

and with deep reproof in its tone the voice goes out to the uttermost bounds of that valley addressed to those on the left, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and ye gave me not to eat; I was thirsty and ye gave me not to drink. * * * But they, alas, seeking in their dire extremity to justify themselves, cry out "Lord! when did we see thee hungry and gave thee not to eat? When did we see thee thirsty and gave thee not to drink? Never until this day did we see thee before." And then he shall answer them saying, "Amen I say to you as long as you did it not to one of these least neither did you do it to me." And these shall go into everlasting punishment.

Christian Soul! with such a declaration as this before you and from the mouth of truth itself, can you doubt for a moment that the withholding of your abundance from your needy neighbor is a mortal sin?

SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH ON ALMSGIVING.

Of what remains over and above give alms.
LUKE II. 41.

What is over and above the decency of your state of life must be given to the poor, and this is of (divine) precept.

ST. THOMAS 2. 2. Ques. 23, Art. 5.

When you give alms to a poor man out of what is over and above, you do not give him what is *yours*; you only give back to him what is *his*. And if you keep it, you keep for yourself what God gave for the common good. The earth is for all, not for the rich. You pay them a debt, not a largess.

ST. AMBROSE.

If you have anything above what is necessary for your food and clothing, take care to give it in alms, and rest assured that in so doing you are only doing your duty.

ST. JEROME.

Things superfluous to the rich are necessary for the poor. If you keep them, you have what is not *yours* but what belongs to others.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

When we give a poor man what is necessary to him, we do not give what is *ours*; we only return to him what is already *his*. We fulfil a duty which should be called an obligation of justice not a work of mercy.

ST. GREGORY.

"How many children have you?" asks St. Augustine. "I have four." "No; you have five. God indeed has given you four to remain in your house, but he has given you a fifth in the poor, to call at your door."

H. B.

* These are not the precise words of St. Augustine, but they express exactly in short the spirit of what he says.

THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

FEBRUARY 2.

"Sacrifice and oblation thou didst not desire, but thou hast pierced ears for me."—Ps. xxxix.

ANIMATED by a spirit of humility and obedience, Mary wished to follow the precepts of the old law. She was not subject to purification, since she was always a virgin and always pure, even after becoming a mother. Nevertheless, she would go and be purified like other mothers. She also came to present her Son to the eternal Father; but she offered her Son in a very different way from that in which other mothers offered theirs. They offered them, knowing well that the offering was only a mere ceremony, so that on redeeming them they recovered them without fear of having still to offer them to death. Whereas Mary really offered her Son to death, and in the certainty that the sacrifice of the life of Jesus Christ, which she then made, was one day to be actually consummated on the tree of the cross. What an example does she not give us by that double sacrifice, made for the glory of God and the love of man's salvation!

The eternal Father had determined to save man, lost by sin, and to deliver him from everlasting death. But as it was also his will that his divine justice should not be deprived of the satisfaction due thereto, he spared not the life of his own Son, who became man to redeem mankind. He would have him expiate, in all rigor, the sin of the first man. It was to that end that he sent him on earth, and gave him Mary for his Mother. But as he would not that the Word should become the Son of Mary unless she gave her consent, so it was not his will that Jesus should sacrifice his life for the salvation of men without the consent of Mary, in order that the heart of the Mother should be sacrificed at the same time as the life of the Son. Saint Thomas teaches, that "mothers have a special right over their children." Jesus being absolutely innocent, and meriting no punishment for any fault of his own; it seemed proper that he should not be destined to the cross, as victim of the