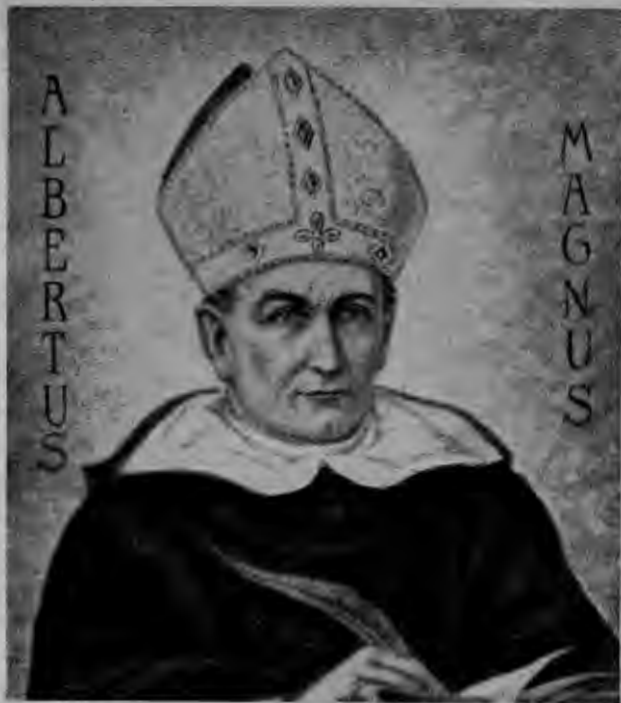


DOMINICAN SAINTS OF THE ROSARY SERIES



ST. ALBERT the GREAT

Patron of Peace and Science



DOMINICAN PUBLICATIONS

ST. SAVIOUR'S, DUBLIN

St. Albert The Great

I.—BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

ST. ALBERT THE GREAT was such an outstanding figure he exercised such an influence upon his age and upon succeeding ages, was such a prolific writer and tireless worker, and was so remarkable for his knowledge of natural science, that it is not easy to give even a sketch of his life and work without seeming to exaggerate. All kinds of fantastic legends have clustered round his name, and he enjoyed the reputation of being a magician!

St. Albert the Great was born at Lauingen, in Swabia, about the year 1206, and was a member of the family of the Counts of Bollstadt. Tradition tells us that one of his sisters was a Dominican nun in the Convent of Gotteszell and another in the Domini-

can Convent of St. Catherine at Ausburg; it is certain that a younger brother of his, Henry, also became a Dominican, and, at one time, was Prior of Ausburg.

The parents of Albert were wealthy, pious, wholeheartedly devoted to the Emperor Frederick II., fond of the chase, falconry especially, and, in his young days, Albert was as keen as any of his family. Even in his early years he was noted for his powers of observation, and some of his descriptions of natural phenomena which are to be found in many of his writings were, in all probability, things he had seen in boyhood. When he was twenty he went to the University of Padua, probably also to Bologna, and some other places in Italy, but it was at Padua he laid the foundations of his knowledge of natural science, for which he became so remarkable in later life. Albert studied medicine at Padua, and possibly would have become a famous physician but for the coming of a man who changed the whole course of his life.

The Order of Preachers had been founded only ten years, but it was already well known in the University cities of Europe. St. Dominic died in 1221, and was succeeded by a renowned master of the University of Paris, Blessed Jordan of Saxony. Blessed Jordan visited Padua as General of the Order in 1223, and received forty-three of the students and masters of the University into the Order, and amongst them was Albert of Bollstadt. He had to face the determined opposition of his family, that of his uncle in particular with whom he lived at Padua and who had extracted a promise from him some time previously that he would keep away from the Dominican Church for a certain specified time. Albert kept his promise, but when the time had expired he asked Blessed Jordan to receive him into the Order. He had doubts whether he would be able to persevere, for he was not what might be called robust, and, although

he was called Albert the Great even in his lifetime, one of his biographers takes care to tell us that "he was great in learning, but small in person." Blessed Jordan settled all Albert's difficulties and doubts, however, gave him the habit, and, when his years of religious training were over and he was ordained priest, sent him almost immediately to teach.

Jordan of Saxony knew his man. We find Albert teaching in the Dominican houses of Hildesheim, Friburg-im-Brisgau, Ratisbon, Strasburg, and Cologne. Amongst his students at Cologne were Ulric of Strasburg, who became a famous professor in the University of Paris, and who made such good use of Albert's lessons in mechanics and natural philosophy that he built the wonderful organ in Strasburg Cathedral. Another student was the Chronicler Thomas of Chantimpré, and two others were Ambrose of Sansedoni, who is one of the Dominican Beati, and St. Thomas of Aquino.

II.—ELECTED PROVINCIAL

IN 1245, Albert was sent to Paris, where he taught in the University and received his Master's degree in Theology, and, in 1248, we find him back again in Cologne, where the Dominicans had opened a *Studium Generale* modelled on that of Paris. Here he taught until 1254, when he was elected Provincial of Germany, at this time the most extensive in the Order, and which included all the territory where the German language was spoken. When we remember that as Provincial

Albert was called upon to visit each house of the Order in the Province, that his journeys were made on foot, and took him to the borders of Poland, we can realise that his work was heavy and left him no time for teaching. He was at once a strict, but kind and broadminded, Superior; a man who loathed anything like hypocrisy, and who did not approve of a multiplicity of rules.

