

COMMENTARY ON
THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

St. Thomas Aquinas

Lectio 14

29 τῇ ἐπαύριον βλέπει τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐρχόμενον πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ λέγει, ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. 30 οὗτός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον,

ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἀνὴρ ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν.

31 καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῇ τῷ Ἰσραὴλ διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον ἐγὼ ἐν ὕδατι βαπτίζων.

32 καὶ ἐμαρτύρησεν Ἰωάννης λέγων ὅτι

τεθέαμαι τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον ὡς περιστερὰν ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ ἔμεινεν ἐπ' αὐτόν: 33 καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ᾔδειν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ὁ πέμψας με βαπτίζειν ἐν ὕδατι ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν, ἐφ' ὃν ἂν ἴδῃς τὸ πνεῦμα καταβαῖνον καὶ μένον ἐπ' αὐτόν, οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ βαπτίζων ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. 34 καὶ γὰρ ἐώρακα, καὶ μεμαρτύρηκα ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.

Supra Ioannes perhibuit testimonium Christo interrogatus; hic vero perhibet aliud testimonium Christo spontaneus. Et primo quidem fert ipsum testimonium; secundo testimonium latum confirmat, ibi *et testimonium perhibuit Ioannes*. Circa primum autem primo quidem

LECTURE 14

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and he said, “Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. 30 It is he of whom I said:

‘After me is to come a man, who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.’

31 And I did not know him! And yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptizing with water.”

32 John gave this testimony also:

“I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove, and resting on him. 33 And I did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water had said to me: ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 Now I have seen for myself and have given testimony that he is the Son of God.”

253 Above, John had given testimony to Christ when he was questioned. Here, he gives testimony to him on his own initiative. First, he gives the testimony; secondly, he confirms it (v 32). As to the first: first, the circumstances of the testimony are

describuntur circumstantiae testimonii; secundo ponitur ipsum testimonium, ibi *ecce agnus Dei*; tertio excluditur suspicio testis, ibi *et ego nesciebam eum*.

Describuntur autem circumstantiae. Una quidem ex parte temporis. Unde dicit *altera die*: in quo quidem commendatur Ioannis constantia, quia non uno die, non semel tantum, sed pluribus diebus et multoties Christo testimonium perhibebat. Ps. CXLIV, 2: *per singulos dies benedicam tibi*. Commendatur etiam eius profectus: quia non debet nobis succedere una dies sicut alia; sed quae succedit debet esse altera, idest melior; iuxta illud Ps. LXXXIII, 8: *ibunt de virtute in virtutem*.

Alia circumstantia ponitur ex parte modi testificandi, quia *vidit Ioannes Iesum*: in quo insinuatur certitudo. Nam testimonium de visu certissimum est. Alia vero circumstantia ponitur ex parte eius cui testimonium perhibetur. Unde dicit *Iesum ad se venientem*, scilicet de Galilaea, ut dicitur Matth. III, 13: *venit Iesus a Galilaea*. Nec tamen intelligendum est de adventu quo venit ad Baptismum, de quo ibi loquitur Matthaueus, sed de alio adventu quo iam baptizatus, et circa Iordanem aliquamdiu commoratus, venit ad Ioannem, alias non dixisset: *super quem videris spiritum descendentem et manentem super eum, hic est qui baptizat in spiritu sancto. Et ego vidi* et cetera. Iam ergo viderat eum, et spiritum super eum descendentem quasi columbam etc., ut infra dicit.

Huius autem Christi ad Ioannem adventus post Baptismum una causa fuit ut testimonium Ioannis certificaretur. Dixerat enim Ioannes de Christo: *ipse est qui post me venturus est*: nam aliquis posset errare in cognitione venturi, cum adesset; venit ad Ioannem, ab eo digito ostendendus, dicente Ioanne *ecce agnus Dei* et cetera. Alia ratio ut excluderet errorem. Posset enim aliquis credere quod Christus prima vice, cum venit ad Baptismum, venerit ad Ioannem sicut a peccatis purgandus. Christus ergo, ut hoc excluderet, venit etiam ad eum post Baptismum. Unde signanter dicit Ioannes *ecce qui tollit*. Peccatum nullum fecit, sed venit peccatum tollere. Venit etiam ut praeberet

given; and secondly, the testimony itself is given (v 29); thirdly, suspicion is removed from the witness (v 31).

254 The circumstances are first described as to the time. Hence he says, **The next day**. This gives credit to John for his steadfastness, because he bore witness to Christ not for just one day or once, but on many days and frequently: “Every day I will bless you” (Ps 144:2). His progress, too, is cited, because one day should not be just like the day before, but the succeeding day should be different, i.e., better: “They will go from strength to strength” (Ps 83:8).

Another circumstance mentioned is his manner of testifying, because **John saw Jesus**. This shows his certitude, for testimony based on sight is most certain. The last circumstance he mentions is about the one to whom he bore witness. Hence he says that he saw **Jesus coming toward him**, i.e., from Galilee, as it says, “Jesus came from Galilee” (Mt 3:13). We should not understand this as referring to the time when he came to be baptized, of which Matthew is here speaking, but of another time, i.e., a time when he came to John after he had already been baptized and was staying near the Jordan. Otherwise, he Would not have said, “‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ Now I have seen” (v 33). Therefore, he had already seen him and the Spirit come down as a dove upon him.

255 One reason why Christ now came to John was to confirm the testimony of John. For John had spoken of Christ as “the one who is to come after me” (v 27). But since Christ was now present, some might not understand who it was that was to come. So Christ came to John to be pointed out by him, with John saying, **Look! There is the Lamb of God**. Another reason Christ came was to correct an error. For some might believe that the first time Christ came, i.e., to be baptized, he came to John to be cleansed from his sins. So, in order to preclude this, Christ came to him even after his baptism. Accordingly, John clearly says, **There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world**. He committed no sin, but came to take away sin. He also came to give us an example of humility, because as it is said, “The greater you are the more humble you should be in all matters” (Sir 3:20).

humilitatis exemplum: quia, ut dicitur Eccli. III, 20, *quanto maior es, humilia te in omnibus.*

Et advertendum, quod sicut Christo iam concepto, quando virgo mater ascendit in montana cum festinatione, Elisabeth matrem Ioannis visere, Ioannes in utero matris existens, nec loqui valens, reverentiam Christo et tripudium faciens, exultavit in utero; ita et nunc, Christo ex humilitate ad eum venienti testimonium et reverentiam praebebat, et in vocem prorumpit, dicens *ecce agnus Dei* et cetera.

