252 Now one must work manfully (*Nunc operandum est viriliter*)[[1]](#endnote-1)

And first because of the perilousness of the place in which we are. For since there are now four places of the souls, namely, hell where souls are irremediably endangered. Wherefore there does not seem to be work there, Exod. 15[:5]: “They are sunk to the bottom like a stone.”

¶ Again, paradise where they are saved eternally. Wherefore work is not necessary, Psal. [123:7]: “The snare is broken, and we are delivered.”

Purgatory where the peril is transitory, and they ought to be released. Wherefore there the suffering is satisfactory, not a meritorious action.

But in this world, we are in peril. Therefore, now we must labor. Therefore, the Lord blessed Abraham, Gen. 13[:14-15]: “Lift up your eyes,” in the straight way, “and look from the place wherein you now are, to the north,” hell, “and to the south,” paradise, “to the east” grace, “and to the west,” fault. “All the land which you see,” efficaciously, “I will give to you,” whether the south of grace or the west of fault. However, we are in danger here in the world as if in the sea. Therefore, just as the good sailors, with the tempest imminent, being troubled, we ought to throw out the necessary water, to vow vows, to relieve the ship. So, we ought to confess exhaustively, bequeath alms, and pray continually, James 5[:1]: “Go to now,” glorious penance, “you rich men,” thinking on the case of your riches, “weep and howl,” like a captured wolf in a snare, etc. But, alas, many now like the frenetic laugh in perils, James 4[:16]: “Now you rejoice in your arrogances.” And this in any case because you have not considered the end, Luke [19:41]: “Jesus seeing the city, wept over it, saying: If you also had known, but now they are hidden,” etc.

¶ Second, we must now work strenuously because of the opportunity of the time in which we live.

¶ For there are three times: the present, the past, and the future. The past is not because it has passed irrevocably. “For our time is as the passing of a shadow,” Wis. 2[:5]. Many in past time served the devil for a long time. And therefore, lest the devil adduce a prescription of working for a long time against them, now the interruption through penance is as the Lord said to Jacob, Gen. 31[:13]: “Now therefore arise and go out of this land.” Arise therefor from sin to that which you are inclined through love, to that which you have given yourself through consent, to that which you are under through work, in which you are quiet through custom, “and go out of this land,” that is, to the land which you were born and ordained, Rom. 6[:19]: “You have yielded your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, so now yield your members,” etc.

Again, we do not have future time nor are we certain if we will have, because perhaps infirmity may interrupt, because we cannot do penance, or poverty when we cannot offer alms, or some business when we cannot pray.

¶ And among these the land of our nature will be perhaps less able for doing penance, there will be a custom of sinning, it will be more difficult for expelling languor, harder for caring, the devil more prone for infesting, God more resistant to condoning. Therefore now we should be penance, 2 Cor. 6[:2]: “Behold, now is the acceptable time,” especially because now is the time of mercy, but afterwards the majesty of power will show offense, the truth of wisdom will produce a sentence, the equity of justice will take revenge, but now piety will offer peace, Rom. 11[:30]: “But now (they) have obtained mercy.”

Third, we must now work strenuously because of the little pain which now we sustain. For since there are four kinds of pains. Sharp but not eternal as purgatory. Eternal but not sharp as the pain of limbo. Eternal and sharp as the pain of hell. And some neither sharp nor eternal as penance in the present which for certain is more to be chosen, 1 Pet. 1[:6]: “If now you must be for a little time made sorrowful in divers temptations.” Job 17[:10]: “Wherefore be you all converted” to me.

Fourth, we must now work strenuously because of the immensity of rewards which now we deserve and not otherwise, Psal. [38:8]: “And now what is my hope? is it not the Lord?” etc. Just as fire is always in motion, so the heart of man yet has God which he expects. For so God has ordained in natural matters and in artificial things that there be process from the lower to the higher, from the small into the great, from the imperfect to the perfect, from motion to the end. So, in moral matters from humility and labor of penance to the sublimity of glory, Luke 6[:21]: “Blessed are you that hunger now: for you shall be filled,” etc. John 16[:22]: “So also you now indeed have sorrow; but I will see you again,” etc. But there are many like the pig which first is fattened so that afterwards he is killed, Luke 6[:25]: “Woe to you that now laugh: for you shall weep.”

¶ And fifth, we must not work strenuously because of security in which we now are, because the enemy fights against us triply. Because the flesh is in a smear of lust, the bird in birdlime is easily captured, Rom. 7[:17]: “Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me,” that is, nature.

¶ The world fights against us with the hook of cupidity, Jer. 3[:2]: “Lift up your eyes on high: and see where you have not prostituted yourself.”

¶ The devil fights against us with the noose of obstinacy, Isai. 37[:20]: “And now, O Lord our God, save us out of his hand.” And Esther 13[:15]: “And now, O Lord, O king, have mercy on your people, because our enemies resolve to destroy us.”

¶ Because therefore we are not in the field of war it is necessary that the affairs be committed either for the good or for the evil, Job 14[:14]: “All the days in which I am now in warfare, I expect until my change come.”

¶ Sixth, we must now work strenuously because of the multiplex of helps which we have which are from the saints, Rom. 6[:22]: “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end life everlasting.”

1. A model for this chapter would seem to be *Fasciculus morum* 5.5 (pp. 422-429): De Occupacione Sancta (Holy Activity) where it is arranged as follows:

Primume patet in exterioribus laboribus, quibus utuntur homines temporibus debitis ad diversa necessaria, sicut arando, seminando, metendo brixando, pandoxando, scindendo, consuendo, edificando, et huiusmodi. ...

Nam primo temporibus debitis est operandum viriliter propter aliarum creaturarum assimilacionem et imitacionem. ...

Secundo est viriliter operandum propter laboris occupacionem....

Tercio viriliter laborandum est propter malorum vitacionem, quia ab opere bono cessacio est immundarum cogitacionum introductio.... [↑](#endnote-ref-1)