Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

35 To Consider (*Considerare*)

Man ought to consider above himself, in heaven so that he may buy the water of glory. Thus, the purchaser of a manor, especially when it is of a small price, Prov. 31[:16]: “She hath considered a field,” in which there are lilies of virgins,[[1]](#endnote-1) violets of confessors, roses of martyrs, heliotropes of the apostles, songs of angels, “and bought it.” Deut. 1[:22]: “Let us send men,” namely, superiors and preachers, “who may view the land,” of the living, “and bring us word,” and example, “what way we shall go up.”

¶ Second, it is to be considered below and here doubly because now as to hell so that we may be on guard just as a fox[[2]](#endnote-2) considered the tracks of animals entering the cave of the lion, but none of them returning, Psal. [90:8]: “But you shall consider with your eyes and shall see the reward of the wicked.” 2 Kings 1[:18]: “Consider, O Israel, for them that are dead.” Now one ought to consider in purgatory so that he may come to the aid, just as the father seeing the child in the well, [2] Mach. 12[:45]: “He considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness.”

¶ Third, he ought to consider however, namely, the future judgments so that he may prepare himself and fear. Just as a thief throws out a theft and seeks friends, Job 23[:15]: “When I consider him,” namely, the judge, “I am made pensive with fear.”

¶ Fourth, consider behind, namely, death, so that he may provide for himself, just as the steward concerning the account, the pilgrim concerning a hospitable reception, Judges 19[:9]: “Consider that the day is declining and draws toward evening.” That rich man was not considering this, Luke 12[:16-21].

¶ Fifth, let him consider the defect inside if it may be that he would correct it, if not it may be that he should flee. So, the woman considers herself in the mirror, Prov. the last chapter [31:27]: “She has looked well to the paths of her house,” that is, her conscience. Therefore, it is said in Matt. 7[:3]: “And why do you see the mote that is in your brother’s eye; and not see the beam that is in your own eye?”

¶ Outside,

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he ought to consider many things. First, the cunning of the devil lest he deceive him. Thus, the dove[[3]](#endnote-3) in the water considers the shadow of the bird of prey, [1] Kings 23[:23]: “Consider and see all his lurking holes, wherein to hide himself.”

¶ Second, the needs of his neighbor, bodily and spiritually, and assist him just as the shepherd does for the flock, Eccli. 31[:1]: “Have they made you ruler? be not lifted up, be among them as one of them.” Note against those through the indignation of rancor, not for those through the flattery of vices, not before those through presumption, not after those through passion, not under those through dejection, not outside those through wandering, but in those through condescension, and as if one out of those through communication, and thus consider through the diligence of care, Prov. 27[:23]: “Be diligent to know the countenance of your cattle, and consider your own flocks.” But alas, because in Job 22[:14] it is said, “The clouds are his covert, and he does not consider our things.”

¶ Third, he ought to consider vanity, indeed the falsehood, of the world, so that he may count it as little, just as a horse which frequently falls and fails is to be counted as little, Psal. [141:5]: “I looked on my right hand, and beheld, and there was [no one that would know me].”

¶ Fourth, the goodness of God so that one may give thanks, thus Tobias [11:19], considered “the benefits” exhibited through the angel, he returned thanks. Heb. 3[:1]: “Consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus,” etc.

¶ Fifth, the operation of nature in an irrational creature so that he may learn as the philosophers considering have taught, Prov. 6[:6]: “Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways.”[[4]](#endnote-4) And Luke 12[:24]: “Consider the ravens,[[5]](#endnote-5) for they sow not, neither do they reap, [and God feeds] them,” etc. The devil considers how he may deceive and devour, just like the kite[[6]](#endnote-6) considers the chicks [of other birds], Psal. [36:32]: “The wicked watches the just man and seeks to put him to death.” However, God considers how to restore, just as the good judge considers the merits of men, Job 31[:4]: “Does he not consider my ways, and number all my steps?” Job 37[:3]: “He beholds under all the heavens.” Prov. 5[:21]: “The Lord beholds the ways of man.”

1. Hildefonsus Toletanus, *Libellus de corona virginis* 23 (PL 96:315): rosae fragrantes martyrum, violae redolentes confessorum, lilia candida virginum. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Aesop's Fables: Ademar, Léopold Hervieux, Les fabulistes latins depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la. fin du Moyen-Age (1893-1899). 59. LEO SENEX ET VULPIS (Perry 142): Leo in annis deficiens languere fingebat, et per eam fallaciam ceterae bestiae ad uisitandum eum introibant. Leo uero continuo edebat eas. Vulpis autem ueniens stetit ante speluncam, et salutauit eum; interrogata a Leone, cur non introiret, r[es]p[ondit]: Quoniam uideo ineuntium uestigia, non egredientium.

   Quia aliorum priuata doctrina nobis debet esse sanitas, et in domum potentis facile est intrare, exire autem iam tardum est.

   Cf. Perry Index # 142 The Aged Lion and the Fox. A sick lion called others to his cave. Many went in but none came out. Latecomers refused to go in. Smart!

   https://fablesofaesop.com/perry-index [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Dove, cf. T. H. White, *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1954), pp. 144-45: The bird sits near streams so that on seeing a hawk it can dive in and escape.

   Cf. *The Middle English* Physiologus, ed. by Hanneke Wirtjes, The Early English Text Society 299 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), ll. 585-602, p. 21: In water 3e is wis of heuekes come-- / & we in boke wiđ deules nome. (In water you are wise of the hawks’ coming / And we in a book are taken with devils.) [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. Perry Index # 373 The Cicada and the Ant. A Grasshopper frolicked while an Ant stored food for the winter. When winter came the Ant was comfortable; the Grasshopper not so.

   https://fablesofaesop.com/perry-index

   Cf. *The Middle English Physiologus*, ed. by Hanneke Wirtjes, The Early English Text Society 299 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), ll. 153-187, pp. 7-8, 30-32. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* 12.10 (1505, p. 230a): Coruus pullorum ora suorum hiantia respicit, quibus cibum prius non ministrat nisi prius per pennarum nigredinem similitudinem proprii coloris recognoscat. Postquam vero nigrescere inspicit totis suis viribus deinceps eos pascit, vt dicit idem Isidorus.

   Cf. *Mediaeval Lore from Bartholomew Anglicus*, ed. Robert Steele (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1966), p. 127: The raven beholdeth the mouths of her birds when they yawn. But she giveth them no meat ere she know and see the likeness of her own blackness, and of her own colour and feathers. And when they begin to wax black, then afterward she feedeth them with all her might and strength. It is said that ravens’ birds are fed with dew of heaven all the time that they have no black feathers by benefit of age. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 12.7.58 (PL 82:467): Milvus, mollis viribus et volatu, quasi mollis avis, unde et nuncupatur, rapacissimus tamen, et semper domesticis avibus insidiatur.

   Cf. Isidore, *The Etymologies* 12.7.58 (Barney p. 268a): The kite (milvus) is soft in flight and strength, but it is a rapacious bird that is always hostile toward domestic birds. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)