

INAUGURAL LECTURES

Commendation and division of Sacred Scripture

by
Thomas Aquinas

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revised and html-edited by Joseph Kenny, O.P.

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HIC EST LIBER

This is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that is for ever. All that keep it shall come to life: but they that have forsaken it, to death. — Baruch 4.1

According to Augustine in On Christian Doctrine 4:12 one skilled in speech should so speak as to teach, to delight and to change; that is, to teach the ignorant, to delight the bored and to change the lazy. The speech of Sacred Scripture does these three things in the fullest manner. For it firmly teaches with its eternal truth. Psalm 118:89: 'Your word, O Lord, stands firm for ever as heaven.' And it sweetly delights with its pleasantness. Psalm 118.103: 'How sweet are your words to my mouth!' And it efficaciously changes with its authority. Jeremiah 23:29: 'Are my words not like fire, says the Lord?'

Therefore in the text above Sacred Scripture is commended for three things. First, for the authority with which it changes: 'This is the book of the commandments of God.' Second, for the eternal truth with which it instructs, when it says, 'and the law that is for ever'. Third, for the usefulness with which it entices, when it says, 'All that keep it shall come to life.'

The authority of this Scripture is shown in three things. First, its origin, because God is its origin. Hence it says, the commandments of God'. Baruch 3:37: 'He found out all the way of knowledge.' Hebrews 2:3: 'For it was first announced by the Lord and was confirmed unto us.' Such an author is infallibly to be believed, both on account of the condition of his nature, because he is truth; John 14:4: 'I am the way and the truth and the life.' And on account of his fullness of knowledge; Romans 11:33: 'Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!' And also on account of the power of the words; Hebrews 4:12: 'For the word of God is living and efficient and keener than any two-edged sword.'

Second, it is shown to be efficacious by the necessity with which it is imposed. Mark 16:16: 'He who does not believe shall be condemned.' The truth of Sacred Scripture is proposed in the manner of a precept, hence the text says, 'the commandments of God'. These commandments direct the intellect through faith: 'You believe in God, believe also in me', John 14:1; inform the affections with love: 'This is my commandment, that you love one another', John 15:12; and induce to action: 'Do this and you shall live', Luke 10:28.

Third, it is shown to be efficacious by the uniformity of its sayings, because all who teach the sacred doctrine teach the same thing. 1 Corinthians 15:11: 'Whether then it is I or they, so we preach, and so you have believed.' And this is necessary because they all had one teacher. Matthew 23:8: 'Your teacher is one.' And they had one spirit, 'Have we not walked in the same spirit?' and one love from above, 'Now the multitude of believers were of one heart and one soul' (Acts 4:32). Therefore, as a sign of the uniformity of doctrine, it says significantly, 'This is the book.'

The truth of this teaching of Scripture is immutable and eternal, hence the words, 'and the law that is for ever'. Luke 21:33: 'Heaven and earth will pass away but my words shall not pass away.' This law will endure for ever because of three things: First, because of the power of the lawgiver. Isaiah 40:8: 'For the Lord of hosts hath decreed, and who can disannul it.' Second, on account of his immutability. Malachi 3:6: 'For I am the Lord and I do not change'; Numbers 23:19: 'God is not a man, that he should lie: nor like the son of man, that he should be changed.' Third, because of the truth of the law. Psalm 118:86: 'All your commandments are faithful.' Proverbs 12:19: 'The lip of truth shall be

steadfast for ever.' 3 Ezra 4:38: 'Truth remains and gathers strength eternally.'

The usefulness of this Scripture is the greatest: 'I am the Lord your God who teaches you profitable things.' Hence our text continues: 'All who keep it shall come to life.' Which indeed is threefold: First it is the life of grace, to which Sacred Scripture disposes. John 6:64: 'The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.' For through this life the spirit lives in God. Galatians 2:20: 'It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me.' Second is the life of justice consisting in works, to which Sacred Scripture directs. Psalm 118.93: 'Your decrees I will never forget, for by them you have given me life.' Third is the life of glory which Sacred Scripture promises and to which it leads. John 6.69: 'Lord, to whom shall we go? you have the words of everlasting life.' John 20:31: 'But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.'