During his term of office three new Dominican foundations were made, and then came the quarrel between the secular professors of the University of Paris and the religious Orders in which William of Saint-Amour was the chief antagonist of the religious. The quarrel waxed so fierce that the Pope intervened, and summoned the representatives of both sides to state their case before the Pontifical Court at Anagni. The Franciscans were represented by their General, John of Parma; the Dominicans by their General, Humbert of Romans, Albert the Great, and Thomas of Aquino. Albert read the volume William of Saint-Amour had written, *On the Dangers of these Latter Days*—a bitter invective against all religious Orders—and was ready within twenty-four hours to answer it. According to Henry of Hereford, it was Albert the Great, or Albert of Cologne, as he was called at the time, and not Thomas of Aquino, who had the lion's share in the defence of the religious Orders, and so convincing and unanswerable were his arguments that the Pope, Alexander IV., condemned Saint-Amour's volume as "irrational and detestable," and ordered it to be publicly burnt on October 5, 1256. St. Thomas compiled his work, *Contra impugnantes Dei cultum et religionem*, as a reply to Saint-Amour and his followers.

III.—APPOINTED BISHOP

ALBERT remained some time at the Papal Court at Anagni, and lectured on the Gospel of St. John and the Epistles of St. Paul, a fact which has led some writers to number him among the official theologians of the Pope who are called Masters of the Sacred Palace.

But his sojourn at Anagni interfered with his duties as Provincial, and his Professor's chair called him, so, at his own request, he was relieved of his office at the General Chapter held in Florence in 1257, and returned to teach at Cologne. It was only for a short time, however. The Diocese of Ratisbon had suffered much from the mis-government of the Bishop, Albert I., Count of Pottigau. Pope Alexander deposed him, and, mindful of the extraordinary skill and tact Albert the Great had shown in settling the differences between the Archbishop of Cologne, Conrad of Hochstaden, and the citizens in 1249, nominated him Bishop of Ratisbon on January 6, 1260. The General, Humbert of Romans, knowing what a loss Albert would be to the Order, besought the Pope to rescind the appointment, but without success, and, on March 29, the Bishop took possession of his See, only to find, says an old diarist, that there was "not a coin in the treasury, or a drop of wine in the cellar, or a grain of wheat in the barn!"

The material depletion was typical of the spiritual and religious state of the diocese. Albert set to work with his accustomed energy, and, in a comparatively short time, had paid most of the

debts. He was a firm but kindly ruler, rigorous, and even severe, towards those who had despoiled the Church, but boundless in his generosity to the poor and distressed. By word and example he taught the clergy to live up to the high ideals of the priesthood, and, in concert with the neighbouring Bishops, drew up a series of rules which made for a deeper and more spiritual life of the clergy. He did not cease to be the religious, the student, and preacher, in spite of his pastoral cares, but he longed for the old quiet of his religious life, and used to retire to the castle of Donaustauf as often as he was able, to spend some time in prayer and study.

It seems surprising that he should have asked the Pope to permit him to resign his See, yet he did so, and was allowed to resign. It was not his love of solitude and study, or his dread of the responsibility which urged him to make the request; the truth is, the people did not want a Bishop like Albert the Great, they preferred a more worldly man, one who went about in state and who was not afraid to insist upon his rights more in the style of a temporal than a spiritual lord. Albert signed a document as Bishop of Ratisbon for the last time on February 25, 1262, and on May 11 of the same year, Pope Urban IV. confirmed the election of Leo Thundorfer, Dean of the Cathedral, as Albert's successor. But Albert was not allowed to retire to his priory immediately. The Pope kept him at the Papal Court at Anagni, and, after a few months, called upon him to preach the Crusade in Germany and Bohemia, addressing no fewer than twenty-five Bulls to him between February 7 and March 25 of the year 1263. It has been already said that the saint was a tireless worker, and, in preaching the Crusade, he multiplied himself, travelling all over Germany in the cause of the Crusade. It is literally true to assert that when he resigned his See at Ratisbon, Albert the Great had more work to do as a Bishop than he would ever have had if

he had not resigned. He was called here and there to ordain priests, consecrate churches and altars, and to settle disputes, and his fame as a peacemaker was spread all through Germany.

IV.—ALBERT AND THOMAS—HIS DEATH

AFTER three years of incessant preaching he was free to offer his services to the new General of the Order of Preachers, Blessed John of Vercelli, and expressed his willingness to go to any of the *Studia* to teach. Needless to say, the offer was gratefully and joyfully accepted, and, in 1266, Albert the Great returned to Cologne, where he was engaged in teaching, writing, preaching, until his death, yet called upon very frequently to exercise his Episcopal powers and to settle disputes. In 1274 he attended the Council of Lyons, hoping it may be, to meet his famous pupil there, Thomas of Aquino, who had already fulfilled the prophecy Albert had made about him years previously. They had not met for fourteen years when he, Thomas, Bonhome, and Peter of Tarantaise had drawn up a Rule of Study at the request of the General, Humbert of Romans.

