137 Faithfulness (*Fidelitas*)

It is read to be triple: of God to man, of man to God, and of man to man.

Faithfulness of God to man is evident because in necessity it is not lacking. Of which the contrary is evident in a horse having four white feet, [1] Cor. 10[:13]: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able.” The faithful servant does not fear to lose his horse because of his lord, so neither does Christ fear to lose his body because of man, Eccli. 6[:15]: “Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend.”

Second, because he does not destroy our goods like the unjust steward, Luke [16:1]. But rather he preserves them 2 Thess. 3[:3]: “He is faithful, who will strengthen and keep you from evil.”

Third, because he does not lessen his mercy but rewards beyond our deserving, Psalm [144:13]: “The Lord is faithful in all his words.” Heb. 10[:23]: “God is faithful who has promised.” Deut. 32[:4]: “God is faithful and without any iniquity.”

The faithfulness of man to God is evident. First, in his firm love so that he may keep back nothing concerning him, Wis. 3[:9]: “they that are faithful in love shall rest in him,” however his adversary shall not rest. But, alas, because in the Psalm [77:37] it is said: “But their heart was not right with him: nor were they counted faithful in his covenant.”

Second, it is evident in the weight of burdens because of him, so that one loves nothing dearer than him, Eccli. 22[:29]: “In the time of his trouble continue faithful to him”; 1 Macc. 2[:52], Abraham in his temptation was found faithful. But, alas, because the wise man asks, Prov. 20[:6]: “But who shall find a faithful man?”

Third, in the continuation of his service so that for no other would he leave him, Luke 19[:17]: “Well done, good servant, because you have been faithful in a little, you shall have power over ten cities.” Apoc. 2[:10]: “Be faithful until death.” But, alas, because now it is asked among the stewards whether anyone may be found faithful, and Prov. 20[:6], it is said, “Who shall find a faithful man?”

The faithfulness of man to man is evident. And first, in the hiding of secrets and this is against the teachers and revealers, Prov. 11[:13]: “He that is faithful, conceals the thing committed by his friend.”

Second, in the observation of truth this is against flatters and detractors, Prov. 14[:5]: “A faithful witness will not lie.” Eccli. 46[:18]: “He was known to be faithful in his words.”

Third, in due instruction and this is against the negligent, Prov. 13[:17]: “A faithful ambassador is health.” Therefore Prov. 28[:20]: “A faithful man shall be much praised.”

He who hands over to his enemies the castle of his lord which he received in safe keeping is not reputed as faithful, but every Christian is the keeper of his soul which is the castle of Christ, Matt. 24[:45]: “Who, do you think, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has appointed over his family.” Christ so loves his that he wants to separate them from the unfaithful lest they be corrupted just as he has said himself where Matt 10[:35] says, “I came to set a man at variance against his father,” etc.

And he adds the reason why the enemies of man are his domestics where Chrysostom says, *Homily* 44,[[1]](#endnote-1) the devil always desires that his unfaithful ones be with the faithful, so that the unfaithful mixed in may corrupt the faithful, and Christ as they are faithful wants to separate them from the unfaithful lest they be corrupted by them and everywhere such a separation is found in the scriptures. Always the good withdraw from the evil and not the contrary. For when the Jews were held in captivity, God through his prophet did not say to the Assyrians, Go out from the midst of my people, but to his people he said, [Isai. 52:11]: “Go out of the midst of them,” and in cleanness lest you be defiled, because the evil contaminates the good and not the contrary. So that if mud is mixed with flour, or a corrupt vinegar is mixed with wine, it corrupts the pure, but not the contrary. For always naturally the good flees the evil and not the contrary.

¶ Here, however, note that in four kinds of men faithfulness is accustomed to being praised. Particularly, in friends, when they agree with each other, Eccli. 6[:14]: “A faithful friend is a strong defense.”

Second, [Matt. 25:14-30] in servants, when they multiply the goods of their lord and take nothing away, Eccli. 33[:31]: “A faithful servant, let him be to you as your own soul”, Matt. 25[:21]: “Good and faithful servant, because … I will place you over many things,” etc.

¶ Third, in teachers, when they instruct with love, Eccli. 15[:8]: “Wisdom … shall abound in a faithful mouth.”

Fourth, in fighters, when without feigning they strive to overcome, Apo. 2[:10]: “Be faithful until death.”

¶ But three things are accustomed to drive out faithfulness, namely, servile fear, love of privilege, and a singular error. First, because he does not have a free will. Second, because he is below age. Third, because of folly. First, fear is in those who fear to enter religion lest perchance necessity drives them to it, against whom, Eccli. 29[:3]: “Reap your word and deal faithfully with him: and you shall always find that which is necessary for you.” The love of privilege is in those who are compared to the sons of the Sunamite the one dying between the knees of his mother, 4 Kings [4:20]. They are more influenced toward carnal knowledge than to that of religion, Deut. 32[:5]: “It is a perverse generation,” and unfaithful sons. A singular error is in those who dissuade youth from entry into religion, Soph. 3[:4]: Your people “are senseless men without faith.” Because they do not consider the sins which they commit which merit punishment rather than the rewards which they expect, 2 Cor. 4[:4]: “The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers.”

Seek more concerning faithfulness in another part of the folio [140 Faithfulness (*Fidelitas*)].

1. (Pseudo-)Chrysostomus, *Opus Imperfectum in Matthaeum* , Hom. 26 cap. 10:37 (PG 56:768-69): Semper diabolus desiderat infideles suos cum fidelibus esse, ut infideles, cum fidelibus mixti, corrumpant fideles: et Christus semper fideles festinat ab infidelibus separare, ut ne fideles, convenientes cum infidelibus, corrumpantur ab eis. Et ubicumque separatio inter bonos et malos facta legitur in Scripturis, semper boni secesserunt a malis, et non mali a bonis. Cum essent Judaei in captivitate, Deus per prophetam non Assyrios dicit: Exite, exite de medio populi mei: sed ad populum suum, *Exite, exite de medio eorum, et immundum ne tetigeritis (Isai.* 52:11): quia malum coinquinat bonum, bonum autem non coinquinat malum, Utputa, junge lutum farinae: non farina sordidat lutum, sed lutum farinam. Item junge acetum vino: non vinum corrupit acetum, sed acetum vinum. Nec enim corrumpi potest ab alio, quod naturaliter a seipso corruptum est. Ideo cum dixerint infideles, A nobis vos recessistis, non nos a vobis: crede; verum enim est. Semper bonum ante malum fugit, malum autem ante bonum non fugit. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)