

WHEN THEN ANYONE has acquired this love of goodness of which we have been speaking, and the imitation of God, then he will be endowed with the Lord's heart of compassion, and will pray also for his persecutors, saying in like manner: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But it is a clear sign of a soul that is not yet thoroughly purged from the dregs of sin, not to sorrow with a feeling of pity at the offenses of others, but to keep to the rigid censure of the judge: for how will he be able to obtain perfection of heart, who is without that by which, as the Apostle has pointed out, the full requirements of the law can be fulfilled, saying: "Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ," and who has not that virtue of love, which "is not grieved, is not puffed up, thinketh no evil," which "endureth all things, beareth all things." For "a righteous man pitieth the life of his beasts: but the heart of the ungodly is without pity." And so a monk is quite certain to fall into the same sins which he condemns in another with merciless and inhuman severity, for "a stern king will fall into misfortunes," and "one who stops his ears so as not to hear the weak, shall himself cry, and there shall be none to hear him."

Luke 23:34

Gal. 6:2

1 Cor. 13:4-7

Prov. 12:10 [LXX]

Prov. 13:7, 21:13

St John Cassian, *First Conference of Abbot Chaeremon*, ch. x, NPNF, Second Series, Vol. XI, p. 419



THE SIGN OF THOSE who have attained to perfection is this: if, for the sake of his love for men, a man were to be given over to the fire ten times a day, he would not be content with this, even as Moses said to God, 'If now Thou wilt forgive their sin, forgive it; and if not, blot me out of Thy book which Thou hast written'; and like the blessed Paul who said, 'For I could wish that myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren'; and again, 'I now rejoice in my sufferings for the nations.' And likewise the other apostles accepted many kinds of death because of their fervent desire that men should receive life.

Exod. 32:32

Rom. 9:3

Col. 1:24

St Isaac the Syrian, *Ascetical Homily 71*, p. 492

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