

COMMENTARY ON
THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN

St. Thomas Aquinas

1

Lectio 1

1 ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος,
καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν,
καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

Evangelista Ioannes, sicut dictum est, intendit principaliter ostendere divinitatem verbi incarnati; et ideo dividitur istud Evangelium in partes duas. Primo enim insinuat Christi divinitatem; secundo manifestat eam per ea quae Christus in carne fecit, et hoc II cap. *et die tertia*. Circa primum duo facit. Primo proponit Christi divinitatem; secundo ponit modum, quo Christi divinitas nobis innotuit, ibi *et vidimus gloriam eius* et cetera. Circa primum duo facit. Primo agit de divinitate Christi; secundo de verbi Dei incarnatione, ibi *fuit homo missus a Deo*.

Quia vero in unaquaque re sunt consideranda duo, scilicet esse et operatio, sive virtus ipsius, ideo primo agit de esse verbi quantum ad naturam divinam; secundo de virtute, seu operatione ipsius, ibi *omnia per ipsum facta sunt*. Circa primum quatuor facit. Primo ostendit quando erat verbum, quia *in principio*

LECTURE 1

1 In the beginning was the Word;
and the Word was with God;
and the Word was God.

23 John the Evangelist, as already indicated, makes it his principal object to show the divinity of the Incarnate Word. Accordingly, his Gospel is divided into two parts. In the first he states the divinity of Christ; in the second he shows it by the things Christ did in the flesh (2:1). In regard to the first, he does two things. First he shows the divinity of Christ; secondly he sets forth the manner in which Christ's divinity is made known to us (1:14). Concerning the first he does two things. First he treats of the divinity of Christ; secondly of the incarnation of the Word of God (1:6).

Because there are two items to be considered in each thing, namely, its existence and its operation or power, first he treats the existence of the Word as to his divine nature; secondly of his power or operation (1:3). In regard to the first he does four things. First he shows when the Word was: **In the**

erat verbum; secundo ubi erat, quia *apud Deum*; unde dicit *et verbum erat apud Deum*; tertio quid erat, quia *Deus*; unde subiungit *et Deus erat verbum*; quarto quomodo erat, quia *hoc erat in principio apud Deum*. Prima duo pertinent ad quaestionem, an est: secunda vero duo pertinent ad quaestionem quid est.

Circa primum autem videndum est quid sit hoc quod dicitur *in principio erat verbum*. Ubi tria diligenter inquirenda concurrunt, secundum tres dictiones huius orationis. Et primo quid sit hoc quod dicitur *verbum*; secundo quid sit hoc quod dicitur *in principio*; tertio quid sit hoc quod dicitur *verbum erat in principio*.

Ad intellectum autem huius nominis *verbum*, sciendum est quod, secundum philosophum ea quae sunt in voce, sunt signa earum, quae sunt in anima, passionum. Consuetum est autem in Scriptura quod significata nominantur nominibus signorum, sicut illud I Cor. X, 4: *petra autem erat Christus*. De necessitate autem oportet quod illud intrinsecum animae nostrae, quod significatur exteriori verbo nostro, verbum vocetur. Utrum autem per prius conveniat nomen verbi rei exteriori voce prolatae, vel ipsi conceptioni mentis, nihil refert ad praesens. Planum est tamen quod illud quod voce significatur, interius existens in anima, prius est quam ipsum verbum exteriori voce prolatum, utpote causa eius existens. Si ergo volumus scire quid est interius verbum mentis, videamus quid significat quod exteriori voce profertur.

In intellectu autem nostro sunt tria: scilicet ipsa potentia intellectus; species rei intellectae, quae est forma eius, se habens ad ipsum intellectum, sicut species coloris ad pupillam; et, tertio, ipsa operatio intellectus quae est intelligere. Nullum autem istorum significatur verbo exteriori voce prolato. Nam hoc nomen lapis non significat substantiam intellectus, quia hoc non intendit dicere

beginning was the Word; secondly where he was: **and the Word was with God**; thirdly what he was: **and the Word was God**; fourthly, in what way he was: **He was in the beginning with God**. The first two pertain to the inquiry “whether something exists”; the second two pertain to the inquiry “what something is.”

24 With respect to the first of these four we must examine the meaning of the statement, **In the beginning was the Word**. And here three things present themselves for careful study according to the three parts of this statement. First it is necessary to investigate the name **Word**; secondly the phrase **in the beginning**; thirdly the meaning of the **Word was in the beginning**.

25 To understand the name **Word** we should note that according to the Philosopher [*On Interpretation* 16a3] vocal sounds are signs of the affections that exist in our soul. It is customary in Scripture for the things signified to be themselves called by the names of their signs, as in the statement, “And the rock was Christ” (1 Cor 10:4). It is fitting that what is within our soul, and which is signified by our external word, be called a “word.” But whether the name “word” belongs first to the exterior vocal sound or to the conception in our mind, is not our concern at present. However, it is obvious that what is signified by the vocal sound, as existing interiorly in the soul, exists prior to the vocal expression inasmuch as it is its actual cause. Therefore if we wish to grasp the meaning of the interior word, we must first look at the meaning of that which is exteriorly expressed in words.

Now there are three things in our intellect: the intellectual power itself, the species of the thing understood (and this species is its form, being to the intellect what the species of a color is to the eye), and thirdly the very activity of the intellect, which is to understand. But none of these is what is signified by the exterior vocal word: for the name “stone” does not signify

nominans; nec significat speciem, quae est qua intellectus intelligit, cum etiam hoc non sit intentio nominantis; non significat etiam ipsum intelligere, cum intelligere non sit actio exterius progrediens ab intelligente, sed in ipso manens. Illud ergo proprie dicitur verbum interius, quod intelligens intelligendo format.

Intellectus autem duo format, secundum duas eius operationes. Nam secundum operationem suam, quae dicitur indivisibilium intelligentia, format definitionem; secundum vero operationem suam, qua componit et dividit, format enunciationem, vel aliquid huiusmodi. Et ideo, illud sic formatum et expressum per operationem intellectus, vel definientis vel enunciantis, exteriori voce significatur. Unde dicit philosophus quod ratio, quam significat nomen, est definitio. Istud ergo sic expressum, scilicet formatum in anima, dicitur verbum interius; et ideo comparatur ad intellectum, non sicut quo intellectus intelligit, sed sicut in quo intelligit; quia in ipso expresso et formato videt naturam rei intellectae. Sic ergo habemus significationem huius nominis *verbum*.

Secundo, ex his quae dicta sunt, concipere possumus, quod verbum semper est aliquid procedens ab intellectu in actu existente. Iterum quod verbum semper est ratio et similitudo rei intellectae. Et si quidem eadem res sit intelligens et intellecta, tunc verbum est ratio et similitudo intellectus, a quo procedit; si autem sit aliud intelligens et intellectum, tunc verbum non est similitudo et ratio intelligentis, sed rei intellectae: sicut conceptio quam aliquis habet de lapide, est similitudo lapidis tantum, sed quando intellectus intelligit se, tunc huiusmodi verbum est similitudo et ratio intellectus. Et ideo Augustinus ponit similitudinem Trinitatis in anima, secundum quod mens intelligit seipsam, non autem secundum quod intelligit alia.

the substance of the intellect because this is not what the one naming intends; nor does it signify the species, which is that by which the intellect understands, since this also is not the intention of the one naming; nor does it signify the act itself of understanding since to understand is not an action proceeding to the exterior from the one understanding, but an action remaining within. Therefore, that is properly called an interior word which the one understanding forms when understanding.

Now the intellect forms two things, according to its two operations. According to its operation which is called “the understanding of indivisibles,” it forms a definition; while according to its operation by which it unites and separates, it forms an enunciation or something of that sort. Hence, what is thus formed and expressed by the operation of the intellect, whether by defining or enunciating, is what the exterior vocal sound signifies. So the Philosopher says that the notion (ratio) which a name signifies is a definition. Hence, what is thus expressed, i.e., formed in the soul, is called an interior word. Consequently it is compared to the intellect, not as that by which the intellect understands, but as that in which it understands, because it is in what is thus expressed and formed that it sees the nature of the thing understood. Thus we have the meaning of the name “word.”