The Division of Sacred Scripture

Sacred Scripture leads to this life in two ways, by commanding and by helping. Commanding through the mandates which it proposes, which belong to the Old Testament. Sirach 24-33: 'Moses commanded a law in the precepts of justice.' Helping, through the gift of grace which the lawgiver dispenses, which pertains to the New Testament. Both of these are touched on in John 1:17: 'For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.'

Hence the whole of Sacred Scripture is divided into two principal parts, the Old and New Testaments, which are mentioned in Matthew 13:52: 'So then every Scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings forth from his storeroom things new and old.' And Song of Songs 7:13: 'In our gates are all fruits, the new and the old, my beloved, I have kept for you.'

The Old Testament is divided according to the teaching of the commandments, for the commandment is of two kinds, the binding and the warning. The binding is the command of a king who can punish transgressors. Proverbs 20:2: 'As the roaring of a lion, so also is the dread of a king.' But a warning is the precept of a father who must teach. Sirach 7:25: 'Do you have you children? Instruct them.' The precept of a king is of two kinds, one which establishes the laws, another which induces to observance of the law, which is customarily done through his heralds and ambassadors. Thus it is that three kinds of command are distinguished, that of the king, that of the herald and that of the father. On this basis the Old Testament is subdivided into three parts, according to Jerome in his prologue to the Book of Kings.

The first part is contained in the law which is proposed by the king himself. Isaiah 33:22: 'For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King.'

The second is contained in the Prophets who were, as it were, ambassadors and heralds of God, speaking to the people in the person of God, and urging them to observance of the law. Haggai 11:13: 'And Haggai, the messenger of the Lord, as one of the messengers of the Lord, spoke.'

The third is contained in the works of hagiographers, writers who were inspired by the Holy Spirit and spoke as for themselves and not for God. Hence they are called saintly writers because they were writers of the sacred, *agios* meaning 'sacred', and *graphia* meaning 'scripture'. Thus the precepts found in them are paternal. As is evident in Proverbs 6:20: 'My son, keep the commandments of your father.'

Jerome mentions a fourth kind of book, namely, the apocryphal, so called from *apo*, that is, 'especially', and *cryphon*, that is, 'obscure', because there is doubt about their contents and authors. The Catholic Church includes among the books of Sacred Scripture some whose teachings are not doubted, but whose authors are. Not that the authors are unknown, but because these men were not of known authority. Hence they do not have force from the authority of the authors but rather from their reception by the Church. Because there is the same manner of speaking in them and in the hagiographical works, they are for now counted among them.

The first part, which contains the law, is divided into two parts, insofar as there are two kinds of law, public and private.

A private law is imposed for the observance of one person or one family. Such law is contained in *Genesis*, as is evident from the first precept given to man, 'But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil 'you shalt not eat' (2:17), and to Noah, 'Saving that flesh with blood you shall not eat' (9:4), and to Abraham, 'And again God said to Abraham: And you therefore shalt keep my covenant, and your descendants after you in their generations' (17:9).

The public law is that which is given to the people. For the divine law was given to the Jewish people through a mediator, because it was not fitting that the people should receive it immediately from God. Deuteronomy 5:5: 'I was the mediator and stood between the Lord and You and at that time to show you his words.' Galatians 3:19: 'What then was the Law? It was enacted on account of transgressors, being delivered by angels through a mediator.' Thus a twofold level is found in legislation. First, when the law comes from the Lord to the mediator,

and this pertains to three books, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. Hence we frequently read in them, 'God spoke to Moses.' Second, when the law is given to the people by the mediator, and this pertains to Deuteronomy, as is evident from its very beginning, 'These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel.'

These three books are distinguished by the three things in which a people should be ordered. First, precepts bearing on equity of judgement, and this is found in *Exodus*. Second, in sacraments with respect to the establishment of worship, and this in *Leviticus*. And third, in offices, with respect to the administration of the community, and this in *Numbers*.

The second part, which is the prophets, is subdivided insofar as a herald ought to do two things. He should manifest the beneficence of the king, so that men will be inclined to obey, and he should declare the edict of the law.

