in a new light? So far the 'five words' of the Pentateuch, with which the apostle boasts his wish to speak in the Church. [1 Cor. 14:19] Then, as for Job, that pattern of patience, what mysteries are there not contained in his discourses? Commencing in prose the book soon glides into verse and at the end once more reverts to prose. By the way in which it lays down propositions, assumes postulates, adduces proofs, and draws inferences, it illustrates all the laws of logic. Single words occurring in the book are full of meaning.

To say nothing of other topics, it prophesies the resurrection of men's bodies at once with more clearness and with more caution than any one has yet shewn. "I know," Job says, "that my redeemer liveth, and that at the last day I shall rise again from the earth; and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. This my hope is stored up in my own bosom. [Job 19:25-27, Vulg] I will pass on to Jesus the son of Nave -a type of the Lord in name as well as in deed-who crossed over Jordan, subdued hostile kingdoms, divided the land among the conquering people and who, in every city, village, mountain, river, hill-torrent, and boundary which he dealt with, marked out the spiritual realms of the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, of the church. [Gal. 4:26] In the book of Judges every one of the popular leaders is a type. Ruth the Moabitess fulfils the prophecy of Isaiah:-"Send thou a lamb, O Lord, as ruler of the land from the rock of the wilderness to the mount of the daughter of Zion. Under the figures of Eli's death and the slaying of Saul Samuel shews the abolition of the old law. Again in Zadok and in David he bears witness to the mysteries of the new priesthood and of the new royalty.

The third and fourth books of Kings called in Hebrew Malachim give the history of the kingdom of Judah from Solomon to Jeconiah, and of that of Israel from Jeroboam the son of Nebat to Hoshea who was carried away into Assyria. If you merely

regard the narrative, the words are simple enough, but if you look beneath the surface at the hidden meaning of it, you find a description of the small numbers of the church and of the wars which the heretics wage against it. The twelve prophets whose writings are compressed within the narrow limits of a single volume, have typical meanings far different from their literal ones. Hosea speaks many times of Ephraim, of Samaria, of Joseph, of Jezreel, of a wife of whoredoms and of children of whoredoms, [Hos. 1:2] of an adulteress shut up within the chamber of her husband, sitting for a long time in widowhood and in the garb of mourning, awaiting the time when her husband will return to her. [Hos. 3:1, 3, 4] Joel the son of Pethuel describes the land of the twelve tribes as spoiled and devastated by the palmerworm the canker-worm, the locust, and the blight, [Joel 1:4] and predicts that after the overthrow of the former people the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon God's servants and handmaids; [Joel 2:29] the same spirit, that is, which was to be poured out in the upper chamber at Zion upon the one hundred and twenty believers.

[Acts 1:13, Acts 1:15] These believers rising by gradual and regular gradations from one to fifteen form the steps to which there is a mystical allusion in the "psalms of degrees. Amos, although he is only "an herdman" from the country, "a gatherer of sycomore fruit," [Amos 7:14] cannot be explained in a few words. For who can adequately speak of the three transgressions and the four of Damascus, of Gaza, of Tyre, of Idumaea, of Moab, of the children of Ammon, and in the seventh and eighth place of Judah and of Israel? He speaks to the fat kine that are in the mountain of Samaria, [Amos 4:1] and bears witness that the great house and the little house shall fall. [Amos 6:11] He sees now the maker of the grasshopper, [Amos 7:1] now the Lord, standing upon a wall [Amos 7:7] daubed or made of adamant, now a basket of apples [Amos 8:1] that brings doom to the transgressors, and now a famine upon the earth "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. [Amos 8:11] Obadiah, whose name means the servant of God, thunders against Edom red with blood and against the creature born of earth. He smites him with the spear of the spirit because of his continual rivalry with his brother Jacob. Jonah, fairest of doves, whose shipwreck shews in a figure the passion of the Lord, recalls the world to penitence, and while he preaches to Nineveh, announces salvation to all the heathen.

Micah the Morasthite a joint heir with Christ announces the spoiling of the daughter of the robber and lays siege against her, because she has smitten the jawbone of the judge of Israel. [Mic. 5:1, Vulg] Nahum, the consoler of the world, rebukes "the bloody city" [i.e., Nineveh-Nahum 3:1] and when it is overthrown cries: -"Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings. [Nahum 1:15] Habakkuk, like a strong and unyielding wrestler, stands upon his watch and sets his foot upon the tower [Hab. 2:1] that he may contemplate Christ upon the cross and say "His glory covered the heavens and the earth was full of his praise. And his

brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. [Hab. 3:3, Hab. 3:4] Zephaniah, that is the bodyguard and knower of the secrets of the Lord, hears ”a cry from the fishgate, and an howling from the second, and a great crashing from the hills. [Zeph. 1:10] He proclaims ”howling to the inhabitants of the mortar; for all the people of Canaan are undone; all they that were laden with silver are cut off. [Zeph. 1:11, RV] Haggai, that is he who is glad or joyful, who has sown in tears to reap in joy, [Ps. 126:5] is occupied with the rebuilding of the temple.

He represents the Lord(the Father, that is) as saying ”Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations and he who is desired of all nations shall come’ [Hag. 2:6, Hag. 2:7] Zechariah, he that is mindful of his Lord, gives us many prophecies. He sees Jesus, ”clothed with filthy garments,” [Zech. 3:3] a stone with seven eyes, [Zech. 3:9] a candle-stick all of gold with lamps as many as the eyes, and two olivetrees on the right side of the bowl [Zech. 4:2, Zech. 4:3] and on the left. After he has described the horses, red, black, white, and grisled, [Zech. 6:1-3] and the cutting off of the chariot from Ephraim and of the horse from Jerusalem [Zech. 9:10] he goes on to prophesy and predict a king who shall be a poor man and who shall sit ”upon a colt the foal of an ass. [Zech. 9:9] Malachi, the last of all the prophets, speaks openly of the rejection of Israel and the calling of the nations. ”I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name is great among the Gentiles: and in every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering.

[Mal. 1:10, Mal. 1:11, RV] As for Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, who can fully understand or adequately explain them? The first of them seems to compose not a prophecy but a gospel. The second speaks of a rod of an almond tree [Jer. 1:11] and of a seething pot with its face toward the north, [Jer. 1:13] and of a leopard which has changed its spots. [Jer. 13:23] He also goes four times through the alphabet in different metres. The beginning and ending of Ezekiel, the third of the four, are involved in so great obscurity that like the commencement of Genesis they are not studied by the Hebrews until they are thirty years old. Daniel, the fourth and last of the four prophets, having knowledge of the times and being interested in the whole world, in clear language proclaims the stone cut out of the mountain without hands that overthrows all kingdoms. [Dan. 2:45] David, who is our Simonides, Pindar, and Alcaeus, our Horace, our Catullus, and our Serenus all in one, sings of Christ to his lyre; and on a psaltery with ten strings calls him from the lower world to rise again. Solomon, a lover of peace and of the Lord, corrects morals, teaches nature, unites Christ and the church, and sings a sweet marriage song to celebrate that holy bridal. Esther, a type of the church, frees

her people from danger and, after having slain Haman whose name means iniquity, hands down to posterity a memorable day and a great feast.

The book of things omitted or epitome of the old dispensation is of such importance and value that without it any one who should claim to himself a knowledge of the scriptures would make himself a laughing stock in his own eyes. Every name used in it, nay even the conjunction of the words, serves to throw light on narratives passed over in the books of Kings and upon questions suggested by the gospel. Ezra and Nehemiah, that is the Lord's helper and His consoler, are united in a single book. They restore the Temple and build up the walls of the city. In their pages we see the throng of the Israelites returning to their native land, we read of priests and Levites, of Israel proper and of proselytes; and we are even told the several families to which the task of building the walls and towers was assigned. These references convey one meaning upon the surface, but another below it.

9. [In Migne, 8. You see how, carried away by my love of the scriptures, I have exceeded the limits of a letter yet have not fully accomplished my object. We have heard only what it is that we ought to know and to desire, so that we too may be able to say with the psalmist:-"My soul breaketh out for the very fervent desire that it hath alway unto thy judgments. [Ps. 119:20, PBV] But the saying of Socrates about himself-"this only I know that I know nothing" -is fulfilled in our case also. The New Testament I will briefly deal with. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are the Lord's team of four, the true cherubim or store of knowledge. With them the whole body is full of eyes, [Ezek. 1:18, Vulg] they glitter as sparks, [Ezek. 1:7] they run and return like lightning, [Ezek. 1:14] their feet are straight feet, [Ezek. 1:7] and lifted up, their backs also are winged, ready to fly in all directions. They hold together each by each and are interwoven one with another: [Ezek. 1:11] like wheels within wheels they roll along [Ezek. 1:16] and go whithersoever the breath of the Holy Spirit wafts them. [Ezek. 1:20] The apostle Paul writes to seven churches (for the eighth epistle-that to the Hebrews-is not generally counted in with the others). He instructs Timothy and Titus; he intercedes with Philemon for his runaway slave. Of him I think it better to say nothing than to write inadequately.

The Acts of the Apostles seem to relate a mere unvarnished narrative descriptive of the infancy of the newly born church; but when once we realize that their author is Luke the physician whose praise is in the gospel, [Col. 4:14; 2 Cor. 8:18] we shall see that all his words are medicine for the sick soul. The apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude, have published seven epistles at once spiritual and to the point, short and long, short that is in words but lengthy in substance so that there are few indeed who do not find themselves in the dark when they read them. The apocalypse of John has as many mysteries as words. In saying this I have said less than the book deserves. All praise of it is inadequate; manifold meanings lie hid in its every word.

10. [In Migne, 9.] I beg of you, my dear brother, to live among these books, to meditate upon them, to know nothing else, to seek nothing else. Does not such a life seem to you a foretaste of heaven here on earth? Let not the simplicity of the scripture or the poorness of its vocabulary offend you; for these are due either to the faults of translators or else to deliberate purpose: for in this way it is better fitted for the instruction of an unlettered congregation as the educated person can take one meaning and the uneducated another from one and the same sentence. I am not so dull or so forward as to profess that I myself know it, or that I can pluck upon the earth the fruit which has its root in heaven, but I confess that I should like to do so. I put myself before the man who sits idle and, while I lay no claim to be a master, I readily pledge myself to be a fellow-student. ”Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.” [Matt. 7:8] Let us learn upon earth that knowledge which will continue with us in heaven.

11. [In Migne, 10. I will receive you with open hands and-if I may boast and speak foolishly like Hermagoras -I will strive to learn with you whatever you desire to study. Eusebius who is here regards you with the affection of a brother; he has made your letter twice as precious by telling me of your sincerity of character, your contempt for the world, your constancy in friendship, and your love to Christ. The letter bears on its face (without any aid from him) your prudence and the charm of your style. Make haste then, I beseech you, and cut instead of loosing the hawser which prevents your vessel from moving in the sea. The man who sells his goods because he despises them and means to renounce the world can have no desire to sell them dear. Count as money gained the sum that you must expend upon your outfit. There is an old saying that a miser lacks as much what he has as what he has not. The believer has a whole world of wealth; the unbeliever has not a single farthing. Let us always live ”as having nothing and yet possessing all things. [2 Cor. 6:10] Food and raiment, these are the Christian’s wealth. [1 Tim. 6:8] If your property is in your own power, [Cf. Acts 5:4] sell it: if not, cast it from you. ”If any man… will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. [Matt. 5:40] You are all for delay, you wish to defer action:

unless-so you argue-unless I sell my goods piecemeal and with caution, Christ will be at a loss to feed his poor. Nay, he who has offered himself to God, has given Him everything once for all. The apostles did but forsake ships and nets. [Matt. 4:18-22] The widow cast but two brass coins into the treasury [Mark 12:41-44] and yet she shall be preferred before Croesus with all his wealth. He readily despises all things who reflects always that he must die.

Letter 54. To Furia.

A letter of guidance to a widow on the best means of preserving her widowhood (according to Jerome 'the second of the three degrees of chastity'). Furia had at one time thought of marrying again but eventually abandoned her intention and devoted herself to the care of her young children and her aged father. Jerome draws a vivid picture of the dangers to which she is exposed at Rome, lays down rules of conduct for her guidance, and commends her to the care of the presbyter Exuperius (afterwards bishop of Toulouse). The date of the letter is 394 a.d. 1. You beg and implore me in your letter to write to you-or rather write back to you-what mode of life you ought to adopt to preserve the crown of widowhood and to keep your reputation for chastity unsullied. My mind rejoices, my reins exult, and my heart is glad that you desire to be after marriage what your mother Titiana of holy memory was for a long time in marriage. Her prayers and supplications are heard. She has succeeded in winning afresh in her only daughter that which she herself when living possessed. It is a high privilege of your family that from the time of Camillus few or none of your house are described as contracting second marriages. Therefore it will not redound so much to your praise if you continue a widow as to your shame if being a Christian you fail to keep what heathen women have jealously guarded for so many centuries.

2. I say nothing of Paula and Eustochium, the fairest flowers of your stock; for, as my object is to exhort you, I do not wish it to appear that I am praising them. Blaesilla too I pass over who following her husband-your brother-to the grave, fulfilled in a short time of life a long time of virtue. [Wisdom 4:13] Would that men would imitate the laudable examples of women, and that wrinkled old age would pay at last what youth gladly offers at first! In saying this I am putting my hand into the fire deliberately and with my eyes open. Men will knit their brows and shake their clenched fists at me; "In swelling tones will angry Chremes rave." The leaders will rise as one man against my epistle; the mob of patricians will thunder at me. They will cry out that I am a sorcerer and a seducer; and that I should be transported to the ends of the earth. They may add, if they will, the title of Samaritan; for in it I shall but recognize a name given to my Lord. But one thing is certain. I do not sever the daughter from the mother, I do not use the words of the gospel: "let the

dead bury their dead." [Matt. 8:22] For whosoever believes. in Christ is alive; and he who believes in Him "ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." [1 Joh. 2:6]

3. A truce to the calumnies which the malice of backbiters continually fastens upon all who call themselves Christians to keep them through fear of shame from aspiring to virtue. Except by letter we have no knowledge of each other; and where there is no knowledge after the flesh, there can be no motive for intercourse save a religious one. "Honour thy father," [Ex. 20:12] the commandment says, but only if he does not separate you from your true Father. Recognize the tie of blood but only so long as your parent recognizes his Creator. Should he fail to do so, David will sing to you: "hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people and thy father's house. So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord." [Ps. 45:10, Ps. 45:11] Great is the prize offered for the forgetting of a parent, "the king shall desire thy beauty." You have heard, you have considered, you have inclined your ear, you have forgotten your people and your father's house; therefore the king shall desire your beauty and shall say to you: - "thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." [Cant. 4:7] What can be fairer than a soul which is called the daughter of God, [Ps. 45:10] and which seeks for herself no outward adorning. [Cf. 1 Pet. 3:3] She believes in Christ, and, dowered with this hope of greatness makes her way to her spouse; for Christ is at once her bridegroom and her Lord.

4. What troubles matrimony involves you have learned in the marriage state itself; you have been surfeited with quails' flesh [Numb. 11:20, Numb. 11:31-4] even to loathing; your mouth has been filled with the gall of bitterness; you have expelled the indigestible and unwholesome food; you have relieved a heaving stomach. Why will you again swallow what has disagreed with you? "The dog is turned to his own vomit again and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." [Pet. 2:22] Even brute beasts and flying birds do not fall into the same snares twice. Do you fear extinction for the line of Camillus if you do not present your father with some little fellow to crawl upon his breast and slobber his neck? As if all who marry have children! and as if when they do come, they always resemble their forefathers! Did Cicero's son exhibit his father's eloquence? Had your own Cornelia, pattern at once of chastity and of fruitfulness, cause to rejoice that she was mother of her Gracchi? It is ridiculous to expect as certain the offspring which many, as you can see, have not got, while others who have had it have lost it again. To whom then are you to leave your great riches? To Christ who cannot die. Whom shall you make your heir? The same who is already your Lord. Your father will be sorry but Christ will be glad; your family will grieve but the angels will rejoice with you. Let your father do what he likes with what is his own. You are not his to whom you have been born, but His to whom you have been born again, and who has purchased you at a great price with His own blood. [Acts 20:28]

5. Beware of nurses and waiting maids and similar venomous creatures who try to satisfy their greed by sucking your blood. They advise you to do not what is best for you but what is best for them. They are for ever dinning into your ears Virgil's lines:- "Will you waste all your youth in lonely grief And children sweet, the gifts of love, forswear?" [Virg. A. 4:32.] Wherever there is holy chastity, there is also frugal living; and wherever there is frugal living, servants lose by it. What they do not get is in their minds so much taken from them. The actual sum received is what they look to, and not its relative amount. The moment they see a Christian they at once repeat the hackneyed saying:-"The Greek! The impostor!" They spread the most scandalous reports and, when any such emanates from themselves, they pretend that they have heard it from others, managing thus at once to originate the story and to exaggerate it. A lying rumour goes forth; and this, when it has reached the married ladies and has been fanned by their tongues, spreads through the provinces. You may see numbers of these-their faces painted, their eyes like those of vipers, their teeth rubbed with pumice-stone-raving and carping at Christians with insane fury. One of these ladies,

"A violet mantle round her shoulders thrown, Drawls out some mawkish stuff, speaks through her nose, And minces half her words with tripping tongue." [Persius 1:32 sqq] Hereupon the rest chime in and every bench expresses hoarse approval. They are backed up by men of my own order who, finding themselves assailed, assail others. Always fluent in attacking me, they are dumb in their own defence; just as though they were not monks themselves, and as though every word said against monks did not tell also against their spiritual progenitors the clergy. Harm done to the flock brings discredit on the shepherd. On the other hand we cannot but praise the life of a monk who holds up to veneration the priests of Christ and refuses to detract from that order to which he owes it that he is a Christian.

6. I have spoken thus, my daughter in Christ, not because I doubt that you will be faithful to your vows, (you would never have asked for a letter of advice had you been uncertain as to the blessedness of monogamy): but that you may realize the wickedness of servants who merely wish to sell you for their own advantage, the snares which relations may set for you and the well meant but mistaken suggestions of a father. While I allow that this latter feels love toward you, I cannot admit that it is love according to knowledge. I must say with the apostle: "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. [Rom. 10:2] Imitate rather-I cannot say it too often-your holy mother whose zeal for Christ comes into my mind as often as I remember her, and not her zeal only but the paleness induced in her by fasting, the alms given by her to the poor, the courtesy shewn by her to the servants of God, the lowliness of her garb and heart, and the constant moderation of her language. Of your father too I speak with respect, not because he is a patrician and of consular rank but because he is a Christian.

Let him be true to his profession as such. Let him rejoice that he has begotten a daughter for Christ and not for the world.

Nay rather let him grieve that you have in vain lost your virginity as the fruits of matrimony have not been yours. Where is the husband whom he gave to you? Even had he been lovable and good, death would still have snatched all away, and his decease would have terminated the fleshly bond between you. Seize the opportunity, I beg of you, and make a virtue of necessity. In the lives of Christians we look not to the beginnings but to the endings. Paul began badly but ended well. The start of Judas wins praise; his end is condemned because of his treachery. Read Ezekiel, "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness. [Ezek. 33:12] The Christian life is the true Jacob's ladder on which the angels ascend and descend, [Gen. 28:12] while the Lord stands above it holding out His hand to those who slip and sustaining by the vision of Himself the weary steps of those who ascend. But while He does not wish the death of a sinner, but only that he should be converted and live, He hates the lukewarm [Rev. 3:16] and they quickly cause him loathing. To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much. [Luke 7:47]

7. In the gospel a harlot wins salvation. How? She is baptized in her tears and wipes the Lord's feet with that same hair with which she had before deceived many. She does not wear a waving headdress or creaking boots, she does not darken her eyes with antimony. Yet in her squalor she is lovelier than ever. What place have rouge and white lead on the face of a Christian woman? The one simulates the natural red of the cheeks and of the lips; the other the whiteness of the face and of the neck. They serve only to inflame young men's passions, to stimulate lust, and to indicate an unchaste mind. How can a woman weep for her sins whose tears lay bare her true complexion and mark furrows on her cheeks? Such adorning is not of the Lord; a mask of this kind belongs to Antichrist. With what confidence can a woman raise features to heaven which her Creator must fail to recognize? It is idle to allege in excuse for such practices girlishness and youthful vanity. A widow who has ceased to have a husband to please, and who in the apostle's language a widow indeed, [1 Tim. 5:5] needs nothing more but perseverance only. She is mindful of past enjoyments, she knows what gave her pleasure and what she has now lost. By rigid fast and vigil she must quench the fiery darts of the devil. [Eph. 6:16] If we are widows, we must either speak as we are dressed, or else dress as we speak. Why do we profess one thing, and practise another? The tongue talks of chastity, but the rest of the body reveals incontinence.

8. So much for dress and adornment. But a widow "that liveth in pleasure"-the words are not mine but those of the apostle-"is dead while she liveth." [1 Tim. 5:6] What does that mean-"is dead while she liveth"? To those who know no better she

seems to be alive and not, as she is, dead in sin; yes, and in another sense dead to Christ, from whom no secrets are hid. ”The soul that sinneth it shall die.” [Ezek. 18:20] ”Some men’s sins are open ...going before to judgment: and some they follow after. Likewise also good works are manifest, and they that are otherwise cannot be hid. [1 Tim. 5:24, 1 Tim. 5:25] The words mean this:-Certain persons sin so deliberately and flagrantly that you no sooner see them than you know them at once to be sinners. But the defects of others are so cunningly concealed that we only learn them from subsequent information. Similarly the good deeds of some people are public property, while those of others we come to know only through long intimacy with them. Why then must we needs boast of our chastity, a thing which cannot prove itself to be genuine without its companions and attendants, continence and plain living? The apostle macerates his body and brings it into subjection to the soul lest what he has preached to others he should himself fail to keep; [1 Cor. 9:27] and can a mere girl whose passions are kindled by abundance of food, can a mere girl afford to be confident of her own chastity?

9. In saying this, I do not of course condemn food which God created to be enjoyed with thanksgiving, [1 Tim. 4:4] but I seek to remove from youths and girls what are incentives to sensual pleasure. Neither the fiery Etna nor the country of Vulcan, nor Vesuvius, nor Olympus, burns with such violent heat as the youthful marrow of those who are flushed with wine and filled with food. Many trample covetousness under foot, and lay it down as readily as they lay down their purse. An enforced silence serves to make amends for a railing tongue. The outward appearance and the mode of dress can be changed in a single hour. All other sins are external, and what is external can easily be cast away. Desire alone, implanted in men by God to lead them to procreate children, is internal; and this, if it once oversteps its own bounds, becomes a sin, and by a law of nature cries out for sexual intercourse. It is therefore a work of great merit, and one which requires unremitting diligence to overcome that which is innate in you; while living in the flesh not to live after the flesh; to strive with yourself day by day and to watch the foe shut up within you with the hundred eyes of the fabled Argus. This is what the apostle says in other words: ”Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

[1 Cor. 6:18] Physicians and others who have written on the nature of the human body, and particularly Galen in his books entitled On matters of health, say that the bodies of boys and of young men and of full grown men and women glow with an interior heat and consequently that for persons of these ages all food is injurious which tends to promote this heat: while on the other hand it is highly conducive to health in eating and in drinking to take things cold and cooling. Contrariwise they tell us that warm food and old wine are good for the old who suffer from humours and from chilliness. Hence it is that the Saviour says ”Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and

cares of this life. [Luke 21:34] So too speaks the apostle: ”Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess. [Eph. 5:18] No wonder that the potter spoke thus of the vessel which He had made when even the comic poet whose only object is to know and to describe the ways of men tells us that

Where Ceres fails and Liber, Venus droops. [Ter. Enn. 4:5, 6]

10. In the first place then, till you have passed the years of early womanhood, take only water to drink, for this is by nature of all drinks the most cooling. This, if your stomach is strong enough to bear it; but if your digestion is weak, hear what the apostle says to Timothy: ”use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities. [1 Tim. 5:23] Then as regards your food you must avoid all heating dishes. I do not speak of flesh dishes only (although of these the chosen vessel declares his mind thus: ”it is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine” [Rom. 14:21]) but of vegetables as well. Everything provocative or indigestible is to be refused. Be assured that nothing is so good for young Christians as the eating of herbs. Accordingly in another place he says: ”another who is weak eateth herbs. [Rom. 14:2] Thus the heat of the body must be tempered with cold food. Daniel and the three children lived on pulse. [Dan. 1:16] They were still boys and had not come yet to that frying-pan on which the King of Babylon fried the elders who were judges. Moreover, by an express privilege of God’s own giving their bodily condition was improved by their regimen. We do not expect that it will be so with us, but we look for increased vigour of soul which becomes stronger as the flesh grows weaker.

Some persons who aspire to the life of chastity fall midway in their journey from supposing that they need only abstain from flesh. They load their stomachs with vegetables which are only harmless when taken sparingly and in moderation. If I am to say what I think, there is nothing which so much heats the body and inflames the passions as undigested food and breathing broken with hiccoughs. As for you, my daughter, I would rather wound your modesty than endanger my case by understatement. Regard everything as poison which bears within it the seeds of sensual pleasure. A meagre diet which leaves the appetite always unsatisfied is to be preferred to fasts three days long. It is much better to take a little every day than some days to abstain wholly and on others to surfeit oneself. That rain is best which falls slowly to the ground. Showers that come down suddenly and with violence wash away the soil.

11. When you eat your meals, reflect that you must immediately afterwards pray and read. Have a fixed number of lines of holy scripture, and render it as your task to your Lord. On no account resign yourself to sleep until you have filled the basket of your breast with a woof of this weaving. After the holy scriptures you should read the writings of learned men; of those at any rate whose faith is well known. You need not go into the mire to seek for gold; you have many pearls, buy

the one pearl with these. [Matt. 13:45, Matt. 13:46] Stand, as Jeremiah says, in more ways than one that so you may come on the true way that leads to the Father. [Jer. 6:16] Exchange your love of necklaces and of gems and of silk dresses for earnestness in studying the scriptures. Enter the land of promise that flows with milk and honey. [Ex. 33:3] Eat fine flour and oil. Let your clothing be, like Joseph's, of many colors. [Gen. 37:23] Let your ears like those of Jerusalem [Ezek. 16:12] be pierced by the word of God that the precious grains of new corn may hang from them. In that reverend man Exuperius you have a man of tried years and faith ready to give you constant support with his advice.

12. Make to yourself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness that they may receive you into everlasting habitations. [Luke 16:9] Give your riches not to those who feed on pheasants but to those who have none but common bread to eat, such as stays hunger while it does not stimulate lust. Consider the poor and needy. [Ps. 41:1] Give to everyone that asks of you, [Matt. 5:42] but especially unto them who are of the household of faith. [Gal. 6:10] Clothe the naked, feed the hungry, visit the sick. [Cf. Matt. 25:35, Matt. 25:36] Every time that you hold out your hand, think of Christ. See to it that you do not, when the Lord your God asks an alms of you, increase riches which are none of His.

13. Avoid the company of young men. Let long baited youths dandified and wanton never be seen under your roof. Repel a singer as you would some bane. Hurry from your house women who live by playing and singing, the devil's choir whose songs are the fatal ones of sirens. Do not arrogate to yourself a widow's license and appear in public preceded by a host of eunuchs. It is a most mischievous thing for those who are weak owing to their sex and youth to misuse their own discretion and to suppose that things are lawful because they are pleasant. "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient. [1 Cor. 6:12] No frizzled steward nor shapely foster brother nor fair and ruddy footman must dangle at your heels. Sometimes the tone of the mistress is inferred from the dress of the maid. Seek the society of holy virgins and widows; and, if need arises for holding converse with men, do not shun having witnesses, and let your conversation be marked with such confidence that the entry of a third person shall neither startle you nor make you blush. The face is the mirror of the mind and a woman's eyes without a word betray the secrets of her heart. I have lately seen a most miserable scandal traverse the entire East. The lady's age and style, her dress and mien, the indiscriminate company she kept, her dainty table and her regal appointments bespoke her the bride of a Nero or of a Sardanapallus.

The scars of others should teach us caution. 'When he that causeth trouble is scourged the fool will be wiser.' [Prov. 19:25, Vulg] A holy love knows no impatience. A false rumor is quickly crushed and the after life passes judgment on that which has gone before. It is not indeed possible that any one should come to the

end of life's race without suffering from calumny; the wicked find it a consolation to carp at the good, supposing the guilt of sin to be less, in proportion as the number of those who commit it is greater. Still a fire of straw quickly dies out and a spreading flame soon expires if fuel to it be wanting. Whether the report which prevailed a year ago was true or false, when once the sin ceases, the scandal also will cease. I do not say this because I fear anything wrong in your case but because, owing to my deep affection for you, there is no safety that I do not fear. [Cf. Virg. A. 4:298] Oh! that you could see your sister and that it might be yours to hear the eloquence of her holy lips and to behold the mighty spirit which animates her diminutive frame. You might hear the whole contents of the old and new testaments come bubbling up out of her heart. Fasting is her sport, and prayer she makes her pastime.

Like Miriam after the drowning Pharaoh she takes up her timbrel and sings to the virgin choir, "Let us sing to the Lord for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. [Ex. 15:21] She teaches her companions to be music girls but music girls for Christ, to be luteplayers but luteplayers for the Saviour. In this occupation she passes both day and night and with oil ready to put in the lamps she waits the coming of the Bridegroom. [Matt. 25:4] Do you therefore imitate your kinswoman. Let Rome have in you what a grander city than Rome, I mean Bethlehem, has in her.