Ubi testimonium Ioannis ponitur: in quo quidem ostendit virtutem Christi, et dignitatem eius, ibi *hic est de quo dixi*. Virtutem quidem ostendit dupliciter. Primo proponendo figuram; secundo exponendo eam, ibi *ecce qui tollit peccata mundi*.

Circa primum sciendum est, quod, sicut dicit Origenes, in veteri lege consueverunt quinque animalia offerri in templo: tria de terrestribus, scilicet vitulus, capra et ovis, sed ovium quidem aries, ovis et agnus; de volatilibus vero duo, turtur scilicet, et columba: quae quidem omnia praefigurativa fuerunt veri sacrificii, quod est Christus, qui *semetipsum obtulit oblationem Deo*, ut dicitur Eph. V, 2.

Quare ergo Baptista Christo testimonium perhibens, agnum specialiter nominavit? Huius ratio est, quia sicut dicitur Num. XXVIII, v. 3 s., licet alia fierent sacrificia in templo ceteris temporibus, unum tamen erat quotidianum, in quo iugiter unus agnus mane, et alius vespere offerebatur; nec hoc mutabatur unquam, sed tamquam principale observabatur, alia vero ex adiuncto. Et ideo per agnum, qui erat principale sacrificium, significatur Christus, qui est principale sacrificium. Nam licet omnes sancti, qui pro fide Christi passi sunt, prosint ad salutem fidelium, hoc tamen non habent nisi in quantum super oblationem agni, quasi oblatio adiuncta principali sacrificio, immolantur. Offeritur quidem mane et vespere, quia per Christum patet aditus ad intelligibilia divinorum contemplanda et fruenda, quod pertinet ad cognitionem matutinam; et instruimur quomodo utamur

Note that after the conception of Christ, when his mother, the Virgin, went in haste to the mountainous country to visit John's mother, Elizabeth, that John, still in his mother's womb and unable to speak, leaped in her womb as though performing a religious dance out of reverence for Christ. And as then, so even now; for when Christ comes to John out of humility, John offers his testimony and reverence and breaks out saying, **Look! There is the Lamb of God.**

256 With these words John gives his testimony showing the power of Christ. Then Christ's dignity is shown (v 30). He shows the power of Christ in two ways: first, by means of a symbol; secondly, by explaining it (v 29).

257 As to the first, we should note, as Origen says, that it was customary in the Old Law for five animals to be offered in the temple: three land animals, namely, the heifer, goat and sheep (although the sheep might be a ram, a sheep or a lamb) and two birds, namely, the turtle-dove and the dove. All of these prefigured the true sacrifice, which is Christ, who "gave himself for us as an offering to God," as is said in Ephesians (5:2).

Why then did the Baptist, when giving witness to Christ, specifically call him a Lamb? The reason for this is that, as stated in Numbers (28:3), although there were other sacrifices in the temple at other times, yet each day there was a time in which a lamb was offered every morning, and another was offered in the evening. This never varied, but was regarded as the principal offering, and the other offerings were in the form of additions. And so the lamb, which was the principal sacrifice, signified Christ, who is the principal sacrifice. For although all the saints who suffered for the faith of Christ contribute something to the salvation of the faithful, they do this only inasmuch as they are immolated upon the oblation of the Lamb, they being, as it were, in oblation added to the principal sacrifice. The lamb is offered in the morning and in the evening because it is through Christ that the way is opened to the contemplation and enjoyment of the intelligible things of God, and this pertains to "morning knowledge"; and we are instructed how to use earthly

terrenis absque inquinamento, quod pertinet ad vespertinam. Et ideo dicit: *ecce agnus Dei*, etc., idest per agnum significatus.

Dicit autem *Dei*, quia in Christo sunt duae naturae, humana scilicet et divina. Et quod hoc sacrificium esset virtuosum ad purgandum et sanctificandum a peccatis, habet ex virtute divinitatis, in quantum scilicet *Deus erat in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi*, II Cor. V, v. 19. Vel dicitur *agnus Dei*, quasi oblatus a Deo, scilicet ab ipso Christo, qui est Deus; sicut dicitur oblatio hominis, quam homo offert. Vel dicitur *agnus Dei*, scilicet patris: quia ipse providit homini oblationem ad offerendum pro peccatis sufficientem, quam homo per se habere non potest. Unde Gen. c. XXII, 7, cum Isaac quaereret ab Abraham: *ubi est victima holocausti?* Respondit: *Deus providebit sibi victimam holocausti*. Rom. VIII, v. 32: *proprio filio suo non pepercit Deus; sed pro nobis omnibus tradidit illum*.

Dicitur autem Christus agnus primo propter puritatem; Ex. XII, 5: *erit agnus anniculus* etc.; I Petr. I, 18: *non corruptilibus auro vel argento redempti estis*. Secundo propter mansuetudinem; Is. LIII, 7: *quasi agnus coram tondente se obmutuit*. Tertio propter fructum, Prov. XXVII, 26: *agni sunt tibi ad vestimentum tuum*. Et hoc quantum ad indumentum, iuxta illud Rom. XIII, v. 14: *induimini dominum Iesum Christum*. Et quantum ad cibum, infra VI, 52: *caro mea est pro mundi vita*. Et ideo dicebat Isaias, c. XVI, 1: *emitte agnum, domine, dominatorem terrae*.

Consequenter propositam figuram exponit cum dicit *qui tollit peccata mundi*, idest aufert; quod in lege nec per agnum, nec per alia sacrificia auferri poterat, quia, ut dicitur Hebr. X, 6: *impossibile est per sanguinem taurorum et hircorum auferri peccata*. Sanguis iste tollit, idest aufert, *peccata mundi*. Oseae ult., 3: *omnem aufert iniquitatem*. Vel tollit, idest in se accipit, *peccata totius mundi*; quia, ut dicitur I Petr. II, v. 24, *qui peccata nostra pertulit in corpore suo*. Is. LIII, 4: *dolores nostros ipse tulit, et languores nostros ipse portavit*.

things without staining ourselves, and this pertains to “evening knowledge.” And so he says, Look! **There is the Lamb of God**, i.e., the one signified by the lamb.

He says, of God, because there are two natures in Christ, a human nature and a divine nature. And it is due to the power of the divinity that this sacrifice has the power to cleanse and sanctify us from our sins, inasmuch as “God was, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor 5:19). Or, he is called **the Lamb of God**, because offered by God, i.e., by Christ himself, who is God; just as we call what a man offers the offering of the man. Or, he is called **the Lamb of God**, that is, of the Father, because the Father provided man with an oblation to offer that satisfied for sins, which man could not have through himself. So when Isaac asked Abraham, “Where is the victim for the holocaust?” he answered, “God himself will provide a victim for the holocaust” (Gn 22:7); “God did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for all of us” (Rom 8:32).

