Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

44 Guard (*Custodia*)

A guard is triple: human, angelic, and divine. The first is triple, because man ought to guard himself, his neighbor, and God. Himself, however, as far as three: heart, mouth, and work.

Therefore, in the first place there ought to be a guard of the heart in man, just as a serpent[[1]](#endnote-1) as a guard of its head exposes his body. Thus, anyone for the guard of his soul ought to lay down his exterior things, Prov. 4[:23]: “With all watchfulness keep your heart, because life issues out from it.” Just as sight from the pupil, Deut. 4[:9]: “Keep yourself therefore, and your soul carefully.” The reason is because God loves it. The devil seeks it. Man neglects nothing other more dangerously. Therefore, man ought to guard his soul through a fortification of good works; just as good wine is guarded better in the wine jar bound well. Thus, the will of man through regular observances, Eccli. 1[:18]: [“Religiousness shall keep and justify the heart.”] And just as fire needs the kindling of oil or wood, so undertakings of the will need the kindling of good works, Matt. 19[:20]: “All these I have kept from my youth.” And Eccle. 4[:17]: “Keep your foot, when you go into the house of God.” My foot is my love; I bear it wherever I go, according to Augustine, book 1 of the *Confessiones*.[[2]](#endnote-2) This foot ought to be guarded from the mire of the carnal will, from the dust of worldly cupidity. [James 1:27]: “Religion clean and undefiled is this,” etc. 1 Tim. 6[:20]: “Keep the good which is committed to your trust.”

¶ The second guard in man is of the mouth which ought to be guarded just as the gate of a city besieged. For often it happens that the devil thrown out of the heart re-enters through the mouth, just as the rascal enters through the tavern if the door is open.

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Thus, the traveler guards himself in public in the slippery place lest he fall, but the tongue of man is always in a slippery state because it is in moisture, Eccli. 22[:33]: “Who will set a guard before my mouth, and a sure seal upon my lips, that I fall not by them.”

¶ This tongue ought to be guarded in two ways: in taste and speech. In guarding the taste is abstinence, just as diet for the weak, as just measure for the merchant. For each one when he comes to a determined quantity according to nature grows quiet and guards the proper measure, Prov. 21[:23]: “He that keeps his mouth from superfluities, keeps his soul from distress.” There is no animal of such a great body that has so moderate a mouth as man in sign that he ought to be of greater abstinence.

¶ Second, the tongue ought to be guarded in speaking, just as voice in singing, so that neither more nor less is the voice elevated than owed, and thus concord is saved. Thus, the little birds observe the time of singing, Psal. [38:2]: “I said: I will take heed to my ways: that I sin not with my tongue.”

¶ Nature obviously gave the mouth always the possibility for closing and opening, but the ears are always left open, so that according to custom we are more for listening than for talking, Prov. 13[:3]: “He that keeps his mouth, keeps his soul: but he that has no guard on his speech shall meet with evils.” Mich. 7[:5]: “Keep the doors of your mouth from her that sleeps in your bosom.” Wis. 1[:11]: “Keep yourselves therefore from murmuring.”

¶ The third guard is of work, just as arms are guarded for defense, selling for the merchant, Psal. [105:3]: “Blessed are they that keep judgment and do justice [at all times].” Psal. [16:4]: “For the sake of the words of your lips, I have kept hard ways,” namely, of penance and obedience. For custody of holiness ought to be had in action, just as an apple is guarded against an injury, Job 9[:28]: “I feared all my works, knowing that you did not spare the offender.” He says well “all,” for he who offends in one part is made liable for every part.

¶ Again, honesty ought to be had in conversation, just as clean clothing is guarded, so that it may adorn well, Apo. 16[:15]: “Blessed is he that watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked.”

¶ Second, man ought to guard his neighbor, particularly the superior, just as the shepherd the flock, namely, Isai. 62[:6]: “Upon your walls, Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen,” etc. But some guard the Church, just like an owl on account of the oil, Psal. [78:1]: “God, the heathens are come into your inheritance.

¶ Third, man ought to guard God, just as a servant his lord, the hungry his food, Prov. 27[:18]: “The keeper of his master, shall be glorified.” [1] Kings 26[:16]: Why therefore “have you not kept your master,” the king.

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and it follows “You are the sons of death, who have not kept him.”

¶ Again things are kept on account of four matters. Because of the precept, Psal. [118:4]: “You have commanded your commandments to be kept most diligently.” Second, on account of the price. So gold is guarded better than lead, Prov. 4[:23]: “With all watchfulness keep your heart. Third on account of affection. So, a mother guards her child, Psal. [144:20]: “The Lord keeps all of them that love him.” Fourth on account of money. So, the shepherd guards the flock, the rich man his wheat, Psal. [18:12]: “For your servant keeps them.” There for guarding the grace of the Lord the rigor of the precept, the value of the price, the love of the matter, the beauty of the reward ought to move us.

1. William de Lancea, in Bonaventure, *Diaetae salutis* 5.4 (8:300a): Et nota quod quinque astutiis utitur serpens quas vir prudens imitatur. Prima astutia sapientis est custodia capitis nam summe custodit pro quo servando totum cor exponit sic sancti Christum qui est nostrum summe custodiunt et pro ipso omnia exponunt sicut Apostolus qui dicebat: *mihi fuerunt lucra hæc arbitratus sum prop ter Christum detrimenta.*  [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Augustine, *Confessiones* 13.9.10 (PL 32.849): Pondus meum amor meus; eo feror quocumque feror.

Cf. Augustine, *The Confessions* 13.9.10 (LCL 27:352-353): My love is my gravitational force; wherever I am carried, it is love that carries me. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)