Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

72 Faith (*Fides*)

Faith according to the Master, in book 3 of his *Sentences*,[[1]](#endnote-1) is a virtue against those things which pertain to the foundation and are to be believed firmly. About which note that it is figured[[2]](#endnote-2) through the worldly mirror, through the right eye, and through the ring of the spouse.

¶ Concerning the first just as a great tower is perceived in a small mirror, so divine majesty is examined in faith. Wherefore also this is “the unspotted mirror,” Wis. 7[:26].

¶ Concerning the second,[[3]](#endnote-3) the left eye is reason

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which judges only concerning natural matters, but the right eye is faith which transcends natural matters and takes captive “Every understanding unto the obedience of Christ,” [2] Cor. 10[:5]. And just as he who has lost his right eye is useless for making war because the shield covers the left eye, so he cannot beware of the enemy, so he who does not have faith. Wherefore, Naas the Ammonite said to the men of Jabes, “On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may pluck out all your right eyes, 1 Kings 11[:2]. Naas is interpreted as the serpent and signifies the devil who strives to take away faith. For he is like the infernal raven[[4]](#endnote-4) who first attacks the eye of his prey.

¶ Concerning the third,[[5]](#endnote-5) it is said in Ose. 2[:20]: “I will espouse you to me in faith.” And faith can be said to be the silver ring because it shines through thought, resounds through confession, Rom. 10[:10]: “With the heart, we believe unto justice; but, with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.”

¶ Again, faith is compared to sign of the standard,[[6]](#endnote-6) because when that standard is seen it is a sign that the lord is present, Isai. 11[:12]: “The Lord shall set up a standard unto the nations,” that is, faith over the believers. Compared to the military shield,[[7]](#endnote-7) because just as the shield is triangular it protects on the left side where the heart lies, so faith believing God to be triune arms against adversity, Eph. 6[:16]: “In all things taking the shield of faith.” Again, compared to the sun’s rays.[[8]](#endnote-8) For just as the sun is perceived with its own rays, not those of candles, nor of fagots, so God discerns the ray of faith not with the light of natural reason, as Ambrose says.[[9]](#endnote-9)

¶ In these matters which are of the faith it is to be believed by fishermen not dialecticians, Eccle. 11[:7]: “The light is sweet, and it is delightful for the eyes to see the sun.” But just as the sun is not seen in its own chariot unless by the eagle,[[10]](#endnote-10) so neither is God in his own essence unless by the contemplative. And just as the blind man does not see the way and however he believes the one pointing it out and even the stick touching the way, so the simple ones, Matt. [13:13-15] who do not see through sacred scriptures, however believe those seeing, that is, the prelates, pastors, and teachers.

¶ Again faith is compared to a grain of mustard,[[11]](#endnote-11) [Matt. 17:19]: “If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed,” etc. And note that just as it denotes the comparable properties. Where it is said in the gloss[[12]](#endnote-12) that mustard seed expels bad humors. Even the mustard seed, the more greatly it is ground, the more it emits an odor, and so it is a grain small in quantity. Wherefore authoritatively it is to be noted that if one has such faith which expels and excludes all errors as for its first property, and then when this grain is ground through adversity and emits an odor through patience as for its second, and it was small in humility, such a one can be said to this mountain, that is, go to the devil.

¶ Again faith is compared to the sacramental column,[[13]](#endnote-13) namely that one preceding the people of Israel. It would be bright toward them, but dark toward the Egyptians, Job 24[:13]: “If the morning suddenly appears, it is to them the shadow of death,” primordial. For just at that was

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the work in the greater world, so faith is the first in the lesser world, that is, in the heart of man, Gal. 3[:7]: “They who are of faith,” they will be blessed.

¶ Faith ought to have three properties,[[14]](#endnote-14) a true confession, a magnificent devotion, and a catholic profession.

¶ Concerning the first a true confession is when the truth is said and the truth is believed and it is truly lived, otherwise that is confirmed, Tit. 1[:16]: “They profess that they know God, but in their works, they deny him.” Such ones are like chimera who really are feigned, but not in the nature of their realities.

Concerning the second faith is great.[[15]](#endnote-15) If one confides only in God even if natural reason contradicts. Just as is evident in Abraham, Gen. 15[:6]: “Abraham believed God,” etc. Thomas did not have such faith.