Secondly, from what has been said we are able to understand that a word is always something that proceeds from an intellect existing in act; and furthermore, that a word is always a notion (ratio) and likeness of the thing understood. So if the one understanding and the thing understood are the same, then the word is a notion and likeness of the intellect from which it proceeds. On the other hand, if the one understanding is other than the thing understood, then the word is not a likeness and notion of the one understanding but of the thing understood, as the conception which one has of a stone is a likeness of only the stone. But when the intellect understands itself, its word is a likeness and notion of the intellect. And so Augustine

Patet ergo quod in qualibet natura intellectuali necesse est ponere verbum: quia de ratione intelligendi est quod intellectus intelligendo aliquid formet; huius autem formatio dicitur verbum; et ideo in omni intelligente oportet ponere verbum.

Natura autem intellectualis est triplex, scilicet humana, angelica et divina: et ideo triplex est verbum. Scilicet humanum, de quo in Ps. XIII, 1: *dixit insipiens in corde suo: non est Deus*. Est et angelicum, de quo Zac. I, 9 et in multis locis sacrae Scripturae dicitur: *dixit Angelus* et cetera. Tertium est verbum divinum, de quo Gen. I, 5: *dixit Deus: fiat lux* et cetera. Cum ergo Evangelista dicit *in principio erat verbum*, non intelligi potest de humano vel angelico verbo: quia utrumque istorum verborum est factum, cum homo et Angelus habeant sui esse et operationis principium et causam; verbum autem hominis vel Angeli non potest praeexistere eis. De quo autem verbo intellexerit Evangelista, declarat per hoc quod dicit, hoc verbum non esse factum, cum omnia sint facta per ipsum; hoc autem est verbum Dei, de quo Ioannes hic loquitur.

Sciendum est autem, quod hoc verbum differt a nostro verbo in tribus. Prima differentia est, secundum Augustinum, quia verbum nostrum prius est formabile, quam formatum: nam cum volo concipere rationem lapidis, oportet quod ad ipsam ratiocinando perveniam; et sic est in omnibus aliis, quae a nobis intelliguntur, nisi forte in primis principiis, quae cum sint simpliciter nota, absque discursu rationis statim sciuntur. Quamdiu ergo sic ratiocinando, intellectus iactatur hac atque illac, nec dum formatio perfecta est, nisi quando ipsam rationem rei perfecte conceperit: et tunc primo habet rationem rei perfecte, et tunc primo habet rationem verbi. Et inde est quod in anima nostra est cogitatio, per quam significatur ipse discursus inquisitionis, et verbum,

(*On the Trinity IX, 5*) sees a likeness of the Trinity in the Soul insofar as the mind understands itself, but not insofar as it understands other things.

It is clear then that it is necessary to have a word in any intellectual nature, for it is of the very nature of understanding that the intellect in understanding should form something. Now what is formed is called a word, and so it follows that in every being which understands there must be a word.

However, intellectual natures are of three kinds: human, angelic and divine; and so there are three kinds of words. The human word, about which it is said in the Psalm (13:1): “The fool said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” “The angelic word, about which it is said in Zechariah (1:9), and in many places in Sacred Scripture, “And the angel said to me.” The third is the divine word, of which Genesis (1:3) says, “And God said, ‘Let there be light.’” “So when the Evangelist says, **In the beginning was the Word**, we cannot understand this as a human or angelic word, because both these words have been made since man and angel have a cause and principle of their existence and operation, and the word of a man or an angel cannot exist before they do. The word the Evangelist had in mind he shows by saying that this word was not made, since all things were made by it. Therefore, the word about which John speaks here is the Word of God.

26 We should note that this Word differs from our own word in three ways. The first difference, according to Augustine, is that our word is formable before being formed, for when I wish to conceive the notion of a stone, I must arrive at it by reasoning. And so it is in all other things that are understood by us, with the sole possible exception of the first principles which, since they are known in a simple manner, are known at once without any discourse of reason. So as long as the intellect, in so reasoning, casts about this way and that, the formation is not yet complete. It is only when it has conceived the notion of the thing perfectly that for the first time it has the notion of the complete thing and a word. Thus in our mind there is both

quod est iam formatum secundum perfectam contemplationem veritatis. Sic ergo verbum nostrum primo est in potentia quam in actu; sed verbum Dei semper est in actu: et ideo nomen cogitationis verbo Dei proprie non convenit. Dicit enim Augustinus, XV de Trinit., ita dicitur verbum Dei, ut cogitatio non dicatur, ne quid quasi volubile credatur in Deo. Id autem quod Anselmus dicit, scilicet dicere summo spiritui nihil aliud est, quam cogitando intueri, improprie dictum est.

Secunda vero differentia verbi nostri ad verbum divinum est, quia verbum nostrum est imperfectum, sed verbum divinum est perfectissimum. Quia enim nos non possumus omnes nostras conceptiones uno verbo exprimere, ideo oportet quod plura verba imperfecta formemus, per quae divisim exprimamus omnia, quae in scientia nostra sunt. In Deo autem non est sic: cum enim intelligat, et seipsum etiam et quicquid intelligit per essentiam suam, uno actu, unicum verbum divinum est expressivum totius quod in Deo est, non solum personarum, sed etiam creaturarum: alias esset imperfectum. Unde dicit Augustinus: si quid minus esset in verbo, quam in dicentis scientia continetur, verbum imperfectum esset. Sed constat quod est perfectissimum; ergo est tantum unum. Iob XXXIII, 14: *semel loquitur Deus*.

Tertia differentia est, quod verbum nostrum non est eiusdem naturae nobiscum, sed verbum divinum est eiusdem naturae cum Deo: et ideo est aliquid subsistens in natura divina. Nam ratio intellecta, quam intellectus videtur de aliqua re formare, habet esse intelligibile tantum in anima nostra; intelligere autem in anima nostra non est idem quod est natura animae, quia anima non est sua operatio. Et ideo verbum quod format intellectus noster, non est de essentia animae, sed est accidens ei. In Deo autem idem est intelligere et esse; et ideo verbum intellectus divini non est aliquid accidens, sed pertinens ad naturam eius: quia quicquid est in natura Dei, est Deus. Unde, dicit Damascenus, quod

a “cogitation,” meaning the discourse involved in an investigation, and a word, which is formed according to a perfect contemplation of the truth. So our word is first in potency before it is in act. But the Word of God is always in act. In consequence, the term “cogitation” does not properly speaking apply to the Word of God. For Augustine says (*On the Trinity XV*): “The Word of God is spoken of in such a way that cogitation is not included, lest anything changeable be supposed in God.” Anselm was speaking improperly when he said: “For the supreme Spirit to speak is for him to look at something while cogitating.”

27 The second difference is that our word is imperfect, but the divine Word is most perfect. For since we cannot express all our conceptions in one word, we must form many imperfect words through which we separately express all that is in our knowledge. But it is not that way with God. For since he understands both himself and everything else through his essence, by one act, the single divine Word is expressive of all that is in God, not only of the Persons but also of creatures; otherwise it would be imperfect. So Augustine says: “If there were less in the Word than is contained in the knowledge of the One speaking it, the Word would be imperfect; but it is obvious that it is most perfect; therefore, it is only one.” “God speaks once” (Jb 33:14).

28 The third difference is that our word is not of the same nature as we; but the divine Word is of the same nature as God. And therefore it is something that subsists in the divine nature. For the understood notion which the intellect is seen to form about some thing has only an intelligible existence in our soul. Now in our soul, to understand is not the same as the nature of the soul, because our soul is not its own operation. Consequently, the word which our intellect forms is not of the essence of our soul, but is an accident of it. But in God, to understand and to be are the same; and so the Word of the divine intellect is not an accident but belongs to its nature. Thus it must be subsistent, because whatever is in the nature of God is God. Thus

Deus verbum substantiale est, et in hypostasi ens, reliqua vero, verba nostra scilicet, virtutes sunt animae.

Ex praemissis etiam patet quod verbum, proprie loquendo, semper personaliter accipitur in divinis, cum non importet nisi quid expressum ab intelligente. Item quod verbum in divinis sit similitudo eius a quo procedit; et quod sit coaeternum ei a quo procedit, cum non prius fuerit formabile quam formatum, sed semper in actu; et quod sit aequale patri, cum sit perfectum, et totius esse patris expressivum; et quod sit coessentialia et consubstantialia patri, cum sit substantia eius.

Patet etiam quod cum in qualibet natura illud quod procedit, habens similitudinem naturae eius a quo procedit, vocetur filius, et hoc verbum procedat in similitudine et identitate naturae eius a quo procedit, convenienter et proprie dicitur filius, et productio eius dicitur generatio.