There is a threefold divine beneficence that the prophets expose to the people. First, the effect of heredity, and this in *Joshua*, of which Sirach 46:1 says, 'Valiant in war was Joshua.' Second, the destruction of armies, and this in the book of Judges, of whose destruction Psalm 82:10 says, 'Do to them as to Madian, as to Sisara.' Third, the exultation of the people, which is twofold, namely the private exaltation of one person, and this in *Ruth*, and a public which is of the whole people, and this in *Kings*, which benefice God grants to them. Ezekiel 16.13: 'And you were adorned with gold and silver.' For these books, according to Jerome, are placed in the rank of prophets.

In other books which are commonly said to be of the prophets, the prophets posed divine edicts for the observance of the law. And this is said, first, in general, in the major prophets who were sent to the whole people and called for the observance of the whole law; second, in particular, and this in the *minor prophets*, different ones of whom were sent for different reasons to special tribes, as Hosea to the ten tribes of Joel, Jonah to the Ninevites, and so with the rest.

The major prophets differ according to the different ways the prophets sought to lead the people to observance of the law, namely, cajoling by the promise of benefits, frightening with the threat of punishment, arguing by condemnation of sins. Although each of these is found in every prophet, *Isaiah* chiefly cajoles, as is said in Sirach 48-27: 'With a great spirit he saw the things that are come to pass at last, and comforted the mourners in Sion.' *Jeremiah* chiefly warns, hence Jeremiah 3 8-4: 'He weakened the hands of the men of war that remain in this city.' But *Ezekiel* argues and scolds. Ezekiel 16-3: 'Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.'

They can be distinguished in another way, insofar as *Isaiah* chiefly foretells the mystery of the Incarnation, which is why he is read during the time of Advent by the Church, and *Jeremiah* the mystery of the Passion, hence he is read in Passiontide, and *Ezekiel* the mystery of the Resurrection, hence his book finishes with the raising of the bones and the repair of the temple. *Daniel*, however, is included among the prophets insofar as he predicted future events in a prophetic spirit; although he did not speak to the people in the person of the Lord, he dealt with the divinity of Christ. Thus the four prophets answer to the four evangelists, and also to the call to judgement.

The third part, which contains the hagiographic and the apocryphal books, is subdivided according to the two ways fathers instruct their sons in virtue, namely, by word and deed, since in morals examples are no less important than words. Some teach by deed alone, some by word alone, some by word and deed.

By deed, however, in two ways. One, instructing about the future by warning, and this in Joshua, whom Jerome places among the hagiographs. For although one is a prophet because of the gift of prophecy, this is not his office, because he was not sent by God to prophesy to the people. Hence what is said in Wisdom 8:8 can be applied to the prophet: 'She knows signs and wonders before they are done.' In another way, speaking of past events as examples of virtue. There are four principal virtues, namely justice, which serves the common good, an example of which is given in *Chronicles*, in which the condition of a whole people who were governed with justice is described. The second is temperance, an example of which is given in *Judith*, which is why Jerome says, 'Take Judith as an example of the chaste widow.' Judith 15. 11: 'For you have acted manfully, and your heart has been strengthened, because you loved chastity.' Third is fortitude, which has two attributes. To attack, and an example of this is found in the Book of *Maccabees*; and to endure, and an example of this is found in *Tobit* 2:12: 'Now this trial the Lord therefore permitted to happen to him, that an example might be given to posterity of his patience.' The fourth is prudence, by which dangers are avoided, and an example of this is given in *Ezra*. For in that book we are shown how Ezra and Nehemiah and other princes prudently guarded against the plots of enemies wishing to impede the building of the temple and the city. It also pertains to prudence wisely to repel the violent, and an example of this is given in *Esther*, where it is shown how Mordecai and Esther handled the deceptions of the most powerful Haman.

