Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

71 Faithfulness is triple (*Fidelitas triplex*)

Faithfulness is found to be triple: of God to man, of man to God, and of man to man. Faithfulness of God to man is evident because in necessity it is not lacking, just as a horse having four white feet, [1] Cor. 10[:13]: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted [above that which you are able].” The faithful servant does not fear to lose his horse because of his lord, so neither does Christ fear to lose his body, Eccli. 6[:15]: “Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend.”

¶ Second, because he does not destroy our goods like the unjust steward, Luke [16:1]. But he preserves them, 2 Thess. 3[:3]: “He is faithful, who will strengthen and keep you [from evil].”

¶ Third, because he does not lessen his goods but rewards beyond our deserving, Psalm [144:13]: “The Lord is faithful in all his words.” Heb. 10[:23]: “God is faithful who has promised.” [1] Pet. 4[:19]: “According to the will

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of God, to the faithful [Creator].” Deut. 32[:4]: “God is faithful and without any iniquity.”

¶ The faithfulness of man to God is evident. First, in his firm love so that he may keep back nothing concerning him, Wis. 3[:9]: “They that are faithful in love shall rest in him,” his adversary shall not [rest]. But, alas, because in the Psalm [77:37]: “But their heart was not right with him: nor were they counted faithful.” Second, in the weight of burdens because of him, so that one loves nothing dearer than him, Eccli. 22[:29]: “In the time of his trouble continue faithful to him”; 1 Macc. 2[:52], “Abraham in his temptation was found faithful.” But, alas, because the wise man asks, Prov. 20[:6]: “But who shall find a faithful man?” Third, in the continuation of his service so that for no other would he leave him, Luke 19[:17]: “Well done, good servant, because you have been faithful,” etc. Apoc. 2[:10]: “Be faithful until death.” But, alas, because now it is asked among the stewards whether anyone may be found faithful.

¶ The faithfulness of man to man is evident. First, in the hiding of secrets and this is against the revealers, Prov. 11[:13]: “He that is faithful, conceals the thing committed by his friend.” Second, in the observation of truth this is against flatters and detractors, Prov. 14[:5]: “A faithful witness will not lie.” Eccli. 46[:18]: “He was known to be faithful in his words.” Third, in due instruction and this is against the negligent, Prov. 13[:17]: “A faithful ambassador is health.” Therefore Prov. 28[:20]: “A faithful man shall be much praised.”

¶ In all conditions the faithful man shall be much praised, Prov. 28[:20]: “A faithful man shall be much praised.” But because it is commonly said,[[1]](#endnote-1) Like the master, like the household. When according to Psalm [144:13]: “The Lord is faithful in all his works.” He does not want to have a servant nor a soldier unless he is faithful.

¶ However, in the highest persons faithfulness is required. In his friends, masters, and companions. Of the companions to the companions, of the servants to the masters, it consists in administrating. Of the friends to the friends in loving. Of the masters to the servants in conserving. Of the companions to the companions in helping.

¶ Concerning the first, the master does not call a servant for administering unless he is faithful. The example concerning Paul [1] Tim. 1[:12]: “I give thanks” to God, “for that he has counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry.” And he does not want to have servants unless they are faithful, Colo. 4[:7]: “All the things he will make known to you.” This is against many masters who do not want to have ministers unless they are despoilers and thieves, Isai. 1[:23]: “Your princes are faithless, companions of thieves.” In French it is said, “Crummy flayer, who takes the piss.” (*Assiem escorche, que le pee tient.*)

¶ The faithfulness of the servant is evident in the good distribution of the things committed to him. On the other hand what they do who in a time of necessity close the purse of the lord nor do they spend like the usurious misers, similar in this is the mastiffs who with a full belly yet they keep the cadaver lest the birds eat, rather they drive them off, [1] Cor. 4[:2]: “Here now it is required among the dispensers, that a man be

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found faithful.” But if one might say so few are faithful among such ones that it is necessary to seek. Wherefore Matt. 24[:45]: “Who do you think is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord has appointed.” But how will he give wheat, he who sells chaff and straw denies the Christian which he gives sparingly, Prov. 20[:6]: “But who shall find a faithful man?” I think if anyone would be faithful in the least, he would be raised up to the greater, Luke 16[:10]: “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater.” The example of the lord who concerning his servant made a proposed bailiff concerning a proposition, Luke 19[:17]: “Well done, good servant, because you have been faithful,” etc.

