

§18. It remains to show that this teaching is in accordance with St. Thomas. My opponents quote from the treatise on charity (II-II, 32, 5 and 6), where St. Thomas says that almsgiving is of precept when there is superfluity on the side of the giver and when there is desperate need on the side of the receiver; in other cases it is of counsel. This seems to run counter to my positions.

§19. Yet there are passages clearly in my favour.

Comm. in Sent. 4, d. 15, qu. 2, a. 1, quaestiunc. 4. "Speaking absolutely, we are bound to relieve the absolute need of strangers before the relative need of ourselves and our kinsfolk." (The relative need is that of status).

II-II, 66, 7, c. "Things which men have in superfluity are due by the natural law to the sustenance of the poor."

II-II, 87, 1, ad 4. "Under the New Law, our Lord commands men to give the poor not merely a tithe but all their superfluity."

Also *De malo* 13, a. 2, ad 4 and (§22) Quodl. 8, a. 12.

§20. This is not a case where St. Thomas changed his mind; all the evidence is against it.

§21. The passages from the treatise on charity must therefore be understood in the light of the other passages. Following Cajetan *On Alms*, we observe that the precept of almsgiving is an affirmative precept which is binding without exception in principle but is not applicable on every particular occasion. If I possess superfluous riches, I have a general duty of almsgiving from which I cannot escape—i.e., if I never give alms, I shall be in mortal sin. But when on a given occasion I meet a particular poor man in serious but not in desperate need, I may please myself whether I give my alms to him here and now or keep them for another poor man or for an almshouse which I propose to found. Giving to the particular man is then a counsel and not a precept. This interpretation reconciles all the passages.

A TREATISE ON THE INEFFABLE MYSTERY OF OUR REDEMPTION

By

LUIS OF GRANADA, O.P.

(Translation by a Nun of Stanbrook Abbey).

CHAPTER VII. (cont.)

3.

Explains in greater detail the immensity of Christ's love for souls.

What, then, must have been the Lord's delight at the glorious sight of this vast number of souls beautified by the abundance of gifts and graces he would merit for them by the Sacrifice of his Passion! Saint Chrysostom says that there is no man in the world so enamoured of a woman, even though he is bewitched by

her, whose love is so strong as Christ's for a pure, humble soul, dead to the world and living only for God. Then, if this Lord feels such an affection for a single soul, what must he feel for the numberless souls who are perfect and holy and possess every virtue and sanctity? When in the beginning God created each thing, he "saw that it was good", but when creation was accomplished "God saw all the things that he had made" and He saw that they were not merely good, but "very good". Therefore if he cherishes one pure soul so tenderly, what must Christ's love be for many such souls if not stronger in proportion for each soul? How joyfully would he have offered his life, and a thousand lives if he had had them, that he might sanctify and beautify so many!

Classical writers extol the beauty of Queen Helen, for whom Troy was lost, and say that the Princes of Troy and King Priam himself were not acting unworthily in fighting the Greeks for so many years for this beautiful queen. This example may seem profane, but it will serve to explain that the holy Doctors thought it was not unworthy of that Sovereign Majesty to die for the sanctification and beatification of souls, nor to suffer as he did for the beauty of his Church—not for that which it possessed of itself but for that which he would give it by his blood. But since comparisons of human love are paltry compared with that of Christ's charity, I will give a better one; that of the charity of Saint Paul who swore a solemn oath; "I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ", (that is to relinquish the bliss that he hoped to enjoy in him) "for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh" (*Rom.* ix, 3, 4), that they might be converted to the Faith and be saved. If the charity of Saint Paul reached thus far, to what must we think Christ's charity attained for all his chosen, since it surpassed Saint Paul's as sunlight surpasses starlight?

How deep must have been his tenderness for his chosen who possessed such charity? Christ loved them because he saw in them the fruit of his Passion and his own spirit. Therefore he loves them as the first man loved the first woman; knowing by divine revelation that she had been formed of his own substance, he loved her as himself. Saint Paul speaks thus of Christ and his bride the Church (*Eph.* v, 25). Christ sees in her his own spirit, for he gave it to her, therefore she is to him one with himself, who came forth from his sacred side. He loves her also as the Head loves its members into which it infuses its spirit and its grace, and as a Father his children, because he gave her all the spiritual being she possesses. We see in him not only a Father's but a mother's affection, which is caused by her having brought forth her babes with pain at the risk of her own life, for our Saviour gave us birth with greater anguish on the bed of the Cross. Indeed, he might well quote to Christians Rachel's

words. She gave birth to Benjamin and died, calling her child "Benjamin, the son of her pain". But with far greater reason could the Saviour call every Christian "the son of his pain" since it was with such anguish that he won for each of them the dignity of being a son of God. Thus we see clearly that every reason for loving him is to be found by his faithful servants in Christ our Lord. For he loves them as the father and mother love their children, as the head its members, as the Bridegroom the bride who was taken from his side when he slept the sleep of death on the Cross, for it was then he was wedded to the Church. Look, then, on the vile worm whose love in return should correspond to that of so great, so noble and so faithful a Lover.

(To be continued).

REVIEWS

MARGARET PRINCESS OF HUNGARY. By S.M.C. With a Preface by Benet O'Driscoll, O.P. (Blackfriars; 5s. net).

Miracles, sweetness, terrifying penances, all the ingredients of the traditional hagiology are here. But they are made credible and interesting by an authoress who has a very special facility for recalling to the present age the message of another and perceiving the signs by which the Holy Ghost manifests his presence at all times. Margaret found the way to sanctity hard, but straight and sure; her simplicity and the avoidance of complicated processes of spirituality were indeed, as S.M.C. insists, the result of *her* Dominican vocation: they were specifically Dominican, but the genus belongs to all the saints. But her way of helping her country was less simple: even the papal dispensations could not persuade her to enter on marriages which seemed immediately advantageous, but which might have deprived Hungary of her intercessions and our bewildered age of her challenge. Perhaps this is not the most suitable place, but at least a non-Dominican reviewer may congratulate BLACKFRIARS on the quiet distinction of this—the first?—venture in book-production.

EDWARD QUINN.

Blackfriars, November, 1945 (Vol. II. No. 21). *Price 6d., if purchased separately.* The Ditchling Press, Hassocks, Sussex.