

*Letters to a
Roman Catholic Priest
... by H. A. Ironside*

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BY

H. A. IRONSIDE

Author of "Mysteries of God;" "Minor Prophets;"
"Holiness: The False and the True;" "Sailing with Paul;"
"Lectures on Daniel;" "Lectures on the Revelation," etc., etc.



LOIZEAUX BROTHERS

Neptune, New Jersey

Letters to a Roman Catholic Priest*

LETTER I

Rev. A. M. S.—

DEAR SIR: I still have on hand your two last letters which I had no thought of neglecting so long; but I was obliged to make a lengthy journey, and it was followed by prolonged sickness from which I did not fully recover for some months. Before renewing our correspondence I also wished to familiarize myself more fully with Roman Catholic teaching and history. To this end I have read largely on both sides: Newman and Chiniquy; Gibbon and Littledale; the "Catholic Encyclopedia" and Protestant historians; the Fa-

* These papers are personal letters addressed to a parish priest of the Church of Rome, Father A. M. S.—, whose acquaintance I made on a railway journey, and with this cultured gentleman it was a pleasure to converse. When we parted, he accepted from me a little volume dealing with a portion of Holy Scripture, concerning which he afterwards wrote me a very appreciative letter. Our correspondence was interrupted by illness on my part, which for a long time hindered my again writing him. Of the earlier letters I kept no copies; but the later ones were written in duplicate, and are now published with the hope that they may prove helpful to the reader.

thers, Pre- and Post-Nicene, and mediæval and modern theologians, in order to take up with you the questions at issue, absolutely without prejudice, and, I trust, without misrepresentation. I think I have to-day more kindly feelings toward sincere Roman Catholics than ever before; while you will pardon me if I say that my researches have given me a more intense detestation of many Romish dogmas than I had previously possessed.

In the measure in which Rome confesses the doctrine of Christ, I rejoice. I too am a member of the Catholic Church, the one body of which Christ alone is the Head, exalted at God's right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour. Every true believer in Him upon the face of the earth is, through the Spirit's baptism, a member of that one body. But I feel, more strongly than ever, that the Bishop of Rome and the faction that acknowledges his authority have largely perverted the gospel of Christ; preaching, instead, "another gospel which is not another;" and you know the solemn anathema pronounced by St. Paul against all such. What a fearful thing if the Roman Pontiff, while calling himself the Vicar of Christ and the earthly head of the Church, himself be under that fearful curse (Gal. 1: 6-9).

In your last letter you say, and I believe rightly so, that "The Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament is the pivotal point on which all turns." And you ask: "Is then Christ really present in the

Blessed Sacrament, as we Catholics believe, or is it only a figure?" And here you confidently say: "I call all History and all Antiquity to testify against you."

I confess that I am greatly surprised at the temerity that could permit you to use such words. Surely you are familiar with the Fathers and history. Nay, I cannot but believe you are better acquainted with the writings of the former than I am; therefore, you must know that the pre-Nicene Fathers nowhere teach the doctrine you allege. It is nothing to me that the Roman Church for centuries has held this doctrine; nor yet that the Eastern Church holds the same; that Luther himself taught something similar; that certain Anglicans, from Henry the Eighth down, largely agree with Rome. These are all comparatively modern. Antiquity, in this case, decides absolutely against them. It is not the writings of fallible men to which I refer as "Antiquity" but to "that which was from the beginning"—the authoritative records of the inspired apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. I will put before you every inspired account of the Lord's Supper found in the Holy Scriptures and ask you to weigh them well, forgetting, so far as you can, every construction put upon them by post-Nicene theologians, and ask yourself if the scriptures quoted can possibly bear the interpretation Rome has given them.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, ch. 26: 26-29, we read:

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

St. Mark's account is very similar, but I quote it entire as found in chap. 14, vers. 22-25.

"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

St. Luke's account occupies but two verses, chap. 22: 19, 20 (vers. 17 and 18 clearly referring to the passover cup preceding the institution of the Lord's Supper).

"And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you."

St. John, as you know, furnishes no account of the institution of the Christian feast at all. His sixth chapter we will consider in a later letter.

St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 11: 23-29, gives us the only remaining account:

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when they had supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh a judgment to himself, if he discern not the Lord's body." *

Turning our attention to the Lord's words in regard to the *cup*, in St. Matthew He says: "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Was He speaking literally or figuratively? To answer this question I will just ask another: *Had His blood been shed at that time or not?* His words are, "This is My blood which is shed." It is an offence to our God-given intelligence to insist that the words, "This is My blood," must be taken literally; while it must be acknowledged that in saying, "which is shed," He was speaking anticipatively. Furthermore our Lord calls the liquid

* The Scripture quotations are from the 1911 Oxford Version, the only edition of the Bible I had on hand when writing, but neither the Douay nor the A. V. differ materially.

in the cup, "the fruit of the vine," which would be absurd if it had been changed into His actual blood. Both these propositions apply with equal force to the quotation from St. Mark's Gospel. And St. Luke makes it even stronger by saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." Would you say He meant us to understand literally that the cup *contained* the new covenant, and that when you drink it you are drinking the new covenant?—or is the expression clearly figurative?

If it be clear that our Lord speaks *figuratively* of the cup, by what rule of logic can we suppose He speaks *literally* of the bread when He says, "This is My body, which is given for you?" Had His body already been broken, given or sacrificed for us, when He instituted the Supper? If not, He certainly speaks in a figurative way. So St. Paul takes it; and in 1 Cor. 10: 16 he writes, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" And he immediately adds, "For we are all partakers of that one loaf." So that the one loaf not only sets forth figuratively Christ's literal body, but it also is a figure of His mystical body—the Church.

