382 Shadow (*Umbra*)

Because a shadow has many properties like present life, according to that in Wis. 2[:5]: “Our time is as the passing of a shadow.” Therefore, the present life can be said as a shadow and not only this but also as the shadow of death. For a shadow is swift in defect, vain in effect, brief in progressing; so the present life because “The days of man are short,” Job [14:5] as for the first.

Again, in Psal. [4:3]: “O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity and seek after lying?” as for the second.

Again, in Psal. [48:18]: “For when he shall die, he shall take nothing away.” Rather nothing earthly, as for the third.

Again, as for the similarity that the shadow has with the body making the shadow, the present life has so much similarity with death. Rather it merits to be said that death rather than life, and this on account of three matters: continuing corruption, change, and affliction.

Concerning the first, Gregory in a *Homilia*,[[1]](#endnote-1) this continuous defect of corruption, what else is it than a certain prolixity of death.

Concerning the second, Augustine,[[2]](#endnote-2) in every mutable matter there is a certain death. This change indeed because life is an act persisting, but man never stays in the same state.

Concerning the third, Eccle. [2:23]: “All his days are full of sorrows.”

¶ Again, as a cloud always has one connection and adhesion with a body making a cloud, so that to some degree the cloud of a tree is prolonged. However, it is always terminated in a tree from one part, so the present life to some degree is prolonged. However, death is always terminated in a tree. Thus, that is, 2 Kings 14[:14]: “We all die, and like waters that return no more, we fall down into the earth.” Wherefore Bernard,[[3]](#endnote-3) why is man proud, whose conception is by fault, being born is by pain, life is labor, and the necessity of dying. For example, however much more the sun ascends in the hemisphere, so much more does it collect the cloud to that of which it is a cloud. So, when man lives longer, so much the more this life grows shorter and he approaches more to death.

¶ Again, just as in a cloud there is lack of light from the interposition an object, so in the present one suffers the absence of the vital life on account of the lack of spiritual goods which suffer from the reproach of death.

Again, just as a cloud flees the one pursuing it and follows the one fleeing, so it is concerning the honor of the world, which often follows the one who flees the honor, and flees from him who seeks it.

In these matters, see the folio below.

1. Gregory, *XL Homiliarum in Evangelia* 2.37.1 (PL 76:1275): Ipse enim quotidianus defectus corruptionis quid est aliud quam quaedam prolixitas mortis? [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Augustine, *Sermo* 48 (PL 40:1329): O homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletus multis miseriis, qui quasi flos campi egrederis et contereris, et fugis velut umbra, nec in eodem statu permanens. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Bernard, cf. Alan of Lille, *Summa de arte praedicatoria* 3 (PL 210:117): Ergo, unde superbit homo, cujus conceptio culpa, nasci poena, labor vita, necesse mori? [↑](#endnote-ref-3)