Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

190 Sin is to be hated (*Peccatum odiendum est*)

Sin is to be hated because it harms man’s virtue, by debilitating him in his operation, by deforming him, or by disordering him.

¶ However it harms the virtue of the soul in four ways. First, by infecting his sensuality, just as garlics do to a fever, James 1[:14-15]: “But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence,” etc., up to “sin.”

¶ Second, it disturbs the conscience as discord does to a song, smoke to the eye, Psal. [50:5]: “My sin is always before me.” Again Psal. [37:4]: “There is no peace for my bones, because of my sins.” And Job 7[:20]: “I have become burdensome to myself.”

¶ Third it debilitates the will just as rust does to iron, a wound to the flesh, he is weak who easily falls and by himself cannot rise, Prov. [8:36]: “He that shall sin against me, shall hurt his own soul. Tob. 12[:10]: “They that commit sin, are enemies to their own soul.” Therefore Psal. [40:4]: “Heal my soul, for I have sinned against you.”

¶ Fourth, it blinds and darkens the reason just as a hot basin affects the bear’s vision,[[1]](#endnote-1) a dirty nose makes the vision dark, Sopho. 1[:17]: “They shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord.” He is sufficiently blind who sees the good and chooses the evil. Concerning these previously mentioned four it is said, Psal. [37:8]: “My loins are filled with illusions,” as for the first. [Psal. 54:5]: “My heart is troubled within me,” as for the second. [Psal. 37:11]: “My

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strength has left me,” as for the third. “And the light of my eyes itself is not with me,” as for the fourth.

¶ Second, sin harms the work of man himself in four ways. First, because it mortifies before the acts. Just as the paralysis of a member, the cutting off an infected part, Ezech. 18[:24] the soul which sinned daily, “All his justices, shall not be remembered.” Just as rottenness make a thing to fall from its worth, so sin does to the soul, Isai. 64[:5-6]: “we have sinned, we are all become as one unclean.” Therefore, he prays in Psal. [50:4]: “Wash me yet more from my iniquity, cleanse me from my sin.” Second, because it abhors the present, just as sleep does work, freezing does fruit, 1 Cor. 13[:1]: “If I speak with the tongues of men, and of angels,” etc. Therefore, the Lord said to the sinful people, Isai. 1[:13]: “Offer sacrifice no more in vain,” etc. Eccli. 15[:9]: “Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner.” Third, because it impedes future matters, just as death does for life, sterility does fruit. [Rom. 7:14-15]: “I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I work, I understand not.” Fourth, it varies toward things opposed, as desertion of the middle makes one go to the extremes, as the wind agitates the foliage about to be torn away, Lam. 1[:8]: “Jerusalem has grievously sinned, therefore she is become unstable.” Therefore, it is to be consulted, Eccli. 17[:21]: “Turn to the Lord,” in whom namely is stability, “and forsake your sins.”

¶ Third, sin harms following to one’s due end. And this in four ways. First because it retards from one’s reward, even if penance follows such as the prolonging the absolution of the solution, Psal. [118:155]: “Salvation is far from sinners.”

¶ Second it depresses to hell by inclining, just as a burden does to an ass, Ezech. 33[:10]: “Your sins are upon you.” Psal. [37:5]: “For my iniquities are gone over my head.” Therefore, it is more expedient now to throw them out.

¶ Third it confounds everything in judgment by stripping down, [1] Pet. 4[:18]: “If the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear,” Matt. 25[:41]: “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire,” etc. Therefore, it is more expedient that now sins be touched upon through penance, Psal. [31:1]: “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven.”

¶ Again sin is entirely unfruitful since it is hateful to God, to its own subject is damnable, to one’s neighbor it is poisonous, to every creature it is dishonorable. For every creature warns man of his debt to God, he is subject to display when his debt is paid in obsequies. But not man. Therefore, it is verified in the end that of Wis. [5:18]: “He will arm the creature for the revenge of his enemies.” Certainly, the elements once did this because Num. 16[:1]. The earth separated the sinners “Dathan et Abyron.” Gen. 7[:17]: “The flood” covered the earth. And Gen. 19[:24]: The fire consumed the Sodomites. And Exod. 8:21]: The air producing worms that afflicted the Egyptians. Therefore, we are lacking according to that verse:[[2]](#endnote-2) He who has struck will strike again; your sinful life repair. / If he hurts you, bear well the pain: his future rod beware!

