372 To Come (*Venire*)

God came to man, and on the other hand man came to God. But God came to man in the present by way of mercy so that he may enliven him in many ways. But he will come by way of justice so that he may judge him terribly. Therefore, because humanity was abandoned in captivity in many ways, Christ came as a mediator agreeing peace, reforming as a physician healing the sick, protracting as a warrior having power over the enemy, prostrating as one laying down a price for paying.

Concerning the first, Eph. 2[:17]: “Coming, he preached peace to you that were afar off, and peace to them that were nigh.”

Concerning the second, Luke 5[:32]: “I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance.”

Concerning the third, [1] Kings 17[:45]: “You come to me with a sword, and with a spear: I come to you in the name of the Lord.”

Concerning the fourth, Matt. 20[:28]: “The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many.”

Second, as concerning the evil they demand judgment because no evil is unpunished, Apo. 2[:16]: “Do penance: if not, I will come to thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”

¶ Third, as he rewards the good, Isai. 62[:11]: “Behold your Savior comes: behold his reward is with him.”

¶ Second, man comes to God, but sometimes as evil, sometimes as good. The evil comes as Judas for selling, Matt. 26[:50]: “Friend, whereto are you come?” And others for killing as the Jews. But the good man comes for kissing and making better. About which we ought to note now the end and the middle.

Concerning the first, note that we ought to come to Christ, after Christ, and through Christ.

First, to Christ teaching because he teaches useful matters, but the world harmful, Psal. [33:12]: “Come, children, hearken to me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.” And Matt. 11[:28]: “Come to me,” the teacher of the devout, “all you that labor,” in the study of the believers, “and are burdened,” with the weight of sins, “and I will refresh you,” with the bread of life and intellect.

Second, we must come after Christ, living with him to resemble him, not after the world seeking to lead me away, as after a teacher, Matt. 4[:19]: “Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men.”

Third, after Christ suffering as through the door into what is to be believed, John 14[:6]: “No man comes to the Father, but by me. I am the way,” directing in the manner of life, “and the truth,” instructing in preaching, “and the life,” restoring in rewarding.

¶ The fruit that is generally coming forth is triple. First is in the petition of forgiveness, just as when one comes to the mediator on account of reconciliation, the pilgrim to the saints on account of an indulgence, the sick man to the physician on account of healing, Isai. 1[:16, 18]: “Cease to do perversely,” etc., and it follows, “Come, and accuse me,” etc. Luke 8[:47] a woman came to Christ and was healed.

The second fruit is acquisition of a benefit, Isai. 55[:1}: “All you that thirst, come to the waters,” that is, to the gifts of graces.

The third fruit is the purchase of glory, just as the worker with his agenda completed comes for his hire, Isai. 55[:3]: “Come to me: hear and your soul shall live.” But alas because it is said in John 5[:40]: “You will not come to me that you may have life.”

Again, according to Bernard in a *Sermo*,[[1]](#endnote-1) it is read that the coming of Christ was triple, because he came to men for the assumption of his flesh, in men for the infusion of grace, and against for the retribution of works.

Concerning the first, Gen. 37[:14]: “So being sent from the vale of Hebron, he came to Sichem,” which is interpreted, labor and return. In this coming he came for three reasons, that he might excite to penitence, Luke 5[:32]: “I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance.”

Again, that he might reward those persevering, John 14[:18]: “I will come to you,” to my own.

¶ Concerning the third coming against men, Isai. 3[:14]: “The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people.” And in that coming he will come for three reasons: for separating, for saving, and damning. Concerning all of these, Matt. 25[:31-32]: “When the Son of man shall come … he shall separate them,” for the first, “And he shall set the sheep on his right hand,” for the second, “but the goats on his left,” for the third.

¶ Again, Christ came according to that of Habac. 2[:3]: “For it shall surely come, and it shall not be slack.” Where the word “come” (*veniens veniet*) is doubled as a sign that his triple coming is doubled. Of which the first is into the world and that is double, because it is through the incarnation and through the transubstantiation. Of which the earlier is in the womb of the Virgin, John 16[:28]: “I came forth from the Father and am come into the world.” Second in the hand of the priest, 1 Kings 4[:7]: “God is come into the camp.”