14. You have wealth and can easily therefore supply food to those who want it. Let virtue consume what was provided for self-indulgence; one who means to despise matrimony need fear no degree of want. Have about you troops of virgins whom you may lead into the king's chamber. Support widows that you may mingle them as a kind of violets with the virgins' lilies and the martyrs' roses. Such are the garlands you must weave for Christ in place of that crown of thorns [Matt. 27:29] in which he bore the sins of the world. Let your most noble father thus find in you his joy and support, let him learn from his daughter the lessons he used to learn from his wife. His hair is already gray, his knees tremble, his teeth fall out, his brow is furrowed through years, death is nigh even at the doors, the pyre is all but laid out hard by. Whether we like it or not, we grow old. Let him provide for himself the provision which is needful for his long journey. Let him take with him what otherwise he must unwillingly leave behind, nay let him send before him to heaven what if he declines it, will be appropriated by earth.

15. Young widows, of whom some "are already turned aside after Satan, when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ " [1 Tim. 5:15, 1 Tim. 5:11] and wish to marry, generally make such excuses as these. "My little patrimony is daily decreasing, the property which I have inherited is being squandered, a servant has spoken insultingly to me, a maid has neglected my orders. Who will appear for me before the authorities? Who will be responsible for the rents of my estates?

Who will see to the education of my children, and to the bringing up of my slaves?" Thus, shameful to say, they put that forward as a reason for marrying again, which alone should deter them from doing so. For by marrying again a mother places over her sons not a guardian but a foe, not a father but a tyrant. Inflamed by her passions she forgets the fruit of her womb, and among the children who know nothing of their sad fate the lately weeping widow dresses herself once more as a bride. Why these excuses about your property and the insolence of slaves? Confess the shameful truth. No woman marries to avoid cohabiting with a husband. At least, if passion is not your motive, it is mere madness to play the harlot just to increase wealth. You do but purchase a paltry and passing gain at the price of a grace which is precious and eternal! If you have children already, why do you want to marry? If you have none, why do you not fear a recurrence of your former sterility? Why do you put an uncertain gain before a certain loss of self-respect?

A marriage-settlement is made in your favour to-day but in a short time you will be constrained to make your will. Your husband will feign sickness and will do for you what he wants you to do for him. Yet he is sure to live and you are sure to die. Or if it happens that you have sons by the second husband, domestic strife is certain to result and intestine disputes. You will not be allowed to love your first children, nor to look kindly on those to whom you have yourself given birth. You will have to give them their food secretly; yet even so your present husband will bear a grudge against your previous one and, unless you hate your sons, he will think that you still love their father. But your husband have may issue by a former wife. If so when he takes you to his home, though you should be the kindest person in the world, all the commonplaces of rhetoricians and declamations of comic poets and writers of mimes will be hurled at you as a cruel stepmother. If your stepson fall sick or have a headache you will be calumniated as a poisoner. If you refuse him food, you will be cruel, while if you give it, you will be held to have bewitched him. I ask you what benefit has a second marriage to confer great enough to compensate for these evils?

16. Do we wish to know what widows ought to be? Let us read the gospel according to Luke. "There was one Anna," he says, "a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser. [Luke 2:36] The meaning of the name Anna is grace. Phanuel is in our tongue the face of God. Aser may be translated either as blessedness or as wealth. From her youth up to the age of fourscore and four years she had borne the burden of widowhood, not departing from the temple and giving herself to fastings and prayers night and day; therefore she earned spiritual grace, received the title 'daughter of the face of God,' and obtained a share in the 'blessedness and wealth' which belonged to her ancestry. Let us recall to mind the widow of Zarephath [1 K. 17] who thought more of satisfying Elijah's hunger than of preserving her own life and that of her son. Though she believed that she and he must die that very night unless they had food, she determined that her guest should survive. She preferred

to sacrifice her life rather than to neglect the duty of almsgiving. In her handful of meal she found the seed from which she was to reap a harvest sent her by the Lord. She sows her meal and lo! a cruse of oil comes from it. In the land of Judah grain was scarce for the corn of wheat had died there; [Joh. 12:24] but in the house of a heathen widow oil flowed in streams.

In the book of Judith-if any one is of opinion that it should be received as canonical-we read of a widow wasted with fasting and wearing the sombre garb of a mourner, whose outward squalor indicated not so much the regret which she felt for her dead husband as the temper in which she looked forward to the coming of the Bridegroom. I see her hand armed with the sword and stained with blood. I recognize the head of Holofernes which she has carried away from the camp of the enemy. Here a woman vanquishes men, and chastity beheads lust. Quickly changing her garb, she puts on once more in the hour of victory her own mean dress finer than all the splendours of the world. [Judith 13]

17. Some from a misapprehension number Deborah among the widows, and suppose that Barak the leader of the army is her son, though the scripture tells a different story. I will mention her here because she was a prophetess and is reckoned among the judges, and again because she might have said with the psalmist:-"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea sweeter than honey to my mouth." [Ps. 119:103] Well was she called the bee for she fed on the flowers of scripture, was enveloped with the fragrance of the Holy Spirit, and gathered into one with prophetic lips the sweet juices of the nectar. Then there is Naomi, in Greek "παρακεκλημένη" or she who is consoled, who, when her husband and her children died abroad, carried her chastity back home and, being supported on the road by its aid, kept with her her Moabitish daughter-in-law, that in her the prophecy of Isaiah might find a fulfilment. "Send out the lamb, O Lord, to rule over the land from the rock of the desert to the mount of the daughter of Zion." I pass on to the widow in the gospel who, though she was but a poor widow was yet richer than all the people of Israel. [Mark 12:43] She had but a grain of mustard seed, but she put her leaven in three measures of flour; and, combining her confession of the Father and of the Son with the grace of the Holy Spirit, she cast her two mites into the treasury. All the substance that she had, her entire possessions, she offered in the two testaments of her faith. These are the two seraphim which glorify the Trinity with threefold song and are stored among the treasures of the church. They also form the legs of the tongs by which the live coal is caught up to purge the sinner's lips. [Isa. 6:6]

18. But why should I recall instances from history and bring from books types of saintly women, when in your own city you have many before your eyes whose example you may well imitate? I shall not recount their merits here lest I should seem to flatter them. It will suffice to mention the saintly Marcella who, while she is true to the claims of her birth and station, has set before us a life which is

worthy of the gospel. Anna ”lived with an husband seven years from her virginity”; [Luke 2:36] Marcella lived with one for seven months. Anna looked for the coming of Christ; Marcella holds fast the Lord whom Anna received in her arms. Anna sang His praise when He was still a wailing infant; Marcella proclaims His glory now that He has won His triumph. Anna spoke of Him to all those who waited for the redemption of Israel; Marcella cries out with the nations of the redeemed: ”A brother redeemeth not, yet a man shall redeem,” [Ps. 49:7. Vulg] and from another psalm: ”A man was born in her, and the Highest Himself hath established her.” [Ps. 87:5]

About two years ago, as I well remember, I published a book against Jovinian in which by the authority of scripture I crushed the objections raised on the other side on account of the apostle’s concession of second marriages. It is unnecessary that I should repeat my arguments afresh here, as you can find them all in this treatise. That I may not exceed the limits of a letter, I will only give you this one last piece of advice. Think every day that you must die, and you will then never think of marrying again.

Letter 55. To Amandus.

A very interesting letter. Amandus a presbyter of Burdigala (Bourdeaux) had written to Jerome for an explanation of three passages of scripture, viz. Matt. vi. 34, 1 Cor. vi. 18, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26, and had in the same letter on behalf of a 'sister' (supposd by Thierry to have been Fabiola) put the following question: 'Can a woman who has divorced her first husband on account of his vices and who has during his lifetime under compulsion married again, communicate with the Church without first doing penance? Jerome in his reply gives the explanations asked for but answers the farther question, that concerning the 'sister,' with an emphatic negative. Written about the year 394 a.d.

1. A short letter does not admit of long explanations; compressing much matter into a small space it can only give a few words to topics which suggest many thoughts. You ask me what is the meaning of the passage in the gospel according to Matthew, "take no thought for the morrow. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. [Matt. 6:34] In the holy scriptures "the morrow" signifies the time to come. Thus in Genesis Jacob says: "So shall my righteousness answer for me to-morrow. [Gen. 30:33, AV. marg] Again when the two tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had built an altar and when all Israel had sent to them an embassy, they made answer to Phinehas the high priest that they had built the altar lest "to-morrow" it might be said to their children, "ye have no part in the Lord. You may find many similar passages in the old instrument. While then Christ forbids us to take thought for things future, He has allowed us to do so for things present, knowing as He does the frailty of our mortal condition. His remaining words "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" are to be understood as meaning that it is sufficient for us to think of the present troubles of this life. Why need we extend our thoughts to contingencies, to objects which we either cannot obtain or else having obtained must soon relinquish?

The Greek word "κακία" rendered in the Latin version "wickedness" has two distinct meanings, wickedness and tribulation, which latter the Greek call "κακωσίν" and in this passage "tribulation" would be a better rendering than "wickedness. But if any one demurs to this and insists that the word "κακία" must mean "wicked-

ness" and not "tribulation" or "trouble," the meaning must be the same as in the words "the whole world lieth in wickedness" and as in the Lord's prayer in the clause, "deliver us from evil: [Matt. 6:13. apo tou ponhrou] the purport of the passage will then be that our present conflict with the wickedness of this world should be enough for us.

2. Secondly, you ask me concerning the passage in the first epistle of the blessed apostle Paul to the Corinthians where he says: 'every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. [1 Cor. 6:18] Let us go back a little farther and read on until we come to these words, for we must not seek to learn the whole meaning of the section, from the concluding parts of it, or, if I may so say, from the tail of the chapter. "The body is not for fornication but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. And God hath both raised up the Lord and will also raise up us [with Him] by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What! Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body," [1 Cor. 6:13-18] and so on. The holy apostle has been arguing against excess and has just before said "meats for the belly and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. [1 Cor. 6:13] Now he comes to treat of fornication.

For excess in eating is the mother of lust; a belly that is distended with food and saturated with draughts of wine is sure to lead to sensual passion. As has been elsewhere said "the arrangement of man's organs suggests the course of his vices. Accordingly all such sins as theft, manslaughter, pillage, perjury, and the like can be repented of after they have been committed; and, however much interest may tempt him, conscience always smites the offender. It is only lust and sensual pleasure that in the very hour of penitence undergo once more the temptations of the past, the itch of the flesh, and the allurements of sin; so that the very thought which we bestow on the correction of such transgressions becomes in itself a new source of sin. Or to put the matter in a different light: other sins are outside of us; and whatever we do we do against others. But fornication defiles the fornicator both in conscience and body; and in accordance with the words of the Lord, "for this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh," [Matt. 19:5; 1 Cor. 6:16] he too becomes one body with a harlot and sins against his own body by making what is the temple of Christ the body of a harlot. Not to pass over any suggestion of the Greek commentators, I shall give you one more explanation.

It is one thing, they say, to sin with the body, and another to sin in the body. Theft, manslaughter, and all other sins except fornication we commit with our hands outside ourselves. Fornication alone we commit inside ourselves in our bodies and not with our bodies upon others. The preposition 'with' denotes the instrument used in sinning, while the preposition 'in' signifies the sphere of the passion is ourselves. Some again give this explanation that according to the scripture a man's body is his wife and that when a man commits fornication he is said to sin against his own body that is against his wife inasmuch as he defiles her by his own fornication and causes her though herself free from sin to become a sinner through her intercourse with him.

3. I find joined to your letter of inquiries a short paper containing the following words: "ask him,(that is me,) whether a woman who has left her husband on the ground that he is an adulterer and sodomite and has found herself compelled to take another may in the lifetime of him whom she first left be in communion with the church without doing penance for her fault. As I read the case put I recall the verse "they make excuses for their sins. [Ps. 161:4 Vulg] We are all the and a indulgent to our own faults; and what our own will leads us to do we attribute to a necessity of nature. It is as though a young man were to say, "I am over-borne by my body, the glow of nature kindles my passions, the structure of my frame and its reproductive organs call for sexual intercourse. Or again a murderer might say, "I was in want, I stood in need of food, I had nothing to cover me. If i shed the blood of another, it was to save myself from dying of cold and hunger. Tell the sister, therefore, who thus enquires of me concerning her condition, not my sentence but that of the apostle. "Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he liveth;

but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress. [Rom. 7:1-3] And in another place: "the wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. [1 Cor. 7:39] The apostle has thus cut away every plea and has clearly declared that, if a woman marries again while her husband is living, she is an adulteress. You must not speak to me of the violence of a ravisher, a mother's pleading, a father's bidding, the influence of relatives, the insolence and the intrigues of servants, household losses. A husband may be an adulterer or a sodomite, he may be stained with every crime and may have been left by his wife because of his sins; yet he is still her husband and, so long as he lives, she may not marry another. The apostle does not promulgate this decree on his own authority but on that of Christ who speaks in him. For he has followed the words of Christ in the gospel: "whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced,

committeth adultery. [Matt. 5:32] Mark what he says: ”whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Whether she has put away her husband or her husband her, the man who marries her is still an adulterer. Wherefore the apostles seeing how heavy the yoke of marriage was thus made said to Him: ”if the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry,” and the Lord replied, ”he that is able to receive it, let him receive it. And immediately by the instance of the three eunuchs he shows the blessedness of virginity which is bound by no carnal tie. [Matt. 19:10-12]

4. I have not been able quite to determine what it is that she means by the words ”has found herself compelled” to marry again. What is this compulsion of which she speaks? Was she overborne by a crowd and ravished against her will? If so, why has she not, thus victimized, subsequently put away her ravisher? Let her read the books of Moses and she will find that if violence is offered to a betrothed virgin in a city and she does not cry out, she is punished as an adulteress: but if she is forced in the field, she is innocent of sin and her ravisher alone is amenable to the laws. [Deut. 22:23-27] Therefore if your sister, who, as she says, has been forced into a second union, wishes to receive the body of Christ and not to be accounted an adulteress, let her do penance; so far at least as from the time she begins to repent to have no farther intercourse with that second husband who ought to be called not a husband but an adulterer. If this seems hard to her and if she cannot leave one whom she has once loved and will not prefer the Lord to sensual pleasure, let her hear the declaration of the apostle: ”ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table and of the table of devils,” [1 Cor. 10:21] and in another place: ”what communion hath light with darkness?

and what concord hath Christ with Belial? [2 Cor. 6:14, 2 Cor. 6:15] What I am about to say may sound novel but after all it is not new but old for it is supported by the witness of the old testament. If she leaves her second husband and desires to be reconciled with her first, she cannot be so now; for it is written in Deuteronomy: ”When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her; then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die which took her to be his wife; her former husband, which sent her away may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. [Deut. 24:1-4] Wherefore, I beseech you, do your best to comfort her and to urge her to seek salvation. Diseased flesh calls for the knife and the searing-iron.

The wound is to blame and not the healing art, if with a cruelty that is really kindness a physician to spare does not spare, and to be merciful is cruel.

5. Your third and last question relates to the passage in the same epistle where the apostle in discussing the resurrection, comes to the words: ”for he must reign, till he hath put all things under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him that God may be all in all. [1 Cor. 15:25-28] I am surprised that you have resolved to question me about this passage when that reverend man, Hilary, bishop of Poictiers, has occupied the eleventh book of his treatise against the Arians with a full examination and explanation of it. Yet I may at least say a few words. The chief stumbling-block in the passage is that the Son is said to be subject to the Father. Now which is the more shameful and humiliating, to be subject to the Father (often a mark of loving devotion as in the psalm ”truly my soul is subject unto God” [Ps. 62:1, Vulg]) or to be crucified and made the curse of the cross? For ”cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.

[Gal. 3:13] If Christ then for our sakes was made a curse that He might deliver us from the curse of the law, are you surprised that lie is also for our sakes subject to the Father to make us too subject to Him as He says in the gospel: ”No man cometh unto the Father but by me,” [Joh. 14:6] and ”I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. [Joh. 12:32] Christ then is subject to the Father in the faithful; for all believers, nay the whole human race, are accounted members of His body. But in unbelievers, that is in Jews, heathens, and heretics, He is said to be not subject; for these members of His body are not subject to the faith. But in the end of the world when all His members shall see Christ, that is their own body, reigning, they also shall be made subject to Christ, that is to their own body, that the whole of Christ’s body may be subject unto God and the Father, and that God may be all in all. He does not say ”that the Father may be all in all” but that ”God” may be, a title which properly belongs to the Trinity and may be referred not only to the Father but also to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. His meaning therefore is ”that humanity may be subject to the Godhead.

By humanity we here intend not that gentleness and kindness which the Greeks call philanthropy but the whole human race. Moreover when he says ”that God may be all in all,” it is to be taken in this sense. At present our Lord and Saviour is not all in all, but only a part in each of us. For instance He is wisdom in Solomon, generosity in David, patience in Job, knowledge of things to come in Daniel faith in Peter, zeal in Phinehas and Paul, virginity in John, and other virtues in others. But when the end of all things shall come, then shall He be all in all, for then the saints shall severally possess all the virtues and all will possess Christ in His entirety.

Letter 56. From Augustine

Augustine's first letter to Jerome: through a series of accidents it was not delivered until nine years after it had been written. In it Augustine comments on Jerome's new Latin version of the O. T. and advises him in his future labours to adhere more closely to the text of the LXX. He also discusses Jerome's account (in his commentary on the epistle to the Galatians) of the quarrel between Paul and Peter at Antioch. This according to Jerome was not a real misunderstanding but only one artificially 'got up' to put clearly before the Church the mischief of Christians conforming to the now obsolete Mosaic Law. Augustine strongly controverts this view and maintains that it is fatal to the veracity and authority claimed felt scripture. Written from Hippo about the year 394 a.d. In collections labeled Augustine's Letter 28, or Jerome's Letter 56. To Jerome, His Most Beloved Lord, and Brother and Fellow-Presbyter, Worthy of Being Honoured and Embraced with the Sincerest Affectionate Devotion, Augustin Sends Greeting.

1. Never was the face of any one more familiar to another, than the peaceful, happy, and truly noble diligence of your studies in the Lord has become to me. For although I long greatly to be acquainted with you, I feel that already my knowledge of you is deficient in respect of nothing but a very small part of you,-namely, your personal appearance; and even as to this, I cannot deny that since my most blessed brother Alypius (now invested with the office of bishop, of which he was then truly worthy) has seen you, and has on his return been seen by me, it has been almost completely imprinted on my mind by his report of you; nay, I may say that before his return, when he saw you there, I was seeing you myself with his eyes. For any one who knows us may say of him and me, that in body only, and not in mind, we are two, so great is the union of heart, so firm the intimate friendship subsisting between us; though in merit we are not alike, for his is far above mine.

Seeing, therefore, that you love me, both of old through the communion of spirit by which we are knit to each other, and more recently through what you know of me from the mouth of my friend, I feel that it is not presumptuous in me (as it would be in one wholly unknown to you) to recommend to your brotherly esteem the brother Profuturus, in whom we trust that the happy omen of his name (Good-speed) may

be fulfilled through our efforts furthered after this by your aid; although, perhaps, it may be presumptuous on this ground, that he is so great a man, that it would be much more fitting that I should be commended to you by him, than he by me. I ought perhaps to write no more, if I were willing to content myself with the style of a formal letter of introduction; but my mind overflows into conference with you, concerning the studies with which we are occupied in Christ Jesus our Lord, who is pleased to furnish us largely through your love with many benefits, and some helps by the way, in the path which He has pointed out to His followers.

2. We therefore, and with us all that are devoted to study in the African churches, beseech you not to refuse to devote care and labour to the translation of the books of those who have written in the Greek language most able commentaries on our Scriptures. You may thus put us also in possession of these men, and especially of that one whose name you seem to have singular pleasure in sounding forth in your writings [Origen]. But I beseech you not to devote your labour to the work of translating into Latin the sacred canonical books, unless you follow the method in which you have translated Job, viz. with the addition of notes, to let it be seen plainly what differences there are between this version of yours and that of the LXX., whose authority is worthy of highest esteem. For my own part, I cannot sufficiently express my wonder that anything should at this date be found in the Hebrew Mss. which escaped so many translators perfectly acquainted with the language. I say nothing of the LXX., regarding whose harmony in mind and spirit, surpassing that which is found in even one man, I dare not in any way pronounce a decided opinion, except that in my judgment, beyond question, very high authority must in this work of translation be conceded to them. I am more perplexed by those translators who, though enjoying the advantage of labouring after the LXX.

had completed their work, and although well acquainted, as it is reported, with the force of Hebrew words and phrases, and with Hebrew syntax, have not only failed to agree among themselves, but have left man), things which, even after so long a time, still remain to be discovered and brought to light. Now these things were either obscure or plain: if they were obscure, it is believed that you are as likely to have been mistaken as the others; if they were plain, it is not believed that they [the LXX. could possibly have been mistaken. Having stated the grounds of my perplexity, I appeal to your kindness to give me an answer regarding this matter.

3. I have been reading also some writings, ascribed to you, on the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. In reading your exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians, that passage came to my hand in which the Apostle Peter is called back from a course of dangerous dissimulation. To find there the defence of falsehood undertaken, whether by you, a man of such weight, or by any author (if it is the writing of another), causes me, I must confess, great sorrow, until at least those things which decide my opinion in the matter are refuted, if indeed they admit of refutation. For

it seems to me that most disastrous consequences must follow upon our believing that anything false is found in the sacred books: that is to say, that the men by whom the Scripture has been given to us, and committed to writing, did put down in these books anything false. It is one question whether it may be at any time the duty of a good man to deceive; but it is another question whether it can have been the duty of a writer of Holy Scripture to deceive: nay, it is not another question-it is no question at all. For if you once admit into such a high sanctuary of authority one false statement as made in the way of duty, there will not be left a single sentence of those books which, if appearing to any one difficult in practice or hard to believe, may not by the same fatal rule be explained away, as a statement in which, intentionally, and under a sense of duty, the author declared what was not true.

4. For if the Apostle Paul did not speak the truth when, finding fault with the Apostle Peter, he said: ”If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”-if, indeed, Peter seemed to him to be doing what was right, and if, notwithstanding, he, in order to soothe troublesome opponents, both said and wrote that Peter did what was wrong; [Gal. 2:11-14] -if we say thus, what then shall be our answer when perverse men such as he himself prophetically described arise, forbidding marriage, [1 Tim. 4:3] if they defend themselves by saying that, in all which the same apostle wrote in confirmation of the lawfulness of marriage, [Cor. 7:10-16] he was, on account of men who, through love for their wives, might become troublesome opponents, declaring what was false,-saying these things, forsooth, not because he believed them, but because their opposition might thus be averted? It is unnecessary to quote many parallel examples. For even things which pertain to the praises of God might be represented as piously intended falsehoods, written in order that love for Him might be enkindled in men who were slow of heart; and thus nowhere in the sacred books shall the authority of pure truth stand sure. Do we not observe the great care with which the same apostle commends the truth to us, when he says: ”And if Christ be not risen, then is our: preaching vain, and your faith is also vain:

yea, I and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised upChrist; whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. [1 Cor. 15:14-15] If any one said to him, ”Why are you so shocked by this falsehood, when the thing which you have said, even if it were false, tends very greatly to the glory of God? would he not, abhorring the madness of such a man, with every word and sign which could express his feelings, open clearly the secret depths of his own heart, protesting that to speak well of a falsehood uttered on behalf of God, was a crime not less, perhaps even greater, than to speak ill of the truth concerning Him? We must therefore be careful to secure, in order to our knowledge of the divine Scriptures, the guidance only of such a man as is imbued with a high reverence for the sacred books, and a profound persuasion of their truth, preventing him from

flattering himself in any part of them with the hypothesis of a statement being made not because it was true, but because it was expedient, and making him rather pass by what he does not understand, than set up his own feelings above that truth. For, truly, when he pronounces anything to be untrue, he demands that he be believed in preference, and endeavours to shake our confidence in the authority of the divine Scriptures.

5. For my part, I would devote all the strength which the Lord grants me, to show that every one of those texts which are wont to be quoted in defence of the expediency of falsehood ought to be otherwise understood, in order that everywhere the sure truth of these passages themselves may be consistently maintained. For as statements adduced in evidence must not be false, neither ought they to favour falsehood. This, however, I leave to your own judgment. For if you apply more thorough attention to the passage, perhaps you will see it much more readily than I have done. To this more careful study that piety will move you, by which you discern that the authority of the divine Scriptures becomes unsettled (so that every one may believe what he wishes, and reject what he does not wish) if this be once admitted, that the men by whom these things have been delivered unto us, could in their writings state some things which were not true, from considerations of duty; unless, perchance, you propose to furnish us with certain rules by which we may know when a falsehood might or might not become a duty. If this can be done, I beg you to set forth these rules with reasonings which may be neither equivocal nor precarious; and I beseech you by our Lord, in whom Truth was incarnate, not to consider me burdensome or presumptuous in making this request. For a mistake of mine which is in the interest of truth cannot deserve great blame, if indeed it deserves blame at all, when it is possible for you to use truth in the interest of falsehood without doing wrong.

6. Of many other things I would wish to discourse with your most ingenuous heart, and to take counsel with you concerning Christian studies; but this desire could not be satisfied within the limits of any letter. I may do this more fully by means of the brother bearing this letter, whom I rejoice in sending to share and profit by your sweet and useful conversation. Nevertheless, although I do not reckon myself superior in any respect to him, even he may take less from you than I would desire; and he will excuse my saying so, for I confess myself to hay, more room for receiving from you than he has. I see his mind to be already more fully stored, in which unquestionably he excels me. Therefore, when he returns, as I trust he may happily do by God’s blessing, and when I become a sharer in all with which his heart has been richly furnished by you, there will still be a consciousness of void unsatisfied in me, and a longing for personal fellowship with you. Hence of the two I shall be the poorer, and he the richer, then as now. This brother carries with him some of my writings, which if you condescend to read, I implore you to

review them with candid and brotherly strictness. For the words of Scripture, ”The righteous shall correct me in compassion, and reprove me;

but the oil of the sinner shall not anoint my head,” [Ps. 141:5, Septuagint] I understand to mean that he is the truer friend who by his censure heals me, than the one who by flattery anoints my head. I find the greatest difficulty in exercising a right judgment when I read over what I have written, being either too cautious or too rash. For I sometimes see my own faults, but I prefer to hear them reproved by those who are better able to judge than I am; lest after I have, perhaps justly, charged myself with error, I begin again to flatter myself, and think that my censure has arisen from an undue mistrust of my own judgment.

Letter 57. To Pammachius on the Best Method of Translating.

Written to Pammachius (for whom see Letter 66.) in a.d. 395. In the previous year Jerome had rendered into Latin Letter 51. (from Epiphanius to John of Jerusalem) under circumstances which he here describes (§2). His version soon became public and incurred severe criticism from Some person not named by Jerome but supposed by him to have been instigated by Rufinus (§12). Charged with having falsified his original he now repudiates the charge and defends his method of translation ("to give sense for sense and not word for word" §5) by an appeal to the practice of classical (§5), ecclesiastical (§6), and N. T. (§§7-10) writers. When at a subsequent period Rufinus gave to the world what was in Jerome's opinion a misleading version of Origen's First Principles, he appealed to this letter as giving him ample warranty for what he had done. See Letters LXXX, and LXXXI, and Rufinus' Preface to the peei !Aecwn in Vol. iii. of this series.

1. The apostle Paul when he appeared before King Agrippa to answer the charges, which were brought against him, wishing to use language intelligible to his hearers and confident of the success of his cause, began by congratulating himself in these words: "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews: especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews." [Acts 26:2, Acts 26:3] He had read the saying of Jesus: "Well is him that speaketh in the ears of them that will hear;" [Ecclus. 25:9] and he knew that a pleader only succeeds in proportion as he impresses his judge. On this occasion I too think myself happy that learned ears will hear my defence. For a rash tongue charges me with ignorance or falsehood; it alleges that in translating another man's letter I have made mistakes through incapacity or carelessness; it convicts me of either an involuntary error or a deliberate offence. And test it should happen that my accuser-encouraged by a volubility which stops at nothing and by an impunity which arrogates to itself an unlimited license-should accuse me as he has already done our father (Pope) Epiphanius; I send this letter to inform you-and through yon others who think me worthy of their regard-of the true order of the facts.

2. About two years ago the aforesaid Pope Epiphanius sent a letter to Bishop John, first finding fault with him as regarded some of his opinions and then mildly calling him to penitence. Such was the repute of the writer or else the elegance of the letter that all Palestine fought for copies of it. Now there was in our monastery a man of no small estimation in his country, Eusebius of Cremona, who, when he found that this letter was in everybody's mouth and that the ignorant and the educated alike admired it for its teaching and for the purity of its style, set to work to beg me to translate it for him into Latin and at the same time to simplify tile argument so that he might more readily understand it; for he was himself altogether unacquainted with the Greek language. I consented to his request and calling to my aid a secretary speedily dictated my version, briefly marking on the side of the page the contents of the several chapters. The fact is that he asked me to do this merely for himself, and I requested of him in return to keep his copy private and not too readily to circulate it. A year and six months went by, and then the aforesaid translation found its way by a novel stratagem from his desk to Jerusalem.

For a pretended monk-either bribed as there is much reason to believe or actuated by malice of his own as his tempter vainly tries to convince us-shewed himself a second Judas by robbing Eusebius of his literary property and gave to the adversary an occasion of railing against me. They tell the unlearned that I have falsified the original, that I have not rendered word for word, that I have put 'dear friend' in place of 'honourable sir,' and more shameful still! that I have cut down my translation by omitting the words "αἰδεσιμῶτατε Πάππα". These and similar trifles form the substance of the charges brought against me.

