311 To Return (*Reddere*)

Sometimes evil is returned for good,[[1]](#endnote-1) just as the Jews did to Christ, Psal. [34:12]: “They repaid me evil for good.” And this is perversity, Prov. 17[:13]: “He that renders evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.”

Sometimes they return the opposite, namely, good for evil,[[2]](#endnote-2) just as God did for us, Gen. last chapter [50:20]: “You thought evil against me: but God turned it into good.” And this is charity, Matt. 5[:44]: “Do good to them that hate you.”

Third, some return evil for evil,[[3]](#endnote-3) and this is vindictive and cruel, against which it is said in [1] Thess. 5[:15]: “See that none render evil for evil.” Rom. 12[:16-17]: “Be not wise in your own conceits. To no man rendering evil for evil. Providing good things, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men.” Note what they see here, note what they provide before men and not before hypocrites, before God and not before men, sinners before God and before men, the just and the famous.

¶ Fourth, they return good for good,[[4]](#endnote-4) the just to each other, and God of the law to the just, Psal. [124:4]: “Do good, O Lord, to those that are good, and to the upright of heart.” And the opposite the good to God who for benefits received return public praise and this is of justice and equity, Prov. last chapter [31:12]: “She will render him good, and not evil.” So, Tobias rendered to the angel, Tob. 9[:6]. And Jethro rendered to Moses, Exod. 18[:5].

¶ Again, note that man ought to render somethings, and God somethings. Man ought to render somethings to God and somethings to man, Matt. 22[:21]: “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

¶ Therefore man first ought to render the obsequies of the faith, Eccle. 5[:3]: “If you have vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it.” This we did in baptism. Therefore, the Psal. [60:9}: “I may pay my vows from day to day.”

¶ Again, in the Psal. [49:14]: “Pay your vows to the Highest.” But I ask, when can man render to God those things which he has consumed, Matt. 18[:26]: “Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.” I respond, he returns as he can, for otherwise he cannot. Unless just as the one defaulting of debts he returns to the creditor grass for fruit. Rather God accepts straw from the hearts, and he is content with fragments, Luc. 7[:42]: “Whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both.” Thus, it is concerning God and us, Augustine, *Epistola* 27,[[5]](#endnote-5) repay what you have vowed, because you are those things. Nor lessen the repayment in repaying, but let it be saved and augmented, the demander should not grow from the repayments, but in himself he makes the repayors to grow. Hence it is that what is not repaid is lost. What is repaid to the repayor is saved.

¶ Again, it is said man himself should render to God, so that he may be blessed from what he receives.

¶ Again, man should repay the divine precepts to completion, Prov. last chapter [31:12]: “She will render him,” that is, man to God, “good,” obedience, “and not evil,” faults.

Again, he ought to repay divine benefits of graces and actions, Eccli. 35[:10]: “Give glory to God with a good heart.”

¶ Again, he ought to repay compunction for the divine commendations, as the dispenser to the president, Luke 16[:2]: “Give an account of your stewardship,” that is, an agreement for the goods of nature, fortune, and grace. Rom. 14[:12]: “Therefore every one of us shall render account to God for himself.” Matt. 12[:36]: “For every idle word, that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment.”

Again, he should repay the settlement of promises, just as the guilty to his summoner, Psal. [65:13-14]: “I will pay to you my vows, which my lips have uttered.” And this ought to be done in three ways.

Because quickly, Eccle. 5[:3]: “If you have vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it. For an unfaithful and foolish promise displeases him.”

Second, happily, Psal. [115:5]: “I will pay my vows before all his people.”

Third, wholly, Eccle. 5[:3-4]: “If you have vowed anything to God, defer not to pay it. For it is much better not to vow, than after a vow,” etc.

