The Use of Scripture in St. Antony's Sermones

Beryl Smalley Il Santo, 22 (1982) 285-297

beautifully presented and annotated and equipped with excellent indices. Especially welcome is the careful attention which the editors have paid to the Paris Gloss, so often neglected in editions of medieval texts. By the early thirteenth century the Gloss had come to form an integral part of sacra pagina, taking its place with the biblical passages on the page. The editors show that their author turned to the Gloss on almost every quotation which needed some exposition if it were to serve his purpose. They have done most of the work for me. It ought to be a simple task to describe St. Antony's use of Scripture with so much help to hand. Yet I found it baffling. St. Antony's use of Scripture is both traditional and original. My aim here is to try to disentangle these two elements. What did he take from existing traditions and techniques? What did he add to them of his own?

His education will tell us something of the traditions and techniques available to him. He received his first and basic instruction at the Augustinian priory at Coimbra near Lisbon. He seems to have had the title of "master" authorizing him to teach when St. Francis sent him to teach at Bologna. Presumably it derived from the school at Coimbra. Later he must have been instructed in religion after he resigned his canonry to join the Friars Minor. It seems that he had no other equipment as a theologian. His habit of private study and intensive reading would fill the gap.

The probable influences on him would be the Paris schools, St. Bernard and the Cistercians, St. Francis and the early Franciscans, and lastly the Fathers. It must be said at once that the form of the Sermones is sui generis and cannot be found in that form in any of St. Antony's sources. Since the genre he chose determined his use of Scripture, I must describe its peculiar features.

It is easier to begin with what the Sermones are not. As the editors explain, they are not records of sermons actually preached, though St. Antony may have used his drafts of such sermons. Sermo here means a discourse, not a "sermon" in the modern sense. Nor do they represent an Ars praedicandi,

setting out rules for preaching and providing model sermons. The genre is equally remote from the early medieval homily on the whole Sunday gospel and the later medieval type, where the preacher worked on one text from the gospel for a Sunday or feast day. The Sermones offer discourses on the gospels for Sundays and feast days (the latter incomplete) throughout the liturgical year. The discourses serve as a framework for a manual for preachers, confessors and penitents. The framework is comprehensive. St. Antony expounds the whole gospel for each day. He divides it into particulae, expounding each in turn. Each particulae exposition ends with a prayer; so it seems that he regarded each as providing matter for one sermon or discourse. His frame is more comprehensive still; it includes exposition of almost the whole scriptural content of the mass: the Old Testament books read in the liturgy, the introit and sometimes also the tract, and the epistle. St. Antony "concords" them all to bring out their unity.

Before going further it is worthwhile to compare the *Sermones* with other preaching aids to ask what practical purpose they might have served for friars sent out on missions to preach. These aids multiplied from the early thirteenth century, taking the form of skeleton sermons, notes for sermons, exempla collections and so on. A compendious, portable type of book was needed, since a friar would carry his own luggage and travel light.¹

Whatever immediately practical purpose they might serve, St. Antony intended the whole to give a theoretical background to preaching and pastoral care. He concentrates almost exclusively on "the excellence of preaching," on the preacher's call to repentance and on its hoped-for sequel, contrition, confession to a priest, satisfaction and perseverance. Needless to say, he defines and paints in ugly colors the vices which make repentance necessary. All this goes with standard teaching on the duties of prelates, priests and

¹D. L. d'Avray, The Transformation of the Medieval Sermon (unpublished D. Phil. thesis, Oxford 1976) 131-132. The Sermones look like a whale among minnows compared to these. St. Antony composed them as a whole, to make up a whole, as the cross-references suggest, together with the fact that most manuscripts contain not separate Sermones, but the whole set. Nonetheless, it would have been feasible to copy one Sermo on a few leaves of parchment. Quaterni of this kind would have provided a friar with a wide chose of themes. The careful themata sermonum at the beginning of each Sermo indicated what he would find there. Each would contain matter for a number of sermons for the same Sunday or feast day, an advantage when the friar had to preach often on the same occasion. And his vade mecum would give him more: each Sermo suggested themes for sermons on other days too. The Sermo for Palm Sunday, for instance, includes a theme "in praise of the Blessed Virgin", which would have served for one of her feast days. In addition almost every Sermo had themes for sermones ad status, that is for preaching to groups: prelates, priests and people. A copy of one Sermo would equip its possessor with matter for sermons on many texts, with abundant supporting texts to help his memory.

confessors: they must set a good example to their flocks, act as true shepherds and do their best to help their penitents.

