Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

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One. In one is noted the conjunction or the splendid joining, Psal. [132:1}: “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity.”

¶ For it is in nature and in art. For as long as a thing is one it is saved, and it subsists. But when it is divided it corrupts. Thence it is that among the theologians the number two is considered infamous because it first recedes from unity.

¶ And the Philosopher says,[[1]](#endnote-1) every unified virtue is stronger than distributed from itself. The example concerns the burning candle which if it were alone, it would be extinguished easily. But not so when many are burning. And one bird is more easily taken by a hawk and more quickly overcome than a squadron of birds. Eccle. 4[:9]: “It is better that two should be together, than one.” Again, in the same place [4:10]: “Woe to him that is alone.” For many in a good congregation and united with effect proceed more securely, resist more forcefully, and live together more joyfully. For unanimity makes men victors, just as on the other hand dissention makes men conquered. The example of a father having seven sons, on the point of death, he ordered seven staffs to be carried in before his sons and said to one that he should break one, and he broke it easily. And again, he said to break two staffs together and he broke them but with more difficulty. But he said that he should break three together, but he could not do it. So, he said, it will be concerning you, while you are united you hardly will anyone prevail against you. However, this is understood concerning the unity of the good, for the unity of the evil is harmful, and therefore it is to be torn apart according to Gregory, book 33, *Moralia*,[[2]](#endnote-2) where it is said, just as they are accustomed to being harmful if unity

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is lacking in good. So, it is pernicious if it not lacking to the evil. For unity strengthens the perverse, while they agree, and so much more are they incorrigible the more they are united. But recall such things that happened, Num 16[:16] they were a congregation. Psal. [105:17]: “The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan,” etc.

¶ The example is of the Red Sea through which sometimes the evil are designated, because while unity was had by the children of Israel toward the promised land. To those setting out it hindered, but when it was divided, it offered a passable route. For unless, as Gregory says,[[3]](#endnote-3) the unity of the evil had been harmful, not at all would divine providence have allowed so much pride in building the tower of Babel to dissipate such a great diversity of tongues. Therefore, the unity of the evil is evil, but of the good is good, and this not only in politics and religious congregations where good unity or unanimity not only results when the inferior obeys his superior humbly, but also when the superior defers to his inferior rationally. The example concerns the substances that can be mixed in a mixture. For when two diverse liquids or metals ought to be truly united or commingled, it is required that each substance to be mixed relinquish something of its activity and comply to its mixability.

¶ The example is in the cithara where the chord proportionally extended renders an agreeable sound, but if it is dispersed not at all. Again, for this that laminates of gold well attached they endure. With a laminate of silver, it is necessary that three things be watched for, from dampness, from dust, and from the wind. So, to this that the human will be united with the divine and on the other hand it is necessary that against three things it should be guarded. Those things that are in the world, according to the canonical [1] John [2:16]: “From the concupiscence of the flesh,” as for the wetness, “and the concupiscence of the eyes,” as for the dust, “and the pride of life,” as for the wind. Again, according to Gregory in a *Homilia*,[[4]](#endnote-4) between the evil and their heads the devil, there is so much conformity and connection that sometimes the members are called by the name of the head, as John 6[:71]: “One of you is a devil.” Sometimes the head is named from the members just as Matt. 13[:28]: “An enemy has done this,” that is, the devil. Similarly, the middle between the good and their head, namely, Christ. According to Augustine,[[5]](#endnote-5) so great is the unity that sometimes the members are called by the name of the head as in the Psal. [104:15]: “Touch not my anointed.” Sometimes the head

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assumes the person of the members, Acts 9[:4]: “Saul, why do you persecute me?” Again, according to the Philosopher,[[6]](#endnote-6) one in substance makes that one in quantity, equally one in quality makes the like.

1. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* 7.13 1144b30, 1145a6 (Barnes 2:1808): It is clear, then, from what has been said, that it is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral virtue. But in this way we may also refute the dialectical argument whereby it might be contended that the virtues exist in separation from each other; the same man, it might be said, is not best equipped by nature for all the virtues, so that he will have already acquired one when he has not yet acquired another. This is possible in respect of the natural virtues, but not in respect of those in respect of which a man is called without qualification good; for with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given all the virtues. And it is plain that, even if it were of no practical value, we should have needed it because it is the virtue of the part of us in question; plain too that the choice will not be right without practical wisdom any more than without virtue; for the one deter, mines the end and the other makes us do the things that lead to the end. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gregory, *Moralia* 33.31.55 (PL 76:708): Nam sicut esse noxium solet si unitas desit bonis, ita perniciosum est si non desit malis. [Col.0709A] Perversos quippe unitas corroborat, dum concordat; et tanto magis incorrigibiles, quanto unanimes facit. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Gregory, *Moralia* 34.4.9 (PL 76:723): Si malorum unitas noxia non fuisset, nequaquam divina providentia superbientium linguas in tanta diversitate dissipasset (Genes. XI, 8). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Gregory, *Moralia* 13.34.38 (PL 75:1034): Ita quippe unum corpus sunt diabolus et omnes iniqui, ut plerumque nomine capitis censeatur corpus, et nomine corporis appelletur caput. Nam capitis nomine censetur corpus cum de perverso homine dicitur: Ex vobis unus diabolus est (Joan. VI, 71). Et rursum nomine corporis [Col.1034B] appellatur caput cum de ipso apostata angelo dicitur: Inimicus homo hoc fecit (Matth. XIII, 28). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Augustine, *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 6.23 (PL 34:788): Unus enim Dominus noster Jesus Christus (I Cor. VIII, 6): quamvis dicantur christi per ejus gratiam, sicut in Psalmo legitur, Nolite tangere christos meos (Psal. CIV, 15). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 5.6.d 1016b6-11 (Barnes 2:1605): Now most things are called one because they do or have or suffer or are related to something else that is one , but the things that are primarily called one are those whose substance is one ,—and one either in continuity or in form or in formula; for we count as more than one either things that are not continuous, or those whose form is not one , or those whose formula is not one . [↑](#endnote-ref-6)