Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

121 The Moon has certain things (*Luna habet quedam*)

The moon has certain properties in appearance only, certain others in appearance and existence. Again, in appearance, it certainly has three characteristics. For when it is great it appears to be small. But this is also because it is seen from a distance, Gen. 1[:16]: “God made two great lights.” So, the humble man is great with merit but modest by his reputation, Apo. 3[:8]: “Behold, I have given before you a door opened, which no man can shut: because you have a little strength.” Gloss, that is, humility.[[1]](#endnote-1) Therefore Eccli. 3[:20]: “The greater you are, the more you should humble yourself in all things.”

¶ Second, looked upon side by side it seems to move otherwise from those others

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moving on, Psal. [8:4]: “For I will behold your heavens, the works of your fingers: the moon and the stars.” So, the wise with wisdom walks and works according to the regimen of wisdom, Wis. 9[:4]: “Give me wisdom” of the heavens.

¶ Third, joined to the sun it is illuminated more and yet it seems as if it does not exist, Eccli. 43[:8], the moon “increasing wonderfully in her perfection.” So, the beloved of God by how much more he is joined by charity, the more he hides himself from the light of the world. According to that of James 4[:4]: “The friendship of this world is the enemy of God.” Psal. [54:8]: “Lo, I have gone far off flying away; and I abode.”

¶ However, this moon because of certain matters signifies the just man; because of certain things signifies the sinner; because of certain properties the fortune of the world. For the moon has light proportional to weak eyes, so the faithful one has the light of faith directing them in the darkness of this life, Jer. 31[:35]: “Thus says the Lord, who gives the sun,” that is, Christ, “for the light of the day,” namely, glory, “of the moon and of the stars,” that is, faith and other virtues, “for the light of the night.” Job 29[3]: “I walked by his light in darkness.” But alas because it is said in Matt. 26[:29]: “The moon shall not give her light,” just as neither does a candle extinguished, because faith without works is dead.

¶ Again, the moon has a delightful light for those laboring at night. So, the just man has the light of hope comforting him by reward, Eccli. 43[:7]: “From the moon,” namely, of hope, “is the sign of the festival day,” namely, of glory, because hope is about the expectation of future beatitude, Rom. 12[:12]: “Rejoicing in hope.”

¶ Again, the moon has the power in the increase of waters and marrows in its own increase. So, the just man by charity and the plenitude of compassion, Eccli. 50[:6]: “As the morning star amid a cloud.” As much as the austerity of penitence and as if the full moon in the days, as much as the humility of mercy and like the sun shining, so much to the teaching of wisdom, Tob. 4[:8]: According to your ability be faithful and “merciful.”

¶ Again, the moon has an efficacy in the generation of those being born. So the holy man is more moving for converting sinners and in the execution of good work and its diffusion, Deut. 33[:13]: “Of the fruits of heaven, and of the dew,” which namely beget the heat to the sun and the humor to the moon, [1] Cor. 4[:15]: “In Christ Jesus, by the gospel, I have begotten you,” namely spiritually. And [1] Cor. 15[:41]: “One is the glory of the sun,” that is Christ, “another the glory of the moon,” that is, the blessed Mary, “and another the glory of the stars,” that is, the saints.

¶ Again, the moon because of some things designates the sinner. First because of mutability and instability and this particularly in foolish recidivism, Eccli.

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27[:12]: “A wise man continues in wisdom as the clear sun,” namely, in its fervent aspect, in its fructifying affect, in its stable virtue, in light or thus height by contemplation, clear through discretion, spherical by poverty, which in a small degree touches earth uniformly by concord, agile by obedience, “but a fool is changed as the moon.” Because now horned by pride, now diminished by lust, now rotund by avarice because it is less able, now full through gluttony, as Isidore says in book 2, c.,[[2]](#endnote-2) that apes in the new moon are exultant, but after the half-moon they are sad. So many in their early days work well and with devotion, but gradually they grow lukewarm. When, however, from their use they ought to be more loved.

¶ Second, because of the eclipse which happens in the full moon and this in the avaricious in whom the interposition of the earth impedes the illumination of the sun, Isai. 13[:10]: “The moon shall not shine with her light.” Jer. 5[:25]: “Your sins have withheld good things from you.”

¶ Third, because of the final confusion and this in the penitent, Isai. 24[:23]: “And the moon shall blush,” as far as the younger ones, “and the sun shall be ashamed,” as far as the elders, “when the Lord of hosts shall reign,” etc. Psal. [30:18]: “Let the wicked be ashamed and be brought down to hell.”

¶ Again, the moon because of some matters designates the fortune of the world. For we read [Job 31:26]: “the moon going in brightness,” that is, prosperity to be put aside, Job 31[:26]: “If I beheld,” going about with the eyes of the heart, “the sun when it shined,” that is, prosperity in delights and honors, “and the moon going in brightness,” that is, prosperity in riches, as if saying, if I wish this evil will happen to me.

¶ Again, we read the moon rising at night, Job 25[:5] in which adversity is noted which however is to be preferred, Psal. [120:6]: “The sun shall not burn you by day,” that is elation in prosperous things, “nor the moon by night,” that is, depression in adversity and this because the Lord watches over you.

¶ Again, we read the moon is placed under the foot, Apo. 12[:1]: “A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.” Where it is noted voluntary poverty treads on temporal substance because of Christ. Also, it is said concerning the moon that it has a man burdened with thorns. So, Mary carried Christ burdened with penitents.

1. Nicholas of Lyra, *Glossa* Apo. 3:8 Moraliter 9 *Bibliorum Sacrorum cum Glossa Ordinaria*, 6 vols. (Venice, 1603). (6:1488): Quia modicam habes virtutem: secundum tuam opinionem, sed realiter magnam, quia vere humiles parum aut nihil virtutis sentiunt de seipsis, Luc. 17. c. Cum omnia benefeceritis, dicite, serui inutiles sumus. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* 12.2.31 (PL 82:439): nova Luna exsultant, media et cava tristantur.

Cf., Isidore, *The Etymologies* 12.2.31 (Barney p. 253b): Apes, in their knowledge of the elements, rejoice at the new moon, and are downcast at the half moon and the crescent moon. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)