Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

110 Leprosy designates the sinner (*Lepra designat peccator*)

Leprosy designates the sinner because the sickness is contagious. For just as a leprous person generates a leprous offspring bodily, so a sinner [generates] a sinner spiritually, [1] Cor. 15[:33]: “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” The healthy mutually conserve the healthy, but the leprous spoil the leprous more. But the leprous among the healthy contaminate those more than the contrary. Wherefore there is more danger for the healthy. So spiritually the good

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next to the good provokes one to the good, as namely from this person one learns humility, from that person patience, and so for the remaining, Prov. 27[:17]: “Iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.” When the evil ones are with the evil they rouse each other mutually, Psal. [18:3]: “Night to night shews knowledge,” namely, evil, and thus they become worse, Apo. 22[:11]: “He that hurts, let him hurt still: and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.” When however, they are mixed, evil with the good, then it is not a danger to the evil but to the good themselves, Prov. 13[:20]: “He that walks with the wise, shall be wise.” Psal. [17:27]: “and with the perverse you will be perverted.” Therefore, the Lord did not say to the Chaldeans that they should withdraw from the midst of his people, but on the contrary, he said to his people that they should withdraw from the midst of the Chaldeans, Jer. 50[:8]: “Remove out of the midst of Babylon.”

¶ Second leprosy designates sin because it is a dangerous illness. The other illnesses corrupt part of the body but leprosy the whole. Thus, sin corrupts the body and the soul, Eccli. 21[:2-3]: “Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent. The teeth thereof are the teeth of a lion, killing the souls of men,” etc.

¶ Third, leprosy designates sin because it is a loathsome and abominable illness. Therefore, the leprous are separated from the community, thus as far as place, merit, and fellowship they are separated from the good.

¶ There are however four places. Heaven where the leprosy of pride expelled the angel. Paradise where the leprosy of gluttony forced out the first man. This world where the sinner cannot stay long, Psal. [17:43]: “I shall beat them as small as the dust before the wind.” And he shall not stay except in the fourth place, that is, in hell as if they are placed in their place of leprosy, Isai. 24[:22]: “They shall be gathered together as in the gathering of one bundle into the pit, and they shall be shut up there in prison.”

¶ Second, sinners are separated from the good in respect to merit because sinners do not partake of the treasury of the Church. Therefore, they cannot resist, lest in falling they rise again, Eccle. 4[:9]: “It is better therefore that two should be together, than one.”

¶ Third, regarding society as it will be evident in the end, Matt. 13[:49]: “The angels shall go out and shall separate.” Regarding society also they send them out into the furnace of fire. Behold the separation as far as the place there where there will be weeping as regard to merit. Just as leprosy

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is universal corruption infecting the body, so sin corrupts the soul in its strength. For it corrupts the affective in seeking, the intellect in knowing, and the operative in persevering. Wherefore note that a leprous person is thin and with a bald forehead. Second of the skin. Third of the head.

¶ Concerning the first, Lev. 13[:29]: “If the leprosy breaks out in the head or the beard of a man or woman,” etc. “Leprosy in the head” is error in faith as far as perceiving about Christ who is the head of the Church. Concerning the second “the beard” is a sign of virtue. Wherefore whoever blasphemes the teaching of the saints carries leprosy in the beard. Concerning the third, Lev. 13[:2]: “The man in whose skin or flesh shall arise a different color,” etc., up to “the stroke of the leprosy.” “A different color” alters the skin, “the blister” corrupts the flesh. Therefore by skin and color conversation is designated, by which the good and evil are discerned. By the flesh which is enclosed inside the skin is designated the conscience, for example, the color of holiness lacking in action or conversation corruption of conscience is indicated. And this leprosy ought to be judged according to the judgment of the priest.