Sic ergo patet primum, scilicet quid sit hoc quod dicitur *verbum*.

Circa hoc autem quatuor quaestiones occurrunt. Duae sunt Chrysostomi. Prima est cur Ioannes Evangelista patrem dimittens, confestim incepit a filio, dicens *in principio erat verbum*.

Ad hoc autem est duplex responsio. Una est, quia pater omnibus innotuerat in veteri testamento, quamvis non in ratione patris, sed ut Deus; filius autem ignorabatur: et ideo in novo testamento, in quo agitur de cognitione verbi, incipit a verbo, sive filio.

Alia est, quia per filium ducimur in notitiam patris; infra XVII, 6: *pater, manifestavi nomen tuum hominibus, quos dedisti mihi*. Volens ergo fideles in

Damascene says that God is a substantial Word, and a hypostasis, but our words are concepts in our mind.

29 From the above it is clear that the Word, properly speaking, is always understood as a Person in the Divinity, since it implies only something expressed, by the one understanding; also, that in the Divinity the Word is the likeness of that from which it issues; and that it is co-eternal with that from which it issues, since it was not first formable before being formed, but was always in act; and that it is equal to the Father, since it is perfect and expressive of the whole being of the Father; and that it is co-essential and consubstantial with the Father, since it is his substance.

It is also clear that since in every nature that which issues forth and has a likeness to the nature from which it issues is called a son, and since this Word issues forth in a likeness and identity to the nature from which it issues, it is suitably and appropriately called a “Son,” and its production is called a generation.

So now the first point is clear, the meaning of the **term Word**.

30 There are four questions on this point, two of them from Chrysostom. The first is: Why did John the Evangelist omit the Father and begin at once with the Son, saying, **In the beginning was the Word?**

There are two answers to this. One is that the Father was known to everyone in the Old Testament, although not under the aspect of Father, but as God; but the Son was not known. And so in the New Testament, which is concerned with our knowledge of the Word, he begins with the Word or Son.

The other answer is that we are brought to know the Father through the Son: “Father, I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given to

notitiam patris ducere Evangelista, decenter incepit a filio, statim subiungens de patre cum dicit *et verbum erat apud Deum*.

Secunda quaestio est etiam Chrysostomi. Cum enim, sicut dictum est, verbum procedat ut filius, quare dixit *verbum*, et non filius?

Ad hoc etiam dupliciter respondetur. Primo quia filius dicit aliquid genitum, et cum audimus generationem filii, posset quis cogitare generationem illam talem esse, qualem comprehendere potest, scilicet materialem et passibilem; ideo ergo non dixit filius sed verbum, quod importat intelligibilem processum, ut non intelligatur materialem et passibilem generationem illam fuisse. Ostendens igitur filium ex Deo impassibiliter nasci, destruit vitiosam suspicionem per verbi nuncupationem.

Aliter potest dici sic: Evangelista tractaturus erat de verbo, in quantum venerat ad manifestandum patrem. Unde cum ratio manifestationis magis importetur in nomine verbi quam in nomine filii, ideo magis est usus nomine verbi.

Tertia quaestio est Augustini in Lib. LXXXIII quaest., quae talis est: in Graeco, ubi nos habemus verbum, habetur logos. Cum ergo logos significet in Latino rationem et verbum, quare translatores transtulerunt verbum, et non rationem, cum ratio sit quid intrinsecum, quemadmodum etiam verbum?

Respondeo. Dicendum quod ratio proprie nominat conceptum mentis, secundum quod in mente est, etsi nihil per illam exterius fiat; per verbum vero significatur respectus ad exteriora: et ideo quia Evangelista per hoc, quod dixit logos, non solum intendebat significare respectum ad existentiam filii in patre, sed etiam operativam potentiam filii, qua *per ipsum facta sunt omnia*, magis

me” (below 17:6). And so wishing to lead the faithful to a knowledge of the Father, the Evangelist fittingly began with the Son, at once adding something about the Father when he says, **and the Word was with God**.

31 The second question is also from Chrysostom. Why did he say **Word** and not “Son,” since, as we have said, the Word proceeds as Son?

There are also two answers to this. First, because “son” means something begotten, and when we hear of the generation of the Son, someone might suppose that this generation is the kind he can comprehend, that is, a material and changeable generation. Thus he did not say “Son,” but **Word**, which signifies an intelligible proceeding, so that it would not be understood as a material and changeable generation. And so in showing that the Son is born of the Father in an unchangeable way, he eliminates a faulty conjecture by using the name **Word**.

The second answer is this. The Evangelist was about to consider the Word as having come to manifest the Father. But since the idea of manifesting is implied better in the name “Word” than in the name “Son,” he preferred to use the name **Word**.

32 The third question is raised by Augustine in his book *Eighty-three Questions*; and it is this. In Greek, where we have “Word,” they have “Logos”; now since “Logos” signifies in Latin both “notion” and “word” [i.e., *ratio et verbum*], why did the translators render it as “word” and not “notion,” since a notion is something interior just as a word is?

I answer that “notion” [ratio], properly speaking, names a conception of the mind precisely as in the mind, even if through it nothing exterior comes to be; but “word” signifies a reference to something exterior. And so because the Evangelist, when he said “Logos,” intended to signify not only a reference to the Son’s existence in the Father, but also the operative power

antiqui transtulerunt verbum, quod importat respectum ad exteriora, quam ratio, quae tantum conceptum mentis insinuat.

Quarta quaestio est Origenis, quae talis est. Scriptura in pluribus locis loquens de verbo Dei, nominat ipsum non absolute verbum, sed cum additione, scilicet Dei, cum dicit verbum Dei, vel domini: Eccli. I, 5: *fons sapientiae verbum Dei in excelsis*, et Apoc. XIX, 13: *et nomen eius verbum Dei*. Quare ergo Evangelista, cum loqueretur hic de verbo Dei, non dixit: in principio erat verbum Dei, sed dixit tantummodo verbum?

Respondeo. Dicendum, quod licet sint multae veritates participatae, est tamen una veritas absoluta, quae per suam essentiam est veritas, scilicet ipsum esse divinum, qua veritate, omnia verba sunt verba. Eodem modo est una sapientia absoluta supra omnia elevata, scilicet sapientia divina, per cuius participationem omnes sapientes sunt sapientes. Et etiam unum verbum absolutum, cuius participatione omnes habentes verbum, dicuntur dicentes. Hoc autem est verbum divinum, quod per seipsum est verbum super omnia verba elevatum. Ut ergo Evangelista hanc supereminentiam divini verbi significaret, ipsum verbum absque ulla additione nobis absolute proposuit;

et quia Graeci, quando volunt significare aliquid segregatum et elevatum ab omnibus aliis, consueverunt apponere articulum nomini, per quod illud significatur sicut Platonici volentes significare substantias separatas, puta bonum separatum, vel hominem separatum, vocabant illud *ly* per se bonum, vel *ly* per se hominem ideo Evangelista volens significare segregationem et elevationem istius verbi super omnia, apposuit articulum ad hoc nomen *logos*, ut si dicatur in Latino, *ly* verbum.

of the Son, by which, through him, all things were made, our predecessors preferred to translate it “Word,” which implies a reference to something exterior, rather than “notion “ which implies merely a concept of the mind.

33 The fourth question is from Origen, and is this. In many passages, Scripture, when speaking of the Word of God, does not simply call him the Word, but adds “of God,” saying, “the Word of God,” or “of the Lord”: “The Word of God on high is the foundation of wisdom” (Sir 1:5); “His name is the Word of God” (Rv 19:13). Why then did the Evangelist, when speaking here of the Word of God, not say, “In the beginning was the Word of God,” but said **In the beginning was the Word?**

I answer that although there are many participated truths, there is just one absolute Truth, which is Truth by its very essence, that is, the divine act of being (*esse*); and by this Truth all words are words. Similarly, there is one absolute Wisdom elevated above all things, that is, the divine Wisdom, by participating in which all wise persons are wise. Further, there is one absolute Word, by participating in which all persons having a word are called speakers. Now this is the divine Word which of itself is the Word elevated above all words. So in order that the Evangelist might signify this supereminence of the divine Word, he pointed out this Word to us absolutely without any addition.

