132 To Make (*Facere*)

To Make. According to the Philosopher, 2 *Ethics*,[[1]](#endnote-1) to know is of insufficient value for virtue without virtue but doing selects men to be virtuous. Wherefore, Augustine, *De civitate*,[[2]](#endnote-2) although the demons are very knowing, however because they do not do well nor good things, with them knowledge is not virtuous. Wherefore, Christ said, John 13[:17] concerning his commandments, “you shall be blessed if you do them,” and that Christ “began to do and to teach,” Acts, first chapter [1:1].

We have the example that first we must do the good and afterward teach. Therefore, it is said in Matt. 5[:19]: “He that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Wherefore it says if the Lord, who before he began to teach what he learned, who before he presumed to preach, did the good things. Just as a barren tree, however, does not have fruit, instead of fruit it puts out words for leaves. Therefore, the deed of man ought to be conformed to the will of the Divine, according to that of the Psal. [142:10]: “Teach me to do your will.” And Eccli. 3[:2]: “So do that you may be saved.” For according to their works men will be saved, Apo. 14[:13]: “Their works follow them.”

Again, Christ speaking of his commandments, Luke 10[:28]: “This do, and you shall live.” And the reason therefore, doers of the law will be justified not hearers only, and Christ says, Matt. 3[:8]: “Fruit worthy of penance.” Wherefore, Aulus Gellius in the book, *Attic Nights*,[[3]](#endnote-3) if through toil you accomplish a good deed, that toil will pass from you, the good deed will not leave you; but if through personal pleasure you do anything dishonorable, the pleasure will pass away, but the deed will remain.

Again, the distinguished king does not remunerate much those who speak about military matters, but those who do them manfully; thus the heavenly king gives himself in his passion the goods of heaven to his good soldiers, Matt. 7[:21]: “Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that does the will of my Father.” Therefore, Mattathias said to his children, 1 Macc. 2[:64], when you do what has been commanded to you by the Lord “you shall be glorious.” But, alas, because Christ complained in the Psal. [13:3]: “They are all gone aside, they are become unprofitable together.” Wherefore, Augustine,[[4]](#endnote-4) we strive to blame each other, and we do not strive to inquire into our works. Eccli. 50[:30-31]: “Blessed is he that is conversant in these good things,” and it follows, “For if he do them, he shall be strong to do all things.”

According to the Philosopher,[[5]](#endnote-5) the course of nature is to make similar from similar. According to that of Exod. 25[:40]: “Look and make it according to the pattern, that was shown to you in the mount.” From which it is given to be understood that out of the saying a man is moved to speaking out of the deed, to doing what was said, certainly something watched does not infer something to be done, as through the place by a similar, because Matt. 7[:21] writes, “Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that does the will of my Father.” Nor through the place by a greater because it is not greater to say than to do, therefore it is less. Wherefore Christ, Matt. 23[:2-3]: “They have sat on the chair of Moses … whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not; for they say, and do not.”

¶ Nor through the place by the less because it does not follow who does less also does more.

¶ Therefore it is necessary that the deed be finished out of the deed not out of the saying. Wherefore Christ asked, Luke 10[:36-37]: “Which, in your opinion, was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers?” And he responded, “He that showed mercy to him. And,” Christ concluded, “Go, and do in like manner.” Behold how the deed finished from the deed. Wherefore Chrysostom, *Super Matthaeum*, homily 2,[[6]](#endnote-6) the evil man can understand what things are of God, but not do them, because the intellect of man was created from God. The act, in truth, is created out of the proposition of the human will. But because God attends more to deeds than words, according to that of Matt. 7[:21]: “Not everyone that says to me, Lord,” etc. Therefore Paul in his conversion said to the Lord, Act. 9[:6]: “What will you have me to do?” He did not say, What will you have me to say?

Therefore, man ought to do something pertaining to himself, something pertaining to his neighbor, and something pertaining to God.