When Thomas was combating the erroneous teaching of Siger de Brabant and other professors of the Faculty of Arts in the University of Paris in 1270, Albert had sent his notes against these very errors to Thomas. They were more than master and pupil, more than ordinary friends, for theirs was the friendship upon which the Church has placed her seal, the friendship of sanctity. Peter of Tarantaise became Pope Innocent V., and is

another of the *Beati* of the Order, and Thomas of Aquino and Albert the Great are canonised. But the friends were not to meet.

St. Thomas died on his way to the Council, and it is not too much to say that St. Albert never got over the loss. He was an old man, yet three years later, in 1277, when he, too, was nearing the end of the journey, he set out for Paris, and the reason for his doing so gives us an insight into his heart. The writings of St. Thomas were being attacked in Paris, and some of them were threatened with condemnation by the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, as tinged with those very errors which Thomas had combated in the writings of Siger de Brabant. Albert the Great set out to defend his former pupil, and defended him well, and then returned to Cologne to die. His marvellous memory had begun to fail, yet we are told he had the writings of St. Thomas read to him each day, and gave his verdict upon them, which the Church has ratified: "that Thomas had put the crown upon all theological speculation for ever by his writings, and there was no further need for it."

The Archbishop of Col6gne, Sigfrid, used to visit him frequently, for he valued his friendship and his advice. But Albert lived more and more a life of prayer, preparing for the end, and used to visit the place where he would be buried and recite the prayers for the dead there, and sing with quavering voice the praises of the Mother of God he loved so truly. On November 15, 1280, Albert the Great died sitting in his religious cell in the priory at Cologne, surrounded by his brethren. The Archbishop presided at the obsequies, and saw him buried in the choir of the Dominican church, before the High Altar. The inscription on his tomb reads: "Anno Domini M.CC.LXXX. XVII. KAL. DECEMBRIS. The Venerable Lord Brother Albert, formerly Bishop of Ratisbon, of the Order of Preachers, Master of Theology, died. Requiescat in pace. Amen."

Albert the Great was beatified by Pope Gregory XV. in 1622, and canonised and declared Doctor of the Universal Church by Pope Pius XI in 1931.

V.—THE SCIENTIST

THE present age justly takes pride upon the extent and accuracy of its scientific knowledge, but it also criticises past ages, the Middle Ages especially, for their absence of "critical" knowledge. It must be confessed, however, that some so-called scientists of the present are anything but scientific, and quite a number of them take a lot for granted. Some of them might learn a lesson in true criticism from a few of the scholars of those Middle Ages they condemn so severely. It is amusing to read their cheap gibes at the old-fashioned methods of the Middle Ages, at the total, or almost total, absence of any scientific knowledge in those days, and of what they term the obscurantism of the Catholic Church; gibes that should hardly be expected from men who have claims to scholarship. According to these "scientists," the Catholic Church has barred the way to knowledge and progress for centuries, and they assert this with a dogmatic self-assertiveness which is often mistaken for truth. With a number of modern scientists Science means rank materialism and a denial of the supernatural.

The Middle Ages were the heirs to two great legacies, Graeco-Roman culture and the Catholic Faith. The Faith gave what all the wisdom of the Greeks and Romans was unable to give—

an answer to the problem of human existence, and the only satisfactory ideal of life and conduct, with the means to realise it. But since society was re-shaping itself in the struggle between the various feudal lords, learning became more and more the monopoly of the clergy, and, naturally enough, theology secured the prominence. Hence, natural science was not a subject of study or investigation; it was taken for granted that Aristotle had said all there was to be said on the subject.

St. Albert the Great studied Aristotle, but he did not slavishly follow him. He thought for himself, and, what is more, he observed for himself. We have said that he appears to have been a close observer of natural phenomena in his youth, and his years at the University of Padua quickened his powers of observation. When he began to teach, these powers were still further quickened, and the result is that Albert the Great stands out from all others of his time as a scientist, who, in the words of Wimmer, "had studied and described the whole universe from the stones to the stars." This may appear an exaggeration, but Albert the Great has written upon astronomy, meteorology, physics, mechanics, chemistry, mineralogy, anthropology, zoology, botany, and climate. He has described the life and habits of bees and spiders in a manner which shows how deeply and attentively he had watched them, "Before Albert, we meet with no botanist who can even be compared with him," says Ernest Meyer, ". . . and until Gessner and Cesalpinus no one after him has described the nature of plants so vividly and with such penetrating insight.

"A place apart must unquestionably be given to him who was so thoroughly conversant with the science of his time, and who so enthusiastically promoted its study, and who not only was not superseded but was not equalled during three centuries."