258 Christ is called a Lamb, first, because of his purity: “Your lamb will be without blemish” (Ex 12:5); “You were not redeemed by perishable gold or silver” (1 Pt 1:18). Secondly, because of his gentleness: “Like a lamb before the shearer, he will not open his mouth” (Is 53:7). Thirdly, because of his fruit; both with respect to what we put on: “Lambs will be your clothing” (Prv 27:26), “Put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 13:14); and with respect to food: “My flesh is for the life of the world” (below 6:52). And so Isaiah said (16:1): “Send forth, O Lord, the lamb, the ruler of the earth.”

259 Then when he says, **who takes away the sins of the world**, he explains the symbol he used. In the law, sin could not be taken away either by a lamb or by any other sacrifice, because as is said in Hebrews (10:4), “It is impossible that sins be taken away by the blood of bulls and goats.” This blood takes away, i.e., removes, **the sins of the world**. “Take away all iniquity” (Hos 14:3). Or, **takes away**, i.e., he takes upon himself the sins of the whole **world**, as is said, “He bore our sins in his own body” (1 Pt 2:24); “It was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured,” as we read in Isaiah (53:4).

Dicit autem, secundum Glossam, *peccatum*, et non peccata, ut ostendat in universali, quod abstulit totum genus peccati; I Io. II, 2: *ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris*. Vel quia pro uno peccato, scilicet originali, mortuus; Rom. V, 12: *per unum hominem peccatum intravit in mundum* et cetera.

Supra perhibuit Baptista testimonium Christo quantum ad eius virtutem; hic vero perhibet testimonium quantum ad eius dignitatem, comparans eum sibi tripliciter. Et primo quantum ad officium et ordinem praedicationis; unde dicit *hic*, scilicet agnus, digito eum demonstrans, *est ille de quo dixi*, scilicet in eius absentia, *post me venit vir*, ad praedicandum et baptizandum, qui post me venit nascendo.

Dicitur autem vir Christus ratione perfectae aetatis: quia quando incepit docere post Baptismum, iam erat in aetate perfecta; Lc. III, 23: *Iesus erat incipiens quasi annorum triginta*. Item, ratione perfectionis omnium virtutum quae in eo fuerunt; Is. IV, 1: *apprehendent septem mulieres*, idest virtutes, *virum unum*, scilicet Christum perfectum. Zach. VI, 12: *ecce vir, oriens nomen eius*: quia ipse est origo omnium virtutum in aliis. Item, ratione desponsationis; quia ipse sponsus est Ecclesiae; Oseae II, 16: *vocabis me virum* etc.; II Cor. XI, 2: *despondi vos uni viro*.

Secundo quantum ad ordinem dignitatis, cum dicit *qui ante me factus est*. Quasi dicat: licet post me venerit ad praedicandum, tamen *ante me* idest praelatus mihi factus est dignitate. Cant. II, 8: *ecce iste venit saliens in montibus, transiliens colles*. Collis unus fuit Ioannes Baptista, quem Christus transilivit: quia, ut dicitur infra III, 30: *me oportet minui, illum autem crescere*.

Tertio quantum ad ordinem durationis, cum dicit *quia prior me erat*. Quasi dicat: non mirum si praefertur mihi dignitate, quia, etsi posterior sit tempore, est tamen prior aeternitate *quia prior me erat*.

However, according to a Gloss, he says sin, and not “sins,” in order to show in a universal way that he has taken away every kind of sin: “He is the offering for our sins” (1 Jn 2:2); or because he died for one sin, that is, original sin: “Sin entered into this world through one man” (Rom 5:12).

260 Above, the Baptist bore witness to the power of Christ; now he bears witness to his dignity, comparing Christ to himself in three respects. First, with respect to their office and order of preaching. So he says, It is he, pointing him out, that is, the Lamb, **of whom I said**, i.e., in his absence, **After me is to come a man**, to preach and baptize, who in birth came after me.

Christ is called a man by reason of his perfect age, because when he began to teach, after his baptism, he had already reached a perfect age: “Jesus was now about thirty years of age” (Lk 3:23). He is also called a man because of the perfection of all the virtues that were in him: “Seven women,” i.e., the virtues, “will take hold of one man,” the perfect Christ (Is 4:1); “Look, a man! His name is the Orient,” because he is the origin of all the virtues found in others (Zec 6:12). He is also called a man because of his espousal, since he is the spouse of the Church: “You will call me ‘my husband’” (Hos 2:16); “I espoused you to one husband” (2 Cor 11:2).

261 Secondly, he compares himself to Christ with respect to dignity when he says, **who ranks ahead of me**. As if to say: Although he comes to preach after me, yet he ranks before me in dignity. “See, he comes, leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills” (Sg 2:8). One such hill was John the Baptist, who was passed over by Christ, because as is said below (3:30), “He must increase, and I must decrease.”

262 Thirdly, he compares himself to Christ with respect to duration, saying, because he existed before me. As if to say: It is not strange if he ranks ahead of me in dignity; because although he is after me in time, he is before me in eternity, **because he existed before me**.

Ex hoc autem duplex error destruitur. Error Arii: quia non dicit prior me factus est ut sit creatura, sed *prior me erat*, ab aeterno ante omnem creaturam; Prov. VIII, 25: *ante omnes colles generavit me dominus*. Item error Pauli Samosatani: quia dixit *prior me erat*, ut ostendat, quod non ex Maria sumpserat exordium. Nam, si essendi principium sumpsisset ex virgine, non extitisset utique prior praecursore, qui Christum in sex mensibus secundum generationem praecedebat humanam.

Consequenter cum dicit *et ego nesciebam eum*, excludit falsam suspicionem a suo testimonio. Posset enim aliquis dicere, Ioannem testimonium perhibuisse Christo propter affectionem specialis familiaritatis quam ad ipsum habebat; et ideo hoc excludens Ioannes, dicit *ego nesciebam eum*: nam Ioannes in deserto a pueritia sua conversatus est. Licet autem miracula multa facta sint in nativitate Christi, puta de magis et de stella, et huiusmodi, tamen non erant nota Ioanni: tum quia infans erat secundum aetatem, tum quia ad desertum secedens, Christi familiaritatem non habuit. Medio vero tempore a nativitate usque ad Baptismum, nullum miraculum Christus operatus est; sed conformis conversatione aliis erat, et sua virtus ignota omnibus existebat.

