105 Day (*Dies*)

There are days past, present, and future. Past days are to be remembered, just as a steward reflects upon what he has taken in, what he has spent, Psal. [76:6]: “I thought upon the days of old.”

In these matters we ought to think upon three things. First, the good examples of our predecessors, so that we may be moved to similar things. Therefore, the deeds of the saints are to be remembered and the honesty of princes, Heb. 10[:32]: “Call to mind the former days, wherein, being illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions.”

Second, the evils committed, so that we may repent and be on guard. Just as the merchant once deceived sorrows for his purchase, once endangered abhors the sea, Job 21[:13]: “They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment, they go down to hell.”

Third, the benefits we have received, so that we may give thanks. And first, for the benefit of creation, Deut. 32[:6-7]: “Is not he your father, that has possessed you, and made you, and created you? Remember the days of old.” Second, for the benefit of redemption, Eccle. [7:2]: “The day of death is better than the day of one's birth.” Psal. [117:24]: “This is the day which the Lord has made.” Third, for the benefit of justification, Psal. [41:9]: “In the daytime the Lord has commanded his mercy.”

This, certainly, the Lord did not command, the fall of the angels. Second, the present days are ordered so that, namely, no one passes through unfruitfully without spiritual food. Just as no one without corporal food, Eccli. 14[:14]: “Defraud not yourself of the good day and let not the part of a good gift overpass you.”

¶ Concerning these days, opportunity is to be considered, Rom. 13[:12]: “The night is passed, and the day is at hand.” Brevity, because the days of man are short, Job 10[:20]: “Shall not the fewness of my days be ended shortly?” Rather, as if they were nothing, Job 7[:16]: “Spare me, Lord, for my days are nothing.” Third, irrevocability, Job 7[:6]: “My days have passed more swiftly than the web is cut by the weaver.” Opportunity moves one to working well, John 9[:4]: “I must work the works while it is day.” Brevity moves one to working earnestly. Just as the traveler hastens much, when he has much of the journey to do, and little of the day. And a natural motion is more intense at the end than in the beginning, Job 10[:20]: “Shall not the fewness of my days be ended shortly?” Irrevocability moves one to working continuously, just as before the judgment, a man labors so that the sentence would be given for him, Luke 1[:74-75]: “We may serve him … in holiness and justice before him, all our days.”

Future days are to be foreseen. Just as an ant provides for himself before the days of winter, Psal. 36:18: “The Lord knows the days of undefiled.” And [Psal. 40:2]: “Blessed is he that understands concerning the needy and the poor … in the evil day.”

¶ These days are triple, and each is to be watched for. For a certain one is the day of death, just as the cleric provides for himself when he must be examined, the substitute when he must be visited, Isai. 10[:3]: “What will you do in the day of visitation?” Prov. 6[:34]: “The jealousy and rage of the husband will not spare in the day of revenge.” Second of the general judgment, Judith the last chapter [16:20]: “In the day of judgment he will visit them.” Joel 2[:11]: “The day of the Lord is great.” Soph. 1[:15]: “That day is a day of wrath.” Mark 13[:19]: “For in those days shall be such tribulations, as were not from the beginning of the creation.” Third, the pains of hell, such that the lamb is wary of the wolf, Jer. 17[:18]: “Bring upon them the day of affliction.” Job 21[:30]: “The wicked man is reserved to the day of destruction.”

Fourth, the day of glory, which is to be desired, just as the critical day to the sick, the day of the feast to the famished, Psal. [83:11]: “For better is one day in your courts above thousands.” But although the Lord promises long days to those walking in his ways, just as is evident in 3 Kings 3[:11], that however is not to be fulfilled in the present life. Just as Augustine treats of in *Homilia* 40,[[1]](#endnote-1) on John the divine, the life of man, although it seems long, it is constrained by such a brevity compared to the breadth of universal time, as if it were one drop to the universal seas. For the day of tomorrow drives out today, and always that approaches which you do not want to come, namely, to the end and it concludes with the Psal. [33:13-14]: “Who is the man that desires life: who loves to see good days? Keep your tongue from evil.