¶ Third faith is great if it is not lacking in adversity according to that of Matt. [17:19]: “If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed,” etc. A grain of mustard seed however much more it is ground, so much more it is strong. Such was the faith of the martyrs, [Heb. 11:33]: “Who by faith conquered kingdoms,” etc. About which,[[16]](#endnote-16) that is, [1] John 5[:4]: “This is the victory which overcomes the world, our faith.” Peter did not have this when seeing the strong wind, he was afraid for himself, and Christ said, Matt. 14[:31]: “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” But many immediately totter and sink in the sea, in the death of despair, in which nothing can live.

¶ Fourth faith is great[[17]](#endnote-17) if man on account of love seeks it and does not desist until he obtains it. The woman of Canan had such faith, therefore Christ said to her, Matt. 15[:28]: “O woman, great is your faith: be it done as you want.” Commonly it is said what is taken away, is not brought.

¶ Third faith ought to have a catholic profession,[[18]](#endnote-18) as namely one believes the twelve articles which are contained in the Apostolic Creed. See the exposition of which in the *Speculum curatorum*,[[19]](#endnote-19)

1. Peter Lombard, cf. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:296a): Fides est virtus, qua ea quae ad fundamentum religionis pertinent firmiter creduntur, ut habetur in tertio *Sententiarum* [lib. 3, dist. 23, § *Fides est virtus*.] [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:296a-b): Figuratur enim per mundum speculum, per dexterum oculum, et per personae annulum. Fides namque comparatur speculo mundo, quia sicut turris magna in modico speculo cernitur, sic majestas et magnitus divina in speculo fidei repraesentatur. Bene ipsa est *speculum sine macula*, ut dicitur in libro *Sapientiae*. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. William de Lancea, *Diaeta Salutis* 5.3 (8:296a-b): Fides etiam comparatur oculo dextero. Sinister oculus est ratio, quae solum de naturalibus judicat: dexter vero fides, quae omnia tam naturalia, quam miracula, determinat, et intellectum *in obsequium Christi* captivat ut dicit Apostolus. Et sicut qui amisit oculum dextrum, inutilis est ad bella, quia scutum operit sinistrum, et sic nullum habet oculum, quo vbideat ferire ves cavere adversarium: sic qui non habet fidem, inutilis est ad pugnam spiritualem. Unde Naas dicit hominibus vel viris Jabez Galaad: *In hoc feriam vobiscum foedus, ut eruam omnium oculos dextros*, ut habetur in libris *Regum*. Naas ihnterpretatur *serpens,* vel *coluber*, et signat serpentem antiquum, id est, fidem, ut ad bellum spirituale hominem reddat inutilem. Ipse enim est corvus infernalis, qui cum cadavera invenit, primum oculum invadit. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* ed. and trans. T. H. White (New York: Capricon Books, 1954), p. 142: This bird (Raven) goes for the eye first when eating corpses. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:296b):  Fides insuper comparatur annulo, quia sicut in subarrhatione sponsae, annulus in digito ponitur ad ornationem; sic fides ornat rationem, quæ per digitum intelligitur, quia discernit, et sic a Deo spiritualiter desponsatur. Nam dicitur: *Sponsabo te mihi in fide*. Annulus iste argenteus potest dici, do quod fides, instar argenti, luceat per veram cognitionem, et resonet per per perfectam confessionem: quia dicit Apostolus: *Corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem.* [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:296b): Fides enim est sicut vexillum regis: nam sicut vexillum regis monstrat, quod rex est praesens in acie, maxime ut terreantur hostes….

