

*Lastly, venial sin leads us to greater faults.* If the malice contained in the nature of venial sin does not suffice to make us fear, its consequences ought to have that effect upon us ; for it exposes us to greater faults, and may throw us into the abyss of crime. The wise Man warns us of this, saying : « He that continueth small things, shall fall by little and little. » (Eccl. 19-1) The reason of it is, that all venial sin, however slight, increases the ardor of lust which inclines us so naturally to the things of the earth. According to St. Augustine : « The increase of cupidity is the decrease of charity, » without which the soul falls into that dangerous lukewarmness for which God casts it out, as He threatens to do in the Apocalypse. If Judas, says St Chrysostome, had restrained his avarice at the beginning, it would never have got to such a point as to make him sell his Master. How blind we are, says the same holy Father. If we perceive a spark of fire in our house, everybody runs to put it out, for fear it should cause a blaze. What is a venial sin, however small it may be? It is a spark which may set the soul on fire, and destroy it, unless we immediately put it out. « Behold, exclaims St. James, how small a fire — what a great wood it kindleth. » (Jas. 3-5.)

O good St. Anne, grant me the grace to bear always in mind that there is no man who sinneth not. (3 K. 8-45) — A just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again. ( Pv. 24-16) — There is no just man upon earth that doth good, and sinneth not. (Eccl. 7-21) — If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (Jo. 1-8) — In many things we all offend. (Ja. 3-2) — If any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble : — he shall be saved, yet so as by fire. (1 Cor. 3-12, 15)

O ye holy souls, who suffer in the dreadful fire of purgatory, we learn from you what a venial sin is. Can it be said that it is not a great evil when it can only be expiated hereafter by such horrible torments? O Good St. Anne, prevent me through thy intercession, from ever deliberately offending my God ; and make me never forget this warning of the Almighty. — « He that continueth small things, shall fall by little and little. » (Eccl. 19-1).

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