92 To Give (*Dare*)

God gives something to man, just as a spouse to his bride, so that he may be more loved, according to Augustine, sermon 2, *Super Canticum.[[1]](#endnote-1)* Therefore the spouse gives a wedding gift, so that in the gift he may be more loved. Therefore, when God gave you all these things, love him who made you. But what is more he gave himself, who made all these things. The spouse, he said, gives the bride a ring. If, therefore, the bride might say, This ring is enough for me, I do not much desire the spouse. Of what sort would that bride be but one by the name of adulteress. God gave paradise to our first parents, so that in it they might live without labor, but because they lost that through sin, he gave them the earth to labor in, Psal. [113:24-26]: “The heaven of heaven is the Lord’s: but the earth he has given to the children of men.” And when he adds there, “The dead shall not praise thee, O Lord … But we that live bless the Lord,” namely, because he gave us these things, we ought to bless the Lord.

But it is to be noted here that God in the Old Testament promised the earth to the fathers, that is, earthly things, just as to Abraham, Gen. 12[:1]. And again, to Jacob, Gen. 28[:13]: “The land, wherein you sleep, I will give to you.” And generally, he promised to the children of Israel when he led them out of Egypt the land of their fathers, Exod. 6[:4]. And, therefore, then God himself said he was their Lord and they were his servants, just as they who serve on account of temporal wages. But in the New Testament God promised to men, just as his sons, a heavenly inheritance. Wherefore, Chrysostom, *Homilia* 14,[[2]](#endnote-2) God does not freely give earthly things, he who teaches those things ought to be contemned. And according to Augustine, sermon 2, *Domini in monte*,[[3]](#endnote-3) in the New Testament God taught his disciples to call him Father, I will learn “Our Father who art in heaven,” Matt. 6[:9], as if saying, Now we are sons who before were servants. For “as many as received him, he gave them power to be made the sons of God,” John 1[:12]. And in James 1[:17] it is said, “Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.”

¶ And of giving an earthly gift is imperfect because it is corporeal, but a heavenly gift is perfect which descends from the Father who does not fail. In the figure of these, Gen. 25[:5-6]: “And Abraham … to the children of the concubines he gave gifts, but for his son” he reserved the heredity of an heir. Wherefore, it was concerning God just as it was concerning Alexander the Great as Seneca says, in the second book, *De beneficiis*,[[4]](#endnote-4) that when a certain man sought something from him, (Alexander) the madman gave him a whole city. However, he responded, It is not fitting to accept nor convenient to fortune. But, (Alexander said), it is fitting for me to give so much.

¶ Thus it is concerning God, he does not ask what is fitting for us to accept, we who are wretched and poor, but he seeks what is fitting for him to give, and this is not less than the heavenly city. Wherefore, Christ said, Luke 12[:32]: “Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom.” Wherefore, Bernard says,[[5]](#endnote-5) God gave us our body with its senses, our soul with its powers, the world with its contents, his Son with his torments. Therefore, either cast off these gifts, or pay them back in turn with love.

¶ Again, Augustine, *Epistola* 34,[[6]](#endnote-6) who gives such great gifts to his creature, the good and the evil, as are these men, as they are thriving with senses, being strong with powers, being affluent with works, finally he will give himself to the good so that they may be well.

¶ Again, Augustine, *De sermone Domini in monte*, 64,[[7]](#endnote-7) the kingdom of heaven is for sale, Buy it if you wish, don’t worry about the price, it is worth just as much as you have. Don’t ask what you may have, but of the kind you are. This thing is worth yourself. It is worth just as much as you are. Give yourself, and you will have that. But perhaps you say, I am evil, and he will not accept me. But by giving yourself to that one, you will be good. Seneca narrates a similar thing, *De beneficiis,* book 1,[[8]](#endnote-8) concerning Aeschines, the disciple of Socrates, when several of the disciples of Socrates offered many things, Aeschines the poor man said to him, I have nothing that I can give to you, unless my poor self which I give to you. To whom Socrates said, You have given me a great gift. Therefore, I will return you to yourself a better man than I received. Thus does the teacher when Christ gives back those given to him, he gives them back to themselves better than he received.

