Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

263 Truth decayed (*Veritas diminute*)

Truth. “Truths are decayed from among the children of men,” Psal. [11:2]. Several times this is said because there are three truths, namely, of life, doctrine, and justice. The first truth is decayed through the contagion of stench. Second through the deviation of error. Third, through the wickedness of judges.

¶ Concerning the first, Isai. 38[:3]: “Ezechias said: I beseech you, O Lord, remember how I have walked before you in truth,” that is, without the plurality of the mouth, “and with a perfect heart,” that is, without the duplicity of the heart, “and have done that which is good in your sight,” without the vanity of work. But this truth is decayed by man through the lying of hypocrisy, Rom. 1[:25]: “Who changed the truth of God into a lie.” Because a lie is in simulated works, just as in words. Wherefore just as deception is in things seen, so a hypocrite is in customs. For there is in it a superficial appearance, but not a real existence. Wherefor Matt. [23:27]: “Woe to you hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchers,” etc. However, it is said that a hypocrite is like something gilded, and it is of a common kind.

¶ Again it is to be feared that it extends to every kind of men, to the laity, to the literate, to the religious because it declares well reception of orders but not the carrying them out, the tonsure (*tonsura*) of the hair (*crinium*) but not the erasing (*rasura*) of crimes (*criminum*).

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When however, that sufficiently signifies the habit of the cleric, but the soul of a layman, a collection of sheaves, but the scattering of souls, on account of this and things similar to these it is said, Psal. [61:10]: “The sons of men are liars in the balances.” For according to Ambrose,[[1]](#endnote-1) A lie is to make one’s profit as a priest but to work the opposite.

¶ Concerning the second truth which is teaching, [1] Tim. [2:7]: “I am appointed a preacher,” etc., where it is described the teaching of Paul and by what authority he is “appointed a preacher” there so that purified from falseness “I say the truth,” so that things may be fully uprooted there “in faith and truth,” in order that things be communicated charitably because “I am a doctor of the Gentiles.” But behold how decayed this truth of teaching is decayed just as Paul himself signified to [1] Tim. [4:1]: “In the last times some shall depart from the faith,” etc. In which authority the four opinions can be named in which it is evident the decay of truth. Because sometimes erroneous teaching is learned more intimately, it is heard more avidly, it is performed more carefully than sound teaching, wherefore the cockle appeared in the wheat, [2] Tim. 4[:3]: “There shall be a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine,” etc. What is sound teaching is specified [2] Tim. [4:2]: “Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season,” etc. Preach, he said, the word that appeared to the angels, that was preached to the gentiles, that was believed in the world, that was handed over from heaven.

¶ The third truth, namely, justice is decayed not only in judgments conducted but also in benefits conferred. Therefore, cries Isais [59:14]: “Judgment is turned away backward, and justice has stood far off: because truth has fallen down in the street, and equity could not come in,” etc.

1. Ambrose, Sermo 30.3 (PL 17:666): Mendacium namque est christianum se dicere, et opera Christi non facere: mendacium est sacerdotem vel clericum se profiteri, et contraria huic ordini operari.

Decretum, Causa 22, quest. 5, c. 20: Cauete, fratres, mendacium, quia omnes, qui amant mendacium, filii sunt diaboli. §. 1. Non solum in falsis uerbis, sed etiam in simulatis operibus mendacium est. Mendacium namque est, Christianum se dicere, et opera Christi non facere. Mendacium est episcopum, sacerdotem uel clericum se profiteri, et contraria huic ordini operari. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)