And because the Greeks, when they wished to signify something separate and elevated above everything else, did this by affixing the article to the name (as the Platonists, wishing to signify the separated substances, such as the separated good or the separated man, called them the good *per se*, or man *per se*), so the Evangelist, wishing to signify the separation and elevation of that Word above all things, affixed an article to the name “Logos,” so that if it were stated in Latin we would say “*the* Word.”

Secundo considerandum est, quid significet hoc quod dicitur *in principio*. Sciendum est autem quod principium, secundum Origenem, multis modis dicitur. Cum enim principium importet ordinem quemdam ad alia, necesse est invenire principium in omnibus, in quibus est ordo. Invenitur autem ordo in quantitatibus; et secundum hoc dicitur principium in numeris et longitudine, puta lineae. Invenitur etiam ordo in tempore; et secundum hoc dicitur principium temporis, vel durationis. Invenitur ordo in disciplinis, et hic est duplex: secundum naturam, et quoad nos; et utroque modo dicitur principium. Hebr. V, v. 12: *deberetis esse magistri propter tempus*. Et hoc modo, secundum naturam quidem, in disciplina Christiana initium et principium sapientiae nostrae est Christus, in quantum est sapientia et verbum Dei, idest secundum divinitatem. Quoad nos vero principium est ipse Christus, in quantum *verbum caro factum est*, idest secundum eius incarnationem. Invenitur etiam ordo in productione rei; et secundum hoc principium dicitur ex parte generati, scilicet ipsa prima pars generati seu facti: sicut fundamentum dicitur principium domus. Vel ex parte facientis: et sic est triplex principium, scilicet intentionis, quod est finis, quod movet agentem; rationis, quod est ipsa forma in mente artificis; et executionis, quod est potentia operans. His igitur modis de principio inquirendum est, quomodo sumatur hic principium, cum dicit *in principio erat verbum*.

Dicendum est igitur quod potest sumi tripliciter. Uno modo, secundum quod principium supponit pro persona filii, quod principium est creaturarum secundum rationem virtutis activae, et per modum sapientiae, quae est ratio eorum quae fiunt; unde dicitur I Cor. I, 24: *Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam*. Unde et dominus de se dicit infra VIII, 25: *ego principium, qui et loquor vobis*. Sic ergo accipiendo principium, intelligendum est quod dicitur *in principio erat verbum*, ac si diceret in filio erat verbum, ut sit sensus: ipsum verbum est principium, ex modo loquendi, quo dicitur vita esse in Deo, quae tamen non est aliud, quam ipse Deus.

34 Secondly, we must consider the meaning of the phrase, **In the beginning**. We must note that according to Origen, the word *principium* has many meanings [such as “principle,” “source,” or “beginning”]. Since the word *principium* implies a certain order of one thing to another, one can find a *principium* in all those things which have an order. First of all, order is found in quantified things; and so there is a principle of number and lengths, as for example, a line. Second, order is found in time; and so we speak of a “beginning” of time, or of duration. Third, order is found in learning; and this in two ways: as to nature, and as to ourselves, and in both cases we can speak of a “beginning”: “By this time you ought to be teachers” (Heb 5:12). As to nature, in Christian doctrine the beginning and principle of our wisdom is Christ, inasmuch as he is the Wisdom and Word of God, i.e., in his divinity. But as to ourselves, the beginning is Christ himself inasmuch as the Word has become flesh, i.e., by his incarnation. Fourth, in order is found in the production of a thing. In this perspective there can be a *principium* on the part of the thing generated, that is, the first part of the thing generated or made; as we say that the foundation is the beginning of a house. Another *principium* is on the part of the generator, and in this perspective there are three “principles”: of intention, which is the purpose, which motivates the agent; of reason, which is the idea in the mind of the maker; and of execution, which is the operative faculty. Considering these various ways of using the term, we now ask how *principium* is used here when it says, **In the beginning was the Word**.

35 We should note that this word can be taken in three ways. In one way so that *principium* is understood as the Person of the Son, who is the principle of creatures by reason of his active power acting with wisdom, which is the conception of the things that are brought into existence. Hence we read: “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1:24). And so the Lord said about himself: “I am the *principium* who also speaks to you” (below 8:25). Taking *principium* in this way, we should understand the statement, **In the beginning was the Word**, as though he were saying, “The Word was in the Son,” so that the sense would be: The Word himself is the

principium, principle, in the sense in which life is said to be “in” God, when this life is not something other than God.

Et haec est expositio Origenis. Dicit ergo hic Evangelista *in principio*, ut statim in principio divinitatem verbi ostenderet, ut Chrysostomus dicit, dum asserit ipsum esse principium; quia secundum determinationem omnium principium est honoratissimum.

Secundo modo potest accipi principium, prout supponit pro persona patris, quod est principium non solum creaturarum, sed omnis divini processus; et sic accipitur in Ps. CIX, 3: *tecum principium in die virtutis tuae*. Secundum hoc ergo dicitur *in principio erat verbum*, ac si diceretur: in patre erat filius. Et haec est expositio Augustini, et etiam Origenis. Dicitur autem filius esse in patre, quia eiusdem essentiae est cum patre. Cum enim filius sit sui essentia, in quocumque est essentia filii, est filius. Quia ergo in patre est essentia filii per consubstantialitatem, conveniens est quod filius sit in patre. Unde infra XIV, 10 dicitur: *ego in patre, et pater in me est*.

Tertio modo potest accipi principium pro principio durationis, ut sit sensus *in principio erat verbum*, idest verbum erat ante omnia, ut Augustinus exponit, et designatur per hoc verbi aeternitas, secundum Basilium et Hilarium.

Per hoc enim quod dicitur *in principio erat verbum*, ostenditur quod quodcumque principium durationis accipiatur, sive rerum temporalium, quod est tempus, sive aeviternarum, quod est aevum, sive totius mundi, sive quodcumque imaginatum extensum per multa saecula, in illo principio iam erat verbum. Unde Hilarius dicit VII de Trinitate: *transeuntur tempora, transcenduntur saecula, tolluntur aetates. Pone aliquid quod voles tuae opinionis principium; verbum iam erat, unde tractatur*. Et hoc est quod dicitur

And this is the explanation of Origen. And so the Evangelist says **In the beginning** here in order, as Chrysostom says, to show at the very outset the divinity of the Word by asserting that he is a principle because, as determining all, a principle is most honored.

36 In a second way *principium* can be understood as the Person of the Father, who is the principle not only of creatures, but of every divine process. It is taken this way in, “Yours is princely power (*principium*) in the day of your birth” (Ps 110:3). In this second way one reads **In the beginning was the Word** as though it means, “The Son was in the Father.” This is Augustine’s understanding of it, as well as Origen’s. The Son, however, is said to be in the Father because both have the same essence. Since the Son is his own essence, then the Son is in whomsoever the Son’s essence is. Since, therefore, the essence of the Son is in the Father by consubstantiality, it is fitting that the Son be in the Father. Hence it says below (14:10): “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.”

37 In a third way, *principium* can be taken for the beginning of duration, so that the sense of **In the beginning was the Word** is that the Word was before all things, as Augustine explains it. According to Basil and Hilary, this phrase shows the eternity of the Word.

The phrase **In the beginning was the Word** shows that no matter which beginning of duration is taken, whether of temporal things which is time, or of aeviternal things which is the aeon, or of the whole world or any imagined span of time reaching back for many ages, at that beginning the Word already was. Hence Hilary says (*On the Trinity* VII): “Go back season by season, skip over the centuries, take away ages. Set down whatever you want as the beginning in your opinion: the Word already was.” And this is what

Prov. VIII, 22: *dominus possedit me in initio viarum suarum, antequam quicquam faceret a principio*. Quod autem est ante durationis principium, est aeternum.

Sic igitur secundum primam expositionem, asseritur verbi causalitas; secundum autem secundam, verbi consubstantialitas ad patrem, qui verbum loquitur; secundum vero tertiam, verbi coaeternitas.

Considerandum est etiam hic, quod dicitur *verbum erat*, quod est temporis praeteriti imperfecti, et hoc maxime videtur competere ad designandum aeterna, si attendamus naturam temporis et eorum quae sunt in tempore. Quod futurum est, nondum est actu; praesens autem actu est, et per hoc quod est actu praesens, non designatur fuisse: praeteritum autem perfectum designat aliquid extitisse, et esse iam determinatum, et iam defuisse; sed praeteritum imperfectum significat aliquid fuisse, et non esse adhuc determinatum, nec defuisse, sed adhuc remanere. Ideo signanter Ioannes ubicumque ponit aliquid aeternum, dicit *erat*; ubi vero dicit aliquid temporale, dicit *fuit*, ut infra patebit.

