

**Passages from Jordan of Saxony, *Libellus* (~1233) and
Thomas Aquinas, *Super Isaiam* and *In Jeremiam* (1252-54)**

1. As noted above, his [Dominic's] practice of sending brethren here and there into various parts of God's Church was truly wondrous: he proceeded so confidently and without wavering, even against the advice of some who deemed it unfeasible, that it seemed he was sure of the future, or that he was being instructed by the revelation of the Spirit.¹

2. Far more impressive and splendid than all his [Dominic's] miracles, though, was the exceptional integrity of his character and the extraordinary divine fervor which carried him along; these proved beyond all doubt that he was a vessel of honor and grace, adorned with every kind of 'precious stone.' His mind was always steady and firm, except when he was stirred by a feeling of compassion and mercy; and, since a happy heart makes for a cheerful face, the tranquil composure of the inner man was revealed outwardly by the kindness and cheerfulness of his expression: He never allowed himself to become angry. In every reasonable purpose which his mind conceived, in accordance with God's will, he maintained such constancy of heart that he hardly ever, if ever, consented to change any plan which he had formulated with due liberation. And though, as has been said, his face was always radiant with a cheerfulness which revealed the good conscience he bore within him, 'the light of his face never fell to the ground.'²

3. Wherever he [Dominic] went, whether he was on the road with his companions or in some house, whether with his host and the rest of the household or among magnates and rulers and prelates, he always overflowed with words of encouragement. He abounded with *exempla*, by which he turned the souls of his listener to the love of Christ and to contempt for the world. Everywhere, in word and in deed, he showed himself to be a man of the gospel.³

4. This is the Brother Henry whom the Lord blessed with such marvelous grace in his talks to the clergy of Paris and whose moving eloquence pierced the hearts of his audience. As far as I can recall, the clergy of Paris had never before witnessed so young, so forceful and so polished a preacher.⁴

5. God had placed in this chosen vessel many signs of grace. He [Henry] was prompt to obey, firm in patience, gentle in meekness, attractively cheerful, expansive in charity; he lacked nothing in integrity of character, sincerity of heart and bodily virginity—indeed, he never in all his life looked at or touched a woman with any impure intention.

Although modest in conversation, his tongue was eloquent, his mind sharp, his countenance pleasing, his personality attractive, his writing smooth, his dictation skillful, and the melody of his voice was that of an angel. He was never downcast, but always cheerful. Strict justice had freed him from her severe rigors, and mercy had claimed him entirely for her own.⁵

6. Master Reginald ... then dedicated himself completely to preaching; and his eloquence was powerfully ignited, as though his speech itself were a flaming torch which set the heart of every listener on fire, so that even the hardest of hearts could not escape its warmth. ⁶

7. And because he [Jeremiah] admits his youthfulness, the Lord promises three things contrary to the defects of young men. For youths are inconstant; and against this he promises constancy. 'Do not say, ["I am only a youth,"] disqualifying yourself, 'for to all whom I send you [you shall go']. Jeremiah 10: 'the way of a man is not his own: neither is it in a man to walk, and to direct his steps.' Proverbs 3: 'Think on him in all your ways, and he will direct your steps.' He also promises eloquence contrary to ineloquence of youth—'And whatever I command you.' Wisdom 10: 'wisdom opens the mouth of the dumb, and makes the tongues of babes speak clearly.' He promises boldness contrary to the timidity of youth: 'do not be afraid because I am with you to rescue you.' This is not because you will be spared of difficulties, but because you will bear all things with patience. Psalm 12: 'I will not fear evils, for you are with me.'⁷

8. 'You, therefore, gird up.' Here he teaches the mode of exercise: and first that he should proceed promptly: 'gird up your loins,' as though one who is preparing himself to go quickly. Job 40: 'gird up your loins like a man.' Second, that he should proceed securely: and concerning this he first excludes fear. 'Be not afraid.' Ezekiel 3: 'fear them not, neither be thou dismayed at their presence: for they are a provoking house.'⁸

