166 Esteem (*Honor*)

Three kinds of men are to be esteemed, namely, those going before us, our parents, and those healing.

Concerning the honor of parents, Exod. [20:12]: “Honor your father and your mother, that you may be long-lived upon the land.” Just as a master of a house gives pay above the hire-price so that he may work better, so God promises a long life to those honoring their parents, Eccli. 3[:7]: “He that honors his father shall enjoy a long life.” For we are held to recollect how much they suffered for us and did in begetting, nourishing, and cherishing us when we could not help ourselves.

Wherefore also against ungrateful children it is said, Mich. 7[:6]: “For the son dishonors the father, and the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's enemies are they of his own household.” The example and figure are in Absalom, 2 Kings 15[:14] who pursued his father. And in Nabugodonosor the younger who divided the body of his father in many pieces which the vultures carried off according to the Master in the *Historiis*.[[1]](#endnote-1) Therefore such ones are rightly called whelps of dogs, who while they are young follow the mother, but when they grow up take vengeance to snatch away from the mother, with teeth bared, against which Ambrose in *Hexameron* said,[[2]](#endnote-2) when the parents of the stork are debilitated he nourishes them with food, supports with wings, and rouses them to fly.

Above it is read[[3]](#endnote-3) concerning the hoopoe that when their parents from old age lose their sight, the children seek a rock on the seashore by which application the sight is restored. But it is to be feared today with many sons that if a parent today should lose one eye, they would wish that he would lose both, against which Prov. 23[:22]: “Hearken to your father, that begot you: and despise not your mother when she is old.” And if it is asked concerning the cause of so much ingratitude it can be responded that it is the defect of correction in youth. Wherefore a certain wise man:[[4]](#endnote-4) the old pot tastes of what goes in the new pot. And another one:[[5]](#endnote-5) he who does not accustom himself to virtue when he is young, that one will not know how to leave off vices when he grows old.

¶ Soft wax is easily imprinted, a young virgin is easily bent, Eccli. [30:1]: “He that loves his son, frequently chastises him.” Because an undisciplined son is an embarrassment of the father. Wherefore, Boethius narrates, *De disciplina scholarium*,[[6]](#endnote-6) concerning a son led to a hanging, reaching out for a kiss, attacking the nose of his father because he did not correct him in his youth.

¶ Again, men are accustomed to be esteemed on account of three things. Teachers and physicians are honored on account of wisdom, Eccli. 38[:1]. The religious are honored, Eccli. 10[:23]: “That seed of men shall be honored, which fears God.” On account of their power superiors are to be honored, Psal. [28:2]: “Bring to the Lord glory and honor.” Thence it is that when Christ was coming to Jerusalem, the Hebrews who heard his words of wisdom in preaching, his works of holiness in conversation, deeds of power in the operation of miracles, went out with boughs so that they may receive him with honor. Again, lords coming to their cities are accustomed to be honored in three ways: in the meetings of the people, in songs and praises, and in precious gifts. In this manner was the procession made to Christ on the day of the Palms, in the carrying of fronds, in the prostration of garments, and in the talking in rhythms.

1. Peter Comestor, *Historia scholastica* Libri Danielis cap. 5 (PL 198:1453): Tradunt tamen quidam quod Evilmerodach frater minoris Nabuchodonosor, in diebus electionis paternae, multa egit impie in terra, et, patre restituto, accusatus apud eum, missus est in carcerem, ubi Joachim erat, usque ad mortem fratris sui. Cumque regnare coepisset, elevavit Joachim, quem socium habuerat in carcere, timensque ne resurgeret pater suus, qui de bestia redierat in hominem, consuluit Joachim. Ad cujus consilium cadaver patris sui effossum, divisit in trecentas partes, et dedit eas trecentis vulturibus. Et ait ad eum Joachim: Non resurget pater tuus, nisi redeant vultures in unum. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ambrose, *Hexameron* 5.16.53 (PL 14:228-229): Ciconias ferunt collecto proficisci agmine, si quo pergendum putant, et simul plerisque circa Orientem locis invehi, et quasi tessera militari pariter omnes moveri. Exercitum credas cum signis suis pergere, sic omnes viandi comitandique et praeeundi ordinem servant. Cornices autem deducunt eas acdirigunt, et velut quibusdam turmis stipatricibus prosequuntur; adeo ut adjumenta quaedam bellantibus adversus iynimicas aves conferre credantur, et propriis periculis bella aliena suscipere. Cujus rei indicium est, quia nullae per intervallum aliquod temporis residere in iis locis reperiuntur; et quia cum vulneribus revertentes manifesta quadam sanguinis sui voce caeterisque loquuntur indiciis gravium se certaminum subiisse conflictum. Quis igitur illis poenam desertionis indixit? Quis derelictae militiae supplicia praescripsit formidolosa; ut nulla prosequendis hospitalibus turmis sese subtrahere nitatur: sed certatim omnes deductionis munere officioque fungantur?He [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. Pliny, *Historia naturalis* 10.32 (LCL 353:332-333): Ciconiae nidos eosdem repetunt. Genetricum senectam invicem educant.

   Storks (hoopoe) return to the same nest. They nourish their poarents’ old age in their turn.

   Cf. Medieval Bestiary, Hoopoe: When the hoopoe get old and their eyes grow dim, their children come to care for them. The children pull out the old feathers and lick the mist off their parents' eyes, rejuvinating the old birds. The young say they do this to repay their parents for caring for them. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Hans Walther, *Proverbia sententiaeque Latinitatis Medii Aevi* (Göttingen. 1963-1967), itgem 25948.

   Cf. Horace, *Epistula* 1.2.69 (LCL 194:266-267): quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem testa diu.

   The jar will long keep the fragrance of what it was once steeped in when new.

   Cf. Quintilian, *The Orator’s Education* 1.1.5 (LCL 124:66-67): ut sapor quo nova <vasa> inbuas durat.

   a flavor lasts a long time when the jar that absorbs it is new. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. A. G. Little, *Studies in English Franciscan History* 4 (Mancester: University Press, 1917), p. 150: Qui non assuescit virtuti dum juvenescit / A viciis nescit discedere quando senescit. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Boethius, *De disciplina Scholarium* 2 (PL 64:1227):Cruci ergo adductus eumdem ad se venire lacrymis compellebat, osculumque voce querula petebat. Pietatis autem motio ad filii petitionem patrem erexit, erectique filius nasum morsu secuit acutissimo dicens: Quare a meis primis erroribus incastigatus evasi? Utquid magistri mei documentis non obedivi, sociosque meos contempsi? Filii patrem necesse est indulgere castigationi, magistrumque discipuli mores informare. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)