The second coming is into the human heart and that is double. One through baptismal regeneration, just as the nurse comes with water to quiet the child, 1 John 5[:6]: “This is he that came by water,” namely, of absolution in baptism, “and blood,” of redemption on the cross. Another through penitential conversion, just as the physician to the sick, Matt. 8[:7]: “I will come and heal him.”

The second coming is for judgment and that is double. One for the particular judgment in death, Matt. 24[:44]: “Be you also ready, because at what hour you know not the Son of man will come.” Another for the universal judgment, Isai. 3[:14]: “The Lord will enter into judgment.”

¶ Again, Christ will come in the cloud of the flesh so that he may redeem the world, John [16:28]: “I came forth from the Father and am come into the world.”

Second, he came in a dew of sweetness so that he might visit the soul, John 14[:23]: “We will come to him and will make our abode with him.”

Third, he came as a pledge of the altar so that he might lessen sin, Apo. 3[:20]: “Behold,” I come, “I stand at the gate, and knock.”

¶ Again, Christ came into the world for redemption. Second into the mind for sanctification. Third for judgment by retribution. Concerning the first, John [16:28]: “I came forth from the Father and am come into the world.” Concerning the second, John [14:23]: “We will come to him and will make our abode with him.” Concerning the third, Matt. [24:30]: “They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.”

¶ This third coming will be terrible, which will be evident by terrible signs preceding the coming of the judge, which will be in creatures bodily and spiritually. And first in the highest bodies, because in the lights, the sun, the moon, and the stars. In the creatures of the world as in the air and the water because there will be the sound of the sea and the waves. In the lowest creatures as in the earth because there will be the hardships of the peoples.

Again, there will be the signs in the spiritual creatures and in the angels. For Luke 21[:26]: “The powers of heaven shall be moved.” And in creatures made up of both as in “Men withering away for fear, and expectation.” Mal. 2[1-2]: “Behold he comes … and who shall stand to see him?”

¶ Again, lest men from ignorance about the coming of Christ should excuse themselves, Christ sent forth signs of his coming, that is, that is, by the mystery of figures he arranged the letters, that is, the witnesses of the scriptures made firm the messengers, that is, the persons of the prophets. But so manifestly wretched was the synagogue it did not take note how open the letters, blind Judea did not understand how truthful the messengers, the incredulous people did not admit how Christ “came unto his own, and his own received him not,” John 1[:11]. Who on the contrary, [Isai. 1:3]: “The ox knows his owner, but Israel has not known” its Lord. Finally however when now he was about to come he sent in very lately three famous messengers of whom the first, that is, [Luke 1:26]: the angel prepared the way of the incarnation so that he might come to greet her in the temple, that is, the womb of the Virgin.

The second messenger was Symeon who prepared the way of the nativity, [Luke 1:34]. Wherefore he would come into the material temple which was Solomon’s.

The third messenger was John the Baptist who prepared the way of preaching, [Matt. 3:1]. Wherefore he came into the spiritual temple which is the mind of man.

¶ Again, it is read the coming of Christ was triple: past, present, and future. In the first he came to man just as a legate for redeeming. In the second to man for consoling. In the third against man for judging.

Concerning the first, he came to man just as a legate sent from the side of the pope with a plenitude of power. Where first, it was being argued concerning a difficult case, he dispensed upon every decree, so that the virgin would be the mother of the boy, a womanly mother, the daughter of God, the mother of the Father, Psal. [64:10]: “You have visited the earth.” A steadfast and humble virgin, and you refresh her through a repletion of virtues, you multiply her in that place by a marvelous fecundity.

Second, as a legate he preached, Luke 1[:78-79]: “The Orient from on high has visited us,” and it follows, “To enlighten them that sit in darkness,” etc. Man did not know how to find the door of paradise, like a blind man, but like anyone going there he fell into a ditch of hell.