3. At the outset before I defend my version I wish to ask those persons who confound wisdom with cunning, some few questions. Where did you get your copy of the letter? Who gave it to you? How have you the effrontery to bring forward what you have procured by fraud? What place of safety will be left us if we cannot conceal our secrets even within our own walls and our own writing-desks? Were I to press such a charge against you before a legal tribunal, I could make you amenable to the laws which even in fiscal cases appoint penalties for meddlesome informers and condemn the traitor even while they accept his treachery. For though they welcome the profit which the information gives them, they disapprove the motive which actuates the informer. A little while ago a man of consular rank named Hesychius (against whom the patriarch Gamaliel waged an implacable war) was condemned to death by the emperor Theodosius simply because he had laid hold of imperial papers through a secretary whom he had tempted. We read also in old histories [Livy 5:27] that the schoolmaster who betrayed the children of the Faliscans was sent back to his boys and handed over to them in bonds, the Roman people refusing to accept a dishonourable victory.

When Pyrrhus king of Epirus was lying in his camp ill from the effects of a wound, his physician offered to poison him, but Fabricius thinking it shame that the king should die by treachery sent the traitor back in chains to his master, refusing to sanction crime even when its victim was an enemy. A principle which the laws uphold, which is maintained by enemies, which warfare and the sword fail to violate, has hitherto been held unquestioned among the monks and priests of Christ. And can any one of them presume now, knitting his brow and snapping his fingers, to spend his breath in saving: "What if he did use bribes or other inducements! he did what suited his purpose. A strange plea truly to defend a fraud as though robbers, thieves, and pirates did not do the same. Certainly, when Annas and Caiaphas led hapless Judas astray, they only did what they believed to be expedient for themselves.

4. Suppose that I wish to write down in my note books this or that silly trifle, or to make comments upon the scriptures, to retort upon my calumniators, to digest my wrath, to practise myself in the use of commonplaces and to stow away sharp shafts for the day of battle. So long as I do not publish my thoughts, they are only unkind words not matter for a charge of libel; in fact they are not even unkind words for the public ear never hears them. You may bribe my slaves and tamper with my clients. You may, as the fable has it, penetrate by means of your gold to the chamber of Danaë; and then, dissembling what you have done, you may call me a falsifier; but, if you do so, you will have to plead guilty yourself to a worse charge than any that you can bring against me. One man inveighs against you as a heretic, another as a perverter of doctrine. You are silent yourself; you do not venture to answer; you assail the translator; you cavil about syllables and you fancy your defence complete if your calumnies provoke no reply. Suppose that I have made a mistake or an omission in my rendering. Your whole case turns upon this; this is the defence which you offer to your accusers. Are you no heretic because I am a bad translator? Mind, I do not say that I know you to be a heretic; I leave such knowledge to your accuser, to him who wrote the letter: what I do say is that it is the height of folly for you when you are accused by one man to attack another, and when you are covered with wounds yourself to seek comfort by wounding one who is still quiescent and unaggressive.

5. In the above remarks I have assumed that I have made alterations in the letter and that a simple translation may contain errors though not wilful ones. As, however the letter itself shews that no changes have been made in the sense, that nothing has been added, and that no doctrine has been foisted into it, "obviously their object is understanding to understand nothing; and while they desire to arraign another's want of skill, they betray their own. For I myself not only admit but freely proclaim that in translating from the Greek (except in the case of the holy scriptures where even the order of the words is a mystery) I render sense for sense and not word for word. For this course I have the authority of Tully who

has so translated the Protagoras of Plato, the Oeconomicus of Xenophon, and the two beautiful orations which Aeschines and Demosthenes delivered one against the other. What omissions, additions, and alterations he has made substituting the idioms of his own for those of another tongue, this is not the time to say. I am satisfied to quote the authority of the translator who has spoken as follows in a prologue prefixed to the orations. ”I have thought it right to embrace a labour which though not necessary for myself will prove useful to those who study. I have translated the noblest speeches of the two most eloquent of the Attic orators, the speeches which Aeschines and Demosthenes delivered one against the other;

but I have rendered them not as a translator but as an orator, keeping the sense but altering the form by adapting both the metaphors and the words to suit our own idiom. I have not deemed it necessary to render word for word but I have reproduced the general style and emphasis. I have not supposed myself bound to pay the words out one by one to the reader but only to give him an equivalent in value. Again at the close of his task he says, ”I shall be well satisfied if my rendering is found, as I trust it will be, true to this standard. In making it I have utilized all the excellences of the originals, I mean the sentiments, the forms of expression and the arrangement of the topics, while I have followed the actual wording only so far as I could do so without offending our notions of taste. If all that I have written is not to be found in the Greek, I have at any rate striven to make it correspond with it. Horace too, an acute and learned writer, in his Art of Poetry gives the same advice to the skilled translator:-

”And care not thou with over anxious thought To render word for word.”

Terence has translated Menander; Plautus and Caecilius the old comic poets. Do they ever stick at words? Do they not rather in their versions think first of preserving the beauty and charm of their originals? What men like you call fidelity in transcription, the learned term pestilent minuteness. Such were my teachers about twenty years ago; and even then I was the victim of a similar error to that which is now imputed to me, though indeed I never imagined that you would charge me with it. In translating the Chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea into Latin, I made among others the following prefatory observations: ”It is difficult in following lines laid down by others not sometimes to diverge from them, and it is hard to preserve in a translation the charm of expressions which in another language are most felicitous Each particular word conveys a meaning of its own, and possibly I have no equivalent by which to render it, and I make a circuit to reach my goal, I have to go many miles to cover a short distance. To these difficulties must be added the windings of hyperbata, differences in the use of cases, divergencies of metaphor; and last of all the peculiar and if I may so call it, inbred character of the language. If I render word for word, the result will sound uncouth, and if compelled by necessity I alter anything in the order or wording, I shall seem to have departed from

the function of a translator." And after a long discussion which it would be tedious to follow out here, I added what follows:-"If any one imagines that translation does not impair the charm of style, let him render Homer word for word into Latin, nay I will go farther still and say, let him render it into Latin prose, and the result will be that the order of the words will seem ridiculous and the most eloquent of poets scarcely articulate."

6. In quoting my own writings my only object has been to prove that from my youth up I at least have always aimed at rendering sense not words, but if such authority as they supply is deemed insufficient, read and consider the short preface dealing with this matter which occurs in a book narrating the life of the blessed Antony. "A literal translation from one language into another obscures the sense; the exuberance of the growth lessens the yield. For while one's diction is enslaved to cases and metaphors, it has to explain by tedious circumlocutions what a few words would otherwise have sufficed to make plain. I have tried to avoid this error in the translation which at your request I have made of the story of the blessed Antony. My version always preserves the sense although it does not invariably keep the words of the original. Leave others to catch at syllables and letters, do you for your part look for the meaning." Time would fail me were I to unfold the testimonies of all who have translated only according to the sense. It is sufficient for the present to name Hilary the confessor who has turned some homilies on Job and several treatises on the Psalms from Greek into Latin; yet has not bound himself to the drowsiness of the letter or fettered himself by the stale literalism of inadequate culture. Like a conqueror he has led away captive into his own tongue the meaning of his originals.

7. That secular and church writers should have adopted this line need not surprise us when we consider that the translators of the Septuagint, the evangelists, and the apostles, have done the same in dealing with the sacred writings. We read in Mark [Mark 5:41] of the Lord saying Talitha cumi and it is immediately added "which is interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. The evangelist may he charged with falsehood for having added the words "I say unto thee" for the Hebrew is only "Damsel arise. To emphasize this and to give the impression of one calling and commanding he has added "I say unto thee. Again in Matthew [Matthew 27:9, Matthew 27:10] when the thirty pieces of silver are returned by the traitor Judas and the potter's field is purchased with them, it is written:-"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken of by Jeremy the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver the price of him that was valued which they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. This passage is not found in Jeremiah at all but in Zechariah, in quite different words and an altogether different order. In fact the Vulgate renders it as follows:-"And I will say unto them, If it is good in your sight, give ye me a price or refuse it: So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

And the Lord said unto me, Put them into the melting furnace and consider if it is tried as I have been tried by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them into the house of the Lord. [Zech. 11:12, 13, Vulg] It is evident that the rendering of the Septuagint differs widely from the quotation of the evangelist. In the Hebrew also, though the sense is the same, the words are quite different and differently arranged. It says: "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and, if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was priced at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord. [Zech. 11:12, Zech. 11:13, AV] They may accuse the apostle of falsifying his version seeing that it agrees neither with the Hebrew nor with the translators of the Septuagint: and worse than this, they may say that he has mistaken the author's name putting down Jeremiah when it should be Zechariah. Far be it from us to speak thus of a follower of Christ, who made it his care to formulate dogmas rather than to hunt for words and syllables.

To take another instance from Zechariah, the evangelist John quotes from the Hebrew, "They shall look on him whom they pierced," [Joh. 19:37, Zech. 12:10] for which we read in the Septuagint, "And they shall look upon me because they have mocked me," and in the Latin version, "And they shall look upon me for the things which they have mocked or insulted. Here the evangelist, the Septuagint, and our own version all differ; yet the divergence of language is atoned by oneness of spirit. In Matthew again we read of the Lord preaching flight to the apostles and confirming His counsel with a passage from Zechariah. "It is written," he says, "I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. [Matt. 26:31, Zech. 13:7] But in the Septuagint and in the Hebrew it reads differently, for it is not God who speaks, as the evangelist makes out, but the prophet who appeals to God the Father saying:-"Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. In this instance according to my judgment-and I have some careful critics with me-the evangelist is guilty of a fault in presuming to ascribe to God what are the words of the prophet. Again the same evangelist writes that at the warning of an angel Joseph took the young child and his mother and went into Egypt and remained there till the death of Herod; "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

[Matt. 2:13-15] The Latin manuscripts do not so give the passage, but in Hosea [Hos. 11:1] the true Hebrew text has the following:-"When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. Which the Septuagint renders thus:-"When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called his sons out of Egypt. Are they altogether to be rejected because they have given another turn to a passage which refers primarily to the mystery of Christ? Or should we not rather pardon the shortcomings of the translators on the score of their human frailty according to the saying of James, "In many things we offend all. If any man offend not in

word the same is a perfect man and able also to bridle the whole body. [James 3:2] Once more it is written in the pages of the same evangelist, ”And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene. [Matt. 2:23] Let these word fanciers and nice critics of all composition tell us where they have read the words; and if they cannot, let me tell them that they are in Isaiah.

[Isa. 11:1] For in the place where we read and translate, ”There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots,” in the Hebrew idiom it is written thus, ”There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse and a Nazarene shall grow from his root. How can the Septuagint leave out the word ’Nazarene,’ if it is unlawful to substitute one word for another? It is sacrilege either to conceal or to set at naught a mystery.

8. Let us pass on to other passages, for the brief limits of a letter do not suffer us to dwell too long on any one point. The same Matthew says:-”Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel. [Matt. 1:22, Matt. 1:23, Isa. 7:14] The rendering of the Septuagint is, ”Behold a virgin shall receive seed and shall bring forth a son, and ye shall call his name Emmanuel. If people cavil at words, obviously ’to receive seed’ is not the exact equivalent of ’to be with child,’ and ’ye shall call’ differs from ’they shall call.’ Moreover in the Hebrew we read thus, ”Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel. Ahaz shall not call him so for he was convicted of want of faith, nor the Jews for they were destined to deny him, but she who is to conceive him, and bear him, the virgin herself. In the same evangelist we read that Herod was troubled at the coming of the Magi and that gathering together the scribes and the priests he demanded of them where Christ should be born and that they answered him, ”In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet;

And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a governour that shall rule my people Israel. [Matt. 2:5, Matt. 2:6] In the Vulgate this passage appears as follows:-”And thou Bethlehem, the house of Ephratah, art small to be among the thousands of Judah, yet one shall come out of thee for me to be a prince in Israel. You will be more surprised still at the difference in words and order between Matthew and the Septuagint if you look at the Hebrew which runs thus:-”But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel. [Mic. 5:2] Consider one by one the words of the evangelist:-”And thou Bethlehem in the land of Judah. For ”the land of Judah” the Hebrew has ”Ephratah” while the Septuagint gives ”the house of Ephratah. The evangelist writes, ”art not the least among the princes of Judah. In the Sep-

tuagint this is, ”art small to be among the thousands of Judah,” while the Hebrew gives, ”though thou be little among the thousands of Judah. There is a contradiction here-and that not merely verbal-between the evangelist and the prophet; for in this place at any rate both Septuagint and Hebrew agree.

The evangelist says that he is not little among the princes of Judah, while the passage from which he queries says exactly the opposite of this, ”Thou art small indeed and little; but yet out of thee, small and little as thou art, there shall come forth for me a leader in Israel,” a sentiment in harmony with that of the apostle, ”God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. [1 Cor. 1:27] Moreover the last clause ”to rule” or ”to feed my people Israel” clearly runs differently in the original.

9. I refer to these passages, not to convict the evangelists of falsification-a charge worthy only of impious men like Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian-but to bring home to my critics their own want of knowledge, and to gain from them such consideration that they may concede to me in the case of a simple letter what, whether they like it or not, they will have to concede to the Apostles in the Holy Scriptures. Mark, the disciple of Peter, begins his gospel thus:-”The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in the prophet Isaiah: Behold I send my messenger before thy face which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. [Mark 1:1-3; see RV] This quotation is made up from two prophets, Malachi that is to say and Isaiah. For the first part: ”Behold I send my messenger before thy face which shall prepare thy way before thee,” occurs at the close of Malachi. [Mal. 3:1] But the second part: ”The voice of one crying, etc.,” we read in Isaiah. [Isa. 40:3] On what grounds then has Mark in the very beginning of his book set the words: ”As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, Behold I send my messenger,” when, as we have said, it is not written in Isaiah at all, but in Malachi the last of the twelve prophets?

Let ignorant presumption solve this nice question if it can, and I will ask pardon for being in the wrong. The same Mark brings before us the Saviour thus addressing the Pharisees: ”Have ye never read what David did when he had need and was an hungred, he and they that were with him, how he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the highpriest, and did eat the shew-bread which is not lawful to eat but for the priests? [Mark 2:25, Mark 2:26] Now let us turn to the books of Samuel, or, as they are commonly called, of Kings, and we shall find there that the highpriest’s name was not Abiathar but Ahimelech, [1 Sam. 21:1] the same that was afterwards put to death with the rest of the priests by Doeg at the command of Saul. [1 Sam. 22:16-18] Let us pass on now to the apostle Paul who writes thus to the Corinthians: ”For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that

love Him. [1 Cor. 2:8, 1 Cor. 2:9] Some writers on this passage betake themselves to the ravings of the apocryphal books and assert that the quotation comes from the Revelation of Elijah; whereas the truth is that it is found in Isaiah according to the Hebrew text:

"Since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee what thou hast prepared for them that wait for thee. The Septuagint has rendered the words quite differently: "Since the beginning of the world we have not heard, neither have our eyes seen any God beside thee and thy true works, and thou wilt shew mercy to them that wait for thee. We see then from what place the quotation is taken and yet the apostle has not rendered his original word for word, but, using a paraphrase, he has given the sense in different terms. In his epistle to the Romans the same apostle quotes these words from Isaiah: "Behold I lay in Sion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence," [Rom. 9:33] a rendering which is at variance with the Greek version yet agrees with the original Hebrew. The Septuagint gives an opposite meaning, "that you fall not on a stumblingstone nor on a rock of offence. The apostle Peter agrees with Paul and the Hebrew, writing: "but to them that do not believe, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. [1 Pet. 2:8. AV. is different] From all these passages it is clear that the apostles and evangelists in translating the old testament scriptures have sought to give the meaning rather than the words, and that they have not greatly cared to preserve forms or constructions, so long as they could make clear the subject to the understanding.

10. Luke the evangelist and companion of apostles describes Christ's first martyr Stephen as relating what follows in a Jewish assembly. "With threescore and fifteen souls Jacob went down into Egypt, and died himself, and our fathers were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem. [Acts 7:15-16] In Genesis this passage is quite differently given, for it is Abraham that buys of Ephron the Hittite, the son of Zohar, near Hebron, for four hundred shekels of silver, a double cave, and the field that is about it, and that buries in it Sarah his wife. And in the same book we read that, after his return from Mesopotamia with his wives and his sons, Jacob pitched his tent before Salem, a city of Shechem which is in the land of Canaan, and that he dwelt there and "bought a parcel of a field where he had spread his tent at the band of Hamor, the father of Sychem, for an hundred lambs," and that "he erected there an altar and called there upon the God of Israel. Abraham does not buy the cave from Hamor the father of Sychem, but from Ephron the son of Zohar, and he is not buried in Sychem but in Hebron which is corruptly called Arboch. Whereas the twelve patriarchs are not buried in Arboch but in Sychem, in the field purchased not by Abraham but by Jacob.

I postpone the solution of this delicate problem to enable those who cavil at me to search and see that in dealing with the scriptures it is the sense we have to look to and not the words. In the Hebrew the twenty-secondpsalm begins with the exact words which the Lord uttered on the cross: Eli Eli lama azabthani, which means, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? [Ps. 22:1] Let my critics tell me why the Septuagint introduces here the words "look thou upon me. For its rendering is as follows: "My God, my God, look thou upon me, why hast thou forsaken me? They will answer no doubt that no harm is done to the sense by the addition of a couple of words. Let them acknowledge then that, if in the haste of dictation I have omitted a few, I have not by so doing endangered the position of the churches.

11. It would be tedious now to enumerate, what great additions and omissions the Septuagint has made, and all the passages which in church-copies are marked with daggers and asterisks. The Jews generally laugh when they hear our version of this passage of Isaiah, "Blessed is he that hath seed in Zion and servants in Jerusalem. [Isa. 31:9, LXX] In Amos also after a description of self-indulgence [Amos 6:4-6] there come these words: "They have thought of these things as halting and not likely to fly," a very rhetorical sentence quite worthy of Tully. But how shall we deal with the Hebrew originals in which these passages and others like them are omitted, passages so numerous that to reproduce them all would require books without number? The number of the omissions is shown alike by the asterisks mentioned above and by my own version when compared by a careful reader with the old translation. Yet the Septuagint has rightly kept its place in the churches, either because it is the first of all the versions in time, made before the coming of Christ, or else because it has been used by the apostles (only however in places where it does not disagree with the Hebrews). On the other hand we do right to reject Aquila, the proselyte and controversial translator, who has striven to translate not words only but their etymologies as well. Who could accept as renderings of "corn and wine and oil" [Cf.

Deut. 7:13] such words as "χεῖμα ὀπωρισμός στιλπνότης", or, as we might say, 'pouring,' and 'fruitgathering,' and 'shining'? or, because Hebrew has in addition to the article other prefixes as well, he must with an unhappy pedantry translate syllable by, syllable and letter, by letter thus: "σὺν τὸν ὐρανὸν καὶ σὺν τὴν γήν", a construction which neither Greek nor Latin admits of, as many passages in our own writers shew. How many are the phrases charming in Greek which, if rendered word for word, do not sound well in Latin, and again how many there are that are pleasing to us in Latin, but which-assuming the order of the words not to be altered-would not please in Greek.

12. But to pass by this limitless field of discussion and to shew you, most Christian of nobles, and most noble of Christians, what is the kind of falsification which is censured in my translation, I will set before you the opening words of the letter in

the Greek original and as rendered by me, that from one count in the indictment you may form an opinion of all. The letter begins ”Εδει ἡμᾶς, ἀγάπητε, μή τῇ οἰ·σει τῶν κλήρων φέρεσθαι” which I remember to have rendered as follows: ”Dearly beloved, we ought not to misuse our position as ministers to gratify our pride. See there, they cry, what a number of falsehoods in a single line! In the first place ”ἀ γαπητός” means ’loved,’ not ’dearly beloved.’ Then ”οἴησις” means ’estimate,’ not ’pride,’ for this and not ”οἰδημα” is the word used. ”Οιδῆμα” signifies ’a swelling’ but ”οἰ·σις” means ’judgment.’ All the rest, say they: ”not to misuse our position to gratify our pride” is your own. What is this you are saying, O pillar of learning and latter day Aristarchus, who are so ready to pass judgment upon all writers? It is all for nothing then that I have studied so long; that, as Juvenal says, [Juv. 1:15] ”I have so often withdrawn my hand from the ferule. The moment I leave the harbour I run aground. Well, to err is human and to confess one’s error wise.

Do you therefore, who are so ready to criticise and to instruct me, set me right and give me a word for word rendering of the passage. You tell me I should have said: ”Beloved, we ought not to be carried away by the estimation of the clergy. Here, indeed we have eloquence worthy of Plautus, here we have Attic grace, the true style of the Muses. The common proverb is true of me: ”He who trains an ox for athletics loses both oil and money. Still he is not to blame who merely puts on the mask and plays the tragedy for another: his teachers are the real culprits; since they for a great price have taught him-to know nothing. I do not think the worse of any Christian because he lacks skill to express himself; and I heartily wish that we could all say with Socrates ”I know that I know nothing; and carry out the precept of another wise man, ”Know thyself. I have always held in esteem a holy simplicity but not a wordy rudeness. He who declares that he imitates the style of apostles should first imitate the virtue of their lives; the great holiness of which made up for much plainness of speech. They confuted the syllogisms of Aristotle and the perverse ingenuities of Chrysippus by raising the dead. Still it would be absurd for one of us-living as we do amid the riches of Croesus and the luxuries of Sardanapalus-to make his boast of mere ignorance.

We might as well say that all robbers and criminals would be men of culture if they were to hide their blood-stained swords in books of philosophy and not ill trunks of trees.

13. I have exceeded the limits of a letter, but I have not exceeded in the expression of my chagrin. For, though I am called a falsifier, and have my reputation torn to shreds, wherever there are shuttles and looms and women to work them; I am content to repudiate the charge without retaliating in kind. I leave everything to your discretion. You can read the letter of Epiphanius both in Greek and in Latin; and, if you do so, you will see at once the value of my accusers’ lamentations and insulting complaints. For the rest, I am satisfied to have instructed one of my

dearest friends and am content simply to stay quiet in my cell and to wait for the day of judgment. If it may be so, and if my enemies allow it, I hope to write for you, not philippics like those of Demosthenes or Tully, but commentaries upon the scriptures.

Letter 58. To Paulinus.

In this his second letter to Paulinus of Nola Jerome dissuades him from making a pilgrimage to the Holy Places, and describes Jerusalem not as it ought to be but as it is. He then gives his friend counsels for his life similar to those which he has previously addressed to Nepotian, praises Paulinus for his Panegyric (now no longer extant) on the Emperor Theodosius, compares his style with those of the great writers of the Latin Church, and concludes with a commendation of his messenger, that Vigilantius who was soon to become the object of his bitterest contempt. Written about the year 395 a.d.

I. ”A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things,” [Matt. 12:35] and ”every tree is known by his fruit.” [Luke 6:44] You measure me by the scale of your own virtues and because of your own greatness magnify my littleness. You take the lowest room at the banquet that the goodman of the house may bid you to go up higher. [Luke 14:10] For what is there in me or what qualities do I possess that I should merit praise from a man of learning? that I, small and lowly as I am, should be eulogized by lips which have pleaded on behalf of our most religious sovereign? Do not, my dearest brother, estimate my worth by the number of my years. Gray hairs are not wisdom; it is wisdom which is as good as gray hairs. At least that is what Solomon says: ”wisdom is the gray hair unto men.” [Wisd. 4:9] Moses too in choosing the seventy elders is told to take those whom he knows to be elders indeed, and to select them not for their years but for their discretion. [Nu. 11:16] And, as a boy, Daniel judges old men and in the flower of youth condemns the incontinence of age. Do not, I repeat, weigh faith by years, nor suppose me better than yourself merely because I have enlisted under Christ’s banner earlier than you. The apostle Paul, that chosen vessel framed out of a persecutor, [Acts 9:15] though last in the apostolic order is first in merit. For though last he has laboured more than they all. [1 Cor. 15:10] To Judas it was once said: ”thou art a man who didst take sweet food with me, my guide and mine acquaintance; we walked in the house of God with company:” yet the Saviour accuses him of betraying his friend and master. A line of Virgil well describes his end:

"From a high beam he knots a hideous death." The dying robber, on the contrary, exchanges the cross for paradise and turns to martyrdom the penalty of murder. How many there are nowadays who have lived so long that they bear corpses rather than bodies and are like whited sepulchres filled with dead men's bones! [Matt. 23:27] A newly kindled heat is more effective than a long continued lukewarmness.

2. As for you, when you hear the Saviour's counsel: "if thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come follow me," [Matt. 19:21] you translate his words into action; and baring yourself to follow the bare cross you mount Jacob's ladder the easier for carrying nothing. Your dress changes with the change in your convictions, and you aim at no showy shabbiness which leaves your purse as full as before. No, with pure hands and a clear conscience you make it your glory that you are poor both in spirit and in deed. There is nothing great in wearing a sad or a disfigured face, in simulating and in showing off fasts, or in wearing a cheap cloak while you retain a large income. When Crates the Theban-a millionaire of days gone by-was on his way to Athens to study philosophy, he cast away untold gold in the belief that wealth could not be compatible with virtue. What a contrast he offers to us, the disciples of a poor Christ, who cram our pockets with gold and cling under pretext of almsgiving to our old riches. How can we faithfully distribute what belongs to another when we thus timidly keep back what is our own? [Cf. Luke 16:12] When the stomach is full, it is easy to talk of fasting. What is praiseworthy is not to have been at Jerusalem but to have lived a good life while there. The city which we are to praise and to seek is not that which has slain the prophets [Matt. 23:37] and shed the blood of Christ, but that which is made glad by the streams of the river, [Ps. 46:4] which is set upon a mountain and so cannot be hid, [Matt. 5:14] which the apostle declares to be a mother of the saints, [Gal. 4:26] and in which he rejoices to have his citizenship with the righteous. [Phil. 3:20., RV]

3. In speaking thus I am not laying myself open to a charge of inconsistency or condemning the course which I have myself taken. It is not, I believe, for nothing that I, like Abraham, have left my home and people. But I do not presume to limit God's omnipotence or to restrict to a narrow strip of earth Him whom the heaven cannot contain. Each believer is judged not by his residence in this place or in that but according to the deserts of his faith. The true worshippers worship the Father neither at Jerusalem nor on mount Gerizim; for "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. [Joh. 4:24] "Now the spirit bloweth where it listeth," [Joh. 3:8, RV. marg] and "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. [Ps. 24:1] When the fleece of Judaea was made dry although the whole world was wet with the dew of heaven, [Judg. 6:36-40] and when many came from the East and from the West [Luke 13:29] and sat in Abraham's bosom: [Luke 16:22] then God ceased to be known in Judah only and His name to be great in Israel alone; [Ps. 76:1] the sound of the apostles went out into all the earth and

their words into the ends of the world. [Ps. 19:4] The Saviour Himself speaking to His disciples in the temple said: ”arise, let us go hence,” [Joh. 14:31] and to the Jews: ”your house is left unto you desolate.

[Matt. 23:38] If heaven and earth must pass away, [Luke 21:33] obviously all things that are earthly must pass away also. Therefore the spots which witnessed the crucifixion and the resurrection profit those only who bear their several crosses, who day by day rise again with Christ, and who thus shew themselves worthy of an abode so holy. Those who say ”the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord,” [Jer. 7:4] should give ear to the words of the apostle: ”ye are the temple of the Lord,” [2 Cor. 6:16] and the Holy Ghost ”dwelleth in you. [Rom. 8:11] Access to the courts of heaven is as easy from Britain as it is from Jerusalem; for ”the kingdom of God is within you. [Luke 17:21] Antony and the hosts of monks who are in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Pontus, Cappadocia, and Armenia, have never seen Jerusalem: and the door of Paradise is opened for them at a distance from it. The blessed Hilarion, though a native of and a dweller in Palestine, only set eyes on Jerusalem for a single day, not wishing on the one hand when he was so near to neglect the holy places, nor yet on the other to appear to confine God within local limits. From the time of Hadrian to the reign of Constantine-a period of about one hundred and eighty years -the spot which had witnessed the resurrection was occupied by a figure of Jupiter;

while on the rock where the cross had stood, a marble statue of Venus was set up by the heathen and became an object of worship. The original persecutors, indeed, supposed that by polluting our holy places they would deprive us of our faith in the passion and in the resurrection. Even my own Bethlehem, as it now is, that most venerable spot in the whole world of which the psalmist sings: ”the truth hath sprung out of the earth,” [Ps. 85:11, Vulg] was overshadowed by a grove of Tammuz, [Ezek. 8:14] that is of Adonis; and in the very cave where the infant Christ had uttered His earliest cry lamentation was made for the paramour of Venus.

4. Why, you will say, do I make these remote allusions? To assure you that nothing is lacking to your faith although you have not seen Jerusalem and that I am none the better for living where I do. Be assured that, whether you dwell here or elsewhere, a like recompense is in store for your good works with our Lord. Indeed, if I am frankly to express my own feelings, when I take into consideration your vows and the earnestness with which you have renounced the world, I hold that as long as you live in the country one place is as good as another. Forsake cities and their crowds, live on a small patch of ground, seek Christ in solitude, pray on the mount alone with Jesus, keep near to holy places: keep out of cities, I say, and you will never lose your vocation. My advice concerns not bishops, presbyters, or the clergy, for these have a different duty. I am speaking only to a monk who having been a man of note in the world has laid the price of his possessions at the apostles’ feet,

[Acts 4:37] to shew men that they must trample on their money, and has resolved to live a life of loneliness and seclusion and always to continue to reject what he has once rejected.

