

Be glad then, dear sister, because of the glory that is given you this day. In your happiness find a little time to pray for those—and alas there are many of us—who were once given what you are being given but have not kept their gift and their love very well; and you who are witnessing this ceremony, pray for this child whom God has chosen out of thousands, that the act of total love which she is making may never diminish in her heart but on the contrary may grow in strength and fullness; and that her love of God, and of her sisters, and, in and through her sisters, of the world may come to resemble the generosity—the prodigality—of the love of God.

Be glad today because you are given today a crown. 'The king made a marriage for his Son': you are given a crown because it is a royal marriage. But it is a marriage also that is eternal, in which death is but an incident; and so the flowers of which the crown is made are flowers that will never fade. Be glad because what you are given is a promise of eternal joy; and while you rejoice over the crown that God gives you, rejoice still more over the ring which will soon be set on your finger. For a ring is a sign of a contract, a promise; and a contract is a two-sided thing. You have promised yourself to God wholly and without reservation; but remember that he too has promised himself to you, bound himself to you, and bound himself also without reserve. You hope and pray that you for your part will be faithful to what you have promised; as for the promises of God you have no need to hope and pray: you *know*. God's promises are never broken. And so in the ring that marks your contract you have the symbol of your greatest happiness: you have a joy that is safe, and secure, and everlasting; you have a word which you know, whatever the appearances, can never be broken. You need never fear therefore; for as long as you try your best to be faithful for ever to your love you know that it is something that can never be taken from you: you have the right, now and for ever, to say of the heart of the Godhead: I have found him whom my soul loveth: I have found him and I will not let him go.

A TREATISE ON THE INEFFABLE MYSTERY OF OUR REDEMPTION

BY

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(*Translated by a Nun of Stanbrook*).

CHAPTER V.

The promptitude and joy with which the Son offered Himself to undergo all the sufferings necessary for our Redemption.

We have explained how the most excellent means chosen by Divine Wisdom for the salvation of the human race was to unite

the Divine Word with humanity in one Person. It remains to learn with what promptitude of soul, and how willingly and joyfully our Lord offered Himself for this work.

To understand this from the very beginning, it must be remembered that the union and junction of the Divine Word with human nature took place in the virginal womb of our Lady. For when the angel had delivered his message and the Virgin had given her consent, in that very instant the sacred humanity was formed and united in an ineffable manner with the Person of the Divine Word by so close a bond that in the two natures there is but one Person. And in concordance with this dignity, the greatest that God could bestow, there were given to Him all the graces, powers and riches requisite, without limit or measure, so that had it been possible to drain the ocean of God's treasures and glory, they would have been drained dry.

At that instant this most holy Soul beheld the Beatific Vision as clearly and blissfully as it does now, and within it saw all the riches and grandeurs that had been bestowed upon Itself purely gratuitously, that is, without any merits of its own.

Here we might contemplate what would have been the love felt by this most holy of souls for the Giver of such blessings, but this surpasses any intelligence that has been or will be created, for the love equalled the dignity and grace received, which were boundless. In proportion to this love was the desire of thanking, serving, and accomplishing the will of Him who had so magnified and enriched this Soul, though this might cost It a thousand deaths.

At that very moment our Lord understood that the will of His Father was that He should be the Restorer, Sanctifier, and Redeemer of the human race which had fallen through the sin of the first man. Hence Christ's love for men must be so strong that He would offer His life in sacrifice to obtain pardon for their sins, to reconcile them to God, and to restore the grace they had lost.

Thus our Lord would found in this world a new kingdom, a new government and a brotherhood of men dead to this world and living to God. These, knowing how short and how unstable is this life, would dwell in it as though it were temporary and only lent to them, not as their fatherland but as an inn, not as natives and citizens but guests and pilgrims, "having no lasting city here but seeking one that is to come". These men were to be so devoted to their Creator and His service and so obedient to His commands that they would rather die than break one of them. Finally, though their nature resembled that of worldly men, their life would be so different that they would make the welfare of their soul their only care, except as regards bare necessities, while the latter would make their bodily comfort

their sole aim.

The Eternal Father wished this new kingdom, this state populated by such men, should be founded on earth by His only-begotten Son in imitation of the heavenly kingdom, and that He should be their Ruler, their Founder, their Officer, and the Guide Who led them, bearing the standard of the Cross and teaching them the way to heaven not only by word, but much more by the deeds and example of His most holy life. When the will of the most Blessed Trinity (which was concerned in this transaction) was declared, who could describe with what joy, obedience, promptitude and heartfelt love and desire that holy Soul must have accepted the command, and what deep affection He must have felt for the human race committed to His care? Such matters are so sublime and beyond our understanding that we can only wonder at them in silence, knowing that this is fitting regarding the actions of Divine Magnificence and of that Lord who is incomprehensible in His nature and therefore in all His works, more especially in this.

It is essential to understand that the root and origin of Christ's love for mankind is His intense love and obedience for His Eternal Father. He loves us because His Father bade Him give us this deep affection, as I said. How joyfully must such a Son have accepted the command of such a Father from whom He had received such riches of grace! For as Saint Gregory says, "the greater the force with which charity rises aloft to love God, the more swiftly does it descend to the depths to love its neighbour for the love of God. (7 *Moral. Cap. II*). This shows with what impetus He turned to love the neighbours commended to Him by the Father for whom He felt such unspeakable affection.

Another reason for his deep love was the insatiable thirst felt by the Son of God for the glory of His Father, and since this glory is promoted chiefly by the sanctity of our lives our Lord longed for that sanctity with a desire beyond the power of words to tell.

(To be continued).

REVIEWS

THE HYMNS OF THE DOMINICAN MISSAL AND BREVIARY. Edited with Introduction and Notes by Aquinas Byrnes, O.P. (Herder: n.p.).

Although the author has been at considerable pains to find the best translations of these hymns and has filled his notes with many references, this work is not addressed primarily to students. It is primarily for those who use the Dominican Breviary and Missal. For these the book is a necessary book, one to be used continually in union with the daily recitation of Divine Office.