Quod autem medio tempore non fuerit miracula operatus usque ad triginta annos, patet per hoc quod dicitur infra II, 11: *hoc fecit initium signorum Iesus* et cetera. Ex quo apparet falsitas libri de infantia salvatoris. Ideo autem non fecit miracula medio tempore, ut non putaretur mysterium circumcisionis et incarnationis phantasma esse, si non se habuisset aetate sicut alii infantes. Et ideo demonstrationem scientiae et virtutis suae in aliud distulit tempus, in quo alii homines scientia et virtute vigere consueverunt. Iuxta quod dicitur Lc. II, 52: *puer autem proficiebat gratia et sapientia*; non quod ipse virtutem et sapientiam ante non habitam susciperet, cum in eis fuerit ab instanti suae conceptionis perfectus, sed quia virtus eius et sapientia magis innotescebat hominibus. Is. c. XLV, 15: *vere tu es Deus absconditus*.

This statement refutes a twofold error. First, that of Arius, for John does not say that “he was made before me,” as though he were a creature, but he existed before me, from eternity, before every creature: “The Lord brought me forth before all the hills,” as is said in Proverbs (8:25). The second error refuted is that of Paul of Samosata: for John said, he existed before me, in order to show that he did not take his beginning from Mary. For if he had taken the beginning of his existence from the Virgin, he would not have existed before the precursor, who, in the order of human generation, preceded Christ by six months.

263 Next (v 31), he precludes an erroneous conjecture from his testimony. For someone might say that John bore witness to Christ because of his affection for him, coming from a special friendship. And so, excluding this, John says, **And I did not know him!**; for John had lived in the desert from boyhood. And although many miracles happened during the birth of Christ, such as the Magi and the star and so on, they were not known to John: both because he was an infant at the time, and because, after withdrawing to the desert, he had no association with Christ. In the interim between his birth and baptism, Christ did not perform any miracles, but led a life similar to any other person, and his power remained unknown to all.

264 It is clear that he worked no miracles in the interim until he was thirty years old from what is said below (2:11): “This beginning of signs Jesus worked in Cana of Galilee.” This shows the error of the book, *The Infancy of the Savior*. The reason he performed no miracles during this period was that if his life had not been like that of other infants, the mystery of the circumcision and incarnation might have been regarded as pure fancy. Accordingly, he postponed showing his knowledge and power to another time, corresponding to the age when other men reach the fulness of their knowledge and power. About this we read, “And Jesus increased in grace and wisdom” (Lk 2:52); not that he acquired a power and wisdom that he previously lacked, for in this respect he was perfect from the instant of his conception, but because his power and wisdom were becoming known to men: “Indeed, you are a hidden God” (Is 45:15).

Ideo ergo Ioannes nesciebat eum, quia nulla signa adhuc de eo viderat, neque aliis per signa innotuerat. Unde subdit *sed ut manifestetur in Israel, propterea ego veni in aqua baptizans*. Quasi dicat: totum ministerium meum est ad manifestationem. Supra, *non erat ille lux, sed ut testimonium perhiberet de lumine*.

Dicit autem *veni in aquam baptizans*, ad differentiam Baptismi Christi. Quia Christus non in aqua solum baptizavit, sed in spiritu, conferens gratiam; unde et Baptismus Ioannis fuit significativum tantum, non effectivum.

Manifestavit autem Baptismus Ioannis Christum tripliciter. Primo scilicet per Ioannis praedicationem. Licet enim Ioannes etiam sine Baptismo potuisset praedicando parare viam domino, et inducere turbas ad Christum, tamen propter novitatem officii plures ad eum concurrebant quam si sine Baptismo praedicatio facta esset. Secundo profuit Baptismus Ioannis propter Christi humilitatem, quam demonstravit, baptizari volens a Ioanne; Matth. III, 13: *venit Christus ad Ioannem ut baptizaretur ab eo*. In quo quidem exemplum humilitatis praebuit, ut scilicet nullus, quantumcumque magnus, dedignetur a quocumque ad hoc ordinato, sacramenta suscipere. Tertio, quia Christo baptizato a Ioanne, affuit virtus patris in voce, et spiritus sanctus in columba, per quam virtus Christi et dignitas magis manifestata fuit. Lc. III, 22: *et vox patris intonuit: hic est filius meus dilectus*.

Consequenter cum dicit *et testimonium perhibuit Ioannes* ipse magna quae testatus est de Christo quod totius orbis terrarum solus peccata tolleret, confirmat auctoritate Dei. Et circa hoc tria facit. Primo proponit visionem; secundo praebet de intellectu visionis instructionem, ibi *et ego nesciebam eum*; tertio suam ex ipsa visione conceptionem ostendit, ibi *et ego vidi, et testimonium perhibui*.

Visionem quidem proponit cum dicit *vidi spiritum descendentem quasi columbam de caelo*. Quod quidem quando factum fuerit, Ioannes Evangelista non refert; sed Matthaeus et Lucas dicunt hoc factum fuisse

265 The reason why John did not know him was that he had so far seen no signs, and no one else had known Christ through signs. Hence he adds: **It was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptizing with water**. As if to say: My entire ministry is to reveal: “He was not the light, but he came in order to bear witness to the light,” as was said above (1:8).

266 He says, **I came baptizing with water**, to distinguish his baptism from that of Christ. For Christ baptized not just in water, but in the Spirit, conferring grace; and so the baptism of John was merely a sign, and not causative.

John’s baptism made Christ known in three ways. First, by the preaching of John. For although John could have prepared the way for the Lord and led the people to Christ without baptizing, yet because of the novelty of the service many more came to him than would have come if his preaching were done without baptism. Secondly, John’s baptism was useful because of Christ’s humility, which he showed by willing to be baptized by John: “Christ came to John, to be baptized by him” (Mt 3:13). This example of humility he gives us here is that no one, however great, should disdain to receive the sacraments from any person ordained for this purpose. Thirdly, because it was during Christ’s baptism by John that the power of the Father was present in the voice, and the Holy Spirit was present in the dove, by which the power and dignity of Christ were all the more shown: “And the voice of the Father was heard: ‘This is my beloved Son’” (Lk 3:22).

267 Then when he says, **John gave this testimony also**, he confirms by the authority of God the great things he testified to about Christ, that Christ alone would take away the sins of the whole world. As to this he does three things. First, he presents a vision. Secondly, he tells us the meaning of the vision (v 33). Thirdly, he shows what he learned from this vision (v 34).

