

for mortal man to realize the description, and therefore to appropriate the blessing of the text. It might be easier, first, if men would acknowledge the deep guilt of disobedience; secondly, if they would from the first prepare themselves to find it very difficult, if they would acknowledge that it entails in most cases suffering. The reason it is so difficult is because in most cases our will does not square with God's will; if we were perfect beings it might be otherwise; but as we are, there are so many lusts and passions, so many temptations from within and from without, which will lead us astray except we battle against them and resist them, that obedience cannot be other than difficult, cannot consist without self-denial, which comes naturally, as we say, to no man. Therefore it is that in so many cases, first in little things, by degrees in greater, we rebel against God's laws, and drift step by step into a condition of chronic disobedience, whence, as I have before remarked, the recovery is difficult and painful. Now, though the difficulty could never be less, our downward progress might be arrested, if we were diligent to examine our hearts and consciences, and if, recognizing the guilt of disobedience as such, we took ourselves to task for every rebellious thought unchecked, still more for every petty violation of law indulged. If our will were in conformity with God's will obedience would be easy. And we must strive to make it so, or else, hard as this may be, and vexatious as it may appear to us, it is nothing to the anguish and suffering which we shall have to bear, when, if by God's grace we be led to repentance, we contrast our sinful state with the perfect holiness of God, which ought to have been our model, not to mention the suffering of other kinds, whereby our Father, chastening us for our good, leads us to that repentance. We must boldly, yet with deep humility, face the fact declared by St. Paul concerning our blessed Lord that though He was a son, yet learned He obedience by