The hagiographical and apocryphal books which instruct by word, are divided insofar as words work in a twofold way to instruct, in one way, by asking for the gift of wisdom. Wisdom 7:7: 'Wherefore I have wished, and understanding was given me, and I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me.' This is how the *Psalter* instructs, speaking to God in prayer. In another way, by teaching

wisdom, and this in two ways according to the twofold work of wisdom, one of which is to expose the liar, and *Job* who drove out errors by way of disputation exhibits this. Job 13.3-4: 'But yet I will speak to the Almighty and I desire to reason with God, having first shown that you are forgers of lies and maintainers of perverse opinions.' The other work is not to lie about what it knows, and thus we are instructed in a twofold way, because either wisdom is commended to us, and this in the book of *Wisdom*, or the precepts of wisdom are proposed, and this in the three books of Solomon, which indeed differ according to the three grades of virtue that Plotinus, in Enneads 1.1.2.2-7, distinguishes, since the precepts of wisdom ought to concern only the acts of virtue. In the first grade, according to him, are political virtues, whereby a man moderately uses the things of this world and lives among men, and this in the *Proverbs*. In the second grade are the purgative virtues, whereby a man regards the world with contempt, and this in *Ecclesiastes*, which aims at contempt of the world, as is clear from Jerome's prologue. In the third grade are the virtues of the purged soul, whereby a man, wholly cleansed of worldly cares, delights in the contemplation of wisdom alone, and this is found in the *Song of Songs*. In the fourth grade are the exemplar virtues existing in God, concerning which precepts of wisdom are not given but are rather derived from them.

In word and in deed *Sirach* instructs. Hence the precepts of wisdom in praise of fathers close his book, as is clear in Chapter 44 and after.

The New Testament, which is ordered to eternal life not only through precepts but also through the gifts of grace, is divided into three parts. In the first the origin of grace is treated, in the Gospels. in the second, the power of grace, and this in the epistles of Paul, hence he begins in the power of the Gospel, in Romans 1:16 saying, 'For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.' In the third, the execution of the aforesaid virtues is treated, and this in the rest of the books of the New Testament.

Christ is the origin of grace. John 1:16-17: 'And of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace. For the Law was given through Moses: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.' In Christ a twofold nature is to be considered, a divine, and the Gospel of *John* is chiefly concerned with this, hence he begins, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' And a human, and the other Gospels treat chiefly of this, and they are distinguished according to the threefold dignity that belongs to the man Christ. With respect to his royal honour, *Matthew* speaks. Hence in the beginning of his Gospel he shows that Christ descended from kings and was adored by the Magi kings. With respect to his prophetic honour, *Mark* speaks, hence he begins with the preaching of the Gospel. With respect to his priestly dignity, *Luke* speaks, and

he begins with the temple and the priesthood and ends his Gospel in the temple, and frequently returns to the temple, as the Gloss says about Luke 2.46: 'And they found him sitting in the temple in the midst of the teachers.'

In another way, *Matthew* might be said to speak of Christ chiefly with respect to the mystery of the Incarnation, and thus he is depicted in the figure of a man. *Luke*, with respect to the mystery of the Passion, and therefore he is depicted as a bull, which is an animal to be immolated. *Mark*, with respect to the victory of the Resurrection, and thus he is depicted as a lion. But *John*, who soars to the heights of his divinity, is depicted as an eagle.

[The part dealing with the power of grace as exemplified in the epistles of Paul is missing from the text.]

The execution of the power of grace is shown in the progress of the Church, in which there are three things to consider. First, the beginning of the Church, and this is treated in the *Acts of the Apostles*, hence Jerome says, in his preface to the Pentateuch, that 'The Acts of the Apostles seem to give the bare history of the birth and to clothe the infant Church.' Second, the progress of the Church, and to this is ordered the apostolic instruction of the *canonical epistles*. Third, the end of the Church, with which the whole content of Scripture concludes in the *Apocalypse*, with the spouse in the abode of Jesus Christ sharing the life of glory, to which Jesus Christ himself conducts, and may he be blessed for ever and ever. Amen.

RIGANS MONTES

You water the hills from your upper rooms, the earth is sated with the fruit of your works. — Psalm 103:13

Preface

The King and Lord of the heavens set down this law from all eternity that the gifts of his Providence should come to the lower through intermediaries. Hence Dionysius in the *Celestial Hierarchy* 5 says, 'It is the most sacred law of the divinity that things in the middle should be led to his most divine light by first things.'

