149 Brother, Brotherhood (*Frater, Fraternitas*)

Brotherhood is found to be fourfold: natural and spiritual. Natural is yet double. One general and remote by which we are all from one God through Adam, Matt. 23[:8]: “All you are brothers” made from one. And one natural, spiritual, and near, because we are from near parents, Gen. 42[:32]: “We are brothers born of one father.”

¶ Spiritual fraternity yet is double. One general and remote to everyone, namely, of the faithful, Luke 22[:32]: “Being once converted, confirm your brothers. And the other faithful one is spiritual and near, namely, of the just and spiritually of the religious, John 20[:17]: “Go to my brothers and say to them.” Matt. 25[:40]: “As long as you did it to one of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

¶ Spiritual fraternity requires many things. First, as far as the act of the heart two things. First, that each person loves another. For, likewise, it draws to the loved one because indeed it is evident about all the animals, unless they were dogs, [1] John 4[:20]: “If any man says, I love God, and hates his brother; he is a liar.” [1] John 3[:15]: “Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer.” But, alas, because it is said in Prov. 19[:7]: “The brothers of the poor man hate him.” And Gen. 27[:41]: “Esau always hated Jacob” his brother.

¶ Behold the double cause of the hate of the brothers: poverty and envy. Thus, the brothers of Joseph “hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him,” [Gen. 37:4]. Second, so that the injured one forgive the injury of the petitioner, so Stephen to those stoning, [Act. 7:58]. Matt. 5[:23]: “If you offer your gift at the altar.” And Matt. 18[:21]: “Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him?” etc. But, alas, the one who in Mich. 7[:2]: “Everyone hunts his brother to death.”

¶ As far as the act of the mouth two. First, so that the teacher teaches the unknowing like the sun illuminates the moon, Psal. [21:23]: “I will declare your name to my brothers.” And Luke 22[:32]: “And thou, being once converted, confirm your brothers,” namely, by word and example. Thus, did Paul, but, alas, because of Mala. 2[:10] it is said, “Has not one God created us? why then does every one of us despise his brother, violating the covenant of our fathers?”

Second, so that the one more just may correct the delinquent, thus the hand washes and wipes off the foot, Lev. 19[:17]: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but reprove him openly, lest you incur sin through him.” Matt. 18[:15]: “But if your brother shall offend against you, go, and rebuke him between you,” etc. But, alas, because many are prepared to correct the defect of others, but not their own, about which, Luke 6[:41]: “Why do you see the mote in your brother's eye: but the beam that is in your own eye you consider not?”

¶ Again, as far as the act of the work two aspects. First, so that the able help the one in need, just as one member helps the member of another, for the companion member does not impede but helps, Exod. 2[:13-14], Moses appeared before those quarreling and reconciled them, saying, Men, you are brothers, why do you summon each other, but, alas, because they say that it follows there, “Who has appointed you judge over us?” But all of us are members of the body of Christ, Prov. 18[:19]: “A brother that is helped by his brother, is like a strong city.” Prov. 17[:17]: “A brother is proved in distress.” [1] Macc. 3[:2]: “All his brothers helped him.” [1] John 3[:17]: “He that … shall see his brother in need, and shall shut up his bowels from him,” etc. But, alas, because in Jer. 9[:5] it is said, “A man shall mock his brother, and they will not speak the truth.” “And let him not trust in any brother of his.” Second, so that each treats the other peacefully. For the gathering of the parts preserves the structure from ruin, Gen. 13[:8]: “Let there be no quarrel … between me and you … for we are brothers.” Eccli. 25[:1-2]: “With three things my spirit is pleased, which are approved before God and men: The concord of brothers,” etc. Wherefore Prov. 6[:19] the wise man detests “him that sows discord among brothers.” And so that peace may be better served, the Apostle says, 2 Thes. 3[:6]: “Withdraw yourselves from every brother walking disorderly.” But, alas, because in [1] Cor. 6[:6] it is said, “Brother goes to law with brother.”