Worcester F 80 Distinctiones

261 The Word (*Verbum*)

“The Word was made flesh,” [John 1:14]. It is the word that was conceived by the heart. The word which was put forth by the mouth. The word which was written by the reed-pen. Again, it is the human word produced metaphorically about which the Poet,[[1]](#endnote-1) the word once let slip flies beyond recall. The divine word is born eternally. About which[[2]](#endnote-2) it is said in Isai. [40:8]: “The word of our Lord endures forever.” However, this word was conceived of the Father, according to the divine nativity eternally brought forth from the mother according to human nativity, temporally written in the mind according nativity, gratuitous spiritually, about which it is said in John [1:1]: “In the beginning was the word,” etc.

¶ Concerning the second, Isai. [9:8]: “The Lord sent a word into Jacob. Concerning the third,[[3]](#endnote-3) Luke 3[:2]: “The word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary, in the desert.”

¶ There is also the heavenly word[[4]](#endnote-4) which is God and flesh, about which John 1[:1, 14]: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh.” And the internal word[[5]](#endnote-5) that is the spirit and life, about which John [6:64]: “The words that I have spoken to you, are spirit and life.” There is the external word which is the seed and the sword. The seed certainly in propagating virtues, Luke [8:11]: “The seed is the word of God.” The sword in cutting away the vices. Wherefore the Apostle [Eph. 6:17]: “The sword of the Spirit which is the word of God.” Again, the word is uncreated in virtue of the Father. The word is inspired in the human breast of the mind. The word is incarnated in the womb of the Virgin. The word is unready

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in the book of divine law. First the word was above John. Second it was within John. Third it was announced on account of John. Fourth it was made through John.

¶ Again,[[6]](#endnote-6) the word was made flesh through a personal union, John 1[:14]: “The Word was made flesh.” The bread becomes flesh through sacramental conversion, John [6:52]: “The bread that I will give, is my flesh.” Man becomes flesh through a natural or carnal comingling, about which it is said, [Gen. 2:24]: “Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife,” etc.

¶ In the name[[7]](#endnote-7) of the flesh sometimes is designated nature as there, [1 Cor. 15:39]: “One is the flesh of birds, another of fishes,” etc. Sometimes a person as there, [Luke 3:6]: “All flesh shall see the salvation of God.” Sometimes fragility as there, [Gen 6:3]: “My spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh.” Sometimes carnality as there [1 Cor. 15:50]: “Flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God.” When therefore it is said, [John 1:14]: “The word was made flesh, that is, God was incarnated there by the name of flesh among humanity, [Rom. 1:3]: “Who was made to him of the seed of David, according to the flesh,” and through this question by which was asked.

¶ When man[[8]](#endnote-8) is sufficiently composed of soul and flesh, and the soul is the prestigious part why on account of the inferior part is it said, [John 1:14]: “The word was made flesh” not [the word] was made soul, especially when there is a greater likeness between the word and the soul than between the word and the flesh. Because, namely, incarnated signifies habit, that is, dressed by flesh which according to itself fits to the word. Animated, in truth, signifies life, that is, the vegetative soul which properly fits the body. The word, however according to itself is not vivified by the soul, but rather vivifies the soul. Or through synecdoche “The word was made flesh,” that is, God was made man. For according to the Psal. [86:5]: “This man is born in her and the Highest himself has founded her.”

¶ Therefore from these four causes[[9]](#endnote-9) “The Word was made flesh,” to humble the proud, to reconcile enemies, to liberate slaves, to redeem friends.

¶ Concerning the first,[[10]](#endnote-10) [Philip. 2:6-7]: “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But emptied himself,” etc. Which Isais says in the *Verbum abbreviatum*,[[11]](#endnote-11) it is necessary certainly for contraries to be cured by contraries. As however much was the vice of pride just so much would be the virtue of humility. So much however was the pride of man that he wished to be like God, knowing good and evils. Therefore, there had to be so much humility that God would become like man. Just as the Apostle says [Philip, 2:6]: “Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery,” etc.

¶ Concerning the second,[[12]](#endnote-12) because of enmity

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there was contrariety between God [and man], because man in sinning subtracted his service from the Lord and gave it to the enemy. But this could not be reformed unless the damned be restored, but man did not have anything worth that he could recompense. Because if the thing was irrational, it would be less restored by the irrational, but man could not because he withdrew the just and innocent and he found no man except a sinner. Therefore, God gave to man for satisfaction a man greater than a man, otherwise one could not make satisfaction for all. Nor did God wish to free man by word alone because he preferred to invite him to power.

