

To bring your case more distinctly and intelligibly before our readers, permit me to allude to your past history. This will explain some things in your letter and make my responses more easily understood.

From you I have learned that some seven or eight years since your attention was particularly called to the subject of religion. You sought the Lord with all your heart—according to the best light that then dawned upon your pathway. You doubtless *thought* that the light by which you were guided was the best. This, I was then disposed to question. Study, time, and your present state of mind, all confirm my conclusions. But in your own estimation, and in that of all the religious friends by whom you were surrounded, you became a christian. You rejoiced in a change of heart and in hope of eternal life. In the ardour of your young soul you lifted up your voice in prayer and praise. In the assemblies of those who met to worship God you spoke out distinctly, for Him and His cause. You called the attention of sinners to Jesus who was to you the “chief among ten thousand”—the “one altogether lovely.”

Then came up the question of “church membership.” Revivals in different denominations do not prevent the leaders’ efforts to get as many to join their respective parties as possible. On the one hand you were solicited to unite with this society and warned against that from many considerations. “In this you will enjoy yourself best, for O, how absurd and inconsistent is ‘infant baptism!’” But the great men of the other society respond “what can be more inconsistent and uncharitable than ‘close communion?’”

After all the fervour you heard and saw in these societies for the conversion of sinners—then to experience in your own person the efforts of prominent men to proselyte you to their respective churches extinguished your zeal and threw you among mere rationalists! And here you have lived seven long years. *Your statements and correspondence* have made these impressions upon my mind. Now your studies, your tastes, and your ambition have one and only one tendency. A profound, and an elegant young lawyer and political distinction are nearly allied; especially to a graduate of a justly celebrated and long established University.

Indeed, my dear sir, were it not that I have carefully scanned the whole ground over which you have travelled, religiously, if not doubtfully, I should hesitate some time before rushing into the arena before one so completely armed. But I trust your familiarity with ancient and modern languages—your careful study of mental, moral and political science, and your intimate acquaintance with the entire circle of mathematics will enable you to examine with a master’s eye, the claims which “Bible christianity” have upon you. I wish you to understand it. I make no demands upon your heart until your understanding fully yields. \* \* \* I will not promise to give you mathematical demonstrations of the facts, commands, and promises of the gospel; for I trust you are too good a scholar to ask for mathematical proof of historic facts. A profound thinker would as soon demand historic proof of the truth of Euclid’s elements of Geometry as he would mathematical demonstrations of Evangelical history.