

The earth, upon which we move and live, recognized Him in His sufferings, for, as though unwilling that such a tragedy should be perpetrated on its surface, it shook to its very centre, and the sun in the heavens stood appalled, and refused to give its light during the agony of its God. The rocks and the veil of the Temple bore witness to His Divinity, for they were rent in twain, and death and the tomb acknowledged His victory, for they gave up their dead.

There is another feature with regard to the miraculous star, that should not be passed over without mention. It led the Wise Men to Jerusalem and then disappeared. Saint Leo says that the inanimate star withdrew itself that it might force the Magi to have recourse to the lawful authority instituted by God for interpreting the Holy Scriptures and teaching the people. There were the pontiffs, the scribes, and the doctors of the Law, who had authority to explain, from the oracles of the prophets, where and when Christ would be born, and they declared He was to be born in Bethlehem. The Magi, having complied with this obligation, and in obedience to the directions received, set out on their journey, and the extraordinary guide, that would not direct them where ordinary means were to be found, to their great joy, went before them and stood over the place where the Child was born.

We can hardly at this distant period fully appreciate the great blessings bestowed upon our fathers and through them upon us, by being called to the faith of Jesus Christ. With the Christian religion every blessing has come to us, and whatever real substantial happiness we enjoy in the present state of the world, we owe to

our Catholic faith. To corroborate this statement, we need but look back to the history of the pagan world, a world seething in its own corruption. Over its worst features we must throw the veil of oblivion, for a respectable pen dare not inscribe, nor offend the sensibility of respectable readers by portraying, the immorality of a pagan people. We must be equally silent over their orgies in honor of their favorite divinities, who were no other than the lowest animal instincts of human nature deified, and worshipped by men fallen to the lowest depths of degradation. Even at the present day, what is the state of the nations who resisted the light of the Gospel and remained pagan? It may be said that, in these nations, pagan civilization did not receive its highest development. Let us grant the above statement, and what does it prove? That such nations were not as enlightened as those who received the Christian religion. If it proves anything, it proves too much. It shows that the more refined and enlightened pagan nations had been, the more willing they were to receive the light of Christianity, and the more docile they were to subject themselves to the sweet yoke of the Gospel. But is it true that paganism in its highest development, in its progress in art, science and literature, brought peace and happiness to the masses of the people? We acknowledge that Greek and Roman genius, the product of the God-like spirit in man, even in spite of paganism, gave to the world great generals, great sculptors and painters, and great historians and poets. But we do not acknowledge that the sculptors or painters of ancient Greece or Rome were equal to Christian artists. It is true the former produced beautiful models of nature, and in that