Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

270 To See Man ought to (*Videre debet homo*)

Man ought to see three things, namely, the inconvenience of fleeing sin, avoiding the dangers of the world, praising the works of God.

¶ The inconveniences of sin are three, namely, the disgrace of the stain, deforming the soul which ought to be wiped clean by looking in a mirror, Ezech. 16[:2]: “Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations.” For he has seen and imprinted likenesses of things in the soul and those likenesses thus conceived move the affections because where the sight is terminated there begins the affections.

¶ Second there is the magnitude of the offense separating us from the highest good, Jer. 4[:14-15]: “Wash your heart from wickedness, O Jerusalem, that you may be saved: how long shall hurtful thoughts abide in you? I am the voice of one giving notice of the idol,” etc. For being wrathful makes one an idol of Mars, avaricious of Mercury, etc., as above. But Num. 23[:21] it is said, “There is no idol in Jacob,” that is, in the active man, “neither is there an image god to be seen in Israel,” that is, in the contemplative man.

¶ Third is the bitterness of pain eternally tormenting, just as an ass sensing the goad rises and quickly, just as one considering hanging for theft avoids the theft, Psal. [89:11]: “Who knows the power of your anger.” Or Psal. 89:12]: “For your fear can number your wrath?” Luke 19[:41]: “Jesus seeing the city, he wept over it.”

¶ Second the perils of the world ought to be seen to avoid them as the dove seeding in water the shadow of the bird of prey flees to the cleft, namely, in the rocks, Psal. [142:8]: “Make the way known to me, wherein I should walk.” For in the way of the world desire lies in ambush by which chastity is endangered, cupidity by which charity is endangered, pride by which humility is endangered. Therefore, it is said, Apo. 6[:2]: “I saw, and behold a white horse,” that is, a clean body, “and he that sat on him,” namely, the rational spirit, “had a bow,” that is, moderation which keeps superfluity in check just as a rope for wood, “and he went forth conquering,” namely, these three snares. Third he ought to see the works of God to praised them and those

/fol. 320ra/

are three, at present, namely, binding precepts, worldly benefits, true indications of things. For the precepts bind to be implemented and to teach. For the first, Matt. 19[:17]: “If you would enter into life, keep the commandments.” Psal. [77:5] for the second, “How great things he commanded our fathers, that they should make the same known to their children.” Second man ought to see worldly benefits which have been two for the present, namely, incarnation, Psal. [97:2]: “The Lord has made known his salvation,” etc. Because of this we must give him thanks. Second is the passion, Psal. [76:16]: “With your arm you have redeemed your people.” Because of this we must detest sins because in this hate of sin Christ suffered, Eph. 1[:6]: “He has graced us in his beloved son.”

¶ Third he ought to see indications of rewards which consist in the reward of goods, Num. 16[:5]: “In the morning the Lord will make known who belong to him, and the holy he will join to himself.” Second in the damnation of the evil, Prov. 24[:22]: “Their destruction shall rise suddenly.” But alas because in our speeches we say that is everywhere and he sees our works, but in our workings, thus we have ourselves and if he is not God neither does he see anything, but boy or partridge hiding themselves in the grass because he does not see himself he believe he is not seen, Job 42[:5]: “With the hearing of the ear, I have heard you, but now my eye sees you.” Therefore Lam. 3[:1] it is said, “I am the man that sees my poverty.” I am a man not a boy who does not blush although he sees himself naked, [1] Cor. 13[:11]: “When I became a man, I put away the things of a child.” Seeing my poverty, I do not give thanks for the body but the spiritual. They go in more securely who have eyes for the grapes than high things. Being prudent for mine and not only others, the householder first considered the defect of his own house than of another.

¶ Again, man ought to see three things, which are above us, which are below us, and which are around us. Above us is the heavenly city. Below us is the calamity of hell. Around us is worldly vanity. Therefore, we see the first that we may love it. We see

/fol. 320rb/

the second that we may fear it. We see the third that we may despise it.