¶ Again, Augustine, *Sermo* 17,[[2]](#endnote-2) upon Matthew, life, properly speaking, does not exist, if not blessed, and it cannot be blessed, unless it is eternal, where the days are good. They are not multiple, but only one day. But that day knows neither a rising nor a setting. Because tomorrow does not succeed that day, nor did yesterday precede it. Psal. [83:11]: “Better is one day in your courts.” Wherefore, Augustine, *De verbis Domini*, sermon 17,[[3]](#endnote-3) are not those days evil which we lead under such a load of bodily corruption, among such temptations, among so many difficulties and, however, no one wants to end these evil days.

¶ Many men prevail to live here a long time, other than to be afflicted a long time, which their evil days cling to the growing evil days, as if those days attend to boys, and they do not know that they are growing less, and this is a false computation because they fall by the way while they are growing.

¶ What a marvel, if you lose your life you are sad, if you enjoy your days. Again, Augustine, *De verbis Apostoli*, sermon 99,[[4]](#endnote-4) explaining that saying of the Apostle, Eph. 5[:16]: “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” To redeem the time, this is when someone brings a suit against you, lose anything, so that you are free from God, not from the suits. Because thus you lose the price of time when you spend money, and you buy something for yourself, thus spend money so that you may purchase rest for yourself.

¶ Some present days are useful to men if they are long, namely, Israelites who merit to continue, just as is evident concerning the hired men who receive more in summer when the days are longer than in the winter, Eccli. 41[:16]: “A good life has its number of days.” When the good die, then they are said to have fulfilled their days, just as it is said concerning Abraham, Gen. 25[:8]. But sinners are said to be cut off “in the midst of my days,” just as in Isai. [32:10]. This has been the case unless one has merited an extension of days through penance, 4 Reg. 20[:19]. Wherefore, Gregory says, book 12 of the *Moralia*,[[5]](#endnote-5) I have set the days for each person from the internal prescience of God, neither can they be increased, nor lessened, except that it should happen that it is thus foreknown. But if a man loses hope to continue, he ought to have a short day. Wherefore, it seems concerning the wicked, Eccle. 8[:13]: “Neither let his days be prolonged.”

¶ The figure for this is Josh. 10[:13] when the son stopped against the Gabaonites and one day was made as long as if there were two days, but such a lengthening was for the Israelites who triumphed, but evil for the Gabaonites who lost. But spiritually in his intention, Jacob said to Pharaoh, Gen. 47[:9]: “The days of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years, few, and evil.” Wherefore, Gregory,[[6]](#endnote-6) if a man knew at what time he would leave the world, he could have some time for penance, and some to indulge his delights, but he who promised a time of grace for those repenting, never promised a day tomorrow to those sinning. Therefore, Jerome says, *Epistola,* 49,[[7]](#endnote-7) nothing so deceives humankind, as when they ignore the extent of their life. They keep promising themselves a longer extent of life. Wherefore there exists that well-known saying: No one is so old, that he does not wish to undertake yet one more year. Wherefore also from the presumption of this he excuses himself, Jer. 17[:16]: “I have not desired the day of man.” The days of this life are called the day of man, but the days of our future life are called the day of God, Zach. 14[:7]: “There shall be one day, which is known to the Lord, not day nor night: and in the time of the evening there shall be light.”

¶ The heart, occupied concerning mundane matters, thinks only of the day of the world, but with the overtaking tribulation, he desires the true day, Eccle. 5[:19]: “He shall not much remember the days of his life, because God entertains his heart with delight. Blessed Job when he was in straits recalled his days, Job 9[:25]: “My days have been swifter than a post,” namely, because a courier seldom stops from his course but passes through it, as if ships carrying fruit. A ship crossing and an eagle flying, each hastens to its meal, but the ship lest the fruit should spoil on the water, the eagle lest its chicks perish. And although God made the days first and materially, about which see Gen. 1[:5], God called “the light Day,” but according to a spiritual meaning also, about which the Apostle speaks in Rom. 13[:13]: “Let us walk honestly, as in the day,” in which the word of God shines in the heart, and drives out the darkness of behavior. He made the first day during created light, but the second during itself, which is uncreated light, 2 Pet. 1[:19]: “The day dawns, and the day star arises in your hearts.” Wherefore Chrysostom, *Homilia*, 29,[[8]](#endnote-8) whoever walk in darkness, if they ever lose the way, they will wander for a long time until the day overtakes them. Thus, those who were wandering in sins did not return until Christ the true day shined light upon them.

