Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

20 Blessedness (*Beatitudo*)

Blessedness is found to be triple. First is false because it is apparent and not existing, just as

light from a rotten oak,[[1]](#endnote-1) but this is found in abundance in temporal affairs, Psal. [143:15]: “They have called the people happy, that have these things.” And Isai. 3[:12]: “O my people they that call you blessed, the same deceive you.”

¶ The second happiness is true but imperfect, because it consists on the way only, not in the end, and this is existing, but not apparent, just as fruit in the root, Eccli. 50[:30]: “Blessed is he that is conversant in these good things.” Psal. [143:15]: “Happy is that people whose God is the Lord.”

¶ The third happiness is true and perfect because it is in the way and in the end, apparent and existing, just as taste in a delicious flavor, Psal. [126:5]: “Blessed is the man that has filled the desire with them.”

The first happiness of the previously mentioned is to be despised.

¶ The second which is in the habit of spiritual gifts is to be embraced.

¶ The third which is in the act of heavenly joys is to be pursued, which is perfected in three ways: from the direct vision of God, [3] Reg. 10[:8]: “Blessed are your men,” etc. In perfect fruition, Eccli. 48[:11]: “Blessed are they that saw you, and were honored with your friendship,” etc. In eternal possession, Apo. 20[:6]: “Blessed is he that has part in the first resurrection.” Prov. 3[:18]: “He that shall retain her is blessed.”

Again, according to Boethius,[[2]](#endnote-2) happiness is the state of perfection in which all goods are possessed. Exod. 33[:18] the Lord said to Moses, “I will show you all good,” just as the wine or bread was shown so that it may be purchased. Therefore, we shall see the place of that heavenly mansion, the fellowship, and the power.

¶ In the place there are three elements: that is pleasantness without displeasure, security without suspicion, sterility without scarcity, in the saying of the Lord, Isai. 32[:18]: “My people shall sit in the beauty of peace.” Behold pleasantness in the tabernacles of trust, behold security in the opulence of repose, behold sterility. Moses commanded [his people] to look for all these in the promised land, Num. 13[:29, 21]: “The cities walled, whether or not, the ground, fat or barren, woody or without trees.” Deut. 28[:11]: “The Lord will make you abound with all goods.”

¶ In the fellowship there are three: joy without harm, charity without discord, health without misfortune, Apo. 21[:4]: “God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of the saints,” etc. Behold here in

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the wiping away of the tears, the joy in holiness, love in refuge, health from sorrow, Wis. 3[:7]: “The just shall shine, and like sparks,” etc. Just as [Psal. 86:7]: “The dwelling in you is as it were of all rejoicing.”

¶ In the Lord there are three parts: the greatest beauty in countenance, the great sweetness of the first truth in the embrace, the perpetual exaltation of the highest good in the possession of the Lord of majesty. Therefore, we will see truth, we will love goodness, and we will praise majesty, because according to Psal. [15:11]: “You shall fill me with joy with your countenance,” as far as his countenance, because we shall see him just as he is, in his “right hand are delights.” As far as his embrace, because Can. 2[:6]: “His right hand shall embrace me,” up to the end, that is, up to eternity. As far as perpetual possession because according to the Psal. [85:3]: “For I have cried to thee all day.” Prov. 11[:23]: “The desire of the just is all good.” Certainly, the good of man is participation of divine goodness, in possession of perpetual dignity, Luke 12[:43]: “Blessed is that servant, whom when his lord shall come,” etc. Eccli. 32[:17]: “And for all these things bless the Lord, who made you, and that replenishes you with all his good things.”

¶ And it is to be noted that true happiness is acquired by victory over temptation, James 1[:12]: “Blessed is the man that endures temptation,” and then he will arrive at the true blessedness of glory which consists in nine degrees of glory against the nine inconveniences of our present misery. Of which, the first is error in the intellect opposite the defect of cognition, Wis. 2[:21]: “Their own malice blinded them.” Tob. 2[:11]: “Hot dung fell upon his eyes, and Tobias was made blind.” The second is sorrow in emotion opposite the lack of consolation, Psal. [30:11]: “My life is wasted with grief.” For all the delightful parts of this life are closed by its sorrowful end. Prov. 14[:13]: “Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow.” The third is ineffective labor, Job 5[:7]: “Man is born to labor,” etc.

¶ These previously mentioned earthly misfortunes are removed through a triple felicity of goods which are knowledge without error, joy without sorrow, and rest without labor.

¶ Concerning the first, Matt. 5[:8]: “Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.” Nor is it a wonder because Psal. [118:1]: “Blessed are the undefiled in the way.” Concerning the second, Apo. 7[:17]: “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Psal. [88:16]: “Blessed is the people that know jubilation.” Concerning the third, Apo. 14[:13]: “Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, from henceforth now, says the Spirit,” etc.