¶ Therefore for an example of things to be borne in cities let the sinner consider before he sins how much he will bear, how long he will bear, and for how much he will bear. This is to say the weight of the burden, the length of the way, and the quantity of the reward. For the first sin is unbearable since neither heaven nor anything this side of hell can bear it, Luke 10[:18]: “I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven.” And when something cannot fall down further than to earth, sin however descends to the underworld.

¶ As for the second, he will bear that without end up to hell, Psal. [48:9-10]: “He shall labor forever; and shall still live unto the end. A monkey[[3]](#endnote-3) having two young ones places the one more beloved in her arms, the other on her back. But when she flees from the hunter, she must dismiss the one more beloved and the one beloved to carry with her. And by the weight of this one she is captured. So, the sinner embraces his temporal matters, but on his back he puts his sins, but with death approaching he is forced to dismiss his temporal matters, but his sins he carries with him, Apo. 14[:13]: “Their works follow them.”

¶ As for the third, “The wages of sin is death,” Rom. 6[:23]. Because not only do they not pay for sins, the delights which they promise, but they inflict upon these contrary things as afflictions, want of the true good. Wherefore Augustine, the first book of *Confessiones*,[[4]](#endnote-4) every wicked person is a penalty to himself. And Seneca, *Epistula* 99,[[5]](#endnote-5) crimes can be well guarded; free from anxiety they cannot be. For the first and greatest penalty of sinning is to have sinned. For a crime unpunished is as if a crime in a crime. Punishment is evil for these almost oppress the mind, always to fear, to despair of its own security. And Jerome, *Epistola* 87,[[6]](#endnote-6) for every sin, we are either embarrassed, or we are fearful. Run through each one you will find as many torments of the soul as there are vices. Wherefore sin is greatly to be hated because it renders man so unfruitful, rather as if demoniacal.

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And this on account of many things of which two respect God, two our neighbor, and two ourselves. First is the defect of clothing, that is, of charity, Luke 8[:27]: “There met him a certain man who had a devil, and wore no clothes,” namely, the clothing of charity, without good works.

¶ Second is the breaking of bonds, that is, of God’s commandments, Luke 8[:29]: “The demoniac breaking the bonds, he was driven by the devil into the deserts.”

¶ Third is the harm of setting on fire. For sin is a contagious sickness, Matt. 8[:28]: “There met him two men that were possessed with devils, coming out of the sepulchers, exceeding fierce, so that non could pass by that way.”

¶ Fourth is the frequenting of evil society, Luke 8[:28]: “The demoniac did not abide in a house,” namely, his own conscience but in the sepulchers, that is, in a union of the dead.

¶ Fifth is the lack of contrition and confession, Matt. 12[:22]: “There was offered to Jesus one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb.”

¶ Sixth is the precipice of his damnation. This is the Leap of Walter (*Saltus Galteri*),[[7]](#endnote-7) Mark 9[:21]: “Oftentimes he cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him.” And to all these things there follows the difficulty of correction, Mark 5[:4]: “No one could tame him.” A skittish horse, however much he is encouraged to advance the more he goes backwards.

¶ Again the sinner is vituperated from three things because he is ungrateful to his benefits. So, it is said concerning the thief because he did not love his redeemer. And the loaned horse is recalcitrant, Deut. 32[:5-6]: “For it is a perverse generation, and unfaithful children.”

¶ Third because he is unprovided for a remedy as for penitence and such kind, like one who enters a labyrinth without a thread, Psal. [77:8]: “A generation that set not their heart aright,” etc. The example of the mole which does not see unless when it is near death, Deut. 32[:28-29]: “They are a nation without counsel, and without wisdom. O that they would be wise and would understand,” etc., that namely they should have the taste of merit in affection, the intelligence of faith in seeing, and the providence of reward in effect, Eccli. 7[:40]: “Remember your last end, and you shall never sin.