¶ As for himself, he ought to do three things. First, grief for sins in contrition. For the offspring is conceived with delight, but it does not go out without sorrow, so it is concerning sin. Pain is a certain feeling of not wanting to suffer division or corruption.[[7]](#endnote-7) And as much as this division is greater, so much more the pain, Jer. 6[:26]: “Make your mourning as for an only son.” But, alas, because there are many just as the mad ones, “Who are glad when they have done evil,” [Prov. 2:14].

¶ Second, he ought to make a judgment for sins in confession, just as the sick man says to the doctor about his illness and the circumstances, Mich. 6[:8]: “I will show you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Verily, to do judgment.” And concerning yourself and mercy with your neighbor. For a sailor evacuates a ship in order to be saved, the gluttonous vomits in order to be restored, so the sinner confesses in order to be cured, Eccli. 3[:2]: “Children, hear the judgment of your father, and so do that you may be saved.” But, alas, because Jer. 8[:6] it is said, “No man speaks what is good, there is none that doth penance for his sin, saying: What have I done?”

¶ Third, he ought to make amends of his failings in satisfaction, just as the abounding fruit of the following year placates the angry lord for the sterility of the preceding year, Matt. 23[:33; 3:7]: “Generation of vipers,” that is, of the vipers, “who has shown you to flee from the wrath to come?” Luke 13[:8]: “Let it alone this year also,” if perhaps, etc., up to “until I dig about it.” There are some that make a confession, but not justice. Wherefore the Lord lamented, Isai. 5[:2]: “He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.”

¶ Again, a man ought to do three things pertaining to his neighbor. First, mercy to one in need by sustaining him, otherwise it would become justice without mercy for that one who does not show mercy with his neighbor, in Bartholomeus 2,[[8]](#endnote-8) it is read concerning certain rapacious animals that they sustain on their prey other weak animals of their kind if they are sick or if they are grown old, but how much more this fits to men, Eccli. 29[:1]: “He that shows mercy, lends to” the Lord. Wherefore, Augustine,[[9]](#endnote-9) give the least and receive heaven, Luke 10[:36-37]: “Which, in your opinion, was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers?” and it follows, “He that showed mercy to him.” But, alas, because Jer. 4[:22]: “They are wise to do evil,” namely, in acquiring, “but to do good they have no knowledge,” namely, in distributing or because they do not give.

Second, what a man ought to do for his neighbor is to do justice to the one despoiled, that is to give back his things otherwise his sin will not be dismissed unless what was taken away is restored, Psal. [105:3]: “Blessed are they that keep judgment, and do justice at all times.” And Isai. 56[:1]: “Keep judgment,” by considering interiorly, “and do justice” in executing. For just as among dogs a quarrel arises when one takes what is another’s, so among men a controversy which justice ought to settle, but, also, because they do not do so today, according to the Psal. [145:7]: “who executes judgment for them that suffer wrong.” Rather it agrees more to those to say that of the Psal. [105:6]: “We have sinned with our fathers: we have acted unjustly.”

¶ Third, a man ought to have this renown to provide for an unknown neighbor just as the earth provides food, water drink, air light, fire warmth. Thus, the wise man has renown of the truth who feeds, gives drink, gives light, and provides fire, Isai. 38[:19]: “The father shall make your truth known to the children,” namely, [1] Tim. 4[:16]: “Take heed to thyself and to doctrine,” and it follows, “For in doing this you shall both save yourself and them that hear thee,” but, alas, there are many like candles illuminating others and consuming themselves, Matt. 23[:2]: “The scribes and the Pharisees have sat on the chair of Moses,” etc. They teach poverty, but they do not want to be poor. They teach humility, but are lifted up.

¶ Again, a man ought to do three things pertaining to God. Of which the first is to fulfill his commandments, to which the teaching of his mother moves us, John 2[:5]: “Whatsoever he shall say to you, do it.” Second, the promise of the love of the Lord, John 15[:14]: “You are my friends, if you do the things.” But, alas, because in Jud. 2[:17] it is said, “Hearing the commandments of the Lord, they did all things contrary.” John 13[:12-13]: “You call me Master, and Lord,” and you do not what I say.

