Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

46 Man Owes Many Things (*Debet Homo Multa)*

Man owes many things: some things to God, some to himself, and some to his neighbor.

¶ To God certainly he owes three things because correction for an offence, 1 Reg. 6[:3], “Render unto him what you owe for sin.” This happens through the work of penance.

¶ Second one owes indulgence for a benefice, Joshua 24[:15]: “Choose this day that which pleases you, whom you would rather serve.”

¶ Third, one owes a reckoning for things accepted and spent, Luke 16[:5]: “How much do you owe my lord?” But, alas, because Matt. 12[:58-59] it is said, “Cast him into prison, till he paid.”

¶ Again, man owes three things to himself. They are according to those three which he has, they are soul, flesh, and his composite self. Therefore, he owes to the flesh mortification just as purgation of the vine, Rom. 8[:12]: “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.” Second, purity to the soul, just as cleanness to a temple, 4 Kings 5[:13]: “If the prophet had bid you do some great thing, surely you should have done it: how much rather what he now has said to you: Wash.” Third, he owes humility to the composite just as the sick man humiliates himself before the doctor, Rom. 15[:1]: “We that are stronger, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak,” etc.

¶ Again, also, man owes love of heart to his neighbor, just as member to member, Rom. 13[:8]: “Owe no man anything, but to love one another.” [1] John 4[:11]: “If God has so loved the world and us, we also ought to love one another.” Second, instruction of the mouth just as the sun spreads its rays, Rom. 1[:14]: “To the wise and to the unwise, I am a debtor.” Third, assistance of work just as the noble birds help in the more powerful of their kind, John 13[:14]: “If then I am being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to [wash one another’s].” Eccli. 4[:8]: “Bow down your ear cheerfully to the poor and pay what you owe.” [1] John 3[:16]: “We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

¶ In the Church of God there are two divisions of men, the prelates and the laity, and these are debtors to each other. For just as the laity owe the prelates obedience, the prelates owe the laity guardianship, and these owe prayers for each other. That the laity should obey the prelates, Heb. 13[:17]: “Obey your prelates. For they watch,” etc. That the prelates owe the laity, Colo. 1[:9]: “We also cease not to pray for you.”