Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

240 To Serve (*Seruire*)

To serve. “No man can serve two masters,” Matt. 6[:24], that is, God and sin. And this because of the displeasure of the two, because where there is God, there sin is not. Again because of the contrariety of the servants, because a servant of God is good, a servant of sin is evil. Again, because of the diversity of rewards, because [Rom. 6:23]: “The wages of sin is death,” of hell. “The grace of God, life everlasting.” Certainly, some serve an image and by night an idol of the moon which envy makes. Others an idol of Mars who is said to be the god of war because he depicts anger. Others the idol of Mercury who is the god of merchants because he depicts avarice. Others the idol of Jove to whom is attributed thunder and lightning because he depicts pride. Others the idol of Venus because she depicts lust. Others the slow idol of Saturn who in hardly thirty years completes his course which depicts sloth. Others the idol of the sun which consumes dampness which depicts gluttony. Against

/fol. 302va/

whom it is said in the Psal. [91:5]: “You have given me, O Lord, a delight in your doings. Again, some serve out of love as the virtuous, some out of compulsion as the captives, some out of hire as merchants.

¶ Again [1] Kings 7[:3] it is said, “Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only.” For rebellious servants do not please, the blind, the contemptuous, the unfaithful, the sleepy, the leprous, or the stinking. Therefore, “prepare your hearts unto the Lord,” lest you be rebellious to God through pride, blind through envy, contemptuous through wrath, unfaithful through avarice, sleepy through sloth, leprous through lust, and stinking through gluttony, “and serve him,” namely, by distancing yourself through penance from these vices, by not rejecting the offered grace. Certainly, grace stands at the door offering itself, but the door does not open, according to that of Apo. 31[:20]: “I stand at the gate, and knock. If any man shall open to me,” etc.

¶ It is even incumbent upon us to serve Christ by reason of creation because we are his original servants. By reason of re-creation because we are his purchased servants. By reason of rewarding because we are his hired servants. For he has hired us “for a penny a day,” by which he will reward those within who are the workers in his vineyard. Concerning the first, Isai. 44[:2]: “Thus says the Lord that made and formed me, your helper from the womb.” Concerning the second Isai. 44[:21-22]: “Israel, for you are my servant,” and it follows, “return to me, for I have redeemed you.” Concerning the third, Matt. 25[:21]: “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into your joy.”

¶ Again God is to be served freely with total benevolence, Psal. [17:45]: “A people, which I knew not, has served me.” Second, faithfully with total diligence, Matt. 25[:21]: “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Third, vigilantly without negligence, Luc. 12[:43]: “Blessed is that servant, whom when his lord shall come, he shall find” him watching.

¶ Again three things are commended in servants. Fidelity, Eccli. 33[:31]: “If you have a faithful servant, let him be to you as your own soul.” Second work-minded, Matt. 20[:6-7]: “Why stand you here all day idle? Third wisdom, Eccli. 7[:23]: “Let a wise servant be dear to you,” just as your soul.

¶ Again for three reasons the servant does not fulfill the will of his lord. Because either it is grave what is imposed upon him, or because although he does not do it, he does not fear the punishment, or because he does not do it, he would not hope for a reward. But in the commandments of Christ the first does not excuse because the canonical [1] John 5[:3]: “His commandments are not heavy.” Nor accordingly because if you did not do it, you would not escape punishment, Luc. 12[:47]: “Who knew the will of his lord, and did not according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.” Nor the third, because from the fact that you pursue reward, John 12[:26]: “Where I am, there also shall my minister be.” Matt. 12[:50]: “For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he” will enter the kingdom of heaven.

¶ Again, the servant is bent under his load because of that “he longs for the shade,” Job 7[:2]. Even [Eccli. 33:27]: “Continual labors bow a slave.” Second, a servant is whipped for a crime, because “The side of a wicked slave to bleed,” Eccli. 42[:5]. Third, a servant is ungrateful for a benefit about which he complains, Job 19[:16]: “I called my servant, and he gave me no answer, I entreated him with my own mouth.” And Prov. 29[:21]: “He that nourishes his servant delicately from his childhood, afterwards shall find him stubborn.”

¶ Fourth, a servant is boastful in his lord, which Jeremias deplores, Lam. 5[:8]: “Servants have ruled over us.” And Prov. [30:21]: “By three things the earth is disturbed, and the fourth it cannot bear: By a slave when he reigns, by a fool when he is filled, and by an odious woman, when she is married, and by a bondwoman when she is heir to her mistress.” Fifth, a servant is removed intentionally, because in John 15[:15] it is said, “The servant knows not what his lord does”. Sixth, a servant is dispelled at pleasure, John 8[:35]: “The servant abides not in the house forever.”