Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

125 Evils We have rejoiced for the days (*Mala Letati sumus pro diebus*)

Evils. [Psal. 89:15]: “We have rejoiced for the days in which you have humbled us; for the years in which we have seen evils,” namely, others as a caution, ours as a penitence. Others such as the warning of the pride of the angels [Apo. 12:9], condemnation of the commerce of the Jews [Matt. 21:12], the drowning of the hatefulness of the Egyptians [Exod. 14:28], the damnation of the avaricious rich [Luke 16:23], the imprisonment of the lazy servant [Matt. 18:34], the drowning of the Sodomites [Gen. 19:24], the burning of the murmurers, the gluttonous [Lev. 10:6].

¶ Again, we ought to see our own evils for penance, Isai. 5[:7]: “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel,” etc.

¶ Again, evil is divided in three ways, namely for fault, penalty, and temptation. Of which the first we do, the second we suffer, and the third we are attacked.

¶ The evil of penalty is double because it is transitory and eternal. The evil of the present penalty is to be suffered. First because it impedes the fault lest it pollute. Just as one weakened by hunger, sickness, or labor does not easily grow insolent, Eccli. 11[:29]: “The affliction of an hour,” that is, emotion, “makes one forget great delights,” delighting, which is small in the thought, large in the delight, greater in the consent, and greatest in the perpetration, Eccli. 11[:14]: “Good things and evil are from God.” Good things, namely, of grace and glory. And evil things of the present wretchedness and the natural death. Second, because it demands grace, just as one who is in service to a lord receives compensation from him.

¶ Third because it merits

/fol. 257rb/

glory, just as the knight of a tournament, Luke 16[:25]: “Son, remember that you received,” etc. For according to the Apostle, [Rom. 8:18]: “The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared to future glory.”

¶ Evil eternal pain is to be avoided according to that of Eccle. 7[:15]: “Beware beforehand of the evil day.” Because it is first through the humility of patience, just as the lion[[1]](#endnote-1) spares the one prostrate, 3 Kings 21[:29]: “Because Achab humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil.” Jer. 18[:8]: “If that nation shall repent of their evil, I also will,” etc.

¶ Second, on account of giving of alms, as the guilty one through gifts renders himself, Psal. [40:2]: “Blessed is he that understands concerning the needy and the poor.” Third, through the integrity of obedience, as one observing the saying is freed, Eccle. 8[:5]: “He that keeps the commandments shall find no evil.”

¶ The evil of fault we ought to flee. First on account of the offense, Jer. 2[:13, 19]: “For my people have done two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have dug to themselves cisterns,” and it follows, “Know and see that it is an evil,” and a fault, “and a bitter thing,” in penalty, “for you, to have left the Lord.” Second, on account of due penalty just as for the fear of the gibbet it is avoided by the thief, Rom. 2[:8-9]: “Wrath and indignation, upon every soul of man that works evil.” Third, on account of the blemish, Jer. 4[:14]: “Wash your heart from wickedness.”

¶ The evil of temptation is to be avoided according to that of Rom. 12[:21]: “Be not overcome by evil,” namely, of temptation,” but overcome evil by good,” of constancy.

¶ For this “evil” is conquered by three ways. The first is in the consideration of the end, Prov. 20[:8]: “The king, who sits on the throne of judgment,” etc. Second, by the clamor of prayer, as the oppressed clamor for their work, Matt. 6[:13]: “And lead us not into temptation.” Third, the avoidance of the occasion, just as a boy is withdrawn from fire, water, and mud lest he fall into it, Eccli. 7[:2]: “Depart from the unjust, and evils shall depart from thee.” Wis. 4[:11]: “He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding.”

¶ Again for avoiding evil three things are necessary. Suppression of arrogance by true humility just as there is no ascent except from the bottom, there is no growth unless from the leg, Matt. 18[:3]: “Unless you be converted and become as little children.” By agreement it is the detestation of avarice by the voluntary poverty just as a ship is unloaded so that it may come to the port. A rock is placed under the foot so that one may ascend higher, Matt. 5[:3]: “Blessed are the poor for theirs is,” etc. Third is the repression of carnal concupiscence through complete chastity. So, a king does not make a prostitute his queen. So worldly nature is ordered upwards in pure matters, downwards as it is evident in the site of the elements, Eph. 5[:5]: “For know this and understand, that no fornicator,” etc.

1. Cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.2.6 (PL 82:43): Circa hominem leonum natura est benigna, ut nisi laesi nequeant irasci. Patet enim eorum misericordia exemplis assiduis. Prostratis enim parcunt; [Col.0434C] captivos obvios repatriare permittunt; hominem non nisi in magna fame interimunt. De quibus Lucretius: Scymnique leonum, etc.

Cf. Isidore, *The Etymologies* 12.2.6 (Barney p. 251b): 6. Around humans, the lion’s nature is such that unless they are hurt they are unable to become angry. Their tender-heartedness is obvious from continual examples, for they spare those who are lying prone, they allow captives whom they meet to return home, and they never kill a human except in great hunger. Concerning them Lucretius says (On the Nature of Things 5.1036): And the cubs (scymnus) of lions

Cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 8.19.48 (LCL 353:36-37): Leoni tantum ex feris clementia in supplices; prostratis parcit, et, ubi saevit, in viros potius quam in feminas fremit, in infantes non nisi magna fame.

XIX. The lion alone of wild animals shows mercy. to suppliants; it spares persons prostrated front of it, and when raging it turns its fury on men rather than women, and only attacks children when extremely hungry. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)