¶ He invites us to the first, Isai. 49[:18]: “Lift up your eyes and see.” Concerning the second, Psal. 51[:8]: “The just shall see and fear.” Concerning the third, Isai. [60:4]: “Lift up your eyes round about and see.” And just as someone desiring to see his friend, he is not satisfied if he sees him in a mirror, except when he sees him himself. So, the soul in the present in seeing God in a riddle is not satisfied, Eccle. 1[:8]: “The eye is not filled with seeing.” But in the future, satiated by vision, it will be fulfilled, Psal. [16:15]: “I shall be satisfied when your glory shall appear.”

¶ Again three things are allied to seeing, society, novelty, utility. Man ought to see the fault of omitting justice to be ashamed for throwing Away rectitude, Jer. 2[:19]: “See that it is an evil and a bitter thing for you, to have left your God.” Evil on account of the lack of convenience, bitter on account of the admixture of anxiety.

¶ Second, he ought to see the offence of wickedness he has committed, so that he may repent the crookedness he has incurred, Jer. 2[:23]: “See your ways in the valley, know what you have done.”

¶ Third, the gift of infused grace so that one may rejoice to have received spiritual fortitude, Psal. [68:31-33]: “I will praise the name of God with a canticle,” and it follows, “Let the poor see and rejoice.”

¶ Fourth, he ought to see the judgment of the flames of hell, so that he may fear to fall into deep abyss, Isai. 51[:6-8]: “Lift up your eyes to heaven, and look down to the earth beneath,” it follows, “For the worm shall eat them up as a garment.” Again, see what God has made for you and if you are grateful, you will be called forth to love. See what he has produced for you if you are human, you will be called forth to compunction. See how much he has promised you and unless you are insensitive, you will be called forth for compensation. But he did not intend this unless they vacate exterior things, Psal. [45:11]: “Be still and see that I am,” etc. But I fear that it happens to many now just as formerly it happened to Consul Pompey,[[1]](#endnote-1) to whom after the death of his first wife, marrying another new wife, there appeared at night the old wife saying, You were so much harassed by the wars by day and by my restlessness at

/fol. 320va/

night that there was no leisure for you to look for new love.

¶ Morally thus it is for many who look so much by day at worldly business and at night in truth by the works of Venus that they cannot look for divine love. Wherefore the Apostle, [Rom. 8:13]: “if you live according to the flesh, you shall die,” etc.

1. Lucan, *The Civil War (Pharsalia)* 3.8 (LCL 220:114-117): His wearied frame then yielded to drowsy sleep, and straight he saw a dream: Julia, a spectre full of dread and menace, raised her sorrowful head above the yawning earth and stood in the guise of a Fury amid the flames of her funeral pyre. And thus she spoke: “Now that civil war has begun, driven forth from the Elysian Fields and abode of the blest, I am dragged to Stygian darkness and the place of guilty spirits. There I saw with these eyes the Furies, and in their hands were torches, to brandish for kindling the strife between you; the ferryman of scorched Acheron[1](https://www.loebclassics.com/view/lucan-civil_war/1928/pb_LCL220.115.xml?result=2&rskey=5Cfkqz#note_LCL220_115_1) is getting ready countless boats; Tartarus is making wide its borders for the punishment of many sinners; all three Parcae, though their hands are busy, are scarce equal to their task, and the Sisters are weary of breaking the threads. While I was your wife, Magnus, you celebrated joyful triumphs. But your fortune changed with your bride: my rival, Cornelia, condemned by Fate ever to drag down her husbands from power to destruction, supplanted me ere my pyre was cold. She is welcome to cling to your standards on land and sea, if only I have power to trouble and disturb your slumbers, and if no time is left free for love between you, while Caesar takes up your days and Julia your nights. Not even the forgetful shore of Lethe has banished my husband from my memory, and I am permitted by the Rulers of the dead to haunt you. When you fight battles, I shall appear in the centre of the fray: never shall my shade, my ghost, suffer you to forget that you were husband to Caesar’s daughter. In vain you sever with the sword the tie of kinship that binds you. The civil war shall make you mine.” Thus speaking, the ghost fled away, dissolving in the arms of her eager husband. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)