

St John of the Cross has left us an autograph drawing in which he, too, shews us the way to heaven: the narrow direct route is the hardest, but still the quickest, for it is the road of Nothingness. It is to this road that St Theresa of Lisieux directs us and labels it her Little Way.

OUR CLAIMS FOR MERCY AND JUSTICE

BY

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What love can be compared with this, that Thou, seeing that I was condemned to burn in eternal flames, moved by the compassion of Thy heart, shouldst descend from heaven to the prison of this world and taking the likeness of a sinner, shouldst stand in my place and be sentenced to death for my debts? What plea of charity urged Thee so far, and was to urge Thee much farther, were it needful?

O Jesus, our Redemption, our Love and our whole desire, what was the pity that moved Thee to take such a burden on Thee? How could I not love Him who showed me such clear testimonies of His intense love? He would be more senseless than the beasts, more cruel than tigers, harder than the rocks and iron, who would not let himself be conquered by such love.

Not only our love but our confidence is strengthened by this blessing. For how should I not hope for grace and glory and forgiveness of my sins when I have such payment and such a Paymaster, who came forth from the presence of God for them. If it was just that the innocent should be so punished and the treasure should be so cheapened because He wished to pay the debts of sinners, would it not be just that the guilty, for whom He paid, should be delivered from their evil doings and justified before God? Would it be right for justice to enter the house of the saint who owed nothing and execute on him such a terrifying rigour of justice and yet not have the mercy to visit the guilty, release him from his misdeeds and free him from penalties? It is more marvellous that God should be judged, condemned, publicly disgraced, and should die on the cross than that His enemy should be treated as a friend, and the traitor adopted as son after he had repented of his past treachery and turned to God; and since the greater action has been performed there is no reason for doubting of the lesser.

Arouse Thy mercy, then, O Lord, and show clemency to the guilty, since justice arose and showed its harshness to the innocent, for though sinners do not deserve mercy on their own

account, it is owing to them for the sake of Thy beloved Son Who purchased it at so dear a cost to Him. It is mercy that they should be saved if we consider them, but justice if we look on Him, and justice is theirs when they adhere to Him.

And since our Lord showed such charity in wishing to undergo these insults, in order to make satisfaction for His Father's honour, and to liberate men's souls, it would be neither reasonable nor just that a work so pleasing to His Father should remain unrewarded or be unknown to or unthanked for by the world. Command, Eternal Father, that men should be taught that justice was executed on Him, and let them tell that Thou didst wound Him for our sins: bid it be told to mankind that Thou didst wound Him for our sins and that His obedience, patience, humility and charity rejoiced Thee, and how high a price Thou dost set on them. Order Thy Prophets, Thine Apostles, and Evangelists thus, and let heaven and earth reveal that Thou dost justly condemn and mercifully acquit; dost mortify and give life; cast down into the abyss and upraise from it. Through Him Who, condemned to death, mounted the hill of Calvary, the crimes of the world are absolved, and because Thy Son was tortured and humiliated, we, heirs of death, have risen and become precious in Thy sight. Then blessed be the innocence that was condemned, which has absolved so many found guilty, and the justice that was blasphemed and that justified so many sinners.

And since Christ's merits are countless and what He asks for on their account is the salvation of souls, doubtless His petition will not be refused. For it is not reasonable that He Who was so satiated with ignominy should be left thirsting for what He so ardently desired, nor that His tender Father should afflict a second time by refusing Him the gift of souls after having afflicted Him by tortures already. Christ received wounds in His body—let them bring the salvation He earned by them for our souls. He Who is just was treated as a sinner—let us, the sinners, be treated in God's sight as just. He suffered the pains and death we owed, and descended to "the depths of the sea" (Ps. lxxviii, 3) by the anguish He bore: it is just that the Father should not punish a sin twice, but should acquit the debtor if he is penitent, since the merciful Surety has paid for him at so dear a cost. . .

When David fled to the mountains from King Saul, Holy Scripture says that he became the prince of "all that were in distress and oppressed with debt" (I Kings, xxii, 2) and so is our true David, Who descended from the bosom of the Father to the desert of this world. For by order of the Eternal Father all are

rightly taught that by the agonizing death of His Son, gracious pardon is accorded to the guilty; and not only pardon, but the adoption of sons and the inheritance of heaven. And this was the adoption God made with our Noe, when the floods of the waters that fell had ceased, that He would make new contracts and covenants of peace and that rather should the mountains be moved and the hills should tremble than that He should cease to grant His mercy to those who, for the sake of this Son, should ask Him for it rightly.

REVIEWS

THE CODE OF CHRIST: An Interpretation of the Beatitudes. By Gerald Heard. (Cassell; 7s. 6d.).

This is a sequel to *The Creed of Christ*, which studied the *Our Father*: the Prayer establishes the conditions, the state of being, in which alone the principles of the Sermon, and the Beatitudes in particular, become practicable. For the Beatitudes give us in effect, a commentary on the saying of our Lord that only they who hate their life shall find it—a saying which makes sense only in the light of that change-over, the re-birth, from self-centredness to God-centredness, which is expressed in the *Our Father*.

The Beatitudes tell us how to be happy: not by looking for happiness but by precisely this process of "self-naughting" which is one aspect of the finding of infinite life. The poor in spirit are those who have learned to live not for the ego but for God; and so the kingdom is already theirs. Then the despair aroused by the "tears in things" is turned for them into a creative compassion: "mourning is necessary because we have to die to much in which we assumed our happiness to live"; but this sorrow is turned into joy because it can see the "redemptive process at work," that process which makes of sin a *felix culpa* because it can lead to something richer than "unself-conscious innocency." But again this process is something in which those who live the Beatitudes can join, must inevitably join: if you are docile enough to be tamed to God's purposes you share in his life and his power, and it radiates out again from you: you have within you the divine gift of creative pity, the divine power which alone can make peace on earth.

We live in desperate days because the "dream of a physical Utopia" has proved illusory, and to many the only alternative is despair: for the reality of the life and power of spirit, the meaning of "the kingdom of God is within you" is lost. We need to be told again and again that real power is inner power, that "we must be transcendental if we are ever to be in fact prac-