Had the scenes of the Passion and of the Resurrection been elsewhere than in a populous city with court and garrison, with prostitutes, playactors, and buffoons, and with the medley of persons usually found in such centres; or had the crowds which thronged it been composed of monks; then a city would be a desirable abode for those who have embraced the monastic life. But, as things are, it would be the height of folly first to renounce the world, to forswear one's country, to forsake cities, to profess one's self a monk; and then to live among still greater numbers the same kind of life that you would have lived in your own country. Men rush here from all quarters of the world, the city is filled with people of every race, and so great is the throng of men and women that here you will have to tolerate in its full dimensions an evil from which you desired to flee when you found it partially developed elsewhere.

5. Since you ask me as a brother in what path you should walk, I will be open with you. If you wish to take duty as a presbyter, and are attracted by the work or dignity which falls to the lot of a bishop, live in cities and walled towns, and by so doing turn the salvation of others into the profit of your own soul. But if you desire to be in deed what you are in name-a monk, that is, one who lives alone, what have you to do with cities which are the homes not of solitaries but of crowds? Every mode of life has its own exponents. For instance, let Roman generals imitate men like Camillus, Fabricius, Regulus, and Scipio. Let philosophers take for models Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Let poets strive to rival Homer, Virgil, Menander, and Terence. Let writers of history follow Thucydides, Sallust, Herodotus and Livy. Let orators find masters in Lysias, the Gracchi, Demosthenes, and Tully. And, to come to our own case, let bishops and presbyters take for their examples the apostles or their companions; and as they hold the rank which these once held, let them endeavour to exhibit the same excellence. And last of all let us monks take as the patterns which we are to follow the lives of Paul, of Antony, of Julian, of Hilarion, of the Macarii. And to go back to the authority of scripture, we have our masters in Elijah and Elisha, and our leaders in the sons of the prophets;

who lived in fields and solitary places and made themselves tents by the waters of Jordan. [2 Kings 6:1, 2 Kings 6:2] The sons of Rechab too are of the number who drank neither wine nor strong drink and who abode in tents; men whom God's voice praises through Jeremiah, and to whom a promise is made that there shall never be wanting a man of their stock to stand before God. [Jer. 35:19] This is probably what is meant by the title of the seventy-first psalm: "of the sons of Jonadab and of those who were first led into captivity. The person intended is Jonadab the son of Rechab who is described in the book of Kings [2 Kings, 10:15, 2 Kings, 10:16]

as having gone up into the chariot of Jehu. His sons having always lived in tents until at last (owing to the inroads made by the Chaldean army) they were forced to come into Jerusalem, are described [Jer. 35:11] as being the first to undergo captivity; because after the freedom of their lonely life they found confinement in a city as bad as imprisonment.

6. Since you are not wholly independent but are bound to a wife who is your sister in the Lord, I entreat you-whether here or there-that you will avoid large gatherings, visits official and complimentary, and social parties, indulgences all of which tend to enchain the soul. Let your food be coarse-say cabbage and pulse-and do not take it until evening. Sometimes as a great delicacy you may have some small fish. He who longs for Christ and feeds upon the true bread cares little for dainties which must be transmuted into ordure. Food that you cannot taste when once it has passed your gullet might as well be-so far as you are concerned-bread and pulse. You have my books against Jovinian which speak yet more largely of despising the appetite and the palate. Let some holy volume be ever in your hand. Pray constantly, and bowing down your body lift up your mind to the Lord. Keep frequent vigils and sleep often on an empty stomach. Avoid tittle-tattle and all self-laudation. Flee from wheedling flatterers as from open enemies. Distribute with your own hand provisions to alleviate the miseries of the poor and of the brethren. With your own hands, I say, for good faith is rare among men. You do not believe what I say? Think of Judas and his bag. Seek not a lowly garb for a swelling soul. Avoid the society of men of the world, especially if they are in power.

Why need you look again on things contempt for which has made you a monk? Above all let your sister hold aloof from married ladies. And, if women round her wear silk dresses and gems while she is meanly attired, let her neither fret nor congratulate herself. For by so doing she will either regret her resolution or sow the seeds of pride. If you are already famed as a faithful steward of your own substance, do not take other people’s money to give away. You understand What I mean, for the Lord has given you understanding in all things. Be simple as a dove and lay snares for no man: but be cunning as a serpent and let no man lay snares for you. [Matt. 10:16] For a Christian who allows others to deceive him is almost at much at fault as one who tries to deceive others. If a man talks to you always or nearly always about money (except it be about alms-giving, a topic which is open to all) treat him as a broker rather than a monk. Besides food and clothing and things manifestly necessary give no man anything; for dogs must not eat the children’s bread. [Matt. 15:26]

7. The true temple of Christ is the believer’s soul; adorn this, clothe it, offer gifts to it, welcome Christ in it. What use are walls blazing with jewels when Christ in His poor [Matt. 25:40] is in danger of perishing from hunger? Your possessions are no longer your own but a stewardship is entrusted to you. Remember Ananias

and Sapphira who from fear of the future kept what was their own, and be careful for your part not rashly to squander what is Christ's. Do not, that is, by an error of judgment give the property of the poor to those who are not poor; lest, as a wise man has told us, charity prove the death of charity.Look not upon "Gay trappings or a Cato's empty name." In the words of Persius, God says:- "I know thy thoughts and read thine inmost soul." To be a Christian is the great thing, not merely to seem one. And somehow or other those please the world most who please Christ least. In speaking thus I am not like the sow lecturing Minerva; but, as a friend warns a friend, so I warn you before you embark on your new course. I would rather fail in ability than in will to serve you; for my wish is that where I have fallen you may keep your footing.

8. It is with much pleasure that I have read the book which you have sent to me containing your wise and eloquent defence of the emperor Theodosius; and your arrangement of the subject has particularly pleased me. While in the earlier chapters you surpass others, in the latter you surpass yourself. Your style is terse and neat; it has all the purity of Tully, and yet it is packed with meaning. For, as someone has said, that speech is a failure of which men only praise the diction. You have been successful in preserving both sequence of subjects and logical connexion. Whatever sentence one takes, it is always a conclusion to what goes before or an introduction to what follows. Theodosius is fortunate in having a Christian orator like you to plead his cause. You have made his purple illustrious and have consecrated for future ages his useful laws. Go on and prosper, for, if such be your first ventures in the field, what will you not do when you become a trained soldier? Oh! that it were mine to conduct a genius like you, not (as the poets sing) through the Aonian mountains and the peaks of Helicon but through Zion and Tabor and the high places of Sinai. If I might teach you what I have learned myself and might pass on to you the mystic rolls of the prophets, then might we give birth to something such as Greece with all her learning could not shew.

9. Hear me, therefore, my fellow-servant, my friend, my brother; give ear for a moment that I may tell you how you are to walk in the holy scriptures. All that we read in the divine books, while glistening and shining without, is yet far sweeter within. "He who desires to eat the kernel must first break the nut." [Plautus, Curc. I. 1:55] "Open thou mine eyes," says David, "that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." [Ps. 119:18] Now, if so great a prophet confesses that he is in the darkness of ignorance; how deep, think you, must be the night of misapprehension with which we, mere babes and unweaned infants, are enveloped! Now this veil rests not only on the face of Moses, [2 Cor. 3:14, 2 Cor. 3:15] but on the evangelists and the apostles as well. To the multitudes the Saviour spoke only in parables and, to make it clear that His words had a mystical meaning, said:-"he that hath ears to hear, let him hear." [Luke 8:8, Luke 8:10] Unless all things that are written are opened by Him "who hath the key of David, who openeth and no man shutteth,

and shutteth and no man openeth," [Rev. 3:7] no one can undo the lock orset them before you. If only you had the foundation which He alone can give; nay, if even His fingers were but passed over your work; there would be nothing finer than your volumes, nothing more learned, nothing more attractive, nothing more Latin.

10. Tertullian is packed with meaning but his style is rugged and uncouth. The blessed Cyprian like a fountain of pure water flows softly and sweetly but, as he is taken up with exhortations to virtue and with the troubles consequent on persecution, he has nowhere discussed the divine scriptures. Victorinus, although he has the glory of a martyr's crown, yet cannot express what he knows. Lactantius has a flow of eloquence worthy of Tully: would that he had been as ready to teach our doctrines as he was to pull down those of others! Arnobius is lengthy and unequal, and often confused from not making a proper division of his subject. That reverend man Hilary gains in height from his Gallic buskin; yet, adorned as he is with the flowers of Greek rhetoric, he sometimes entangles himself in long periods and offers by no means easy reading to the less learned brethren. I say nothing of other writers whether dead or living; others will hereafter judge them both for good and for evil.

11. I will come to yourself, my fellow-mystic, my companion, and my friend; my friend, I say, though not yet personally known: and I will ask you not to suspect a flatterer in one so intimate. Better that you should think me mistaken or led astray by affection than that you should hold me capable of fawning on a friend. You have a great intellect and an inexhaustible store of language, your diction is fluent and pure, your fluency and purity are mingled with wisdom. Your head is clear and all your senses keen. Were you to add to this wisdom and eloquence a careful study and knowledge of scripture, I should soon see you holding our citadel against all comers; you would go up with Joab upon the roof of Zion, [1 Chron. 11:5, 1 Chron. 11:6] and sing upon the housetops what you had learned in the secret chambers. [Cf. Luke 12:3] Gird up, I pray you, gird up your loins. As Horace says:-

"Life hath no gifts for men except they toil." [Horace, Sat. I. 9:59, 60] Shew yourself as much a man of note in the church, as you were before in the senate. Provide for yourself riches which you may spend daily yet they will not fail. Provide them while you are still strong and while as yet your head has no gray hairs: before, in the words of Virgil,Diseases creep on you, and gloomy age, "And pain, and cruel death's inclemency." [Virgil, Georg. 3:67, 68] I am not content with mediocrity for you: I desire all that you do to be of the highest excellence. How heartily I have welcomed the reverend presbyter Vigilantius, his own lips will tell you better than this letter. Why he has so soon left us and started afresh I cannot say; and, indeed, I do not wish to hurt anyone's feelings. Still, mere passer-by as he was, in haste to continue his journey, I managed to keep him back until I had given him a taste of my friendship for you. Thus you can learn from him what you want to know about

me. Kindly salute your reverend sister and fellow-servant, who with you fights the good fight in the Lord.

Letter 59. To Marcella.

An answer to five questions put to Jerome by Marcella in a letter not preserved. The questions are as follows. (1) What are the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard (1 Cor. ii. 9)? Jerome answers that they are spiritual things which as such can only be spiritually discerned. (2) Is it not a mistake to identify the sheep and the goats of Christ's parable (Matt. xxv. 31 sqq.) with Christians and heathens? Are they not rather the good and the bad? For an answer to this question Jerome refers Marcella to his treatise against Jovinian (II. §§18-23). (3) Paul says that some shall be "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord;" and that they shall be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. iv. 15, 17). Are we to suppose this assumption to be corporeal and that those assumed will escape death? Yes, Jerome answers, but their bodies will be glorified.

(4) How is John xx. 17, "touch me not," to be reconciled with Matt. xxviii. 9, "they came and held him by the feet"? In the one case, Jerome replies, Mary Magdalen failed to recognize the divinity of Jesus; in the other the women recognized it. Accordingly they were admitted to a privilege which was denied to her. (5) Was the risen Christ before His ascension present only with the disciples, or was He in heaven and elsewhere as well? The latter according to Jerome is the true doctrine. "The Divine Nature," he writes, "exists everywhere in its entirety. Christ, therefore, was at one and the same time with the apostles and with the angels; in the Father and in the uttermost parts of the sea. So afterwards he was with Thomas in India, with Peter at Rome, with Paul in Illyricum, with Titus in Crete, with Andrew in Achaia." The date of the letter is a.d. 395 or a.d. 396.

Letter 60. To Heliodorus

One of Jerome's finest letters, written to console his old friend, Heliodorus, now Bp. of Altinum, for the loss of his nephew Nepotian who had died of fever a short time previously. Jerome tries to soothe his friend's grief (1) by contrasting pagan despair or resignation with Christian hope, (2) by an eulogy of the departed both as man and presbyter, and (3) by a review of the evils which then beset the Empire and from which, as he contended, Nepotian had been removed. The letter is marked throughout with deep and sincere feeling. Its date is 396 a.d.

1. Small wits cannot grapple large themes but venturing beyond their strength fail in the very attempt; and, the greater a subject is, the more completely is he overwhelmed who cannot find words to unfold its grandeur. Nepotian who was mine and yours and ours-or rather who was Christ's and because Christ's all the more ours-has forsaken us his elders so that we are smitten with pangs of regret and overcome with a grief which is past bearing. We supposed him our heir, yet now his corpse is all that is ours. For whom shall my intellect now labour? Whom shall my poor letters desire to please? Where is he, the impeller of my work, whose voice was sweeter than a swan's last song? My mind is dazed my hand trembles, a mist covers my eyes, stammering seizes my tongue. Whatever my words, they seem as good as unspoken seeing that he no longer hears them. My very pen seems to feel his loss, my very wax tablet looks dull and sad; the one is covered with rust, the other with mould. As often as I try to express myself in words and to scatter the flowers of this encomium upon his tomb, my eyes fill with tears, my grief returns, and I can think of nothing but his death. It was a custom in former days for children over the dead bodies of their parents publicly to proclaim their praises and (as when pathetic songs are sung) to draw tears from the eyes and sighs from the breasts of those who heard them. But in our case, behold, the order of things is changed: to deal us this blow nature has forfeited her rights. For the respect which the young man should have paid to his elders, we his elders are paying to him.

2. What shall I do then? Shall I join my tears to yours? The apostle forbids me for he speaks of dead Christians as "them which are asleep." [1 Thess. 4:13] So too in

the gospel the Lord says, ”the damsel is not dead but sleepeth,” [Mark 5:39] and Lazarus when he is raised from the dead is said to have been asleep. [Joh. 11:11] No, I will be glad and rejoice that ”speedily he was taken away lest that wickedness should alter his understanding” for ”his soul pleased the Lord.” [Wisd. 4:11, Wisd. 4:14] But though I am loth to give way and combat my feelings, tears flow down my cheeks, and in spite of the teachings of virtue and the hope of the resurrection a passion of regret crushes my too yielding mind. O death that dividest brothers knit together in love, how cruel, how ruthless thou art so to sunder them! ”The Lord hath fetched a burning wind that cometh up from the wilderness: which hath dried thy veins and hath made thy well spring desolate.” [Hos. 13:15, LXX] Thou didst swallow up our Jonah, but even in thy belly He still lived. Thou didst carry Him as one dead, that the world’s storm might be stilled and our Nineveh saved by His preaching. He, yes He, conquered thee, He slew thee, that fugitive prophet who left His home, gave up His inheritance and surrendered his dear life into the hands of those who sought it. He it was who of old threatened thee in Hoses: ”O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.” [Hos. 13:14] By His death thou art dead; by His death we live. Thou hast swallowed up and thou art swallowed up. Whilst thou art smitten with a longing for the body assumed by Him, and whilst thy greedy jaws fancy it a prey, thy inward parts are wounded with hooked fangs.

3. To Thee, O Saviour Christ, do we Thy creatures offer thanks that, when Thou wast slain, Thou didst slay our mighty adversary. Before Thy coming was there any being more miserable than man who cowering at the dread prospect of eternal death did but receive life that he might perish! For ”death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression. [Rom. 5:14] If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob be in hell, who can be in the kingdom of heaven? If Thy friends-even thosewho had not sinned themselves-were yet for the sins of another liable to the punishment of offending Adam, what must we think of those who have said in their hearts ”There is no God; who ”are corrupt and abominable” [Ps. 14:1] in their self-will, and of whom it is said ”they are gone out of the way, they are become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one”? [Rom. 3:12] Even if Lazarus is seen in Abraham’s bosom and in a place of refreshment, still the lower regions cannot be compared with the kingdom of heaven. Before Christ’s coming Abraham is in the lower regions: after Christ’s coming the robber is in paradise. And therefore at His rising again ”many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and were seen in the heavenly Jerusalem. [Matt. 27:52, Matt. 27:53] Then was fulfilled the saying: ”Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

[Eph. 5:14] John the Baptist cries in the desert: ”repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. [Matt. 3:2] For ”from the days of John the Baptist the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. [Matt. 11:12] The

flaming sword that keeps the way of paradise and the cherubim that are stationed at its doors [Gen. 3:24] are alike quenched and unloosed by the blood of Christ. It is not surprising that this should be promised us in the resurrection: for as many of us as living in the flesh do not live after the flesh, have our citizenship in heaven, [Phi. 3:20] and while we are still here on earth we are told that ”the kingdom of heaven is within us. [Luke 17:21]

4. Moreover before the resurrection of Christ God was ”known in Judah” only and ”His name was great in Israel” alone. [Ps. 76:1] And they who knew Him were despite their knowledge dragged down to hell. Where in those days were the inhabitants of the globe from India to Britain, from the frozen zone of the North to the burning heat of the Atlantic ocean? Where were the countless peoples of the world? Where the great multitudes? ”Unlike in tongue, unlike in dress and arms?” [Virg. A. 8:723] They were crushed like fishes and locusts, like flies and gnats. For apart from knowledge of his Creator every man is but a brute. But now the voices and writings of all nations proclaim the passion and the resurrection of Christ. I say nothing of the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans, peoples which the Lord has dedicated to His faith by the title written on His cross. [Luke 23:38] The immortality of the soul and its continuance after the dissolution of the body-truths of which Pythagoras dreamed, which Democritus refused to believe, and which Socrates discussed in prison to console himself for the sentence passed upon him-are now the familiar themes of Indian and of Persian, of Goth and of Egyptian. The fierce Bessians and the throng of skinclad savages who used to offer human sacrifices in honour of the dead have broken out of their harsh discord into the sweet music of the cross and Christ is the one cry of the whole world.

5. What can we do, my soul? Whither must we turn? What must we take up first? What must we pass over? Have you forgotten the precepts of the rhetoricians? Are you so preoccupied with grief, so overcome with tears, so hindered with sobs, that you forget all logical sequence? Where are the studies you have pursued from your childhood? Where is that saying of Anaxagoras and Telamon (which you have always commended) ”I knew myself to have begotten a mortal”? I have read the books of Crantor which he wrote to soothe his grief and which Cicero has imitated. I have read the consolatory writings of Plato, Diogenes, Clitomachus, Carneades, Posidonius, who at different times strove by book or letter to lessen the grief of various persons. Consequently, were my own wit to dry up, it could be watered anew from the fountains which these have opened. They set before us examples without number; and particularly those of Pericles and of Socrates’s pupil Xenophon. The former of these after the, loss of his two sons put on a garland and delivered a harangue; [Val. Max. 5:10] while the latter, on hearing when he was offering sacrifice that his son had been slain in war, is said to have laid down his garland; and then, on learning that he had fallen fighting bravely, is said to have

put it on his head again. What shall I say of those Roman generals whose heroic virtues glitter like stars on the pages of Latin history?

Pulvillus was dedicating the capitol when receiving the news of his son's sudden death, he gave orders that the funeral should take place without him. Lucius Paullus entered the city in triumph in the week which intervened between the funerals of his two sons. I pass over the Maximi, the Catos, the Galli, the Pisos, the Bruti, the Scaevolas, the Metelli, the Scauri, the Marii, the Crassi, the Marcelli, the Aufidii, men who shewed equal fortitude in sorrow and war, and whose bereavements Tully has set forth in his book Of consolation. I pass them over lest I should seem to have chosen the words and woes of others in preference to my own. Yet even these instances may suffice to ensure us mortification if our faith fails to surpass the achievements of unbelief.

6. Let me come then to my proper subject. I will not beat my breast with Jacob and with David for sons dying in the Law, but I will receive them rising again with Christ in the Gospel. The Jew's mourning is the Christian's joy. "Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning." [Ps. 30:5] "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." [Rom. 13:12] Accordingly when Moses dies, mourning is made for him, [Deut. 34:8] but when Joshua is buried, it is without tears or funeral pomp. [Josh. 24:30] All that can be drawn from scripture on the subject of lamentation I have briefly set forth in the letter of consolation which I addressed to Paula at Rome. Now I must take another path to arrive at the same goal. Otherwise I shall seem to be walking anew in a track once beaten but now long disused.

7. We know indeed that our Nepotian is with Christ and that he has joined the choirs of the saints. What here with us he groped after on earth afar off and sought for to the best of his judgment, there he sees nigh at hand, so that he can say: "as we have heard so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. [Ps. 48:8] Still we cannot bear the feeling of his absence, and grieve, if not for him, for ourselves. The greater the happiness which he enjoys, the deeper the sorrow in which the loss of a blessing so great plunges us. The sisters of Lazarus could not help weeping for him, although they knew that he would rise again. And the Saviour himself-to shew that he possessed true human feeling-mourned for him whom He was about to raise. [Joh. 11:35] His apostle also, though he says: "I desire to depart and to be with Christ," [Phi. 1:23] and elsewhere "to me to live is Christ and to die is gain," [Phi. 1:21] thanks God that Epaphras (who had been "sick nigh unto death") has been given back to him that he might not have sorrow upon sorrow. [Phi. 2:27] Words prompted not by the fear that springs of unbelief but by the passionate regret that comes of true affection.

How much more deeply must you who were to Nepotian both uncle and bishop,(that is, a father both in the flesh and in the spirit), deplore the loss of one so dear, as though your heart were torn from you. Set a limit, I pray you, to your sorrow and

remember the saying ”in nothing overmuch. Bind up for a little while your wound and listen to the praises of one in whose virtue you have always delighted. Do not grieve that you have lost such a paragon: rejoice rather that he has once been yours. As on a small tablet men depict the configuration of the earth, so in this little scroll of mine you may see his virtues if not fully depicted at least sketched in outline. I beg that you will take the will for the performance.

8. The advice of the rhetoricians in such cases is that you should first search out the remote ancestors of the person to be eulogized and recount their exploits, and then come gradually to your hero; so as to make him more illustrious by the virtues of his forefathers, and to show either that he is a worthy successor of good men, or that he has conferred lustre upon a lineage in itself obscure. But as my duty is to sing the praises of the soul, I will not dwell upon those fleshly advantages which Nepotian for his part always despised. Nor will I boast of his family, that is of the good points belonging not to him but to others; for even those holy men Abraham and Isaac had for sons the sinners Ishmael and Esau. And on the other hand Jephthah who is reckoned by the apostle in the roll of the righteous [Heb. 11:32] is the son of a harlot. [Judg. 11:1] It is said ”the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” [Ezek. 18:4] The soul therefore that has not sinned shall live. Neither the virtues nor the vices of parents are imputed to their children. God takes account of us only from the time when we are born anew in Christ. Paul, the persecutor of the church, who is in the morning the ravening wolf of Benjamin, [Gen. 49:27] in the evening ”gave food,” that is yields himself up to the sheep Ananias. [Acts 9:17. (Cf. Letter LXIX.] Let us likewise reckon our Nepotian a crying babe and an untutored child who has been born to us in a moment fresh from the waters of Jordan.

9. Another would perhaps describe how for his salvation you left the east and the desert and how you soothed me your dearest comrade by holding out hopes of a return: and all this that you might save, if possible, both your sister, then a widow with one little child, or, should she reject your counsels, at any rate your sweet little nephew. It was of him that I once used the prophetic words: ”though your little nephew cling to your neck.” Another, I say, would relate how while Nepotian was still in the service of the court, beneath his uniform and his brilliantly white linen, his skin was chafed with sackcloth; how, while standing before the powers of this world, his lips were discoloured with fasting; how still in the uniform of one master he served another; and how he wore the sword-belt only that he might succour widows and wards, the afflicted and the unhappy. For my part I dislike men to delay the complete dedication of themselves to God. When I read of the centurion Cornelius that he was a just man I immediately hear of his baptism.

10. Still we may approve these things as the swathing bands of an infant faith. He who has been a loyal soldier under a strange banner is sure to deserve the laurel

when he comes to serve his own king. When Nepotian laid aside his baldrick and changed his dress, he bestowed upon the poor all the pay that he had received. For he had read the words: ”if thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor and follow me,” [Matt. 19:21] and again: ”ye cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon. [Matt. 6:24] He kept nothing for himself but a common tunic and cloak to cover him and to keep out the cold. Made in the fashion of his province his attire was not remarkable either for elegance or for squalor. He burned daily to make his way to the monasteries of Egypt, or to visit the communities of Mesopotamia, or at least to live a lonely life in the Dalmatian islands, separated from the mainland only by the strait of Altinum. But he had not the heart to forsake his episcopal uncle in whom he beheld a pattern of many virtues and from whom he could take lessons without going abroad. In one and the same person he both found a monk to imitate and a bishop to revere. What so often happens did not happen here. Constant intimacy did not produce familiarity, nor did familiarity breed contempt. He revered him as a father and every day admired him for some new virtue.

To be brief, he became a clergyman, and after passing through the usual stages was ordained a presbyter. Good Jesus! how he sighed and groaned! how he fasted and fled the eyes of all! For the first and only time he was angry with his uncle, complaining that the burthen laid upon him was too heavy for him and that his youth unfitted him for the priesthood. But the more he struggled against it, the more he drew to himself the hearts of all: his refusal did but prove him worthy of an office which he was reluctant to assume, and all the more worthy because he declared himself unworthy. We too in our day have our Timothy; we too have seen that wisdom which is as good as gray hairs; [Wisd. 4:9] our Moses has chosen an elder whom he has known to be an eider indeed. Nepotian regarded the clerical state less as an honour than a burthen. He made it his first care to silence envy by humility, and his next to give no cause for scandal that such as assailed his youth might marvel at his continence. He helped the poor, visited the sick, stirred men up to hospitality, soothed them with soft words, rejoiced with those who rejoiced and wept with those who wept. [Rom. 12:15] He was a staff to the blind, food to the hungry, hope to the dejected, consolation to the bereaved. Each single virtue was as conspicuous in him as if he possessed no other.

Among his fellow-presbyters while ever foremost in work, he was ever satisfied with the lowest place. Any good that he did he ascribed to his uncle: but if the result did not correspond to his expectations, he would say that his uncle knew nothing of it, that it was his own mistake. In public he recognized him as a bishop; at home he looked upon him as a father. The seriousness of his disposition was mitigated by a cheerful expression. But while his laughter was joyous it was never loud. Christ’s virgins and widows he honoured as mothers and exhorted as sisters ”with all purity. [1 Tim. 5:2] When he returned home he used to leave the clergyman outside and to

give himself over to the hard rule of a monk. Frequent in supplication and watchful in prayer he would offer his tears not to man but to God. His fasts he regulated-as a driver does the pace of his horses-according to the weariness or vigour of his body. When at his uncle's table he would just taste what was set before him, so as to avoid superstition and yet to preserve self-control. In conversing at entertainments his habit was to propose some topic from scripture, to listen modestly, to answer diffidently, to support the right, to refute the wrong, but both without bitterness; to instruct his opponent rather than to vanquish him. Such was the ingenuous modesty which adorned his youth that he would frankly confess from what sources his several arguments came;

and in this way, while disclaiming a reputation for learning, he came to be held most learned. This he would say is the opinion of Tertullian, that of Cyprian; this of Lactantius, that of Hilary; to this effect speaks Minucius Felix, thus Victorinus, after this manner Arnobius. Myself too he would sometimes quote, for he loved me because of my intimacy with his uncle. Indeed by constant reading and long-continued meditation he had made his breast a library of Christ.

11. How often in letters from beyond the sea he urged me to write something to him! How often he reminded me of the man in the gospel who sought help by night [Luke 11:5, Luke 11:8] and of the widow who importuned the cruel judge! [Luke 18:1, Luke 18:5] And when I silently ignored his request and made my petitioner blush by blushing to reply, he put forward his uncle to enforce his suit, knowing that as the boon was for another he would more readily ask it, and that as I held his episcopal office in respect he would more easily obtain it. Accordingly I did what he wished and in a brief essay dedicated our mutual friendship to everlasting remembrance. On receiving this Nepotian boasted that he was richer than Croesus and wealthier than Darius. He held it in his hands, devoured it with his eyes, kept it in his bosom, repeated it with his lips. And often when he unrolledit upon his couch, he fell asleep with thecherished page upon his breast. When a stranger came or a friend, he rejoiced to let them know my witness to him. The deficiencies of my little book he made good bycareful punctuation and varied emphasis, so that when it was read aloud it was always he not I who seemed to please or to displease. Whence came such zeal, if not from the love of God? Whence came such untiring study of Christ's law, if not from a yearning for Him who gave it?

Let others add coin to coin till their purses are chock-full; let others demean themselves to sponge on married ladies; let them be richer as monks than they were as men of the world; let them possess wealth in the service of a poor Christ such as they never had in the service of a rich devil; let the church lose breath at the opulence of men who in the world were beggars. Our Nepotian spurns gold and begs only for written books. But while he despises himself in the flesh and walks

abroad more splendid than ever in his poverty, he still seeks out everything that may adorn the church.

12. In comparison with what has gone before what I am now about to say may appear trivial, but even in trifles the same spirit makes itself manifest. For as we admire the Creator not only as the framer of heaven and earth, of sun and ocean, of elephants, camels, horses, oxen, pards, bears, and lions; but also as the maker of the most tiny creatures, ants, gnats, flies, worms, and the like, whose shapes we know better than their names, and as in all alike we revere the same creative skill; so the mind that is given to Christ shews the same earnestness in things of small as of great importance, knowing that it must render an account of every idle word. [Matt. 12:36] Nepotian took pains to keep the altar bright, the church walls free from soot and the pavement duly swept. He saw that the doorkeeper was constantly at his post, that the doorhangings were in their places, the sanctuary clean and the vessels shining. The careful reverence that he shewed to every rite led him to neglect no duty small or great. Whenever you looked for him in church you found him there.