Third, he should multiply prayers to God like the poor man at the door of the rich man. For all have sinned and need the grace of God. Therefore one ought to pray [2] Macc. 1[:23]: “All the priests made prayer, while the sacrifice was consuming.” And Gen. 35[:2]: “Cast away the strange gods that are among you,” and do. But, alas, because that was more filled by man, Matt. [21:13]: “My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.” For it is more often visited by man on account of the bodily sustenance than on account of spiritual devotion.

¶ Third, he ought to direct his intention to God, Isai. 34[:3]: “I beseech you, O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in truth.” Jer. 7[:3]: “Make your ways and your doings good.” 2 Cor. [4:15] do “all things … unto the glory of God.” But, alas, because in Matt. 23[:5] it is said, “All their works they do for to be seen of men.”

¶ Again, for doing anything three things move us, namely, the honor of the deed, the rigor of the commandment, and the love of the reward.

About which, see below, chapter [262] Work (*Opus*).

Again, according to the Philosopher, in the book *De anima*,[[10]](#endnote-10) there are two senses which can be taught to learn in a rational man, sight and hearing. Thus, what he has seen the evidence of the matter leaves, as does the eloquence of the word heard. Hence it is that through these two, man is effectively instructed to the good, namely, by example of holiness and by the word of truth, which two among the remaining offices of the church are judged more useful, namely, to edify others by word and example. This office Christ exercised in his own person because he began to do and to teach. He enjoined these things also to his disciples, Mark the last chapter [16:20]: “They going forth preached everywhere: the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed.” It is commonly said that he who does well will have well,[[11]](#endnote-11) James 1[:25]: “A doer of the work; this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

Wherefore, just as it is not enough to promise unless one intends to deliver, so it is not enough to speak unless one intends to speak forcefully on the Divine commandments, Matt. 7[:21]: “Not everyone that says to me, Lord.” In which words it is noted the triple good of the word, deed, and reward. Of which the first is of eloquence, but it is deficient. The second is obedience, and it is sufficient. The third is of glory, and it is perfecting. The first good is shown deficient in two ways. First as far as the simulation of virtue, because it consists in the word alone and not in the deed. Wherefore the foolish virgins said, Matt. 25[:11]: “Lord, Lord, open to us.” Because if they had said a third, Lord, namely, with heart, mouth, and work, perhaps he would have opened to them. Second as far as the destruction of the simulation when it is said, [Matt. 7:21]: “Not everyone … shall enter the kingdom of heaven,” about which Matt. 23[:13]: “But woe to you scribes … because you shut the kingdom of heaven.” Second, the sufficient good is touched upon there, [Matt. 7:21]: “But he that does the will of my Father.” Psal. [102:21]: “Bless the Lord, all his hosts: you … that do his will.” Third, perfecting the good there he himself will enter, Matt. 25[:34]: “Come, blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom.”

¶ Again, the commandment of God is to be done on account of many reasons. And first, on account of the remuneration of the deed man freely bears heavy and vile things on account of a great reward, but God is the greatest giver of rewards, Gen. 15[:1]: “I am your protector, and your reward exceeding great.”

Second, because of the punishment of the transgression.

¶ Whoever is a transgressor against the precept of an earthly king is punished in body and goods, but much more is he punished who transgresses against the commandment of God, unless he repents, because in the loss of heaven and in the perpetual affliction of the body, Esdras 7[:26]: “And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, … judgment shall be executed upon him.”

Third, on account of the quickening of the mortified spirit, one being sick in the body will be cured by doing the counsel of the doctor, much more who does the commandment of Christ, Lev. 18[:5]: “Keep my laws.” And Ezech. [20:11]: “Which if a man do, he shall live in them.” Luke 10[:28]: “This do, and you shall live.” Ezech. 18[:21] and 33[:14]: “If the wicked do penance for all his sins,” etc. But there are many just like some being sick hear the doctor but they do not. Therefore he is not cured.

Fourth, on account of showing owed servitude of which he does who shows that commandment to be his Lord, Ezech. 20[:19-20]: “Walk in my statutes … and do them … that they may be a sign between me and you: and that you may know that I am the Lord your God.”

Fifth, on account of the repelling of fear, for he who does well does not need to fear, Rom. 13[:3-4]: “Will you then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good: … But if you do that which is evil, fear.” 1 Pet. 3[:10-11]: “He that will … see good days … let him decline from evil, and do good.”

