Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

255 To Come When came (*Venire Cum venit*)

To come. “When the fulness of the time had come,” [Gal. 4:4]. The fulness of time is the time of grace, which began from the coming of the Savior because without doubt it is the time of having mercy and the year of benignity. For it is the law given through Moses, but grace and truth are made through Jesus Christ, that is, the exhibition of the promises through Christ. For sins taken away through Christ are fulfilled. But why for so long did he put off coming, the physician for healing the sick so long languishing. Certainly, therefore if he had come more quickly the sick might think that he was not the physician of virtue but of the power of nature or the sick would be healed lightly and thus hold the physician and sickness of little value. Therefore as the sick one was distrustful of his power and recognized the magnitude of the sickness and asked for the grace of the physician, the Savior put off approaching until the sick one cried out frequently and would say,[[1]](#endnote-1) Come, Lord, and do not delay, lighten the crimes of your people.

¶ There is another reason for this delay. For in Wis. [18:4] it is said, “While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course,” etc., until he came. The first silence was in the law of nature. The second was in the law of scripture. The third is in the law of grace. For example, God responded to the minds of men from the beginning of his creation. The natural law the twin of the one containing the mandates, namely, the affirmative which was for seeking benefits was taught in the Gospel of Matt. [7:12]: “Whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.” Another negative which was for avoiding injuries is read in Tob. [4:6]: “See you never do to another what you would hate to have done to you by another.” But this law was resolved when Cain slew Abel, doing to another what he did not want done to him. And thus, was made the first silence up to Moses through whom God raised up a witness to Jacob and placed the precept in Israel giving him the ten commandments written in two tables.

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The one contained the love of God, the other of our neighbor, on which the whole law and the prophets depended. But this law was resolved when the people adored the molten image of a calf against the first precept [Exod. 23:24]: “You shall not adore their gods.” And thus, was made the second silence toward one’s neighbor which conferred the law of grace that was written in the hearts of men by the finger of God. But this law will be silent in the end when the son of perdition will arise and now will be quiet so much iniquity abounds, and charity grows cold. In the first of these laws God made man capable. In the second to know. In the third to desire. In the first he made man to be capable by nature. In the second to know through the scripture. In the third to desire through grace.

¶ Therefore man falling, he excused himself through powerlessness by saying, I fell certainly but I could not stand. Therefore that every excuse be taken away after the first and second law while the night of fault was in the middle of its journey the word of the spirit came, that is, [John 1:14]: “The Word was made flesh,” and he made the law of grace so that man was capable by nature and knew through scripture that he may fulfill through grace.

¶ Not that he and others did not have the grace but few because they had more fear than love, more as servants than as children they served. Wherefore also in his descent he moved the water of the angel and the conquered priest was healed, and the Levite passed by but the Samaritan healed him. And [4 Kings 4:29], the staff of Eliseus sent before did not raise the boy but with this Eliseus applying himself to the dead one he resuscitated.

¶ Therefore Christ came three ways. First, in a cloud of flesh that he might redeem the world, Isai. [19:1]: “The Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud,” that is, the flesh, exempt from sin, “and will enter into Egypt,” that is, the world, here is that angel who according to the Apocalypse [10:1]. Therefore Bernard,[[2]](#endnote-2) “he came down from heaven, clothed with a cloud,” because he came to us shod in divinity,[[3]](#endnote-3) that is, covered by the cloud of the flesh.

Second, he came in the dew of sweetness to visit his friends, John [14:23]: “We will come to him and will make our abode with him.” Again, before you came to him in blessings of sweetness.

¶ 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,

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if any man shall open to me,” etc.

Fourth he will come in the fire of judgment against the world, Psal. [96:3]: “A fire shall go before him,” etc.

¶ These four comings represent the Church on four Sundays, not only at the beginning of the days, but in the plan of the offices which even are designated by four verses of the Prime response which are, [Psal. 48:3]: “All you that are earthborn,”[[4]](#endnote-4) You who sit,[[5]](#endnote-5) Lift up the gates,[[6]](#endnote-6) Glory be to the Father,[[7]](#endnote-7) or thus Christ comes. First, into the world for redemption. Second, into the mind for sanctification. Third, into the flesh for untying. Fourth, in judgment for retribution. Concerning the first therefore [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, [Luke 12:36]: “When he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately.”

Concerning the fourth, [Luke 21:27]: “They shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud.”

¶ This fourth coming will be terrifying which is evident from the terrible signs preceding the judgment. The coming which will be in bodily creatures, on high as in the stars, in the middle as on earth and the waters, the lowest as in spiritual creatures as in angels because Luke 21[:26]: “The powers of heaven shall be moved.” And in creatures composed of both as in “men withering away for fear.” Mala. 3[:1-2]: “Behold he comes, and who shall stand to see him?”

1. Choral text: Veni Domine, et noli tardare. Relaxa facinora plebis tuae et revoca dispersos in terram suam.

   [Veni Domine et noli tardare a 5 (Orlando di Lasso) - ChoralWiki (cpdl.org)](https://www.cpdl.org/wiki/index.php/Veni_Domine_et_noli_tardare_a_5_(Orlando_di_Lasso)) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Bernard, rather Rupert of Deutz, *De divinis officiis* 19 (PL 170:22): descendisse de coelo, amictum nube (Apoc. X). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. See Beryl Smalley, “Some Gospel Commentaries of the Early Twelfth Century” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* , Janvier-Décembre 1978, Vol. 45 (Janvier-Décembre 1978), pp. 147-180 [166 n. 48]: Alexander of Hales on the same text, MS Durham Α.11.22, fol. 75" : 'Per calciamentum humanitas unita deitati, sicut pes sub calciamento et calciamentum apparet, sie humanitas. Glosa : Venit ad nos calciata divinitas. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Quique terrigenae et filii hominum simul in unum dives et pauper

   [Quique terrigenae et filii hominum | Cantus Database](https://cantusdatabase.org/chant/199925) [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Qui sedes ad dexteram Dei

   [Qui sedes ad dexteram dei | Cantus Database](https://cantusdatabase.org/chant/504765) [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Tollite portas, principes, vestras, et elevamini portae aeternales et introibit

   [Tollite portas principes vestras et | Cantus Database](https://cantusdatabase.org/chant/243177) [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto

   [Gloria patri et filio et | Cantus Database](https://cantusdatabase.org/chant/243163) [↑](#endnote-ref-7)