

THE EPISTLES OF SENECA

- 3 "Quid aliud?" inquis; "adhuc volo." In hoc plurimum est, non sic quomodo principia totius operis dimidium occupare dicuntur; ista¹ res animo constat. Itaque pars magna bonitatis est velle fieri bonum. Scis quem bonum dicam? Perfectum, absolutum, quem malum facere nulla vis, nulla necessitas possit.
- 4 Hunc te prospicio, si perseveraveris et incubueris et id egeris, ut omnia facta dictaque tua inter se congruant ac respondeant sibi et una forma percussa sint. Non est huius animus in recto, cuius acta discordant. VALE.

XXXV

SENECA LVCILIO SVO SALVTEM

- 1 Cum te tam valde rogo, ut studeas, meum negotium ago; habere te² amicum volo, quod contingere mihi, nisi pergis ut coepisti excolere te, non potest. Nunc enim amas me, amicus non es. "Quid ergo? Haec inter se diversa sunt?" Immo dissimilia. Qui amicus est, amat; qui amat, non utique amicus est. Itaque amicitia semper prodest, amor aliquando etiam nocet. Si nihil aliud, ob hoc profice, ut amare discas.
- 2 Festina ergo, dum mihi proficis, ne istuc alteri

¹ *ista* Haase; *ita* MSS.

² *te* added by Linde.

^a *i. e.*, the proverb may apply to tasks which a man performs with his hands, but it is an understatement when applied to the tasks of the soul.

^b The question of Lucilius represents the popular view, which regards love as including friendship. But according to Seneca it is only the perfect love, from which all selfishness has been removed, that becomes identical with friendship.

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“What else do you want of me, then?” you ask; “the will is still mine.” Well, the will in this case is almost everything, and not merely the half, as in the proverb “A task once begun is half done.” It is more than half, for the matter of which we speak is determined by the soul.^a Hence it is that the larger part of goodness is the will to become good. You know what I mean by a good man? One who is complete, finished,—whom no constraint or need can render bad. I see such a person in you, if only you go steadily on and bend to your task, and see to it that all your actions and words harmonize and correspond with each other and are stamped in the same mould. If a man’s acts are out of harmony, his soul is crooked. Farewell.

XXXV. ON THE FRIENDSHIP OF KINDRED MINDS

When I urge you so strongly to your studies, it is my own interest which I am consulting; I want your friendship, and it cannot fall to my lot unless you proceed, as you have begun, with the task of developing yourself. For now, although you love me, you are not yet my friend. “But,” you reply, “are these words of different meaning?” Nay, more, they are totally unlike in meaning.^b A friend loves you, of course; but one who loves you is not in every case your friend. Friendship, accordingly, is always helpful, but love sometimes even does harm. Try to perfect yourself, if for no other reason, in order that you may learn how to love.

Hasten, therefore, in order that, while thus perfecting yourself for my benefit, you may not have

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didiceris. Ego quidem percipio iam fructum, cum mihi fingo uno nos animo futuros et quicquid aetati meae vigoris abscessit, id ad me ex tua, quamquam
3 non multum abest, rediturum. Sed tamen re quoque ipsa esse laetus volo. Venit ad nos ex iis, quos amamus, etiam absentibus gaudium, sed id leve et evanidum; conspectus et praesentia et conversatio habet aliquid vivae voluptatis, utique si non tantum quem velis, sed qualem velis, videas. Adfer itaque te mihi ingens munus, et quo magis instes, cogita te
4 mortalem esse, me senem. Propera ad me, sed ad te prius. Profice et ante omnia hoc cura, ut constes tibi. Quotiens experiri voles, an aliquid actum sit, observa, an eadem hodie velis, quae heri. Mutatio voluntatis indicat animum natare, aliubi atque aliubi apparere, prout tulit ventus. Non vagatur, quod fixum atque fundatum est. Istud sapienti perfecto contingit, aliquatenus et proficienti provectoque. Quid ergo interest? Hic commovetur quidem, non tamen transit, sed suo loco nutat; ille ne commovetur quidem. VALE.

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learned perfection for the benefit of another. To be sure, I am already deriving some profit by imagining that we two shall be of one mind, and that whatever portion of my strength has yielded to age will return to me from your strength, although there is not so very much difference in our ages. But yet I wish to rejoice in the accomplished fact. We feel a joy over those whom we love, even when separated from them, but such a joy is light and fleeting; the sight of a man, and his presence, and communion with him, afford something of living pleasure; this is true, at any rate, if one not only sees the man one desires, but the sort of man one desires. Give yourself to me, therefore, as a gift of great price, and, that you may strive the more, reflect that you yourself are mortal, and that I am old. Hasten to find me, but hasten to find yourself first. Make progress, and, before all else, endeavour to be consistent with yourself. And when you would find out whether you have accomplished anything, consider whether you desire the same things to-day that you desired yesterday. A shifting of the will indicates that the mind is at sea, heading in various directions, according to the course of the wind. But that which is settled and solid does not wander from its place. This is the blessed lot of the completely wise man, and also, to a certain extent, of him who is progressing and has made some headway. Now what is the difference between these two classes of men? The one is in motion, to be sure, but does not change its position; it merely tosses up and down where it is; the other is not in motion at all. Farewell.

END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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