Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

273 Of Bonds (*Vinculorum*)

Of bonds, some are desirable because they are from God, some are to be tolerated because they are on account of God, and some are to be detested because they are against God. The first bonds are of grace. The second of pain. The third are of fault.

¶ Therefore God binds us doubly. First, by the bonds of obedience in the precepts so that grace is preserved in us, Eccli. 6[:31]: “In her is the beauty of life,” that is, in wisdom she makes beauty for as long as she lives to speak truly, to work well, to converse honestly, “and her bands,” that is, the precepts, “are a healthful binding.” Matt. 19[:17]: “If you would enter into life, keep the commandments.”

¶ These bonds join us

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together, like stalks in a sheaf lest we be scattered, Eph. 4[:3]: “Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” But many break these bonds through empty sins, Jer. 5[:5]: “These have together broken the yoke more and have burst the bonds.”

¶ Secondly, God binds us with the bonds of penitence for sins, just as a broken arm is healed. The example of the Samaritan, Luke 10[:34]. But alas because Jer. 2[:20] says to the one slipping backwards, “You have broken my yoke, you have burst my bands, and you said: I will not serve,” etc.

¶ Secondly, the world binds us with bonds of pain, that is, tribulation, if we do not exert ourselves to preaching truth. For this reason, Christ was bound, Matt. 27[:2]: Those binding Jesus “brought him.” So, Peter, Acts 12[:6], was “bound with two chains.” And Paul, 2 [Tim. 2:9], “Wherein I labor even unto bands.” But the word of God did not bind. Again, if we exert ourselves for the correction of iniquity. For this reason, was John the Baptist bound, Matt. 18[:30] he bound “him into prison.” Heb. 11[:36]: The saints “had trial of mockeries and stripes,” etc.

¶ Again, the flesh detains him by drawing to sin by sight, affect, and touch. Prov. 7[:21]: “She entangled him with many words,” etc.

¶ Again she detains him by delight in the will of sinning, just as honey does a fly, a corpse does a wolf,[[1]](#endnote-1) Eccli. 7[:27]: “I have found a woman more bitter than death,” etc., that is, carnal concupiscence which by consent alone kills. But these bonds are to be broken by virtue of conscience, Judges 16[:9]: “He broke the bands, as a man would break a thread of tow twined with spittle,” etc.

¶ Again, the devil has bonds which he uses. First, of sin for drawing into sin, so that he may be more obliged. So, Nebuchadnezzar led the king of Juda bound in two chains into Babylon, that is, with carnal and spiritual sins. Second, impenitent and promising a long life, so that thus he impedes penance and draws one with him, just as the butcher draws the pig, Wis. 17[:2], that is, impeded “fettered with the bonds of darkness, and a long night.”

¶ But these bonds are to be broken doubly. First, by man himself disposition through patience, just as the physician stops sickness, Isai. 52[:2]: “Loose the bonds

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from off your neck, O captive.” Second, effectively by God through grace, Psal. [115:16-17]: “You have broken my bonds; I will sacrifice to you,” etc.

1. Cf. Terence, Phormio 506 (LCL 23:68-69): auribus teneo lupum.

I’m holding the proverbial wolf by the ears. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)