St. Antony derived some of his equipment from the Paris schools. The exercises of lectio, disputatio, praedicatio radiated toward from Paris and with them the tools of the trade, the basic classroom texts: the Gloss, Peter Lombard's Sentences and Peter Comestor's Historia scholastica. The most oldfashioned school and the remotest from Paris might have acquired them by the early thirteenth century. St. Antony used all three, in that order of frequency. What other short cuts, if any, he had to the Fathers remains unclear. He does not seem to have used Paterius' abridgment of St. Gregory, although it was popular; the glossators had relied on it in compiling the Gloss on the Old Testament. A spot check of St. Antony's references to the Moralia showed no trace of Paterius.2 It looks as though he read and quoted from St. Gregory in the original. Similarly no time-saving device would explain the facility of biblical quotation which so impressed contemporaries that Gregory IX called him Arca Testamenti (I, XVI, XX). Verbal concordances to the whole Bible were produced after a long process of trial and error at the Dominican studium at Saint Jacques, Paris, in the 1230's. Preceding these, and pointing to the need for them, came distinctiones, lists of biblical words, naming persons or things. Each followed by a list of their properties and various meanings in their contexts. St. Antony may have used one or more sets of distinctiones, since they were common. Possible examples would be the words species and ubrea (I, 110, 11, 4); he may well have looked them up in a distinctiones list. Individual scholars tried to furnish themselves with rough and ready verbal concordances to Scripture. Their attempts have been traced in margins of manuscript copies of lectures and sermons, again pointing to the need for the supreme achievement at Saint Jacques.3 St. Antony, working before the Saint Jacques concordances were available, may have devised something of the sort for himself. But no such mechanical aid would account for all the quotations which flowed from his pen, there would have been less need for verbal concordances if every scholar possessed St. Antony's memory. He had made the whole Bible his own.

²Paterius excerpted Gregory's exposition of texts and re-arranged them according to the sequence of biblical books in the Old Testament. The manual was naturally incomplete; not all expositions to be found in the Gregorian writings have a place there. St. Antony's quotations from the *Moralia* on Eccles. 11, 1 (1, 165) and on Jer. 31, 4 (1,201) are not in Paterius at all. His quotation on Is. 11, 15 (1, 244) is not *ad verbum*, but a paraphrase, which corresponds exactly neither to the *Moralia* nor to Paterius (PL 79, 947).

³Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, "The Verbal Concordances to the Scriptures," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 44 (1974) 8-9.

He accepted and used the tools offered by Paris, but supplemented them by much wider reading of St. Gregory and the Bible. Moreover he used them selectively to suit his purpose. It is no accident that the one and only quaestio in the Sermones concerns "the return of forgiven sins." Should the sinner relapse after absolution and penance, was his former absolution void if he "returned to his vomit?" St. Antony cites the Lombard and earlier works on the subject. Like the Lombard he reserves an opinion (II, 395), although the view that forgiven sins did not return had won the day by the early thirteenth century. It is a measure of St. Antony's conservatism that he chose to go no further than the Lombard. Much more significant is the fact that he chose this topic as the subject of a quaestio. It arose from his over-riding concern with penance.

So much for disputatio. Lectio consisted of the lecturing on and exposition of Scripture, which has its place in the Sermones. Here at once we see a striking contrast between St. Antony and the schoolmen. The Gloss gave mainly allegorical and moral interpretations; but the twelfth-century Paris masters made an effort to distinguish between the literal and spiritual senses. Which glosses referred to which sense? They broached the problem of the christological element in Old Testament prophecy: which prophecies should be interpreted as belonging to the prophet's first intention, to address the people of Israel on their immediate circumstances, and which did the prophet intend to refer directly to Christ's coming? St. Antony either ignored such questions or set them aside as irrelevant. He kept to the Gloss as it was, interpreting prophecies directly in their christological or allegorical or moral sense. To take an example where he goes straight to a morality: Joel's lament demolita sunt horrea, dissipatae sunt apothecae, quoniam confusum est triticum (1, 17) refers to the cloisters of canons (horrea) and the abbeys of monks (apothecae). The grain, white within and red outside, signifies charity. Its defect has destroyed all religion (I, 32). St Antony seized upon whatever interpretation would serve his purpose. He had no use for niceties in his aim to denounce abuses.