In Quintus Fabius antiquity admired a nobleman and the author of a history of Rome, yet his paintings gained him more renown than his writings. Our own Bezaleel [Ex. 31:2, Ex. 31:3] also and Hiram, the son of a Tyrian woman, are spoken of in scripture as filled with wisdom and the spirit of God because they framed, the one the furniture of the tabernacle, the other that of the temple. For, as it is with fertile tillage-fields and rich plough-lands which at times go out into redundant growths of stalk or ear, so is it with distinguished talents and a mind filled with virtue. They are sure to overflow into elegant and varied accomplishments. Accordingly among the Greeks we hear of a philosopher who used to boast that everything he wore down to his cloak and ring was made by himself. We may pass the same eulogy on our friend, for he adorned both the basilicas of the church and the halls of the martyrs with sketches of flowers, foliage, and vine-tendrils, so that everything attractive in the church, whether made so by its position or by its appearance, bore witness to the labour and zeal of the presbyter set over it.

13. Go on blessed in thy goodness! What kind of ending should we expect after such a beginning! Ah! hapless plight of mortal men and vanity of all life that is not lived in Christ! Why, O my words, do you shrink back? Why do you shift and turn? I fear to come to the end, as if I could put off his death or make his life longer. "All flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. [1 Pet. 1:24] Where now are that handsome face and dignified figure with which as with a fair garment his beautiful soul was clothed? The lily began to wither, alas! when the south wind blew, and the purple violet slowly faded into paleness. Yet while he burned with fever and while the fire of sickness was drying up the fountains of his veins, gasping and weary he still tried to comfort his sorrowing uncle. His

countenance shone with gladness, and while all around him wept he and he only smiled. He flung aside his cloak, put out his hand, saw what others failed to see, and even tried to rise that he might welcome new comers. You would have thought that he was starting on a journey instead of dying and that in place of leaving all his friends behind him he was merely passing from some to others. Tears roll down my cheeks and, however much I steel my mind, I cannot disguise the grief that I feel.

Who could suppose that at such an hour he would remember his intimacy with me, and that while he struggled for life he would recall the sweetness of study? Yet grasping his uncle's hand he said to him: "Send this tunic that I wore in the service of Christ to my dear friend, my father in age, but my brother in office, and transfer the affection hitherto claimed by your nephew to one who is as dear to you as he is to me. With these words he passed away holding his uncle's hand and with my name upon his lips.

14. I know how unwilling you were to prove the affection of your people at such a cost, and that you would have preferred to win your countrymen's love while retaining your happiness. Such expressions of feeling, pleasant as they are when all goes well, are doubly welcome in time of sorrow. All Altinum, all Italy mourned Nepotian. The earth received his body; his soul was given back to Christ. You lost a nephew, the church a priest. He who should have followed you went before you. To the office which you held, he in the judgment of all deserved to succeed. And so one family has had the honour of producing two bishops, the first to be congratulated because he has held the office, the second to be lamented because he has been taken away too soon to hold it. Plato thinks that a wise man's whole life ought to be a meditation of death; and philosophers praise the sentiment and extol it to the skies. But much more full of power are the words of the apostle: "I die daily through your glory. [1 Cor. 15:31, Vulgate] For to have an ideal is one thing, to realize it another. It is one thing to live so as to die, another to die so as to live. The sage and Christian must both of them die: but the one always dies out of his glory, the other into it.

Therefore we also should consider beforehand the end which must one day overtake us and which, whether we wish it or not, cannot be very far distant. For though we should live nine hundred years or more, as men did before the deluge, and though the days of Methuselah [Gen. 5:27] should be granted us, yet that long space of time, when once it should have passed away and come to an end, would be as nothing. For to the man who has lived ten years and to him who has lived a thousand, when once the end of life comes and death's inexorable doom, all the past whether long or short is just the same; except that the older a man is, the heavier is the load of sin that he has to take with him.

”First hapless mortals lose from out their life The fairest days: disease and age come next; And lastly cruel death doth claim his prey.” [Virg. G. 3:66-68] The poet Naevius too says that ”Mortals must many woes perforce endure.” Accordingly antiquity has feigned that Niobe because of her much weeping was turned to stone and that other women were metamorphosed into beasts. Hesiod also bewails men’s birthdays and rejoices in their deaths, and Ennius wisely says: ”The mob has one advantage o’er its king: For it may weep while tears for him are shame.” If a king may not weep, neither may a bishop; indeed a bishop has still less license than a king. For the king rules over unwilling subjects, the bishop over willing ones. The king compels submission by terror; the bishop exercises lordship by becoming a servant. The king guards men’s bodies till they die; the bishop saves their souls for life eternal. The eyes of all are turned upon you. Your house is set on a watchtower; your life fixes for others the limits of their self-control. Whatever you do, all think that they may do the same. Do not so commit yourself that those who seek ground for cavil may be thought to have rightly assailed you, or that those who are eager to imitate you may be forced to do wrong. Overcome as much as you can-nay even more than you can-the sensitiveness of your mind and check the copious flow of your tears. Else your deep affection for your nephew may be construed by unbelievers as indicating despair of God. You must regrethim not as dead but as absent. You must seem lobe looking for him rather than have lost him.

15. But why do I try to heal a sorrow which has already, I suppose, been assuaged by time and reason? Why do I not rather unfold to you-they are not far to seek-the miseries of our rulers and the calamities of our time? He who has lost the light of life is not so much to be pitied as he is to be congratulated who has escaped from such great evils. Constantius, the patron of the Arian heresy, was hurrying to do battle with his enemy when he died at the village of Mopsus and to his great vexation left the empire to his foe. Julian , the betrayer of his own soul, the murderer of a Christian army, felt in Media the hand of the Christ whom he had previously denied in Gaul. Desiring to annex new territories to Rome, he did but lose annexations previously made. Jovian had but just tasted the sweets of sovereignty when a coal-fire suffocated him: a good instance of the transitoriness of human power. Valentinian died of a broken blood vessel, the land of his birth laid waste, and his country un-avenged. His brother Valens defeated in Thrace by the Goths, was buried where he died. Gratian, betrayed by his army and refused admittance by the cities on his line of march, became the laughing-stock of his foe; and your walls, Lyons, still bear the marks of that bloody hand.

Valentinian was yet a youth-I may say, a mere boy-when, after flight and exile and the recovery of his power by bloodshed, he was put to death not far from the city which had witnessed his brother’s end. And not only so but his lifeless body was gibbeted to do him shame. What shall I say of Procopius, of Maximus, of Eugenius, who while they held sovereign sway were a terror to the nations, yet stood one and

all as prisoners in the presence of their conquerors, and- cruellest wound of all to the great and powerful - felt the pang of an ignominious slavery before they fell by the edge of the sword.

16. Some one may say: such is the lot of kings: The lightning ever smites the mountain-tops. [Hor. C. II. 10:11, 12] I will come therefore to persons of private position, and in speaking of these I will not go farther back than the last two years. In fact I will content myself-omitting all others-with recounting the respective fates of three recent consulars. Abundantius is a beggared exile at Pityus. The head of Rufinus has been carried on a pike to Constantinople, and his severed hand has begged alms from door to door to shame his insatiable greed. Timasius, hurled suddenly from a position of the highest rank thinks it an escape that he is allowed to live in obscurity at Assa. I am describing not the misfortunes of an unhappy few but the thread upon which human fortunes as a whole depend. I shudder when I think of the catastrophes of our time. For twenty years and more the blood of Romans has been shed daily between Constantinople and the Julian Alps. Scythia, Thrace, Macedonia, Dardania, Dacia, Thessaly, Achaia, Epirus, Dalmatia, the Pannonias- each and all of these have been sacked and pillaged and plundered by Goths and Sarmatians, Quades and Alans, Huns and Vandals and Marchmen. How many of God’s matrons and virgins, Virtuous and noble ladies, have been made the sport of these brutes! Bishops have been made captive, priests and those in minor orders have been put to death. Churches have been overthrown, horses have been stalled by the altars of Christ, the relics of martyrs have been dug up.

”Mourning and fear abound on every side And death appears in countless shapes and forms.” [Virg. A. 2:369] The Roman world is falling: yet we hold up our heads instead of bowing them. What courage, think you, have the Corinthians now, or the Athenians or the Lacedaemonians or the Arcadians, or any of the Greeks over whom the barbarians bear sway? I have mentionedonly a few cities, but these once the capitals of no mean states. The East, it is true, seemed to be safe from all such evils: and if men were panic-stricken here, it was only because of bad news from other parts. But lo! in the year just gone by the wolves (no longer of Arabia but of the whole North) were let loose upon us from the remotest fastnesses of Caucasus and in a short time overran these great provinces. What a number of monasteries they captured! What many rivers they caused to run red with blood! They laid siege to Antioch and invested other cities on the Halys, the Cydnus, the Orontes, and the Euphrates. They carried off troops of captives. Arabia, Phenicia, Palestine and Egypt, in their terror fancied themselves already enslaved.

”Had I a hundred tongues, a hundred lips, A throat of iron and a chest of brass, I could not tell men’s countless sufferings.” [Virg. A. 6:625-7] And indeed it is not my purpose to write a history: I only wish to shed a few tears over your sorrows and

mine. For the rest, to treat such themes as they deserve, Thucydides and Sallust would be as good as dumb.

17. Nepotian is happy who neither sees these things nor hears them. We are unhappy, for either we suffer ourselves or we see our brethren suffer. Yet we desire to live, and regard those beyond the reach of these evils as miserable rather than blessed. We have long felt that God is angry, yet we do not try to appease Him. It is our sins which make the barbarians strong, it is our vices which vanquish Rome's soldiers: and, as if there were here too little material for carnage, civil wars have made almost greater havoc among us than the swords of foreign foes. Miserable must those Israelites have been compared with whom Nebuchadnezzar was called God's servant. [Jer. 27:6] Unhappy too are we who are so displeasing to God that He uses the fury of the barbarians to execute His wrath against us. Still when Hezekiah repented, one hundred and eighty-five thousand Assyrians were destroyed in one night by a single angel. [2 K. 19:35] When Jehosaphat sang the praises of the Lord, the Lord gave His worshipper the victory. [2 Chr. 20:5-25] Again when Moses fought against Amalek, it was not with the sword but with prayer that he prevailed. [Ex. 17:11] Therefore, if we wish to be lifted up, we must first prostrate ourselves. Alas! for our shame and folly reaching even to unbelief! Rome's army, once victor and lord of theworld, now trembles with terror at the sight ofthe foe and accepts defeat from men who cannot walk afoot and fancy themselves dead if once they are unhorsed. We do not understand the prophet's words: "One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one." [Isa. 30:17] We do not cut away the causes of the disease, as we must do to remove the disease itself. Else we should soon see the enemies' arrows give way to our javelins, their caps to our helmets, their palfreys to our chargers.

18. But I have gone beyond the office of a consoler, and while forbidding you to weep for one dead man I have myself mourned the dead of the whole world. Xerxes the mighty king who rased mountains and filled up seas, looking from high ground upon the untold host, the countless army before him, is said to have wept at the thought that in a hundred years not one of those whom he then saw would be alive. Oh! if we could but get up into a watch-tower so high that from it we might behold the whole earth spread out under our feet, then I would shew you the wreck of a world, nation warring against nation and kingdom in collision with kingdom; some men tortured, others put to the sword, others swallowed up by the waves, some dragged away into slavery; here a wedding, there a funeral; men born here, men dying there; some living in affluence, others begging their bread; and not the army of Xerxes, great as that was, but all the inhabitants of the world alive now but destined soon to pass away. Language is inadequate to a theme so vast and all that I can say must fall short of the reality.

19. Let us return then to ourselves and coming down from the skies let us look for a few moments upon what more nearly concerns us. Are you conscious, I would ask, of the stages of your growth? Can you fix the time when you became a babe, a boy, a youth, an adult, an old man? Every day we are changing, every day we are dying, and yet we fancy ourselves eternal. The very moments that I spend in dictation, in writing, in reading over what I write, and in correcting it, are so much taken from my life. Every dot that my secretary makes is so much gone from my allotted time. We write letters and reply to those of others, our missives cross the sea, and, as the vessel ploughs its furrow through wave after wave, the moments which we have to live vanish one by one. Our only gain is that we are thus knit together in the love of Christ. "Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth. [1 Cor. 13:4, 1 Cor. 13:7, 1 Cor. 13:8] It lives always in the heart, and thus our Nepotian though absent is still present, and widely sundered though we are has a hand to offer to each. Yes, in him we have a hostage for mutual charity.

Let us then be joined together in spirit, let us bind ourselves each to each in affection and let us who have lost a son shew the same fortitude with which the blessed pope Chromatius bore the loss of a brother. Let every page that we write echo his name, let all our letters ring with it. If we can no longer clasp him to our hearts, let us hold him fast in memory; and if we can no longer speak with him, let us never cease to speak of him.

Letter 61. To Vigilantius.

Vigilantius on his return to the West after his visit to Jerusalem (whither he had gone as the bearer of letters from Paulinus of Nola-see Letter 58.) had openly accused Jerome of a leaning to the heresy of Origen. Jerome now writes to him in the most severe tone repudiating the charge of Origenism and fastening upon his opponent those of ignorance and blasphemy. He singles out for especial reprobation Vigilantius's explanation of 'the stone cut out without hands' in Daniel and urges him to repent of his sins in which case he will have as much chance of forgiveness as the devil has according to Origen! The letter is often referred to as showing Jerome's way of dealing with Origen's works. Jerome subsequently wrote a refutation of Vigilantius's work, of all his controversial writings the most violent and the least reasonable. See the translation of it in this volume. See also Letter 109. The date of this letter is 396 a.d.

1. Since you have refused to believe your own ears, I might justly decline to satisfy you by a letter; for, if you have failed to credit the living voice, it is not likely that you will give way to a written paper. But, since Christ has shown us in Himself a pattern of perfect humility, bestowing a kiss upon His betrayer and receiving the robber's repentance upon the cross, I tell you now when absent as I have told you already when present, that I read and have read Origen only as I read Apollinaris, or other writers whose books in some things the Church does not receive. I by no means say that everything contained in such books is to be condemned, but I admit that there are things in them deserving of censure. Still, as it is my task and study by reading many authors to cull different flowers from as large a number as possible, not so much making it an object to prove all things as to choose what are good. I take up many writers that from the many I may learn many things; according to that which is written "reading all things, holding fast those that are good." [1 Th. 5:21] Hence I am much surprised that you have tried to fasten upon me the doctrines of Origen, of whose mistaken teaching on many points you are up to the present altogether unaware. Am I a heretic? Why pray then do heretics dislike me so? And are you orthodox, you who either against your convictions and the words of your own mouth signed unwillingly and are consequently a prevaricator, or else signed deliberately and are consequently a heretic? You have taken no account of Egypt;

you have relinquished all those provinces where numbers plead freely and openly for your sect; and you have singled out me for assault, me whonot only censure but publicly condemn all doctrines that are contrary to the church.

2. Origen is a heretic, true; but what does that take from me who do not deny that on very many points he is heretical? He has erred concerning the resurrection of the body, he has erred concerning the condition of souls, he has erred by supposing it possible that the devil may repent, and-an error more important than these-he has declared in his commentary upon Isaiah that the Seraphim mentioned by the prophet [Isa. 6:2. See Letter XVIII] are the divine Son and the Holy Ghost. If I did not allow that he has erred or if I did not daily anathematize his errors I should be partaker of his fault. For while we receive what is good in his writings we must on no account bind ourselves to accept also what is evil. Still in many passages he has interpreted the scriptures well, has explained obscure places in the prophets, and has brought to light very great mysteries, both in the old and in the new testament. If then I have taken over what is good in him and have either cut away or altered or ignored what is evil, am I to be regarded as guilty on the score that through my agency those who read Latin receive the good in his writings without knowing anything of the bad? If this be a crime the confessor Hilary must be convicted; for he has rendered from Greek into Latin Origen's Explanation of the Psalms and his Homilies on Job.

Eusebius of Vercellae, who witnessed a like confession, must also be held in fault; for he has translated into our tongue the Commentaries upon all the Psalms of his heretical namesake, omitting however the unsound portions and rendering only those parts which are profitable. I say nothing of Victorinus of Petavium and others who have merely followed and expanded Origen in their explanation of the scriptures. Were I to do so, I might seem less anxious to defend myself than to find for myself companions in guilt. I will come to your own case: Why do you keep copies of his treatises on Job? In these, while arguing against the devil and concerning the stars and heavens, he has said certain things which the Church does not receive. Is it for you alone, with that very wise head of yours, to pass sentence upon all writers Greek and Latin, with a wave of your censor's wand to eject some from our libraries and to admit others, and as the whim takes you to pronounce me either a Catholic or a heretic? And am I to be forbidden to reject things which are wrong and to condemn what I have often condemned already? Read what I have written upon the epistle to the Ephesians, read my other works, particularly my commentary upon Ecclesiastes, and you will clearly see that from my youth up I have never been terrified by any man's influence into acquiescence in heretical pravity.

3. It is no small gain to know your own ignorance. It is a man's wisdom to know his own measure, that he may not be led away at the instigation of the devil to

make the whole world a witness of his incapacity. You are bent, I suppose, on magnifying yourself and boast in your own country that I found myself unable to answer your eloquence and that I dreaded in you the sharp satire of a Chrysippus. Christian modesty holds me back and I do not wish to lay open the retirement of my poor cell with biting words. Otherwise I should soon shew up all your bravery and your parade of triumph. But these I leave to others either to talk of or to laugh at; while for my own part as a Christian speaking to a Christian I beseech you my brother not to pretend to know more than you do, lest yourpen may proclaim your innocence and simplicity, or at any rate those qualities of which I say nothing but which, though you do not see them in yourself others see in you. For then you will give everyone reason to laugh at your folly. From your earliest childhood you have been taught other lessons and have been used to a different kind of schooling. One and the same person can hardly be a tester both of gold coins on the counter and also of the scriptures, or be a connoisseur of wines and an adept in expounding prophets or apostles.

As for me, you tear me limb from limb, our reverend brother Oceanus you charge with heresy, you dislike the judgment of the presbyters Vincent and Paulinian, and our brother Eusebius also displeases you. You alone are to be our Cato, the most eloquent of the Roman race, and you wish us to accept what you say as the words of prudence herself. Pray call to mind the day when I preached on the resurrection and on the reality of the risen body, and when you jumped up beside me and clapped your hands and stamped your feet and applauded my orthodoxy. Now, however, that you have taken to sea travelling the stench of the bilge water has affected your head, and you have called me to mind only as a heretic. What can I do for you? I believed the letters of the reverend presbyter Paulinus, and it did not occur to me that his judgment concerning you could be wrong. And although, the moment that you handed me the letter, I noticed a certain incoherency in your language, yet I fancied this due to want of culture and knowledge in you and not to an unsettled brain. I do not censure the reverend writer who preferred, no doubt, in writing to me to keep back what he knew rather than to accuse in his missive one who was both under his patronage and entrusted with his letter;

but I find fault with myself that I have rested in another’s judgment rather than my own, and that, while my eyes saw one thing, I believed on the evidence of a scrap of paper something else than what I saw.

4. Wherefore cease to worry me and to overwhelm me with your scrolls. Spare at least your money with which you hire secretaries and copyists, employing the same persons to write for you and to applaud you. Possibly their praise is due to the fact that they make a profit out of writing for you. If you wish to exercise your mind, hand yourself over to the teachers of grammar and rhetoric, learn logic, have yourself instructed in the schools of the philosophers; and when you have

learned all these things you will perhaps begin to hold your tongue. And yet I are acting foolishly in seeking teachers for one who is competent to teach everyone, and in trying to limit the utterance of one who does not know how to speak yet cannot remain silent. The old Greek proverb is quite true ”A lyre is of no use to an ass. For my part I imagine that even your name was given you out of contrariety. For your whole mind slumbers and you actually snore, so profound is the sleep-or rather the lethargy-in which you are plunged.

In fact amongst the other blasphemies which with sacrilegious lips you have uttered you have dared to say that the mountain in Daniel [Dan. 2:34, Dan. 2:45] out of which the stone was cut without hands is the devil, and that the stone is Christ, who having taken a body from Adam (whose sins had before connected him with the devil) is born of a virgin to separate mankind from i the mountain, that is, from the devil. Your tongue deserves to be cut out and torn into fragments. Can any true Christian explain this image of the devil instead of referring it to God the Father Almighty, or defile the ears of the whole world with so frightful an enormity? If your explanation has ever been accepted by any-I will not say Catholic but-heretic or heathen, let your words be regarded as pious. If on the other hand the Church of Christ has never yet heard of such an impiety, and if yours has been the first mouth through which he who once said ”I will be like the Most High” [Isa. 14:14] has declared that he is the mountain spoken of by Daniel, then repent, put on sackcloth and ashes, and with fast-flowing tears wash away your awful guilt; if so be that this impiety may be forgiven you, and, supposing Origen’s heresy to be true, that you may obtain pardon when the devil himself shall obtain it, the devil who has never been convicted of greater blasphemy than that which he has uttered through you.

Your insult offered to myself I bear with patience: your impiety towards God I cannot bear. Accordingly I may seem to have been somewhat more acrid in this latter part of my letter than I declared I would be at the outset. Yet having once before repented and asked pardon of me, it is extremely foolish in you again to commit a sin for which you must anew do penance. May Christ give you grace to hear and to hold your peace, to understand and so to speak.

Letter 62. To Tranquillinus.

Tranquillinus, one of Jerome's Roman friends, had written (1) to tell him of the stand that Oceanus was making against the Origenists at Rome, and (2) to ask whether any parts of Origen's works might be studied with safety and profit. Jerome welcomes the tidings about Oceanus and answers the question of Tranquillinus in the affirmative. He classes Origen with Tertullian, Apollinaris and others whose works continued to he read in spite of their heresies. Written in 396 or 397 a.d. I. Though I formerly doubted the fact, I have now proved that the links which bind spirit to spirit are stronger than any physical bond. For you, my reverend friend, cling to me with all your soul, and I am united to you by the love of Christ. I speak simply and sincerely to your spotless heart: the very paper on which you write, the very letters which you have formed-voiceless though they are-in-spire in me a sense of your affection.

2. You tell me that many have been deceived by the mistaken teaching of Origen, and that that saintly man, my son Oceanus, is doing battle with their madness. I grieve to think that simple folk have been thrown off their balance, but I am rejoiced to know that one so learned as Oceanus is doing his best to set them right again. Moreover you ask me, insignificant though I am, for an opinion as to the advisability of reading Origen's works. Are we, you say, to reject him altogether with our brother Faustinus, or are we, as others tell us, to read him in part? My opinion is that we should sometimes read him for his learning just as we read Tertullian, Novatus, Arnobius, Apollinarius and some other church writers both Greek and Latin, and that we should select what is good and avoid what is bad in their writings according to the words of the Apostle, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good" [1 Th. 5:21] Those, however, who are led by some perversity in their dispositions to conceive for him too much fondness or toomuch aversion seem to me to lie under the curse of the Prophet:-"Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!" [Is. 5:20] For while the ability of his teaching must not lead us to embrace his wrong opinions, the wrongness of his opinions should not cause us altogether to reject the useful commentaries which he has published on the holy scriptures. But if his admirers and his detractors are bent on having a tug of war one against the other, and

if, seeking no mean and observing no moderation, they must either approve or disapprove his works indiscriminately,I would choose rather to be a pious boor than a learned blasphemer. Our reverend brother, Tatian the deacon, heartily salutes you.

Letter 63. To Theophilus.

When the dispute arose between Jerome and Epiphanius on the one side and Rufinus and John of Jerusalem on the other (see Letter 51.), Theophilus bishop of Alexandria, being appealed to by the latter sent the presbyter Isidore to report to him on the matter. Isidore reported against Jerome and consequently Theophilus refused to answer several of his letters. Finally he wrote counselling him to obey the canons of the church. Jerome replies that to do this has always been his first object. He then remonstrates with Theophilus on his too great leniency towards the Origenists and declares it to be productive of the worst results. The date of the letter is probably 397 a.d. Jerome to the most blessed pope Theophilus. I. Your holiness will remember that at the time when you kept silence towards me, I never ceased to do my duty by writing to you, not taking so much into account what you in the exercise of your discretion were then doing as what it became me to do. And now that I have received a letter from your grace, I see that my reading of the gospel has not been without fruit. For if the frequent prayers of a woman changed the determination of an unyielding judge, [Luke 18:2-5] how much more must my constant appeals have softened a fatherly heart Auks yours?

2. I thank you for your reminder concerning the canons of the Church. Truly, ”whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” [Heb. 12:6] Still I would assure you that nothing is more my aim than to maintain the rights of Christ, to keep to the lines laid down by the fathers, and always to remember the faith of Rome; that faith which is praised by the lips of an apostle, [Rom. 1:8] and of which the Alexandrian church boasts to be a sharer. 3. Many religious persons are displeased that you are so long-suffering in regard to that shocking heresy, and that you suppose yourself able by such lenity to amend those who are attacking the Church’s vitals. They believe that, while you are waiting for the penitence of a few, your action is fostering the boldness of abandoned men and making their party stronger. Farewell in Christ.

Letter 66. To Pammachius.

Pammachius a Roman senator, had lost his wife Paulina one of Paula's daughters, while she was still in the flower of her youth. It was not till two years had elapsed that Jerome ventured to write to him; and when he did so he dwelt but little on the life and virtues of Paulina. Probably there was but little to tell. The greater part of the letter is taken up with commendation of Pammachius himself who, in spite of his high rank and position, had become a monk and was now living a life of severe self-denial. Jerome speaks approvingly of the Hospice for Strangers which, in conjunction with Fabiola, Pammachius had set up at Portus, and describes his own somewhat similar institutions at Bethlehem. He also mentions Paula, Eustochium, and the dead Blaesilla,all in terms of the highest praise. The date of the letter is 397 a.d.

I. Supposing a wound to be healed and a scar to have been formed upon the skin, any course of treatment designed to remove the mark must in its effort to improve the appearance renew the smart of the original wound. After two years of inopportune silence my condolence now comes rather late; yet even so I am afraid that my present speech may be still more inopportune. I fear lest in touching the sore spot in your heart I may by my words inflame afresh a wound which time and reflection have availed to cure. For who can have ears so dull or hearts so flinty as to hear the name of your Paulina without weeping? Even though reared on the milk of Hyrcanian tigresses they must still shed tears. Who can with dry eyes see thus untimely cut down and withered an opening rose, an undeveloped bud, which has not yet formed itself into a cup nor spread forth the proud display of its crimson petals? In her a most priceless pearl is broken. In her a vivid emerald is shattered. Sickness alone shews us the blessedness of health. We realize better what we have had when we cease to have it.

2. The good ground of which we read in the parable brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. [Matt. 13:8] In this threefold yield I recognize an emblem of the three different rewards of Christ which have fallen to three women closely united in blood and moral excellence. Eustochium culls the flowers of virginity. Paula sweeps the toilsome threshing floor of widow-

hood. Paulina keeps the bed undefiled of marriage. A mother with such daughters wins for herself on earth all that Christ has promised to give in heaven. Then to complete the team-if I may so call it-of four saints turned out by a single family, and to match the women's virtues by those of a man, the three have a fit companion in Pammachius who is a cherub such as Ezekiel describes, [Ezek. 10:8-22] brother-in-law to the first. son-in-law to the second, husband to the third. Husband did I say? Nay, rather a most devoted brother; for the language of marriage is inadequate to describe the holy bonds of the Spirit. Of this team Jesus holds the reins, and it is of steeds like these that Habakkuk sings: "ride upon thy horses and let thy riding be salvation." [Hab. 3:8, LXX] With like resolve if with unlike speed they strain after the victor's palm. Their colours are different; their object is the same. They are harnessed in one yoke, they obey one driver, not waiting for the lash but answering the call of his voice with fresh efforts.

3. Let me use for a moment the language of philosophy. According to the Stoics there are four virtues so closely related and mutually coherent that he who lacks one lacks all. They are prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. [Cf. Wisdom, 8:7] While all of you possess the four, yet each is remarkable for one. You have prudence, your mother has justice, your virgin sister has fortitude, your wedded wife has temperance. I speak of you as wise, for who can be wiser than one who, despising the folly of the world, has followed Christ "the power of God and the wisdom of God"? [1 Cor. 1:24] Or what better instance can there be of justice than your mother, who having divided her substance among her offspring has taught them by her own contempt of riches the true object on which to fix their affections? Who has set a better example of courage than Eustochium, who by resolving to be a virgin has breached the gates of the nobility and broken down the pride of a consular house? The first of Roman ladies, she has brought under the yoke the first of Roman families. Has there ever been temperance greater than that of Paulina, who, reading the words of the apostle:

"marriage is honourable in all and the bed unde filed," [Heb. 13:4] and not presuming to aspire to the happiness of her virgin sister or the continence of her widowed mother, has preferred to keep to the safe track of a lower path rather than treading on air to lose herself in the clouds? When once she had entered upon the married state, her one thought day and night was that, as soon as her union should be blessed with offspring, she would live thenceforth in the second degree of chastity, and "Though woman, foremost in the high emprise," [Virg. A. 1:494] would induce her husband to follow a like course. She would not forsake him but looked for the day when he would become a companion in salvation. Finding by several miscarriages that her womb was not barren, she could not give up all hope of having children and had to allow her own reluctance to give way to the eagerness of her mother-in-law and the chagrin of her husband. Thus she suffered muchas Rachel suffered, [Gen. 35:16] although instead of bringing forth like her a son of pangs

and of the right hand, the heir she had longed for was no other than her husband. I have learned on good authority that her wish in submitting herself to her husband was not to take advantage of God's primitive command "Be faithful and multiply and replenish the earth" [Gen. 1:28] but that she only desired children that she might bring forth virgins to Christ.

