Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

174 Patience is prudent (*Patiencia est prudens*)

Patience is prudent for governing, just as is evident for acquiring, conserving, and multiplying. As for the first, the patient man knows to pay his debts. About these which have no value, namely, concerning evils almost which he sustains, so that God may remit to him the debt of his fault. And by paying he expends nothing of his own, but of these which he received from his enemy, such as disgraces and contumelies, Job 37[:22]: “Gold comes to you out of the north.”

¶ Second, it is evident in conserving, whoever when he loses his temporal goods retains his spiritual, but whoever is impatient in losing his temporal good, he spreads abroad eternal things, Prov. 19[:19]: “He that is impatient, shall suffer damage.”

¶ Third it is evident in multiplying because opprobrium combines in gold. For that one is like the bear driven by blows, as an ass that feeds on pungent things, as a fish that grows in salt water:[[1]](#endnote-1) The noble origin of the conqueror is patience; he conquers [himself]. Who suffers; if he wishes to conquer, learn to suffer. Again, the patient one in particular is invited to the divine banquet. For some are called by the voice preaching, some are drawn by internal inspiration, but others are lacerated that they may come like those being patient through tribulation. Wherefore it is said in Luke [14:23]: “Compel them to come in.” And just as it would be a great incivility for someone to reject the food which the king has sent to him for drinking, so it is ingratitude to reject the tribulation which first Christ tasted for us. And just as wine is strong of itself passing through an aromatic species is made a sweet nectar, so the tribulations of the world if they pass through the remembrance of the passion of Christ grow sweet, Can. 8[:2]: “I will give you a cup of spiced wine.” Man ought to suffer freely the burdens of the present life such as the austerity of penance and the multiplicity of

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hidden miseries. If the worker or the merchant carries weight of God and the heat on account of a small temporal gain, if the soldier carries the blow of the tournament on account of transitory glory when the Christian ought to suffer more on account of the eternal glory, [1] Pet. 3[:14]: “If you suffer any thing for justice' sake, blessed are you.” And well he said that, namely, of the afflicted. For some want to be patient, but without affliction, just as it is evident concerning some abbess[[2]](#endnote-2) who wanted to be well disciplined, but with the tail of a wolf. He is not said to be cured who does not have a fever on the attack. So, neither is one said to be patient who is not moved when he lacks vexation. John the last chapter [21:18-19], these however are some, namely, who will suffer whether martyred or not.

¶ And truly we ought to suffer all thing because of Christ, because Rom. 8[:18]: “The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with” past fault which is remitted for the present grace which is infused, or “the glory to come, that is promised and shall be revealed

in us.” Therefore Psal. [115:12]: “What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things he has rendered unto me?”

¶ Therefore conformity to change moves us to suffering for Christ, [1] Pet. 2[:2]: “Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example,” etc. [1] Pet. 4[:1]: “Christ having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought.” Second, the necessity of toleration urges, for it is necessary that if we are here that we endure, [1] Pet. last chapter [5:9]: “Knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world.” [2] Tim. 3[:12]: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus,” etc. Luke last chapter [24:46]: “It behooved Christ to suffer.” Third, join to this the utility of affliction, Rom. 8[:18]: “The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come.”

¶ Again, for this that man usefully suffers, it is required that this is done innocently, freely, and joyfully, because, namely, that he be innocent in working, Job 16[:18]: “These things have I suffered without the iniquity of my hand.” Again, that one be benign in suffering, [1] Pet. 4[:15]: “Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief.” [2] Macc. 6[:30]: “I am well content to suffer these things because I fear you.” Again, if there is joy in persecution, Act. 5[:41]: “The apostles went from the presence of the council, rejoicing.” [1] Pet. 4[:13]: “If you partake of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice.”

1. Cf. Edward Bensi, “Nobile virtutis genus est patientia,” in *Notes and Queries* S. IV, Nov. 18, 1905, p. 417: Nobile vincendi genus est patientia, vincit. / Qui patitur, Si vis vincere, disce pati. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Pliny, *Natural History* 8.34.84-85 (LCL 353: 60-61): quin et caudae huius animalis creditur vulgo inesse amatorium virus exiguo in villo eumque cum capiatur abici nec idem pollere nisi viventi direptum;

   Moreover it is popularly believed that even the tail of this animal [wolf] contains a love-poison in a small tuft of hair, and when it is caught it sheds the tuft, which has not the same potency unless plucked from the animal while it is alive [↑](#endnote-ref-2)