

G K Chesterton & St Therese: Kindred Spirits

Humility

'The humbler you are, the happier you will be.' *Therese*

'The secret of life lies in laughter and humility.' *GKC*

'What a joy to be humbled; it is the only way that makes saints.' *Therese*

'Pride flings frail palaces at the sky,
As a man flings up sand,
But the firm feet of humility
Take hold of heavy land

Pride juggles with her toppling towers,
They strike the sun and cease,
But the firm feet of humility
They grip the ground like trees.' *GKC*

'For Him stay little all your days
humility throws hell into a rage.' *Therese*

'True spirituality is as humble as a lover and as careless as a schoolboy.' *GKC*

Gratitude

'You say grace before meals - all right
But I say grace before the play and the opera
and grace before the concert and pantomime
and grace before I open a book
and grace before sketching, painting swimming, fencing,
boxing, walking, playing, dancing
and grace before I dip the pen in this ink.'
GKC

'When I think of all the graces the good God has given me
I have to restrain myself against shedding endless tears of gratitude.' *Therese*

'The aim of life is appreciation; there is no sense in not appreciating things; and there is no sense in having more of them if you have less appreciation of them.' *GKC*

'The spirit of gratitude draws down upon us the overflow of God's grace.
When we thank him for one blessing he is moved to give us ten more.
When we thank Him for these, He multiplies blessings to such a degree
that we seem to be under a constant stream of Divine graces, all coming our way.'
Therese

'The highest form of human thought is thanks.' *GKC*

Humour

‘He [St Francis] expressed in loftier and bolder language than any earthly thinker the conception that laughter is as divine as tears.’ *GKC*

‘I always find a way of being happy.’ *Therese*

‘Alone of all the animals man is shaken by the beautiful madness called laughter.’ *GKC*

‘Her head is full of mischief to play on anyone she pleases. Mystic, comic, everything. She can make you weep with devotion and just as easily split your sides with laughter during recreations.’ *Mother Prioress describing Therese*

‘The angels are able to fly because they take themselves lightly.’ *GKC*

‘She was always cheerful in spite of her sufferings. She began amusing herself by talking about everything that would happen after her death. Because of the way she did this, when we should have been crying, she had us bursting out with peals of laughter. I believe she'll die laughing.’ *Her Sister Pauline describing Therese*

‘Humour can get in under the door
while seriousness is still fumbling at the handle.’ *GKC*

‘Laughter...unfreezes pride and unwinds secrecy;
it makes men forget themselves in the presence of something greater than themselves.’
GKC

Childhood

‘I must stay little and become this more and more.’ *Therese*

‘Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, “Do it again”; and the grow-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, “Do it again” to the sun; and every evening, “Do it again” to the moon.’ *GKC*

‘I am making every effort to be a totally tiny child.’ *Therese*

‘The most unfathomable schools and sages have never attained to the gravity which dwells in the eyes of a baby of three months old. It is the gravity of astonishment at the universe.’ *GKC*

‘To be little is not to be discouraged by one’s faults, because children often fall, but they are too small to seriously hurt themselves.’ *Therese*