Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

166 The natural Eye (*Oculus naturalis*)

The natural eye has three: act, object, and defect. The act of the eye is triple, namely, to show the right path, to beware of obstructions, and to guide the members. Thus, the work of the wise man is to proceed along the right path which happens through the right intention, Prov. 4[:25]: “Let your eyes look straight on.” Matt. 6[:23]: “If your eye be evil.” For just as the branches draw the humor and taste of the fruit from the root so the works are endowed by the intention.

¶ Second,[[1]](#endnote-1) finally to beware what happens by consulted caution, Matt. 5[:29]: “And if your right eye scandalizes you,” etc. A harmful branch and an infected member are amputated lest it corrupts others. So, an evil counselor ought to be amputated, Haba. 1[:13]: “Your eyes are too pure to behold evil.”

¶ Third, to guide your neighbor as a co-member which happens through preaching, Job 29[:15]: “I was an eye to the blind.” Where it is to be noted that just as the material or corporal eye not only sees to direct and conduct oneself, but also for directing other members. So, the spiritual eye, that is, the teacher, that is, the preacher, not only for himself but also for others, by writing, by teaching he profits which is evident in this deed.

¶ The object of the material eye is the delightfully colored object, so the heart of the wise man is God. For where there is love, there is the eye, Eccle. 2[:14]: “The eyes of a wise man are in his head,” that is, in Christ not in his purse through avarice, not in the kitchen through gluttony, not in the street through vanity, Psal. [24:15]: “My eyes are ever towards the Lord.” The defect of the material eye in respect of other members is triple, which also even is found in the spiritual eye. The first is that it does not see itself, but more distant things. But it is otherwise concerning the nose and ear. So many do not pay attention to their own nor the sins of their attendants, but the sins of others, Psal. [37:11]: “The light of my eyes itself is not with me.” Second, it is because the eyes are more deficient in old age than the other senses.[[2]](#endnote-2) So it is concerning many both clerics and laity, Gen. 27[:1]: “Now Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim.” Third, it is because it is more easily injured than another member and blemishes appear fouler in it than in another member, so a sin in a prelate, Matt. 7[:3]: “And why do you see the mote that is in your brother's eye,” etc. Eccli. 22[:24]: “He that pricks the eye, brings out tears.” Eccli. 31[:15]: “What is created more wicked than an eye?”

¶ Again the corporal eye has clarity from the substance of light because it is spherical in nature and has purity of matter

/fol. 272rb/

because nature is fiery. This has subtlety of site because it is in the head and not in the foot. This has happiness of form because the form is spherical.

1. Cf. Hugh Ripelin of Strasburg, *Compendium Theologicae Veritatis* 5.20 (8:201a): Octavum est de vitanda occasione peccati. Unde dicitur: *Si oculus tuus scandalizat te, erue eum, et projice abs te*. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 1.4 408b21-22 (Barnes 1:651): if the old man could recover the proper kind of eye, he would see just as well as the young man. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)