Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

85 Humility is distinguished triply (*Humilitas triplex distinguitur*)

Humility is differentiated in three ways. For one is treacherous or deceitful, about which Eccli. 19[:23]: “There is one that humbles himself wickedly, and his interior is full of deceit.” And this humility is foxy, namely, of the hypocrites, therefore, to be avoided, Eccli. 12[:11]: “Though he humbles himself and go crouching, take good heed and beware of him.” The second is causing pain or testing, Dan. 3[:37]: “We are brought low in all the earth this day for our sins.” This is asinine humility which willy-nilly bears burdens. But this is to be tolerated, Eccli. 2[:4]: “In your humiliation keep patience.” The third is meritorious and virtuous about which Luke 1[:48]: “He has regarded the humility of his handmaid.” This is the dove-like humility, therefore, to be embraced, Eccli. 13[:9]: “Humble yourself to God, and wait for his hands,” that is, the reward.

¶ About this humility three things ought to be considered, namely, things assumed, things shown, and things preserved. Things assumed are three.

First is the consideration of one’s own vileness. In the proverb,[[1]](#endnote-1) as if, the peacock seeing the foulness of his feet humbles his tail. So, he who considers what lies in the belly, what goes out through the holes of the body ought to be humbled, Mich. 6[:14]: “Your humiliation

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shall be in the midst of you.” Eccli. 10[:9]: “Why is earth and ashes proud?”

¶ Second, the persuasion of Sacred Scripture is multiplex, the drop of water often falling hollows out a rock.[[2]](#endnote-2) Thus truth noted turns a man to becoming humble, Eccli. 7[:19]: “Humble your spirit very much.” Judith 8[:16]: “Let us humble our souls before him.” 1 Pet. 5[:5]: “Do you all insinuate humility one to another.”

¶ Third is the imitation of divine humility. For what a good and wise man chooses, this thing is to be chosen more, Matt. 11[:29]: “Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.” Philip. 2[:8]: “He humbled himself, unto death.” Prov. 16[:19]: “It is better to be humbled with the meek, than to divide spoils with the proud.”

¶ Things to be shown of humility are three, of which the first is the sorrow of penance. For just as to be turned away from God is a sign of pride, so to be turned toward God is a sign of humility, 3 Kings 21[:29]: “Have you not seen Achab humbled before me?” Psal. [50:19]: “A contrite and humbled heart, O God, you will not despise.” Second is the love of patience, Eccli. 2[:5]: “Just as gold and silver are tried in the fire, so men in the furnace of humiliation.” Third is the labor of obedience, Gen. 16[:9]: “Return, and humble yourself under the hand” of the Lord. Eccli. 3[:20]: “The greater you are, the humbler yourself in all things.”

¶ Things to be preserved are three. For humility makes three goods. Because first, it takes away fault just as prostrating oneself before a lion mitigates his anger, Psal. [114:6]: “I was little, and he delivered me.”

¶ Second, because it gains one grace, to the degree that he who exposes his body to the sun so much the more does he grow warm, 1 Pet. 5[:5]: “God resists the proud, but to the humble he gives grace.” It is also accepted by the proud.

¶ Third, it multiplies glory, just as a grain falling on the earth brings forth fruit, Psal. [33:19]: “He will save the humble of spirit.” Job 22[:29]: “He that has been humbled, shall be in glory.” Prov. 15[:33]: “Humility goes before glory.”

1. Cf. Bartholomaeus Anglicus, *De proprietatibus rerum* 12.31 (1505, p. 236b): Videns autem pedum suorum deformitatem quasi erubescit, et velut non attendens predicta pennarum pulcritudinem eas subito deprimit et submittit.

And he wondereth of the fairness of his feathers, and areareth them up as it were a circle about his head, and then he looketh to his feet, and seeth the foulness of his feet, and like as he were ashamed he letteth his feathers fall suddenly, and all the tail downward, as though he took no heed of the fairness of his feathers. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Phillip le Chancellor, *Summa super Psalterium*: Ps 17:30 Sermo 36 G: **Gutta** cavat lapidem non vi sed sepe cadendo. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)