4. We read that the wife of Phinehas thepriest, on hearing that the ark of the Lord had been taken, was seized suddenly with the pains of travail and that she brought forth a son Ichabod and died a mother in the hands of the women who nursed her. [1 Sam. 4:19-22] Rachel's son is called Benjamin, that is 'son of excellence' Or 'of the right hand'; but the son of the other, afterwards to be a distinguished priest of God, derives his name from the ark. The same thing has come to pass in our own day, for since Paulina fell asleep the Church has posthumously borne the monk Pammachius, a patrician by his parentage and marriage, rich in alms, and lofty in lowliness. The apostle writes to the Corinthians, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men, not many noble are called. [1 Cor. 1:26] The conditions of the nascent church required this to be so that the grain of mustard seed might grow up little by little into a tree, [Matt. 13:31] and that the leaven of the gospel might gradually raise more and more the whole lump of the church. [Matt. 13:33] In our day Rome possesses what the world in days gone by knew not of. Then few of the wise or mighty or noble were Christians; now many wise powerful and noble are not Christians only but even monks. And among them all my Pammachius is the wisest, the mightiest, and the noblest;

great among the great, a leader among leaders, he is the commander in chief of all monks. He and others like him are the offspring which Paulina desired to have in her life time and which she has given us in her death. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child"; [Isa. 54:1] for in a moment thou hast brought forth as many sons as there are poor men in Rome.

5. The glowing gems which in old days adorned the neck and face of Paulina now purchase food for the needy. Her silk dresses and gold brocades are exchanged for soft woollen garments intended to keep out the cold and not to expose the body to vain admiration. All that formerly ministered to luxury is now at the service of virtue. That blind man holding out his hand, and often crying aloud when there is none to hear, is the heir of Paulina, is co-heir with Pammachius. That poor cripple who can scarcely drag himself along, owes his support to the help of a tender girl. Those doors which of old poured forth crowds of visitors, are now beset only by the wretched. One suffers from a dropsy, big with death; another mute and without the means of begging, begs the more appealingly because he cannot beg; another maimedfrom his childhood implores an alms which he may not himself enjoy. Still

another has his limbs rotted with jaundice and lives on after his body has become a corpse. To use the language of Virgil:

"Had I a hundred tongues, a hundred lips, I could not tell men's countless sufferings." [Virg. A. 6:625, 627] Such is the bodyguard which accompanies Pammachius wherever he walks; in the persons of such he ministers to Christ Himself; and their squalor serves to whiten his soul. Thus he speeds on his way to heaven, beneficent as a giver of games to the poor, and kind as a provider of shows for the needy. Other husbands scatter on the graves of their wives violets, roses, lilies, and purple flowers; and assuage the grief of their hearts by fulfilling this tender duty. Our dear Pammachius also waters the holy ashes and the revered bones of Paulina, but it is with the balm of almsgiving. These are the confections and the perfumes with which be cherishes the dead embers of his wife knowing that it is written: "Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins." [Ecclus. 3:30] What great power compassion has and what high rewards it is destined to win, the blessed Cyprian sets forth in an extensive work. It is proved also by the counsel of Daniel who desired the most impious of kings-had he been willing to hear him-to be saved by shewing mercy to the poor. [Dan. 4:27] Paulina's mother may well be glad of Paulina's heir. She cannot regret that her daughter's wealth has passed into new hands when she sees it still spent upon the objects she had at heart. Nay, rather she must congratulate herself that without any exertion of her own her wishes are being carried out. The sum available for distribution is the same as before: only the distributor is changed.

6. Who can credit the fact that one, who is the glory of the Furian stock and whose grandfathers and great grandfathers have been consuls, moves amid the senators in their purple clothed in sombre garb, and that, so far from blushing when he meets the eyes of his companions, he actually derides those who deride him! "There is a shame that leadeth to death and there is a shame that leadeth to life." It is a monk's first virtue to despise the judgments of men and always to remember the apostle's words:-"If I yet pleased men, I should not be tile servant of Christ." [Gal. 1:10] In the same sense the Lord says to the prophets that He has made their face a brazen city and a stone of adamant and an iron pillar, [Cf. Jer. 1:18. Ezek. 3:8, Ezek. 3:9] to the end that they shall not be afraid of the insults of the people but shall by the sternness of their looks discompose the effrontery of those who sneered at them. A finely strung mind is more readily overcome by contumely than by terror. And men whom no tortures can overawe are sometimes prevailed over by the fear of shame. Surely it is no small thing for a man of birth, eloquence, and wealth to avoid the company of the powerful in the streets, to mingle with the crowd, to cleave to the poor, to associate on equal terms with the untaught, to cease to be a leader and to become one of the people. The more he humbles himself, I the more he is exalted. [Cf. Luke 14:11]

7. A pearl will shine in the midst of squalor and a gem of the first water will sparkle in the mire. This is what the Lord promised when He said: "Them that honour me I will honour. [1 S. 2:30] Others may understand this of the future when sorrow shall be turned into joy and when, although the world shall pass away, the saints shall receive a crown which shall never pass. But I for my part see that the promises made to the saints are fulfilled even in this present life. Before he began to serve Christ with his whole heart, Pammachius was a well known person in the senate. Still there were many other senators who wore the badges of proconsular rank. The whole world is filled with similar decorations. He was in the first rank it is true, but there were others in it besides him. Whilst he took precedence of some, others took precedence of him. The most distinguished privilege loses its prestige when lavished on a crowd, and dignities themselves become less dignified in the eyes of good men when held by persons who have no dignity. Thus Tully finely says of Caesar, when he wished to advance some of his adherents, "he did not so much honour them as dishonour the honourable positions in which he placed them. To-day all the churches of Christ are talking of Pammachius. The whole world admires as a poor man one whom heretofore it ignored as rich. Can anything be more splendid than the consulate?

Yet the honour lasts only for a year and when another has succeeded to the post its former occupant gives way. Each man's laurels are i lost in the crowd and sometimes triumphs themselves are marred by the shortcomings of those who celebrate them. An office which was once handed down from patrician to patrician, which only men of noble birth could hold, of which the consul Marius-victor though he was over Numidia and the Teutons and the Cimbri-was held unworthy on account of the obscurity of his family, and which Scipio won before his time as the reward of valour,-this great office is now obtained by merely belonging to the army; and the shining robe of victory now envelops men who a little while ago were country boors. Thus we have received more than we have given. The things we have renounced are small; the things we possess are great. All that Christ promises is duly performed and for what we have given up we have received an hundredfold. [Cf. Matt. 19:29] This was the ground in which Isaac sowed his seed, [Gen. 26:12] Isaac who in his readiness to die [Gen. 22] bore the cross of the Gospel before the Gospel came.

8. "If thou wilt be perfect," the Lord says, "go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor.... and come and follow me. [Matt. 19:21] If thou wilt be perfect. Great enterprises are always left to the free choice of those who hear of them. Thus the apostle refrains from making virginity a positive duty, because the Lord in speaking of eunuchs who had made themselves such for the kingdom of heaven's sake finally said: "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. [Matt. 19:12] For, to quote the apostle, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. [Rom. 9:1] If thou wilt be perfect. There is no compulsion laid

upon you: if you are to win the prize it must be by the exercise of your own free will. If therefore you will to be perfect and desire to be as the prophets, as the apostles, as Christ Himself, sell not a part of your substance (lest the fear of want become an occasion of unfaithfulness, and so you perish with Ananias and Sapphira [Acts v]) but all that you have. And when you have sold all, give the proceeds not to the wealthy or to the high-minded but to the poor. Give each man enough for his immediate need but do not give money to swell what a man has already.

"Thou shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," [1 Cor. 9:9] and "the labourer is worthy of his reward. [1 Tim. 5:18] Again "they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar. [1 Cor. 9:13] Remember also these words: "having, food and raiment let us be therewith content. [1 Tim. 6:8] Where you see smoking dishes, steaming pheasants, massive silver plate, spirited nags, long-haired boy-slaves, expensive clothing, and embroidered hangings, give nothing there. For he to whom you would give is richer than you the giver. It is moreover a kind of sacrilege to give what belongs to the poor to those who are not poor. Yet to be a perfect and complete Christian it is not enough to despise wealth or to squander and fling away one's money, a thing which can be lost and found in a single moment. Crates the Theban did this, so did Antisthenes and several others, whose lives shew them to have had many faults. The disciple of Christ must do more for the attainment of spiritual glory than the philosopher of the world, than the venal slave of flying rumours and of the people's breath. It is not enough for you to despise wealth unless you follow Christ as well. And only he follows Christ who forsakes his sins and walks hand in hand with virtue. We know that Christ is wisdom. He is the treasure which in the scriptures a man finds in his field.

[Matt. 13:44] He is the peerless gem which is bought by selling many pearls. [Matt. 13:45] But if you love a captive woman, that is, worldly wisdom, and if no beauty but hers attracts you, make her bald and cut off her alluring hair, that is to say, the graces of style, and pare away her dead nails. [Cf. Dt. 21:11, Dt. 21:12] Wash her with the nitre of which the prophet speaks, [Jer. 2:22] and then take your ease with her and say "Her left hand is under my head, and her right hand doth embrace me. [Cant. 2:6] Then shall the captive bring to you many children; from a Moabitess she shall become an Israelitish woman. Christ is that sanctification without which no man shall see the face of God. Christ is our redemption, for He is at once our Redeemer and our Ransom. [1 Cor. 1:30, Heb. 12:14] Christ is all, that he who has left all for Christ may find One in place of all, and may be able to proclaim freely. "The Lord is my portion. [Ps. 73:26]

9, I see clearly that you have a warm affection for divine learning and that far from trying-like some rash persons-to teach that of which you are yourself ignorant you make it your first object to learn what you are going to teach. Your letters in their simplicity are redolent of the prophets and savour strongly of the apostles. You

do not affect a stilted eloquence, nor boylike balance shallow sentences in clauses neatly-turned. The quickly frothing foam disappears with equal quickness; and a tumour though it enlarges the size of the body is injurious to health. It is moreover a shrewd maxim, this of Cato, ”Fast enough if well enough. Long ago it is true in the days of our youth we laughed outright at this dictum when the finished orator used it in his exordium. I fancy you remember the mistake shared by the speaker in our Athenaeum and how the whole room resounded with the cry taken up by the students ”Fast enough if well enough. According to Fabius crafts would be sure to prosper if none but craftsmen were allowed to criticise them. No man can adequately estimate a poet unless he is competent himself to write verse No man can comprehend philosophers, unless he is acquainted with the various theories that they have held. Material and visible products are best appraised by those who make them. To what a cruel lot we men of letters are exposed you may gather from the fact that we are forced to rely on the judgment of the public;

and many a man is in company a formidable opponent who would certainly be despised could he be seen alone. I have touched on this in passing to make you content, if possible, with the ear of the learned. Disregard the remarks which uneducated persons make concerning your ability; but day by day imbibe the marrow of the prophets, that you may know the mystery of Christ and share this mystery with the patriarchs.

10. Whether you read or write, whether you wake or sleep, let the herdsman’s horn of Amos always ring in your ears. Let the sound of the clarion arouse your soul, let the divine love carry you out of yourself; and then seek upon your bed him whom your soul loveth, [Cant. 3:1] and boldly say: ”I sleep, but my heart waketh.” [Cant. 5:2] And when you have found him and taken hold of him, let him not go. And if you fall asleep for a moment and He escapes from your hands, do not forthwith despair. Go out into the streets and charge the daughters of Jerusalem: then shall you find him lying clown in the noontide weary and drunk with passion, or wet with the dew of night by the flocks of his companions, or fragrant with many kinds of spices, amid the apples of the garden. [Cf. Cant. 1:7, Cant. 2:5, Cant. 5:2] There give to him your breasts, let him suck your learned bosom, let him rest in the midst of his heritage, [Ps. 68:13] his feathers as those of a dove overlaid with silver and his inward parts with the brightness of gold. This young child, this mere boy, who is fed on butter and honey, [Isa. 7:14, Isa. 7:15] and who is reared among curdled mountains, quickly grows up to manhood, speedily spoils all that is opposed to him in you, and when the time is ripe plunders [the spiritual] Damascus and puts in chains the king of [the spiritual] Assyria.

11. I hear that you have erected a hospice for strangers at Portus and that you have planted a twig from the tree of Abraham upon the Ausonian shore. Like neas you are tracing the outlines of a new encampment; only that, whereas he, when he

reached the waters of the Tiber, under pressure of want had to eat the square flat cakes which formed the tables spoken of by the oracle, [Virg. Aen. 7:112-129] you are able to build a house of bread to rival this little village of Bethlehem wherein I am staying; and here after their long privations you propose to satisfy travellers with sudden plenty. Well done. You have surpassed my poor beginning. You have reached the highest point. You have made your way from the root to the top of the tree. You are the first of monks in the first city of the world: you do right therefore to follow the first of the patriarchs. Let Lot, whose name means 'one who turns aside' choose the plain [Gen. 13:5-11] and let him follow the left and easy branch of the famous letter of Pythagoras. But do you make ready for yourself a monument like Sarah's [Gen. 23:19] on steep and rocky heights. Let the City of Books be near; and when you have destroyed the giants, the sons of Anak, [Cf. Jos. 15:14] make over your heritage to joy and merriment. Abraham was rich in gold and silver and cattle, in substance and in raiment:

his household was so large that on an emergency he could bring a picked body of young men intothe field, and could pursue as far as Dan and then slay four kings who bad already put five kings to flight. [Gen. 14:13-16] Frequently exercising hospitality and never turning any man away fromhis door, be was accounted worthy at last to entertain God himself. He was not satisfied with giving orders to his servants and hand-maids to attend to his guests, nor did he lessen the favour he conferred by leaving others to care for them; but as though he had found a prize, he and Sarah his wife gave themselves to the duties of hospitality. With his own hands he washed the feet of his guests, upon his own shoulders he brought home a fat calf from the herd. While the strangers dined he stood by to serve them, and set before them the dishes cooked by Sarah's hands-though meaning to fast himself.

12. The regard which I feel for you, my dear brother, makes me remind you of these things; for you must offer to Christ not only your money but yourself, to be a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," [Rom. 12:1] and you must imitate the son of man who "came not to be ministered unto but to minister." [Matt. 20:28] What the patriarch did for strangers that our Lord and Master did for His servants and disciples. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But," says the devil, "touch his flesh and he will curse thee to thy face." [Job 2:4, Job 2:5] The old enemy knows that the battle with impurity is a harder one than that with covetousness. It is easy to cast off whatclings to us from without, but a war within our borders involves far greater peril. We have to unfasten things joined together, we have to sunder things firmly united. Zacchus was rich while the apostles were poor. lie restored fourfold all that he had taken and gave to the poor the half of his remaining substance. He welcomed Christ as his guest, and salvation came unto his house. [Luke 19:2-9] And yet because he was little of stature and could not reach the apostolic standard of height, he was not numbered with the twelve apostles. Now as regards wealth

the apostles gave up nothing at all, but as regards will they one and all gave up the whole world. If we offer to Christ our souls as well as our riches, he will gladly receive our offering. But if we give to God only those things which are without while we give to the devil those things which are within, the division is not fair, and the divine voice says: "Hast thou not sinned in offering aright, and yet not dividing aright?" [Gen. 4:7, LXX]

13. That you, the leader of the patrician order, first set the example of turning monk should not be to you an occasion of boasting hut rather one of humility, knowing as you do that the Son of God became the Son of man. However low you may abase yourself, you cannot be more lowly than Christ. Even supposing that you walk barefooted, that you dress in sombre garb, that you rank yourself with the poor, that you condescend to enter the tenements of the needy, that you are eyes to the blind, hands to the weak, feet to the lame, that you carry water and hew wood and make fires-even supposing that you do all this, where are the chains, the buffets, the spittings, the scourgings, the gibbet, the death which the Lord endured? And even when you have done all the things I have mentioned, you are still surpassed by your sister Eustochium as well as by Paula: for considering the weakness of their sex they have done more work relatively if less absolutely, than you. I myself was not at Rome but in the desert-would that I had continued there-at the time when your father-in-law Toxotius was still alive and his daughters were still given up to the world. But I have heard that they were too dainty to walk in the muddy streets, that they were carried about in the arms of eunuchs, that they disliked crossing uneven ground, that they found a silk dress a burthen and felt sunshine too scorching.

But now, squalid and sombre in their dress, they are positive heroines in comparison with what they used to be. They trim lamps, light fires, sweep floors, clean vegetables, put heads of cabbage in the pot to boil, lay tables, hand cups, help dishes and run to and fro to wait on others. And yet there is no lack of virgins under the same roof with them. Is it then that they have no servants upon whom they can lay these duties? Surely not. They are unwilling that others should surpass them in physical toil whom they themselves surpass in rigour of mind. I say all this not because I doubt your mental ardour but that I may quicken the pace at which you are running, and in the heat of battle may add warmth to your warmth.

14. I for my part am building in this province a monastery and a hospice close by; so that, if Joseph and Mary chance to come to Bethlehem, they may not fail to find shelter and welcome. Indeed, the number of monks who flock here from all quarters of the world is so overwhelming that I can neither desist from my enterprise nor bear so great a burthen. The warning of the gospel has been all but fulfilled in me, for I did not sufficiently count the cost of the tower I was about to build; [Luke 14:28] accordingly I have been constrained to send my brother

Paulinian to Italy to sell some ruinous villas which have escaped the hands of the barbarians, and also the property inherited from our common parents. For I am loth, now that I have begun it, to give up ministering to the saints, lest I incur the ridicule of carping and envious persons.

15. Now that I have come to the conclusion of my letter I recall my metaphor of the four-horse team, and recollect that Baesilla would have made a fifth had she been spared to share your resolve. I had almost forgotten to mention her, the first of you all to go to meet the Lord. You who once were five I now see to be two and three. Baesilla and her sister Paulina rest in sweet sleep: you with the two others on either side of you will fly upward to Christ more easily.

Letter 67. From Augustine.

Jerome having written him a short letter (no longer extant) Augustine now replies. He speaks with approval of Jerome's treatise On Famous Men, incorrectly called the Epitaph (see Letter 112). He also repeats his objections to Jerome's account of the quarrel between Paul and Peter at Antioch and then concludes with a request that he will draw up a short notice of the principal heresies condemned by the Church. Like the preceding letter of Augustine (Letter 56.) this also failed to reach Jerome. It was however published in the West, but without Augustine's knowledge and by degrees its contents found their way to Bethlehem where they caused much annoyance and pain. The date of the letter is 397 a.d. In collections labeled Augustine's Letter 40, or Jerome's Letter 67. To My Lord Much Beloved, and Brother Worthy of Being Honoured and Embraced with the Most Sincere Devotion of Charity, My Fellow-Presbyter Jerome, Augustine Sends Greeting.

1. I thank you that, instead of a mere formal salutation, you wrote me a letter, though it was much shorter than I would desire to have from you; since nothing that comes from you is tedious, however much time it may demand. Wherefore, although I am beset with great anxieties about the affairs of others, and that, too, in regard to secular matters, I would find it difficult to pardon the brevity of your letter, were it not that I consider that it was written in reply to a yet shorter letter of my own. Address yourself, therefore, I entreat you, to that exchange of letters by which we may have fellowship, and may not permit the distance which separates us to keep us wholly apart from each other; though we are in the Lord bound together by the unity of the Spirit, even when our pens rest and we are silent. The books in which you have laboured to bring treasures from the Lord's storehouse give me almost a complete knowledge of you. For if I may not say, "I know you," because I have not seen your face, it may with equal truth be said that you do not know yourself, for you cannot see your own face. If, however, it is this alone which constitutes your acquaintance with yourself, that you know your own mind, we also have no small knowledge of it through your writings, in studying which we bless God that to yourself, to us, to all who read your works, He has given you as you are.

2. It is not long since, among other things, a certain book of yours came into my hands, the name of which I do not yet know, for the manuscript itself had not the title written, as is customary, on the first page. The brother with whom it was found said that its title is Epitaphium,-a name which we might believe you to have approved, if we found in the work a notice of the lives or writings of those only who are deceased. Inasmuch, however, as mention is there made of the works of some who were at the time when it was written, or are even now, alive, we wonder why you either gave this title to it, or permitted others to believe that you had done so. The book itself has our complete approval as a useful work.

3. In your exposition of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians I have found one thing which causes me much concern. For if it be the case that statements untrue in themselves, but made, as it were, out of a sense of duty in the interest of religion, have been admitted into the Holy Scriptures, what authority will be left to them? If this be conceded, what sentence can be produced from these Scriptures, by the weight of which the wicked obstinacy of error can be broken down? For as soon as you have produced it, if it be disliked by him who contends with you, he will reply that, in the passage alleged, the writer was uttering a falsehood under the pressure of some honourable sense of duty. And where will any one find this way of escape impossible, if it be possible for men to say and believe that, after introducing his narrative with these words, ”The things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not,” [Gal. 1:20] the apostle lied when he said of Peter and Barnabas, ”I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel”? [Gal. 2:14] For if they did walk uprightly, Paul wrote what was false; and if he wrote what was false here, when did he say what was true? Shall he be supposed to say what is true when his teaching corresponds with the predilection, of his reader, and shall everything which runs counter to the impressions of the reader be!

reckoned a falsehood uttered by him under a sense of duty? It will be impossible to prevent men from finding reasons for thinking that he not only might have uttered a falsehood, but was bound to do so, if we admit this canon of interpretation. There is no need for many words in pursuing this argument, especially in writing to you, for whose wisdom and prudence enough has already been said. I would by no means be so arrogant as to attempt to enrich by my small coppers your mind, which by the divine gift is golden; and none is more able than yourself to revise and correct that work to which I have referred.

4. You do not require me to teach you in what sense the apostle says, ”To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews,” [1 Cor. 9:20] and other such things in the same passage, which are to be ascribed to the compassion of pitying love, not the artifices of intentional deceit. For he that ministers to the sick becomes as if he were sick himself; not, indeed, falsely pretending to be under the fever, but considering, with the mind of one truly sympathizing, what he would wish done for

himself if he were in the sick man's place. Paul was indeed a Jew; and when he had become a Christian, he had not abandoned those Jewish sacraments which that people had received in the right way, and for a certain appointed time. Therefore, even although he was an apostle of Christ, he took observing these; but with this view, that he might show that they were in no wise hurtful to those who, even after they had believed in Christ, desired to retain the ceremonies which by the law they had learned from their fathers; provided only that they did riot build on these their hope of salvation, since the salvation which was foreshadowed in these has now been brought in by the Lord Jesus. For the same reason, he judged that these ceremonies should by no means be made binding on the Gentile converts, because, by imposing a heavy and superfluous burden, they might turn aside from the faith those who were unaccustomed to them.

5. The thing, therefore, which he rebuked in Peter was not his observing the customs handed down from his fathers-which Peter, if he wished, might do without being chargeable with deceit or inconsistency, for, though now superfluous, these customs were not hurtful to one who bad been accustomed to them-but his compelling the Gentiles to observe Jewish ceremonies, [Gal. 2:14] which he could not do otherwise than by so acting in regard to them as if their observance was, even after the Lord's coming, still necessary to salvation, against which truth protested through the apostolic office of Paul. Nor was the Apostle Peter ignorant of this, but he did it through fear of those who were of the circumcision. Manifestly, therefore, Peter was truly corrected, and Paul has given a true narrative of the event, unless, by the admission of a falsehood here, the authority of the Holy Scriptures given for the faith of all coming generations is to be made wholly uncertain and wavering. For it is neither possible nor suitable to state within the compass of a letter how great and how unutterably evil must be the consequences of such a concession. It might, however, be shown seasonably, and with less hazard, if we were conversing together.

6. Paul had forsaken everything peculiar to the Jews that was evil, especially this: "That, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, they had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. [Rom. 10:3] In this, moreover, he differed from them: that after the passion and resurrection of Christ, in whom had been given and made manifest the mystery of grace, according to the order of Melchizedek, they still considered it binding on them to celebrate, not out of mere reverence for old customs, but as necessary to salvation, the sacraments of the old economy, which were indeed at one time necessary, else had it been unprofitable and vain for the Maccabees to suffer martyrdom, as they did, for their adherence to them. [2 Macc. 7:1] Lastly, in this also Paul differed from the Jews: that they persecuted the Christian preachers of grace as enemies of the law. These and all similar errors and sins he declares that he "counted but loss and dung that he might win Christ; [Phil. 3:8] but he

does not, in so saying, disparage the ceremonies of the Jewish law, if only they were observed after the custom of their fathers, in the way in which he himself observed them, without regarding them as necessary to salvation, and not in the way in which the Jews affirmed that they must be observed, nor in the exercise of deceptive dissimulation such as he had rebuked in Peter.

For if Paul observed these sacraments in order, by pretending to be a Jew, to gain the Jews, why did he not also take part with the Gentiles in heathen sacrifices, when to them that were without law he became as without law, that he might gain them also? The explanation is found in this, that he took part in the Jewish sacrifices, as being himself by birth a Jew; and that when he said all this which I have quoted, he meant, not that he pretended to be what he was not, but that he felt with true compassion that he must bring such help to them as would be needful for himself if he were involved in their error. Herein he exercised not the subtlety of a deceiver, but the sympathy of a compassionate deliverer. In the same passage the apostle has stated the principle more generally: "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some," [1 Cor. 9:22] - the latter clause of which guides us to understand the former as meaning that he showed himself one who pitied the weakness of another as much as if it had been his own. For when he said, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? [2 Cor. 11:29] he did not wish it to be supposed that he pretended to suffer the infirmity of another, but rather that he showed it by sympathy.

7. Wherefore I beseech you, apply to the correction and emendation of that book a frank and truly Christian severity, and chant what the Greeks call palinw|/dia. For incomparably more lovely than the Grecian Helen is Christian truth: In her defence, our martyrs have fought against Sodom with more courage than the heroes of Greece displayed against Troy for Helen's sake. I do not say this in order that you may recover the faculty of spiritual sight, -far be it from me to say that you have lost it!-but that, having eyes both clear and quick in discernment, you may turn them towards that from which, in unaccountable dissimulation, you have turned them away, refusing to see the calamitous consequences which would follow on our once admitting that a writer of the divine books could in any part of his work honourably and piously utter a falsehood. 8. I had written some time ago a letter to you on this subject, which was not delivered to you, because the bearer to whom it was entrusted did not finish his journey to you. From it I may quote a thought which occurred to me while I was dictating it, and which I ought not to omit in this letter, in order that, if your opinion is still different from mine, and is better, you may readily forgive the anxiety which has moved me to write. It is this: If your opinion is different, and is according to truth (for only in that case can it be better than mine), you will grant that "a mistake of mine, which is in the interest of truth, cannot deserve great blame, if indeed it deserves blame at all, when it is possible for you to use truth in the interest of falsehood without doing wrong."

9. As to the reply which you were pleased to give me concerning Origen, I did not need to be told that we should, not only in ecclesiastical writers, but in all others, approve and commend what we find right and true, but reject and condemn what we find false and mischievous. What I craved from your wisdom and learning (and I still crave it), was that you should acquaint us definitely with the points in which that remarkable man is proved to have departed from the belief of the truth. Moreover, in that book in which you have mentioned all the ecclesiastical writers whom you could remember, and their works, it would, I think, be a more convenient arrangement if, after naming those whom you know to be heretics (since you have chosen not to pass them without notice), you would add in what respect their doctrine is to be avoided. Some of these heretics also you have omitted, and I would fain know on what grounds.

If, however, perchance it has been from a desire not to enlarge that volume unduly that you refrained from adding to a notice of heretics, the statement of the things in which the Catholic Church has authoritatively condemned them, I beg you not to grudge bestowing on this subject, to which with humility and brotherly love I direct your attention, a portion of that literary labour by which already, by the grace of the Lord our God, you have in no small measure stimulated and assisted the saints in the study of the Latin tongue, and publish in one small book (if your other occupations permit you) a digest of the perverse dogmas of all the heretics who up to this time have, through arrogance, or ignorance, or self-will, attempted to subvert the simplicity of the Christian faith; a work most necessary for the information of those who are prevented, either by lack of leisure or by their not knowing the Greek language, from reading and understanding so many things. I would urge my request at greater length, were it not that this is commonly a sign of misgivings as to the benevolence of the party from whom a favour is sought. Meanwhile I cordially recommend to your goodwill in Christ our brother Paulus, to whose high standing in these regions I bear before God willing testimony.

Letter 68. To Castrutius.

Castrutius, a blind man of Pannonia, had set out for Bethlehem to visit Jerome. However, on reaching Cissa (whether that in Thrace or that on the Adriatic is uncertain) he was induced by his friends to turn back. Jerome writes to thank him for his intention and to console him for his inability to carry it out. He then tries to comfort him in his blindness (1) by referring to Christ's words concerning the man born blind (Joh. ix. 3) and (2) by telling him the story of Antony and Didymus. The date of the letter is 397 a.d.

