Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

43 Running toward the Fatherland (*Currentes versus patriam*)

Running toward the fatherland three things ought to be addressed: the motive, the way, and the method. The motive is triple: fear, love, and opportunity.

The first therefore that moves is fear of sin, just as the rabbit fears the dog, 3 Kings 18[:45]: “Behold the clouds, wind, and rain,” namely, the fallacies of the devil, the disturbance of the world, the slackness of the flesh which pursue man.

¶ But the love of the good moves one just as reward moves the young, money the merchant, Prov. 18[:10]: “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the just run to it.” Can. 1[:3]: “We will run after you to the odor of your ointments.” John 20[:4]: “They both ran together,” etc.

¶ Third, opportunity of time and place. Thus, the driver of a four-horse chariot on a level road and in a beautiful time goes more quickly over the way, Prov. 4[:11-12]: “I will show you the way of wisdom,” etc.

¶ The way through which it is to be run is triple.

The first is obedience as far as God, just as the sun runs to the setting, the slave to the nod of his lord, Psal. [118:32]: “I have run the way of your commandments.” 1 Kings 3[:5] Thus Samuel “ran to Heli.” Nor was it that one about whom, Job 15[:26]: “He has run against the Lord with his neck raised up.”

The second way is of mercy as far as our neighbor, spiritual as well as corporal. Thus Abraham “ran to meet” the angels, Gen. 18[:2]. And certainly, spiritually in teaching and correcting, Prov. 6[:3]: “Run about, make haste, stir up your friend.” It is not so for that one about whom, Prov. 1[:16]: “Their feet run to evil.”

The third way of uncleanness is as far as the runner himself. Thus, the angel and the sun run through the world because they are not infected by the evil smells of the places, Psal. [58:4-5]: “The mighty have rushed in upon me,

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and it follows, “Lord, without iniquity have I run, and directed my steps.” [1] Cor. 9[:26]: “I therefore so run, not as at an uncertainty.” The example of Ovid concerning Atalante and the apples.[[1]](#endnote-1)

¶ The way of running is triple: Because eagerly as the child to the nipple, Psal. [61:5]: “They have thought to cast away my price; I ran in thirst.” Jer. 2[:23]: “Know what you have done: as a swift runner pursuing his course.”

Second, patiently just as a soldier in tournament, Heb. 12[:1]: “Laying aside every weight and sin which surrounds us, let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us.” Thus, martyrs run.

¶ Third, perseveringly, just as the runner to the goal, [1] Cor. [9:24]: “So run that you may obtain.” [2] Tim. 4[:7]: “I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course.”

¶ Again it ought to be run on account of three. Because of evading danger, on account of declining punishment, on account of consequent reward, this is to say, on account of the reward of glory.

¶ Therefore brothers, Heb. 4[:11]: “Let us hasten to enter into that rest,” namely, to the place of worship, to a more agreeable pasture, to a more fertile field.

1. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 10.560-572 (LCL 43:104-105):

   “‘Forsitan audieris aliquam certamine cursus

   veloces superasse viros: non fabula rumor

   ille fuit; superabat enim. nec dicere posses,

   laude pedum formaene bono praestantior esset.

   scitanti deus huic de coniuge “coniuge” dixit

   “nil opus est, Atalanta, tibi: fuge coniugis usum.

   nec tamen effugies teque ipsa viva carebis.”

   territa sorte dei per opacas innuba silvas

   vivit et instantem turbam violenta procorum

   condicione fugat, “nec sum potiunda, nisi” inquit

   “victa prius cursu. pedibus contendite mecum:

   praemia veloci coniunx thalamique dabuntur,

   mors pretium tardis: ea lex certaminis esto.”

   “‘You may, perchance, have heard of a maid who surpassed swift-footed men in the contest of the race. And that was no idle tale, for she did surpass them. Nor could you say whether her fleetness or her beauty was more worthy of your praise. Now when this maid consulted the oracle about a husband, the god replied: “A husband will be your bane, O Atalanta; flee from the intercourse of husband; and yet you will not flee, and, though living, you will lose yourself.” Terrified by the oracle of the god, she lived unwedded in the shady woods, and with harsh terms she repulsed the insistent throng of suitors. “I am not to be won,” she said, “till I be conquered first in speed. Contest the race with me. Wife and couch shall be given as prize unto the swift, but death shall be the reward of those who lag behind. Be that the condition of the race.” [↑](#endnote-ref-1)