9. Here he warns of false confidence in escape: 'Let not the wise man not glory'—as though hoping by this to free himself—'in his wisdom,' which is chief among the human goods of the soul; 'in his strength,' which is chief among human goods of the body, 'in his riches,' which is chief among exterior goods. 1 Samuel 2: 'Do not multiply to speak lofty things, vaingloriously.' And then he demonstrates true confidence: 'But let him who glories glory in this, that he knows me,' through knowledge in the intellect, 'and is familiar with me,' through the experience of sweetness in the affection. Psalm 61: 'In God is my salvation and my glory: he is the God of my help, and my hope is in God.' 2 Corinthians 10: 'But he that glories, let him glory in the Lord.' And he gives the reason: 'because I am the Lord who does mercy,' that I may free you, 'and judgment,' that I may subdue the foe; 'justice,' that there may be equity; 'these things please me,' in you. Michah 6: 'I will tell you, O man, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you. But to do judgment and to love mercy, and to walk steadfastly with your God.'⁹

10. 'The Lord has given me.' Here he presents himself as an example. And first with respect to the grace of the benefit he received, as regards both eloquence: 'a learned tongue, that I should know how to uphold' with encouragements: Job 4:4: 'thy words have confirmed them that were staggering' and as regards wisdom: 'he wakens my ear,' to listen, 'in the morning,' from the beginning of my preaching ... Psalm [62]: 'I will meditate on you in the morning.' 'The Lord God has opened my ear,' to understand. Psalm [84]: 'I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me.' Matthew 23:10: 'You have one master, Christ.'

Second, he presents himself as an example of obedience, setting out his perfect obedience: 'and I do not resist,' but I receive and accept his inspiration; 'I have not gone back,' from my good intention. Isaiah 45:9: 'woe to him that gainsays his maker.' He also sets out the constancy of his obedience, that he did not abandon his obedience for any danger: 'I have given my body,' that is, I exposed myself that I should suffer such things; or perhaps he literally suffered these

things ... Jeremiah 12:7: 'I have given my dear soul into the hand of enemies.'

Third, he presents himself as an example of having confidence in God—first, setting down a ready defense. 'The Lord God is my helper'; second, the security of his confidence: 'he has set my face' so that I am moved neither by fear or shame. 'I have made thy face like an adamant and like flint'; third, he assigns the reason for this security from the power of the helper: 'he that justifies me is near,' namely, God. 'Who will contend with me?' with words; 'let us stand together,' Job 17: 'set me beside you, O Lord, and let any man's hand fight against me.' 'Who is my adversary?' with deeds. 'Who shall condemn me?' with false judgments, Romans 8:33: 'God is he that justifies: who is he that shall condemn?'¹⁰

11. The manner of preaching is designated by three things: by the height of the location, so that he who announces good things will be heard from afar: 'upon a high mountain,' mystically, Christ, or heavenly conversation and contemplation, Isaiah 2: 'come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord'; Isaiah 42: 'they shall cry from the top of the mountains'; by the cry of the voice: 'lift up your voice with strength,' so that many may hear, by preaching straightforwardly and constantly, Isaiah 58: 'cry, cease not, lift up your voice'; by security of heart: 'lift it up, fear not,' Jeremiah 1: 'be not afraid at their presence.'¹¹

¹ Jordan, *Libellus*, §62: "Eratque quiddam mirabile de servo Dei Dominico, ut in mittendis huc illucque fratribus per diversas ecclesie Dei partes, quemadmodum supra memoratum est, sic faceret omnia confidenter, et abseque hesitationes ambiguo, licet non sic faciendum aliis videretur interdum, ac si iam de futuris eventibus certus existeret, aut per revelationem Spiritus fuisset edoctus."

