Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

103 Anger in God (*Ira in Deo*)

Anger in God is not said to be an affect dwelling in nature, but an affect of vengeance. But in man

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one can say both. The sinner provokes the anger of God. And first the proud man, just like the arrogant judge, the one ungrateful of a benefice, Job 36[:13]: “Dissembler and crafty men,” as hypocrites, “prove the wrath of God.” Deut. 32[:16]: “They provoked him by strange gods.” On the other hand, humility mitigates, [2] Paral. 12[:12]: “Because they were humbled, the wrath of the Lord turned away from them.”

¶ Second the unclean are like a false witness who [puts] smoke in the eye of the judge, Matt. 22[:7]: “And when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies,” that is, his angels, “he destroyed those murderers.” On the other hand, love mitigates, Isai. 12[:1]: “I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for you were angry with me, [your wrath] is turned away.”

¶ Third the avaricious man is like the creditor drawing due delay from the depth of a well, Isai. 57[:17]: “For the iniquity of his covetousness he was angry,” etc. On the other hand, alms mitigate, Prov. 21[:14]: “A secret present quenches anger.”

Fourth slothfulness is like the sterility of a tiller of the soil, a slow messenger of the lord, Num. 11[:1]: “There arose a murmuring of the people against the Lord, as it were repining at their fatigue. And when the Lord heard it he was angry.” On the other hand, good work mitigates, [2] Paral. 19[:2]: “You did deserve indeed the wrath of the Lord.”

¶ Third lecherous like the stench of a noble man, Prov. 22[:14]: “The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit, he whom the Lord is angry with, shall fall into it.” [3] Reg. 11[:9]: “The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his mind was turned away.” On the other hand, discipline mitigates, Psal. [2:12]: “Embrace discipline,” etc.

¶ Seventh the gluttonous is like a hole in the ship for a sailor, Psal. [77:30-31]: “As yet their meat was in their mouth and the wrath of God [came upon them].” On the other hand, prayer mitigates.

¶ The wrath of man is triple. The best is useful which happens through zeal for justice against fault, just as bitter medicine is useful because it purges, Eccle. 7[:4]: “Anger is better than laughter.” And Exod. 32[:19]: Moses was angered seeing the bull calf.

¶ The second is tolerable when three things concur. When there is delay in the beginning of action, James 1[:19]: “Let every man be swift to hear,” etc. And Prov. 18[:14]: “The spirit that is easily angered, who can bear?” The second because there is brevity in length, because then it is easily cured, to the Eph. 4[:26]: “Let not the sun go down upon your anger.” Third, when there is moderation in intensity. So that the reason is not stirred up, because what is lighter is lighter to be carried, Psal. [4:5]: “Be angry, and sin not.” Job

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36[:18]: “Let not anger overcome you to oppress any man.”

¶ Third anger is reprehensible which arises in hate. Not the first because it destroys the good things of man belonging to oneself. For anger is one that wounds nature, just as the moth [gnaws] clothing, Eccli. 30[:26]: “Anger shortens a man's days.” And Prov. 25[:20]: “As a moth does to a garment, and a worm to the wood: so, the sadness [of a man].” Third because it is a destroyer of fortune as a broken vase loses its liquid, a tempest the food stuffs, Eccli. 21[:5]: “Injuries and wrongs will waste riches.” The lawyers know this very well.

Third, it is the blinder of intelligence, just as the crow first pecks out the eye of animals, Prov. 21[:24]: “The proud and the arrogant,” etc. Horace,[[1]](#endnote-1) Anger impedes the soul, so that it cannot discern the truth. Second, it destroys the good things belonging to God. For it is a killer of grace, Job 5[:2]: “Anger indeed kills the foolish.” It is a neglector of justice, James the first chapter [1:20]: “The anger of man works not the justice of God.” It is an impeder of glory, just as the division of the branches from a vine impedes the fruit, Eccli. 1[:28]: “The wrath of his high spirits is his ruin.”

¶ Third, it destroys the goods belonging to our neighbor which are three: the correction of fault, the love of nature, and the compassion of misery. But anger is a liar in correction which under the hope of justice inflicts vengeance, Eccli. 19[:28]: “There is a lying rebuke in the anger of an injurious man.” Therefore, the king of the bees[[2]](#endnote-2) does not have a stinger. Second, it is audacious in murmuring just as the whirl wind drives a house to ruin, Prov. 22[:24]: “Be not a friend to an angry man.” Third mercy is in pardoning, just as Ethiopian skin[[3]](#endnote-3) does not grow white, Prov. 27[:4]: “Anger has no mercy.”

1. Horace, cf. Dionysius Cato, *Dicta Catonis*, 2.4 (LCL 434:604-605): Impedit ira animum, ne possit cernere verum.

   “Anger so clouds the mind that it cannot perceive the truth.” [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Bartholomeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum,* 12.4 (1505, p. 226a): Nam et si habeat aculeum eo tamen non vtitur ad vindicandum.

   trans. Steele, p. 122: For though their king has a sting yet he useth it not in wreck. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. See Jean Michel Massing, “From Greek Proverb to Soap Advert: Washing the Ethiopian,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. 58 (1995), pp. 180-201), [p. 182 n. 8]: … Best-known, however was Jerome, who in his Letter lxix linked it to the baptism of the Eunuch (Acts 8.27-38): 'Eunuchus Candacis reginae lectione prophetica Christi baptismati praeparatur; mutat contra naturam "Aethiops pellem suam et pardus varietates suas" "'. For the biblical and patristic sources relating to blackness see J. M. Courtis, 'Traitement patristique de la th6matique "6thiopienne"', LImage du Noir dans l'art occidental / The Image of the Black in Western Art, ed. L. Bugner, ii.1, Fribourg 1979, pp. 9-31. The biblical saying is used, for example, by G. P. Valeriano in his Hieroglyphica (edn Lyons 1626, p. 128), under 'Mens reproba': 'Pardalis non mutat cutis maculas, neque ex nigro fit albus Aethiops...'; for this passage see Van Norden (as in n. 7), p. 120. …

   Cf. Jerome, *Epistolae secundum ordinem temporum* 6 (PL 22:660): Eunuchus Candacis reginae Aethiopum, lectione Prophetica, Christi baptismati praeparatur. Mutat contra naturam Aethiops pellem suam, et pardus varietates suas. (Jer. 13:23). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)