268 He presents the vision when he says, **I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven**. When this actually happened John the Evangelist does not tell us, but Matthew and Luke say that it took place when Christ was being baptized by John.

quando Christus baptizatus est a Ioanne. Et quidem congruebat quod spiritus sanctus adesset baptizato et Baptismo. Baptizato namque congruebat, quia sicut filius existens a patre, manifestat patrem infra XVII, 6: *pater, manifestavi nomen tuum* etc., ita et spiritus sanctus a filio existens, filium manifestat. Infra XVI, 14: *ille me clarificabit, quia de meo accipiet* et cetera. Baptismo autem congruit, quia Baptisma Christi est inchoativum et consecrativum nostri Baptismatis. Nostrum autem Baptisma consecratur per invocationem sanctae Trinitatis; Matth. ult., 19: *baptizantes eos in nomine patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti* et cetera. Quod ergo nos invocamus in Baptismo nostro, affuit Baptismo Christi, scilicet pater in voce, spiritus sanctus in columba, filius in humana natura.

Dicit autem *descendentem*, quia cum descensus duos terminos habeat, scilicet principium sursum et terminum deorsum, quantum ad utrumque convenit Baptismo. Est enim duplex spiritus, unus mundi et alius Dei. Et spiritus quidem mundi est amor mundi, qui non est desursum, sed ab inferiori ascendit in hominem, et eum descendere facit; spiritus autem Dei, scilicet Dei amor, desursum descendit ad hominem, et eum ascendere facit. I Cor. II, 12: *nos autem non spiritum huius mundi accepimus, sed spiritum Dei*. Quia ergo ille spiritus de supernis est, ideo dicit *descendentem*.

Similiter etiam, quia impossibile est creaturam recipere Dei bonitatem in tanta plenitudine, secundum quod convenit Deo, ideo bonitatis ipsius ad nos derivatio, est quasi quidam descensus; Iac. I, 17: *omne datum optimum, et omne donum perfectum desursum est, descendens a patre luminum*.

Sed quia spiritus sanctus in sua natura videri non potest, ut dicitur infra III, 8: *spiritus ubi vult spirat, et nescis unde veniat, aut quo vadat*, spiritus etiam non est descendere, sed ascendere. Ez. VIII, 3: *elevavit me spiritus* et cetera. Ideo consequenter Evangelista modum visionis et descensus exponit, dicens, hic non fuisse in spiritu, idest natura sed in specie columbae, in qua apparuit: unde dicit *quasi columbam*.

And it was indeed fitting for the Holy Spirit to be present at this baptism and to the person being baptized. It was appropriate for the one baptized, for as the Son, existing by the Father, manifests the Father, “Father, I have manifested your name” (below 17:6), so the Holy Spirit, existing by the Son, manifests the Son, “He will glorify me, because he will receive from me” (below 16:14). It was appropriate for this baptism because the baptism of Christ begins and consecrates our baptism. Now our baptism is consecrated by invoking the whole Trinity: “Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19). Thus, the ones we invoke in our baptism were present at the baptism of Christ: the Father in the voice, the Holy Spirit in the dove, and the Son in his human nature.

269 He says, **coming down**, because descent, since it has two termini, the start, which is from above, and the end, which is below, suits baptism in both respects. For there is a twofold spirit: one of the world and the other of God. The spirit of the world is the love of the world, which is not from above; rather, it comes up to man from below and makes him descend. But the spirit of God, i.e., the love of God, comes down to man from above and makes him ascend: “We have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit of God,” as is said in 1 Corinthians (2:12). And so, because that spirit is from above, he says, **coming down**.

Similarly, because it is impossible for the creature to receive God’s goodness in the fulness in which it is present in God, the communication of this goodness to us is in a way a certain coming down: “Every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights” (Jas 1:17).

270 The Evangelist, in describing the manner of the vision and of the coming down, says that the Holy Spirit did not appear in the spirit, i.e., in his nature, but in the form of a dove, saying, that he came like a dove. The reason for this is that the Holy Spirit cannot be seen in his nature, as is said, “The Spirit blows where it wills, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes” (below 3:8), and because a spirit does not come down but goes up, “The spirit lifted me up” (Ez 8:3).

Et hoc quidem congrue, ut scilicet filius Dei per carnem visibilis factus, manifestaretur per spiritum sanctum visibili specie columbae. Quae quidem columba non est assumpta a spiritu sancto in unitatem personae, sicut humana natura assumpta est a filio Dei. Cuius ratio est, quia filius apparuit non solum ut manifestator, sed ut salvator. Et ideo, secundum quod dicit Leo Papa, oportuit quod esset Deus et homo: Deus quidem, ut afferret remedium; homo vero, ut praeberet exemplum. Spiritus vero sanctus apparuit solum ad manifestandum, ad quod sufficiebat speciem corporalem assumere solum ad significationem quamdam.

Utrum autem columba illa fuerit verum animal, et utrum praeexistens apparitioni: sciendum, quod rationabiliter dicitur illa fuisse vera columba. Venit enim spiritus sanctus ad manifestandum Christum, qui cum sit veritas, non nisi per veritatem manifestandus erat. Quantum vero ad secundum, dicendum, quod non praeexistit apparitioni; sed tunc virtute divina absque commixtione maris et feminae formata fuit, sicut et corpus Christi virtute spiritus sancti conceptum, non ex virili semine. Et tamen fuit vera columba, quia, ut Augustinus dicit in libro de agone Christiano, omnipotenti Deo, qui universam creaturam ex nihilo fabricavit, non erat difficile verum corpus columbae sine aliarum columbarum ministerio figurare, sicut non fuit difficile verum corpus in utero b. virginis sine naturali semine fabricare.

Cyprianus in libro de unitate Ecclesiae: idcirco et in columba dicitur spiritus sanctus apparuisse, quia columba simplex animal et innocens est, non felle amarum, non morsibus ferum, non unguium laceratione violentum: hospitia humana diligere, unius domus consortium nosse, cum generat simul filios edere, cum conveniat volantibus invicem cohaerere, communi conversatione vitam suam degere, oris osculo concordiam pacis agnoscere, legem circa omnia unanimatis implere.

Quare autem potius in columba, quam in alia specie apparuit, multipliciter ratio assignatur. Primo quidem propter columbae simplicitatem. Nam columba simplex est; Matth. X, 16: *estote prudentes sicut serpentes, et simplices sicut columbae*. Spiritus autem

It was appropriate that the Son of God, who was made visible through flesh, should be made known by the Holy Spirit in the visible form of a dove. However, the Holy Spirit did not assume the dove into a unity of person, as the Son of God assumed human nature. The reason for this is that the Son did not appear as a manifestor but as a Savior. And so, according to Pope Leo, it was appropriate that he be God and man: God, in order to provide a remedy; and man, in order to offer an example. But the Holy Spirit appeared only to make known, and for this it was sufficient merely to assume a visible form which was suitable for this purpose.