   De hoc vexillari signo dicitur: *Levavit Dominus signum in nationes,* id est fidem super credentes.   [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. William de Lancea, *Diaeta Salutis* 5.3 (8:296b): Fides etiam est sicut militare scutum: nam sicut scutum ponitur ad sinistram partem, sic fides praecipue armat hominem contra adversitatem; et sicut scutum portatur a parte cordis, quod est in sinistra parte hominis, sic fides est armtura mentis; et sicut scutum est triangtulum, ita fides credit Deum trinum et unum. De scuto dicit Apostolus: *In omnibus sumentes scutum fidei*. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:296b-297a): Fides nihilominus est sicut sol, vel solis radius. Nam sicut sol videtur solum propriis radiis, non torchiis vel candelis; sic Deus videtur solum radio fidei, qui solum innititur luci primae veritatis, non torchiis, id est, lumine naturalis rationis. Unde dicit Ambrosius: “In his quae fidei sunt, piscatoribus creditur, non dialectics” [Ambrose, *De Fide,* lib. 1, c. 5.] De hoc lumine, vel radio fidei, potest intelligi quod dicitur: *Dulce lumen, et delectabile est oculis videre solem*.Tamen nota, quod sol non videtur in propria rota, nisi ab aquila: sic Deus non videtur in propria essentia, nisi ab anima valde devota, et pennis contemplationis elevata. Item caecus non videt solem, sed tamen credit videnti; non videt viam, et tamen credit cani ducenti; nec videt locum profundum, et tamen credit baculo tangenti, et tentanti: ita simplices, quia per se sacramenta non vident, videntibus, id est, praelatis et pastoribus suis se committere debent, sicut caecus committit se ductori, et sicut ovis committit se pastori…. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Cf. Ambrose, *De Fide* 13.84 (PL 16:548): Non creditur philosophis, creditur piscatoribus: non creditur dialecticis, creditur publicanis. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Cf. *Middle English Bestiary* (British Library Arundel MS 292) [13th century] Eagle Latin name: Aquila: Kithen I wille the ernes kinde, / Also Ic it o boke rede, / Wu he neweth his guthhede, / Hu he cumeth ut of elde, / Sithen hise limes am unwelde, / Sithen his bec is alto wrong, / Sithen his fligt is al unstrong, / And his egen dimme. / Hereth wu he neweth him: / A welle he seketh that springeth ai / Bothe bi nigt and bi dai; / Therover he flegeth, and up he teth / Til that he the hevene seth, / Thurg skies sexe and sevene / Til he cumeth to hevene. / So rigt so he cunne / He hoveth in the sunne. / The sunne swideth al his fligt, / And oc it maketh his egen brigt. / His fethres fallen for the hete, / And he dun mide to the wete / Falleth in that welle grund / Ther he wurdeth heil and sund, / And cumeth ut al newe, / Ne were his bec untrewe.

