

in search of. Essentially they have a greater fondness for the preferences shown them, than they have any fondness for the preferences extended to others; they create their own standards of religious excellence and know of no guide but their own private judgement; ever ready to find fault with the observances of all other people. Touch but the empty reputation of the sanctity they fancy themselves possessed of, and of which they are excessively jealous; merely suggest to them to discontinue any of the devotions to which they are addicted, and their trouble and vexation is sure to be expressed.

If God Himself, in order to open their eyes and show them the true path to perfection should send them crosses, sicknesses, or severe persecutions – the surest trials of His servant’s fidelity – and which never happen but by His appointment and permission, then it is that the corruption of their hearts discovers itself through their excessive pride.

In all the incidents of this life, whether happy or otherwise, such as they are utter strangers to any conformity to the Will of God. When things go well with them, never a word is spoken of the Will of God, or that the good fortune is attributed to His Divine Will, but when things go badly with them – due to their own negligences and poor judgements – how quickly they place the burden of it all on “The Will of God” without a moment’s notice of the part they played in life’s troubles. They know not how to bend under God’s Almighty Power or to submit to His judgements; they find it difficult to humble themselves before men; they fail to love their enemies and to look upon them as the instruments employed by the Divine goodness to train them to mortification and thus to true sanctification. For this reason, they are in imminent danger of being lost. All dazzled by self-love, they view themselves and their actions blameless.. They are puffed up with vanity, and they deem themselves far advanced towards God – WHILE AT THE SAME TIME – readily disdaining and rejecting their neighbor!

Experience convinces us that professed sinners are with less difficulty reclaimed, than those who willfully make their own hearts a secret to themselves through a false resemblance of virtue. From this you will easily comprehend that the spiritual life does not consist in the several practices above enumerated – (a DOING) – if considered only in the outward appearance. The spiritual life properly consists in knowing – (a BEING) – the infinite greatness and goodness of God, and joined to this there must be a true sense of our own wretchedness and proclivity to evil. We must comprehend what it means to love God and to hate self in ourselves; we must comprehend what it means to humble ourselves not only before God, Himself, but for His sake, before all men; we must comprehend that we must renounce our own will entirely in order to follow His. We must be willing to crown the work before us by doing it all for the sole glory of His Holy Name, with NO OTHER view than to please Him,



*This narrative is an adaptation of Chapter I of the “Spiritual Combat” by Father Laurence Scupoli (1530-1610). For accurate reading refer to the 1905 Printing.*