VI.—HIS DISCOVERIES

ALBERT'S treatise "On Vegetable Life" is acknowledged by naturalists to-day to be a masterpiece, and they have expressed their admiration of his discoveries in generous terms, for let it be remembered that Albert the Great was no mere dabbler in science; he has anticipated discoveries which even in our time are regarded as "modern." A distinguished writer in the *Irish Rosary* tells us that some of his methods, *e.g.*, the preparation of artificial whitelead, the extraction of mercury, or quicksilver, from its ore, are essentially the same as those in use to-day. "He has the honour of having discovered arsenic. . . . His observations on sulphur would seem to indicate that he considered it to be an 'element' in the modern sense of the term—namely, a substance which is chemically indivisible into simpler substances. If this be the case, he has anticipated Lavoisier by about five hundred years."*

Albert the Great was the first to draw attention to the singular position of the grape cluster and leaves on the vine; to the difference between buds encased in a scaly covering and those not so encased; to the action of light and heat upon the growth and the bark of trees; and to the fact that the sap at the root is tasteless, but that its flavour increases as it rises. In his detailed

* *Saint and Scientist: St. Albert the Great.* By Hyacinth Casey, O.P. February, 1932.

description of fish and bird-life, of insects, ants and spiders especially, he shows extraordinary power of observation, while so particularly exact are his remarks upon the life and habits of spiders that it has been said one would think he had had nothing else to do but study them!

He studied the life of the bee closely, and naively tells us that he had "attempted to study the anatomy of the bee." We are told he discovered a means of destroying flies, which were a nuisance in Cologne; we should be glad to know what this means was! Probably the greatest mark of esteem which scientists could give him was the publication of his treatise "On Animal Life" by Professor Stadler. At a conference of the Scientific Society of Monaco in 1905, Professor Stadler delivered a lecture on *The Originality of Albert the Great as a Scientist*. In 1908 he addressed the eightieth reunion of German naturalists and scientists on the same subject at Cologne, and, as Father Wasmann, S.J., says, "This was the first time an assembly of German scientists met to show honour to a man who was a scholastic of the Middle Ages, a Bishop and a saint, in the name of modern science."

St. Albert taught the sphericity of the earth, as Aristotle had taught it, but he went further, and taught that the northern and southern parts of the globe were habitable and inhabited, and it is more than probable that it was Albert's teaching which inspired Columbus to set out on his voyage of discovery. Columbus was a friend of Diego de Deza, a Dominican professor in the University of Salamanca, who later became Bishop of Palencia. From him and his brethren Columbus learned the theories of Albert the Great. When the teaching had borne fruit, and Columbus was eager to set out, it was Diego who befriended him, pleaded his cause, and assisted him in every possible way. Columbus left on his great adventure from the

Priory of San Esteban, and years afterwards, when his services were ignored by those who should have remembered, it was Diego who helped him again. It was to him the disappointed man turned in his dark hour, and we have his own words in a letter to his son which explain why he remained in Castille instead of offering his services to others, who, perhaps, would have appreciated them better: "He (Diego de Deza) has been the cause of their Highnesses possessing the Indies, and of my remaining in Castille when I had determined to go elsewhere."*

Albert has written on earthquakes, volcanoes, the rainbow, the ebb and flow of the tides; has described the influence of the sea, of mountains and forests upon the vegetable and animal kingdoms, and even upon man. He carried out chemical experiments, purified gold by smelting, separated it from silver with aqua-forte, investigated the combination of sulphur with metals, and found that, with the exception of gold, other metals suffered. He did not rely upon traditional teaching or the mere word of any master, not even that of Aristotle, in matters of natural science, but, with unexampled perseverance, held to, one might almost say laid down, the fundamental principle of all true positive science—personal experiment instead of traditional teaching. And he held to this principle, be it remembered, in an age that was not by any means sympathetic to it, but rather the reverse. Hence, Professor Stadler says of him: "In every sense he was an observer of the first rank, and, if science had continued to develop along the lines followed by Albert the Great, the roundabout methods of three centuries would have been avoided."

We may fittingly close these remarks about St. Albert as a

* *Les Dominicains et la Découverte de l'Amerique*, par Père Mandonnet, O.P. 1893.

scientist with the testimony of some modern scientific writers. Alexander von Humboldt says that the work by Albert, *De Natura Locorum*, contains in germ an excellent physical description of the earth, and that in a marvellous manner the saint was aware of the influence which latitude exercises on climate, and also the influence exercised by surface configuration in moderating the rays of heat. A writer in a medical encyclopaedia tells us: "Most modern anatomists, led by the appearance of the head and by the importance of the organs which it contains, have commenced their treatises by describing the skull; quite a wrong method of approach. However, as early as the thirteenth century, this learned Dominican had already outlined the method which our time has only come to follow after having blazed a false trail. Albert began his outline of the bone structure by describing the vertebral column — the rational basis of such structure in the first branch of the animal series. This is the method most widely followed by present anatomists."

When we consider that Albert the Great wrote seven centuries ago, when he had none of the advantages of modern equipment, and had to work single-handed in an environment that was not, what one might say, sympathetic to scientific study, we can understand how he came to be called by his contemporaries "The Universal Doctor," and how, as Cardinal Ehrle, S.J., who for many years has laboured so indefatigably for his canonisation, shows in his list of mediaeval scholastic writers, in the domain of natural science, he was named *Doctor Expertus*, in truth Albert the Great.

VII.—THE PHILOSOPHER

"THE greatest feat of mediaeval scholasticism," says Monsignor Grabmann, "was the introduction of Aristotelian philosophy into scholastic thought . . . the Christianisation of Aristotelian philosophy; and the creators of this philosophy are Albert the Great and his disciple, St. Thomas of Aquino." Before Albert was called Albert the Great, he was called "the Great Philosopher." No lecture hall in the University of Paris, we are told, was large enough to hold the students who attended his lectures, so he lectured in the open air, and to-day the *Place Maubert*, off the Boulevard de Saint-Germain, marks the place where Albert lectured seven hundred years ago.