1. My reverend son Heraclius the deacon has reported to me that in your eagerness to see me you came as far as Cissa, and that, though a Pannonian and consequently a land animal, you did not quail before the surges of the Adriatic and the dangers of the Aegean and Ionian seas. He tells me that you would have actually accomplished your purpose, had not our brethren with affectionate care held you back. I thank you all the same and regard it as a kindness shewn. For in the case of friends one must accept the will for the deed. Enemies often give us the latter, but only sincere attachment can bring us the former. And now that I am writing to you I beseech you do not regard the bodily affliction which has befallen you as due to sin. When the Apostles speculated concerning the man that was born blind from the womb and asked our Lord and Saviour: "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? they were told "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. [Joh. 9:2, Joh. 9:3] Do we not see numbers of heathens, Jews, heretics and men of various opinions rolling in the mire of lust, bathed in blood, surpassing wolves in ferocity and kites in rapacity, and for all this the plague does not come nigh their dwellings?

[Ps. 91:10] They are not smitten as other men, and accordingly they wax insolent against God and lift up their faces even to heaven. We know on the other hand that holy men are afflicted with sicknesses, miseries, and want, and perhaps they are tempted to say "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. Yet immediately they go on to reprove themselves, "If I say, I will speak thus; behold I should offend against the generation of thy children. [Ps. 73:13, Ps. 73:15] If you suppose that your blindness is caused by sin, and that a disease which

physicians are often able to cure is an evidence of God's anger, you will think Isaac a sinner because he was so wholly sightless that he was deceived into blessing one whom he did not mean to bless. [Gen. 27] You will charge Jacob with sin, whose vision became so dim that he could not see Ephraim and Manasseh, [Gen. 48:10] although with the inner eye and the prophetic spirit he could foresee the distant future and the Christ that was to come of his royal line. [Gen. 49:10] Were any of the kings holier than Josiah? Yet he was slain by the sword of the Egyptians. [2 K. 23:29] Were there ever loftier saints than Peter and Paul? Yet their blood stained the blade of Nero. And to say no more of men, did not the Son of God endure the shame of the cross?

And yet you fancy those blessed who enjoy in this world happiness and pleasure? God's hottest anger against sinners is when he shews no anger. Wherefore in Ezekiel he says to Jerusalem: "My jealousy will depart from thee and i will be quiet and will be no more angry. [Ezek. 16:42] For "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. [Heb. 12:6] The father does not instruct his son unless he loves him. The master does not correct his disciple unless he sees in him signs of promise. When once the doctor gives over caring for the patient, it is a sign that he despairs. You should answer thus: "as Lazarus in his lifetime [Luke 16:25] received evil things so will I now gladly suffer torments that future glory may be laid up for me. For "affliction shall not rise up the second time. [Nahum 1:9] If Job, a man holy and spotless and righteous in his generation, suffered terrible afflictions, his own book explains the reason why.

2. That I may not make myself tedious or exceed the due limits of a letter by repeating old stories, I will briefly relate to you an incident which happened in my childhood. The saintly Athanasius bishop of Alexandria had summoned the blessed Antony to that city to confute the heretics there. Hereupon Didymus, a man of great learning who had lost his eyes, came to visit the hermit and, the conversation turning upon the holy scriptures, Antony could not help admiring his ability and eulogizing his insight. At last he said: You do not regret, do you, the loss of your eyes? At first Didymus was ashamed to answer, but when the question had been repeated a second time and a third, he frankly confessed that his blindness was a great grief to him. Whereupon Antony said: "I am surprised that a wise man should grieve at the loss of a faculty which he shares with ants and flies and gnats, and not rejoice rather in having one of which only saints and apostles have been thought worthy." From this story you may perceive how much better it is to have spiritual than carnal vision and to possess eyes into which the mote of sin cannot fall. [Luke 6:42]

Though you have failed to come this year, I do not yet despair of your coming. If the reverend deacon who is the bearer of this letter is again caught in the toils of your affection, and if you come hither in his company I shall be delighted to welcome

you and shall readily acknowledge that the delay in payment is made up for by the largeness of the interest.

Letter 69. To Oceanus.

Oceanus, a Roman nobleman zealous for the faith, had asked Jerome to back him in a protest against Carterius a Spanish bishop who contrary to the apostolic rule that a bishop is to be ”the husband of one wife” had married a second time. Jerome refuses to take the line suggested on the ground that Carterius’s first marriage having preceded his baptism cannot be taken into account. He therefore advises Oceanus to let the matter drop. The date of the letter is 397 a.d.

1. I never supposed, son Oceanus, that theclemency of the Emperor would be assailed by criminals, or that persons just released from prison would after their own experience of its filth and fetters complain of relaxations allowed to others. In the gospel he who envies another’s salvation is thus addressed: ”Friend, is thine eye evil because I am good? [Matt. 20:15] ”God hath concluded them all in sin that he might have mercy upon all. [Rom. 11:32] ”When sin abounded grace did much more abound. [Rom. 5:20] The first born of Egypt are slain and not even a beast belonging to Israel is left behind in Egypt. [Ex. 12:29, Ex. 12:30, Ex. 12:38] The heresy of the Cainites rises before me and the once slain viper lifts up its shattered head, destroying not partially as most often hitherto but altogether the mystery of Christ. This heresy declares that there are some sins which Christ cannot cleanse with His blood, and that the scars left by old transgressions on the body and the soul are sometimes so deep that they cannot be effaced by the remedy which He supplies. What else is this but to say that Christ has died in vain? He has indeed died in vain if there are any whom He cannot make alive. When John the Baptist points to Christ and says: ”Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world” [Joh. 1:29] he utters a falsehood if after all there are persons living whose sins Christ has not taken away.

For either it must be shewn that they are not of the world whom the grace of Christ thus ignores: or, if it be admitted that they are of the world, we have to choose between the horns of a dilemma. Either they have been delivered from their sins, in which case the power of Christ to save all men is proved; or they remain undelivered and as it were still under the charge of misdoing, in which case Christ is proved to be powerless. But far be it from us to believe of the Almighty that He

is powerless in aught. For ”what things soever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. [Joh. 5:19] To ascribe weakness to the Son is to ascribe it to the Father also. The shepherd carries the whole sheep and not only this or that part of it: all the epistles of the apostle speak continually of the grace of Christ. And, lest a single announcement of this grace might seem a little thing, Peter says: ”Grace unto you and peace be multiplied. [1 Pet. 1:2] The Scripture promises abundance; yet we affirm scarcity.

2. To what does all this tend, you ask. I reply; you remember the question that you proposed. It was this. A Spanish bishop named Carterius, old in years and in the priesthood has married two wives, one before he was baptized, and, she having died, another since he has passed through the laver; and you are of opinion that he has violated the precept of the apostle, who in his list of episcopal qualifications commands that a bishop shall be ”the husband of one wife. [1 Tim. 3:2] I am surprised that you have pilloriedan individual when the whole world is filled with persons ordained in similar circumstances; I do not mean presbyters or clergy of lower rank, but speak only of bishops of whom if I were to enumerate them all one by one I should gather a sufficient number to surpass the crowd which attended the synod of Ariminum. Still it does not become me to defend one by incriminating many; nor if reason condemns a sin, to make the number of those who commit it an excuse for it. At Rome an eloquent pleader caught me, as the phrase goes, between the horns of a dilemma: whichever way I turned I was held fast. Is it sinful, said he, to marry a wife, or is it not sinful? I in my simplicity, not being wary enough to avoid the snare laid for me, replied that it was not sinful. Then he propounded another question:

Is it good deeds which are done away with in baptism or is it evil? Here again my simplicity induced me to say that it was sins which were forgiven. At this point, just as I began to fancy myself secure, the horns of the dilemma commenced to close in on me from this side and from that and their points hidden before began to shew themselves. If, said he, to marry a wife is not sinful, and if baptism forgives sins, all that is not done away with is held over. On the instant a dark mist rose before my eyes as though I had been struck by a strong boxer. Yet recalling the sophism attributed to Chrysippus: ”Whether you lie or whether you speak the truth, in either case you lie,” I came to myself again and turned upon my opponent with a dilemma of my own. Pray tell me, I said, does baptism make a new man or does it not? He grudgingly admitted that it did. I pursued my advantage by saying. Does it make him wholly new or only partially so? He replied, Wholly. Then I asked, Is there nothing then of the old man held over in baptism? He assented. Hereupon I propounded the argument; If baptism makes a man new and creates a wholly new being, and if there is nothing of the old man held over in the new, that which once was in the old cannot be imputed to the new. At first my thorny friend held his tongue;

afterwards however, making Piso's mistake, though he had nothing to say he could not remain silent. Sweat stood upon Iris brow, his cheeks turned pale, his lips trembled, his tongue clove to his mouth, his throat became dry; and fear (not age) made him cower. At last he broke out in these words, Have you not read how the apostle permits none to be ordained priest save the husband of one wife, and that what he lays stress upon is the fact of the marriage and not the time at which it is contracted? Now as the fellow had challenged me with syllogisms, and as I saw that he was feeling his way towards some intricate and awkward questions, I proceeded to turn his own weapons against him. I said therefore, Whom did the apostle select for the episcopate, baptized persons or catechumens? He refused to reply. I however made a fresh onslaught repeating my question a second time and a third. You would have taken him for Niobe changed to stone by excessive weeping. I turned to the audience and said: It is all the same to me, good people, whether I bind my opponent awake or sleeping; but it is easier to fetter a man who offers no resistance. If those whom the apostle admits into the ranks of the clergy are not catechumens but the faithful, and if he who is ordained bishop is always one of the faithful, being one of the faithful he cannot have the faults of a catechumen imputed to him.

Such were the darts I hurled at my paralysed opponent. Such the quivering spears I cast at him. At last his mouth opened and he vomited forth the contents of his mind. Certainly, he blurted out, that is the doctrine of the apostle Paul.

3. Accordingly I bring out two epistles of the apostle, the first to Timothy, and the second to Titus. In the first is the following passage: "If a man desire the office of a bishop he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker ...but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Not a novice lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condenmation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. [1 Tim. 3:1-7] While immediately at the commencement of the epistle to Titus the following behests are laid down: "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able bysound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. [Tit. 1:5-9] In both epistles

commandment is given that only monogamists should, be chosen for the clerical office whether as bishops or as presbyters. Indeed with the ancients these names were synonymous, one alluding to the office, the other to the age of the clergy. No one at any rate can doubt that the apostle is speaking only of those who have been baptized. If therefore it in no wise prejudices the case of one who is to be ordained bishop that before his baptism he has not possessed all the requisite qualifications (for it is asked what he is and not what he has been), why should a previous marriage-the one thing which is in itself not sinful-prove a hindrance to his ordination? You argue that as his marriage was not a sin it was not done away with at his baptism. This is news to me indeed, that what in itself was not a sin is to be reckoned as such. All fornication and contamination with open vice, impiety towards God, parricide and incest, the change of the natural use of the sexes into that which is against nature [Cf. Rom. 1:26, Rom. 1:27] and all extraordinary lusts are washed away in the fountain of Christ. Can it be possible that the stains of marriage are indelible, and that harlotry is judged more leniently than honourable wedlock?

I do not, Carterius might say, hold you to blame for the hosts of mistresses and the troops of favourites that you have kept; I do not charge you with your bloodshedding and sow-like wallowings in the mire of uncleanness: yet you are ready to drag from her grave for my confusion my poor wife, who has been dead long years, and whom I married that I might be kept from those sins into which you have fallen. Tell this to the heathen who form the church's harvest with which she stores her granaries; tell this to the catechumens who seek admission to the number of the faithful; tell them, I say, not to contract marriages before their baptism, not to enter upon honourable wedlock, but like the Scots and the Atacotti and the people of Plato's republic to have community of wives and no discrimination of children, nay more, to beware of any semblance even of matrimony; lest, after they have come to believe in Christ, He shall tell them that those whom they have had have not been concubines or mistresses but wedded wives.

4. Let every man examine his own conscience and let him deplore the violence he has done to it at every period of his life; and then when he has brought himself to deliver a true judgment on his own former misdeeds, let him give ear to the chiding of Jesus: "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shall thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. [Matt. 7:5] Truly like the scribes and pharisees we strain out the gnat and swallow the camel, we pay tithe of mint and anise, and we omit the just judgment which God requires. [Matt. 23:23, Matt. 23:24, RV] What parallel can be drawn between a wife and a prostitute? Is it fair to make a marriage now dissolved by death a ground of accusation, while dissolute living wins for itself a garland of praise? He, had his former wife lived, would not have married another; but as for you, bow can you defend the bestial unions you indiscriminately make? Perhaps indeed you will say

that you feared to contract marriage lest by so doing you might disqualify yourself for ordination. He took a wife that he might have children by her; you by taking a harlot have lost the hope of children. He withdrew into the privacy of his own chamber when he sought to obey nature and to win God's blessing: "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.

[Gen. 1:28] You on the contrary outraged public decency in the hot eagerness of your lust. He covered a lawful indulgence beneath a veil of modesty; you pursued an unlawful one shamelessly before the eyes of all. For him it is written "Marriage is honourable and the bed undefiled. while to you the words areread, "but whoremongers and adulterers Godwilt judge," [Heb. 13:4] and "if any man destroyeth thetemple of God, him shall God destroy. [1 Cor. 3:17, RV] All iniquities, we are told, are forgiven us at our baptism, and when once we have received God's mercy we need not afterwards dread from Him the severity of a judge. Theapostle says:- "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus,and by the Spirit of our God. [1 Cor. 6:11] All sins thenare forgiven; it is an honest and faithful saying. But I ask you, how comes it that, whileyour uncleanness is washed away, my cleanness is made unclean? You reply, "No, it is not made unclean, it remains just what it was.Had it been uncleanness, it would have beenwashed away like mine. I want to knowwhat you mean by this shuffling. Your remarks seem to have no more point in them than the round end of a pestle. Is a thing sin because it is not sin? or is a thing unclean because it is not unclean? The Lord, you say, has not forgiven because He had nothingto forgive;

yet because He has not forgiven, that which has not been forgiven still remains.

5. What the true effect of baptism is, and what is the real grace conveyed by water hallowed in Christ, I will presently tell you; meantime I will deal with this argument as it deserves. 'An ill knot,' says the common proverb, 'requires but an ill wedge to split it.' The text quoted by the objector, "a bishop must be the husband of one wife," admits of quite another explanation. The apostlecame of the Jews and the primitive Christian church was gathered out of the remnants of Israel. Paul knew that the Law allowed men to have children by several wives, [Ex. 21:10] and was aware that the example of the patriarchs had made polygamy familiar to the people. Even the very priests might at their own discretion enjoy the same license. [Lev. 21:7, Lev. 21:13] He gave commandment therefore that the priests of the church should not claim this liberty, that they should not take two wives or three together, but that they should each have but one wife at one time. Perhaps you may say that this explanation which I have given is disputed; in that case listen to another. You must not have a monopoly of bending the Law to suit your will instead of bending your will to suit the Law. Some by a strained interpretation say that wives are in this passage to be taken for churches and husbands for their bishops.

A decree was made by the fathers assembled at the council of Nicaea that no bishop should be translated from one church to another, lest scorning the society of a poor yet virgin see he should seek the embraces of a wealthy and adulterous one. For as the word ”λογισμόι”, that is, ”disputings,” refers to the fault and misdoing of sons in the faith, [Cf. Ph. 2:14, Ph. 2:15] and as the precept concerning the management of a house refers to the right direction of body and of soul, [1 Tim. 3:4] so by the wives of the bishops we are to understand their churches. Concerning whom it is written in Isaiah, ”Make haste ye women and come from the show, for it is a people of no understanding. [Isa. 27:11, LXX. AV. follows the Hebrew] And again ”Rise up, ye women that are wealthy, and hear my voice. [Isa. 32:9] And in the Book of Proverbs, ”Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. [Prov. 31:10, Prov. 31:11] In the same book too it is written, ”Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. [Prov. 14:1] Nor does this, say they, derogate from the dignity of the episcopate; for the same figure is used in relation to God. Jeremiah writes: ”As a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel.

[Jer. 3:20] And the apostle employs the same comparison: ”I have espoused you,” he says to his converts, ”to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. [2 Cor. 11:2] The word woman is in the Greek ambiguous and should in all these places be understood as meaning wife. You will say that this interpretation is harsh and does violence to the sense. In that case give back to the scripture its simple meaning and save me from the necessity of fighting you on your own ground. I will ask you the following question, Can a man who before his baptism has kept a concubine, and after her death has received baptism and has taken a wife, become a clergyman or not? You will answer me that he can, because his first partner was a concubine and not a wife. What the apostle condemns then, it would seem, is not mere sexual intercourse but marriage contracts and conjugal rights. Many persons, we see, because of narrow circumstances refuse to take upon them the burthen of matrimony. Instead of taking wives they live with their maid-servants and bring up as their own the children which these bear to them. Thus, if through the bounty of the Emperor they gain for their mistresses the right of wearing a matron’s robes, they will at once come beneath the yoke of the apostle and sorely against their will will have to receive their partners as their wedded wives.

But, if their poverty prevents them from obtaining an imperial rescript such as I have mentioned, the decrees of the Church will vary with the laws of Rome. Be careful therefore not to interpret the words ”the husband of one wife,” that is, of one woman, as approving indiscriminate intercourse and condemning only contracts of marriage.

I bring forward all these explanations not for the purpose of resisting the true and simple sense of the words in question but to shew you that you must take the holy scriptures as they are written, and that you must not empty of its efficacy the baptismal rite ordained by the Saviour, or render vain the whole mystery of the cross.

6. Let me now fulfil the promise I made a little while ago and with all the skill of a rhetorician sing the praises of water and of baptism. In the beginning the earth was without form and void, there was no dazzling sun or pale moon, there were no glittering stars. There was nothing but matter inorganic and invisible, and even this was lost in abysmal depths and shrouded in a distorting gloom. The Spirit of God above moved, as a charioteer, over the face of the waters, [Gen. 1:2] and produced from them the infant world, a type of the Christian child that is drawn from the laver of baptism. A firmament is constructed between heaven and earth, and to this is allotted the name heaven,-in the Hebrew Shamayim or 'what comes out of the waters,'- and the waters which are above the heavens are parted from the others to the praise of God. Wherefore also in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel there is seen above the cherubim a crystal stretched forth, [Ezek. 1:22] that is, the compressed and denser waters. The first living beings come out of the waters; and believers soar out of the layer with wings to heaven. Man is formed out of clay [Gen. 2:7] and God holds the mystic waters in the hollow of his hand. In Eden a garden is planted, and a fountain in the midst of it parts into four heads.

[Gen. 2:8, Gen. 2:10] This is the same fountain which Ezekiel later on describes as issuing out of the temple and flowing towards the rising of the sun, until it heals the bitter waters and quickens those that are dead. [Ezek. 47:1, Ezek. 47:8] When the world falls into sin nothing but a flood of waters can cleanse it again. But as soon as the foul bird of wickedness is driven away, the dove of the Holy Spirit comes to Noah [Gen. 8:8, Gen. 8:11] as it came afterwards to Christ in the Jordan, [Matt. 3:16] and, carrying ill its beak a branch betokening restoration and light, brings tidings of peace to the whole world. Pharaoh and his host, loth to allow God's people to leave Egypt, are overwhelmed in the Red Sea figuring thereby our baptism. His destruction is thus described in the book of Psalms: "Thou didst endow the sea with virtue through thy power: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters: thou brakest the heads of leviathan in pieces. [Ps. 74:13, 14 LXX] For this reason adders and scorpions haunt dry places [Deut. 8:15] and whenever they come near water behave as if rabid or insane. As wood sweetens Marah so that seventy palm-trees are watered by its streams, so the cross makes the waters of the law lifegiving to the seventy who are Christ's apostles. [Exod. 15:23-27; Luke 10:i] It is Abraham and Isaac who dig wells, the Philistines who try to prevent them.

[Gen. 26:15, Gen. 26:18] Beersheba too, the city of the oath, [Gen. 21:31] and [Gihon], the scene of Solomon's coronation, [1 Kings 1:38; 2 Chron. 32:30] derive

their names from springs. It is beside a well that Eliezer finds Rebekah. [Gen. 24:15, Gen. 24:16] Rachel too is a drawer of water and wins a kiss thereby [Gen. 29:10, Gen. 29:11] from the supplanter [Gen. 27:36] Jacob. When the daughters of the priests of Midian are in a strait to reach the well, Moses opens a way for them and delivers them from outrage. [Exod. 2:16, Exod. 2:17] The Lord's forerunner at Salem (a name which means peace or perfection) makes ready the people for Christ with spring-water. [Joh. 3:23] The Saviour Himself does not preach the kingdom of heaven until by His baptismal immersion He has cleansed the Jordan. [Matt. 3:13, Matt. 3:17] Water is the matter of His first miracle and it is from a well that the Samaritan woman is bidden to slake her thirst. [Joh. 4:13, Joh. 4:14] To Nicodemus He secretly says:-"Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. [Joh. 3:5] As His earthly course began with water, so it ended with it. His side is pierced by the spear, and blood and water flow forth, twin emblems of baptism and of martyrdom. After His resurrection also, when sending His apostles to the Gentiles, He commands them to baptize these in the mystery of the Trinity.

[Matt. 28:19] The Jewish people repenting of their misdoing are sent forthwith by Peter to be baptized. [Acts 2:38] Before Sion travails she brings forth children, and a nation is born at once. [Isa. 66:7, Isa. 66:8] Paul the persecutor of the church, that ravening wolf out of Benjamin, [Gen. 49:27] bows his head before Ananias one of Christ's sheep, and only recovers his sight when he applies the remedy of baptism. By the reading of the prophet the eunuch of Candace the queen of Ethiopia is made ready for the baptism of Christ. [Acts 8:27-38] Though it is against nature the Ethiopian does change his skin and the leopard his spots. [Jer. 13:23] Those who have received only John's baptism and have no knowledge of the Holy Spirit are baptized again, lest any should suppose that water unsanctified thereby could suffice for the salvation of either Jew or Gentile. [Acts 19:1-7] "The voice of the Lord isupon the waters ...The Lord is uponmany waters ...the Lord maketh the flood to inhabit it. [Ps. 29:3, Ps. 29:10] His "teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn which came up from the washing; whereof everyone bear twins, and none is barren among them. [Cant. 4:2] If none is barren among them, all of them must have udders filled with milk and be able to say with the apostle: "Ye are my little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you;

[Gal. 4:19] and "I have fed you with milk and not with meat. [1 Cor. 3:2] And it is to the grace of baptism that the prophecy of Micah refers: "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us: he will subdue our iniquities, and will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. [Mic. 7:19]

7. How then can you say that all sins are drowned in the baptismal layer if a man's wife is still to swim on the surface as evidence against him? The psalmist says:-"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is

the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. [Ps. 32:1-2] It would seem that we must add something to this song and say ”Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not a wife. Let us hear also the declaration which Ezekiel the so called”son of man” [Ezek. 2:1] makes concerning the virtueof him who is to be the true son of man, theChristian: ”I will take you,” he says, ”from among the heathen ...then will I sprinkleclean water upon you, and ye shall be cleanfrom all your filthinessa new heart also will I give you and a new spirit. ”From all your filthiness” he says, ”will I cleanse you. If all is taken away nothing can be left. If filthiness is cleansed, how much more is cleanness kept from defilement. ”A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit. Yes, for ”in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision but a new nature. [Gal. 6:15] Wherefore the song also which we sing is a new song, [Rev. 14:3] and putting off the old man [Eph. 4:22] we walk not in the oldness of the letter but in the newness of the spirit.

[Rom. 7:6] This is the new stone wherein the new name is written, ”which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. [Rev. 2:17] ”Know ye not,” says the apostle, ”that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. [Rom. 6:3, Rom. 6:4] Do we read so often of newness and of making new and yet can no renewing efface the stain which the word wife brings with it? We are buried with Christ by baptism and we have risen again by faith in the working of God who hath called Him from the dead. And ”when we were dead in our sins and in the uncircumcision of our flesh, God hath quickened us together with Him, having forgiven us all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it to His cross. [Col. 2:13, Col. 2:14] Can it be that when our whole being is dead with Christ and when all the sins noted down in the old ”handwriting” are blotted out, the one word ”wife” alone lives on?

Time would fail me were I to try to lay before you in order all the passages in the Holy Scriptures which relate to the efficacy of baptism or to explain the mysterious doctrine of that second birth which though it is our second is yet our first in Christ.

8. Before I make an end of dictating (for I perceive that I have already exceeded the just limits of a letter) I wish to give a brief explanation of the previous verses of the epistle in which the apostle describes the life of him that is to be made a bishop. We shall thus recognize him as Doctor of the Nations not only for his praise of monogamy but also for all his precepts. At the same time I beg that no one will suppose that in what I write my design is to blacken the priests of the present day. My one object is to promote the interest of the church. Just as orators and philosophers in giving their notions of the perfect orator and the

perfect philosopher do not detract from Demosthenes and Plato but merely set forth abstract ideals; so, when I describe a bishop and explain the qualifications laid down for the episcopate, I am but supplying a mirror for priests. Every man's conscience will tell him that it rests with himself what image he will see reflected there, whether one that will grieve him by its deformity or one that will gladden him by its beauty. I turn now to the passage in question. [1 Tim. 3:1-7] "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good, work. Work, you see, not rank; toil not pleasure; work that he may increase in lowliness, not grow proud by reason of elevation. "A bishop then must be blameless.

The same thing that he says to Titus, "if any be blameless. [Tit. 1:6] All the virtues are comprehended in this one word; thus he seems to require an impossible perfection. For if every sin, even every idle word, is deserving of blame, who is there in this world that is sinless and blameless? Still he who is chosen to be shepherd of the church must be one compared with whom other men are rightly regarded as but a flock of sheep. Rhetoricians define an orator as a good man able to speak. To be worthy of so high an honour he must be blameless in life and lip. For a teacher loses all his influence whose words are rendered null by his deeds. "The husband of one wife. Concerning this requirement I have spoken above. I will now only warn you that If monogamy is insisted on before baptism the other conditions laid down must be insisted on before baptism too. For it is impossible to regard the remaining obligations as binding only on the baptized and this alone as binding also on the unbaptized. "Vigilant (or "temperate" for "νηφαλιος" means both) wise, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach. The priests who minister in God's temple are forbidden to drink wine and strong drink, [Lev. 10:9] to keep their wits from being stupefied with drunkenness and to enable their understanding to do its duty in God's service. By the word 'wise' those are excluded who plead simplicity as an excuse for a priest's folly.

For if the brain be not sound, all the members will be amiss. The phrase "of good behaviour" is an extension of the previous epithet "blameless. One who has no faults is called "blameless;"one who is rich in virtues is said to be "of good behaviour. Or the words may be differently explained in accord with Tully's maxim, 'the main thing is that what you do you should do gracefully.' For some persons are so ignorant of their own measure [Cf. 2 Cor. 10:14] and so stupid and foolish that they make themselves laughing stocks to those who see them because of their gesture or gait or dress or conversation. Fancying that they knew what is and what is not good taste they deck themselves out with finery and bodily adornments and give banquets which profess to be elegant: but all such attempts at dress and display are nastier than a beggar's rags. As regards the obligation of priests to be teachers we bare the precepts of the old Law [Cf. Dt. 17:9-11] and the fuller instructions given on the subject to Titus. [Tit. 1:9-14] For an innocent and unobtrusive conversation does as much harm by its silence as it does good by its example. If the

ravening wolves are to be frightened away it must be by the barking of dogs and by the staff of the shepherd. ”Not given to wine, no striker. With the virtues they are to aim at he contrasts the vices they are to avoid.

9. We have learned what we ought to be: let us now learn what priests ought not to be Indulgence in wine is the fault of diners out and revellers. When the body is heated with drink it soon boils over with lust. Wine drinking means self-indulgence, self-indulgence means sensual gratification, sensual gratification means a breach of chastity. He that lives in pleasure is dead while he lives, [Cf. 1 Tim. 5:6] and he that drinks himself drunk is not only dead but buried. One hour’s debauch makes Noah uncover his nakedness which through sixty years of sobriety he had kept covered. [Gen. 9:20, Gen. 9:21] Lot in a fit of intoxication unwittingly adds incest to incontinence, and wine overcomes the man whom Sodom failed to conquer. [Gen. 19:30-38] A bishop that is a striker is condemned by Him who gave His back to the smiters, [Isa. 50:6] and when He was reviled reviled not again. [1 Pet. 2:23] ”But moderate”; one good thing is set over against two evil things. Drunkenness and passion are to be held in check by moderation. ”Not a brawler, not covetous. Nothing is more overweening than the assurance of the ignorant who fancy that incessant chatter will carry conviction with it and are always ready for a dispute that they may thunder with turgid eloquence against the flock committed to their charge. That a priest must avoid covetousness even Samuel teaches when he proves before all the people that he has taken nothing from any man.

[1 Sam. 12:3-5] And the same lesson is taught by the poverty of the apostles who used to receive sustenance and refreshment from their brethren and to boast that they neither had nor wished to have anything besides food and raiment. [Cf. 1 Tim. 6:8] What the epistle to Timothy calls covetousness, that to Titus openly censures as the desire for filthy lucre. [Tit. 1:7] ”One that ruleth well his own house. Not by increasing riches, not by providing regal banquets, not by having a pile of finely-wrought plates, not by slowly steaming pheasants so that the heat may reach the bones without melting the flesh upon them; no, but by first requiring of his own household the conduct which he has to inculcate in others. ”Having his children in subjection with all gravity. They must not, that is, follow the example of the sons of Eli who lay with the women in the vestibule of the Temple and, supposing religion to consist in plunder, diverted to the gratification of their own appetites all the best parts of the victims. [1 Sam. 2:12-17, 1 Sam. 2:22] ”Not a novice lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

I cannot sufficiently express my amazement at the great blindness which makes men discuss such questions as that of marriage before baptism and causes them to charge people with a transaction which is dead in baptism, nay even quickened into a new life with Christ, while no one regards a commandment so clear and unmistakable as this about bishops not being novices. One who was yesterday a

catechumen is to-day a bishop ; one who was yesterday in the amphitheatre is to-day in the church; one who spent the evening in the circus stands in the morning at the altar: one who a little while ago was a patron of actors is now a dedicator of virgins. Was the apostle ignorant of our shifts and subterfuges? did he know nothing of our foolish arguments? He not only says that a bishop must be the husband of one wife, but he has given commandment that he must be blameless, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, moderate, not given to wine, no striker, not a brawler, not covetous, not a novice. Yet to all these requirements we shut our eyes and notice nothing but the wives of the aspirants. Who cannot give instances to shew the need of the warning: ”lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil?

