Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

76 Joy is triple (*Gaudium est triplex*)

Joy is triple. For some is of the perverse which is to be fled; some is of the just which is to be sought; some is of the good which is to be sought. Therefore, so that we may avoid the first, let us come to the second, and let us arrive at the third. We say that joy is triple, namely, temporal in which the evil rejoice; spiritual in which the just rejoice; celestial in which the blessed rejoice. The evil rejoice in the vanity of temporal matters; the just in the endurance of tribulations; the blessed in the fruition of rewards. The first joy is brief and damnable. The second is bitter and fruitful. The third is loveable and glorious.

¶ Concerning the first, Wis. 2[:6]: “Come therefore and let us enjoy the good things,” etc. He shows the brevity of this, Job 21[:12]: “They take the timbrel, and the harp,” etc. And thus, by the just judgment of God, “My harp is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of those that weep, Job [30:31].

¶ Concerning the second, 2 Cor. 1[:5]: “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us: so also,” etc. Therefore “The apostles went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy,” etc. Act. [5:41].

¶ Concerning the third, Matt. 5[:12]: “Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.”

¶ Again, temporal joy is fourfold, for some rejoice concerning delights such as carnal, some concerning riches such as ungenerous, some concerning honors such as boastful, some concerning evils as the malicious. The first joy is deceptive. The second is infective. The third is detectable. The fourth is interfective. Concerning the first, Eccle. 2[:2]: “To mirth I said: Why are you vainly deceived?” And Isai. 22[:13]: “Behold joy and gladness, killing calves,” etc. Wis. 2[:6]: “Come therefore and let us enjoy the good things that are present.” Such ones wish to survive so that in such cases they can rejoice because they do not hope for another joy.

¶ And such joy is like the joy of pigs who always desire to be in breeding and manure, therefore it often happens that of Luke 8[:33]: “The devils entered into the swine,” and cast themselves down headlong. Job 21[:12-13]: “They take the timbrel and rejoice at

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the sound of the organ, and in a moment, they go down to hell,” etc.

¶ And then mournfully they sing that of Lam. last chapter [5:15]: “The joy of our heart is ceased; our dancing is turned into mourning.”

¶ Concerning the second joy, John 16[:20]: “You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice,” that is, lovers of the world. Such is the joy of the wild asses, Isai. 32[:14]: “A joy of wild asses, the pastures of flocks,” that is, the goods of the poor are the prey of the rich. Not because the poor have less merit, but because of the rapacious delight in their goods. Thus, the ass imitates the lion, according to Pliny.[[1]](#endnote-1) Eccli. 13[:23]: “The wild ass is the lion’s prey in the desert, so also the poor are devoured by the rich.” The saints despise that joy because it has more bitterness mixed in, Prov. 14[:13]: “Mourning takes hold of the end of joy,” etc.

¶ Again, triple is the joy concerning the conversion of the sinner, concerning the conversation of the penitent, concerning the consummation of perseverance. Concerning the first, Luke 15[:32]: “It was fit that we should make merry and be glad,” etc. Concerning the second, Luke 15[:7]: “There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that does penance,” etc. Concerning the third, Philip. 4[:1]: “My joy and my crown; so, stand fast in the Lord.” And note that spiritual joy differs from worldly joy because that is pure, this is impure and sprinkled with bitterness, according to Boethius.[[2]](#endnote-2) Isai. 1[:22]: “Your wine is mingled with water.” For worldly joy is mixed with remorse of conscience and tortuous solitude.

¶ The second difference[[3]](#endnote-3) is continuity and discontinuity, because spiritual joy is continuous and secure, Prov. 15[:15]: “A secure mind is like a continual feast.” Earthly joy in truth is brief and transitory, Job 20[:5]: “The joy of the hypocrite but for a moment.” The worldly joy is hypocritical because the interior is corrupt, the exterior flowery. The joy of such a kind is like a moment because it does not have the height of perseverance, nor the width of friendship, nor the depth of good conscience.

¶ The third difference[[4]](#endnote-4) is dignity and lack of dignity, because spiritual joy is concerning matters worthy and divine, Philip. 4[:4]: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” Worldly joy is concerning unworthy matters, Prov. 3[:35]: “The promotion of fools is disgrace.” Wherefore says Augustine,[[5]](#endnote-5) that worldly joy is evils unpunished.

¶ The fourth difference is health and injury.

1. Pliny, cf. Aesop’s fables, *The ass in the Lion’s Skin*: An Ass found a Lion's skin left in the forest by a hunter. He dressed himself in it and amused himself by hiding in a thicket and rushing out suddenly at the animals who passed that way. All took to their heels the moment they saw him.

   The Ass was so pleased to see the animals running away from him, just as if he were King Lion himself, that he could not keep from expressing his delight by a loud, harsh bray. A Fox, who ran with the rest, stopped short as soon as he heard the voice. Approaching the Ass, he said with a laugh:

   "If you had kept your mouth shut you might have frightened me, too. But you gave yourself away with that silly bray."

   A fool may deceive by his dress and appearance, but his words will soon show what he really is. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae,* lib. 2, prosa 4 (PL 63:684): Quam multis amaritudinibus humanae felicitatis dulcedo respersa est! quae si etiam fruenti jucunda esse videatur, tamen, quo minus, cum velit, abeat, retineri non possit.

   Cf. Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, lib. 2, prosa 4 (LCL 74:194-195):  How many bitter troubles spoil with their spattering the sweetness of a man’s happiness! A happiness which even if it seem pleasant to a man when he enjoys it, yet cannot be prevented from passing when it will. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 8.1 (8:327a): Secunda differentia spiritualis gaudii est continuitas et discontinuitas. Spirituale gaudium est continuum et securum; unde dicitur: *Secura mens quasi juge convivium*. Gaudium vero mundanum est breve et transitorium, quia, ut dicitur: *gaudium hypocritae instar puncti*. *Hypocrita* dicitur este mundus, quia hypocrita licet interius sit corruptus, exterius tamen apparet bonus et mundus.... sicut punctus qui caret longitudine, quam habet linea; et latitudine, quam habet superficies; et profunditate, quam habet corpus. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 8.1 (8:327a-b): Tertia differentia spiritualis gaudii, et mundani, est dignitas et indignitas. Gaudium enim spirituale est de rebus valde dignis, quia de Deo precipue, et de rebus divinis. Unde dicit Apostolus: *Gaudete in Domino semper*, etc. Gaudium vero mundi est de rebus indignis, et praecipue, sicut de voluptate carnis ... De quo gaudio turpissimo dicitur: *Stultorum exultatio ignominia*. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Augustine, *De scripturis sermones* 1714.4 (PL 38:935): Saeculi laetitia est impunita nequitia. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)