    <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast232.htm>

    Cf. *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* ed. and trans. T. H. White (New York: Capricon Books, 1954), p. 105: And it isa true fact that when the eagle grows old and his wings become heavy and his eyes become darkned with a mist, then he goes in search of a fountain, and, over against it, he flies up to the height of heaven, even unto the circle of the sun; and there he singes his wings and at the same time evaported the fog of his eyes, in a ray of the sun. Then at length, taking a header down into the fountain, he dips himself three times in it, and instantly he is renewed with a great vigoru of plumage and splendour of vision. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:297b): Secundo fides est magna, si in adversitate non deficiat, set tunc plus invalescat, de qua dicit Salvator: *Si habueritis fidem sicut granum sinapis*, etc. Granum sinapis, quanto plus teritur, tanto fortius viget: talis fuit fides martyrum, qui *per fidem vicerunt regna, ludibria, verbera, insuper vincula et carceres.* [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Gloss, marginal (Luke 17:6): Sinapis granum tritum et cribratum tepide pingui mulse admixtum, si ieiunus contra solem vel in balneo gargarises, omnem noxium humorem de capite purgat et imminentium imbecillitatum pericula vitari facit. Sic fides temptationis pistillo probata, ab omni levium cogitationum superficie, cribro discretionis castigata et perfecte dilectionis melle dulcorata, omnes de corde vitiorum sentinas, non solum ad presens exhaurit, sed et in futurum ne recolligi possint precavet. [Glossae Scripturae Sacrae-electronicae (Gloss-e) (cnrs.fr)](https://gloss-e.irht.cnrs.fr/php/editions_chapitre.php?id=liber&numLivre=57&chapitre=57_17) [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:297a): Item fides tribus aliis comparatur, scilicet columnae sacramentali, aurorae spirituali et luci primordiali. Fides namque est sicut columna illa, quae praecedebat populum Israel in exitu de AEgypto, Nam illa ex parte Israel erat lucidea, et ex parte AEgyptiorum tenebrosa; sic fides credentibus lucet, et infidelibus est obscura: quia *ipsi sunt rebelles lumini*, ut dicitur in Job. Fides etiam est sicut aurora: nam sicut illa est exosa latronibus, sic fides odiosa est daemonibus, qui sunt latrones animarum. De ipsis enim dicitur: *Si subito apparuerit aurora, arbitrantur umbram mortis.* Fides autgem nihilominujs est sicut lux primo creata: nam sicut illa primum opus in majori mundo, sic fices prima virtus in minori mundo, hoc est in corde humano: et ideo cum sit primogenita, specialiter benedici meretur, sicut antiqui primogenit benedicebant. Unde dicitur de talibus: *Qui ex fide sunt, benedicentur cum fideli Abraham.* [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:297a-b): Item nota, quod fides ad hoc, quod sit commendabilis, debet habere tria, scilicet verdicam confessionem, magnificam devotionem, et catholicam professionem. Primo ergo fides debet habere veridicam confessionem, scilicet, ut verum dicat, ne aliud dicat, aliud credat, aliter vivat: ut scilicet fides sit viva, non mortua; ver, non ficta. Res enim mortua proprie non est res, nisi aequivoce; sicut homo mortuus non est homo. Res etiam ficta non est proprie dicenda res, sicut leo pictus non est leo verus, nec denarius falsus; sicut ille qui est de aurichalco, qui debet esse de auro, non est verus denarius; tales sunt falsi et ficti christiani, di quibus dicitur [Tit. 1:16]: *Confitentur se nosse Deum, factis autem negant.* Tales sunt sicut chimaera, quae est res tantum ficta, et tamen nihil est in rerum natura. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:297b): Secundo debet habere devotionem magnificam; et est notandum, quod fides ostenditur esse magnifica in tribus. Primo, ut in solo Deo confidat, etiamsi naturalis ratio contradicat. Talem fidem habuit Abraham, qui vetulus de vetula et sterili, contra omnem rationem, crfedidit Deo promittenti quod h aberet semen, in quo benedicerentur omnes gentes, ut dicitur: *Credidit Abraham Deo, et reputatum est ei ad justitiam.* Talem fidem non habuit Thomas, qui noluit credere quod Christus resurrexisset a mortuis, nisi oculis videret et manibus contrectaret. Tales sunt illi, qui nolunt credere vel mutuare, nisi sub bono p ignore. De tali modica fide dicit Gregorius [Greg., *in Evang*., hom 20, non longe a princ.]: “Fides non habet meritum, cui humana ratio praebet experimentum.” [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:297b): De hac fide dicitur: *Haec est victoria, quae vincit mundum, fides vestra.* Talem fidem non habuit Petrus, qui videns ventum validum timuit, et statim veritus fuit, cui dixit Salvator: *Modicae fidei, quare dubitasti?* Sic multi infideles ventum validum tribulationis videntes, statim titubant, et merguntur in mari tentationis, vel desperationis, quod est mare mortuum, in quo nihil potest vivere. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:297b-298a): Tertio fides est magna, si homo propter dilationem petere non desistat, quousque obtineat. Talem fidem habuit mulier Chananaea, quae quantumeumque fuisset a Christo repulsa, non quievit a prece, quousque fuit exaudita. Unde dicit ei Salvator: *Mulier, magna est fides tua, fiat tibi sicut petisti,* quia, vt vulgo dicitur, quod differtur, non aufertur. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. William de Lancea, *Diaetae Salutis* 5.3 (Bonaventure, ed. Peltier 8:298a): Item fides d ebet habere professionem catholicam. Et notandum, quod catholica professio christiana continet duodecim articulos fidei, qui in Symbolo apostolico continentur, scilicet: *Credo in Deum*, etc. Sunt autem duodecim articuli, quia duodecim sunt apostoli. Quilibet autem duodecim apostolorum posuit in Symbolo suum articulum. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. *Speculum curatorum.* This is a reference to Higden’s own *Speculum curatorum*. The first version was written in 1340. The second version written about 1350 has been edited by Eugene Crook and Margaret Jennings, *Ranulph Higden, Speculum curatorum: A Mirror for Curates* in *Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations* 13.1 (2012), 13.2 (2016), and 13.3 (forthcoming). [↑](#endnote-ref-19)