Sed quantum ad rationem praesentis competit maxime ad designandum aeternitatem praesens tempus, quod signat aliquid esse in actu, quod semper convenit aeternis: et ideo dicitur Ex. III, 14: *ego sum qui sum*; et Augustinus dicit, quod ille solus vere est, cuius esse non novit praeteritum et futurum.

Est etiam considerandum quod hoc verbum *erat*, secundum Glossam, non sumitur hic in quantum significat temporales motus, more aliorum verborum, sed secundum quod signat rei existentiam: unde et verbum substantivum dicitur.

Proverbs (8:23) says: “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before he made anything.” But what is prior to the beginning of duration is eternal.

38 And thus the first explanation asserts the causality of the Word; the second explanation affirms the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father, who utters the Word; and the third explanation affirms the co-eternity of the Word.

39 Now we should consider that it says that the Word was (*erat*), which is stated in the past imperfect tense. This tense is most appropriate for designating eternal things if we consider the nature of time and of the things that exist in time. For what is future is not yet in act; but what is at present is in act, and by the fact that it is in act what is present is not described as having been. Now the past perfect tense indicates that something has existed, has already come to an end, and has now ceased to be. The past imperfect tense, on the other hand, indicates that something has been, has not yet come to an end, nor has ceased to be, but still endures. Thus, whenever John mentions eternal things he expressly says “was” (*erat*, past imperfect tense), but when he refers to anything temporal he says “has been” (*fuit*, past perfect tense), as will be clear later.

But so far as concerns the notion of the present, the best way to designate eternity is the present tense, which indicates that some thing is in act, and this is always the characteristic of eternal things. And so it says in Exodus (3:14): “I am who am.” And Augustine says: “He alone truly is whose being does not know a past and a future.

40 We should also note that this verb was, according to the Gloss, is not understood here as indicating temporal changes, as other verbs do, but as signifying the existence of a thing. Thus it is also called a substantive verb.

Sed potest aliquis quaerere, cum verbum sit genitum a patre, quomodo possit esse patri coaeternum: homo enim filius a patre homine genitus, est eo posterior.

Ad quod dicendum est quod principium originis invenitur esse prius duratione, eo quod est ex principio, propter tria. Primo quidem quia principium originis alicuius rei praecedit tempore actionem, qua producit rem cuius est principium; sicut non statim quando homo est, incipit scribere, et ideo tempore praecedit Scripturam. Secundo per hoc quod actio successionem habet, et ideo etiam si simul cum agente incipiat, tamen terminus actionis est post agentem: sicut simul cum generatus est ignis in istis inferioribus, incipit sursum tendere; prius tamen est ignis quam sit sursum, quia motus quo sursum tendit, quodam tempore mensuratur. Tertio modo eo quod ex voluntate principii determinatur initium durationis eius quod est in principio, sicut ex voluntate Dei determinatur initium durationis creaturae: unde prius fuit Deus quam creatura.

Nihil autem horum trium in generatione divini verbi invenitur. Non enim Deus primo fuit quam inceperit generare verbum: cum enim generatio verbi nihil aliud sit quam intelligibilis conceptio, sequeretur quod Deus esset prius intelligens in potentia quam in actu, quod est impossibile. Similiter non potest esse quod ipsa verbi generatio sit successiva: sic enim divinum verbum prius esset informe quam formatum, sicut accidit in nobis, qui cogitando verba formamus; quod est falsum, ut iam dictum est. Similiter non potest dici quod pater sua voluntate initium durationis filio suo praestiterit; quia Deus pater non generat filium voluntate, ut Ariani dixerunt, sed naturaliter: Deus enim pater seipsum intelligendo, verbum concepit, et ideo non ante fuit Deus pater quam filius.

41 Someone may ask how the Word can be co-eternal with the Father since he is begotten by the Father: for a human son, born from a human father, is subsequent to his father.

I answer that there are three reasons why an originative principle is prior in duration to that which derives from that principle. First of all, if the originative principle of anything precedes in time the action by which it produces the thing of which it is the principle; thus a man does not begin to write as soon as he exists, and so he precedes his writing in time. Secondly, if an action is successive; consequently, even if the action should happen to begin at the same time as the agent, the termination of the action is nevertheless subsequent to the agent. Thus, as soon as fire has been generated in a lower region, it begins to ascend; but the fire exists before it has ascended, because the motion by which it tends upward requires some time. Thirdly, by the fact that sometimes the beginning of a thing depends on the will of its principle, just as the beginning of a creature's coming-to-be depends on the will of God, such that God existed before any creature.

Yet none of these three is found in the generation of the divine Word. God did not first exist and then begin to generate the Word: for since the generation of the Word is nothing other than an intelligible conception, it would follow that God would be understanding in potency before understanding in act, which is impossible. Again, it is impossible that the generation of the Word involve succession: for then the divine Word would be unformed before it was formed (as happens in us who form words by "cogitating"), which is false, as was said. Again, we cannot say that the Father pre-established a beginning of duration for his Son by his own will, because God the Father does not generate the Son by his will, as the Arians held, but naturally: for God the Father, understanding himself, conceives the Word; and so God the Father did not exist prior to the Son.

Huius aliqualis similitudo apparet in igne, et in splendore procedente ab igne: procedit enim splendor naturaliter et sine successione. Item si ignis esset aeternus, splendor eius coaeternus esset: propter quod filius dicitur splendor patris; ad Hebr. I, 3: *qui cum sit splendor gloriae* et cetera. Sed in hac similitudine deficit connaturalitas, et ideo nominamus eum filium, cum tamen in humana filiatione deficiat coaeternitas: oportet enim ex multis similitudinibus sensibilibus in divinam cognitionem pervenire, quia una non sufficit;

et hoc est quod dicitur in libro Ephesini Concilii, coexistere semper patri filium: splendor enim denunciat impassibilitatem, nativitas ostendit verbum, consubstantialitatem vero filii nomen insinuat.

Nominamus ergo filium diversis nominibus, ad exprimendum perfectionem eius, quae uno nomine non potest exprimi. Ut enim ostendatur connaturalis patri, dicitur filius; ut ostendatur in nullo dissimilis, dicitur imago; ut ostendatur coaeternus, dicitur splendor; ut ostendatur immaterialiter genitus, dicitur verbum.

Deinde dicit *et verbum erat apud Deum*. Hic ponitur secunda clausula, quam Evangelista ponit in sua narratione. Ubi prius consideranda est significatio duorum verborum quae in prima clausula posita non fuerunt, scilicet *Deum* et *apud*. Quid enim sit verbum, et quid principium, iam expositum est. Haec ergo quae in hac secunda clausula ponuntur de novo, scilicet *Deum* et *apud*, investigantes, diligentius prosequamur. Et ut melius expositionem huius secundae clausulae intelligamus, dicendum est aliquid de significatione utriusque, quantum pertinet ad propositum.

Sciendum est ergo in primis quod hoc nomen Deus significat divinitatem, sed in supposito et concrete; hoc vero nomen deitas significat deitatem in abstracto, et absolute: et inde est quod non potest supponere pro persona ex naturali

An example of this, to a limited degree, appears in fire and in the brightness issuing from it: for this brightness issues naturally and without succession from the fire. Again, if the fire were eternal, its brightness would be coeternal with it. This is why the Son is called the brightness of the Father: “the brightness of his glory” (Heb 1:3). But this example lacks an illustration of the identity of nature. And so we call him Son, although in human sonship we do not find coeternity: for we must attain our knowledge of divine things from many likenesses in material things, for one likeness is not enough.

The Council of Ephesus says that the Son always coexists with the Father: for “brightness” indicates his unchangeability, “birth” points to the Word himself, but the name “Son” suggests his consubstantiality.

42 And so we give the Son various names to express his perfection, which cannot be expressed by one name. We call him “Son” to show that he is of the same nature as the Father; we call him “image” to show that he is not unlike the Father in any way; we call him “brightness” to show that he is coeternal; and he is called the “Word” to show that he is begotten in an immaterial manner.

43 Then the Evangelist says, **and the Word was with God**, which is the second clause in his account. The first thing to consider is the meaning of the two words which did not appear in the first clause, that is, **God**, and **with**; for we have already explained the meanings of “Word,” and “beginning.” “Let us continue carefully by examining these two new words, and to better understand the explanation of this second clause, we must say something about the meaning of each so far as it is relevant to our purpose.

