249 Cloud (*Nubes*)

In a cloud the status of any conqueror can be noted. For a cloud has splendor because it is illuminated by the sun, it has beauty because it is elevated from the earth, it has lightning because it is removed from the sea. So, any holy man has the splendor of his thought, the beauty of his contemplation, and the sweetness of his benignity.

Concerning the first, Gen. 9[:13]: “I will set my bow in the clouds” of heaven. This happens because the knowledge of the heavens is placed in the men of the prophets and apostles. According to that of Isai. 60[:8]: “Who are these, that fly as clouds,” formerly through a quick inclination, rain through erudition, thunder through communication, shake through work. Certainly, these conditions the good preacher has according to the rain.

A cloud is removed from the earth by forty furlongs (*stadia*). Wherefore Job [7:15]: “My soul rather chooses hanging,” that is, hanging from the earthly desires. Such hangings we ought to have lest our senses be corrupted in earthly things. For we see that namely ours are ground down by the earth and tramped down by feet. However, earth hurts bare feet more than those with shoes, so earthly desires hurt holy hearts more if they are touched too much.

Third, any holy man has sweetness as if a cloud, because the sea water in the sea is salty, but in a cloud, it is sweet, so this holy man. Wherefore concerning this it can be verified that of 3 Kings 18[:44]: “A little cloud,” diminutive because it is small through humility, light without the weight of sin. “It arose out of the sea,” truly “a little cloud” diminutive because it is small through humility, light without the weight of sin. “It arose out of the sea,” that is, from the world which is compared to the sea because of many properties.

About which see above in the chapter [222] Sea (*Mare*) and chapter [239] World (*Mundus*).

¶ Again, the Blessed Virgin is called a cloud because she is lively through obedience, shiny through chastity, light through want. Certainly, there was a cloud for the sons of Israel indicative of the journey as a sign of the agreement in the equilibrium of the air, Exod. 13[:21].

¶ Again, a cloud is light in motion, Isai. 60[:8]: “Who are these, that fly as clouds.” It is lofty in site, Isai. 14[:14]: “I will ascend above the height of the clouds.” It is useful in effect, Psal. [146:8]: “Who covers the heaven with clouds and prepares rain for the earth.” So, Mary was light in as much as incorruption of fault, Isai. 19[:1]: “The Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud,” which is explained from the flesh of the virgin.

Second, it was lofty through the perfection of life, Num. 10[:11]: “This cloud was taken up.” Therefore, by an evil elevation which is through presumption in the heart, by boasting in speech, by ostentation in work. About which it is said in 3 Kings 1[:5]: “Adonias the son of Haggith exalted himself.” Behold the first, “saying,” behold, “I will be king.” Behold the second, “He made himself chariots.” Behold the third, but on the contrary was the Blessed Virgin. For this one is elevated from the state of life to the state of the fatherland, 1 Kings 2[:8]: “He raises up the needy from the dust,” from the state of sloth to the state of contemplation, Ezech. 1[:21]: “When those went these went,” by meditating, “and when those stood these stood,” by expecting and discussing themselves, “and when those were lifted up from the earth,” by contemplating. And Job 39[:27]: “Will the eagle mount up at your command,” that is, Mary who is as the eagle is noble in family, perspicacious in sight, agile in flight.

Third, this one is elevated from the state of grace to the state of glory, Psal. [8:2]: “Your magnificence is elevated above the heavens,” namely, it was useful through the petition of forgiveness. 3 Kings 18[:44]: “A little cloud arose out of the sea like a man's foot.” And it follows “and there fell a great rain.”

Again, Mary is elevated from the earth by casting out of earthly things, moved above through devotion.

¶ It is bedewed by rains, that is, through grace, Psal. [71:6]: “He shall come down like rain upon the fleece.”

Again, she is frigid through chastity. For it tempers the concupiscence of man and the judge. For Eccli. 35[:26]: “The mercy of God is beautiful in the time of affliction, as a cloud of rain in the time of drought.” Psal. [104:39]: “He spread a cloud for their protection.” And Apo. 14[:14]: “I saw and behold a white cloud.”

¶ Again, as much as the fact of the assumption Mary as if a lofty cloud in site, agile in motion, useful in effect, because this one is lofty by the lifting and exaltation, she is agile to the invocation of prayer, useful by the petition of forgiveness.

Concerning the first, Eccli. 24[:7]: “I dwelt in the highest places.” And in a cloud, he said he was also the son of God, I am the Son of God, I reign with the Father, and I remain in the virgin.

Concerning the second, because this one is prone to listening, rather she is compared to the column of the cloud than to the column of fire. According to that of Eccli. 24[:7]: “My throne is in a pillar of a cloud.” For a cloud is repressive to heat and bestowing of moisture, but a column of fire is burning.

Concerning the third, the teachers Anselm[[1]](#endnote-1) and Bernard[[2]](#endnote-2) report that this one is useful in effect, bestowing grace, Psal. [146:8]: “Who covers the heaven with clouds and prepares rain for the earth.”

Again, blessed Mary is compared to a cloud because of three matters. For a cloud touches and hides the sun, pours out rain, and receives the rainbow. So, Mary is a cloud spread out for pouring out grace, a cloud rooted to taking the word.

Concerning the first, Ezech. 32[:7]: “I will cover the sun with a cloud.” Concerning the second, in the Psal. [146:8]: “Who covers the heaven with clouds and prepares rain for the earth.” Concerning the third, Gen. 9[:13]: “I will set my bow in the clouds” of heaven.

1. Anselm, *Exhortatio ad contemptum temporalium et desiderium aeternorum* (PL 158:677): Esto velut nubes ad proferendam pluviam lacrymarum, ut possis exstinguere flammas peccatorum. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Bernardus, *De Laudibus Virginis Matris* 2.7 (PL 183:64): Siquidem recordatae sunt nubes illae, quae portabant pluviam, praeceptum sibi fuisse cum mitterentur: Quod dico vobis in tenebris, dicite in lumine; et quod in aure auditis, praedicate super tecta (Matth. X, 27). Quod et fecerunt: etenim in omnem terram exivit sonus eorum, et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum (Psal. XVIII, 5). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)