1. Horace, *Epistula* 1.71 (LCL 194:374-375): et semel emissum volat irrevocabile verbum.

and the word once let slip flies beyond recall. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. Innocent III, *Sermo* 1 (PL 217:452): De verbo prolato secundum nativitatem humanam ex matre loquitur Isaias **(cap. IX)**: «Verbum misit Dominus in Jacob, et cecidit in Israel.» [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. Innocent III, *Sermo* 1 (PL 217:452): De verbo scripto secundum nativitatem gratuitam in mente Lucas **(cap. III)**testatur: «Factum Domini super Joannem Zachariae filium in deserto.» [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. Innocent III, *Sermo* 1 (PL 217:452): Verbum supernum, Deus et **[Col.0452B]**caro; internum, spiritus et vita; verbum externum, semen et gladius. Verbum Deus secundum aeternitatem, quoniam in principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum. Verbum caro secundum humanitatem, quia Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Cf. Innocent III, *Sermo* 1 (PL 217:452): Verbum spiritus, intelligentibus; verbum vita, credentibus; unde: «Verba quae locutus sum vobis, spiritus et vita sunt **(Joan. VI)**.» Verbum semen in propagandis virtutibus; unde: «Semen est verbum Dei **(Luc. VIII)**.» Verbum gladius, in vitiis amputandis; unde: «Et gladius spiritus, quod est verbum Dei **(Ephes. VI)**.» [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Cf. Innocent III, *Sermo* 1 (PL 217:452): Verbum fit caro per unionem, panis fit caro per conversionem, homo fit caro per commistionem; per unionem personalem, per conversionem sacramentalem, per commistionem carnalem. De primo dicitur: Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis; de secundo legitur: «Panis quem ego dabo, caro mea est pro mundi vita **(Joan. VI);**» de tertio vero scribitur: «Propter quod relinquet homo patrem et matrem, et adhaerebit uxori suae: et erunt duo in carne una **(Gen. II)**.» [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. Innocent III, Sermo 1 (PL 217:453): Nomine carnis quandoque designatur **[Col. 0453A]**natura, quandoque persona, quandoque fragilitas, quandoque carnalitas. Natura, cum dicitur: «Alia est caro piscium, alia volucrum, alia jumentorum (I Cor. XV);» persona, cum dicitur: «Videbit omnis caro salutare Dei nostri (Luc. III);» fragilitas, ubi dicitur: «Non permanebit spiritus meus in homine in aeternum, quia caro est (Gen. VI);» carnalitas, ubi dicitur: «Caro et sanguis regnum Dei non possidebunt (I Cor. XV).» Cum ergo dicitur: *Verbum caro factum est,* nomine carnis intelligitur vel habitus, vel humanitas. *Verbum* enim *caro factum est,* id est Deus est incarnatus; quia «factus est ex semine David secundum carnem (Rom. I).» Ac per hoc solvitur quaestio illa, qua dicitur: [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. Innocent III, Sermo 1 (PL 217:453): Cum homo sufficienter ex anima constet et **[Col. 0453B]**carne, cur propter unam partem *Verbum* dicitur *caro factum,* et propter alteram, verbum non dicitur factum anima; praesertim cum major sit similitudo inter Verbum et animam, quam inter Verbum et carnem? Quia scilicet incarnatum significat habitum, id est carne vestitum: quod convenit Verbo; animatum vero significat vitam, id est anima vegetatum, quod Verbo non convenit; Verbum enim non vivificatur ab anima, sed potius vivificat animam. Vel per synecdochen *Verbum* dicitur *caro factum,* id est Deus factus homo; nam «homo factus est in ea, et ipse fundavit eam Altissimus (Psal. LXXXVI). [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Cf. Innocent III, Sermo 1 (PL 217:453): Quatuor enim ex causis *Verbum caro factum est:* ut superbos humiliaret, ut inimicos reconciliaret, ut servos redimeret [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Cf. Innocent III, Sermo 1 (PL 217:453): ut amicos nutriret. «Cum enim in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo: sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus, et habitu inventus ut homo (Phil. II).» Quod Apostolus dicit: «Exinanivit,» Propheta dicit: «Abbreviatum.»---«Verbum, inquit, abbreviatum faciet Dominus super terram (Psal. X).» Vitium quippe superbiae, per humilitatis virtutem oportuit expiari; quia contraria contrariis curantur: ut quantum fuit superbiae vitium, tanta foret virtus humilitatis. Vitium autem superbiae tantum fuit, ut homo vellet esse sicut Deus, sicut serpens illi promiserat: «Eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum (Gen. III).» Tanta ergo debuit esse virtus humilitatis, ut Deus fieret sicut homo; juxta quod dicit Apostolus: «Cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo,  [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Peter Cantor, *Verbum abbreviatum* (PL 205:48): Si subtilius etiam consideres, animadvertes vitium superbiae sordidissimum sordidissimo, et mortale mortali emplastro saepe curari. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Cf. Innocent III, Sermo 1 (PL 217:454): Inter Deum et hominem gravis erat inimicitiarum discordia, quoniam homo peccando servum subtraxit **[Col. 0454C]**et abstulit Deo, quem tradidit et subjecit diabolo. Pax igitur inter eos fieri rationabiliter non poterat, nisi damnum quod intulerat, restauraret. Homo vero nihil habebat, quod digne Deo recompensaret pro damno; quia si quid Deo de rationabili redderet creatura, pro rationabili sublata substantia, minus esset: sed hominem non poterat digne restituere, quia justum et innocentem abstulerat, et neminem nisi peccatorem inveniebat. Videns itaque Deus hominem sua virtute non posse jugum damnationis evadere, primo praevenit eum per solam misericordiam, ut deinde liberaret etiam per justitiam. Ut ergo Deus placari posset ab homine, dedit Deus homini gratis, quod homo pro debito redderet Deo. Dedit igitur homini hominem, quem restitueret homo pro homine: qui, ut recompensatio digna fieret, priori non solum esset aequalis, sed major.  Quocirca *Verbum caro factum est,* ut daretur hominibus Deus homo, sicut praedixerat Isaias: «Puer natus est nobis, et Filius datus est nobis (Isa. IX),» quatenus inter Deum et hominem legitime mediaret. Si enim alterius tantum esset naturae, non utrique communis, quocirca nec esset idoneus, ut inter eos pacis foedera reformaret. «Mediator enim unius non est,» ut inquit Apostolus (Gal. III): et ob hoc in nativitate Christi coelestis militiae multitudo psallebat: «Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis (Luc. II).»---«Ipse est enim pax nostra, qui fecit **[Col. 0455A]**utraque unum (Ephes. II);» lapis angularis, qui duos e diverso parietes in uno novo homine copulavit (ibid.). Poterat Deus hominem solo verbo per potentiam liberare, sed maluit eum redimere pretio per justitiam, ut eum non ad potentiam, sed ad justitiam invitaret. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)