

was often found unequal—it pleased God to commission his Son Jesus Christ to communicate all the knowledge, encouragement and aid, which might be necessary to his success and happiness; and to set an example of perfect purity of life, and continued resistance of temptation. That in the truths and institutions of the Gospel he has made a provision of means, which it is for man himself to use; and which he is left at liberty to use or refuse. “That these means are his own instructions as recorded in the Scriptures, and as connected with a previous dispensation; the worship and ordinances of his institutions; the spiritual influence granted in answer to prayer; his own life, death, and example, so fitted to affect and influence the heart and character; and the promises and threatenings of future retribution;” that the terms of acceptance to divine favour are faith in Christ, repentance of sin, and an obedient life; that future happiness is suspended on these conditions; those who comply with them shall be abundantly rewarded; those who hold out against them shall deservedly suffer the divine displeasure in future condemnation; “and finally, that as man had no claim to this revelation and aid from God, it is to be accounted the free gift of his grace, and therefore those who are saved, are saved not from their own unassisted righteousness, but by the grace of God.” I have attempted time and again to write you on these subjects as I now have done. I have thought seriously upon them, and tried to read the Bible and other good books in an unprejudiced manner; and the conclusion is irresistible—Baptism is given, in my opinion, as a seal of pardon, not as a saving ordinance. As a figure, representing that the soul is cleansed from sin just as the subject of this ordinance thus cleanses the body. Is obedience of life and purity of heart a necessary result of baptism? If it be, then I consider it a saving ordinance. Purity of heart and consequent obedience of life are the necessary results, and as it were, the offspring of repentance and faith, or the inward change which takes place in the heart. Hence their necessity. Hence without them we cannot be christians. But does the Bible teach that Baptism is necessary to a life of holiness and faith, or that without it no man can see God? It seems to me not. I have thus written a long letter with some haste. If you wish you may use such portions of it as you deem fit. But I have not written with that supposition.

Your Brother,

DANIEL.

REPLY.

MY DEAR BROTHER—I have not time to keep up a private correspondence with a tribe of my dear friends and brethren who favor me with their communications. I should much prefer such a medium of communication with you; but the want of time, and the remote possibility that my remarks may be of interest to some other readers, induce me to give the above extract from your very welcome epistle, and a few general remarks thereon.

You are just the age for theory and speculation. Your position strongly tempts you to philosophise upon God’s plan of saving sinners. Most young men of independent, philosophic minds, prefer a splendid theory of religion to a system that appears to be at first sight enshrouded with mystery, and not exactly adapted to what we may deem the real state of