388 Strength (*Virtus*)

The strong[[1]](#endnote-1) are compared to a fruitful tree, although acorns and leaves are produced which are carnal delights, which are food for hogs and the unclean. But if the branch of virtue is grafted to such a tree it draws the tree to its mercy and makes for the joy of God and men, Luke 15[:7]: “joy,” that is among the angels, “in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance.” This is the tree of Dan. 4[:8-9] of which the fruit is most beautiful, etc.

Second,[[2]](#endnote-2) the virtuous is compared to a precious stone. For virtue in a gem makes the ring to prevail, so virtue makes the just man prevail over many sinners, just as it is said in Eccli. 16[:3]: “Better is one that fears God, than a thousand ungodly children.” But this virtue is little appreciated and perhaps because it is not known, so the cock on the dung heap chooses the rotten grain over the precious gem, Job 28[:13]: “Man knows not the price thereof.” There Christ said, Matt. 7[:6]: “Neither cast your pearls before swine.”

Again,[[3]](#endnote-3) virtue is compared to paradise on account of three matters: on account of the excellent of the site, on account of the riches of the fruit, and on account of the outpouring of the spring.

Concerning the first, paradise is the highest place, thus because the waters of the flood could not reach to it, Eccli. the last chapter [51:13]: “You have exalted my dwelling place upon the earth.

Concerning the second, paradise is rich with various fruits, Gen. 2[:9]. And Eccli. 24[:23]: “My flowers are the fruit of honor and riches.”

Third, for it is a place watered, Gen. 2[:10]: by God because “it was divided into four heads,” that is, in four cardinal virtues.

Again, virtue is compared to a noble prebend which is evident from the part of the giver and from the part of the receiver. For these two prebends only God confers grace and glory, Psal. [83:12]: “The Lord will give grace and glory.” If a woman does not have this prebend of virtue, it is given to no one unless the flesh is friendly and worthy, but natural and temporal goods as if vile prebends are given indifferently.

1. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 5.1 (8:291b): Comparatur ergo virtus tribus specialiter, scilicet ligno fructuoso, lapidi pretioso, et cælesti paradiso. Primo comparatur ligno fructuoso: homo enim absque virtute, est sicut arbor silvestris, vel vinea, quæ profert labruscas, id est, delectationes carnales vel glandes, quæ sunt cibaria porcorum, id est, hominum immundorum. Sed si ramus virtutis tali arbori fuerit insertus, totam arborem trahit ad naturam suam, et facit eam ferre fructus optimos, quæ lætificant Deum et angelos Dei, juxta illud: *Gaudium est angelis Dei super uno peccatore*, etc. Hæc est illa arbor pulcherrima, cujus *fructus nimius et esca universorum in ea,* ut habetur in *Daniele.* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 5.1 (8:291b): Secundo comparatur lapidi pretioso. Virtus enim quæ est in viro justo, facit eum prævalere multis peccatoribus; nam dicitur: *Melior est unus timens Deum quam mille filii impii*. … Et ratio est, quare vilipenditur virtus, quia *nescit homo pretium ejus* ut dicitur in Job. Et propter hoc dicit Salvator: *Ne mittatis margaseptem ritas ante porcos*, id est, homines immundos et mundanos, quia plus volunt furfur carnalis et immundæ delectationis, quam margaritas gratiæ vel virtutis. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. William de Lancea, *Diaetae salutis* 5.1 (8:291b-292a): Tertio comparatur paradiso, tam cælesti, quam terrestri. Terrestri comparatur in tribus, scilicet in situs eminentia, in fructus opulentia, et in fontis affluential. Est enim primo paradisus locus altissimus ita quod aquæ diluvii usque ad illum locum non pervenerunt: sic viri religiosi, vel virtuosi, vitam habent eminentem instar paradisi, ita quod nunquam submerguntur diluvio peccati. Unde dicit Sapiens in persona viri justi: *Exaltasti super terram habitationem meam*. Est secundo paradisus locus fructibus opulentus: producit enim *omne lignum pulchrum visu, et ad vescendum suave*, ut dicitur in Genesi: … Unde dicitur in per sona viri virtuosi: *Flores mei fructus honoris et honestatis.* Est nihilominus paradisus terrestris aquis irriguus: nam dicitur, quod *fluvius egrediebatur de loco voluptatis ad irrigandum pa radisum qui inde dividitur in quatuor capita.* Paradisi fluvius virtus est, vel gratia, quia de fonte divinitatis oritur. Quatuor capita sunt quatuor virtutes, vel cardinals, quæ a gratia derivantur…. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)