¶ Again three

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things render the present state unhappy, namely, shameful is this state to those entering the world. It is evident enough to the heavenly who glory, Ose. 9[:11]: “their glory from the birth, and from the womb.” But it is said there, chapter 4[:7]: “I will change their glory into shame.” And how shameful is this state for those going out is evident in Jer. 3[:25]: “Sleeping in your confusion, and your shame shall cover you.” And supported by such shame, about which Jer. 23[:40]: “I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame which shall never be forgotten.”

¶ Again the fourth is the lack in this life and how much we are in need is evident in Psal. [24:16; 85:1]: “Have mercy on me... for I am needy and poor.”

Wherefore Boethius, *De consolatione*,[[3]](#endnote-3) riches cannot overcome hunger nor thirst from the body, nor cold from the limbs, but rather they do more if therefore the rich are thus in want that much more than the poor. [2] Cor. 8[:14]: “Let your abundance supply their want, that their abundance also may supply your want.”

Concerning the third which is hunger, [1] Cor. 4[:11]: “Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted.” But because few hear that of Matt. 25[:35]: “For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat.” Therefore, many hear that at the end of Isai. the last chapter [65:13]: “My servants shall eat, and you shall be hungry.” Against these three miseries there will be felicities in heaven, because there will be incomparable glory, inestimable abundance, and indescribable opulence.

For as for the first they will be kings, Matt. 5[:10]: “Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake.”

¶ Again as for the second there will be riches, [Matt. 5:3]: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for [theirs is the kingdom of heaven].”

Again, as for the third they will be affluent with delights, Psal. [126:5]: “Blessed is the man that has filled his desire with them.”

Again Psal. [64:5]: “Blessed is he whom you have chosen and taken to you.” It follows, “They shall be filled with the good things of your house.” Then that one will say, [Psal. 33:9]: “O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet,” the world is not so sweet.

¶ Again three things disturb the present state, namely, the multiplicity of enemies, Psal [3:2]: “Why, O Lord, are they multiplied that afflict me?” Again, these enemies however are death, the world, the flesh, the devil, and the evil man. Therefore, it is said as if in admiring, Bar. 3[10-11]: “How does it happen, O Israel, that you are in your enemies' land? You are grown old in a strange country; you are counted with them that go down into hell.”

¶ The second state is doubt, Eccle. 9[:1-2]: “There are just men and wise men, and their works are in

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the hand of God: and yet man knows not whether he be worthy of love, or hatred: But all things are kept uncertain for the time to come.” For certainly life is certain, it is uncertain about the end, Eccle. 9[:12]: “Man does not know his own end: but as fishes are taken with the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time.” The second is the instability of the time, when sometimes it is prosperous, and other times adverse. Therefore, it is said in Eccle. 7[:1]: “What needs a man to seek things that are above him, whereas he knows not...all the days of his pilgrimage.” Wherefore on account of such instability it is said in [1] Thess. 5[:2]: “The day of the Lord shall so come, as a thief in the night.” For when men speak peace and security, suddenly destruction will come upon them. Therefore, let us not sleep as happens concerning many but let us be vigilant.

¶ But through opposite in the highest happiness there will be the tranquility of peace, the Psal. [4:9] says: “In peace in the selfsame I will sleep, and I will rest.” And Matt. 5[:9]: “Blessed are the peacemakers,” etc. Again, there will be resolute security. For then they will know with covering certitude that [Rom. 8:38-39]: “Neither death, nor life, nor things present, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.” For nothing then will be able to extract us, Deut. 33[:29]: “Blessed are you, Israel, who will be saved.”

¶ Again, there will be unchanging eternity, Apo. 20[:6]: “Blessed and holy is he that has part in the first resurrection. In these the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God and of Christ; and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

1. “Fox-fire,” *Oxford English Dictionary*: The phosphorescent light emitted by decaying timber. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae,* libro 3, prosa 2 (PL 63.724): Liquet igitur esse beatitudinem statum bonorum omnium congregatione perfectum.

Cf. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, lib. 3, pr. 2 (LCL 74:232-233):  So it is clear that happiness is that state which is perfect since all goods are gathered together in it. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae,* lib. 3, prosa 3 (PL 63.733-34): Quis autem modus est, quo pellatur divitiis indigentia? Num enim divites esurire nequeunt? num sitire non possunt? num frigus hibernum pecuniosorum membra non sentiunt? sed adest, inquies, opulentis, quo famem satient; quo sitim frigusque depellant. Sed hoc modo consolari quidem divitiis indigentia potest, auferri penitus non potest. Nam si haec hians semper, atque aliquid poscens, opibus non expletur, maneat necesse est, quae possit expleri.

Cf. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* lib. 3, pr. 3 (LCL 74:242-245]: And by what means does wealth get rid of need? Can rich men not get hungry, can they not be thirsty, do the bodies of the moneyed men not feel the winter’s cold? But, you will argue, the wealthy have the means to satisfy their hunger, and to be rid of thirst or cold. But in that way need can be made easier to bear by riches, it cannot be removed altogether. For if need, always gasping for and demanding something, is satisfied by riches, there must remain a need still which could be satisfied.  [↑](#endnote-ref-3)