Second, a man ought to repay to a man what things are of friendship and justice, Rom. 13[:7]: “Render therefore to all men their dues.” Wherefore also Gen. 20[:14], God commanded Abimelech the king of Gerara that he render to Abraham “his wife Sarah.” Otherwise he is delayed and does like with other gifts. Wherefore Augustine, *Sermo* d*e verbis apostoli*,[[6]](#endnote-6) but he says, that if you have found and not give back, you are a robber. Where he narrated concerning a certain poor man, who finding a sack full of coins, that is, two hundred solidi. This man proposed a public announcement so that whoever lost it should come to a determined place and give signs and circumstances of the matter he would be repaid. But the other who had lost the money wishing to repay the finder offered him twenty solidi, afterwards ten, and finally five. But when that finder would not receive anything, the other man threw the sack from him, saying he had not lost anything. However, the finder thus conquered received what was offered, which also quickly he distributed and gave it to the poor.

Third, a man ought to render to man, the wise man instruction to the ignorant, like the sun renders illumination to the air, 1 Pet. 3[:15]: “Being ready always to satisfy everyone that asks you a reason of that faith which is in you.” He does not say the movement of the stars, or the generation of the winds.

Second, being powerful sustenance to the indigent, just as the mouth gives nourishment to the members, Eccli. 4[:8]: “Bow down your ear cheerfully to the poor, and pay what you owe, and with mildness.”

Third, love for your neighbor, because the image of God is that each approves his like, Rom. 13[:7]: “Render to all men their dues.”

¶ Again, God repays three things. First, grace to the penitent to merit congruently, Eccli. 3[:34]: “God provides for him that shows favor.”

Second, for praising devoutly, because there is no spontaneous praise in the mouth of sinners, Soph. 3[:9]: “I will restore to the people a chosen lip.”

Third, to the one persevering happily, Psal. [50:14]: “Restore unto me the joy of your salvation.”

¶ Again, God repays glory to the one persevering in good, Eccli. 35[:12]: “Give to the Highest according to what he has given to you. However much he is giving and seven times more he renders to you, Wis. 10[:17]: “God rendered to the just the wages of their labors.”

¶ Third, God repays Gehenna to the impenitent, Psal. [93:2]: “Lift up yourself, you that judge the earth, render a reward to the proud.” Deut. 32[:41]: “I will render vengeance to my enemies.” Apo. 22[:12]: “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works.”

1. Cf. Hugh Ripelin of Strasburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis* 3.17 (8:137b): Sed reddere malum pro bono, est perversitatis, sicut fecit Judas tradendo Christum. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Hugh Ripelin of Strasburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis* 3.17 (8:137b): Reddere bonum pro malo, est perfectionis, sicut fecit beatus Stephanus, qundo pro inimicis oravit. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. Hugh Ripelin of Strasburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis* 3.17 (8:137b): Notandum quod reddere malum pro malo, est fragilitatis, sicut fecit Joab [2 Reg. 2:27], quando interfecit abner, scilicet interfectorem fratris sui Asael. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. Hugh Ripelin of Strasburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis* 3.17 (8:137b): Reddere bonum pro bono, est aequitatis, sicut fecit Assuerus, quando Mardochaeum honoravit. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Augustine, *Epistola* 127.6 (PL 33:486): Reddite igitur quod vovistis, quia vos ipsi estis, et ei vos redditis a quo estis; reddite, obsecro. Neque enim quod redditis, reddendo minuetur, sed potius servabitur et augebitur: benignus enim exactor est, non egenus; et qui non crescat ex redditis, sed in se crescere faciat redditores. Huic ergo quod non redditur, perditur: quod autem redditur, reddenti additur; imo vero in eo cui redditur, ipse reddens servatur. Idipsum quippe erit redditum et redditor, quia idipsum erat debitum et debitor. Deo namque seipsum debet homo, eique reddendus est ut beatus sit, a quo accepit ut sit. Hoc significat quod in Evangelio Dominus ait: Reddite Caesari quae Caesaris sunt, et Deo quae Dei sunt (Matth. XXII, 21). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Augustine, *Sermo de verbis Apostoli* 178.9 (PL 38:965): Nam quod invenisti et non reddidisti, rapuisti. Quantum potuisti, fecisti: quia plus non potuisti, ideo non plus fecisti. Qui alienum negat, si possit et tollit. Quod non tollis, timor prohibet: non bonum facis, sed malum metuis. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)