This is found to be a law not only in spiritual things but also in corporeal. Hence Augustine in *On the Trinity* 3.4: 'Therefore, as the more crass and least are ruled in a given order by more subtle bodies, so all bodies are ruled by the rational spirit of life.' Therefore, in the psalm the Lord proposed this law observed in the

communication of spiritual wisdom in a metaphor of bodily things: 'Watering the mountains...' It is plain to the senses that from the highest clouds rain flows forth by which the mountains and rivers are refreshed and send themselves forth so that the satiated earth can bear fruit. Similarly, from the heights of divine wisdom the minds of the learned, represented by the mountains, are watered, by whose ministry the light of divine wisdom reached to the minds of those who listen.

There are then four things to be considered in the chosen text: the height of spiritual doctrine; the dignity of those who teach it; the condition of the listeners; and the order of communicating.

1

Its height is expressed by the words, 'from your upper rooms'. The Gloss has, 'from your treasure houses on high'. The height of sacred doctrine comes from three things.

First, its origin: for this is the wisdom that is described as being from on high. James 3:15 and Sirach 1:5: 'The word of God on high is the fountain of wisdom.'

Second, because of the subtlety of its matter, Sirach 24:7: 'I dwelt in the highest places, and my throne is in a pillar of a cloud.' There are some heights of divine wisdom to which all come, though imperfectly, because, as Damascene says in *On Orthodox Faith* I.1, 'knowledge of the existing God is naturally inserted in all'. In this respect, it is said in Job 36:25, 'All men see him: every one gazes from afar.' Other things are higher and only the wit of the wise achieves them. Romans 1:19: 'What is known about God is manifest to them.' Some are so high that they completely transcend human reason, of which it is said in Job 28:21, 'It is hidden from the eyes of all the living,' and Psalm 17:12, 'He put on darkness as his covering.' But this has been made known by the Holy Spirit, 'Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is from God,' instructing holy teachers who passed it on in the text of Sacred Scripture; and these are the highest, in which this wisdom is said to dwell.

Third, from the sublimity of the end, for it has the highest end, namely, life eternal. John 10:31: 'But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.' Colossians 3:1-2, 'Therefore, if you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things of earth.'

2

Because of the height of this doctrine, there is required dignity in those who teach it, which is why they are symbolized by mountains when it is said, 'from your upper rooms', and this for three reasons.

First, because of the height of mountains. For they are elevated above the earth and neighbours of the sky. Thus the holy teachers by despising earthly things cleave to heavenly things alone. Philippians 3:25: 'But our citizenship is in heaven from which also we eagerly await a Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ.' Hence of the teacher of teachers, Christ, it is said in Isaiah 2:2, 'And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountain... and all nations shall flow unto it.'

Second, because of its splendour. For the mountains are illumined by beams. Similarly the sacred teachers of minds first receive the splendour. Like mountains the teachers are illumined by the first beams of divine wisdom. Psalm 75:5: 'You came shining with light, powerful, from the everlasting hills. The foolish of heart have been despoiled,' that is, by the teachers who participate in eternity. Philippians 2:15: 'You shine like stars in the world.'

Third, because of the protection of the mountains, for the land is defended from the enemy by mountains. So too the doctors of the Church must in defence of the faith stand against errors. The sons of Israel do not put their trust in lance or bow, but the mountains defend them. Ezekiel 13:5: 'You have not gone up to face the enemy, nor have you set up a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle in the day of the Lord.'

Therefore all the teachers of Sacred Scripture should give high thanks to their eminence of life, that they might be worthy to preach efficaciously, because as Gregory says in *On Pastoral Care*, 'The preaching of those whose life is despised will also be despised.' Ecclesiastes 12:11: 'The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails deeply fastened in, which by the counsels of masters are given from one shepherd.' For the heart cannot be stimulated or stirred to fear of God unless it is fixed in highness of life.

They should be enlightened, that they might fittingly teach by reading. Ephesians 3:8-9: 'Yes, to me, the very least of all the saints, there was given this grace, to announce among the Gentiles the good tidings of the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all men as to what is the dispensation of the mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God.'

