

which are today priceless, and the story has achieved its purpose if it has inspired such art and if it encourages modern Christians to show a like courage in face of persecution. Katharine is patron saint of Venice; of philosophy; science; eloquence; of places of education; against diseases of the tongue.



## EXTRACTS FROM SAINT ALBERT THE GREAT<sup>1</sup>

**T**HESE *Sayings* are preserved in a collection of remarks made by saints and theologians which used to be widely read in religious communities. Presumably they were taken from sermons preached before congregations of religious. Anyone looking for profound mystical truths will be disappointed, but the fact that it was precisely these sayings that were collected is a proof that in earlier centuries Albert was regarded not only as a great teacher and scholar, but also as a man of profound human wisdom. In more recent times, the sayings of Albert have become more widely known owing to the *Albert Tablets* shown in certain European churches.

### I—SAYINGS

There are twelve good things. The first is when in this life a man gives a penny for love of our Lord, that is more pleasing to God and more beneficial to the man than if, after his death, he gave as much gold and silver as would stretch from earth to heaven.

The second is, when a man bears a harsh word patiently for love of our Lord, that is more pleasing to God than if he beat his back with as much broom as grows in a whole field.

The third is, that you humiliate yourself before God and all creatures; that is more pleasing to God than if you went from one end of the earth to the other, leaving footmarks red with your blood.

The fourth is, that you constantly offer God contrition of soul

<sup>1</sup> These extracts are from a translation, eventually to be published by BLACKFRIARS, of *Albertus Magnus*, by H. C. Scheeben. The translator is Ruth Bethell.

with the help of his grace; that is more pleasing to God than running from one end of the earth to the other.

The fifth is, when a man sheds a tear for sheer love; that is more pleasing to God than weeping a whole riverful of tears as big as the Danube, for pain.

The sixth is, go to God yourself; that is of more use to you than sending on your behalf all the saints and all the angels in heaven.

The seventh is, condemn no one; that is more pleasing to God than that you shed your blood seven hours a day.

The eighth is, to accept with patience what God has in store for you; that is more pleasing to God than that you be translated into the third heaven like St Paul.

The ninth is, to sympathize with your fellow men; that is more pleasing to God than that you feed as many sick people as there may be in a whole land.

The tenth is, that when you perceive and recognize in your neighbour holy works and other pure virtues, you rejoice in true love; that is more pleasing to God than if you rejoiced with God in heaven.

The eleventh is, that you try to draw sinners away from their sins; that is more pleasing to God than if you sat at table in heaven with God himself.

The twelfth is, to know yourself and draw and bring yourself to God; that is more pleasing to God than if you brought the whole world to everlasting grace but were yourself eternally damned.

## II—A PRAYER ON THE EUCHARIST

Almighty everlasting God, only Son of God, thou didst take on flesh and blood and a human body, among us, from us and for us.

Thy prophet Jeremias, whom thou didst make holy in his mother's womb, through thy gracious will has made known to us that thou dost desire to steel the souls of thy priests with divine strength and bless thy people with the fulness of thy gifts. May thy holy body penetrate into our souls like a leaven; satisfy our desire with thy gifts and grant that the wonderful sacrament of thy body and blood may produce all its riches in us: truth and

virtue, unity and love, purity and piety, self-surrender and sanctity.

Thou art in the Father, and the Father is in thee. Thou dwellest in us according to thy immutable godhead, let us remain in thee through thy body and the immaculate purity of thy soul. Let us be incorporated in thee in thy holy body, so that in union with thee we may find salvation and inwardly enjoy our participation in thee.

May thy holy blood moisten our souls so that every stain, down to the most secret ones, may be wiped out and obliterated. May thy holy soul be the price of our redemption and salvation, by which we are ransomed and reconciled to thee and the Father and the Holy Spirit. May thy Spirit which animates thee, animate us; may he bring illumination to our minds, and restore in our souls the holy life that we have lost.

Through thy most holy godhead may we be well-pleasing to thee, so that every virtue may grow in us and come to perfection.

With thy own hand, thou didst give this holy sacrament to thy apostles and disciples and let them participate in the treasures that are held in this vessel of thy grace. Let us too draw upon this source of blessing, let us of thy bounty receive grace upon grace. At the intercession of all who have found rest and joy of mind in thee, let us realize and experience how intimately thou dost enter into us and enliven us. Make faith and love effective in us; give us devout minds, anoint and strengthen us with spiritual power to dedicate ourselves wholly to thee.

Once, at a banquet, Mary Magdalen waited on thee in love; give us her careful love, her tireless ardour, her attentive readiness to serve thy brothers; then, if thou who art our head dost grant it, the sweet proximity of thy presence shall overwhelm us. As the Father has prepared the kingdom for thee, so hast thou blessed thy kingdom with thy gifts, so that thy faithful may eat and drink at thy table. How happy are they who in God's kingdom eat the bread that thou art. Let us one day be with thee, together with Lazarus and all who rest yonder with thee.

Arm us with that fearless zeal that filled St Peter at the last supper and equipped him to meet the traitor; a zeal that forgives all and blots out all that is not in conformity with thy will.

If thou dost help us, we shall peel from our hearts the pleasures of the world and find our way to perfect composure, and enjoy

thee like thy holy evangelist St John, lying on thy breast, drawing upon thy fount of wisdom, and tasting thy all-surpassing gentleness and kindness.

Through the intercession of thy apostles and disciples who received this sacrament from thy hand, arouse in us true faith, firm hope and perfect love.

Grant that we may ever shrink in horror from Judas' betrayal, that the saving power of this sacrament may penetrate into our souls, the power through which thou dost unite thyself to the blessed in heaven in thy godhead, and bring them to the fulness of their bliss; who with thy beloved Father and the Holy Spirit livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### ST BRIDGET OF SWEDEN

DEAR EDITOR,

About the article on St Bridget of Sweden in your last issue, it's a wonderful thought for meditation that the pope whom 'Bridget chased across half Europe, castigating him and trying to bring him to his senses', was every bit as saintly as Bridget herself. She must have heard of the multitude of extraordinary miracles that took place after his funeral, and he almost raced her to canonization. Bl. Urban V was not truly pictured in the revelations, and modern Catholic writers now know that the story should be written otherwise. Just because Bridget was a saint, it does not mean that Urban was a bad pope, any more than Urban's own sanctity makes Bridget a bad woman. However, a pope seems always fair game for saint or sinner.

Yours, etc.,

WALTER GUMBLEY, O.P.

Blackfriars, Oxford, October 14th 1959.