A new interest in the historical sense of Scripture had appeared in the Paris schools. It seems at first sight that St. Antony did not share it. His "historical" explanations are fleeting and brief. He found allegories and moralities more useful. A gospel parable will be interpreted immediately according to its spiritual sense. The rich man of the parable (Luke 16, 1-4) refers to Christ himself (II, 6). Christ's precept in the Sermon on the Mount to be reconciled

⁴Artur Michael Landgraf, Dogmengeschichte der Frühscholastik 4/1 (Regensburg, 1955) 193-275.

to one's brother before offering gifts at the altar (Mt 5, 23-24) was much debated by commentators from St. Augustine onwards. Its literal interpretation raised such questions as to what to do if one's brother were unavailable or unamenable to reconciliation. St. Antony brushed all that aside. He moralized the precept: the altar signifies the Trinity (I, 525-528). One might expect some literal comment on the entry of Christ into Jerusalem in the Palm Sunday sermon. But no: we read only an allegorical and moral interpretation, based on etymologies of names. The author also sketches in an extraneous theme in praise of the Virgin (I, 191). And yet St. Antony was not wholly lacking in curiosity on gospel history, as is proved by his comment on the Jews' saying that Jesus was not yet fifty years old. In fact, St. Antony remarked, Jesus was aged thirty-one or thirty-two at the time: "Perhaps he seemed older on account of his excessive toil and energy in preaching" (I, 186). This bit of speculation is not in the Historia scholastica. Hence it may have been St. Antony's own or he may have picked it out carefully from some other source. Does this gleam of curiosity show that he deliberately suppressed any interest in the historical sense which he may have had? Did he set it aside, with so much else, in order to focus on what mattered to him?

He was less scrupulous in quoting apocrypha than were the Paris masters. He records that the Virgin's face shone during her pregnancy so that Joseph could not look at her (II, 147), whereas Peter Comestor warned his pupils in a lecture that the story came from an inattention book. The apocryphal story of Seth (here fully annotated) is also adduced as "legitur in historiis graecorum" (III, 215). What would serve for edification, whether authentic or not, was grist to his mill.

On praedicatio he inherited a basis of technique and tradition from the Parish schools. The Paris masters devised aids to preaching in the form of Artes praedicandi. St. Antony was familiar with the Artes techniques: exordium, thema, distinctiones, concluding prayer; but he did not copy them slavishly. He subordinated them to his method of "concordances." The beginning of his prologue to the Sermones bears some resemblance to the principium, the inaugural lecture given by a master at his inception in theology in praise of Scripture. After that the resemblance ends, when St. Antony proceeds to set out the purpose of his Sermones. Their content has much in common with the Parish school tradition, as might be expected. The Paris masters of the sacred

⁵Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (2nd ed., Oxford 1952) 239. Comestor ascribes the story to Jerome and to "libro forte de infantia Salvatoris." I have not been able to trace it.

page insisted on the scholar's duty to preach. They stressed the familiar subject matter for sermons; they had recourse to "animal, vegetable and mineral lore" to draw lessons from names of things, persons and places, as St. Antony does as a concession to the taste of the times. Above all they satirized contemporary abuses: the failings of each rank of society and especially those of priests and prelates. They went into detail in describing these short comings and illustrated them by exempla from contemporary life. A colorful picture of the Church and lay society as the masters saw them emerges from their lectures and sermons.

St. Antony too attacks the greed, nepotism and negligence of prelates and the laxity and indiscipline of religious. He denounces vicious practices. All this in terms of biblical texts, the standard method. However, there is a contrast. His attacks are more generalized; he goes into less detail. He avoids exempla apart from traditional ones taken from saints' lives. His villains are sketched in more vaguely. One gets the impression of timelessness and sobriety if one compares the satire in the *Sermones* with that of, say, Peter the Chanter or Stephen Langton. We might be reading about Christendom in the early middle ages as well as in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. When blaming religious he distinguishes between monks and canons, but not between black and white monks and the military Order, all of whom had their share in the masters' satire.