44 At the outset, we should note that the name “God” signifies the divinity concretely and as inherent in a subject, while the name “deity” signifies the divinity in the abstract and absolutely. Thus the name “deity” cannot

virtute et ex modo significandi; sed supponit solummodo pro natura. Hoc vero nomen Deus habet naturaliter ex modo significandi quod supponat pro aliqua personarum, sicut hoc nomen homo supponit pro supposito humanitatis, et ideo quodcumque veritas locutionis, vel ipsum praedicatum exigit ut hoc nomen Deus supponat pro persona, tunc supponit pro persona ut cum dicimus, Deus generat Deum. Et ita cum hic dicitur *apud Deum*, necesse est quod Deus pro persona patris supponat, quia haec praepositio apud distinctionem significat verbi, quod esse dicitur *apud Deum*; et licet significet distinctionem in persona, non tamen in natura, cum eadem sit natura patris et filii. Evangelista igitur significare voluit patris personam per hoc quod dixit *Deum*.

Sciendum est autem circa hoc quod haec praepositio apud quamdam coniunctionem rei significatae per rectum, ad rem significatam per obliquum importat, sicut haec praepositio in. Sed differenter, quia haec praepositio in significat quamdam coniunctionem intrinsecam; haec vero praepositio apud quodammodo extrinsecam coniunctionem importat. Et utrumque dicimus in divinis: scilicet filium esse in patre, et esse apud patrem; et intrinsecum quidem ad consubstantialitatem pertinet, extrinsecum vero (ut sic loqui liceat, cum improprie in divinis dicatur extrinsecum) non nisi ad distinctionem personalem refertur, cum filius a patre solum per originem distinguatur. Et ideo per utrumque istorum, et consubstantialitas in natura designatur, et distinctio in personis: consubstantialitas quidem, in quantum coniunctionem quamdam importat; distinctio vero, in quantum distinctionem quamdam significat, ut superius dictum est.

Et quia haec praepositio in, ut dictum est, principaliter consubstantialitatem designat, in quantum importat coniunctionem intrinsecam, et ex consequenti distinctionem personarum, in quantum omnis praepositio est transitiva; haec

naturally and by its mode of signifying stand for a [divine] person, but only for the [divine] nature. But the name “God” can, by its natural mode of signifying, stand for any one of the [divine] persons, just as the name “man” stands for any individual (*suppositum*) possessing humanity. Therefore, whenever the truth of a statement or its predicate requires that the name “God” stand for the person, then it stands for the person, as when we say, “God begets God.” Thus, when it says here that **the Word was with God**, it is necessary that God stand for the person of the Father, because the preposition **with** signifies the distinction of the Word, which is said to be **with God**. And although this preposition signifies a distinction in person, it does not signify a distinction in nature, since the nature of the Father and of the Son is the same. Consequently, the Evangelist wished to signify the person of the Father when he said God.

45 Here we should note that the preposition **with** signifies a certain union of the thing signified by its grammatical antecedent to the thing signified by its grammatical object, just as the preposition “in” does. However, there is a difference, because the preposition “in” signifies a certain intrinsic union, whereas the preposition **with** implies in a certain way an extrinsic union. And we state both in divine matters, namely, that the Son is *in* the Father and *with* the Father. Here the intrinsic union pertains to consubstantiality, but the extrinsic union (if we may use such an expression, since “extrinsic” is improperly employed in divine matters) refers only to a personal distinction, because the Son is distinguished from the Father by origin alone. And so these two words designate both a consubstantiality in nature and distinction in person: consubstantiality inasmuch as a certain union is implied; but distinction, inasmuch as a certain otherness is signified as was said above.

The preposition “in,” as was said, principally signifies consubstantiality, as implying an intrinsic union and, by way of consequence, a distinction of persons, inasmuch as every preposition is transitive. The preposition “with”

autem praepositio apud distinctionem personalem significat principaliter, consubstantialitatem vero, in quantum quamdam coniunctionem significat quasi extrinsecam, ideo Evangelista in hoc loco specialiter ista praepositione apud usus est, ut distinctionem personae filii a patre insinuet, cum dixit *et verbum erat apud Deum*, id est filius apud patrem, ut alia persona apud aliam.

Sciendum est autem quod per hanc praepositionem apud quatuor significantur, per quae obiectiones quatuor contrariae excluduntur. Significat enim haec praepositio apud primo subsistentiam in recto; quia ea quae subsistentiam per se non habent, non dicuntur proprie esse apud aliquid: sicut non dicimus albedinem esse apud corpus, et similiter de aliis quae per se non subsistunt. Ea autem quae per se subsistunt, dicuntur proprie esse unum apud aliud; sicut dicimus hominem esse apud hominem, et lapidem apud lapidem.

Secundo significat auctoritatem in obliquo, non enim proprie dicitur rex esse apud militem sed proprie dicitur miles apud regem. Tertio dicit distinctionem: non enim proprie dicitur aliquis esse apud seipsum, sed unus homo est apud alium. Quarto significat coniunctionem et societatem quamdam: cum enim dicitur aliquis esse apud alium, insinuat nobis inter eos quaedam socialis coniunctio.

Secundum autem istas condiciones importatas in significatione huius praepositionis apud convenienter Evangelista hanc clausulam, scilicet *verbum erat apud Deum*, subiungit primae clausulae, scilicet *in principio erat verbum*. Praetermissa namque una illarum trium expositionum huius quod est *in principio erat verbum*, illa scilicet secundum quam principium ponitur pro filio, ad quamlibet aliarum expositionum, scilicet ad illam quae principium dicit idem quod ante omnia, et ad illam secundum quam principium sumitur pro patre, duplex obiectio fit ab haereticis; et sic sunt quatuor obiectiones, quas

principally signifies a personal distinction, but also a consubstantiality inasmuch as it signifies a certain extrinsic, so to speak, union. For these reasons the Evangelist specifically used here the preposition “with” in order to express the distinction of the person of the Son from the Father, saying, **and the Word was with God**, that is, the Son was with the Father as one person with another.

46 We should note further that this preposition **with** has four meanings, and these eliminate four objections. First, the preposition with signifies the subsistence of its antecedent, because things that do not subsist of themselves are not properly said to be “with” another; thus we do not say that a color is with a body, and the same applies to other things that do not subsist of themselves. But things that do subsist of themselves are properly said to be “with” another; thus we say that a man is with a man, and a stone with a stone.

Secondly, it signifies authority in its grammatical object. For we do not, properly speaking, say that a king is with a soldier, but that the soldier is with the king. Thirdly, it asserts a distinction. For it is not proper to say that a person is with himself but rather that one man is with another. Fourthly, it signifies a certain union and fellowship. For when some person is said to be with another, it suggests to us that there is some social union between them.

Considering these four conditions implied in the meaning of this preposition **with**, the Evangelist quite appropriately joins to the first clause, **In the beginning was the Word**, this second clause, **and the Word was with God**. For if we omit one of the three explanations of, **In the beginning was the Word** (namely, the one in which *principium* was understood as the Son), certain heretics make a twofold objection against each of the other explanations (namely, the one in which *principium* means the same as “before all things,” and the one in which it is understood as the Father). Thus

per quatuor conditiones huius praepositionis *apud* supra positas excludere possumus.

Quarum prima talis est: tu dicis quod verbum erat in principio, idest ante omnia; sed ante omnia nihil erat; ubi ergo erat verbum, si ante omnia nihil erat? Haec autem obiectio procedit secundum imaginationem eorum qui ponunt, omne quod est, esse alicubi et in loco. Quae quidem excluditur a Ioanne, cum dicit *apud Deum*. Et designat coniunctionem secundum ultimam dictarum conditionum, ut sit sensus, secundum Basilium: ubi ergo erat verbum? Respondet *apud Deum*, non in aliquo loco, cum incircumscriptibile sit, sed apud patrem, qui nullo comprehenditur loco.

