

distributes clothing and food, to conciliate your friendship; it sends forth among you, falsified copies of the Bible, tracts full of error, falsehood and blasphemy, that it may sow in your midst the seeds of perverse doctrines. Oh! beware of these gifts of false friendship; steadfastly refuse to receive these books, or cast them into the flames: if you sincerely desire your own salvation, and that of your children, do not allow those messengers of error to enter your houses. For, as St. Paul says, *what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?* (II Cor., VI 15.)

The more precious our treasure is, the greater should be our care to avoid anything that may destroy it. Learn hence with what jealousy you should watch over the preservation of your faith. "This virtue, says the Holy Council of "Trent, (*Sess. VI. ch. 8.*) is the beginning of man's salvation; the foundation "and root of all justification, *and without it*, according to the Apostle, *it is impossible to please God.* (Hebrews, XI. 6)"

"Faith, says Pius IX, is the mistress of life, the guide to salvation, the "destruction of all vice, the mother and powerful sustenance of all virtue; it "sheds the benighted rays of its light on all nations, making them bow under "the yoke of Jesus-Christ, announcing to them peace and happiness." (*Encyclical letter, 9th November 1846.*)

But you must bear in mind, Dearest Brethren, "that faith unaccompanied "by hope and charity cannot unite us to Christ. Therefore it is true, in the most "absolute sense, to say that faith without good works is dead and useless." (*Council of Trent, sess. VII. chap. 7.*) *If thou wilt enter into life*, says Christ, *keep the commandments.* (Matthew, XIX. 17.) God who created man wholly, body and soul, desires to be honoured by man wholly. Hence, he requires that man pay him, by faith, the homage of his intelligence, and by his exterior works, manifest his submission to the supreme dominion of the Creator. "Without good works "faith cannot please God, nor will God accept good works without faith. It is "not in the sole practice of virtue, or in the exclusive observation of the precepts "but in their union with faith that we must seek out the path that leads to life "eternal." (*Letter of Pius IX to the Bishops of Austria, 17th March 1856.*)

To effectuate a union so desirable, so necessary, between faith and good works, you should not neglect any occasion of instructing yourselves in the christian doctrine, whether by attending regularly at the instructions given to you, by your pastors on Sundays and Holidays, in accordance with the ordinance of our mother the Church, or by reading good books, chosen and approved by your spiritual guides.

Approach frequently the holy sacrament of Penance, in order to purify your