Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

256 To Come Behold I send (*Venire Ecce mitto*)

To Come, “Behold I send my angel, etc., [Luke 7:27]. And immediately he will come to his holy temple, namely, lest men excuse themselves for ignorance of the Savior’s coming. Christ sent signs in advance of his coming, that is, mysteries of figures, he directed letters, that is, witnesses of scriptures, he appointed messengers, that is, the persons of the prophets. But so manifest was the misery, the synagogue it did not note such open letters. Judea was blind and did not understand the truth speaking messengers, the incredulous people would not admit it. Certainly, Christ [John 1:11]: “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” Who rather, [Isai. 1:3]: “The ox knows his owner, but Israel had not known” its Lord. At last, however when now he was to come, next he sent three illustrious messengers of whom the first, that is, [Luke 1:26] the angel prepared the way of the incarnation. He came into the temple to save, that is, the womb of the virgin. The second messenger, that is, Simeon prepared the way of his nativity. Wherefore he himself came into the material temple which is of Solomon.

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The third messenger, that is, John the Baptist prepared the way of preaching. Wherefore he himself came into the spiritual temple which is the mind of man.

¶ Concerning the first messenger it is said in Luke [1:26]: “The angel Gabriel was sent,” etc., up to and he was blessed. “Hail,” (*Ave*), he said, because through you the name of Eve will be changed. That one went away from God, but [Luke 1:28]: “The Lord is with you.” That one was cursed among women, “blessed are you.” [Luke 1:42]: “Blessed is the fruit of your womb,” Jesus. By this salutation sent forth the coming of the Lord began when it was said [Luke 1:35]:

¶ “The Holy Ghost shall come upon you,” etc., and thus the Holy Spirit coming prepared a triple way before the face of the Lord. Of which the first was the acknowledgement in the virgin, the second was the cleaning of the carnal from sin, the third was the formation of the body out of blood. For the author of faith could not be conceived from one not believing. Therefore, she consented as for the first and immediately the Holy Spirit came upon her. Certainly before he came in her when his soul was in the womb of his mother he had cleaned her of original sin, but also then he came over her so that he would clean her flesh from the source of sin, from the sickness of nature, as far as it would thus be without stain and wrinkle so that from the rest there could not arise in his members a sign from the law of sin against the law of reason and justice no [Gal. 5:17]: “For the flesh lusts against the spirit.”

¶ Third he over came when the word assumed the rational soul anew created and infused together with the flesh from the body of the virgin, and thus God made man with the soul mediating not only through the union, but also through nature, otherwise divinity could not be united with the body in the way of love, unless with the rational soul mediating. For divinity is entirely elemental because it lacks the multitude of sins and the coalescence of properties as the body. Immediately therefore he came to his holy temple, that is, the temple of salvation about which in John [2:19]: “Destroy this temple,” etc. This temple is so holy that it is sanctifying and sanctified because it is immune from sin because certainly it did not do it nor contract it. Also, it is that he did not come suddenly below nor alone

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because he came with the spirit of power by which he was able and the spirit of charity by which he could be incarnated. About whom in Wis. [18:15] it is said, “Your almighty word leapt down from your royal throne.”

¶ What greater power than eternal, he made the temporal himself, the mortal immortal, the simple composite, and certainly every word is possible with God. When therefore it is greater for God to become man and to be conceived from a virgin than for God made man to be born of a virgin. Why therefore the nativity of Christ is more solemnized than his conception. To this it is said that his conception was said to be hidden but his birth manifest or from a cause of mystery. This happens because just as Christ conceived Christ in the womb, so the faithful one ought to conceive Christ by faith in the soul. And just as the virgin brough forth Christ into the world, so the faithful soul ought to bring forth Christ in work, because faith with works is more solemn than without works.

¶ Concerning the spirit of charity about which he did not want it to be said John[[1]](#endnote-1) [3:16]: “For God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son,” not as servant, “only begotten,” not adopted, “he gave,” not sold or counter balanced, because [Tit. 3:5]: “Not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to his mercy,” etc. Thus, therefore we have the first good messenger, the first way, the first coming, and the first temple.

¶ Second, the second messenger came to the shepherds saying [Luke 2:10]: “I bring you good tidings of great joy.” This one also prepared a triple way before the face of the Lord because he was a servant in service, a place in a guest house, a cradle in the nativity scene.

¶ Concerning the first it is said [Matt. 1:20]: “Joseph, son of David, fear not to take,” etc. For this one was of the virgin a remedy for opprobrium, a solace for the journey, a submission for the necessity, and in this messenger, he announced a triple peace for us against the three enmities which were among God, man, and the angel. About which see above in the chapter [185] Peace (*Pax*). So, with these deeds the dominator came, the Lord to the material temple about which it is said in the Gospel of John [2:20]: “Six and forty years was this temple in building.” And

Psal. [47:10]: “We have received your mercy, O God.” However, he came for service. For he was offered by his mother to Simeon in the temple, he offered himself to this Father on the gallows. In the temple he was redeemed who on the cross redeemed. Not, however was this for a debt but for a benefit. For he offered himself because he wanted to. For according to the law, he was not held to be redeemed

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unless the first born opening the womb, namely, going out but this one did not thus open the womb.

¶ To this, just as Christ did not come suddenly thus, nor alone because they came with him, the spirit of humility and the spirit of poverty. Humility offered him in the temple, and he reclined in the cradle, poverty clothed him with base clothing, he redeemed with a base payment. Therefore, we have the second messenger, the second way, the second coming, and the second temple. But after the second messenger, there came a third about whom the angel Gabriel spoke in Luke [1:17]: “He shall go before him in the spirit and power,” etc. This John was called an angel not by the property of nature but by the quality of office. According to which way Christ himself is called an angel, just as consequently this one is also called an angel. The witness whom you want. John on the other hand is a great angel because he petitions the judge, the voice of the word, best man of the bridegroom, lamp of the sun who for his dignity was called not only [Matt. 11:9]: “A prophet but more than a prophet.”

¶ Again certainly there were paths of predecessors and followers because the law and the prophets up to John and from John, in truth the gospel and the apostles. This when he said to those going before that Christ would be the future. Thus [John 1:30]: “After me there comes a man, who is preferred before me,” etc.

¶ When to those present, he shows Christ present there, [John 1:29]: “Behold the Lamb of God,” etc. This one also prepared the way before the face of the Lord, a way that was triple. For when it is read that there was a triple baptism, namely, ablution in water, compunction in tears, suffering in blood. The first way John prepared by baptizing, the second by preaching, the third by dying. For he baptized the exterior body but to the interior mind he preached penance, but he did not confer indulgence, he dies for justice, but he did not justify.

¶ Third the Lord came to your holy temple to the spiritual temple about which the Apostle [1 Cor. 3:17]: “For the temple of God is holy, which you are.” But also, then just as he did not come suddenly, so neither alone. For with him there came the spirit of honesty and the spirit of truth. You do honestly, you speak truth which he employed. For he did singular works according to that [John 15:24]: “If I had not done among them the works that no other man,” etc. And the salutary words with Peter attesting that when he said [John 6:69]: “You have the words of eternal life,” etc.

1. The word *caritas* or *charitas* is not found in the Gospel of John. However in the First Epistle of John it is found twelve times. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)