Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

33 Confession (*Confessio*)

Confession is found to be triple: of one’s own trespasses, of the true faith, and of the divine benefits.

¶ Concerning the first,[[1]](#endnote-1) Psal. [135:1]: “Praise the Lord, for he is good,” etc. Concerning the second[[2]](#endnote-2) to the Rom. 10[:10]: “With the heart, we believe unto justice,” etc. Concerning the third,[[3]](#endnote-3) Eccli. [51:1]: “I will give glory to you, O Lord, O King, and I will praise you.”

¶ Confession of sin happens in a triple manner, namely, either in the interior penitential tribunal before God, or in the exterior penitential tribunal before the vicar of Christ, or in the contentious tribunal before the judge. In the first of these secret sin does not appear because all things are open to God. In the last it does not appear in the hope of pardon. But in confession in the middle way the said hope is found.

Confession of the faith out to be triple: in the heart, in the mouth, and in the work. In the heart denote that one does not admit another lord, just as a soldier does not admit the enemy of his lord into the castle, nor a wife admits the adulterer into the bed of her husband, Psal. [9:2]: “I will give praise to you, O Lord,” that is, I will recognize you O Lord, “with my whole heart.” Thus John 1[:20]: John “confessed,” with his heart, “and did not deny,” with his mouth.

¶ Second, the confession of faith ought to be manifest in the mouth so that is does not fail in adversity. In the example of Lawrence[[4]](#endnote-4) who when fastened to the fire confessed to the Lord. A dog barks against that one who insults his lord, Rom. 10[:10]: “With the heart, we believe unto justice,” etc. Luke 12[:8]: “Whosoever shall confess me before men,” etc. So the Lord requires of us a brief goodness, but he promises an eternal [reward]. The example of the contrition in the thief, [Luke 23:42], this is against those who

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do not believe unless upon a good security. Just like the tavern keeper. So, some acknowledge God in prosperity, Psal. [48:19]: “He will praise you when you shall do well” to them.

¶ Third, confession of faith ought to be practiced in work, so that just as one believes to impend a reward for the good, a punishment for the evil, so one does good and flees evil. [Psal. 42:4]: “O God, I will give praise upon the harp,” that is, in mortification of the flesh, [Psal. 91:4]: “Upon an instrument of ten strings,” that is, in observance of the ten commandments, this is against the evil Christians who by words acknowledge to know God. His deeds, however, they deny. Such a one seems to be the liar whose deed is contrary to his word. And confession of the benefits of the Lord consists in praise.

First, because of the benefice of creation. I should praise him, who gave me one member, but much more God who gives me all my members, Psal. [144:10]: “Let all your works, O lord, praise you.” Second, because of the manner of redemption, which was through death, Isai. 12[:1]: “I will give thanks to you, O Lord, for you were angry with me,” etc.

¶ Third, because of the promise of beatitude which he equally promised me, I will praise him. But God promises his kingdom, Tob. 13[:10]: “Bless the Lord, all his elect, keep days of joy, and give glory to him.”

Fourth, because of the good of justification. If the creditor remits the debt or the offense of the injury, I will praise him. Tob. 13[:7]: “As for me, I will praise him in the land of my captivity, because he has shown his majesty” toward the nations.

1. William de Lancea in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 2.3 (8:267b): Secunda est confessio laudis, de qua in *Ecclesiastico* dicitur*: Confitebor tibi, Domine rex, collaudabo;* de his duobus dicit Psalmista: *Confitebimur tibi, Deus, confitebimur tibi.* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. William de Lancea in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 2.3 (8:267b): Tertia est confessio fidei, de qua dicit Apostolus: Corde *creditur ad justitiam,* etc. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. William de Lancea in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 2.3 (8:267a): Prima est confessio peccati. De qua dicitur: *Dixi: Confitebor adversum me injustitiam meam Domino.* [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. James of Voragine, *Legenda aurea* 117 (Ryan 2:67): And giving thanks, he said: “I thank you, O Lord, because I have been worthy to pass through your portas!” And so he breathed his last.

Cf. ed. Th. Graesse (Dresdae & Lipsiae, Impensis Librarie Arnoldiane, 1846), 492: Et gratias agens dixit: gratias tibi ago, domine, quia januas tuas ingredi merui, et sic spiritum emisit. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)