A priest who is made such in a moment knows nothing of the lowliness and meekness which mark the meanest of the faithful, he knows nothing of Christian courtesy, he is not wise enough to think little of himself. He passes from one dignity to another, yet he has not fasted, he has not wept, he has not taken himself to task for his life, he has not striven by constant meditation to amend it, he has not given his substance to the poor. Yet he is moved from one see to another, he passes, that is, from pride to pride. There can be no doubt that arrogance is what the Apostle means when he speaks of the condemnation and downfall of the devil. And all men fall into this who are in a moment made masters, actually before they are disciples. ”Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without. The last requirement is like the first. One who is really ”blameless” obtains the unanimous approval not only of his own household but of outsiders as well. By aliens and persons outside the church we are to understand Jews, heretics and Gentiles. A Christian bishop then must be such that they who cavil at his religion may not venture to cavil at his life. At present however we see but too many bishops who are willing, like the charioteers in the horse races, to bid money for the popular applause;

while there are some so universally hated that they can wring no money from their people, a feat which clowns accomplish by means of a few gestures.

10. Such are the conditions, son Oceanus, which the master-teachers of the church ought with anxiety and fear to require of others and to observe themselves. Such too are the canons which they should follow in the choice of persons for the priesthood; for they must not interpret the law of Christ to suit private animosities and feuds or to gratify ill-feeling which is sure to recoil on the man who cherishes it. Consider how unimpeachable is the character of Carterius in whose life his ill-wishers can find nothing to censure except a marriage contracted before baptism. ”He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. If we commit no adultery yet if we kill, we are become transgressors of the law.” [Jas. 2:11] ”Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” [Jas. 2:10]

Accordingly when they cast in our teeth a marriage entered into before baptism, we must require of them compliance with all the precepts which are given to the baptized. For they pass over much that is not allowable while they censure much that is allowed.

Letter 70. Tomagnus an Orator of Rome.

Jerome thanks Magnus. a Roman orator, for his services in bringing a young man named Sebesius to apologize to him for some fault that he had committed. He then replies to a criticism of Magnus on his fondness, for making quotations from profane writers, a practice which he defends by the example of the fathers of the church and of the inspired penmen of scripture. He ends by hinting that the objection really comes not from Magnus himself but from Rufinus (here nicknamed Calpurnius Lanarius). The date of the letter is 397 a.d. 1. That our friend Sebesius has profited by your advice I have learned less from your letter than from his own penitence. And strange to say the pleasure which he has given me since his rebuke is greater than the pain he caused me from his previous waywardness. There has been indeed a conflict between indulgence in the father, and affection in the son; while the former is anxious to forget the past, the latter is eager to promise dutiful behaviour in the future. Accordingly you and I must equally rejoice, you because you have successfully put a pupil to the test, I because I have received a son again.

2. You ask me at the close of your letter why it is that sometimes in my writings I quote examples from secular literature and thus defile the whiteness of the church with the foulness of heathenism. I will now briefly answer your question. You would never have asked it, had not your mind been wholly taken up with Tully; you would never have asked it had you made it a practice instead of studying Volcatius to read the holy scriptures and the commentators upon them. For who is there who does not know that both in Moses and in the prophets there are passages cited from Gentile books and that Solomon proposed questions to the philosophers of Tyre and answered others put to him by them. In the commencement of the book of Proverbs he charges us to understand prudent maxims and shrewd adages, parables and obscure discourse, the words of the wise and their dark sayings; [Prov. 1:1-6] all of which belong by right to the sphere of the dialectician and the philosopher. The Apostle Paul also, in writing to Titus, has used a line of the poet Epimenides: ”The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. [Tit. 1:12] Half of which line was afterwards adopted by Callimachus. It is not surprising that a

literal rendering of the words into Latin should fail to preserve the metre, seeing that Homer when translated into the same language is scarcely intelligible even in prose. In another epistle Paul quotes a line of Menander: ”Evil communications corrupt good manners.

[1 Cor. 15:33] And when he is arguing with the Athenians upon the Areopagus he calls Aratus as a witness citing from him the words ”For we are also his offspring; [Acts 17:28] in Greek ”τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμεν”, the close of a heroic verse. And as if this were not enough, that leader of the Christian army, that unvanquished pleader for the cause of Christ, skilfully turns a chance inscription into a proof of the faith. [Acts 17:22] For he had learned from the true David to wrench the sword of the enemy out of his hand and with his own blade to cut off the head of the arrogant Goliath. [Cf. 1 Sam. 17:50, 1 Sam. 17:51] He had read in Deuteronomy the command given by the voice of the Lord that when a captive woman had had her head shaved, her eyebrows and all her hair cut off, and her nails pared, she might then be taken to wife. [Deut. 21:10-13] Is it surprising that I too, admiring the fairness of her form and the grace of her eloquence, desire to make that secular wisdom which is my captive and my handmaid, a matron of the true Israel? Or that shaving off and cutting away all in her that is dead whether this be idolatry, pleasure, error, or lust, I take her to myself clean and pure and beget by her servants for the Lord of Sabaoth?

My efforts promote the advantage of Christ’s family, my so-called defilement with an alien increases the number of my fellow-servants. Hosea took a wife of whoredoms, Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and this harlot bore him a son called Jezreel or the seed of God. [Hos. 1:2-4] Isaiah speaks of a sharp razor which shaves ”the head of sinners and the hair of their feet; [Isa. 7:20] and Ezekiel shaves his head as a type of that Jerusalem which has been an harlot, [Ezek. 5:1-5] in sign that whatever in her is devoid of sense and life must be removed.

3. Cyprian, a man renowned both for his eloquence and for his martyr’s death, was as-sailed-so Firmian tells us -for having used in his treatise against Demetrius passages from the Prophets and the Apostles which the latter declared to be fabricated and made up, instead of passages from the philosophers and poets whose authority he, as a heathen, could not well gainsay. Celsus and Porphyry have written against us and have been ably answered, the former by Origen, the latter by Methodius, Eusebius, and Apollinaris. Origen wrote a treatise in eight books, the work of Methodius extended to ten thousand lines while Eusebius and Apollinaris composed twenty-five and thirty volumes respectively. Read these and you will find that compared with them I am a mere tyro in learning, and that, as my wits have long lain fallow, I can barely recall as in a dream what I have learned as a boy. The emperor Julian found time during his Parthian campaign to vomit forth seven books against Christ and, as so often happens in poetic legends, only wounded himself

with his own sword. Were I to try to confute him with the doctrines of philosophers and stoics you would doubtless forbid me tostrike a mad dog with the club of Hercules It is true that he presently felt in battle the hand of our Nazarene or, as he used to call him, the Galilaean, and that a spear-thrust in the vitals paid him due recompense for his foul calumnies. To prove the antiquity of the Jewish people Josephus has written two books against Appio a grammarian of Alexandria; and in these he brings forward so many quotations from secular writers as to make me marvel how a Hebrew brought up from his childhood to read the sacred scriptures could also have perused the whole library of the Greeks. Need I speak of Philo whom critics call the second or the Jewish Plato?

4. Let me now run through the list of our own writers. Did not Quadratus a disciple of the apostles and bishop of the Athenian church deliver to the Emperor Hadrian (on the occasion of his visit to the Eleusinian mysteries) a treatise in defence of our religion. And so great was the admiration caused in everyone by his eminent ability that it stilled a most severe persecution. The philosopher Aristides, a man of great eloquence, presented to the same Emperor an apology for the Christians composed of extracts from philosophic writers. His example was afterwards followed by Justin another philosopher who delivered to Antoninus Plus and his sons and to the senate a treatise Against the Gentiles, in which he defended the ignominy of the cross and preached the resurrection of Christ with all freedom. Need I speak of Melito bishop of Sardis, of Apollinaris chief-priest of the Church of Hierapolis, of Dionysius bishop of the Corinthians, of Tatian, of Bardesanes, of Irenaeus successor to the martyr Pothinus; all of whom have in many volumes explained the uprisings of the several heresies and tracked them back, each to the philosophic source from which it flows. Pantaenus, a philosopher of the Stoic school, was on account of his great reputation for learning sent by Demetrius bishop of Alexandria to India, to preach Christ to the Brahmans and philosophers there.

Clement, a presbyter of Alexandria, in my judgment the most learned of men, wrote eight books of Miscellanies and as many of Outline Sketches, a treatise against the Gentiles, and three volumes called the Pedagogue. Is there any want of learning in these, or are they not rather drawn from the very heart of philosophy? Imitating his example Origen wrote ten books of Miscellanies, in which he compares together the opinions held respectively by Christians and by philosophers, and confirms all the dogmas of our religion by quotations from Plato and Aristotle, from Numenius and Cornutus. Miltiades also wrote an excellent treatise against the Gentiles. Moreover Hippolytus and a Roman senator named Apollonius have each compiled apologetic works. The books of Julius Africanus who wrote a history of his own times are still extant, as also are those of Theodore who was afterwards called Gregory, a man endowed with apostolic miracles as well as with apostolic virtues. We still have the works of Dionysius bishop of Alexandria, of Anatolius chief priest of the church of Laodicea, of the presbyters Pamphilus, Pierius, Lucian, Malchion; of

Eusebius bishop of Csarea, Eustathius of Antioch and Athanasius of Alexandria; of Eusebius of Emisa, of Triphyllius of Cyprus, of Asterius of Scythopolis, of the confessor Serapion, of Titus bishop of Bostra; and of the Cappadocians Basil, Gregory, and Amphilochius.

All these writers so frequently interweave in their books the doctrines and maxims of the philosophers that you might easily be at a loss which to admire most, their secular erudition or their knowledge of the scriptures.

5. I will pass on to Latin writers. Can anything be more learned or more pointed than the style of Tertullian? His Apology and his books Against the Gentiles contain all the wisdom of the world. Minucius Felix a pleader in the Roman courts has ransacked all heathen literature to adorn the pages of his Octavius and of his treatise Against the astrologers (unless indeed this latter is falsely ascribed to him). Arnobius has published seven books against the Gentiles, and his pupil Lactantius as many, besides two volumes, one on Anger and the other on the creative activity of God. If you read any of these you will find in them an epitome of Cicero's dialogues. The Martyr Victorinus though as a writer deficient in learning is not deficient in the wish to use what learning he has. Then there is Cyprian. With what terseness, with what knowledge of all history, with what splendid rhetoric and argument has he touched the theme that idols are no Gods! Hilary too, a confessor and bishop of my own day, has imitated Quintilian's twelvebooks both in number and in style, and has also shewn his ability as a writer in his short treatise against Dioscorus the physician. In the reign of Constantine the presbyter Juvencus set forth in verse the story of our Lord and Saviour, and did not shrink from forcing into metre the majestic phrases of the Gospel. Of other writers dead and living I say nothing. Their aim and their ability are evident to all who read them.

6. You must not adopt the mistaken opinion, that while in dealing with the Gentiles one may appeal to their literature in all other discussions one ought to ignore it; for almost all the books of all these writers-except those who like Epicurus are no scholars-are extremely full of erudition and philosophy. I incline indeed to fancy-the thought comes into my head as I dictate-that you yourself know quite well what has always been thepractice of the learned in this matter. I believe that in putting this question to me you are only the mouthpiece of another who by reason of his love for the histories of Sallust might well be called Calpurnius Lanarius. Please beg of him not to envy eaters their teeth because he is toothless himself, and not to make light of the eyes of gazelles because he is himself a mole. Here as you see there is abundant material for discussion, but I have already filled the limits at my disposal.

Letter 71. To Lucinius.

Lucinius was a wealthy Spaniard of Btica who in conformity with the ascetic ideas of his time had made a vow of continence with his wife Theodora. Being much interested in the study of scripture he proposed to visit Bethlehem, and in a.d. 397 sent several scribes thither to transcribe for him Jerome's principal writings. To these on their return home Jerome now entrusts the following letter. In it he encourages Lucinius to fulfil his purpose of coming to Bethlehem, describes the books Which he is sending to him, and answers two questions relating to ecclesiastical usage. He also sends him some trilling presents. Shortly after receiving the letter (written in 398 a.d.) Lucinius died and Jerome wrote to Theodora to console her for her loss (letter LXXV.

1. Your letter which has suddenly arrived was not expected by me, and coming in an unlooked for way it has helped to rouse me from my torpor by the glad tidings which it conveys. I hasten to embrace with the arms of love one whom my eyes have never seen, and silently say to myself:-'"oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away and be at rest."' [Ps. 55:6. PBV] Then would I find him "whom my soul loveth. [Cant. 3:1] In you the Lord's words are now truly fulfilled: "many shall come from the east and west and shall sit down with Abraham. [Matt. 8:11] In those days the faith of my Lucinius was foreshadowed in Cornelius, "centurion of the band called the Italian band. [Acts 10:1] And when the apostle Paul writes to the Romans: "whensoever I take my journey into Spain I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you; [Rom. 15:24] he shews by the tale of his previous successes what he looked to gain from that province. Laying in a short time the foundation of the gospel "from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum," [Rom. 15:19] he enters Rome in bonds, that he may free those who are in the bonds of error and superstition. Two years he dwells in his own hired house [Acts 28:30] that he may give to us the house eternal which is spoken of in both the testaments.

The apostle, the fisher of men, [Matt. 4:19] has cast forth his net, and, among countless kinds of fish, has landed you like a magnificent gilt-bream. You have left behind you the bitter waves, the salt tides, the mountain-fissures; you have

despised Leviathan who reigns in the waters. [Cf. Ps. 104:26] Your aim is to seek the wilderness with Jesus and to sing the prophet's song: "my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. [Ps. 63:1, Ps. 63:2] or, as he sings in another place, "lo, then would I wander far off and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest. [Ps. 55:7, Ps. 55:8] Since you have left Sodom and are hastening to the mountains, I beseech you with a father's affection not to look behind you. Your hands have grasped the handle of the plough, [Luke 9:62] the hem of the Saviour's garment, [Matt. 9:20] and His locks wet with the dew of night; [Cant. 5:2] do not let them go. Do not come down from the housetop of virtue to seek for the clothes which you wore of old, nor return home from the field. [Matt. 24:17, Matt. 24:18] Do not like Lot set your heart on the plain or upon the pleasant gardens;

[Gen. 13:10] for these are watered not, as the holy land, from heaven but by Jordan's muddy stream made salt by contact with the Dead Sea.

2. Many begin but few persevere to the end. "They which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the crown. But of us on the other hand it is said: "So run that ye may obtain. [1 Cor. 9:24] Our master of the games is not grudging; he does not give the palm to one and disgrace another. His wish is that all his athletes may alike win garlands. My soul rejoices, yet the very greatness of my joy makes me feel sad. Like Ruth [Ruth 1:14] when I try to speak I burst into tears. Zacchus, the convert of an hour, is accounted worthy to receive the Saviour as his guest. [Luke 19:5] Martha and Mary make ready a feast and then welcome the Lord to it. [Joh. 12:2] A harlot washes His feet with her tears and against His burial anoints His body with the ointment of good works. [Mark 14:8] Simon the leper invites the Master with His disciples and is not refused. [Matt. 26:6] To Abraham it is said: "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. [Gen. 12:1] He leaves Chaldaea, he leaves Mesopotamia; he seeks what he knows not, not to lose Him whom he has found. He does not deem it possible to keep both his country and his Lord; even at that early day he is already fulfilling the prophet David's words:

"I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. [Ps. 39:12] He is called "a Hebrew," in Greek "περάτής", a passer-over, for not content with present excellence but forgetting those things which are behind he reaches forth to that which is before. [Phil. 3:13] He makes his own the words of the psalmist: "they shall go from strength to strength. [Ps. 84:7] Thus his name has a mystic meaning and he has opened for you a way to seek not your own things but those of another. You too must leave your home as he did, and must take for your parents, brothers, and relations only those who are linked to you in Christ. "Whosoever,"

He says, ”shall do the will of my father ...the sameis my brother and sister and mother. [Matt. 12:50]

3. You have with you one who was once your partner in the flesh but is now your partner in the spirit; once your wife but nowyour sister; once a woman but now a man; once an inferior but now an equal. Under the same yoke as you she hastens toward thesame heavenly kingdom.

A too careful management of one’s income, a too near calculation of one’s expenses-these are habits not easily laid aside. Yet to escapethe Egyptian woman Joseph had to leave hisgarment with her. [Gen. 39:12] And the young man whofollowed Jesus having a linen cloth cast about him, when he was assailed by the servants hadto throw away his earthly covering and to flee naked. [Mark 14:51, Mark 14:52] Elijah also when he was carried upin a chariot of fire to heaven left his mantle of sheepskin on earth. [2 Kings 2:11, 2 Kings 2:13] Elisha used for sacrifice the oxen and the yokes which hitherto he had employed in his work. [1 Kings 19:21] We read in Ecclesiasticus: ”he that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith.” [Ecclus. 13:1] As long as we are occupied with the things of the world, as long as our soul is fettered with possessions andrevenues, we cannot think freely of God. ”For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” [2 Cor. 6:14, 2 Cor. 6:15] ”Ye cannot,” the Lord says, ”serve God and Mammon.” [Matt. 6:24] Now the laying aside of money is for those who are beginners in the way, not for those who are made perfect. Heathens like Antisthenes and Crates the Theban have done as much before now. But to offer one’s self to God, this is the mark of Christians and apostles. These like the widow out of their penury cast their two mites into the treasury, and giving all that they have to the Lord are counted worthy to hear his words: ”ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” [Matt. 19:28]

4. You can see for yourself why I mention these things; without expressly saying it I am inviting you to take up your abode at the holy places. Your abundance has supported the want of many that some day their riches may abound to supply your want; [2 Cor. 8:14] you have made to yourself ”friends of the mammon of unrighteousness that they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” [Luke 16:9] Such conduct deserves praise and merits to be compared with the virtue of apostolic times. Then, as you know, believers sold their possessions and brought the prices of them and laid them down at the apostles’ feet: [Acts 4:34, Acts 4:35] a symbolic act designed to shew that men must trample on covetousness. But the Lord yearns for believers’ souls more than for their riches. We read in the Proverbs: ”the ransom of a man’s soul are his own riches.” [Prov. 13:8, LXX] We may, indeed, take a man’s own riches to be those which do not come from some one else, or from plunder; according to the precept: ”honour God with thy just labours.” [Prov.

3:9, LXX] But the sense is better if we understand a man's "own riches" to be those hidden treasures which no thief can steal and no robber wrest from him. [Cf. Matt. 6:20]

5. As for my poor works which from no merits of theirs but simply from your own kindness you say that you desire to have; I have given them to your servants to transcribe, I have seen the paper-copies made by them, and I have repeatedly ordered them to correct them by a diligent comparison with the originals. For so many are the pilgrims passing to and fro that I have been unable to read so many volumes. They have found me also troubled by a long illness from which this Lent I am slowly recovering as they are leaving me. If then you find errors or omissions which interfere with the sense, these you must impute not to me but to your own servants; they are due to the ignorance or carelessness of the copyists, who write down not what they find but what they take to be the meaning, and do but expose their own mistakes when they try to correct those of others. It is a false rumour which has reached you to the effect that I have translated the books of Josephus and the volumes of the holy men Papias and Polycarp. I have neither the leisure nor the ability to preserve the charm of these masterpieces in another tongue. Of Origen and Didymus I have translated a few things, to set before my countrymen some specimens of Greek teaching. The canon of the Hebrew verity -except the octoteuch which I have at present in hand-I have placed at the disposal of your slaves and copyists. Doubtless you already possess the version from the septuagint which many years ago I diligently revised for the use of students. The new testament I have restored to the authoritative form of the Greek original. For as the true text of the old testament can only be tested by a reference to the Hebrew, so the true text of the new requires for its decision an appeal to the Greek.

6. You ask me whether you ought to fast on the Sabbath and to receive the eucharist daily according to the custom-as currently reported-of the churches of Rome and Spain. Both these points have been treated by the eloquent Hippolytus, and several writers have collected passages from different authors bearing upon them. The best advice that I can give you is this. Church-traditions-especially when they do not run counter to the faith-are to be observed in the form in which previous generations have handed them down; and the use of one church is not to be annulled because it is contrary to that of another. As regards fasting, I wish that we could practise it without intermission as-according to the Acts of the Apostles -Paul did and the believers with him even in the season of Pentecost and on the Lord's Day. They are not to be accused of manichism, for carnal food ought not to be preferred before spiritual. As regards the holy eucharist you may receive it at all times without qualm of conscience or disapproval from me. You may listen to the psalmist's words:-"O taste and see that the Lord is good;" [Ps. 34:8] you may sing as he does:-"my heart poureth forth a good word." [Ps. 45:1, Vulg] But do not mistake my meaning. You are not to fast on feast-days, neither are you to abstain

on the week days in Pentecost. In such matters each province may follow its own inclinations, and the traditions which have been handed down should be regarded as apostolic laws.

7. You send me two small cloaks and a sheepskin mantle from your wardrobe and ask me to wear them myself or to give them to the poor. In return I send to you and your sister in the Lord four small haircloths suitable to your religious profession and to your daily needs, for they are the mark of poverty and the outward witness of a continual penitence. To these I have added a manuscript containing Isaiah's ten most obscure visions which I have lately elucidated with a critical commentary. When you look upon these trifles call to mind the friend in whom you delight and hasten the voyage which you have for a time deferred. And because "the way of man is not in himself" but it is the Lord that "directeth his steps;" [Jer. 10:23] if any hindrance should interfere-I hope none may-to prevent you from coming, I pray that distance may not sever those united in affection and that I may find my Lucinius present in absence through an interchange of letters.

Letter 75. To Theodora.

Theodora the wife of the learned Spaniard Lucinius (for whom see Letter 71.) had recently lost her husband, a bereavement which suggested the present letter. In it Jerome recounts the many virtues of Lucinius and especially his zeal in resisting the gnostic heresy of Marcus which during his life was prevalent in Spain. The date of the letter is 399 a.d.

1. So overpowered am I by the sad intelligence of the falling asleep of the holy and by me deeply revered Lucinius that I am scarcely able to dictate even a short letter. I do not, it is true, lament his fate, for I know that he has passed to better things: like Moses he can say: ”I will now turn aside and see this great sight. [Exod. 3:3] but I am tormented with regret that I was not allowed to look upon the face of one, who was likely, as I believed, in a short time to come hither. True indeed is the prophetic warning concerning the doom of death that it divides brothers, and with harsh and cruel hand sunders those whose names are linked together in the bonds of love. But we have this consolation that it is slain by the word of the Lord. For it is said: ”O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction,” and in the next verse: ”An east wind shall come, the wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up. [Hos. 13:14, Hos. 13:15] For, as Isaiah says, ”there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots”: [Isa. 11:1, Vulg] and He says Himself in the Song of Songs, ”I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley.

[Cant. 2:1] Our rose is the destruction of death, and died that death itself might die in His dying. But, when it is said that He is to be brought ”from the wilderness,” the virgin’s womb is indicated, which without sexual intercourse or impregnation has given to us God in the form of an infant able to quench by the glow of the Holy Spirit the fountains of lust and to sing in the words of the psalm: ”as in a dry and pathless and waterless land, so have I appeared unto thee in the sanctuary. [Ps. 63:1, 2, Vulg] Thus when we have to face the hard and cruel necessity of death, we are upheld by this consolation, that we shall shortly see again those whose absence we now mourn. For their end is not called death but a slumber and a falling asleep.

Wherefore also the blessed apostle forbids us to sorrow concerning them which are asleep, [1 Thess. 4:13] telling us to believe that those whom we know to sleep now may hereafter be roused from their sleep, and when their slumber is ended may watch once more with the saints and sing with the angels:-"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men of good will. [Luke 2:14, Vulg] In heaven where there is no sin, there is glory and perpetual praise and unwearied singing;

but on earth where sedition reigns, and war and discord hold sway, peace must be gained by prayer, and it is to be found not among all but only among men of good will, who pay heed to the apostolic salutation: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [Rom. 1:7] For "His abode is in peace and His dwelling place is in Zion," that is, on a watch-tower, on a height of doctrines and of virtues, in the soul of the believer; for the angel of this latter daily beholds the face of God, [Matt. 18:10] and contemplates with unveiled face the glory of God.

2. Wherefore, though you are already running in the way, I urge a willing horse, as the saying goes, and implore you, while you regret in your Lucinius a true brother, to rejoice as well that he now reigns with Christ. For, as it is written in the book of Wisdom, he was "taken away lest that wickedness should alter his understanding ...for his soul pleased the Lord ...and he ...in a short time fulfilled a long time. [Wisd. 4:11-14] We may with more right weep for ourselves that we stand daily in conflict with our sins, that we are stained with vices, that we receive wounds, and that we must give account for every idle word. [Matt. 12:36] Victorious now and free from care he looks down upon you from on high and supports you in your struggle, nay more, he prepares for you a place near to himself; for his love and affection towards you are still the same as when, disregarding his claim on you as a husband, he resolved to treat you even on earth as a sister, or indeed I may say as a brother, for difference of sex while essential to marriage is not so to a continent tie.

And since even in the flesh, if we are born again in Christ, we are no longer Greek and Barbarian, bond and free, male and female, but are all one in Him, [Gal. 3:28] how much more true will this be when this corruptible has put on incorruption and when this mortal has put on immortality. [1 Cor. 15:53] "In the resurrection," the Lord tells us, "they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels ...in heaven. [Matt. 22:30] Now when it is said that they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are as the angels in heaven, there is no taking away of a natural and real body but only an indication of the greatness of the glory to come. For the words are not "they shall be angels" but "they shall be as the angels": thus while likeness to the angels is promised identity with them is refused. "They shall be," Christ tells us, "as the angels," that is like the angels; therefore they will not cease to be human. Glorious indeed they shall be, and graced with angelic splendour, but they will still be human; the apostle Paul will still be Paul, Mary will

still be Mary. Then shall confusion overtake that heresy which holds out great but vague promises only that it may take away hopes which are at once modest and certain.

3. And now that I have once mentioned the word ”heresy,” where can I find a trumpet loud enough to proclaim the eloquence of our dear Lucinius, who, when the filthy heresy of Basilides raged in Spain and like a pestilence ravaged the provinces between the Pyrenees and the ocean, upheld in all its purity the faith of the church and altogether refused to embrace Armagil, Barbelon, Abraxas, Balsamum, and the absurd Leusibora. Such are the portentous names which, to excite the minds of unlearned men and weak women, they pretend to draw from Hebrew sources, terrifying the simple by barbarous combinations which they admire the more the less they understand them. The growth of this heresy is described for us by Irenaeus, bishop of the church of Lyons, a man of the apostolic times, who was a disciple of Papias the hearer of the evangelist John. He informs us that a certain Mark, of the stock of the gnostic Basilides, came in the first instance to Gaul, that he contaminated with his teaching those parts of the country which are watered by the Rhone and the Garonne, and that in particular he misled by his errors high-born women; to whom he promised certain secret mysteries and whose affection he enlisted by magic arts and hidden indulgence in unlawful intercourse. Irenaeus goes on to say that subsequently Mark crossed the Pyrenees and occupied Spain, making it his object to seek out the houses of the wealthy, and in these especially the women, concerning whom we are told that they are ”led away with divers lusts, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” [2 Tim. 3:6, 2 Tim. 3:7] All this he wrote about three hundred years ago in the extremely learned and eloquent books which he composed under the title Against all heresies.

4. From these facts you in your wisdom will realize how worthy of praise our dear Lucinius shewed himself when he shut his ears that he might not have to hear the judgement passed upon blood shedders, and dispersed all his substance and gave to the poor that his righteousness might endure for ever. [Ps. 112:9] And not satisfied with bestowing his bounty upon his own country, he sent to the churches of Jerusalem and Alexandria gold enough to alleviate the want of large numbers. But while many will admire and extol in him this liberality, I for my part will rather praise him for his zeal and diligence in the study of the scriptures. With what eagerness he asked for my poor works! He actually sent six copyists (for in this province there is a dearth of scribes who understand Latin) to copy for him all that I have ever dictated from my youth until the present time. The honour was not of course paid to me who am but a little child, the least of all Christians, living in the rocks near Bethlehem because I know myself a sinner; but to Christ who is honoured in his servants [Luke 9:48] and who makes this promise to them, ”He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.” [Matt. 10:40]

5. Therefore, my beloved daughter, regard this letter as the epitaph which love prompts me to write upon your husband, and if there is any spiritual work of which you think me to be capable, boldly command me to undertake it: that so ages to come may know that He who says of Himself in Isaiah, ”He hath made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me,” [Isa. 49:2] has with His sharp arrow so wounded two men severed by an immense interval of sea and land, that, although they know each other not in the flesh, they are knit together in love in the spirit. May you be kept holy both in body and spirit by the Samaritan-that is, saviour and keeper-of whom it is said in the psalm, ”He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.” [Ps. 121:4] May the watcher and the holy one who came down to Daniel come also to you, that you too may be able to say, ”I sleep but my heart waketh.” [Cant. 5:2]

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