The wisdom of the ancient world in the region of pure thought reached its perfection in the philosophy of Aristotle. Owing to various causes, chief of which was the erroneous interpretation given to the teaching of Aristotle by Arabian and Jewish commentators, Catholic philosophy viewed Aristotle with disfavour. "It was Albert who first revealed the whole philosophical system of Aristotle to the Christian world," says Father Emilian Michael, S.J. But, again, Albert the Great was no slavish disciple of him whom Dante calls "the Master of those who know." He wrote in his treatise on the physics of Aristotle: "Whosoever believes that Aristotle is human and not divine must be prepared to find imperfections and mistakes in his writings," and in his treatises on psychology and metaphysics he keenly and unspar-

ingly criticises the teaching of the philosopher.

Father Paul von Loe, O.P., tells us that: "Albert was a scientist by natural inclination, a philosopher by deliberate will, and a theologian with all the ardour of a soul full of faith and a heart enflamed with the love of God." In knowledge of the sciences, his disciple, St. Thomas, cannot be compared with him, for St. Thomas did not study science. As a philosopher, St. Albert is the equal of St. Thomas, but the Angelic Doctor is superior to his master as a theologian. Yet, as Father Jerome Wilms, O.P., points out well, Albert has the indisputable glory of having shown the way to his great disciple, of having done "the spade work" by collecting the material and laying down the principles to be adhered to, and by having attempted a synthesis of theological knowledge, even though he was not wholly successful in bringing it to perfection.

VIII.—THE THEOLOGIAN

THE theologian in the Middle Ages was called *Magister Sacrae Paginae*, Master of the Sacred Page, i.e., the Holy Scriptures. Albert's lectures were based upon the Bible, and might be called an Exposition of the Scriptures. The oldest biographers of St. Albert attest that he explained the whole Bible; but so far, his explanation of the Psalms, the Major and Minor Prophets, the Four Gospels, the Book of Job, and the Apocalypse are known, although a commentary on the Canticle of Canticles and another on the Ave Maria have lately been dis-

covered. His commentary upon the Gospel of St. Luke is particularly beautiful.

According to the methods of modern Biblical criticism, the explanations and comments of the saint are not of great importance, it is true, but, again, we must remember that he had none of those advantages which Biblical scholars possess in our time. In spite of these drawbacks, however, St. Albert the Great was regarded as "the most renowned commentator on the Holy Scriptures" of his time.

His theological works include two commentaries upon the Sentences of Peter Lombard, a *Summa Theologica*, and a *Summa de Creaturis*, as well as a number of separate treatises. Like St. Thomas, he treats the entire Christian ethical system in his two Summas and in his Commentary on the Sentences, using the *Ethics* of Aristotle as the foundation, but the *Ethics* unencumbered with the erroneous comments of Arabian and Jewish writers. In these works he paved the way for the more complete and perfect work of St. Thomas, and if the disciple shows such profound reverence for, and knowledge of, the Fathers of the Church, and an affectionate reverence for St. Augustine in particular, he had the example of St. Albert the Great to guide him. So extraordinary was St. Albert's veneration for St. Augustine that he says in a passage in which he gives the arguments of this mighty champion of the Faith: "This is the teaching of Augustine, and to contradict him in matters pertaining to faith or morals would be an impiety."

A small volume bearing the title, *De Adhaerendo Deo*, "On Union with God," was regarded as the work of St. Albert until Monsignor Grabmann considered that John of Kastl, a Benedictine monk, had the real claim to be its author. Father Thery, O.P., still holds that it is the composition of St. Albert, and Monsignor Grabmann has been so far convinced by the argu-

ments of the French Dominican that he now thinks the Benedictine recast and amplified an earlier work of the saint. But St. Albert wrote many treatises on mystical theology, and one of these, his *Paradisus Animae*, was translated into English some years ago by Father Raymund Devas, O.P. Mysticism with the saint was not that vague, invertebrate stuff which goes by the name amongst so many in our time; it was what it really is, the full blossoming of the Christian life, altogether different from the intangible dreams of Eastern "mystics" and the equally unsatisfactory, and possibly more dangerous, theories of the Quietists. We have already said that competent authorities have asserted that science would have been saved centuries of tortuous and roundabout efforts if the methods followed and the principles laid down by the saint had been adopted. The same may be said in regard to mysticism. Much uncertainty and many dangerous errors would have been avoided if the principles of St. Albert the Great in this matter had been followed. The strongest support of this statement is to be had in the fact that the Holy See has pointed to St. Thomas of Aquino as the safe and sure guide in the spiritual life, and St. Thomas follows his master, St. Albert, step by step. Those who can speak with authority on the subject say that, while St. Thomas is far superior to St. Albert in other realms of theology because of his keen perception and the clarity of his exposition, he is not his superior in the realm of mystical theology, and it is in his treatise on Grace that St. Albert proves himself to be a true mystic, who speaks from experience and out of the abundance of his heart.

