

that the wicked rich man dying in the state of mortal sin, was buried in hell? No, you answer, for Faith teaches that the sinner dying in his sin, goes to hell. And yet you are surprised at this statement, that you commit no fault, neither mortal nor venial with full deliberation, if you do not want to commit it. Does not Faith teach us that without the will, no sin is possible? If, then, you find no fault of which to accuse yourself, do not be troubled on that account, but thank the good God who, by His grace, has strengthened your will, in order to prevent you from yielding to temptation.

You will, perhaps, ask: It is possible that one can have no fault whatever with which to reproach one's self? The saints committed some, and do not we commit some, too? Yes, we may fear, and with reason, it seems to us, for how many faults our blindness prevents us, perhaps, from recognizing!

By the foregoing remarks, you mean, doubtless, that having no knowledge of the sins into which you think you fall, you are bound to hunt them up, and, for this end, to examine your conscience anxiously in the hope of discovering them.

We answer: Above all, recall what we have already said, namely, that mortal sins alone are the obligatory matter for Sacramental Confession, and that, consequently, there is obligation to examine one's self only upon mortal sin.

Coming now to venial sin, to which we alluded in saying that the saints themselves are not exempt from them, we shall show you that the faults committed by the saints, were not sins of full deliberation. They were faults proceeding less from malice of the will than from human frailty. They were such sins as no one escapes without a special privilege from God, such privilege, we know having been accorded to no saint, the Blessed Virgin Mary excepted. (1) They were sins committed rather through surprise than from a perverse will. Now, it is certain that you constantly commit such sins unless you, too, have received the privilege granted to the Blessed Virgin. Such sins are more known of very enlightened persons such as were the saints, than of the less

(1) Council of Trent. Session 6. ch. II.