

by the immense impetus given by it to passions and vices. What a decent man would blush to hear, the pagans of Rome, says Seneca, did not blush to say to their gods. They were so conscious of their turpitude, that if any one happened to listen to them, they kept silent. They displayed in broad daylight what in ordinary life men hide in deepest darkness. In the secret recesses of the temples they committed abominable crimes against nature. Faith, on the contrary, teaches us to adore God in spirit and truth, by the respect, love, and imitation of His infinite perfections. "Be ye perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect."

*Truth about our brethren and fellowmen.* At the school of reason three-fourths of mankind were slaves, and nature willed—men said—not only that some should be free and others essentially slaves, but that the slave should hardly differ from the brute beast. Before the law the slaves were *nil*: "*non tam viles quam nulli.*" Masters had absolute power over them. The celebrated constitution of Constantine alluded to daily occurrences, when it forbade masters to beat them to death, stab them to death, hang them, poison them, tear them to pieces with wild beasts, burn their quivering limbs with red-hot iron, etc., etc. What a spectacle to behold myriads of gladiators bawling each other to delight the blood-thirsty Roman populace! Yet Trajan, one of the best emperors, celebrated his triumph over the Dacians by gladiatorial shows which lasted for 123 days, and in which 10,000 gladiators, and 11,000 wild beasts tore each other to pieces. The greatest of Roman emperors accepted, without a thrill, without a blush, the sacrilegious farewell, or salutation of the noble victims who were going to slay each other in the amphitheatre: "*Moriturus salutant.*" And that, too, in the palmy days of Rome when reason and philosophy were at their height.

From the very beginning Faith beheld in a slave the child of God: "If thy brother constrained by poverty—says Leviticus—sell himself to thee, thou shalt not oppress him with the service of bond-servants. But he shall be as a hireling and a sojourner, he shall work with thee until the year of the jubilee. And afterwards he shall go out with his children, and shall return to his kindred and to the possession of his fathers" (Lev. 25—39). In the light of

The poor blind man is human reason, groping in darkness, always in danger of straying into lamentable errors. Faith is his guiding child, his faithful dog, his staff; it is the angel of light shielding him from danger, and leading him to the goal of his journey, and to the possession of his everlasting inheritance. Separate him from his guide and he will fall headlong into the abyss of unbelief and corruption. To take the good coin out of his wallet, and substitute the base one, is to take away his faith and give him philosophy, which will leave him hopelessly hungering for the bread of life. Ah! for heaven's sake, leave him his staff; leave him his good coin; leave him his faith.

Hitherto we have developed only the first part of the definition given by St Paul: "*Faith is the evidence of the things which appear not*"; but he also says that it is *the substance of things to be hoped for.*" And here we shall see still more clearly how reasonable, legitimate, and glorious faith is. A man without hopes beyond this life is a kind of monstrosity. He must be fallen fearfully low, he must be fatally identified with matter, to aspire to nothing beyond the deceitful and fleeting scene of this short life so chequered with miseries. The soul of man has naturally an unquenchable thirst for happiness. The wise man fitly compares it to the "sea into which all rivers flow and which is never filled"; or to a devouring fire which never says "enough." Now, this complete happiness which we yearn for with such energy, we find to be undeniable experience that it is not of this world, where discomfort is the rule and ease the exception, where the beautiful is oppressed by the ugly, good by evil, justice by injustice, where, in brief, all is vanity and affliction of spirit. Such was the lamentation of the wisest and the most disenchanted of men, who had tasted and drunk every cup of this world's happiness and still found his thirst unquenched. I have seen all things that were under the sun. . . . I am become great and have gone beyond all in wisdom that were before me, and I have given my heart to know prudence and learning. I said in my heart: I will go and abound with delights, and enjoy good things. And I made me great works, I built me houses and planted vineyards, I made gardens and orchards, and set them with trees of all kinds. And I

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## BARGAINS IN ALL DEPARTMENTS.

Revelation, all—Jews and Gentiles, slaves and masters—form but one body animated with the same spirit, while all have equal claims as members. "The eye cannot say to the hand: I need not thy help; nor again the hand to the feet: I have no need of you. Yea, much more those that seem to be the most feeble members of the body are more necessary. But the members must be mutually careful one for another; and if one member suffer anything, all the members suffer with it; or, if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it" (I. Cor. 21—25, 26). And then follow the admirable precepts of Christian charity.

*The truth about ourselves.* That truth is fatally missed by reason; whereas faith makes us certain of the existence of our soul, of its immortality, its happy, or miserable eternity, the resurrection of the body, etc. It teaches us our duties to God, to ourselves, and to our neighbours. It offers us the grace necessary to fulfil them faithfully. While for unaided reason all is darkness, or doubt, or uncertainty, contradiction, hopeless strife, for reason aided by faith all is flooded with light, and enjoys the brightness of the midday sun. A child well instructed in the Catechism possesses a thousand fold more religious and moral truths than Plato, Socrates, Cicero, Seneca, and all the philosophers of antiquity.

Who has not sometimes met a poor blind man guided by a child, or a little dog, the faithful companion of his misfortune? Sometimes he has no guide but his stick, with which he feels his way along. But did you ever see the blind leading the blind? No: they know full well that both fall into the pit. Now, what indignation you would feel if, in the midst of a crowded street, overrun with vehicles in every direction, a malicious wretch came up to the poor blind man, and tearing him away from his child or his dog, or his stick, left him to himself with certainty of his being run over and killed! What cruelty! you would say. Or you can conceive another piece of malice equally revolting. Suppose a mean, spiteful fellow were to go up to a poor blind beggar, and under pretence of taking change out of his wallet, deliberately substitute a piece of iron, or tin, or other base metal of any kind, thus depriving the poor man of his daily bread,

made me ponds of water to water therewith the wood of the young trees. I got me men-servants and maid-servants, and had a great family, and herds of oxen and great flocks of sheep above all that were before me. I heaped together for myself silver and gold, and the wealth of kings, and provinces, and I surpassed in riches all that were before me. And whatsoever my eyes desired, I refused them not; and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure. And when I turned myself to all the works which my hands had wrought, and to the labours wherein I had laboured in vain, I saw in all things vanity and vexation of mind, and that nothing was lasting under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1 and 2 chapter.) And in another place Solomon adds, what is for upright souls a trial almost beyond endurance, that, in this world unhappiness is too often the lot of the good, and happiness—at least apparent—the lot of the wicked. King David passed through the same trial and gave vent to distressful feelings in immortal strains: "But my feet were almost moved, my steps had well-nigh slipped, because I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners." (Ps. 72.)

Without faith how sad, how hollow, how despairing the world appears! Let others plunge, if they will, into that sea of error, doubt, and contradiction. We must have faith—it is the imperative need of our nature, it is the heavenly telescope of the heart as well as of the mind, it shows us in the distance the good, the beautiful, the happy, the term of our exile, the bias beyond our most ardent dreams, what "eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into man's heart to conceive."

What are the irreconcilable foes of man's happiness? Passions and vices. Feverish craving for pleasure; pride, restlessness of mind, cupidity, jealousy, envy, hatred, vexation; the fierce storms of the rebellious senses. Now, faith and the help it brings, and only faith, can calm those storms, and save the heart from shipwreck in those terrible billows.

Who are they that utter the cries of anguish so pathetically described in the book of Wisdom? "We fools have erred from the path of truth, and the light of justice hath not shone unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us. We wearied our-