271 As to whether this dove was a real animal and whether it existed prior to its appearance, it seems reasonable to say that it was a real dove. For the Holy Spirit came to manifest Christ, who, being the Truth, ought to have been manifested only by the truth. As to the other part of the question, it would seem that the dove did not exist prior to its appearance, but was formed at the time by the divine power, without any parental union, as the body of Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and not from a man's seed. Yet it was a real dove, for as Augustine says in his work, *The Christian Combat*: "It was not difficult for the omnipotent God, who produced the entire universe of creatures from nothing, to form a real body for the dove without the aid of other doves, just as it was not difficult to form the true body of Christ in the womb of the Blessed Virgin without natural semen."

Cyprian, in his *The Unity of the Church*, says: "It is said that the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove because the dove is a simple harmless animal, not bitter with gall, not savage with its bites, not fierce with rending talons; it loves the dwellings of men, is able to live together in one nest, together it raises its young, they remain together when they fly, spend their life in mutual association, signify the concord of peace with the kiss of their bill, and fulfill the law of harmony in all things."

272 Many reasons are given why the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove rather than in some other form. First, because of its simplicity, for the dove is simple: "Be wise as serpents, and simple as doves" (Mt 10:16). And the Holy Spirit, because he inclines souls to gaze on one thing, that is, God, makes them simple; and so he appeared in

sanctus, quia facit respicere unum, scilicet Deum, simplices facit; et ideo in specie columbae apparet. Et quidem, secundum Augustinum, apparuit etiam super discipulos congregatos per ignem, quia quidam sunt simplices, sed tepidi; quidam autem ferventes, sed malitiosi. Ut ergo spiritu sanctificati dolo careant, spiritus in columbae specie demonstratur; et ne simplicitas frigiditate tepescat, demonstratur in igne.

Secundo, propter caritatis unitatem. Nam columba amore multum fervet; Cant. VI, 8: *una est columba mea*. Ut ergo ostendat Ecclesiae unitatem, in specie columbae spiritus sanctus apparet. Nec te moveat quod discipulis dispartitae linguae apparuerunt, quando sedit supra singulos eorum spiritus sanctus, qui et dispartitus apparet, secundum diversa donorum officia, et tamen unit per caritatem; et sic propter primum apparuit in dispartitis linguis, ut dicitur I Cor. XII, 4: *divisiones gratiarum sunt*, in columbae specie propter secundum.

Tertio, propter gemitum. Columba enim habet gemitum pro cantu; sic spiritus sanctus *postulat pro nobis gemitibus inenarrabilibus*, ut dicitur Rom. VIII, 26, et Nahum II, 7: *ancillae eius mirabantur*.

Quarto, propter fecunditatem. Columba enim animal fecundissimum est, idcirco ad designandum fecunditatem gratiae spiritualis in Ecclesia, in specie columbae spiritus sanctus apparuit. Hic est quod Levit. V, 7 dominus pullos columbarum offerre praecepit.

Quinto, propter columbae cautelam. Sedet enim super rivos aquarum, in quibus respiciens, falconem volitantem conspicit, et sibi ab eo cavet; Cant. V, 12: *oculi tui sicut columbae* et cetera. Unde, quia in Baptismo est nostra tutela et defensio, congrue in specie columbae spiritus sanctus apparuit.

Respondet igitur figurae veteris testamenti. Sicut etenim columba deferens ramum virentis olivae, ostendit signum clementiae Dei his qui residui fuerant ex aquis diluvii; ita et in Baptismo veniens spiritus

the form of a dove. Further, according to Augustine, the Holy Spirit also appeared in the form of fire over the heads of the assembled apostles. This was done because some are simple, but lukewarm; while others are fervent but guileful. And so in order that those sanctified by the Spirit may have no guile, the Spirit is shown in the form of a dove; and in order that their simplicity may not grow tepid, the Spirit is shown in fire.

A dove was used, secondly, because of the unity of charity; for the dove is much aglow with love: “One is my dove” (Sg 6:9). So, in order to show the unity of the Church, the Holy Spirit appears in the form of a dove. Nor should it disturb you that when the Holy Spirit rested on each of the disciples, there appeared separate tongues of fire; for although the Spirit appears to be different according to the different functions of his gifts, he nevertheless unites us through charity. And so, because of the first he appeared in separate tongues of fire, as is said, “There are different kinds of gifts” (1 Cor 12:4); but he appears in the form of a dove because of the second.

A dove was used, thirdly, because of its groaning, for the dove has a groaning chant; so also the Holy Spirit “pleads for us with indescribable groanings” (Rom 8:26); “Her maidens, groaning like doves” (Na 2:7).

Fourthly, because of the doves fertility, for the dove is a very prolific animal. And so in order to signify the fecundity of spiritual grace in the Church, the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove. This is why the Lord commanded an offering of two doves (Lv 5:7).

A dove was used, fifthly, because of its cautiousness. For it rests upon watery brooks, and gazing into them can see the hawk flying overhead and so save itself: “His eyes are like doves beside brooks of water” (Sg 5:12). And so, because our refuge and defense is found in baptism, the Holy Spirit appropriately appeared in the form of a dove.

The dove also corresponds to a figure in the Old Testament. For as the dove bearing the green olive branch was a sign of God’s mercy to those who survived the waters of the deluge, so too in baptism, the Holy Spirit, coming in the form of a dove, is a

sanctus in columbae specie, ostendit signum divinae clementiae, quae baptizatis et peccata remittit, et gratiam confert.

Dicit autem *manentem super eum*, quia in mansione quies designatur. Et quod spiritus sanctus in aliquo non quiescat, duplici de causa contingit. Una est ex peccato. Omnes enim alii homines, praeter Christum, vel sauciantur vulnere peccati mortalis, per quod effugatur spiritus sanctus, vel obfuscantur macula veniali, per quam aliqua operatio spiritus sancti impeditur. In Christo autem neque mortale, nec veniale, nec originale peccatum fuit: unde nec in eo fuit spiritus sanctus inquietatus; sed *super eum mansit*, idest quievit.

Alia causa: quia quantum ad gratias gratis datas, non semper adest aliis sanctis potestas operandi. Sicut non semper adest sanctis potestas operandi miracula, nec prophetis spiritus prophetiae. Christus vero semper habuit potestatem ad omnem operationem virtutum et gratiarum: et ideo ad hoc designandum, *super eum mansit*. Unde hoc proprium signum fuit agnoscendi Christum, ut dicitur in Glossa Is. XI, 2: *requiescet super eum spiritus domini*. Quod intelligendum est de Christo, in quantum est homo, secundum quod est minor patre et spiritu sancto.