But here again we find an exception to the rule. His restraint did not stem from lack of observation or inventiveness. A moralization of the story of Abimelech shows him as breaking free from his own conventions. This morality is specific and pointed. Abimelech, fighting to capture a tower, approached the gate and tried to set fire to it. A certain woman threw a piece of millstone from above, dashed it against his head and broke his skull (Judges 9, 52-53). St. Antony makes Abimelech, whose name means "my father the king," signify an ambitious man, wanting to lord it over others as father and king. The tower signifies high rank, which he fights to obtain. To do so more easily he sets fire to the gate. The fire signifies gold and silver marks, the gate those who seem to be the gate of the Church. To set fire to the gate means to bribe them to let him take the tower. Or gate may mean the ushers and notaries of the Curia; they wickedly bleed the poor, empty rich men's purses and give the proceeds to their nephews and nieces or perhaps to their sons and daughters. They receive petitions on bits of parchment and take payment in weights of gold and silver. A chain of supporting texts on this interpretation ends with Job 24, 12-13: oppressors of the poor have been rebellious to the light; so they shall be deprived of grace and glory. St. Antony continues:

Unhappy Abimelech who wants to lord it over others, not to be of service to them. He takes to the road, fearing neither enemy wiles, Alpine cold, Italian heat, Tuscan perils, nor Roman robbers. On reaching the gate he sets fire to it, is stripped of his gold and laden instead with a leaden seal hung on a scrap of parchment. The woman is the flesh and the millstone the worldly care of an ambitious man. His face is signified by Abimelech, who had his skull broken. Worldly care disrupts his mind now and will smite him at the severe Judgment hereafter (II, 184-186).

Here is a circumstantial, humorous picture, set into a carefully worked out morality, of the ambitious man who journeys to Rome determinedly in order to bribe his way into the papal Curia. We also see the papal officials charging exorbitant sums for drawing up and sealing petitions. Normally St. Antony goes into less detail. He prefers to stand at a distance and judge from afar; but he could come closer if he chose to.

Another mark of distance is his attitude to Jews and heretics. A major part of the Gloss and its originals relate to the blindness and cruelty of the Jews. It came into both the literal and the spiritual sense of Scripture. St. Antony shows remarkably little animus against the Jews. For him the "bad" Jews of both Testaments usually signify bad Christians, especially prelates. Nor do heretics, ancient or modern, figure largely in his moralities, although they did so in the Gloss and patristics and preoccupied Paris masters. One exceptional passage on Lam 4, 3 charges the lower classes with being especially prone to heresy. The monsters (lamiae) signified heretical teaching according to the Gloss, and the young they suckled were disciples of heretics. St. Antony elaborates on the young; they are called young not sons, a more honorable term, because nowadays they are "rustics," tailors and skinners, who do nothing but bark against the Church and blaspheme against her Catholics (I, 71). That is a clear reference to the spread of heresy among the lower classes in St. Antony's Italy. But he does not pursue the charge. Elsewhere he blames the negligence of prelates, who leave the nest of faith (he cites Job 29, 18) by behavior which defies the faith and so encourages conversions to heresy (II, 15). An exceptional thrust, at heretical craftsmen this time, breaks through customary aloofness.

St. Antony then selected from the Paris school inheritance: tools, techniques, content. Yet he rejected part of the tradition, such as distinction between the senses. How can we explain the exceptions: a quaestio on the return of forgiven sins, a literal historical comment on the age of Jesus, uncharacteristic allusions to the details of the papal Curia and to lower class heretics? My guess, and it is only a guess, is that he knew more of the Paris school tradition at second hand than he cared to incorporate into his Sermones. He deliberately restrained himself in the interests of gravity in pursuing his

serious purpose, but would occasionally "let himself go." Even so, his selective treatment of the school tradition of use of Scripture leaves much unaccounted for.

Perhaps we shall find a closer connection if we leave the schools and turn to the Cistercians. We do so more eagerly in that St. Antony, not surprisingly in view of their vogue, quotes lavishly from St. Bernard himself and from works then wrongly attributed to him. A comparison shows that here too St. Antony was eclectic: he chooses, rather than being subject to influence. He borrows the techniques of Bernardine rhetoric, addressing his biblical characters and his readers directly, in exclamations and questions (I, 51, 66, 105). But he is less dramatic and evocative. St. Bernard presents biblical scenes so vividly that his readers enter Mary's room with the angel and watch the Annunciation, as Bernard imagined it. St. Antony does not participate in the events he describes nor try to bring his characters to life. The appeal of allegories and moralities was too strong. His Sermones in praise of the Virgin praise her mainly by such means as likening her to an elephant by reason of the properties of ivory and the habits of elephants, moralized, from natural history (II, 111). She does not appear as a sorrowing woman and mother. Meditations on Christ's birth, life and Passion play a minor part in the Sermones, if we contrast them to the literature of Cistercian piety. To take one example: the text Mt 7, 17-20 leads to an analysis of the ten grades of humility as one of the good works which a good tree is known by. Only the last three of the ten grades consist of meditations on Christ's humility on earth and on the coming of the Humble Man at the Second Advent (I, 564-565). Further emphasis on the Passion as a subject for meditation recurs (II, 164); but such allusions are rare in a bulky book.