¶ In the second faithfulness which is of friends in loving, on the other hand you found the heart of Noah faithful before you, Christ, just like the predatory bird requires only the heart of his prey. And this faithfulness consists in conformity of the will when we do what we know God wants. The example of the zealous husband who tests his faithful spouse in various ways, Wis. 3[:9]: “They that are faithful in love shall rest in him,” etc. Truly we are held to be faithful to Christ because he is very faithful to us, not only in the conduct of this way, but also in death by protecting us from the demons, because all earthly friends will be lacking indeed taking, Eccli. 6[:15]: “Nothing can be compared to a faithful friend.” And the protection of a faithful friend is strong, he who finds him finds a treasure.

¶ Third the faithfulness of lords or superiors is needed in governing subjects, to whom the care of a neighbor is committed just as the sheep to the shepherd, Tob. 10[:6]: “That man is very trusty.” That man to whom we commit our son once committed were like wolves to the sheep, Matt. 10[:16]: “Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves.” But now the sheep are changed into wolves, Ezech. 22[:27]: “Her princes in the midst of her, are like wolves ravening the prey,” namely, following the profits of avarice, Isai. 1[:23]: “Your princes are faithless, companions of thieves. Rather as it seems they are more cruel than those wolves because wolves although they eat the flesh, however they leave the wool, nor do they look into the cadaver, on account of this it is said Soph. 3[:4]: “Men without faith, her priests have polluted the sanctuary.” But the faithful prelate washes the dead sheep through prayer, he does not wound, as is wisdom, [Eccli.] 34[:8]: “In the mouth of the faithful” there will be abundant health. Again the hungry feeds upon preaching and so do not draw refreshment, Eccli. 37[:26]: “A wise man instructs his own people, and the fruits of his understanding are faithful.” Again, he indicates himself through correction,

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Apo. 19[:11]: “He that sat upon the horse was called faithful and true.” But alas because today that can be said, Isai. 1[:21-23]: “How is the faithful city, become a harlot?” etc. up to “they judge not.” But God sometimes converts his hand to making sheep from the wolves, just as he promised, Isai. 1[:25-26]: “I will turn my hand to you, and I will clean away the dross,” etc. up to “the city of the just.”

¶ Fourth, faithfulness of companions is needed who communicate in profit and damned things through preceding passion and subsequent glory. Of which kind is between Christ and the Christian who does not remain in the Lord’s struggle, such as the false armor bearer in a tournament, because on the other hand [2] Tim. 4[:7]: “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.” For such were the ancient fathers, Judith 9[:16]: However, many “from the beginning have been acceptable to you,” [Judith 8:23]: “they passed through many tribulations, remaining faithful.” But many are like the dog not following a man unless he has been giving him bread and just like the actor who does not frequent the house where he is not fed nor remunerated, Eccli. 22[:28]: “Keep fidelity with a friend in his poverty,” etc.

¶ And note that three things remove fidelity, servile fear, puerile love, and senile error. First because he does not have a free will. Second, because he is below age. Third, because of folly. First, fear is in those who fear they will lack necessities if they enter religion, against whom, Eccli. 29[:3]: “Reap your word and deal faithfully with him: and you shall always find that which is necessary for you.” The puerile love of privilege is in those who are compared to the Sunamites dead between the knees of his mother, 4 Kings [4:20]. They are more influenced toward carnal knowledge than to that of religion, Deut. 32[:5]: “It is a perverse generation,” and unfaithful sons. A similar error is in those who dissuade youth from entry into religion, Soph. 3[:4]: Your people “are senseless men without faith.” Because they do not consider the sins which we commit, the punishment which we have merited, the rewards which we expect, the pains which Christ sustained for us, [2] Cor. 4[:4]: “The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers.”

1. Petronius, *Satyricon* 58.4 (LCL 15:180-181): plane qualis dominus, talis et servus.

   clearly like master, like slave. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)