313 To Remember or To Record (*Recolere uel Recordari*)

Man ought to remember particularly the prerogatives for God and for himself and for his neighbor. The prerogatives for God: the commandments of power, the judgments of equity, and the benefits of goodness.

First, therefore the commandments of God are to be remembered, just as a passage through which a man ought to go through, Psal. [102:18]: “Mindful of his commandments to do them.” Therefore, the words of God are to be remembered for believing, for doing, for teaching, not like the Jews, Matt. 27[:63]: “Sir, we have remembered, that that seducer said,” etc.

Second, the judgments of God are to be recorded, so that from similar they may derive a similar future judgment. Just as a young crow conjectures from a dead one suspended in a field, Luke 16[:25]: “Son, remember that you did receive good things in your lifetime,” etc., up to “and you are tormented.” Wherefore it is notable that before death the rich man was put over Lazarus, but after death on the contrary thus in a way the rich are dominated by the poor, but afterwards it will be otherwise. Therefore, mark that Esau was disinherited because of gluttony.

¶ The flood happened on account of lust, the useless servants are imprisoned on account of sloth, the rich are damned on account of avarice, Pharaoh and his troops were drowned on account of envy, Lucifer and his followers were cast out on account of pride and the will to sin, Deut. 7[:18]: “Remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh.” It is beautiful when one corrects himself who through another castigates himself.

¶ The example of the lion[[1]](#endnote-1) and the whelp beaten. But alas because in Dan. 13[:9] it is said concerning the old men who “turned away their eyes that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember judgments.”

¶ Third, the benefits of God are to be recorded. For the forgetfulness of such things is lost in ingratitude, Jer. 18[:20]: “Shall evil be rendered for good,” and it follows, “Remember that I have stood in your sight, so speak good for them.” However, these benefits of God are three.

Of which the first is justification, just as he merited the healing of the physician, Deut. 16[:12]: “You shall remember that you were a servant in Egypt,” which is interpreted darkness, narrowness, or tribulation, that is, in sin which darkened reason, choice, and conscience. He narrows the complaining will which draws to evil, he troubles God dividing himself from man, Deut. 8[:18]: “Remember the Lord your God, that he has given you strength.”

The second benefit is redemption, as you pass into the use of the buyer, Lam. 3[:19]: “Remember my poverty, and transgression, the wormwood, and the gall.” Conflicting delights and tokens lead to misunderstanding of the significant, therefore the crucifixion of Christ is painted. The example of the blessed Ignatius.[[2]](#endnote-2) But alas because in the Psal. [77:42] it is said, “They remembered not his hand, in the day that he redeemed them from the hand of him that afflicted them.” Against his he created, governed, healed, redeemed, blessed, attracted, and conquered the devil, Isai. 17[:10]: “You have not remembered your strong helper.”

¶ The third benefit is the glorification which is to be remembered as the end which most powerfully moves the craftsman to work.

And first he ought to be in intention, but since God himself is the cause of causes he ought particularly to move the worker to work because of himself, Psal. [41:2, 5]: “As the hart pants after the fountains of water,” and it follows, “These things I remembered, and poured out my soul in me.” Psal. [41:5] with the affection which “I shall go over,” slowly, “into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house” because of the loveliness. Psal. [136:1]: “Upon the rivers of Babylon,” that is, the delights of the world, not below by submersion or clinging, “when we remembered Sion,” that is, above the city, but alas because, Eccle. 9[:14]: “A little city, and few men in it,” etc.

Second, man must mark the things that concern himself which are three.

First, things of his own iniquity for sorrowing and confessing, just as the sick man before the physician, Lev. 26[:39-40]: “They shall be afflicted for the sins of their fathers ... until they confess their iniquities,” etc. Isai. 38[:15]: “I will recount to you all my years.” But alas because many more are to be marked, his sayings are more for delight than for detestation, Num. 11[:5]: “We remember the fish that we ate, the cucumbers come into our mind, and the melons.” Explain there also Ezech. 21[:24]: “Because you have remembered your iniquity,” it follows, “you shall be taken with the hand,” etc., faults just as the thief is led to hanging.

Second, he ought to mark the human frailty for avoiding danger. As a fox[[3]](#endnote-3) seeing the tracks of beasts entering to the den of the lion, but none returning he does not want to enter there. So, concerning sin and hell, Psal. [77:39]: “He remembered,” the Lord because he makes us to remember, “that they are flesh,” fragile to ruin, “a wind that goes,” by itself from grace to fault, “and returns not,” from fault to grace.

Again, it is to be marked that he made us because we are of dust. Therefore, it is not safe to seek height, nor scattering in the wind of vain glory. Here man is called dust because of the usefulness of the material, grass because of the brevity of life, flower of the field because of the mutability of fortune. For the flower grows and withers, grows green and decays.

Second, it ought to the marked what is thrust between him and his end to prepare himself like one swift to respond, Lam. 1[:7]: “Jerusalem has remembered,” namely, the soul, “the days of her affliction,” namely, death, “and in the enemy's hand.” But alas because in Lam. 1[:9]: “Her filthiness is on her feet, and she hath not remembered her end.”

¶ Third, man ought to mark their things which pertain to his neighbor.

And first, his merits for inviting, Job 4[:7]: “Remember, I pray you, whoever perished being innocent?”

Second, the benefits for gift giving or responding, 1 Kings 25[:31]: “You shall remember your handmaid.” But alas there are many promoted who do not remember their poor friends of old.

¶ Third, injuries taken away for repairing, Matt. 5[:23]: “If therefore you offer your gift at the altar, and there you remember.”

1. Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.2.5 (PL 82:434): Cum genuerint catulum, tribus diebus et tribus noctibus catulus dormire fertur; tunc deinde patris fremitu, vel rugitu veluti tremefactus cubilis locus, suscitare dicitur catulum dormientem.

When they give birth to a cub, it is thought to sleep for three days and nights, until the place where it sleeps is shaken by the roar of the father, which wakes it. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ignatius, cf. James of Voragine, *The Golden Legend* trans. William Granger Ryan, 36 (1:142-143): When the executioners asked him why he repeated the name so often, he replied: “I have this name written on my heart and therefore cannot stop invoking it!” After his death those who had heard him say this were driven by curiosity to find out if it was true, so they took the heart out of his body, split it down the middle, and found there the name *Jesu Christ* inscribed in gold letters. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. Perry # 142: The fox and the sick lion: Leo, defectus annis, recubabat in spelunca sua et aegrum simulabat. Visitatum regem complures venerunt bestiae, quas protinus devoravit. Accessit etiam vulpes, sed cauta ante speluncam procul stabat, salutans regem. “Cur non intras?” interrogavit leo. Vulpes respondit, “Quod video vestigia intrantium multa, at nulla exeuntium.”

<https://fablesofaesop.com/the-fox-and-the-sick-lion.html> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)