¶ Thus the rude apostles gave themselves to Christ, and he returned them better, more subtle from God because neither philosophers nor tyrants could resist them. Wherefore, Ennodius the philosopher,[[9]](#endnote-9) If we give something, it is ours; if we have something, it is another’s. And here,[[10]](#endnote-10) If you wish to be the best merchant, give what you can lose, give so that you may receive a hundred-fold.

¶ Again, Augustine, *De doctrina,* book [1], chapter 5,[[11]](#endnote-11) Everything which does not decrease on being given away is not properly owned when it is owned and not given, Matt. 13[:12]: “For he that has, to him shall be given,” and if they are benevolently using that which they have received.

¶ Again, note what God will have given, he gives to the perfect, he gives perfectly, John 16[:24]: “Ask, and you shall receive; that your joy may be full.” But he does not give a perfect gift to those desiring, nor mercy unless they acknowledge their own wretchedness, nor grace except to the one ruling, but on the contrary the world gives joy to our emptiness, Jer. 4[:23]: “I beheld the earth, and lo it was void.” Or half full, Psal. [54:24]: “Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days. Or mixed, Isai. 1[:22]: “Your wine is mingled with water.” Or deceived, Luke 12[:19]: “Soul, you have much goods laid up for many years,” etc. Therefore, it is to be noted that many things move us to giving. First, the example of the irrational creatures, which from the will of God they give what they have, as the stars their light, the air its dew, and the earth its fruit. How much more man who is rational, Eccli. 29[:12]: “Help the poor because of the commandment.”

¶ Again some things from the part of the creator’s precept by which we are constrained move us to giving. Example, by which we are attracted to the judgment by which we are cast down.

¶ Concerning the first, Eccli. 29[:12-13]: “Help the poor because of the commandment,” and it follows, “Lose your money for your brother.”

¶ Concerning the second, according to the Philosopher, in the *Topics,[[12]](#endnote-12)* what one chooses where a man is wise and good, that is greatly to be chosen. But God who is the greatest of the wise and the good chooses to give. For he gave his Son who is his own and coequal, John 3[:16]: “For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son.” He even gave “the Holy Ghost” who is in union to himself and the Son, John 20[:22]. He gave the creature doubly, both bodily and spiritually. Concerning the bodily, it is said in Gen. 1[:29]: “Behold I have given you every herb.”

¶ Concerning the spiritual, of which kind are grace and virtues as is said in Psal. [67:19], he gave “gifts in men.”

¶ Concerning the third, fearing judgment moves us to give, because a cleric freely provides for himself concerning the material about which he ought to be examined. For if he is lacking he is to be condemned; if not he is to be approved, but in a judgment, the examination takes place over the works of mercy, Matt. 25[:35]: “For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat.” Therefore, in this reading it ought to be studied, Tob. 4[:8]: “According to your ability be merciful,” etc., and expound them there.

¶ Again, three things on the part of the creature move us to giving. First, an opportune time for meriting, which is now.

¶ For in hell there will not be time for giving, because although there is need, however there is not the possibility. Nor even in paradise, because although there is the possibility, there is however no need, Eccle. 3[:1]: “All things have their season.” And Eccli. 14[:13]: “Do good to your friend before you die, and according to your ability, stretching out your hand give to the poor.” The rich man at the banquet could not give after death.

Second, the opportunity for eternity moves us to giving. If man gives his body to labor, his money to a lawyer, his mind to study on account of earthly profit, how much more on account of eternity, Prov. 22[:9]: “He that makes presents shall purchase victory and honor.” And Luke 11[:41]: “That which remains, give alms: and behold, all things are clean unto you.” Because also your soul shall be clean from the stain of avarice, your body from the desire of concupiscence, your possessions from the superfluity of feasting.