² Jordan, *Libellus*, §103: "Ceterum quod ipsis fulgentius est magnificentiisque miraculis, tanta morum honestate pollebat, tanto divini fervoris impetit ferebatur, ut ipsum esse vas honoris et gratiae, vas ornatum omni lapide pretioso haud dubium probaretur. Inerat ei firma valde mentis equalitas, nisi cum ad compassionem et misericordiam turbaretur; et quia cor gaudens exhilarat faciem, placidam interioris hominis compositionem manifesta de foris benignitate ac vultus hilaritate prodebat, nec aliquatenus acquiescebat irasci. Tantam autem servabat in his, quae secundum Deum rationabiliter fieri concepisset, cordis constantiam, ut vix aut numquam semel enuntiatum cum digna deliberatione sermonem acquiesceret immutare. Et cum multa in eius facie, sicut commemoratum est, de bone conscientie te

³ Jordan, *Libellus*, §104: "Ubicumque versaretur, sive in via cum sociis, aut in domo cum hospite, reliquaque familia, aut inter magnates et principes et praelatos, semper edificatoriis affluebat sermonibus, abundabat exemplis, quibus ad Dei amorem, seculive contemptum audientium animi flecterentur. Ubique virum evangelicum se exhibebat et opere."

⁴ Jordan, *Libellus*, §77: "Hic est frater Henricus, cui multam atque mirabilem in verbo suo ad clerum Parisiensem dominus largitus est gratiam, cuius sermo vivuis efficacis audientium corda violentissime penetrabat. Non est visus ante ipsum nostre recordationis temporibus apud Parisius in audientia omnis cleri tam iuvenis, tam facundus, tam gratiosus per omnia praedicator."

⁵ Jordan, *Libellus*, §78: “Et quidem in hoc vas electionis multa contulerat deus gratiarum insignia. Erat nempe obedientia promptus, patientia firmus, mansuetudine placidus, hilaritate gratus, caritate diffusus; nec deerat ei morum honestas, cordis sinceritas et in carne virginalis integritas, quippe qui in omni vita sua mulierem impudica cordis intentione non vidit nec contingit. Inerat ei sermonis modestia, lingue facundia, acumen ingenii, gratia faciei, persone venustas, scribendi habilitas, dietandi peritia, vocis angelice melodia. Numquam tristem, semper hilaris. Licentiaverat eum ab austeritate rigoris iustitia totumque eum sibi vendicaverat misericordia.”

⁶ Jordan, *Libellus*, §58: “magister Reginaldus ... Cepit autem mox predicationi totus insistere; et ignitum erat eloquium ejus vehementer, sermoque ipsius quasi facula ardens corda cunctorum audientium inflammabat, ut vix esset tam saxeus, qui se absconderet a calore eius.”

⁷ Aquinas, *In Jer.*, c. 1, l. 3: “Repellit hanc contradictionem. Et quia ille allegabat pueritiam, promittit tria contra tres defectus puerorum. Pueri enim sunt inconstantes; et contra hoc promittit constantiam: *noli dicere*, te excusando, *ad omnia*, exequendum. Infra 10: *non est hominis via ejus, nec viri est ut ambulet, et dirigat gressus suos*. Pr. 3: *in omnibus viis tuis cogita illum, et ipse diriget gressus tuos*. Item promittit eloquentiam contra hoc quod pueri sunt elingues, *et universa*. Sap. 10: *sapientia aperuit os mutorum, et linguas infantium fecit disertas*. Promittit audaciam contra timiditatem puerorum: *ne timeas quia tecum sum, ut eruam te*, non quod angustiis careas, sed quod omnia patienter feras. Psal. 12: *non timebo mala, quoniam tu mecum es. Et misit dominus.*”

⁸ Aquinas, *Super Jer.* c. 1, l. 5: “*Tu ergo accinge*. Hic docet exercendi modum: et primo ut prompte exequatur: *accinge lumbos tuos*, quasi qui parat se ad velociter eundum. Job 40: *accinge sicut vir lumbos tuos*. Secundo quod secure: et circa hoc primo excludit timorem. *Ne formides*. Ezech. 3: *ne timeas eos, neque metuas a facie eorum, quia domus exasperans est*.