1. Augustine, *Sermo*: De scripturis 108.3.3 (PL 38:634): Quia et longa hominis vita tanta brevitate constringitur ad universi saeculi illius latitudinem, quasi una gutta ad universum mare comparetur. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Augustine, *Sermo*: De scripturis 84.1.2 (PL 38:520): Vita itaque non est, nisi beata. Et vita beata esse non potest, nisi aeterna, ubi sunt dies boni; nec multi, sed unus. Ex consuetudine hujus vitae appellati sunt dies. Dies ille nescit ortum, nescit occasum. Illi diei non succedit crastinus; quia non praecedit eum hesternus. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Augustine, *Sermo*: De scripturis 84.1.2 (PL 38:519-20): Non sunt ergo dies mali quos agimus in corruptela hujus carnis, in tanta vel sub tanta sarcina corruptibilis corporis, inter tantas tentationes, inter tantas difficultates, ubi falsa voluptas, nulla securitas gaudii, timor torquens, cupiditas avida, tristitia arida? Ecce quam malos dies: et nemo vult finire ipsos malos dies, multumque hinc rogant homines Deum, ut diu vivant. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *Sermo:* De scripturis167.2.3 (PL 38:910): Redimere tempus. Redimamus tempus; quoniam dies mali sunt. Exspectatis a me forte scire, quid est tempus redimere. Dicturus sum quod pauci audiunt, pauci ferunt, pauci aggrediuntur, pauci agunt: tamen dicam, quoniam ipsi pauci qui me audituri sunt, inter malos vivunt. Redimere tempus, hoc est, quando aliquis tibi infert litem, perde aliquid, ut Deo vaces, non litibus. Perde ergo: ex eo quod perdis, pretium est temporis. Certe quando pro tuis necessitatibus procedis ad publicum, das nummos, et emis tibi panem, aut vinum, aut oleum, aut lignum, aut aliquam supellectilem: das et accipis, aliquid amittis, aliquid acquiris; hoc est emere. Nam si nihil amittas, et habeas quod non habebas; aut invenisti, aut donatum accepisti, aut haereditate acquisisti. Quando autem aliquid amittis ut aliquid habeas, tunc emis: quod habes, emptum est; quod amittis, pretium est. Quomodo ergo perdis nummos, ut emas tibi aliquid; sic perde nummos, ut emas tibi quietem. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Gregory, *Moralia* 12.52.58 (PL 75:1013): Praefixi dies singulis ab interna Dei praescientia nec augeri possunt, nec minui, nisi contingat ut ita praesciantur, ut aut cum optimis operibus longiores sint, aut cum pessimis breviores, sicut Ezechias augmentum dierum meruit impensione lacrymarum; [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. *Gregory, Homilia in Evangelia* 1.12.6 (PL 76:1122): si sciret quisque de praesenti saeculo quo tempore exiret, aliud tempus voluptatibus, atque aliud poenitentiae aptare potuisset. Sed qui poenitenti veniam spopondit, peccanti diem crastinum non promisit. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Jerome, *Epistola* 140.16 (PL 22:1177): Nihil enim ita decipit humanum genus, quam dum ignorant spatia vitae suae, longiorem sibi saeculi hujus possessionem repromittunt. Unde et illud egregie dictum est: Nullum tam senem esse et sic decrepitae aetatis, ut non se adhuc uno plus anno vivere suspicetur. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. (Pseudo-)Chrysostom, *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum* *Homilia* 36.30 (PG 56:832-33): Sicut enim qui in tenebris ambulat, si semel viam perdiderit, interdum tota nocte ambult juxta viam errans, et non invenit viam, donec superveniat dies: sic et homines ambulant4s in erroribus vel peccatis, postquam Dei cognitionem semel perdiderunt, ad perfectam notitiam veritatis redire non poterant, nisi dies, scilicet Christus, venisset, quamvis circa veritatem vivebant. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)