Third, the teaching of the wise moves us to give, by which we are informed if we are lacking an incentive, thus anyone ought to give by the teaching of the just. Zacheus certainly taught by example, Luke 19[:8]: “The half of my goods, I give to the poor.” Behold what he gave, abundantly because “the half,” curially because “of goods,” faithfully because “my,” wisely because “I give,” usefully because “to the poor.”

¶ Again, Solomon taught by word, Eccli. 4[:36]: “Let not your hand be stretched out to receive and shut when you should give.” And Prov. 3[:9]: “Honor the Lord with your substance and give of the first of all your fruits” to the poor. Christ and the apostles taught equally by word and example, Matt. 19[:21]: “If you will be perfect, go sell what you have, and give to the poor.” How liberal Christ was to us is evident from the triple gift according to the triple nature which was in him. Which are the Deity, the soul, and the flesh. For, he gave to us divinity in the first of the beatitudes; soul in the price of redemption; flesh in the provisions of pilgrimage. Therefore, he gave the gift of nature, fortune, and grace. Therefore, indifferently to the good and evil but the gift of glory not except to the good and to those desiring it strongly, Prov. 10[:24]: “To the just their desire shall be given.” If, therefore, he desires teachings on account of truth, songs on account of joyfulness, food on account of taste, land on account of fertility, how much more life ought to be desired in which there is truth without fallacy, charity without envy, joyfulness without sadness, fertility without scarcity, security without servitude, Apo. 21[:6]: “To him that thirsts, I will give of the fountain of the water of life.”

Second, glory is given to the obedient humbly if the good earth gives in its time earthly fruit to those cultivating it. How much more God will give heavenly fruit for those meriting it, Luke. 12[:32]: “Fear not, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you a kingdom.”

¶ Third, glory is given to those over-paying liberally. For this is consonant to reason to give to the one giving.

¶ For if he does not give what he loves, he does not receive that which he hopes for, Matt. 10[:42]: “Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water.” Therefore, the Savior from the beginning gave us his goods in solace and sustenance, Psal. [8:8]: “You have subjected all things under his feet.” Also, he gave his own, namely angels in ministry, Heb. 1[:14]: “Are they not all ministering spirits,” but in these days he gave us himself, etc. Just as above it is said because his flesh into food, etc.

¶ A great sign of love is what one gives to his other, but more to give his own, namely, family and friends, but most is to give himself. Wherefore also one is accustomed to say to his friend, I will give to you of my flesh.

¶ Again, he gives another gift of general grace to all the elect for living honestly, Ezech. 37[:6]: “I will give” also abundant grace, I will not sell from indigence nor avarice to you, namely, my universally elect to the spirit, right in your inwards, and you will live soberly with respect to your own self, justly with respect to your neighbor, piously with respect to God.

¶ Again, second, God gives something of spiritual wisdom for the prudent of feeling, such as contemplating.

Third, some gift of verbal eloquence and drawing sweetly, namely to the teachers and superiors, concerning which at the same time, Luke 21[:15]: “I will give,” not whoever, but “you,” teachers and superiors not contemned if however you receive, “a mouth,” that is, the eloquence of the mouth for persuading, and to you contemplatives, “and wisdom,” that is, prudent knowledge.

Fourth, he gives to those comprehending then blessed gifts of heavenly glory for understanding clearly, Isai. 46[:13]: “I will give,” from operating and cooperating grace, “in Sion,” that is, in the church triumphant, “salvation,” whole and eternal, “and in Jerusalem,” above, which is our mother, “and my glory,” participatively, not integrally. On account of that which is said in Isai. 42[:8]: “I will not give my glory to another.”

¶ Concerning the second, Deut. 32[:35]: “Revenge is mine, and I will repay.”

Again, concerning the third, John 5[:27]: “He has given him power to do judgment.”