Third, as a legate he was sent to pacify the great discords which were between God and man, nor did anyone else seek to calm these. For he did not wish to put himself over man purely in the case that he had against man, nor did man dare to put himself over God purely in his case. Therefore, what was sent was a mediator toward God and toward man in which as if God and man compromised. Wherefore in the Psal. [11:6]: “Says the Lord,” the Father, “I will set him in safety.” And man, for his part says, “I will deal confidently in his regard.” Fully the good mediator who would rather die in pain than not pacify between the parties, 1 Tim. 2[:5-6]: “One mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: Who gave himself a redemption,” etc. And 2 Cor. 5[:15]: “He died for all.” Therefore, he reigns, Psal. [105:4]: “Visit us with your salvation,” so that namely, he may pacify by this passion.

Fourth, as a legate he was sent to give indulgences and absolutions. For humanity was as if excommunicated and separated from the communion of the Church triumphant, Luke 1[:68]: “He has visited and wrought the redemption.” And Psal. [8:5]: Lord, “What is man that you are mindful of him?” It is a great sign of love and gift of indulgence. So, a man descends to a house of ill repute by asking his wife if he might return from thence, and if he would return, he wants to excuse all, so did Christ coming in the second coming of Christ. And because it is for the present, Christ came to spiritual man just as a teacher to his student lest he err and if he would err to correct, Psal. [88:31]: “And if his children forsake my law.” John 3[:2]: “We know that you are come a teacher from God.”

Second, just as a friend to a troubled friend lest he despair by pouring in consolations, Exod. 3[:16-17]: “Visiting I have visited” them, through consolation, “and I have seen,” with the eye of compassion, “all,” namely, the opposition to you. “And I have said the word to bring you forth.”

Third, just as the householder to the worker to encourage him to the good, Job 10[:12]: “Your visitation has preserved my spirit.”

¶ Concerning the third coming for judgment, Mal. 3[:2]: “He came like a refining fire,” that is, cleaning the slag from the metal, “and like the fuller's herb,” which is the thistle because by its eating it takes away what is left over on the cloth. And it can be said that he comes then secretly and this in the document of our preposition and vigilance, [1] Thess. 5[:2]: “The day of the Lord shall so come, as a thief in the night.” Where the Apostle notifies us of the future judgment for many reasons.

First, for the demonstration of fault when it is said, “the day.” For it is not said “the day” there on account of the quality of time, but on account of the clarity of the demonstration, just as the Apostle calls it, Rom. 2[:5]: “The day of wrath, the day of revelation,” on account of the detention of sinners here not of the ones showing.

Second, he gives notice to the strictness of the sentence when he says, “of the Lord,” this is the day of man for freedom, but then there will be the day of the Lord truly judging what is strict enough, Isai. 13[:9]: “Behold, the day of the Lord shall come, a cruel day.” And this because he spares no one, Prov. 6[:34]: “The jealousy and rage of the husband will not spare in that day, etc.

Third, as for the hiding of the hour when it is said, “like a thief,” therefore he knows every watch because 2 Pet. 3[:10]: “The day of the Lord shall come as a thief, in which the heavens,” etc.

¶ Again, Christ comes as the lord to his servants, as the teacher to his students, and like the physician to the sick.

Concerning the first, princes are accustomed to come to their lands for taking homage, John 16[:28]: “I came forth from the Father and am come into the world.” This can be noted how much he loved men that he left heaven to come to man. And lest men excuse themselves from ignorance, therefore he sent ahead messengers to warn about his coming, just as it was said above, Mal. 3[:1]: “He shall come to his holy temple, the Lord of hosts.” Some however did not want to receive the Lord, nor do him homage, John 1[:11]: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him,” etc.

First, however afterward in his passion they rejected him, and in a similar way the evil Christians do who receive Christ at first and after their being born, they drive him out after Easter. Wherefore it is a marvel how such expellers dare to seek anything from God, to whom it can be responded that of Judges 11[:7] that as a response “he answered” those questioning him to the leader, “Are not you the men that cast me out of my father's house.” But also somewhat worse, because they receive the enemy of Christ through the whole year under their cloisters and only once at the paschal time of the Lord, John 5[:43]: “I am come in the name of my Father, and you receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive.”

