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241 The Sun has three (*Sol habet tria*)

The sun has three characteristics: substance, strength, and performance. Concerning substances, it has four, namely, purity in material, beauty in form, greatness in quantity, and perpetuity in duration. Because of these the holy man can be compared to the sun. First, because he has purity in life. For just as the sun does not receive impressions, nor are its rays tinged by these which are near, so the just man does not receive an impression nor the stain of spiritual blame. Which are winds of pride, the clouds of envy, the lightning of wrath, the heat of avarice, the frost of sloth, the plague of lust, and the intemperance of gluttony, Can. 6[:9]: “Who is she that cometh forth,” etc. and it follows, “bright as the sun,” what is bright

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is pure. Second, he has beauty in teaching, who in himself is never eclipsed although he appears so to us, Wis. 7[:29]: “For she is more beautiful than the sun, being compared with the light.”

¶ Third, he has humility in every state, just as the sun which although it is large, namely, eight times larger than the earth, according to the philosophers, however it seems little. And this is because of its distance from the earth, so a just man the more remote he is from the earth and the closer to God, so the humbler he is in himself, Psal. [137:7-8]: “Who made the great lights, the sun to rule over the day.”

¶ Fourth, he has incorruptibility in perseverance. The sun does not have a nature subjected to contrary qualities, just as bodies have such as heat and coldness, dryness and dampness. So, the just man is not affected to consent by the heat of swimming ambition, nor the cold of sluggish omission, nor the damp of flowing voluptuousness, nor the dryness of elevating vanity. Therefore, he saves his sanctity uncorrupted, Eccli. 27[:12]: “A holy man continues in wisdom as the sun,” the uniformity of light, “but a fool is changed as the moon,” since he is totally flesh. For now, he is round through emerging cupidity, and in the end as if no one by eternal damnation.

¶ Again, the sun has a triple virtue because it is illuminative, Eccli. 17[:30]: “What is brighter than the sun; yet it shall be eclipsed.” Not to the extent of substance and light, but to the extent of its present course, office, and profit, Apo. 21[:23]: “The city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon.” Again, it has heating, Eccli. 43[:3]: “At noon he burns the earth, and who can abide his burning heat?” Again, it has an emotive power, by which one is moved by God, Ezech. 9[:9]: “The land is great,” etc. So, a holy man has the light of health or honesty, the heat of charity, and the motive of obedience.

¶ Again, the sun has a multiple operation, by the previously mentioned power. For by the power of illumination four things are operated because it shows trivial things, puts to flight darkness and clouds, delights the eyes, and refrains malefactors. Thus, the true sun of justice arises in the soul of the just man, it shows small defects, just as in the rays of the sun are seen minimal particles of matter. Eccli. 42[:16]: “The sun giving light has looked upon all things.” Therefore, he says that all things perish along a single evil path. A man in a game by the loss of

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one foot loses, a man on a horse, so by one mortal sin man loses the reward of glory. By the change of one thing, it takes away the specific, and the whole difference is changed, Psal. [118:101]: “From every evil way.” Therefore, he says well all things not only mortal sins but also venial. Therefore, Ezechias illuminated said, Isai. 38[:15]: “I will recount to you all my years,”

¶ Again, he puts to flight the clouds by the detestation of sin. For the fog is called a fault because it is stinking by the absence of charity, wet by the ease of slipping, obscure by the choosing of error, and dissolute by separation of damnation, Wis. 2[:3]: “Our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud, and shall be dispersed as a mist, which is driven away by the beams of the sun.” But this cloud disturbs the eyes more, that is, church men, than other members of the church, Habac. 1[:13]: “Your eyes are too pure to behold evil.”

¶ Again, his eyes delight in the taste of heaven, Eccli. 11{:7]: “The light is sweet, and it is delightful for the eyes to see the sun.” The delight is the convenient with the convenient, but nothing so much fits to the rational soul as God to whose image it was created and for one recovered by his grace. Therefore, to be joined with God is the greatest delight of the soul, Psal. [33:9]: “O taste and see that the Lord is sweet.” But some like beasts of burden carry the wine, however they do not taste it. In service to the Lord, they labor but impeded by sins they do not taste because they distance themselves from God by the four feet: thought, word, deed, and omission. Again, the malefactors refrain the coercion of enemies. For with the sun appearing, adulterers, and thieves return to their own. And the enemy does not dare to attack the castle where the Lord is thought to be, Psal. [103:22]: “The sun arises,” of justice in the heart of the faithful, “and they are gathered together,” the demons, who do not dare to invade those in whom they see the sign thau, [Ezech. 9:4]. But man goes out [2 Esd. 4:15]: “To his work,” etc.