And so it was held by all the apostolic churches; nor was any other meaning attached to it until the predicted apostasy had begun. The Romish dogma of the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ be-

ing present under one species, and the consequent denial of the cup to the laity, is in itself a complete annulment of the dogma of the Real Presence; for in the Lord's Supper, as instituted by Christ, it was of the loaf *alone* that He said, "This is My body," and it set forth His body as given in death; hence the cup set forth His blood as *separated* from His body, though that separation had not yet actually taken place. In warning the Corinthians concerning their unholy partaking of the Lord's Supper, St. Paul says: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup." It is still the *bread*, and still the *cup*. No change has taken place in the elements; faith alone can see in the loaf and the cup a symbol of the crucified Saviour.

And now I ask you, dear sir, in all seriousness, can you see anything in the Roman service of the Mass that answers in any sense to the beauty and simplicity of the Lord's Supper, as set forth in the scriptures we have read? There you have no pompous hierarchy separated from the laity, as though of a superior class, but a company of Christian brethren gathered to partake together of a simple memorial feast, each one eating of the loaf, each one drinking of the cup, in reverent and hallowed remembrance of the Lord in His death.

As to the denial of the cup to "the laity" of communicants, I must write on that later.

Very sincerely yours, ———

LETTER II

MY DEAR SIR:

I must now say something on Rome's denial of the cup to "the laity." And here I turn your words back upon yourself, and call all history (up to very recent years) and all antiquity to witness against you. You know that the canon enjoining communion in one kind was only passed on June 15, 1415, and that at a time when the Roman Church was without a head. For the same council that enacted the decree, had deposed Pope John XXIII., on May 29th, 1415, and his successor was not elected until November 11th, 1417. Yet Roman apologists declare that the Pope has authority to change the Lord's order who gave communion in two kinds (the bread typifying His body, the wine His blood), to communion in one kind only on the part of the commonalty—priests alone being permitted to observe the original order.

Now this decree of the council of Constance is a direct contradiction to Roman canon law of the centuries preceding. Pope Leo the Great, in inveighing against the Manicheans, says distinctly: "They receive Christ's body [which to him, of course, was the communion loaf] with unworthy mouth, and entirely refuse to take the blood of our redemption [referring to the cup, according to the Roman interpretation]; therefore we give notice to you, holy brethren, that men of this sort, whose sacrilegious deceit has been detected, are

to be expelled by priestly authority from the fellowship of the saints" (quoted from his 41st Homily). But Pope Gelasius I. is stronger yet, for in a letter addressed to the Bishops Majoricus and John, which has been embodied in the canon law of the Romish Church, he says: "We have ascertained that certain persons having received a portion of the sacred body alone abstain from partaking of the chalice of the sacred blood. Let such persons, without any doubt, since they are stated to feel thus bound by some superstitious reason, either receive the sacrament in its entirety, or be repelled from the entire sacrament, because a division of one and the same mystery cannot take place without great sacrilege" (Corp. Jur. Can. Decre. 3: 11, 12). And with this agrees the decree of the council of Clermont, personally presided over by Pope Urban II. in 1095: "That no one shall communicate at the altar, without he receives the body and blood alike, unless by way of necessity, or caution." In the next century (A. D. 1118), Pope Paschal II. wrote to Pontious, Abbot of Cluny, referring to the teaching of St. Cyprian: "Therefore, according to the same Cyprian: in receiving the Lord's body and blood, let the Lord's tradition be observed, nor let any departure be made, through human institution, from what Christ the Master ordained and did. For we know that the bread was given separately, and the wine was given separately, by the Lord Himself, which custom we

therefore teach and *command to be always observed in Holy Church,** save in the case of infants and very infirm people, who cannot swallow bread."

Now, what title has the Church of Rome to declare itself unchanged, Catholic and Apostolic in its practices, as well as doctrines, when a council without a Pope can deliberately overthrow the teaching of four Popes on a matter of this kind? The fact is, Rome has completely annulled the words of our Lord Jesus Christ as to this, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

And this to a Catholic is a most serious thing. For when our Lord in John 6 speaks of "eating His flesh and drinking His blood," Romanists implicitly believe it refers to participation in the Eucharist; yet his church forbids him to drink of the cup, unless he has taken priestly orders!

But does the much disputed passage in John 6 have any reference to the Lord's Supper, or is it intended to set forth a great spiritual truth? I believe the latter. If you accuse me of using private judgment, you too are using private judgment, though you may decry it, when you decide to accept the teaching of the Roman Church as to the same passage. I repudiate it as against both our God-given reason and Holy Scripture's teaching, which is to me far more reliable authority than any interpretation the Church may put upon it.

To the Jews seeking material advantages, our

* Italics mine throughout.

Lord says, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you" (ver. 27). They refer Him to Moses who had fed their fathers in the wilderness with manna: desiring Him to provide them too with literal bread. To this He answered: "*I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst*" (ver. 35). "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that Bread of Life*" (vers. 47, 48). Unbelieving Jews strove among themselves at this, saying: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said unto them, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day*" (vers. 53, 54).

Now this is the teaching of our Lord as to eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and suggests what they might have done *at that time*, namely, *live by* eating His flesh and drinking His blood. His blood had not yet been poured out upon the cross, nor His flesh wounded in death, but those who came to Him, trusting Him as their Saviour, were *already* recipients of the new life which He came to give. That the eating and drinking were spiritual and not literal is clear from verse 57,

where He speaks of living by the Father, in the *very same way that they who were eating Him, lived by Him*. And how did He live by the Father? Clearly as a man of faith. "I will put My trust in Him" expressed the continuous habit of His life, and as we who believe in Him thus live by faith in Himself, we eat His flesh and drink His blood. He says in verse 63: "It is the Spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

What further proof have we need of? I think it plain that the Lord Jesus was referring, not to a sacrament yet to be instituted, but to a spiritual reality, known even then to those who believed upon Him. And all the councils of Rome cannot annul His words as to this.