⁹ Aquinas, *In Jer.*, c. 9, l. 6: “Hic excludit evasionis falsam fiduciam: *non gloriatur*; quasi per hoc credens se liberari, *in sapientia*, quae praecipua est inter humana bona animae, *fortitudine*, praecipua inter humana bona corporis, *divitiis*, quae praecipua sunt in bonis exterioribus. ... Et ostendit veram fiduciam: *sed in hoc gloriatur qui gloriatur, scire*, per cognitionem in intellectu, *et nosse*, per experientiam dulcedinis in affectu. Psal. 61: *in Deo salutare meum, gloria mea, et spes mea in Deo est* 2 Cor. 10: *qui gloriatur, in domino gloriatur*. Et assignat causam: *quia ego sum Dominus qui facio misericordiam*, ut vos liberem, *judicium*, ut hostes opprimam, *justitiam*, ut sit aequalitas, *placent*, in vobis. Mich. 6: *indicabo tibi, o homo, quid sit bonum, et quid Dominus requirat a te. Utique facere judicium, et diligere misericordiam, et sollicitum ambulare cum Deo tuo.*”

¹⁰ Aquinas, *Super Isa.*, c. 50 [#913-915]: “*Dominus dedit*. Hic ponit se ipsum in exemplum. Et primo quantum ad beneficii percepti gratiam, tum quantum ad eloquentiam: *linguam eruditam; sustentare*, confortationibus, Job IV 4 *Vacillantes confirmaverunt*; tum etiam quantum ad sapientiam: *Erigit*, ad attendendum, *mane*, a principio praedicationis meae ... *aperuit*, ad intelligendum, Ps. *Audiam quid loquatur in me Dominus Deus*, Matth. XXIII 10 *Magister vester unus est, Christus*. Secundo ponit se ipsum in exemplum quantum ad obedientiam ... *Ego autem non contradico*, sed recipio et accepto ipsius inspirationem, *retrorsum non abii* a bono proposito, supra XLV 9 *Vae qui contradicit factori suo*. ... Ponit etiam obediendi constantiam, quia obedientiam pro nullo periculo dimisit: Corpus meum dedi, id est exposui me ut talia paterer; vel forte ad litteram haec passus est ... Jer. XII 7 *Dedi dilectam animam meam in manus inimicorum*. Tertio ponit se ipsum in exemplum quantum ad fiduciam quam in Deo habebat primo ponens paratam defensionem: *Dominus Deus auxiliator*, Jer. XX 11 *Dominus mecum est tamquam bellator fortis*; secundo fiduciae securitatem: et *posui*, ut timore vel rubore non moverer, Ez. III 9 *Ut adamantem et silicem dedi te*; tertio assignat securitatis rationem ex potestate adjuvantis: *Juxta est qui justificat*, scilicet Deus, *quis contradicet?*, verbis; *Stemus simul*, Job XVIII *Pone me Domine juxta te, et cujusvis manus pugnet contra me, adversarius, factis; condemnet*, falsis judiciis, Ro. VIII 33 *Deus qui justificat, quis est qui condemnet?*”

¹¹ Aquinas, *Super Isa.*, c. 40 [#790]: “Modum designat per tria: per loci altitudinem ut bona nuntians de longe audiatur: *Super montem* etc., mystice Christum, vel caelestem conversationem et contemplationem, supra secundo *Venite ascendamus* etc., infra xliij *De vertice montium* etc.; per vocis clamorem: *exalta in fortitudine*, ut multi audiant, plane et constanter praedicando, infra xlvij *Clama ne cesses* etc.; per cordis securitatem: *exalta, noli* etc., Jer. primo *Ne timeas a facie* etc.”