Consequenter cum dicit *et ego nesciebam eum*, instruit de intellectu visionis praedictae. Quidam enim haeretici, scilicet Ebionitae, dicebant, Christum a principio nativitate suae, neque Christum fuisse, nec filium Dei, sed ex tunc filium Dei et Christum esse incepit quando in Baptismo oleo spiritus sancti unctus fuit. Sed hoc falsum, quia in ipsa hora nativitate Angelus dixit pastoribus, Lc. II, 11: *natus est vobis hodie salvator, qui est Christus dominus in civitate David*. Ne ergo aliquis crederet spiritum sanctum in Baptismo supra Christum descendisse, quasi de novo Christus indigeret spiritu ad sui sanctificationem, ideo causam sui descensus Baptista ostendit, dicens quod non descendit propter sui necessitatem, sed propter nos, ut scilicet gratia eius nobis manifestaretur. Et ideo dicit *ego nesciebam eum. Sed ut manifestaretur in Israel, propterea veni ego in aqua baptizans*.

sign of the divine mercy which takes away the sins of those baptized and confers grace.

273 He says that the Holy Spirit was **resting on him**. If the Holy Spirit does not rest on someone, it is due to two causes. One is sin. For all men except Christ are either suffering from the wound of mortal sin, which banishes the Holy Spirit, or are darkened with the stain of venial sin, which hinders some of the works of the Holy Spirit. But in Christ there was neither mortal nor venial sin; so, the Holy Spirit in him was never disquieted, but was **resting on him**.

The other reason concerns charismatic graces, for the other saints do not always possess their power. For example, the power to work miracles is not always present in the saints, nor is the spirit of prophecy always in the prophets. But Christ always possessed the power to accomplish any work of the virtues and the graces. So to indicate this, he says, **resting on him**. Hence this was the characteristic sign for recognizing Christ, as the Gloss says. “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him” (Is 11:2), which we should understand of Christ as man, according to which he is less than the Father and the Holy Spirit.

274 Then when he says, **I did not know him**, he teaches us how this vision should be understood. For certain heretics, as the Ebionites, said that Christ was neither the Christ nor the Son of God from the time he was born, but only began to be the Son of God and the Christ when he was anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit at his baptism. But this is false, because at the very hour of his birth the angel said to the shepherds: “This day a Savior has been born for you in the city of David, Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:11). Therefore, so that we do not believe that the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ in his baptism as though Christ needed to receive the Spirit anew for his sanctification, the Baptist gives the reason for the Spirit’s coming down. He says that the Spirit descended not for the benefit of Christ, but for our benefit, that is, so that the grace of Christ might be made known to us. And so he says, **And I did not know him! And yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptizing with water**.

Sed hic oritur quaestio. Dicit enim *qui misit me baptizare* etc., si dicatur quod pater misit eum, verum est; similiter si dicatur quod filius, manifestius, cum dicatur quod et pater et filius misit eum, quia Ioannes non est de illis de quibus dicit Ierem. c. XXIII, 21: *non mittebam eos, et ipsi currebant*. Quomodo ergo dicit *ego nesciebam eum*, si filius misit eum? Si dicatur, quod licet cognosceret eum secundum divinitatem, non tamen cognoscebat eum secundum humanitatem, nisi postquam vidit spiritum descendentem super eum, contra: spiritus enim sanctus descendit super Christum quando baptizatus est. Ioannes autem cognovit Christum antequam baptizaretur, alias non dixisset *ego debeo a te baptizari, et tu venis ad me?*

Est ergo dicendum, quod tripliciter potest ad hanc quaestionem responderi. Uno modo, secundum Chrysostomum, ut referatur ad cognitionem familiaritatis, ut sit sensus *ego nesciebam eum*, scilicet familiariter. Et si obiiciatur, quod dicit Ioannes *ego a te debeo baptizari* etc., dicitur quod ista duo sunt ad diversa tempora referenda, ut hoc quod dicit *ego nesciebam eum*, referatur ad tempus diu ante Baptismum, in quo nondum Christo familiaris erat; hoc vero quod dicit *ego a te debeo baptizari*, referatur ad tempus illud in quo baptizatus est Christus, quando iam propter frequentem visitationem eius, Christus familiaris erat. Alio modo, secundum Hieronymum, dicendum quod erat Christus filius Dei et salvator mundi, et hoc quidem sciebat Ioannes; sed nesciebat eum per Baptismum mundi salvatorem: et ideo hoc quod nescivit addidit, scilicet quod *hic est qui baptizat in spiritu sancto*. Sed melius dicendum est, secundum Augustinum, quod aliquid scivit et aliquid nescivit, et hoc quod nescivit addidit, scilicet quod potestatem baptizandi, quam potuit fidelibus suis communicare, sibi soli retinuit. Et hoc est quod dicit *qui misit me baptizare in aqua (...)* *hic est*, singulariter scilicet, et solus, *qui baptizat in spiritu sancto*, et nullus alius: quia hanc potestatem sibi soli retinuit.

Notandum autem, quod triplex potestas Christi attenditur in Baptismo. Una est efficientiae, qua mundat interior animam a macula peccati; quam quidem potestatem habet Christus in quantum est Deus, non autem in quantum homo; et haec potestas nulli alii potest communicari.

275 There is a problem here. For he says, **he who sent me to baptize**. If he is saying that the Father sent him, it is true. Also, if he is saying that the Son sent him, it is even more clear, since it is said that both the Father and the Son sent him, because John is not one of those referred to in Jeremiah (23:21), “I did not send the prophets, yet they ran.” But if the Son did send him, how can he then say, **I did not know him?** If it is said that although he knew Christ according to his divinity, yet he did not know him according to his humanity until after he saw the Spirit coming down upon him, one might counter that the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ when he was being baptized, and John had already known Christ before he was baptized, otherwise he would not have said: “I ought to be baptized by you, and you come to me?” (Mt 3:14).