His disciples at that time, who were such in very deed, not merely by profession, were *already* living by Him, yet had never partaken of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And we may rest assured that wherever, and whenever, a repentant soul turns now to Christ and trusts Him as the Saviour who has given His life for the world, he both eats His flesh and drinks His blood, and thus has life eternal—which the Romish sacrifice of the Mass, so-called, does not even pretend to give. For what intelligent Romanist really believes he has eternal life—a life in Christ that can never be forfeited—through participation in the Mass? Is it not a fact that this, as all other Romish sacraments, leaves

the participant uncertain and anxious still as to the final outcome? But it is otherwise with him who rests implicitly on the words of the Son of God: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me **HATH** everlasting life" (ver. 47).

May I, without giving offence, press some questions home upon you, my dear sir? Have you this great gift, promised by our Lord Jesus to all who believe in Him? Are you certain that you have everlasting life? After all your years of devoted service in the Church of Rome, your obedience to her decrees, are you now at rest in your soul as to the question of your sins? Do you know them all forgiven and put away, through the offering of Jesus Christ once for all upon the cross? Have you been justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? O my dear sir, if you cannot answer simple questions like these in the affirmative, is it not time to stop and ask yourself how it is that the system to which you cling has not given you that certainty and peace which is the portion of those who enjoy apostolic Christianity? Is it not possible that you have missed your way? Yea, that the whole church to which you belong has in some manner, perhaps to you unaccountable, fallen from the simplicity of apostolic days into grievous apostasy?

In my next letter I purpose to consider the sacrificial character of the Mass in your Communion.

Very sincerely yours, ———

LETTER III

MY DEAR SIR:

According to promise, I shall now endeavor to put before you what seems to me to be the unscriptural teaching of the Church of Rome as to the so-called sacrifice of the Mass. This you hold, as I understand, to be a continual unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead, and you are very insistent that it was ever offered throughout the Church's history by anointed priests on literal altars, "as early, at least," you say, "as the second century." And you ask: "Had the Church of Jesus Christ erred so early as this, on her chief doctrine, the doctrine on which her whole system centred? Or did the infallible God produce, in His masterpiece only, the crazy institution that could not be kept within the bounds of truth, even for half a century after the death of the last of the apostles? What became of His promise: 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against her,' and 'I am with you all the days, even unto the consummation of the age,' and again, 'The Spirit of Truth will remain with you,' etc.?"

As to this, I am not at all perplexed to find the answer. It is undoubtedly the fact that while Christ's promises abide, and the Spirit of Truth dwells in His own and guides each subject soul into the truth; and that Christ does and will remain with His chosen to the end whatever the vicissi-

tudes they are called to pass through; and while eventually it will be manifested that the gates of hell have not prevailed against what was really of God; nevertheless, even *in the apostles' own days*—let alone fifty years afterwards—error had come in like a flood. Witness the stirring letter of St. Paul to the Galatians. The Galatian heresy was the adding of legal works to the covenant of grace, and abides with us to this present day in spite of the apostle's strong protest against it. In fact, as one has well said: "The heterodoxy of the first century has become the orthodoxy of the present." Where to-day is the religious communion found in which this Galatian error has not gained headway? What church is free from it? Certainly *not* the Church of Rome. For there, as nowhere else, Galatianism has swept all before it; so that the doctrine of justification by faith, which is the keynote of the epistle of which we are speaking, came as a new discovery in the stormy days of the Reformation, and has been opposed strenuously ever since.

Then, again, note the errors creeping in at Colosse. In the 2d chapter three grave departures from the truth are noticed as already come in, and this during the life-time of the apostles. I refer to rationalistic philosophizing beginning to supplant divine revelation; of legality, supplanting the truth of grace; and, even more striking, of a vast ritualistic system involving the worship of

angels and the humiliation of the body by self-imposed penance in place of holding fast the Head: and I ask you, as an honest man, can you deny the presence of every one of those systems of error in the Roman Church to-day?

But the first and second letters to Timothy likewise witness the rapid growth of error; and it is noteworthy that before the death of St. Paul, he has to sorrowfully exclaim: "All that be in Asia have turned away from me." So even supposing the Christian churches elsewhere were still holding fast the faith, those in Asia, where the oldest assemblies had been established, had in a measure at least apostatized from the truth. The seven apocalyptic letters make this very evident.

We need not be surprised, therefore, to find an altar and sacrifice at a very early day in many churches, taking the place of the Lord's table and its simple memorial feast. But this by no means proves it to be either scriptural or apostolic, nor in any true sense Catholic.

But on the other hand, we find no evidence of a reliable character to show that as early as the second century the altar *had* succeeded the table, and the sacrifice of the Mass usurped the place of the Lord's Supper. Certainly the pre-Nicene Fathers, who have written on the subject would leave no such impression on the mind. Justin Martyr describes the weekly meeting of Christians on the Lord's day more fully perhaps than any other;

and, as you know, he makes it very clear that the early Christians partook together of a simple meal of bread and wine in commemoration of the Saviour's death. While the well-known letter of Pliny, addressed to the Emperor Trajan, affords proof positive that such was still the case in his day. He assures his patron that he could find no evil against the Christians; no evidence whatever of sacrilegious or criminal proceedings. His spies only found that the Christians met together to read the Holy Scriptures, to pray, to sing a hymn to Christ as God, and to partake of a very simple meal consisting only of bread and wine.

It was in a later day that the departure from early simplicity came in, when the truth as to Christ's one offering and His finished work had been largely lost sight of: when in accordance with the solemn prophecy of St. Paul, grievous wolves had entered in among the sheep of Christ, not sparing the flock, and even of their own selves had men arisen, "speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." The only resource upon which he casts the faithful is "God and the word of His grace;" not the church's authority, nor the voice of councils, nor the infallibility of the Pope. To God's Word therefore let us turn, and see if it is still possible to offer to God an acceptable sacrifice for the sins of either the living or the dead?