¶ Again, by the power of heating. Four things are at work which alters colors, brings forth fruits, dissolves the congealed, and makes things to abound. Thus, the true sun, Christ, having arisen in the soul alters the colors through honest association. For the color of the world flourishes in the trappings of horses, in the crowds of the rich, by sweetness of delights, the boasting of members, the arrangement of hair. But Can. 1[:4] it is said, “I am black but beautiful.” I am black on the outside because of poverty in begging, because of labor striving, because of discourse in preaching, because of affliction in fasting, because of humility in association, but I am beautiful, namely, because of brightness of chastity, the rosiness of honesty, the clearness of knowledge. I am black, she says, like the dwellings of cedar which were exposed to the sun and rains, but beautiful like the fur coats of Solomon of which some are dyed red, some blue. Therefore, do not consider me as if held to little account because I am dark, because the sun has discolored me, on the outside it has colored through mercy, but it has recolored me above through glory. For how much more I am in form, that is, because of it, which is pure act without matter, and less of matter, that is, in bodily substance, so much more the entity is more beautiful. Again, it procreates fruit through excellent work. Wherefore the sun is called the father of the planets, Deut. 33[:14]: “Of the fruits brought forth by the sun and by the moon.” *Gloss*,[[1]](#endnote-1) which the heat of the sun and the dampness of the moon nourish, just as a fire always is in motion, so heat is always in operation. Wherefore Gregory in his *Homilia* *de penitentibus*.[[2]](#endnote-2) If love is idle, it is not love. If it is great it works great things, Col. 1[:10-11]: “That you may walk worthy of God,” as for good association to God, “in all things pleasing,” as for the right intention, “being fruitful in every good work,” as for meritorious operation, “and increasing in the knowledge of God,” as for saving knowledge, “strengthened with all might,” as for the final perseverance. Again, it dissolves the congealed and loosens through the remission of sins, just as frozen water is dissolved by heat, Exod. 16[:21]: “After the sun grew hot, the manna melted.” Luke 7[:47]: “Many sins are forgiven her because she has loved much.” Because the crystal is not at all dissolved by heat. Again, it consumes the moisture through the mortification of the flesh, James 1[:11]: “The sun rose with a burning heat, and parched the grass, and the flower thereof fell off.” Isai. 40[:6]: “All flesh is grass,” etc. Just as dried plants do not fructify, so neither flesh whose origin is evil, the delightful fruit

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is evil in performance, Gal. 5[:19]: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest.”

¶ Again, by motive power it has four operations. For it illuminates the earth, determines the times, varies the shadows, and manifests the glory of God. So, the true son rising in the soul makes man to shine by the consideration of his various states, Eccle. 1[:5-6]: “The sun rises, and goes down, and returns to his place; and there rising again, makes his round by the south, and turns again to the north. The spirit goes forward surveying all places round about.” So,[[3]](#endnote-3) man shining like the true sun now ascends at the rising of his nativity considering that the soul is made from nothing, the body from the mud, and thus he humiliates himself. Now he descends to the setting of death considering that after this life he could not merit. But according to the merits he receives, so thus he prepares himself. Now he turns south to the grace of inspecting, the splendor of vision, the heat of love, so that he may desire that. Now he is turned to the north of hell considering the fierceness of fire and the perpetuity of the fierceness, and thus he avoids it, Gen. 13[:14]: “Lift up your eyes, and look from the place wherein you now are, to the north.”

¶ Again, it determines the times, Gen. 1[:14]: “Let there be lights made in the firmament of heaven, to divide the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons.”

¶ The sun distinguishes four times in the year. Spring when it is under the eastern signs: the Ram, the Bull, and the Twins. Summer when it was under the northern signs: Cancer, the Lion, and the Virgin. Autumn when it is under the western signs: Libra, Scorpio, and Sagittarius. Winter when it is under the southern signs: Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. In winter, the fruit is conceived. In spring it is born. In summer it increases. In autumn it is collected. So, man illuminated by the sun. In adolescence he conceives a good proposal. In youth he produces what was conceived. In old age he perfects to perfection. After death he gathers the fruit. Therefore, while we have time let us work good for all.

¶ But because some find no acceptable time for working because in adolescence they do not know how. In their youth they do not want to. In old age they are unable, Psal. [118:126]: “It is time, O Lord, to do,” namely, now, but

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“They have dissipated your law.” Therefore, after death they gather nothing of good.

¶ Again, it varies the shadows by contending association, Jer. 6[:4]: “Woe unto us, for the day is declined, for the shadows of the evening are grown longer.” When man is subjected to the true sun, he is perpendicular and little or no shadow. The more he declines from that, he makes a longer shadow, that is, a greater fault, because sin is to the good spirit, the incommutable adheres to things commutable.

¶ Again, he manifests the glory of God by a right intention of working, Eccli. 43[:5]: “Great is the Lord that made him, and at his words,” etc. And he says well by words plurally because there are two words of God. The word of the precepts, about which Matt. 19[:17, 21]: “If you will enter into life, keep the commandments.” And the word of the counsels about which follows there, “If you will be perfect, go sell what you have,” etc. If Christ is compared to the sun, Mala. last chapter [4:2]: Deservedly his word is compared to the solar rays. For the solar ray is derived from the heat of the work, inflamed directly by the air. So, the word of God inflames the affections for loving, Psal. [118:140]: “Your word is exceedingly refined.” It directs an aspect to succeed, Jer. 42[:3]: “Let the Lord shew us the way by which we may walk.” Psal. [142:8]: “Make the way known to me, wherein I should walk.” Through which it illuminates the intellect for believing, Luke 24[:45]: “Then he opened their understanding, that they might understand,” etc.

1. *Glossa ordinaria* Deut. 33:14 (PL 113:498): Solis. Christi, qui est sol justitiae, qui ait: Fulgebunt justi sicut sol in regno Patris eorum (Matth. XIII), quia similes ei erimus.

Ac lunae. Ecclesiae, quae accipit hos fructus a sole, id est a Christo: semper igitur solem plena devotione respiciat, ne aliquando aversa lumen perdat. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Gregory, *XL Homiliaum in Evangelia* 30.2 (PL 76:1221): Nunquam est Dei amor otiosus. Operatur etenim magna, si est; si vero operari renuit, amor non est. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. *Fasciculus morum* 3.21 (p. 282): Exemplum. Si enim respiciat ad orientem sui ortus, ibi propriam miseriam satis intuetur; si ad occidentem sue mortis, hoc idem prospiciet; si ad aquilonem, bene consideret iudicium et penam inferni; si quarto ad aliam partem, scilicet austrum, respexerit, ibi considerabit gloriam et gaudium beatorum. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)