384 Bonds (*Vincula*)

There are some bonds that are desirable because they are from God, some are to be tolerated because they are on account of God, and some are to be detested because of what was said. The first bonds are of grace. The second of pain. The third of fault. For God binds us doubly.

First, by the bonds of obedience and precept as grace is preserved in us, Eccli. 6[:31]: “In her is the beauty of life,” that is, in wisdom she makes beauty for as long as she lives it can truly be said she works well, converses honestly, “and her bands,” that is, the precepts, “are a healthful binding.” Matt. 19[:17]: “But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” These bonds join us to similar things, such spirits clothed lest we be scattered, Eph. 4[:3]: “Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” But these because these bonds break some through various sins, Jer. 5[:5]: “These have together broken the yoke more and have burst the bonds.”

Secondly, God binds us with the bonds of penitence for sins, just as a broken arm is fractured and protected. The example of the Samaritan, Luke 10[:34]: “And he bound up his wounds.” But alas because Jer. 2[:20] says to the one slipping backwards, “You have broken my yoke, you have burst my bands, and you said: I will not serve,” etc.

¶ Secondly, the world binds us with bonds of pain, that is, to tribulation, especially if we do not exert ourselves to the aforesaid truth. For this reason, Jesus was bound, Matt. 27[:2]: Those binding Jesus “brought him bound and delivered him to Pilate.” So, Peter, Acts 12[:6], was “bound with two chains.” And Paul, 2 Tim. 2[:9], “Wherein I labor even unto bands.” But the word of God did not bind.

Again, if we exert ourselves for the correction of iniquity. For this reason, was John the Baptist bound, Matt. 18[:30] he bound “him into prison.” Heb. 11[:36]: The saints “had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover also of bands and prisons.”

Again, it detains him by delight in the will of sinning, just as honey, music, and a cadaver holds the wolf,[[1]](#endnote-1) Eccli. 7[::27]: “I have found a woman more bitter than death,” that is, carnal concupiscence which by deliberate consent alone kills, but these bond are to be broken by virtue of conscience, Judges 16[:9]: “He broke the bands, as a man would break a thread of tow twined with spittle.”

Again, the devil has bonds which he uses.

First, of sin for drawing into sin, so that he may be more obliged. So, Nebuchadnezzar led the king of Juda bound in two chains into Babylonia, that is, with carnal and spiritual sins.

Second, impenitent and promising a long life, so that thus he impedes penance and draws one with him, just as the butcher draws the pig, Wis. 17[:2], that is, “fettered with the bonds of darkness, and a long night,” etc., but these bonds are to be broken doubly.

First, by man himself dispensatively through patience, just as the physician stops death, Isai. 52[:2]: “Loose the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Sion.”

Second, effectively by God through grace, Psal. [115:16-17]: “You have broken my bonds; I will sacrifice to you.”

Again, the devil seeing some to escape the bond of the will, inclination, and difficulty, added a triple rope which is broken with difficulty. For he ties the feet with affection, the neck with producing, and the hand with working.

Concerning the first, Psal. [149:8]: “To bind their kings with fetters.”

Concerning the second, because [Isai. 52:2]: “Loose the bonds from off your neck, O captive daughter of Sion.” Mark 7[:35]: “The string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right.”

Concerning the third, John 11[:44]: Lazarus was “bound feet and hands with winding bands.” Wherefore just as Sampson easily broke the bonds as if flax, so the bonds are broken by the sinner easily when he repents, Psal. 115[:16-17]: “You have broken my bonds: I will sacrifice to you.” But the Lord Jesus has general, spiritual, particular, and singular bonds. The first bonds are general justice. The second of penitence. The third of abundance. The fourth of friendship.

¶ He is sufficiently unhappy whom so many bonds coerce.

First are the bonds of the precepts, but these are broken by man on account of which the Lord was conquered, Jer. 2[:20]: “Of old time you have broken my yoke, you have burst my bands, and you said: I will not serve.” And lest this be understood concerning children he added, Jer. 5[:5]: “I will go therefore to the great men, and I will speak to them: and behold these have together broken the yoke more and have burst the bonds.”

Second, the bonds are of penance which freely go under the foot, the neck, and the shoulder, that is, the will, the word, and the effect, so thus they may escape the bonds of the devil, Eccli. 6[:25]: “Put your feet into her fetters.” But alas because that is verified concerning many, Luke 8[:29] he was tied with bonds, he was held in, and he could not go for that.

Third are the bonds of the counselors by which man inhibits himself, not only by their superfluities, but also by permitted matters, Ezech. 3[:25]: “O son of man, they shall put bands upon you.”

Fourth are the bonds of friendship, Osee 11[:4]: “I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love.” Col. 3[:14]: “But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection.”

¶ Again, in the dead are certain bonds of venial deformity, certain bonds of temporal punishment, and certain bonds of weary delaying.

Concerning the first, Psal. [115:16-17]: “You have broken my bonds: I will sacrifice to you.” This happens through prayer, Jud. 15[:14]: “As the flax is wont to be consumed at the approach of fire.”

Concerning the second, Eccli. 6[:31]: “Her bands are a healthful binding.” Because we have liberated such afflicted ones, we have helped ourselves, their patrons. And in this it is true what is commonly said, he who prays (*orat*) for another works (*laborat*) for himself.[[2]](#endnote-2)

Concerning the third, Job 39[:5]: “Who has sent out the wild ass free, and who has loosed his bonds?” The wild ass (*Onager*) which is an ass of the forest figures the soul afflicted in purgatory, which is freed at least after the judgment because the journey is not the place of purgatory.

1. Cf. Terence, Phormio 506 (LCL 23:68-69): auribus teneo lupum.

I’m holding the proverbial wolf by the ears. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. D. Radulphi Ardentis Pictavi, *Homiliae* 1.43 (PL 155:1485): Et qui pro alio orat, pro seipso laborat. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)