Armed, that they might refute errors in disputation. Luke 21:15: 'For I myself will give you utterance and wisdom, which all your adversaries will not be able to

resist.'

Of these three offices, namely, to preach, to lecture and to dispute, it is said in Titus 1:9, 'that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to confute opponents'.

3

Third, the condition of those who hear, which are presented in the symbol of earth: 'the earth is sated'. This is because the earth is lowest. Proverbs 25:3: 'The heaven above, and the earth beneath.' Again, it is stable and firm. Ecclesiastes 1:4: 'One generation passes away, and another generation comes, but the earth stands for ever.' Again, it is fruitful. Genesis 1:11: 'Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind.'

Similarly, they should be low as the earth in humility. Proverbs 11:2: 'Where humility is, there, also is wisdom.' Again, firm with the sense of rectitude; Ephesians 4:14: 'That we may be now no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine.' And fruitful, as the precepts of wisdom bear fruit in them, Luke 8:15: 'Having heard the word, hold it fast and bear fruit in patience.'

Therefore humility is required of them with respect to the learning that comes from listening, Sirach 6:34: 'If you wilt incline your ear, you shalt receive instruction: and if you love to hear, you shalt be wise.' Rectitude of the senses with respect to the judgement of what is heard; Job 12.11: 'Doth not the ear discern words?' But fruitfulness in discovery, by which from a few things heard, the good listener pronounces many things; Proverbs 9.9: 'Give an occasion to a wise man, and wisdom shall be added to him.'

4

The order of its coming about is touched on here with respect to three things, namely, the order of communicating, the amount, and the quality of the gift received.

First with respect to the order of communicating, because not everything that is contained in divine wisdom can be grasped by the minds of the teachers. Hence he does not say from the highest mountains, but from the upper; Job 26:14: 'Lo, these things are said in part.' Similarly, not everything that the teachers grasp is passed on to the hearers; 1 Corinthians 12:4: '...and heard secret words that a man may not repeat'. Hence he does not say, passing on to earth the fruits of the

mountains, but 'the earth is sated with the fruit of your works'. This is what Gregory, in the *Morals on Job* 26 says in explaining Job 26:8, 'He binds up the waters in his clouds, so that they break not out and fall down together': 'For the teacher should not preach to the simple as much as he knows, because he himself is unable to know how many divine mysteries there are.'

Second, the order with respect to the mode of having is touched upon, because God has wisdom naturally. Hence his 'upper rooms' are what is natural to him; Job 12:13: 'With him is wisdom and strength; he hath counsel and understanding.' But teachers share in wisdom abundantly. Hence they are said to be watered from on high. Sirach 24:42: 'I said I will water my garden of plants, and I will water abundantly the fruits of my meadow.' But listeners sufficiently participate in it, and the satiety of the earth signifies this; Psalm 16:15: 'I shall be satisfied by seeing you.'

Third, with respect to the power of communicating, because God communicates wisdom by his own power. Hence by himself he is said to water the mountains. But the teachers do not communicate wisdom except as ministers. Hence the fruits of the mountains are not attributed to them but to the divine works, 'By the fruit of your works'. 1 Corinthians 3-4: 'What then is Paul' and later, 'His minister in whom you believe'.

But 2 Corinthians 2:16: '...who is worthy of this...' For God requires innocent ministers; Psalm 100:6: 'He who walks in the perfect way shall serve me.' Understanding; Proverbs 14:35: 'A wise servant is acceptable to the king.' Fervour; Psalm 103:4: 'You make the winds your messengers, and the blazing fire your ministers.' Again, obedience; Psalm 102:21: 'You ministers of his who do his will'.

But although no one by himself, of himself, is sufficient for such a ministry, he can hope to have this sufficiency from God; 2 Corinthians 3:5: 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God.' He must ask it of God; James 1:5: 'But if any of you is wanting in wisdom, let him ask it of God, who gives abundantly to all men, and does not reproach; and it will be given to him.'

Let us pray that Christ will grant it to us. Amen.