Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

198 Feed my sheep (*Pasce oues meas*)

“Feed my sheep,” [John 21:17]. Although all the apostles are honored according to that of Psal. [138:17]: “Your friends, O God, are made exceedingly honorable.” However, Peter among others because of the faith and charity particularly merited to be honored. Because of the first he received the keys, because of the second he received the sheep. For before the commission of the keys, the Lord asked him about his faith, saying, [Luke 9:20]: “But whom do you say that I am?” Before the commission of everything he asked him concerning charity, saying, [John 21:17]: “Peter, do you love me?”

¶ Concerning these two especially which Christ fixed, because among the virtues, faith is first. Since it is the foundation, the beginning. And charity is the special one, since it is the roof, the completion, about which it is said that “it shall cover a multitude of sins,” James [5:20]. Nor ought the keys be committed to anyone than a faithful one, nor ought the sheep be handed over to anyone than a loving one. But by inquiring concerning what he fixed once, because there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. By inquiring concerning charity he asked three times, because from charity man ought to love three things, God, himself, and one’s neighbor. [Luke 10:27]: “You shall love the Lord your God.” Behold the first, “God,” “neighbor” behold the second, “as yourself” behold the third. Or certainly because Peter denied Christ three times from fear, three times he confessed his love, nor less of love than of fear, he would serve his cross. And thus let the duty of love be to feed the flock of the Lord. But in responding more cautiously than before when he asserted, he would never deny him, Peter holds himself. For he dismisses his doubt and holds on to certainty when he is no more than the others, but he affirmed to love Christ simply. Therefore, Christ three times questioned whether Peter loved, and three times enjoined him to feed on account of the three reasons of loving, and the three ways of feeding.

¶ For it is written, [Luke 10:27]:

/fol. 285rb/

“You shall love the Lord your God with you whole heart,” etc. The Lord, he said, is the creator who in creating gave nature. God the redeemer who in redeeming gave his grace, rewarding yours, who by saving gave glory. Then very truly he will be yours when he will be overall, the fruit, profit, and reward of each. However, Peter loved that one “with his whole heart,” that is, with his intellect without error, “with his whole mind,” that is, his will without condition. But he who says there is one nature in Christ without a soul does not love with his whole heart like Peter who says [Matt. 16:16]: “You are Christ, the son of the living God.” And who glorifies in prosperity but in adversity blasphemes does not love with his whole mind when he is ungrateful and forgetful according to that, [Psal. 48:19]: “He will praise you when you shall do well to him.” And also, if they are not filled, they will murmur. Again he who wants to serve God and mammon does not love God with his whole soul since there is no communication of light and darkness or perhaps Christ three times asked of Peter whether he loved as if he might say with [John 14:6]: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life.” If you love my way, truth, and life. For I am with the right way for those working in example. I am the right truth for those preaching in the teaching. I am the life worthy for those consuming in the sacrament. Therefore, three times I enjoin you to feed, so if you love my way, feed by right example of working. If you love my truth, feed my lambs with the holy word of preaching. If you love my life, feed my sheep with the sacrament of divine communion without the protection of the catholic defense, because [John 4:34]: “My meat is to do the will of” the Father, as for the first. And [Matt. 4:4]: “Not in bread alone does man live,” as for the second. And [John 6:54]: “Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man,” etc., as for the third. However, there are three orders of all people who ought to be fed from charity, namely, the virgins, the continent, and the married continent on account of the reward. And second it is said [John 21:15]: “Feed my lambs,” who do not generate. Because of the third it is said [John 21:17]: “Feed my sheep” who generate, that is, the married. And in these it is said “Feed my sheep,” not yours, as in them is my glory, not yours. You seek my gain, not yours, [Psal. 49:10]: “For they are mine,” that is, bought in my blood and not redeemed by corruptible gold and silver.

¶ Concerning the evil shepherds it is said in Ezech. [34:2]: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel, that fed themselves,” etc. Therefore when you feed vain glory by the example of a dog, [Matt. 6:1]: “Take heed that you do not your justice before men,” but [Matt. 5:16]: “So let your light shine before men,” etc. so as a curtain draws a curtain and who are dry let him say

/fol. 285va/

forgiveness, because just as many shepherds are worthy of death as the examples of death which they have given to their subjects. For when the subject sees the superior to sin, he says, Why can’t I do it? There is no disciple above the teacher, nor can a son do anything unless what he sees the father doing.