Nor did he intend his *Sermones* to be a guide to the mystical way to unity with God, again differentiating himself from the Cistercians. Occasional references to "the heights of contemplation" show that he was aware of the theme, but did not set out to be a spiritual guide to the contemplative. Another difference: his way of structuring his *Sermones* inhibited the Cistercian mode of free exposition. St. Bernard himself, his pupil Guerric of Igny and Isaac of l'Étoile all claimed not to "expound" their text in their sermons and homilies, but to take it as a springboard for inspiration. Instead of quoting Scripture verbally in doing so, when they digressed from exposition of one text, they

⁶S. Bernardi Opera. ed. J. Leclercq and others, 4 (Rome, 1966) 58: Guerric d'Igny. Sermons 2, ed. John Morson and Hilary Costello (Sources chrétiennes, no. 202, 1973, 396): Issac de l'Étoile. Sermons 2, ed. A. Hoste (Sources chrétiennes, no. 207, 1974, 10).

uttered in scriptural language, as though sharing the inspiration of the sacred writers. St. Antony's mode of "concordance" tied him, however loosely, to his opening text and forced him to make verbal quotations of other texts. It was a self-imposed limitation as were his others.

The noted affinity of Cistercian and Franciscan piety prepares his reader to find little or no trace of the latter, as there is little of the former, in these pages. What we are taught to see as Franciscan religious sentiment is absent, in that there is no mention of St. Francis and his novus ordo to lighten the gloom, and no sense of a religious renewal. Even the Sermones on the Resurrection and Ascension seem joyless. The four horsemen of the Apocalypse offered the writer an occasion to number the stages of the Church's development. St. Antony would not take it; he eschews history and prefers allegories and moralities in treating the four horsemen (I, 260-269). He does not allude to the friars even indirectly. His reproaches to prelates and religious are so standard that they are unlikely to point to a contrast with the friars by implication. One passage might jolt a reader unfamiliar with medieval homiletics into guessing at a contemporary allusion: the trick set by the Jews for Jesus (Mt 22, 15) evokes a long list of texts; among them is Amos 7,10-12, where the high priest Amasias tells the prophet to leave for his own country and sets the king against him: "Just so, the Pharisees of our time say this to preachers, when these preachers expose their wickedness, and they complain to a superior, as Amasias sent to Jeroboam to accuse Amos of being a rebel" (II, 410-411). Stephen Langton had already drawn a parallel between Amasias and the prelate who tells the scholar to return to Paris instead of stirring up trouble elsewhere; let him preach and prophesy in Paris. Amasias represents this kind of prelate's reaction to reform; he accuses Amos, representing the reformer, to his king. Langton's lectures on the Twelve Prophets circulated widely in the early thirteenth century. This exposition of Amos would have become a topos. No: St. Antony sees no comfort for the present Church. Her prelates are often pupils not of Christ but of Antichrist (II, 18). Agar, worldly wisdom, lords it over Sara, theology. What remedy has "the poor little stormtossed Church" but to trust in the Lord?

Iacta, ergo, o Ecclesia paupercula, tempestate convulsa, absque ulla consolatione cogitatum tuum in Dominum, qui ipse te enutriet... (II, 18-20).

⁷Beryl Smalley, op. cit 251-252.

Surely the friars had been sent to bring just such comfort and help to the Church! Surely the response to their coming showed that it had not been in vain! One would never suspect that the *Sermones* were a fruit of this new religious revival.

Yet again, there is an exception, a touch of personal piety on the Eucharist, in line with other exceptions to the negative side of the *Sermones*. This really does evoke a Franciscan milieu. Commenting on 1 John 2, 1-2, St. Antony writes:

We offer up the Son to the Father as a woman holds up her child to an angry husband, saying: "Strike him, beat him." The child weeps in pity for his mother. His father, moved by the tears of his son, whom he loves dearly, spares the wife on the child's behalf. So God the Father, angered by our sins, spares us, if not for our own sakes, but for the tears, toil and Passion of his Son (1, 342-343).