IX.—SPIRITUAL WRITINGS .

“**A**MONGST scholastic theologians,” says Monsignor Grabmann, “Albert, more than all others, has written of Mary.” “In his Commentary on the Sentences, in his exegetical works, and in his great *Mariale* there is abundance of thought, both theological and devotional, about Our Blessed Lady Albert took every possible opportunity to manifest his love of Our Lady. It is not by the number of his writings on Our Lady that the saint shows his devotion, but by the depth and solidity of his doctrine. At the present time the Catholic world harks back to the doctrine of the Mediation of Mary, and ascribes to her a universal mediation of all grace. Albert is a clear and trusty witness to the teaching of his time in this respect, and to the dignity and power of the Mother of God. . . . He speaks explicitly of the universal mediation of all grace, in the sense that all grace received by man through the merits of Jesus Christ comes to him by way of Our Blessed Lady As all men share in the grace of Christ, so all men receive that grace through Mary. • It is in this sense that he speaks of her in his *Mariale* as the Fount of Grace, the Gate of Heaven, the Star of the Sea . . . and clearly shows what a difference there is between the intercession of the saints and the mediation of Our Blessed Lady.”

More numerous than his writings upon Our Lady are those upon the Blessed Eucharist. Devotion to the Blessed Eucharist was the absorbing devotion of St. Albert the Great. One of his

works contains thirty-two sermons on the Blessed Eucharist. Another work of his, *De Eucharistiae Sacramento*, is, in the opinion of Monsignor Gräbmann, "a volume of profound and touching spirituality, one of the most perfect works written upon this sublime subject, and one which exercised a great influence upon the writings of the German mystics on the doctrine of the Blessed Eucharist." The saint wrote another work on the Sacrifice of the Mass, which has received the highest praise for its sound doctrine and its deep devotion.

In his teaching on the Church and its supreme head on earth, the Pope, St. Albert the Great shows that Peter and his successors are in truth the principle of unity; that the Pope possesses the plenitude of power in himself; and that his magisterium does not, and cannot, depend upon the consent of his subjects, but that he in himself possesses the infallible norm of the Faith.

X.—DOCTOR AND SAINT

IT has frequently been asked why St. Albert the Great was not proclaimed Doctor of the Church long ago, and why he was allowed to remain so long, as it were, in the shade. We think a partial answer to the question is to be had in the extraordinary brilliance of his greatest disciple, St. Thomas of Aquino. St. Albert the Great was, to a certain extent, overshadowed by St. Thomas; but it speaks volumes for the disinterested love of truth which inspired St. Albert that he put himself aside, as it were, and laboured strenuously to the end of his life, and, as we

have seen, at the end of his life, for the glory of his disciple. All agree that St. Thomas steered for absolute truth as carefully as the pilot steers for the port. He was always calmly and dispassionately impartial; his writings are there to prove this. May we not truly say that, in this calm, unbiased investigation of truth, which nothing could ruffle and from which no arguments could make him turn aside, St. Thomas was inspired and guided by the influence and example of St. Albert the Great? St. Albert the Great was really great in every sense as St. Thomas was great. There was nothing small or narrow about him either as a scientist or a saint. If we may venture to describe his character in one word, we think the term "magnanimous" best expresses it, and it is this very term which one of his earliest biographers applies to him: "He was a model of magnanimity." The same term applies to St. Thomas. Was St. Thomas not indebted to St. Albert for more than his philosophy and theology? It is said that St. Thomas acknowledged that he obtained more light and knowledge from prayer than from study. All his biographers tell us that he prayed fervently for light to settle theological difficulties, and that when these difficulties were specially formidable he added fasting to his prayer. Now, in the prologue to his *Summa Theologica*, St. Albert the Great writes: "In sacred science one obtains by prayer and a virtuous life far more knowledge than one obtains by study." The master and disciple were in full agreement, in complete harmony; each was worthy of the other, and each of these saints perfectly realised the ideal set before them by St. Dominic, that of labouring for the salvation of souls by preaching and teaching. St. Albert the Great was a teacher all his life; so was St. Thomas of Aquino. But St. Albert was compelled by the Sovereign Pontiff to accept what St. Thomas had respectfully but firmly refused on two occasions—the mitre, and the cares and respon-

sibilities of an Episcopal See.

We are told by his contemporaries that St. Albert was a contemplative, and one of his students, Thomas of Chantimpré, says: "When he had delivered his lecture he always retired to meditate upon divine things"; while Peter of Prussia, another of his biographers, informs us that "he contemplated the things of God night and day. He eagerly heard the sweet teaching of the Holy Ghost, and, by continual prayer, drank of the water of life at its source, then poured out this same saving water of Wisdom he had so ardently desired." The fruits of his contemplation are manifest in his writings, but they are particularly evident in the prayers he composed for each Sunday of the year, in those in honour of the Blessed Eucharist and in praise of Our Blessed Lady. The following is one of his Sunday prayers: "Hail! Sacred Humanity of the Redeemer, which united Thee with the Eternal Godhead in the Virgin's womb. Hail! Supreme and Everlasting Deity, Who came amongst us in the veil of our flesh. A thousand times hail to Thee, Who, by the power of the Holy Ghost, didst unite Thyself with virginal flesh. Hail to thee also, O Mary! in whom dwelt the fulness of the divinity made man. Hail to thee in whom the measureless plenitude of the Holy Ghost abode. Hail to the most pure Humanity of the Son, blessed by the Father, and come to us by thee. Hail! Immaculate Virginity which is exalted above the choirs of angels. Rejoice, O Queen of the world, who wast worthy to be the temple of the most pure Humanity of Christ. Rejoice and be glad, Virgin of all virgins, in whose flesh the Deity willed to be espoused with the Sacred Humanity. Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven, in whose most holy womb the most holy Humanity found a worthy dwelling place. Rejoice and exult, most noble spouse of the Patriarchs, who wast worthy to nourish at thy virginal breast that Sacred Humanity. Praise and benediction be thine