So we must say that this problem can be resolved in three ways. In one way, according to Chrysostom, so that the meaning is to know familiarly; the sense being that **I did not know him**, i.e., in a familiar way. And if the objection is raised that John says, “I ought to be baptized by you,” it can be answered that two different times are being discussed: so that **I did not know him**, refers to a time long before baptism, when he was not yet familiar with Christ: but when he says, “I ought to be baptized by you,” he is referring to the time when Christ was being baptized, when he was now familiar with Christ because of his frequent visits. In another way, according to Jerome, it could be said that Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of the world, and that John did in fact know this; but it was not through the baptism that he knew that he was the Savior of the world. And so to remedy this ignorance he adds, he **is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit**. But it is better to say with Augustine that John knew certain things and was ignorant of others. Explaining what he did not know, he adds that the power of baptizing, which Christ could have shared with his faithful followers, would be reserved for himself alone. And this is what he says, **he who sent me to baptize with water ... is the one**, exclusively and solely, **who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit**, i.e., he and no one else, because this power he reserved for himself alone.

276 We should note that a threefold power of Christ is found in baptism. One is the power of efficiency, by which he interiorly cleanses the soul from the stain of sin. Christ has this power as God, but not as man, and it cannot be communicated to any other. Another is the power of ministry, which he does share with the faithful:

Alia potestas est ministerii, quam quidem communicavit fidelibus; Matth. ult., 19: *baptizantes eos in nomine patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti*. Et ideo sacerdotes, ut ministri, potestatem habent baptizandi; Christus autem, in quantum homo, minister dicitur, ut apostolus dicit sed tamen caput est omnium ministrorum Ecclesiae.

Et quantum ad hoc habet singulariter potestatem excellentiae in sacramentis: quae quidem excellentia apparet in quatuor. Primo in sacramentorum institutione: quia nullus homo purus, nec etiam tota Ecclesia, posset sacramenta instituere, vel sacramenta mutare, aut a sacramentis absolvere. Nam sacramenta invisibilem gratiam conferunt ex eorum institutione; conferre autem gratiam solius Dei est: et ideo solus qui est verus Deus potest sacramenta instituere. Secundum est quantum ad meriti Christi efficaciam: nam ex merito passionis Christi sacramenta virtutem habent; Rom. VI, 3: *quicumque baptizati sumus in Christo Iesu, in morte ipsius baptizati sumus*. Tertium est quia Christus potest conferre effectum Baptismi sine sacramento: quod solius Christi est. Quarto quia aliquo tempore Baptismus conferebatur ad invocationem nominis Christi; sed modo non ita fit.

Quae quidem quatuor nulli hominum communicavit; licet aliquid eorum communicare potuisset, puta quod in nomine Petri, vel alicuius alterius, conferretur Baptismus, et forte aliquid aliorum. Sed hoc ideo non fuit factum ne fieret schisma in Ecclesia, si baptizati spem suam ponerent in illis in quorum nominationem baptizarentur.

Et ideo didicit Ioannes per hoc quod spiritus sanctus descendit super eum, quod Christus solus est qui sua virtute interioriter baptizat.

Et forte posset dici, quod cum dixit *ego a te debeo baptizari* etc. cognovit eum per internam revelationem; sed cum vidit spiritum sanctum descendentem super eum, cognovit eum per exterioris signi manifestationem. Et ideo utrumque modum cognitionis tangit. Primum, cum dicit *qui me misit baptizare, ille mihi dixit*, id est interioriter

“Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19). Therefore priests have the power to baptize as ministers. Christ too, as man, is called a minister, as the Apostle says. But he is also the head of all the ministers of the Church.

Because of this he alone has the power of excellence in the sacraments. And this excellence shows itself in four things. First, in the institution of the sacraments, because no mere man or even the entire Church could institute sacraments, or change the sacraments, or dispense with the sacraments. For by their institution the sacraments give invisible grace, which only God can give. Therefore, only one who is true God can institute sacraments. The second lies in the efficacy of Christ’s merits, for the sacraments have their power from the merit of Christ’s passion: “All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus, have been baptized into his death” (Rom 6:3). The third is that Christ can confer the effect of baptism without the sacrament; and this is peculiar to Christ. Fourthly, because at one time baptism was conferred in the name of Christ, although this is no longer done.

Now he did not communicate these four things to anyone; although he could have communicated some of them, for example, that baptism be conferred in the name of Peter or of someone else, and perhaps one of the remaining three. But this was not done lest schisms arise in the Church by men putting their trust in those in whose name they were baptized.

And so John, in stating that the Holy Spirit came down upon Christ, teaches that it is Christ alone who baptizes interiorly by his own power.

277 One might also say that when John said, “I ought to be baptized by you,” he recognized Christ through an interior revelation, but that when he saw the Holy Spirit coming down upon him, he knew him through an exterior sign. And so he mentions both of these ways of knowing. The first when he says, **he who sent me to baptize with water had said to me**, i.e., revealed something in an interior way.

revelavit. Secundum, quando addidit *super quem videris spiritum descendentem (...) hic est qui baptizat.*

Consequenter ostendit quid Baptista ex hac visione intellexit, scilicet quod Christus esset filius Dei; et hoc est quod dicit *et ego vidi*, scilicet spiritum descendentem super eum, et *testimonium perhibui, quia hic*, scilicet Christus, *est filius Dei*, scilicet verus et naturalis. Filii enim adoptivi patris fuerunt ad similitudinem filii Dei naturalis; Rom. VIII, 29: *quos praescivit conformes fieri imaginis filii sui*. Ille ergo debet filios Dei facere qui baptizat in spiritu sancto, per quem filii adoptantur; Rom. VIII, 15: *non enim accepistis spiritum servitutis (...) sed spiritum adoptionis* et cetera. Quia ergo iste, scilicet Christus, est qui baptizat in spiritu sancto, ideo recte concludit Baptista, quod est filius Dei verus et purus. I Io. ult., 20: *ut simus in vero filio eius* et cetera.

Sed si alii viderunt spiritum sanctum descendentem super eum, quare non crediderunt? Respondeo, quia non erant dispositi ad hoc, vel forte quia soli Baptistae visio illa demonstrata est.

The second when he adds, **The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptize with the Holy Spirit.**

278 Then he shows what the Baptist understood from this vision, that is, that Christ is the Son of God. And this is what he says, Now I have seen for myself, that is, the Spirit coming down on him, and have given testimony that he, that is, Christ, is the Son of God, that is, the true and natural Son. For there were adopted sons of the Father who had a likeness to the natural Son of God: “Conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom 8:29). So he who baptizes in the Holy Spirit, through whom we are adopted as sons, ought to fashion sons of God. “You did not receive the spirit of slavery ... but the spirit of adoption” (Rom 8:15). Therefore, because Christ is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit, the Baptist correctly concludes that he is the true and pure Son of God: “that we may be in his true Son” (1 Jn 5:20).

279 But if there were others who saw the Holy Spirit coming down upon Christ, why did they not also believe? I answer that they had not been so disposed for this. Or perhaps, this vision was seen only by the Baptist.