As to this we need do nothing more than care-

fully consult the 9th and 10th chapters of the epistle to the Hebrews. There the one offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, never to be repeated, is placed in vivid contrast with all the many sacrifices under the law (which were but a figure) when gifts and sacrifices were offered "that could not perfect him that worshiped, as pertaining to the conscience." In these there was a continual calling of sins to mind, as indeed is the case in every Roman church where the sacrament is offered up daily, and sins are never really put away. "But Christ having come as High Priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands (that is to say, not of this creation), neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." And so great is the efficacy of that one offering, that through it the believer's conscience is "purged from dead works to worship the living God."

Now you insist that there is nothing incompatible with all this and the continual sacrifice of the Mass. For in your letter you say that "the Victim of the Sacrifice is the body and blood of Jesus Christ; the same body that was nailed to the cross; the same blood that was shed on Calvary. In other words, the same Jesus Christ who was crucified for us is the same that we offer on our altars." And you add, "The sacrifice of the Mass is offered to God alone, to acknowledge His sovereign great-

ness and our dependence. It is true that we offer the Mass in memory of the saints, but we never offer the sacrifice *to* them. The sacrifice of the Mass is offered on our altars by the ministry of priests who receive in their ordination the power to offer it. But Jesus Christ is the principal Offerer. It is He who presents Himself to the Father, by the hands of priests; it is He who changes the bread and wine into the body and the blood." But, observe, *this is the very thing that is denied, in the epistle to the Hebrews*. Note carefully chapter 10: 11-14: "And every priest [that is, Jewish priest] standeth daily ministering and offering often the same sacrifices [as Roman Catholic priests do to-day], which can never take away sins; but He, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool." And again, in the previous chapter, verses 24-26 are absolutely conclusive: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: *nor yet that He should offer Himself often* [the very thing which you insist He does], as the high priest entereth into the holy places every year with other blood than his own; but now, *once* in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

Language could not be stronger to declare the abiding efficacy of the one *irrepeatable* sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ—so perfect, so complete, so fully satisfying to God, is that one blessed, finished work of His that He will never offer again. He has sat down as token that His work is finished; and because He has made purgation for sins, the seat He has taken is at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. Depend upon it, He never descends from that exalted place to offer on Rome's altars or any other; for of such sacrifice there is no need. The sins and iniquities of all who believe in Him are eternally remitted, on the basis of that one all-sufficient work, and "where remission of these is, there is *no longer an offering for sin*" (Heb. 10: 18). Your unbloody offerings can be of no avail, for "without shedding of blood is no remission."

All the reasoning in the world could not change the force of this. Christ's *one* offering is all that is needed for the purgation of sin, or it never will be. Scripture distinctly declares it *is*. Rome, tacitly at least, declares it is *not*. Which am I to believe? Which do you accept?

I observe, in looking over your letter again, that you deny the term "the Lord's Supper," as having reference to the sacrament at all. You say it referred alone to the love-feasts of the early Christians—a common meal, where they met together in Christian fellowship. But you evidently have for-

gotten that the apostle Paul in the very passage in question, after rebuking the Corinthians for their abuse of the Lord's Supper, immediately gives them clear instructions as to how that Supper should be observed; while in the previous chapter, 1st Corinthians 10, he makes it plain that it is at the Lord's table we partake of the cup of blessing, even the communion of the blood of Christ, and the broken bread, the communion of the body of Christ. Surely it is the Lord's Supper which is partaken of from the Lord's table. But if you insist that both of these are very different to your sacrifice of the Mass, then I grant you are indeed correct. The Lord's Supper is *not* to be confounded with the Romish Mass, nor the Lord's table with the Roman altar. One speaks of Christianity, and the other of a mysterious mixture of Judaism and Paganism, and a perversion of apostolic teaching. *For of the Mass as such there is not one line in Holy Scripture.*

I do not wish to prolong the discussion of this solemn theme. If what I have already written has no real weight, I can only suppose that a further attempt to elucidate what seems to me so clear, would only leave us where we began—you looking at everything from the standpoint of Roman Catholic theologians, and I, from that of one desiring alone to be taught by the word of God. And so I bring this letter to a close, beseeching you to search the scriptures daily whether these things

are so, and praying that God in His rich grace may give you such a sight of the perfection of the one offering of His blessed Son, that your soul set free through faith in Christ alone, will never more feel the need of any additions to the work of His cross.

Very sincerely yours, _____.

LETTER IV

MY DEAR SIR:

I desire on this occasion to go briefly into the subject of *Mediatorship* and *Advocacy*. As to this, nothing could possibly be simpler and plainer than the truly lucid affirmation of Holy Scripture: "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2: 5, 6). And if we are to believe the statement found in the *Homily of Adam and Eve*, commonly attributed to St. Chrysostom: "That may not be considered Catholic, which appears contrary to the statements of Scripture," then surely we should have no difficulty in judging whether the doctrines of the Roman Church on the matter in question are really Catholic or not. "Faith in

Scripture," says St. Augustine, "is the most Catholic of all." And Scripture distinctly declares that there is *one* Mediator, and knows of no other. Now if the Roman Church teaches contrary to this, it cannot be the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church.

You yourself say: "Christ is the one Mediator—the one possible of grace and redemption. We can have many advocates and mediators of intercession. In this sense is St. Joseph especially a mediator by reason of his great holiness and merit with God." We do not find in the Scriptures the distinction that you have drawn, however; and indeed, while recognizing your honesty of purpose and evident desire to harmonize the teaching of the Papal Church with the word of God, I cannot but question whether the distinction you make is to be understood even in the doctrinal and devotional works of Roman Catholic theologians.