Secunda quaestio ad idem, est talis: tu dicis quod verbum erat in principio, idest ante omnia. Sed ea quae sunt ante omnia, a nullo videntur procedere; cum illud a quo procedit aliquid, prius esse videatur eo quod procedit ab ipso; ergo verbum non est procedens ab alio. Haec autem obiectio excluditur cum dicit *verbum erat apud Deum*, ut *ly* apud accipiatur secundum secundam conditionem, secundum quam importat auctoritatem in causali, et sit sensus secundum Hilarium: a quo est verbum si ante omnia? Evangelista respondet *verbum erat apud Deum*; quasi dicat: licet verbum careat initio durationis, non tamen caret principio vel auctore: erat enim apud Deum, ut apud auctorem.

Tertia quaestio est ad aliam expositionem secundum quam principium supponit pro patre; quae talis est: tu dicis *in principio erat verbum*, idest filius erat in patre; sed illud quod est in aliquo, non videtur esse subsistens, ut hypostasis: sicut albedo quae est in corpore, non subsistit. Sed haec obiectio solvitur per hoc quod dicit *verbum erat apud Deum*; ut *ly* apud sumatur secundum primam conditionem per quam importat subsistentiam in recto; et sic, secundum

there are four objections, and we can answer these by the four conditions indicated by this preposition **with**.

47 The first of these objections is this. You say that the Word was in the beginning, i.e., before all things. But before all things there was nothing. So if before all things there was nothing, where then was the Word? This objection arises due to the imaginings of those who think that whatever exists is somewhere and in some place. But this is rejected by John when he says, **with God**, which indicates the union mentioned in the last four conditions. So, according to Basil, the meaning is this: Where was the Word? The answer is: **with God**; not in some place, since he is unsurroundable, but he is with the Father, who is not enclosed by any place.

48 The second objection against the same explanation is this. You say that the Word was in the beginning, i.e., before all things. But whatever exists before all things appears to proceed from no one, since that from which something proceeds seems to be prior to that which proceeds from it. Therefore, the Word does not proceed from another. This objection is rejected when he says, **the Word was with God**, taking “with” according to its second condition, as implying authority in what is causing. So the meaning, according to Hilary, is this: From whom is the Word if he exists before all things? The Evangelist answers: **the Word was with God**, i.e., although the Word has no beginning of duration, still he does not lack a *principium* or author, for he was with God as his author.

49 The third objection, directed to the explanation in which *principium* is understood as the Father, is this. You say that **In the beginning was the Word**, i.e., the Son was in the Father. But that which is in something does not seem to be subsistent, as a hypostasis; just as the whiteness in a body does not subsist. This objection is solved by the statement, **the Word was with God**, taking “with” in its first condition, as implying the subsistence of its grammatical antecedent. So according to Chrysostom, the meaning is

Chrysostomum, est sensus *verbum erat in principio*, non ut accidens: sed *erat apud Deum*, ut subsistens, et hypostasis divina.

Quarta quaestio ad idem est talis: tu dicis quod verbum erat in principio, idest in patre; quod autem est in aliquo, non est distinctus a patre. Sed haec obiectio excluditur per hoc quod dicit *et verbum erat apud Deum*; ut *ly* apud sumatur secundum tertiam conditionem, secundum quam significat distinctionem: ut sit sensus, secundum Alcuinum et Bedam, *verbum erat apud Deum*, et sic erat in patre per consubstantialitatem naturae, quod tamen est apud ipsum per distinctionem personae.

Sic ergo per hanc clausulam *et verbum erat apud Deum*, ostenditur coniunctio verbi ad patrem in natura, secundum Basilium; distinctio autem in persona, secundum Alcuinum et Bedam; substantia verbi in natura divina, secundum Chrysostomum; auctoritas patris ad verbum, secundum Hilarium.

Notandum autem, secundum Origenem, quod per hoc quod dicit *verbum erat apud Deum*, ostendit filium semper fuisse apud patrem. In veteri enim testamento dicitur factum esse verbum domini ad Ieremiam, vel quemcumque alium, ut patet in multis Scripturae locis, non autem dicitur: verbum domini erat apud Ieremiam vel apud alium; quia ad illos fit verbum, qui incipiunt habere verbum, postquam non habuerunt. Unde Evangelista non dixit, verbum factum esse apud patrem, sed *erat apud patrem*: quia ex quo pater erat, verbum apud eum erat.

Deinde dicit *et Deus erat verbum*. Haec est tertia clausula narrationis Ioannis, quae quidem secundum ordinem doctrinae congruentissime sequitur. Quia enim Ioannes dixerat de verbo quando erat et ubi erat; restabat quaerere, quid

this: **In the beginning was the Word**, not as an accident, but he was **with God**, as subsisting, and a divine hypostasis.

50 The fourth objection, against the same explanation, is this. You say that the Word was in the beginning, i.e., in the Father. But whatever is in something is not distinct from it. So the Son is not distinct from the Father. This objection is answered by the statement, **and the Word was with God**, taking “with” in its third condition, as indicating distinction. Thus the meaning, according to Alcuin and Bede, is this: **The Word was with God**, and he was with the Father by a consubstantiality of nature, while still being “with” him through a distinction in person.

51 And so, **and the Word was with God**, indicates: the union of the Word with the Father in nature, according to Basil; their distinction in person, according to Alcuin and Bede; the subsistence of the Word in the divine nature, according to Chrysostom; and the authorship of the Father in relation to the Word, according to Hilary.

52 We should also note, according to Origen, that **the Word was with God** shows that the Son has always been with the Father. For in the Old Testament it says that the word of the Lord “came” to Jeremiah or to someone else, as is plain in many passages of sacred Scripture. But it does not say that the word of the Lord was “with” Jeremiah or anyone else, because the word “comes” to those who begin to have the word after not having it. Thus the Evangelist did not say that the Word “came” to the Father, but was “with” the Father, because, given the Father, the Word was with him.

53 Then he says, **and the Word was God**. This is the third clause in John’s account, and it follows most appropriately considering the order of teaching. For since John had said both *when* and *where* the Word was, it remained to

erat verbum; idest verbum erat Deus, ut ly verbum ponatur ex parte subiecti, et ly Deus ex parte praedicati.

Sed cum prius quaerendum sit de re quid est, quam ubi et quando sit, videtur quod Ioannes hunc ordinem pervertat, insinuans primo de verbo ubi et quando sit.

Ad hanc autem quaestionem respondet Origenes, quod aliter dicitur esse verbum Dei apud hominem, et aliter apud Deum. Nam apud hominem est ut perficiens ipsum, quia per illud homo efficitur sapiens et bonus, Sap. c. VII, 27: *amicos Dei et prophetas constituit*. Apud Deum vero non ita dicitur esse verbum, quasi pater perficiatur per verbum et illustretur ab ipso; sed sic est apud Deum, quod accipiat naturalem divinitatem ab ipso, qui verbum loquitur, a quo habet ut sit idem Deus cum eo. Ex eo ergo quod est per originem apud Deum, necesse fuit primum ostendere quod verbum erat in patre et apud patrem, quam quod verbum erat Deus.

Sciendum est autem quod per hanc clausulam *Deus erat verbum*, responderi potest duabus obiectionibus, quae ex praecedentibus insurgunt. Quarum una insurgit ex nomine verbi, et est talis: tu dicis quod *verbum erat in principio, et apud Deum*; constat autem quod verbum secundum communem usum loquendi significat vocem aliquam et enuntiationem necessariorum, manifestationem cogitationum; sed ista transeunt et non subsistunt; posset ergo credi quod de tali verbo Evangelista loqueretur.

Sed ista quaestio satis per praedicta excluditur, secundum Hilarium et Augustinum, Hom. prima super Io., qui dicit, manifestum esse, verbum in hoc loco non posse pro locutione accipi, quia cum locutio sit in motu et transeat, non posset dici quod *in principio erat verbum*, si verbum esset quid transiens et in motu. Item cum dicit *et verbum erat apud Deum*, datur idem intelligi; satis enim patet quod aliud est inesse, et aliud est adesse. Verbum enim nostrum, cum non subsistat, non adest, sed inest; verbum autem Dei est subsistens, et

inquire *what* the Word was, that is, **the Word was God**, taking “Word” as the subject, and “God” as the predicate.

54 But since one should first inquire what a thing is before investigating where and when it is, it seems that John violated this order by discussing these latter first.

Origen answers this by saying that the Word of God is with man and with God in different ways. The Word is with man as perfecting him, because it is through him that man becomes wise and good: “She makes friends of God and prophets” (Wis 7:27). But the Word is not with God as though the Father were perfected and enlightened by him. Rather, the Word is with God as receiving natural divinity from him, who utters the Word, and from whom he has it that he is the same God with him. And so, since the Word was with God by origin, it was necessary to show first that the Word was in the Father and with the Father before showing that the Word was God.

