Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

197 A Man ought to Seek (*Petere debet homo*)

A man ought to seek three things, remission from fault, insertion of grace, and a commission to glory. Concerning the first it is said in Tob. 3[:15]: “I beg, O Lord, that you loose me from the bond of this reproach.” Thus, one fallen into a pit, one besieging an indestructible castle seeks help from God, Judith 6[:21]: “They prayed, desiring help of the God of Israel.” But because of the fault committed three things remained evil, namely, the note of infamy, the impression of evil, and the interruption of penance. Therefore, against the first, Sara asks, Tob. 3[:15]: “I beg,

/fol. 284vb/

O Lord, that you loose me from the bond of this reproach.” For anyone ought to have a good conscience against the serpent, a good report on account of our neighbor. And this is against the hypocrites who only care for care.

¶ Against the second, Esth. 8[:5] asked, “I beseech you, O Lord, that the former letters of Aman may be reversed by new letters.” So, in a vessel remains from the milk newly poured the color, from honey the taste, from wine the odor. But from water nothing. So, after sin remains the sorrow of desertion in association, the taste of delight in the imagination, the odor of turpitude in the speaking. These letters are to be corrected by new epistles, that is, by laborious studies, worldly thoughts, and honest conversations.

¶ Against the third, Job 6[:8-9] asked, “Who will grant that my request may come,” it follows, “he that has begun,” as if, for what good does it do a fighter to contend bravely in the beginning

and to fall in the end.

¶ Second, a man ought to seek the infusion of grace, Zach. 10[1]: “Ask of the Lord rain,” that is, grace which in the manner of rain restrains and cools the ardor of concupiscence, makes fruitful in good works, and comes from above by the giving of God.

¶ Tercio, he ought to seek the conferment of glory, like the incarcerated seeks liberation and freedom, Joan. 16[:23]: “If you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it you.” But because the Apostle says to Rom. 8[:26]: “We know not what we should pray for; but the Spirit himself ask for us.” Therefore it is to be known that many ask as if nothing, namely, these earthly matters which quickly give out, Matt. 16[:26]: “For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?” etc., as if saying, not what does it profit, but as if nothing, Wis. 5[:8]: “What has pride profited us?” etc. From a great man they ought to seek great things while it is worth seeking. The example of the poor jester who sought from the king a castle and afterwards a penny. The king responded that it was not dignified first to accept and second it was not fitting for the king. There “the petition of Esther” was instantaneous, Esth. 5[:3] and Matt. 6[:33]: “Seek first the kingdom of God,” etc.

¶ And note that in the petition three matters ought to be addressed, namely, that on the part of that one from whom something is sought that there be the power and clemency, on the part of the person

/fol. 285ra/

seeking humility and indigency, and on the part of the thing sought material or convenience. So, the blind man sought, Luke 18[:38]. For to seek from one in need a benefit would be the counsel of a fool, help from one who is sick would be foolish.

¶ Again, they neither seek nor accept when being desperate, so neither did Judas seek forgiveness. Others seek and accept when they are repentant as the thief did for glory. Others do not seek but accept as Paul did for grace. Fourth and some do not accept as [Matt. 20:21] the mother of the sones of Zebedee, to sit on the right hand. and [Act. 3:16] Paul sought “soundness,” who had indiscreetly sought.