Certainly the place given the blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, is that of a mediator of grace and redemption, and that in the fullest, highest sense. What else, for instance, am I to understand from the following expressions, which I quote on the authority of Littlefield, from the *Raccolta*—a collection of prayers said to be specially indulgenced by the Popes, and which you will therefore acknowledge, I presume, to be in the truest sense authoritative:

"Hail, Queen, Mother of Mercy, our Life, Sweetness, and Hope, all Hail! To thee we cry, banished

sons of Eve; to thee we sigh, groaning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, O our Advocate, thy merciful eye to us, and after this our exile, show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb, O merciful, O love, O sweet Virgin Mary."

"We fly beneath thy shelter, O holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessity, and deliver us always from all perils, O glorious and Blessed Virgin."

"Heart of Mary, Mother of God...Worthy of all the veneration of angels and men....Heart full of goodness, ever compassionate towards our sufferings, vouchsafe to thaw our icy hearts.... in thee let the Holy Church find safe shelter; protect it, and be its sweet Asylum, its tower, its strength....be thou our help in need, our comfort in trouble, our strength in temptation, our refuge in persecution, our aid in danger...."

"Sweet heart of Mary, be my salvation."

"Leave me not, my Mother, in my own hands, or I am lost; let me but cling to thee. Save me, my Hope; save me from hell."

And surely no one could dream after reading the following quotations from *Liguori's* "Glories of Mary," that she was not supposed to be, without any reservation, a mediator of Grace and Redemption.

"Mary is our refuge, help and Asylum. In Judea, in ancient times, there were cities of refuge, wherein criminals who fled there for protec-

tion were exempt from the punishment they had deserved. Nowadays these cities of refuge are not so numerous; there is but one, and that is Mary."

"God, before the birth of Mary, complained by the mouth of the Prophet Ezekiel that there was no one to rise up and withhold Him from chastising sinners, but that He could find no one, for this office was reserved for our blessed Lady, who withholds His arm till He is pacified."

"Often we seem to be heard more quickly, and be thus preserved, if we have recourse to Mary, and call upon her name, than we should be if we called upon the name of Jesus our Saviour."

"Many things are asked from God and are not granted; they are asked from Mary, and are obtained."

"At the commandment of the Virgin all things obey, even God."

"The salvation of all depends on our being favored and protected by Mary. He who is protected by Mary will be saved; he who is not will be lost."

"Mary has only to speak and her Son executes all."

And is it not a fact that the last words which the Roman ritual puts into the mouth of the dying are: "Mary, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, do thou protect me from the foe and receive me in the hour of death?" How different to the last words of the first martyr Stephen: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!"

And returning to the *Raccolta*, what words could be more unscriptural than these?

"I acknowledge thee, and I venerate thee, most Holy Virgin, Queen of Heaven, Lady and Mistress of the Universe, as daughter of the eternal Father, Mother of His well-beloved Son, and most loving Spouse of the Holy Spirit. Kneeling at the feet of thy great Majesty with all humility I pray thee, through thy divine charity wherewith thou wast so bountifully enriched on thine acceptation into Heaven, to vouchsafe me favor and pity, placing me under thy most safe and faithful protection, and receive me into the number of those happy and highly favored servants of thine, whose names thou dost carry graven upon thy virgin breast."

You instance St. Joseph as an example of the intercession of which you speak; but what am I to think of the two following quotations likewise from the *Raccolta* prayers, addressed to Joseph by those seeking his advocacy?

"Benign Joseph, our guide, protect us and the Holy Church."

"Guardian of Virgins, and Holy Father Joseph, to whose faithful keeping Christ Jesus, innocence itself, and Mary, Virgin of virgins, were committed, I pray and beseech thee by those two dear pledges, Jesus and Mary, that being preserved from all uncleanness, I may with spotless mind, pure heart, and chaste body, ever most chastely serve Jesus and Mary. Amen."

One might go on quoting indefinitely from Roman Catholic books of devotion to show that the one Mediator of God is completely set aside in favor of a multitude of saints and angels who are evidently supposed to be more approachable than our blessed Lord Himself. And yet St. Clement of Alexandria, A. D. 200, wrote: "Since there is only one good God, both we ourselves and the angels supplicate from Him alone." St. Athanasius, that doughty champion of the truth, A. D. 370, writing against the Arians ridicules them for applying such scriptures as "The Lord is the Refuge of the poor," to the Lord Jesus Christ, if they denied His Godhead glory. He goes on to say: "But if they say that these things are spoken of the Son, which would perhaps be true, let them confess that the saints did not think of calling on a created being to be their helper and their house of refuge." And in this he is evidently fully in accord with the Scriptures of Truth. St. John has written, "If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world."

What need we then of any other? Christ by His bloody sacrifice upon the cross has settled the question of sin to the satisfaction of God; maintaining the righteousness of His throne and the holiness of His character, so now God can be "just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,"

and those who have confided in Him as their Saviour need no other mediator than Himself. For He is ever available; His heart is as tender as when here on earth; His love ever flowing out to all His own; needing no other intermediary, neither His mother after the flesh, nor any saint or angel to entreat Him on our behalf; but He Himself forever abiding, so long as His people have need of His intercession, the one great all-compassionate High-Priest with God, our Advocate with the Father, our one Mediator, *excluding every other.*

In your letter you seek to put the prayers of believers, on earth, one for another, in the same category as the advocacy of saints in heaven. You write, "You yourself say to me at the end of your most charitable letter, I will not cease to earnestly pray for you, my dear fellow-believer in Christ. Oh, do, I beg of you, be my advocate, my mediator with the Father through your prayers and intercessions."

I shall, indeed, my dear sir, continue to pray the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ on your behalf, but neither as a mediator nor an advocate in the sense to which these words are applied to our Saviour and the Holy Spirit of God alone; but as a Christian I make intercession on your behalf, and on behalf of all men, not expecting an answer on the ground of my personal merit or holiness, but praying only *in the name of our Lord Jesus*

Christ. This is surely a very different thing to what you had in mind when you preached the sermon on the intercession of St. Joseph, which you sent me to read.