¶ Sixth, on account of the association of God to this which takes place among some, the association is required that among those there be some kind of accord, but between the good and the best there is an accord. Therefore, he who does the good has an accord with God, John 8[:47]: “He that is of God,” does well. Jer. 7[:3]: “Make your ways and your doings good: and I will dwell with you.”

¶ For the operation of the good for showing virtue, just as no operation is a sign of death, Tob. 4[:23]: “We shall have many good things if we fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is good.”

Wherefore, note here that there are three things which restrain one from doing, namely, the gravity of the work, the deceit of the one hiring, the smallness of the pay, but on the contrary, the work of God is light, Matt. 11[:30]: “My burden is light.” With the help of God he who is very weak can carry that, Matt. 22[:37]: “You shall love the Lord your God.”

Again, against the second, God is faithful without any evil, therefore [Wis. 10:17]: “She rendered to the just the wages of their labors.”

¶ Again, against the third, God is bountiful in rewarding, Gen. 15[:1]: “I am your protector, and your reward exceeding great.”

1. Aristotle, Nicomacean Ethics 2.4 1105b8-11 (Barnes 2:1746): It is well said, then, tht it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no on would have even a prospect of becoming good. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 12.8 (PL 41:355): Itemque scio in quo fit mala voluntas, id in eo fieri, quod si nollet, non fieret: et ideo non necessarios, sed voluntarios defectus justa poena consequitur. Deficitur enim non ad mala, sed male; id est, non ad malas naturas, sed ideo male, quia contra ordinem naturarum ab eo quod summe est ad id quod minus est. Neque enim auri vitium est avaritia, sed hominis perverse amantis aurum, justitia derelicta, quae incomparabiliter auro debuit anteponi. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Aulus Gellius, *Noctium Atticarum*, 16.1.4 (LCL 212:130): si quid vos per laborem bene feceritis, labor ille a vobis cito recedet, bene factum a vobis, dum vivitis, non abscedit; sed si qua per voluptatem nequiter feceritis, voluptas cito abibit, newquiter factum illud apud vos semper manebit. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *Sermo de tempore Barbarico,* 1.2 (PL 40:700): Studemus invicem reprehendere, et non studemus opera nostra discutere. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Aristotle, *History of Animals* 1.1 486a16-20 (Barnes 1:774): Sometimes the parts are identical in form, as, for instance, one man’s nose or eye resembles another man’s nose or eye, flesh flesh, and bone bone.... [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. (Pseudo-)Chrysostomus, *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum* Homilia 2 ex cap. 2:7 (PG 56:640): malus homo quae Dei sunt quidem intelligere potest, quae Dei sunt autem agere non potest: quoniam intellectus hominis ex Deo creatus est, actus autem ex propositio voluntatis ipsius. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. Augustine, *De libero arbitrio* 3.23.69 (PL 32:1305): Quid enim est aliud dolor, nisi quidam sensus divisionis vel corruptionis impatiens. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Bartholomeus Anglicus*, De proprietatibus rerum* 18.63 (1505, p. 460b): preda suam quam arripit solus comedere ei rebescit, et ideo sepe semper a remotis sequentibus aliis bestiis de ipsa preda liberalitatis gratia deus relinquit...

on the Lion: And he is ashamed to eat alone the prey that he taketh; therefore of his grace of free heart, he leaveth some of his prey to other beasts that follow him afar.... [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Augustine, *Ennarationes in Psalmos* 36.3.6 (PL 36:387): da terram, accipe coelum. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 2.5 417a10-12 (Barnes 1:663): We use the word ‘perceive’ in two ways, for we say that what has the power to hear or see, ‘sees’ or ‘hears’, even though it is at the moment asleep, and also that what is actually seeing or hearing, ‘sees’ or ‘hears’. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Cf. Thomas a Kempis, *Hortulus rosarum* cap. 6: De auditione et lectione divini sermonis (Opera Vaemunduntur Iodeo Badio Ascensio, n.d.), fo. 69rb: qui bene facit, bene habebit. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)