Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

222 To Return (*Reuerti*)

To return. “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man,” etc. “I will return into my house,” etc.

¶ Concerning the act of this spirit note three things,

/fol. 295vb/

the going out, the advancing, and the return. The going out from a man, the advancing through places, and the return into the house. Going out is always good, the advancing is doubtful, the return is always bad. Therefore, brothers let us procure diligently the going out so that our house should be cleaned and ornamented. Let us beware prudently the advancing lest not finding rest he returns to us. Let us strongly fear the returning lest our last states be worse than those before. He exited, however, [Luke 11:24]: “When the unclean spirit [is gone out of a man],” through penance which entered through fault, “And he walks through places,” etc., places without water are lustful hearts about which Job [40:16]: “He sleeps under the shadow of the reeds, in moist places.” Places without water are arid hearts by abstinence and penance. For he has faith that flows into the mouth of the Jordan. “He goes about seeking whom he may devour,” [1 Pet. 5:8]. But not finding rest says [Luc. 11:24]: “I will return into my previous house.” Nor is it a marvel if the lying spirit lies, if the spirit of presumption presumes in saying that it is his house, that is, our conscience. Wherefore he went out of this house. With the going out of the demon sometimes the house is cleaned of vices by brooms and ornamented by virtues introduced.

¶ However, there is a triple broom, that is, contrition in the heart, confession in the mouth, and satisfaction in the work. It is ornamented by virtuous gifts and works. But when the evil spirit cannot break into a house alone, “he takes with him seven other spirits,” [Luke 11:26], because if per chance the spirit of lust is thrown out, now he approaches an affected castle with similar spirits, hypocrisy, vain glory, ambition, pride, ostentation, and dissolution. And thus the unclean spirit, thus fortified enters. But not then is anything to be despaired of, because it is read that Jesus cast out seven demons [Luke 8:2], that is, seven principal vices which are designated by the seven peoples ejected from the promised land. By which the seven virtues and the seven gifts are opposed. In which the three are referred to the spirit because he has three natural powers, namely, the rational power that he may discern between good and evil, the irascible that he may flee the evil, and the concupiscible that he may desire the good.

/fol. 296ra/

The four are referred to the body, because it is made up of four elements. Therefore, the seven are thrown out when the spiritual and corporal vices are dismissed.

¶ And it is to be known that we are held to return to the Lord on account of three things. Because one is inclined to be recalled, long lasting for awaiting, easy for remitting. Concerning the first, Can. 6[:12]: “Return, return, that we may behold you.” Concerning the second, [2] Pet. 3[:9]: “The Lord deals patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.” Concerning the third Isai. 55[:7]: “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return,” etc. But alas there are many who do not want to return, such as the raven sent out from the ark, Gen. 8[:6-7]. Even it is permitted often to the one who has been called out, Deut. 32[:15]: “The beloved grew fat and kicked.” Jer. 5[:3]: “They have made their faces harder than the rock, and they have refused to return.”