Scripture itself bears witness to the care with which our blessed Lord guarded against even so much as the using of devotional expressions in regard to His mother. When the woman cried out invoking blessing on His mother, He answered: "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." This is the blessing, dear sir, that I desire; a blessing which I know would be forfeited forever were I to forsake the one Mediator for the host of lesser intermediaries set forth by the Roman Church.

Very sincerely yours, ———.

P. S.—I have seen a photograph, taken by a missionary laboring in Central America, of a Roman Catholic Church which has over the main entrance a Latin inscription, the plain English of which is: "COME UNTO MARY, ALL YE WHO LABOR AND ARE BURDENED, AND SHE WILL REFRESH YOU." Is not this meant to show that she is held up to the people as a mediator of grace and redemption? What a fearful perversion of the precious invitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in Matt. 11: 28!

LETTER V

MY DEAR SIR:

In concluding your last letter to me, you seek to show that while the gift of God is eternal life, yet because the Scriptures say, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life," therefore eternal life is after all the reward given only for faithful persistence in the Christian course; and you instance the "Well done, good and faithful servant," pronounced by the Master on the one who had done his Lord's bidding, as a case in point. Forgive me if I say that it seems to me that you are quite confounding things that differ. There are two distinct lines of truth in the word of God, which must never be mingled. One has to do with the full, free and eternal salvation which was purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross at the enormous cost of His own life, when He bore the judgment of God against sin, fully meeting all the claims of God's righteous throne, so that now God can be "just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." Concerning this great blessing of justification from all things, Scripture is very positive that human works and human merit have no place whatever in it. They form no part of the procuring cost; nor have they anything to do with our retaining this marvelous gift of God's grace. It is a salvation for which

Christ, not we, labored; it is a salvation which Christ, not we, must alone maintain.

Nothing can be clearer than the instruction of the apostle Paul as to this in the early chapters of his epistle to the Romans. May I ask that you turn to your Bible and read thoughtfully this important part of divine revelation, beginning with the first verse of chapter three, and going on to the end of the eleventh verse of chapter five? In this section of the Epistle we have the whole matter thoroughly gone into, and we find that upon the proven sinfulness and utterly lost condition of all men, the justice of God has been manifested in setting forth Christ Jesus as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and through Him we are justified freely by God's grace—and this, alone through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. To this nothing can be added, nor from it can anything be taken away. It is a perfect, complete work—yea, a finished work; and, as you well know, to attempt to add anything to a work once finished is but to mar it. No need of human merits here: no need of penance, of intercession of saints or angels; no need of rites and ceremonies—these have no part whatever in justifying the ungodly. It is the merit of Christ, *and that alone*, that avails. This was what gave St. Bernard of Clairvaux peace in the hour of death. You will doubtless recall his dying words: "Holy Jesu, Thy wounds are my merits!" So cries every Christian heart.

"I stand upon His merit,
I know no safer stand;
Not e'en where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

This is a righteousness without works, altogether apart from the deeds of the law. For, says St. Paul, "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned as of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." This is the *cruz* of the argument in Rom. 4, and surely the words admit of no other meaning than this, viz., that if our works have anything whatever to do with procuring our justification before God, then of very necessity we put God in our debt, and salvation is not of grace at all, but is something that God owes each faithful soul because of individual merit. But this is the very thing which the Apostle will not allow for one moment. Merit we have none; human righteousness is but filthy rags in the sight of God; but all merit is found in the glorious Person and finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore it is in very deed to him that worketh not, but believeth that God's salvation comes as a gift. So, my dear sir, it is not to him that worketh *and believeth*, but the very contrary. Works of any kind are altogether *barred out*. It is through faith alone that we lay hold of this great gift of God's salvation.

And to this agree the words of the same devoted

Apostle, as recorded in the second chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians; "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." And again in Romans, chap. 11, he tells us: "If it be of grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it is of works then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." There must be no mingling of the two principles. Man is either saved *altogether* by his own works and merits, or he is saved *altogether* by the work and merit of the Lord Jesus Christ. And Holy Scripture leaves us in no doubt whatever as to which of these is the correct view.

But now, what of all the passages that speak of Christian works and faithfulness to the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of rewards given in that day for obedience to what God has been pleased to put on record for our guidance and instruction? The passages in question, I think you will find in every instance, have to do, not at all with the matter of the salvation of the soul, but with the behavior of those who are already saved, who are to be rewarded by the Lord Jesus Christ when He sits on His judgment throne, according to the deeds done in the body since His grace made them partakers of eternal life and justified them from all their sins. In other words, the moment a poor sinner trusts the Lord Jesus Christ, he

passes out of his former condition by nature and practice, in which he was a child of wrath on his way to the everlasting burnings, and he becomes by the Holy Spirit of God a child of grace; a son of God; a joint-heir with the Lord Jesus Christ; the present possessor of eternal life; every charge of Satan, the great adversary, having been met by the atoning value of the precious blood of Christ, he is saved once and forever.

As we are told in Ecclesiastes, chapter 3: "I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that men should fear before Him." Salvation is altogether God's work, and therefore, it is perfect and eternal. But the one who has thus been saved is now called upon to act accordingly. Having been made a child of God, through infinite grace, he has now to act as a child of God. He is under the Father's care; he is in subjection to the Lord; he is guided by the Holy Spirit through the Word. He is not to follow his own ways now; he is not to be guided by his own thoughts, nor the thoughts of men like himself; but being changed in his condition, he is now responsible to walk as Christ walked; to obey as Christ obeyed, and he will be rewarded at "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him," according as he has served Him down here.

