Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

31 Perception (*Cognicio*)

Perception is treated in three ways. Through hearing, Isai. 33[:13]: “Hear, you that are far off,” etc. Psal. [77:3]: “How great things have we heard and known.” Through sight, Eccli. [19:26]: “A man is known by his look.” Through taste or touch, [1] John 4[:6]: “By this we know,” because we are in him, etc. In this way each is known because through hearing, cries and rumors, through sight, colors, through taste, flavors.

¶ However, a man ought to know three: himself, his neighbor, and God. In himself he ought to know three. First, his own iniquity so that he may sorrow and weep. Thus, the woman looks in the mirror so that she may cleanse the blemish, Psal. [50:4-5]: “Cleanse me from my sin. For I know my iniquity.” Thus, the sick man knowing his illness seeks a physician, 3 Kings 8[:38]: “When a man shall know the wound of his own heart,” etc. But, alas, because [Psal. 81:5]: “They have not known nor understood: they walk on in darkness.”

¶ Second, his spiritual infirmity so that he may take care lest he fall. Thus, knowing the evil exposed, he may provide for himself, and take care, Luke 19[:42] because “If you also had known.” Prov. 14[:8]: “The wisdom of a discreet man is to understand his way.” But, alas, because in Psal. [35:4]: “He would not understand that he might do well.”

¶ Third, the uncertain hour of death, so that he might provide for himself, just as the man

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before the rendering of the sentence. It is usual for the healthy one to use counsel, Psal. [38:5]: “O Lord, make me know my end.” Again Psal. [103:19]: “The sun knows its going down.” Deut. 32[:29]: “O that they would be wise and would understand and would provide for their last end.” But alas it is said concerning the avaricious one, Eccli. [11:20]: “He knows not what time shall pass.”

¶ In his neighbor man ought to perceive three. First, his destitution, so that he may give aid. Just as by nature he should confer the necessities to any member, Psal. [40:2]: “Blessed is he that understands concerning the needy,” etc.

¶ Second, his ignorance, so that he may teach him. Just as the eye sees itself in the other members, Prov. 27[:23]: “Be diligent to know the countenance of your cattle.”

¶ Third, his life, so that he may correct himself. Just as a physician touches the pulse, sees the urine, so that he may well direct the sick man, Luke 6[:44]: “Every tree is known by its fruit.” Matt. 22[:18]: “Jesus knowing their wickedness.” Prov. 20[:11]: “By his inclinations a child is known.”

¶ In God man ought to perceive three. First, an admirable power which appears in two. In working, just as a thing is known through its tracks, cause through its effect, Wis. 13[:5]: “By the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the creator of them may be seen.” To the Rom. first chapter [1:20]: “The invisible things of God, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” Because of which we are held by duty because he has made us.

¶ Second, in judging, thus the hanging of evil men shows the power of the judge, Psal. [9:17]: “The Lord shall be known when he executes judgments.” Again Psal. [49:22]: “Understand these things, you that forget God, lest he snatch you away.” Therefore, we must avoid his displeasure, but in Isai. 1[:3] it is said, “The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel has not known me.”

¶ Second, his indescribable goodness which appears in two ways namely, in the condition of sins, for on account of this his son was given, [1] John 5[:2]: “In this we know that we love the children of God, when [we love God].” He himself laid down his soul for us, on account of this he even gave the Holy Spirit, 1 John 4[:13]: “In this we know that we abide in him, and he in us: because [he has given us of his spirit].” But alas because Psal. [91:7]: “The senseless man shall not know, nor will the fool understand these.”

¶ Third, in the promise of rewards, there is the greatest goodness to give the kingdom for nothing, Job 23[:3]: “Who will grant me that I might know and find him?” Psal. [106:43]: “Who is wise, and will keep these things, and will understand.” But in the Psal. [94:10] it is said, “Forty years long was I offended with that generation,” that is, they truly did not know his ways.

Fourth, his venerable wisdom which consists in two things, namely, in the present regard

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of the universe. Great is the wise man who sees all things and therefore would be prudently conversing, Psal. [138:14]: “Wonderful are your works, and my soul knows right well.” Again, your eyes see my imperfections.

¶ Again [Psal. 93:8]: “Understand, you senseless among the people, and you fools, be wise at last.” But Eccli. 23[:27]: “He understands not that his eye sees all things.”

¶ Fifth in the teaching of equity, Psal. [118:75]: “I know, O Lord, that your judgments are [equity].” Wis. 3[:9]: “They that trust in him, shall understand the truth.” John 7[:17]: “If any man does the will of him, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.”