

with no other motive than that God ought to be loved and served by all His creatures.

This is the law of love, impressed by the Hand of the Lord Himself upon the hearts of His faithful servants; this is the abnegation of self which He requires of us; this is His sweet yoke and His light burden; this is the obedience to which, by His Voice and His Example, our Master and Redeemer calls us. In aspiring to such sublime perfection thou wilt have to do continual violence to thyself by a generous conflict with thine own will in all things, great and small, until thy will be wholly annihilated. Thou must prepare thyself, therefore, for the battle with all readiness of mind, for none but brave warriors shall receive the crown.

This is indeed the greatest and hardest of all struggles; for while we strive against self, self is striving against us, and therefore is the victory here more glorious and precious in the sight of God. For if thou wilt set thyself to trample down and exterminate all thy unruly appetites, desires, and wishes, even in the smallest and most inconsiderable matters, thou wilt render a greater and more acceptable service to thy God than if thou shouldst discipline thyself to blood, fast more rigorously than hermits or anchorites of old, or convert millions of souls, and yet voluntarily leave even one of these evils alive within thee. For although the conversion of souls is no doubt more precious to the Lord than the mortification of a fancy, nevertheless nothing should in thy sight be of greater account than to will and to do that very thing which the Lord specially demands and requires of thee. And He will infallibly be better pleased that thou shouldst watch and labour to mortify thy passions than if, consciously and willfully leaving but one passion alive within thee, thou shouldst serve Him in some other matter of greater importance in itself. □