It is to this that all the passages speaking of

rewards and crowns refer; do they not? You instance St. Paul's words, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: therefore there is awaiting me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, shall give me on that day." This is very pointed. He is looking on till the day when Christ will sit upon His judgment-seat and all His own will be gathered about Him, and he knows there is a crown of justice awaiting him then. And he goes on to add what you do not quote, "And not to me only, but also to all who love His appearing." So that he links all believers with himself, who love the appearing of the Lord Jesus, and assures us that for every one there will be a crown. The crowns speak of overcoming. They are, as you know, not the diadems of monarchs, but the laurel wreaths given to the victors in the games. So we strive to obtain the crown—not the salvation which we already have if we have believed in the Lord Jesus, but the testimony of His approbation since we became children of God and members of His body.

Nor do such scriptures as the one to which you refer in the first letter of the apostle Peter, and the second chapter of the epistle of James, contradict this. Believers are indeed to give all diligence to manifest in their lives the grace that was so fully displayed in our Lord Jesus Christ, in us the fruit of the Holy Spirit. By so doing, we make it evident that ours is not a false profession,

but a genuine one; that we are not simply giving assent to divine truth, but that we have received the testimony of God into our hearts, so we have the witness in ourselves.

And the faith of God's children is a faith which manifests itself by works. For "Faith without works is dead." That is, everyone who professes to have faith in Christ and walks according to the flesh, is either deceived or a deceiver. True faith is ever fruitful. It produces good works; just as a good tree produces good fruit. Abraham, says St. Paul, was justified by faith apart from works when he believed God, and it was counted to him for justice. But, says St. James, "Abraham our father was justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar. You see then how *faith wrought* with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." He believed God's promise as to the coming seed, when he was a childless old man, and all hope in nature was at an end; but he staggered not at the promise of God; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; the Scripture is witness that he was *then* justified by faith.

Many years afterward God's promise was fulfilled in the birth of Isaac; and when the child had grown into a lad, Abraham was called upon to evidence his faith in the promise that Messiah was to come through Isaac, by sacrificing his son upon the altar. Again he staggered not, but proceeded to obey the voice of the Lord, counting that He

was able to raise his son even from the dead, from whence also he received him in figure. This was the *work* of faith; and it was faith that gave it all its value. The work was the evidence of the reality of the faith which had been his for so long. And so it is with each one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. He must prove his faith by his works.

There are two passages of Scripture which are intimately connected, and are each designated as "faithful sayings." In 1 Timothy 1:15 we read: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And in Titus 3:8 we are told: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." These two verses present the two sides of the truth.

Thus we see it is Christ who saves, and *He alone*; to Him we shall give all the praise and all the glory throughout an eternity of bliss. But we who are saved through faith in Him, are now exhorted to diligence in maintaining good works, and for these good works we shall be rewarded at His judgment-seat. All will not have the same capacity of spiritual enjoyment. Our place in the kingdom, by and by, will depend largely upon our measure of devotedness to Christ while we are here in this world. Just as on the other hand, all

the lost will not have the same measure of punishment. Some will be beaten with many stripes and some with few. Yet all alike will be banished from the presence of God, and will be turned away from the light of His countenance into the outer darkness. They are lost because they do not believe the message God has sent to them, but the extent of their punishment depends upon the measure of their guilt. And so of those who are saved, they will be in heaven forever because of the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ their only Saviour, but their capacity for enjoyment and reward in the everlasting kingdom, will depend upon their faithfulness to Christ while in this life.

That this is the teaching of Holy Scripture seems to me so clear that I wonder anyone can think otherwise, and I beg of you to search the Word carefully; weigh especially the passages we have taken occasion to refer to, and then ask yourself if this be not in very deed the faith once delivered to the saints.

I trust, dear sir, that my letters are not wearying you. Your own to me were so long that I find it easier to answer taking up one subject in each letter than by writing one lengthy treatise. I do not wish to slight anything you have put before me and shall weigh carefully any replies you may see fit to send me. On the other hand, I do not desire to trespass on your time, nor to be offensively forward in addressing you.

Very sincerely yours, ———.

LETTER VI

MY DEAR SIR:

Your kind note acknowledging my last, and apprising me of your removal from California to Ireland, was duly received and appreciated. I gather from it that, while you evidently do not agree with much that I have written, you are, at least, not offended with me for having sought to put before you what, it seemed to me, the word of God teaches, in contra-distinction to the dogmas of the Roman church. I now desire to write a little as to the different ways in which you and I look at the Bible and tradition.

In one of your former letters you touched on this, and in a way that made me feel there could be no common ground between us while we differed so radically. You hold the Bible and tradition as of equal authority; providing, of course, that it be tradition accredited by the Roman church. I hold the Bible to be the one only authoritative declaration as to faith and morals; believing it to be the very truth, the revealed word of God, divinely-inspired, and sufficient to direct the reverent believer in every detail of his life, if there be on his part subjection to it. Nor do I utterly refuse tradition. If it be well authenticated, it may sometimes be a help in explaining or amplifying expressions of Scripture (never

doctrines) which are not quite clear to some, owing to the many divergent views that have come in since.

For instance, no one could *positively* say that the term, "the Lord's Day," in Revelation, chap. 1, means the first day of the week. But when I find it to have been the unanimous teaching of the Fathers for the first two centuries of the Christian era, and everywhere since (save as occasional schismatics arise), I no longer doubt the correctness of such a use of the words. I quite admit that those immediately following the apostles were more likely to know the exact way in which the term was understood than some modern controversialist who reads his Bible in utter independence of all who have loved it before his time. Christianity is not a revelation made afresh in every century, but an inheritance handed down from the remote past, fully set forth in the Scriptures, and testified to by its earliest preachers and teachers.

But when I find, even at the earliest period, human tradition directly contradicting divine revelation, I refuse the tradition, no matter how hoary, and cleave to the Bible. Tradition cannot define doctrine, though it may help to make clear the sense of a difficult word, or phrase; but it is not authoritatively binding on heart and conscience. To make it so, is to run the risk of teaching for doctrine the "commandments of men" and "making void the word of God through tradition."