St. Antony's attitude to early Franciscan piety suggests the same self-restraint which we have noted before. He was no stranger to it, but preferred to mark his distance from the contemporary scene. He would not update his picture of the "poor, little storm-tossed Church."

I have left the Latin Fathers to the end because it is a relief to find positive results after so much has been negative. The permeating influence on him was St. Gregory in his use of Scripture and in his attitude to its application.⁸

The seed, as God says in today's gospel, is God's word. Therefore, that I may merit to be blessed among the blessed, I shall sow it on you in the name of Jesus Christ, who "went out from the Father's bosom and came into the world to sow his seed," "since the God of the New and Old Testament is the same, Jesus Christ, God's Son. Hence he says in Isaias: For I myself that spoke, behold I am here (Is 52, 6), I that spoke to the fathers in the prophets, I am here in the truth of the Incarnation." And so let us concord both Testaments to the honor of one God and for the use of our hearers, according to what he will give me (I, 26).

That was St. Antony's inspiration. He devised his complex patterns of "concordances" to set on his Gregorian basis. It was his way of harmonizing texts picked out from the Bible and the liturgy of the day. He wanted to prove

⁸On St. Gregory see C. Dagens, S. Grégoire. Culture et expérience chrétiennes (Études Augustiniennes, Paris, 1977). We have seen that he studied St. Gregory in the original. St. Antony had the same mood: gravity, moderation, pessimism, earnestness. He mustered the same flow of quotations to develop a theme, and had the same preference for the spiritual senses. St. Gregory's preference came from the certainty that God spoke to him equally in both Testaments. The spiritual senses enabled him to find Christian doctrine in any text. St. Antony expressed the same idea with crystal clarity as his reason for making "concordances." Their aim was to bring out the divine unity of Scripture.

that there was nothing random about the choice. A close-up view of his method will show how skillfully he contrived to do so.

He knew that his "concordances" often had to be forced, witness his delight when he found a natural agreement in content:

Consider and look carefully to see how suitable, how splendidly, the history of Judith concords with the gospel of today's Sunday (II, 251).

But in default of such natural agreement it was his duty to force, and he forced with amazing virtuosity.

One example will illustrate his recourse to twists and turns to achieve his purpose of making a cohesive whole. The text is Erat quidam regulu (John 4, 46). The theme is Ezech 1, 26; Ezechiel's vision includes four things: the animals, the firmament, the sapphire throne and the appearance of a man. These signify carnal desire, contrition, confession and perseverance, for reasons stated at length. We return briefly to the gospel, where two things are noted: the sickness of his son and the prince's belief. The introit and epistle both relate to sin and forgiveness or healing of sin. Just as St. John speaks of sickness and healing, so the Apostle speaks of the temptation of the devil, which makes the soul sick, and of the armor of God, which opposes the devil. And so this epistle [Ezech] is read with this gospel. St. Antony at last gets down to the task of expounding the gospel. Now four things are noted: the prince, his son, the son's sickness and Capharnaum, the place. The regulus signifies any one of the faithful, because he represents the celestial order established by Christ, king of kings. St. Antony lists the nine celestial orders of the heavenly hierarchy. He picks out angel to moralize. Angel signifies the just man who, after sin, binds Satan, the spirit of pride, by penance and by restraining his appetites. A number of supporting texts are adduced. We all represent the order of Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim when we lead good lives and repent of our sins. The reason for that is that Cherubim means "fullness of knowledge," and Seraphim "burning." Therefore we must quench the burning of sin by our prayers. Another string of proof texts testifies that "fullness of knowledge" is charity, while sin is "burning." The regulus signifies any one of the faithful for a further reason: he is composed of the four elements, as is every creature. Leaving the heavenly hierarchy, therefore, St. Antony comes to the four elements. That man is truly "prince" of them who disposes and informs them aright in his body. The exposition of regulus is now complete. We go on to the same kind of excursive comment on son, sickness and Capharnaum, which means sickness, that is sin. The exposition of each word deploys the same sort of association of texts as that of regulus. Each exposition relates to sin, penance and confession. Finally he draws all his threads together in a concluding prayer. He prays for all who commit the aforesaid abominations, like the sick son in Capharnaum. They suffer from deadly sickness of soul. Let the *regulus*, that is each one of the faithful, beg in prayer that he may be freed from sickness and restored to health (II, 354-363).

