Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

145 Death is triple (*Mors est triplex*)

Death is triple. First is that of nature assumed by all, about which [2] Kings 14[:14]: “We all die, and like waters, we fall down,” etc. And this death is bitterly evil according to that of Eccli. 41[:1]: “O death, how bitter is the remembrance of you to a man,” etc. And this is triple for a reason because it despoils them above compensation, just as a poor man begets the fire of his house, Eccli. 11[:18]: “There is one that is enriched by living sparingly.” and after he does not know that death approached and he throws everything away to others, Job 27[:19]: “The rich man when he shall sleep shall take away nothing with him.”

¶ Second, because it torments without end, just as the gallows does to the thief, Psal. [17:5]: “The sorrows of death surrounded me.” The example, Luc. 16[:22]: “The rich man also died, and he was buried in hell.”

¶ Third, because it annihilates without the possibility of meriting. The merchant is begotten when nothing is gained nor is he rewarded by anyone, Job 14[:10]: “Man when he shall be dead, and stripped and consumed, I pray you where is he.” It will be like the state of meriting the honor of the world, the joy of heaven, Psal. [36:35-36]: “I have seen the wicked man highly exalted.”

¶ Again the death of nature is a just good according to that of Eccli. 41[:3]: “O death, your sentence is welcome to the man,” etc. And this is for a triple reason. First because it speaks to a great gain, Philip. 1[:21]: “To me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” For by the sacrifice a kingdom is acquired, Job 5[:26]: “You shall enter into [the grave] in abundance,” namely the sepulcher of merits. Second because there is much solace in the quiet, just as quiet is good after labor, Apo. 14[:13]: “Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord,” etc., up to “that they may rest.”

¶ In truth, however, this death is to be feared of all things, Psal. [17:5]: “The sorrows of death surrounded me.” However, because they are public, Psal. [88:49]: “Who is the man that shall live, and not see death?” However, because it is quick, Eccli. 14[12]: “Remember that death is not slow.” However, because it is uncertain, Gen. 27[:2]: “You see that I am old, and know not the day of my death.”

¶ Again it is to be considered that the death of nature is universal. Therefore, it is called the way of all flesh,

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Jos. next to last chapter [23:14]: “Behold I am going into the way of all the earth.” And [3] Kings 2[:2]: “I am going the way of all flesh.” [2] Kings 14[:4]: “We all die, and like waters, we fall down [into the earth].” Wherefore Bernard,[[1]](#endnote-1) speaking to the devil, O wicked, wicked one, where is that one who will never die? And this encourages for the contempt of the world because according to Jerome,[[2]](#endnote-2) he easily contemns all things who thinks he is about to die. Therefore, it would be better to exchange earthly things in celebration than to lose both.

¶ Second, it is terrible because it leads through the midst of the enemies to a dubious judgment, Psal. 141:4]: “In this way wherein I walked, they have hidden a snare for me.” For the world is a snare of cupidity which the devil places as if felicity and this encourages the casting out of sinners. The thief cited to judgment does not freely take his thieving with him unless he wants to be hanged. Therefore Isai. 55[:77]: “Let the wicked forsake his way,” etc. Jer. 18[:11]: “Let every man of you return from his evil way and may your ways [good],” etc.

¶ Third, irremediable because one does not return to the pure state, Job 16[:23]: “Behold short years pass away and I am walking in a path by which I shall not return.” This is the way “of a ship in the sea,” Prov. 30[:19]. And this raises up a multiplication of merits. Just as a traveling man who does not have a long time goes more forcefully. And the prince changing his dwelling in the hope of returning takes more things with him, Eccle. 9[:10]: “Whatsoever your hand is able to do, do it earnestly.”

¶ The death of one at fault is bitter to anyone, Eccli. 41[:12]: “If you are born, you shall be in malediction, it shall be your portion.” Especially if you consider that which is above us, it is God who is offended because we are separated from him, Prov. 16[:14]: “The wrath of a king is as messengers of death.”

¶ Again if it is considered what is against us, namely, the devil, to whom one is subjected, Psal. [12:4]: “That I never sleep in death.”

¶ Again if that is considered which is below us, namely, hell to which the sinner is led, [Luke] 16[:22]: “The rich man also died, and he was buried in hell.” Again, if that is considered what is next to us, namely, our neighbor who is killed, Eccli. 34 [:30]: “He that washes himself after touching the dead, if he touches him again, what does his washing avail.” Again, if that is considered which is inside, namely, the spirit, it is killed like one eating something poisoned, Eccli. 22[:11]: “Weep for the dead.” For his light had gone out. Again, if that is considered which is outside us, namely, the body which is killed, just as touching something contagious, Rom. 7[:24]: “Unhappy man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death.”

1. Bernard, *In Nativitate Domini* 2.3 (PL 183:121): Ubi est quod dixisti, nequam, Nequaquam moriemini? Ecce enim morimur omnes, et non est homo qui vivat, et non videat mortem. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Jerome, *Epistola* 53.10 (PL 22:549): Facile contemnit omnia, qui se semper cogitat esse moriturum. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)