55 This clause also enables us to answer two objections which arise from the foregoing. The first is based on the name “Word,” and is this. You say that **In the beginning was the Word**, and that the Word was with God. Now it is obvious that “word” is generally understood to signify a vocal sound and the statement of something necessary, a manifesting of thoughts. But these words pass away and do not subsist. Accordingly, someone could think that the Evangelist was speaking of a word like these.

According to Hilary and Augustine, this question is sufficiently answered by the above account. Augustine says (Homily I *On John*) that it is obvious that in this passage “Word” cannot be understood as a statement because, since a statement is in motion and passes away, it could not be said that **In the beginning was the Word**, if this Word were something passing away and in motion. The same thing is clear from **and the Word was with God**: for to be “in” another is not the same as to be “with” another. Our word,

ideo adest. Et idcirco Evangelista signanter dixit *verbum erat apud Deum*. Sed tamen, ut obiectionis causa tollatur totaliter, naturam et esse verbi subdit, dicens *et verbum erat Deus*.

Alia quaestio insurgit ex hoc quod dixerat *apud Deum*. Cum enim *ly* apud dicat distinctionem, posset credi quod *verbum erat apud Deum*, scilicet patrem, ab ipso in natura distinctum. Et ideo ad hoc excludendum statim subdit consubstantialitatem verbi ad patrem, dicens *et verbum erat Deus*; quasi dicat: non separatus a patre per diversitatem naturae, quia ipsum verbum est Deus.

Nota etiam specialem modum significandi, quia dicit *verbum erat Deus*, absolute ponendo Deum; ut ostendat non eo modo Deum esse, quo nomen deitatis attribui dicitur creaturae in sacra Scriptura; quia cum additione aliqua aliquando hoc nomen creatura participat. Sicut illud Ex. VII, 1: *ego constitui te Deum Pharaonis*, ad designandum quod non erat Deus simpliciter, nec per naturam, quia constituebatur Deus alicuius determinate; et illud Ps. LXXXI, 6: *ego dixi, dii estis*, quasi dicat: per meam reputationem, non secundum rei veritatem, dii estis: aliud enim est Deum reputari, et aliud esse Deum. Unde verbum absolute dicitur Deus, quia est secundum essentiam suam Deus, et non participative, sicut homines et Angeli.

Sciendum est etiam quod circa hanc clausulam Origenes turpiter erravit, ex modo loquendi, qui in Graeco habetur, sumens occasionem sui erroris. Consuetudo enim est apud Graecos, quod cuilibet nomini apponunt articulum, ad designandum discretionem quamdam. Quia ergo in Evangelio Ioannis in Graeco, huic nomini quod est verbum, cum dicitur *in principio erat verbum*, et similiter huic nomini quod est Deus, cum dicitur *et verbum erat apud Deum*, apponitur articulus, ut dicatur *ly* verbum, et *ly* Deus, ad designandum eminentiam et discretionem verbi ad alia verba, et principalitatem patris in

since it does not subsist, is not “with” us, but “in” us; but the Word of God is subsistent, and therefore “with” God. And so the Evangelist expressly says, and the Word was with God. To entirely remove the ground of the objection, he adds the nature and being of the Word, saying, **and the Word was God.**

56 The other question comes from his saying, **with God.** For since “with” indicates a distinction, it could be thought that **the Word was with God**, i.e., the Father, as distinct from him in nature. So to exclude this he adds at once the consubstantiality of the Word with the Father, saying, **and the Word was God.** As if to say: the Word is not separated from the Father by a diversity of nature, because the Word itself is God.

57 Note also the special way of signifying, since he says, **the Word was God**, using “God” absolutely to show that he is not God in the same way in which the name of the deity is given to a creature in Sacred Scripture. For a creature sometimes shares this name with some added qualification, as when it says, “I have appointed you the God of Pharaoh” (Ex 7:1), in order to indicate that he was not God absolutely or by nature, because he was appointed the god of someone in a qualified sense. Again, it says in the Psalm (81:6): “I said, ‘You are gods.’” —as if to say: in my opinion, but not in reality. Thus the Word is called God absolutely because he is God by his own essence, and not by participation, as men and angels are.

58 We should note that Origen disgracefully misunderstood this clause, led astray by the Greek manner of speaking. It is the custom among the Greeks to put the article before every name in order to indicate a distinction. In the Greek version of John’s Gospel the name “Word” in the statement, **In the beginning was the Word**, and also the name “God” in the statement, **and the Word was with God**, are prefixed by the article, so as to read “the Word” and “the God,” in order to indicate the eminence and distinction of the Word from other words, and the principality of the Father in the divinity.

divinitate; ideo, cum in hoc quod dicitur *verbum erat Deus*, non apponatur articulus huic nomini *Deus*, quod supponit pro persona filii, blasphemavit Origenes quod verbum non esset Deus per essentiam, licet sit essentialiter verbum; sed dicitur per participationem Deus: solus vero pater est Deus per suam essentiam. Et sic ponebat filium patre minorem.

Quod autem non sit verum, probat Chrysostomus per hoc quod si articulus positus huic nomini *Deus*, importaret maioritatem in patre respectu filii, numquam apponeretur huic nomini *Deus*, cum de alio praedicatur, sed solum quando praedicatur de patre, et semper cum dicitur de patre, apponeretur articulus. Invenimus autem contrarium per duas auctoritates apostoli, qui notat Christum Deum cum appositione articuli, dicens in Epist. ad Titum, II, 13: *expectantes beatam spem, et adventum gloriae magni Dei*. Ibi enim *Deus* supponit pro filio, et apponitur ei articulus in Graeco; ergo Christus est *Deus magnus*. Item idem apostolus, Rom. IX, 5, dicit: *ex quibus Christus, qui est super omnia Deus benedictus in saecula*. Ibi similiter ad Iy *Deus* ponitur in Graeco articulus. Praeterea I Io. ult., 20: *ut simus in vero filio eius Christo Iesu; hic est verus Deus, et vita aeterna*. Christus ergo non est *Deus* per participationem, sed verus. Patet igitur esse falsum quod Origenes finxit.

Ratio autem quare Evangelista non apposuit articulum huic nomini *Deus*, assignatur a Chrysostomo; scilicet quia iam bis nominaverat Deum cum appositione articuli, et ideo non oportebat reiterare tertio, sed subintelligitur. Vel dicendum est et melius, quod *Deus* ponitur hic in praedicatione, et tenetur formaliter; consuetum est autem quod nominibus in praedicatione positis non ponitur articulus, cum discretionem importet. Si vero *Deus* poneretur hic ex parte subiecti, pro quacumque persona supponeret, sive pro filio sive pro spiritu sancto; et tunc non est dubium quod in Graeco ibi apponeretur articulus.

But in the statement, **the Word was God**, the article is not prefixed to the noun “God,” which stands for the person of the Son. Because of this Origen blasphemed that the Word, although he was Word by essence, was not God by essence, but is called God by participation; while the Father alone is God by essence. And so he held that the Son is inferior to the Father.

59 Chrysostom proves that this is not true, because if the article used with the name “God” implied the superiority of the Father in respect to the Son, it would never be used with the name “God” when it is used as a predicate of another, but only when it is predicated of the Father. Further, whenever said of the Father, it would be accompanied by the article. However, we find the opposite to be the case in two statements of the Apostle, who calls Christ “God,” using the article. For in Titus (2:13) he says, “the coming of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ,” where “God” stands for the Son, and in the Greek the article is used. Therefore, Christ is the great God. Again he says (Rom 9:5): “Christ, who is God over all things, blessed forever,” and again the article is used with “God” in the Greek. Further, in 1 John (5:20) it says: “That we may be in his true Son, Jesus Christ; he is the true God and eternal life.” Thus, Christ is not God by participation, but truly God. And so the theory of Origen is clearly false.

Chrysostom gives us the reason why the Evangelist did not use the article with the name “God,” namely, because he had already mentioned God twice using the article, and so it was not necessary to repeat it a third time, but it was implied. Or, a better reason would be that “God” is used here as the predicate and is taken formally. And it is not the custom for the article to accompany names used as predicates, since the article indicates separation. But if “God” were used here as the subject, it could stand for any of the persons, as the Son or the Holy Spirit; then, no doubt, the article would be used in the Greek.