through all ages, Virgin most fruitful, through whom we are made worthy to receive the fruit of life and the joy of eternal salvation. Amen."

He addresses Our Divine Lord in the Blessed Eucharist as follows: "Hail! Salvation of the world, true Host, living Body, very God and truly Man. Now we can be offered to Thee and be incorporated with Thee in the temple of Thy Divine Majesty. We can be united to Thy Body, to Thee Who sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and thus participate in Thy eternal life, obtain a share in Thy bliss, and be incorporated with Thee in Thy most holy incorporation. Wherefore, to Thee be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

We have mentioned the *Mariale*, the saint's monumental work in honour of the Mother of God, which is at once a theological exposition of the dignity, prerogatives, and power of Our Lady and an expression of his childlike devotion to her. His introduction reveals the spirit in which the work was written. "It is written: 'They that eat me, shall yet hunger; and they that drink me, shall yet thirst. He that hearkeneth to me, shall not be confounded: and they that work for me shall not sin. They that explain me shall have life everlasting.' (Eccl. xxiv., 29-31.) Confiding in this wonderful promise, I begin this work in the hope that it is not beyond my powers and my knowledge. But I know that the hand of the Lord is not shortened, and that all things are possible to him who believes. The work I undertake treats of the Incarnation of the Lord from the beginning, and of the mystery of the Redemption. I undertake it in praise and to the honour of the most glorious Virgin Mother of God, worthy of praise above all creatures, confident of her special assistance and of her mercy, which is greater far than my confidence. From her do I look for its happy fulfilment; from her do I look for reward. She moves my will, guides me, and even now knows

confidence in that love was unbounded; and it was this confidence which makes St. Albert stand out so conspicuously as a forerunner of devotion to the Sacred Heart. In his volume

what my purpose it. . . . It is not my intention to show honour to this glorious Virgin by untruth, or to unfold to enlightened minds any new doctrine in pretentious language, and thus seek my own praise instead of the glory of this sublime Virgin. It is, rather, my purpose to speak to humble souls in lowly language, to those who, like myself, are simple and unlearned. Wherefore, I shall be well content if others more learned than I am, who am unworthy and have but little knowledge, shall write something worthier of this Blessed Lady than I can offer her."

XI.—THE MAN OF GOD

THE very multiplicity of the saint's works makes us ask with amazement how he found time to do all he accomplished. We have seen that, when the Pope accepted his resignation of the See of Ratisbon, he imposed another burden upon him, that of preaching the Crusade. This meant much more than appears from the bald statement. He had not only to urge the different peoples and rulers of Europe to unite in an effort to expel the infidel from Palestine and to recover the Holy Places they had desecrated; he had to preach peace to these very rulers and peoples, who were so frequently at variance with each other, to inculcate the absolute need of charity, and to bring back to a realisation of their duties as Christians both rulers and subjects. This duty is incumbent upon every priest and preacher, it is true, but every priest and preacher has not lectured, and taught, and written as St. Albert the Great has done, and this fact must

always be kept in mind if we would even attempt to understand and appreciate this extraordinary man. Many of his writings are still unpublished, but those which have been published fill thirty-eight quarto volumes, and, as we have seen, upon all manner of subjects. "Saint and scientist" he truly is, but he is the saint first. He was exact in the observance of his religious Rule, and when he became Bishop he did not cease to be the religious. It was remarked that, even as Bishop, he always wore the same kind of shoes he had worn as a religious—strong, heavy things known as "the poor man's shoes." When he resigned his See and returned to Cologne at last, he lived amongst his fellow-religious as the humblest and poorest of them all. The great and the nobles came to consult him, and to seek his advice in settling affairs of State, and he assisted them. We have said that he had been chosen to arbitrate between the Bishop of Wurtzburg and the citizens, and again between the Archbishop of Cologne and the authorities of the city. It was his championship of Rudolf of Hapsburg at the Council of Lyons in 1274 which really determined Pope Gregory X. to confirm Rudolf's election. But Albert's heart went out before all others to the poor, the outcast, and the suffering, and the most winning picture of the saint, perhaps, is that which represents him, Albert the Great, Scientist, Philosopher, Theologian, Bishop, seated in the confessional as the healer of souls, reconciling sinners with God.

