255 Oblivion, You have forgotten (*Obliuio, obliuisti*)

Somethings ought to be handed over to oblivion as injuries, some not as benefits. Concerning the first, Gen. 50[:17]: Jacob said to Joseph his son, “I beseech you to forget the wickedness of your brothers.” Wherefore Augustine, the fifth *Epistola*,[[1]](#endnote-1) narrates concerning Julius Caesar that ne never forgot anything except injuries. Wherefore the Lord, Lev. 19 [:18]: “Seek not revenge, nor be mindful of the injury of your citizens. You shall love your friend. I am the Lord.”

Concerning the second, Seneca, book 3, *De beneficiis*,[[2]](#endnote-2) he is most ungrateful who has forgotten benefits received. Such was the butler of the Pharaoh, Gen. 40[:23]: “Who when things prospered with him, forgot his interpreter,” namely, Joseph. For frequently prosperity is the cause of forgetfulness, just as is evident concerning the raven that Noah sent forth from the ark, which finding a corpse as a gift to him, he forgot to return [Gen. 8:6-7].

¶ The figure for this,[[3]](#endnote-3) Gen. 41[:51-53]: Manassas, who is interpreted as forgetfulness, followed Ephraim, who is interpreted as fruitful, that is, abundance.

Again, the hen in autumn finding where there is an abundance forgets to return to her mistress calling, who fed her in the winter, Osee 13[:6]: “They were filled and were made full: and they lifted up their heart and have forgotten me.”

¶ When some person is elevated to a place of eminence, then things under him seem small, so it is concerning a man whose heart is elevated through pride, Gregory, 27, *Moralium*,[[4]](#endnote-4) says therefore a man dying justly returns into the earth because he has forgotten he was of the earth. It is read in the *Vitis Patrum*,[[5]](#endnote-5) that the three arms of Satan are namely, forgetfulness,

negligence, and concupiscence. Forgetfulness is the mother of negligence. From negligence in truth arises concupiscence, from concupiscence man is ruined. Wherefore Augustine says in the *Regula clericorum*,[[6]](#endnote-6) lest through forgetfulness anything is neglected.

1. Augustine, *Epistola* 138.2.9 (PL 33:529): quomodo Caesari administratori utique reipublicae, mores ejus extollens Cicero dicebat, quod nihil oblivisci soleret nisi injurias (Orat. pro Q. Ligario.)? [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Seneca, *De beneficiis* 3.5.2 (LCL 310:134-135): perveniunt deinde eo, quo, ut ego existimo, pessimus quisque atque ingratissimus pervenit, ut obliviscantur.

   and then they reach the state, to which, in my opinion, all the worst and the most ungrateful men come—they grow forgetful. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 1.6 (8:256b-257a): Septimo facit hominem obliviosum propriae salutis; et in signum hujus Manasses et Ephraim fuerunt fratres, but habetur in Genesi. Manasses interpretatur *oblivio*: Epharim *fructificns*, vel *crescens*, et figurat avarum, qui est crescens (*Ephraim*), id est, in divitiis; et est *Manasses*, qui scilicet obliviscitur propriae salutis. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Gregory, *Moralia* 29.10.21 (PL 76:488): moriendo vero ad limi sui materiam redit, recte dicitur: Restituetur ut lutum signaculum. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. *Vitae Patrum,* Verba Seniorum 11.46. (PL 73:939): Dicebat senex: Quia tres virtutes Satanae, quae [Col.0939C] praecedunt universa peccata: prima oblivionis, secunda negligentiae, tertia concupiscentiae. Etenim si oblivio venerit, generat negligentiam; de negligentia vero concupiscentia nascitur; de concupiscentia vero corruit homo. Si enim ita est sobria mens, ut oblivionem respuat, ad negligentiam non venit; et si non neglexerit concupiscentiam non recipit; si vero concupiscentiam non recipit, nunquam cadet opitulante Christi gratia. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Augustine, *Regula ad servos Dei*, 12 (PL 32:1384): Ut autem vos in hoc libello tanquam in speculo possitis inspicere, ne per oblivionem aliquid negligatis, semel in septimana vobis legatur. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)