¶ Second, he came as a teacher to his student, Dan. 10[:14]: “I am come to teach you.” It is evident what things he taught here and yet daily teaches, John 12[:46]: “I am come a light into the world; that whosoever believeth in me, may not remain in darkness.” But alas because some cannot submit to the teaching of this light, they are similar to the wolf that does not heed the barking of the dogs at night and that flees the light, John 3[:20]: “For every one that does evil hates the light, and comes not to the light, that his works may not be reproved.” Wherefore it is to be feared for such ones because he was dead or near, because they could not suffer the light, just as the false merchants who take their cloth from the light, John 3[:19]: “The light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light.”

¶ Third, he came like the physician to the sick. Wherefore Augustine,[[2]](#endnote-2) he came to us, the great physician, because everywhere the great were lying sick. Truly Christ is the physician, Mark 1[:14]: “Jesus came into Galilee” and they wished him to cure the sick and he cured them, truly the friends as well as the enemies, 1 Tim. 1[:15]: “Christ came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.” But many would rather receive the poison than the medicine, John 10[:10]: “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they may have life.”

¶ Again, the Son of God came to man through the assumption of human nature in man by the gathering of grace and the execution of justice.

Concerning the first, Agg. 2[:8]: “The desired of all nations shall come.” Wherefore Augustine says in some *Sermo*,[[3]](#endnote-3) concerning the coming of Christ, desperate we lay, we were sick under the expectation of healing. Finally, the physician came, whom the sick man did not recognize. He came that he might visit, and that he might heal the one killed. The example of the pelican[[4]](#endnote-4) concerning this, also 1 Kings 4[:7-8]: “God is come into the camp.” The Philistines said this when the ark came to the children of Israel and they approached. “Woe to us: for there was no such great joy,” in the camps of the Hebrews, “yesterday and the day before.” God came into the camp when he came into the womb of the Virgin, enclosed by a wall of integral virginity, the false excluded by a ditch of humility, ordered to the seat of the Trinity. Wherefore these camps are the Philistines, that is, the demons. Inspiring awe, Can. 6[:9]: “Who is she that comes forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon,” and it follows, “terrible as an army set in array?” Wherefore also the good rejoicing is more than yesterday, that is, in the time of the law, scripture, or even more than three days ago, that is, greater in the state of innocence.

Concerning the second, John 10[:10]: “I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly.” For just as it is triple: the life of nature, grace, and glory. Before the coming of Christ men had only the life of nature, which is short, but after the coming of Christ he gave men the life of grace and glory and thus they had life more abundantly.

Concerning the third coming, against man, see above in the same chapter.

Again, because man incurred sin, he also had the aggravation of the body, desolation of the mind, and weakening of his virtue. Therefore, Christ came in the flesh just as humble so that the debility in the mind might be alleviated, that the desolate in subsistence might be consoled, and that the debilitated be strengthened.

¶ Again, because through sin man incurred a sickness of the flesh, a grief of the mind, and a numbness of virtue, therefore Christ came in the flesh so that the flesh may be cured, in the mind that the mind may be cheered in sustenance, that virtue be strengthened.

1. Bernard, *Sermones de diversis* 66.3 (PL 183:689): Ecce quam necessarius fuit adventus Christi, qui carnem subjiceret spiritui, hominem pacificaret sibi, Deum reconciliaret homini. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Augustine, *Sermo* 175.1.1 (PL 38:945): Si venit de coelo magnus medicus, magnus per totum orbem terrae jacebat aegrotus. Ipse aegrotus genus humanum est. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 109.3 (PL 37:1447): quam nos in imo desperati jacebamus? Sine exspectatione salutis aegrotabamus: missus est medicus, quem non cognovit aegrotus. Si enim cognovissent, nunquam Dominum gloriae crucifixissent (I Cor. II, 8). Sed hoc quoque valuit ad aegroti medicamentum, quod medicum occidit aegrotus: venit ut visitaret, occisus est ut sanaret. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Pelican, cf. Isidore, *Etymologiae* 12.7.26 (PL 82:955): ubi advertit [Col.0955A] veteris philosophiae tantum praejudicio credi, quae de filiis pelicani cruore illius in vitam revocatis commemorantur.

Its is said that she kills her offspring and grieves for them for three days, then wounds herself and sheds her blood to revive her sons. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)