His love of Jesus Christ was a manly yet tender love, and his confidence in that love was unbounded; and it was this confidence which makes St. Albert stand out so conspicuously as a forerunner of devotion to the Sacred Heart. In his volume, *Illustrious Friends of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, Father Richstatter, S.J., says in reference to one of St. Albert's sermons on the Blessed Eucharist: "Thus does the great German theologian explain the Holy Eucharist by the fire of love which consumes

the Divine Heart. At the same time he compares the corporal Heart to the Ark of the Covenant which contains the manna of grace. He is the first to indicate the close connection between the Divine Heart and the Holy Eucharist." 1, 1, p. 121.

In an address given some years ago, the Rector of the University of Vienna said: "In Albert the Great we honour one who not only was one of the noblest, one of the greatest geniuses to whom our country has given birth, but one who is the ever living and ever present embodiment of that wonderful period of our national history, the robust interior spiritual life of which is as fully shown forth by Albert the Great as by the Cathedrals of the Rhine and the Danube that point to God."

XII.—CANONISATION

THE hopes and prayers of centuries were fulfilled when Albert the Great took his place amongst the Doctors of the Universal Church beside St. Thomas of Aquino, who once sat at his feet and learned the answer to his question: What is God?

It is not possible to speak of the influence of these two great teachers, for not only was it exercised in an extraordinary manner upon those of their own time, but it has continued all through the centuries. It is literal truth to assert that no Doctor, not even excepting St. Augustine, has moulded Catholic thought as St. Thomas has moulded it, and St. Thomas would be the first to acknowledge his debt to St. Albert the Great.

Let us remember that Pope Pius XI. declared St. Albert to be

“Patron of Science and of Peace.” This might seem a strange grouping, but it is true that most of the world’s unrest in these days has been caused by the divorce of science from religion and the supernatural. This unrest will continue, and even increase, unless those who profess to speak in the name of science learn to humble themselves in the presence of Eternal Wisdom and adore Him. True science knows its place, and the true scientist is always humble; we have the example of St. Albert the Great to enforce this lesson. He was a child before God and in his estimation of himself. He was truly a scientist because he was humble, and he was humble because he loved the truth. It is for this reason that the Sovereign Pontiff points to him and bids us pray that he will ask God to give peace to a world which knows it not, and wisdom to those whose learning has blinded them to Him.

This short account of Albert’s life and labours may be fittingly closed with extracts from the Bull of Canonization *In Thesauris Sapientiae* :—

“ . . . During the Vatican Council the Bishops of Germany, desirous of having the pious aspirations of previous centuries realised, requested the Apostolic See to take up again the Cause of Blessed Albert the Great; but the trials of the Church in Italy and Germany at that time did not permit the granting of their petition.

At last, in these our days, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, numerous Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, and Prelates in every part of the world; Abbots and Superiors of Religious Orders, and, in a particular manner, Universities, Faculties, Seminaries, and Colleges, Scientific Societies, and noteworthy personages in Germany, have presented to Us with all solemnity their petitions, and have requested Us to confer upon

Blessed Albert the Great the aureole of the Saints and the Title of Doctor of the Church. . . .

"Albert the Great is indeed a Saint upon whom our age, which desires peace so anxiously, and which prides itself upon its scientific achievements, may fix its eyes with the greatest profit to itself. . . .

"Albert, who so strenuously, and with such happy results, laboured all his life to make peace between cities and princes, as well as between individuals, stands forth as the perfect type of peacemaker. . . . For in himself he was the living image of Christ the Saviour, Who is called in Holy Writ 'the Prince of Peace.' . . . And when Science is submissive to right reason and supernatural faith, it leads in a marvellous manner to the establishment of peace. . . .

"In Albert the Great the rays of divine and human science are met most wonderfully, and form an aureole of light which envelops him. By his shining example he teaches that there is no opposition between science and faith, truth and good, doctrine and sanctity, but, on the contrary, the closest union. . . . Like St. Jerome from the desert, so Albert, by his wonderful writings, calls out strongly and powerfully, while he demonstrates most effectively, that true science and faith, and a life that is lived holily according to faith, not only can, but should, flourish amongst men, since supernatural faith gives perfection and completeness to science in an extraordinary degree. . . .

"Having considered the claims of Albert the Great to be called a Saint, and to be invoked by all Christendom, . . . and to supply whatever may still appear to be wanting to his glory. . . We have determined to fulfil Our desire. . . .

"Wherefore, by virtue of Our Sovereign Apostolic Authority, We order that the Feast of Saint Albert the Great shall be observed each year by the Universal Church on his natal day,

November 15, according to the rite of a Minor-Double, with the Office and Mass of a Confessor-Pontiff, and the Title of Doctor. . . .

"Given at Rome from St. Peter's, in the year of the Lord 1931, on December 16, and in the Tenth year of Our Pontificate.

"✠I., PIUS,

Bishop of the Catholic Church."

PRAYER TO ST. ALBERT

Ant. O Lord God of all knowledge, we praise and bless thee with our whole heart and with our lips, because thou hast raised up a renowned teacher from amongst our brethren.

V. Pray for us, blessed Albert.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray

O God, who didst make the blessed Albert, thy bishop and doctor, great in subordinating human wisdom to divine faith; grant us, we beseech thee, so to follow in the footsteps of his teaching, that we may enjoy the perfect light in heaven. Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

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