I have summarized only the "sermon" on the first particula of the gospel as typical. Looking back, we can see an overall pattern on the detail. St. Antony has been leading us through a maze. The entry to it is signposted De carnalium desideriorum mortificatione et peccatorum confessione. The exit opens into a new life of release from sin and aspiration to persevere. We do not lose ourselves in the maze because we realize that our guide is following a clue, the theme of sin and repentance, as he stops to explain to us at each twist and turning. Complex as they were, his "concordances" were made intelligible to the dullest reader by the piling up of texts. Never had so many texts been adduced in their various senses to prove the commonplace that the sower of the parable signified Christ preaching his gospel: "Habes ergo aperte quod seminator est Christus" is the triumphant conclusion (I, 28).

His technique of "concordances" was St. Antony's own answer to the problem of putting his message across to an increasingly sophisticated audience. The popularity of *Artes praedicandi* points to a taste for the even more complex. Not only clerks and religious but nobles and bourgeoisie in the Italian towns had educated tastes. The preacher had to find new ways to satisfy them. Old truths gained new freshness when expressed in varied and unexpected terms. John of Salisbury admired St. Bernard's use of scriptural language because it made what was old sound new by clever adaptation. St. Antony devised his "concordances" in order to use scriptural language for the same end. His clever adaptation made the old sound new.

Though the form was complex, the message came through clearly. The Sermones were meant to inspire preachers to exhort their congregations to abhor their sins, to repent, confess and persevere, while inspiring the preachers themselves to lead exemplary lives and to act as good confessors to their penitents. The "concordances" provided them with devices to capture their hearers' attention in a manner sure to attract contemporaries. Further the Sermones never allowed them to forget that the whole of Scripture, not only single texts, taught the same message. The most strongly felt inspiration came from St. Gregory. Otherwise St. Antony adapted to his use of Scripture what suited him from the Paris schools and from Cistercian and Franciscan piety.

⁹Historia pontificalis 12, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Medieval Texts, London, 1956) 26-27.

Exceptional passages suggest that he might have borrowed more, but chose not to. The result is both eclectic and individual, religious, but unsentimental and sober.

St. Francis ordered him to teach "provided that he did not quench the spirit of prayer and devotion, as is contained in the Rule" (I, XVII). That is what he did. The teaching in the Sermones kept the spirit of prayer and devotion alive, while being expressed almost wholly in biblical language. St. Francis might not have liked the subtleties and convolutions of its use; but the call to repentance and amendment of life encapsulated his message. If the personal Franciscan touch was missing in the Sermones, they were not alone in that. St. Antony resembled the first generation of friar doctors at Paris in the 'thirties and 'forties. Neither Hugh of St. Cher, O.P., nor John of la Rochelle, O.Min., mentioned their respective founders or Orders in their Paris lectures on the gospels. Whether their motives in refraining from doing so stemmed from modesty, from the desire not to stir up jealousy among secular clergy or from sheer conservatism, is not clear. St. Antony anticipated them. Franciscan piety found its expression through other media than the products of school teaching.

Finally, to take a birdseye view, his approach to Scripture reminds me of a recent coment on the exegesis of the Qumran community as found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. All their interpretations looked forward to "the time end, which has set in with the founding of the community." It was concerned with showing how biblical prophecies were to be fulfilled in the community's present and future:

All this exegesis involves the atomization of the biblical text, but it was not in the biblical text that the Qumran community looked for coherence, but in the situation to which the biblical text pointed forward.¹¹

St. Antony "atomized" the biblical text, not in view of a situation to which he looked forward, but in view of a situation existing now, and likely to exist for as long as the world should last. The situation called for repentance and amendment. the message was timeless. The coherence behind the "concordances" and the atomization lies in the situation of the Church militant on earth. Her needs were unchanging. Hence the Sermones could be read and

¹⁰B. Smalley, "Some Paris Gospel Commentaries on the Early Thirteenth Century," in press for Franciscan Studies.

¹¹Frederick F. Bruce, "The Theology and Interpretation of the Old Testament," *Tradition and Interpretation*, ed. George W. Anderson (Oxford 1979) 410-412.

taught from as long as Scripture was read and taught by her ministers. The number of manuscripts, surviving and listed, and the quotations from them, so carefully collected by the editors, show that their usefulness continued up to the Counter Reformation and after.

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