I have noticed that he who begins by putting the Bible and tradition on one common level, generally ends by exalting tradition above the Bible. This, it seems clear to me, has often been Rome's policy in the past, as proven by her strenuous efforts to withhold the Bible from the people; and her indignation when translations of "the most translatable book in the world," as one has called it, were prepared in the vernacular and circulated freely among what she was pleased to call "the laity." Nor is she changed as to this; as witness the recent Bible-burning in the Philippine Islands, by a Roman Catholic priest, an act of barbarism and irreligion almost incredible in this enlightened age!

It is useless to say it was the erroneous translation that was objected to and not the Bible itself; for Rome—when provoked to jealousy by active Protestantism—circulates a translation whose inaccuracies are legion, and which has not been revised for centuries, but which no Protestant who is also a Christian would dream of destroying; for he knows that the poorest version of the sacred Scriptures yet contains enough of God's truth to enlighten the darkest soul. Personally I have had priests become angry with me for putting the Douay and Rheims Bible into the hands of earnest Catholics, who have been advised not to read the book, though bearing the *imprimatur* of a Roman prince of the church!

For some reason Rome is really afraid of the Bible. Why is this?

You ask: "What have been the benefits derived from the circulation of so many millions of Bibles by the Bible societies?" And I answer: Benefits *innumerable*, both spiritual and temporal—more than tongue can tell or pen can write.

The Bible has everywhere been the precursor of civilization and liberty, driving out barbarity and despotism, as bats and vermin flee from the brilliant sunshine. The Bible has dispelled ignorance and superstition in every land where its free and unrestrained reading has been encouraged. And as to spiritual things, who can fathom the joy and gladness, the peace and blessing that the Bible has carried to countless souls?

One Bible, floating on the waters of the Bay, brought salvation and holiness to a Japanese nobleman, and opened Japan to the gospel. Yea, even Roman Catholic missionaries, barred out of that kingdom for centuries, are permitted to labor there in peace to-day through what that Bible produced.

I could give you many instances of single Bibles, read without note or comment, bringing the vilest sinners to the Saviour's feet, and often where no preaching had been listened to. Missionary annals, home and foreign, are full of marvellous records, well authenticated, of conversions in no whit short of miraculous, brought about through the

reading of the Bible. Dr. Underwood, of the Presbyterian Mission in Korea, tells of over two hundred people who were brought to Christ in one village in the Hermit Kingdom, through the reading of two or three of the Gospels, the book of Acts, and one or two epistles; while, as yet, the whole Bible was not published; but these parts of the sacred Library had found their way to this mountain town.

In many lands missionaries have frequently found the ground all prepared and souls awakened ere their coming, through the work of the Rome-hated colporteur, who had gone in advance selling Bibles and distributing portions to whoever desired them.

It is the Bible and the Bible alone which unerringly shows the way of salvation. All tradition, however venerable, that disagrees with this blessed Book of God, is untrustworthy and soul-deluding. To speak of the Bible and tradition as of equal value is like endeavoring to put man's lantern on an equality with the light of the sun.

What doctrine of Scripture is there that tradition has not sought to set aside or obscure? And what doctrine has tradition made plainer than it is made in the Bible? You may refer me to my own remarks above as to "the Lord's Day." But I only say that reliable tradition is confirmatory of the teaching of Scripture; and besides, it is not a doctrine that is in question, but the usage or meaning

of a term. Just as a knowledge of the original languages helps in the elucidation of many passages, while adding nothing to the doctrines of Scripture, so familiarity with the usage of Biblical terms, by believers in the past, will often help to preserve one from new-fangled notions. But this is not using the lantern to display the brilliant sunlight, but it is the thankful acknowledgment that even the lantern is useful in some dark corners obscured by human reasonings.

It is my firm conviction that advance in the knowledge of God and His will is an impossibility until the supremacy of Scripture is recognized; and as one tradition after another is found to be in opposition to it, Scripture is allowed to judge, and they are relegated to the ecclesiastical wastebasket. I venture to say that any God-fearing priest who would read nothing but the Bible for one year, and read that thoughtfully, prayerfully and penitently, daily, determined to refuse everything he had learned not in agreement with it, would at the end of the twelve months have forever cast aside so many traditionary fables, and have found such great enlightenment and blessing, that he would be encouraged to continue to make the Holy Scriptures his one chief study, and thus would be enabled to walk in peace and godliness in the path of the just which shineth brighter unto the perfect day. And so full would be the divine instruction received that he would never

miss the human traditions and ecclesiastical dogmas thus discarded, but would find every spiritual need met in the great storehouse of heavenly food found in the inerrant and God-breathed depository of light and truth, the once-neglected Bible. Oh that you, my dear sir, might be persuaded to try it and see for yourself whether I write as an irresponsible enthusiast, or as one, in some little measure, taught of God!

Reading books about the Bible, or dogmatic instruction professedly founded on the Bible, is not by any means to be compared with reading the Bible itself. Nor can he be rightfully considered presumptuous who thus shuts himself up to God and His Word; for you cannot have forgotten the solemn exhortation addressed by St. Paul to the Ephesian elders, when warning them of Church declension. He says: "I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20: 29, 30). And what resource does he put before them? The authority of tradition? No! The decisions of councils? No! The voice of the church? No! What then? Read carefully, dear sir, and note it well: "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (ver. 32).

This the inspired apostle conceived to be sufficient. How is it that so many since have ignored instruction so clear? and turning from the patient, persistent study of the Holy Scriptures, have sought instead unto tradition, church and councils, all fallible, all manifestly having erred and reversed one another again and again!

Am I wrong in seeking to cleave alone to "God and to the word of His grace?" Will you not seek henceforth to do the same?

With kindest greeting and earnest prayers for your blessing, I remain, dear sir,

Your sincere friend,

H. A. IRNSIDE.

P. S.—Not wishing to be tedious to you, I shall not write again, unless you desire a further correspondence.

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