¶ The last ends are those matters that Bernard spoke,[[8]](#endnote-8) what is more horrible than death, what is more terrible

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than judgment, what is more intolerable than hell, what is more joyful than joyous glory. And note that if man is damned, he should impute it to himself not to God. For God wants from his antecedent will that “would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,” [1] Tim. 2[:4], *Gloss*,[[9]](#endnote-9) *Si velint*. Wherefore if a man by his demerit is damned, he does not arrogate the injury to himself, but the justice of God is manifested. For according to the mercy of the will it does not happen in mercy. Therefore, man properly imputes it to choice, Eccli. 15[:14]: “God made man from the beginning and left him in the hand of his own counsel.” Before man life and death, good and evil which pleased was given to him. Therefore, we consider our will because if the past is not enjoyed, so the future will be excruciating, if the present is not hard.

1. Cf. Bartholomeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* 18.110 (1505, p. 492a): Et quando capitur peluis ardentur aspectu excecatum

   When he is taken he is made blind with a bright basin... [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. *Fasciculus morum*, ed. Siegfried Wenzel 1.1 (pp. 36-37): Qui tetigit, tetigit; tu desine vivere prave. Si feriat, feriat: virga secunda cave. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. *Fasciculus morum,* ed. Siegfried Wenceal 5.13 (pp. 486-489): Simea enim cum duos fetus habeat, quando fugatur a venatoribus, quem magis diligit inter brachia portat, set alium circa collum appendit. Cum autem venator illam approximat, magis dilectum compellitur proicere, set alius in dorso velit nolit secum remanet. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Augustine, *Confessiones* 1.12.19 (PL 32:670): ut poena sua sibi sit omnis inordinatus animus. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Seneca, *Epistula* 97.13 (LCL 77:114-115): Ita est: tuta scelera esse possunt, secura esse non possunt.

   crimes can be well guarded; free from anxiety they cannot be. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Jerome, *Pelagius* 1.4 (PL 30:19): Quid illud, obsecro, est, quod ad omne peccatum, aut erubescimus, aut timemus: et culpam facti, nunc rubore vultus, nunc pallore monstramus: ac trepidante animo, etiam in minimis delictis testem effugimus; conscientia remordemur? [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Thomas Wright, ed. LATIN STORIES, (pp. 47-48): **XLIX. De Saltu Galteri.** Audivi quod quidiam locus in partibus Normanniae, qui Saltus Galteri nuncupatur, eo quod de loco illo quidam voelens ostendere amicae suae quod tantum eam diligeret quod nullum periculum pro ipsa recusaret, et illa similiter illi promiserat quod sequeretur eum quocunque pergeret, facto de loco illo saltu, dum Galterum in aquis suffocatum inspiceret, eum sequi noluit, sed paulo post alio adhaesit. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Bernard, *Sermones de diversis* 4.3 (PL 183:553): et neminem onerat ipse: qui terribilius et horribilius **[Col. 0553B]**ipsa gehenna judicat in re vel levissima vultum Omnipotentis scienter offendere. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. *Glossa ordinaria* 1 Tim. 2[:4]: marg.| QUI  OMNES  VULT etc. Si Deus qui omnipotens dicitur, omnes homines vult salvos fieri, cur non impletur hec eius voluntas ? Sed in hac locutione sensus et condicio latet, unde Petrus aita :"Omnis Scriptura indiget interpretatione". Vult ergo Deus omnes homines salvos fieri, si accedant ad eum, non enim sic vult, ut nolentes salventur. Sed vult eos salvari, si et ipsi velint, aliter nonnullum excepit a salute et veritatis cognitione. [Glossae Scripturae Sacrae-electronicae (Gloss-e) (cnrs.fr)](https://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?id=liber&numLivre=69&chapitre=69_2) [↑](#endnote-ref-9)