First, the vain glorifiers take away from God, John 5[:44]: “How can you believe, who glory one from another … seek?”

Second, the proud and wrathful take away, Eccli. 28[:1]: “He that seeks to revenge himself, shall find vengeance from the Lord.”

Third, those judging by chance against whom they take away, [1] Cor. 4[:5]: “Judge not before the time, until the Lord come.”

¶ Again, note that they magnify the gift five times. Sometimes, namely, in giving is liberality and excellence as things given by the king, Gal. 1[:1]: “Not of men” have I received that. When in the house there is abundance and reveling, Tob. 4[:9]: “If you have much give abundantly.” Third, when in a way of giving or in distributing there is quickness and hastening, Prov. 3[:28]: “Say not to your friend: Go and come again … when you can give at present.” Fourth, if in the receiving one there is necessity or need, because help is magnified more in adversity than in prosperity, Matt. 25[:42]: “For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat.”

¶ Again, if in the gift there is foreknowledge and, in the giving, there is gaiety, [2] Cor. [9:7]: “God loves a cheerful giver.”

¶ Again, if in receiving there is spiritualty, so that when it is given to one for others, Psal. [147:20]: “He hath not done in like manner to every nation.” Again, if in the end there is utility.

1. Cf. Augustine, *In* *Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos tractatus* 2.2.11 (PL 35:1995): Quemadmodum, fratres, si sponsus faceret sponsae suae annulum, et illa acceptum annulum plus diligeret quam sponsum qui illi fecit annulum; nonne in ipso dono sponsi adultera anima deprehenderetur, quamvis hoc amaret quod dedit sponsus? Certe hoc amaret quod dedit sponsus: tamen si diceret, Sufficit mihi annulus iste, jam illius faciem nolo videre; qualis esset? Quis non detestaretur hanc amentiam? quis non adulterinum animum convinceret? Amas aurum pro viro, amas annulum pro sponso: si hoc est in te, ut ames annulum pro sponso tuo, et nolis videre sponsum tuum; ad hoc tibi arrham dedit, ut non te oppigneraret, sed averteret. Ad hoc utique arrham dat sponsus, ut in arrha sua ipse ametur. Ergo dedit tibi Deus omnia ista, ama illum qui fecit. Plus est quod tibi vult dare, id est, seipsum, qui ista fecit. Si autem amaveris haec, quamvis illa Deus fecerit, et neglexeris Creatorem, et amaveris mundum; nonne tuus amor adulterinus deputabitur. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. John Chrysostom, *In epistolam ad Hebraeos homeliae* Homilia 25.2 (PG 63:173?): Cum enim mentem nostrum exhibuerimus perfectam, et ostenderimus nos res terrenas despicere, tunc quoque nobis donat res terrens despicere, tunc quoque nobis donat res terrenas, et non ante, ne acceptum donum nos terrenos alligatos magis adhuc alliget. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Augustine, *De sermone Domini in monte secundum Matthaeum* 2.16-17 (PL 34:1276): Si enim quisquam plebeius senatorem grandioris aetatis ab eo ipso patrem vocare permittatur; sine dubio trepidabit, nec facile audebit, cogitans humilitatem generis sui, et opum indigentiam, et plebeiae personae vilitatem: ... Utatur ergo voce Novi Testamenti populus novus, ad aeternam haereditatem vocatus, et dicat, Pater noster qui es in coelis: id est, in sanctis et justis. Non enim spatio locorum continetur Deus. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Seneca, *De beneficiis* 2.16 (LCL 310:78): Urbem cuidam Alexander donabat, vesanus et qui nihil animo nisi grande conciperet. Cum ille, cui donabatur, se ipse mensus tanti muneris invidiam refugisset dicens non convenire fortunae suae: “Non quaero,” inquit, “quid te accipere deceat, set quid me dare.” [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Suzanne Paul, *An Edition and Study of Selected Sermons of Robet Grosseteste,* T55 *Diligam te Domine, virtus mea,* fol. 116rb, (University of Leeds: Centre for Medieval Studies, October 2002), 2:323: Dedit Dominus nobis esse, dedit et pulcrum esse, dedit et vivere. Corpus cum sensibus, animam cum viribus, dona spiritus sancti cum sacramentis, virtutes cum incrementis, mundum cum contenti, filium cum tormentis. Concludit ex hiis donis anime sue ut Dominus diligat, dicens aut dona Dei si potes respue, aut si non potes, vicissitudinem dileccionis inpende. Citing Hugo de Sancto Victore, *Soliloquium de arrha animae* (PL 176:951). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Augustine, *Epistola* 155*: Augustinus Macedonio* 1.2 (PL 33.667): Nam qui tanta creaturae suae bona bonis malisque largitur, ut sint, ut homines sint, ut vigentes sensibus, valentes viribus, affluentes opibus sint; seipsum bonis dabit ut beati sint, quia ejus etiam hoc munus est ut boni sint. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Augustine, *Sermo 127: De verbis Evangelii Joannis* 3 (PL 38:707): Et tamen venale est: eme si vis. Nec multum exaestues de re magna propter pretii magnitudinem. Tantum valet, quantum habes. Ad aliquid ergo magnum et pretiosum comparandum parares aurum, vel argentum, vel pecuniam, vel fructus aliquos pecorum aut frugum, qui in tua possessione nascerentur, ut emeres nescio quid hoc magnum et praeclarum, quo viveres in hac terra felix. Et hoc eme, si vis. Noli quaerere quid habeas, sed qualis sis. Res ista te valet. Tantum valet, quantum es tu. Te da, et habebis illam. Quid turbaris? quid exaestuas? Numquid quaesiturus es te, aut empturus es te? Ecce tu qui es, qualis es, da te illi rei, et habebis illam. Sed malus sum, inquies, et forte me non accipit. Dando te illi, bonus eris. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Seneca, *De beneficiis* 1.8 (LCL 310:26): Socrati cum multa pro suis quisque facultatibus offerrent, Aeschines, pauper auditor: “Nihil,” inquit, “dignum te, quod dare tibi possim, invenio et hoc uno modo pauperem esse me sentio. Itaque dono tibi, quod unum habeo, me ipsum. Hoc munus rogo, qualecumque est, boni sonsulas cogitesque alios, cum multum tibi darent, plus sibi reliquisse.” Cui Socraes: “Quidni tu,” inquit, “Magnum munus mihi dederis, nisi forte te parvo aestimas? Habebo itaque curae, ut t meliorem aestimas? Habebo itaque curae, ut te meliorem tibi reddam, quam accepti.” [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Cf. Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistolae* 8.4 (PL 58:593): si quid agimus, nostrum; si quid habemus, alienum est. Vale. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Cf. Alanus de Insulis, *Summa de arte praedicatoria* 6 (PL 210:124): Vis esse mercator optimus, foenerator egregius et prudens mercenarius? Da quae non potes retinere, ut consequaris ea quae non potes amittere, da modicum ut consequaris centuplum; da alienam possessionem, ut consequaris aeternam haereditatem. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana* 1.1.1 (PL 34:19): Omnis enim res quae dando non deficit, dum habetur et non datur, nondum habetur quomodo habenda est. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Aristotle, *Topics* 3.1, 116a13-19 (Barnes 1:194): First, then, that which is more lasting or secure is more desirable than that which is less so: and so is that which is more likely to be chosen by the prudent or by the good man or by the right law, or by men who are good in any particular line, when they make their choice as such, or by the experts in regard to any particular class of things; i.e. either whatever most of them or what all of them would choose; e.g. in medicine or in carpentry those things are more desirable which most, or all, doctors would choose; or, in general, whatever most men or all men or all things would choose, e.g. the good: for everything aims at the good. You should direct the argument you intend to employ to whatever purpose you require. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)