LETTERS TO A QUAKER FRIEND ON BAPTISM

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Letters to a Quaker Friend on Baptism by William Taylor

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WILLIAM TAYLOR

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ON

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WILLIAM TAYLOR

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PREFACE.

ON the eve of my departure from New York for Brazil I received a letter from a Quaker Friend, a personal friend of mine, and a very dear brother in Christ. At the close of his letter he requested me to write him on the subject of baptism.

During my short sojourn in Brazil, opening new fields for Christian workers, I had no time to spare for correspondence with any body outside of my own immediate line of work: but on my return voyage, as a recreation from the study of the Portuguese language in which I was engaged, I snatched the opportunity of responding to the request of my Quaker brother. I meant to make short work of it, but the inspiration came upon me, and what I designed to be a private letter, grew, by a series of letters, into a book for the benefit of others as well. I have not aimed to treat the

subject critically nor polemically, and much that I have written is merely suggestive, and not exhaustive, and in the familiar style of personal correspondence with a dear friend. I had no book of reference, but the one authoritative Book, which, therefore, was the only one I required.

I have written plainly what I am sure is the teaching of God on the subject of baptism. If it shall have the effect of provoking adverse criticism, let it be kept in mind that my heart is ever full of love for all God's children, of whatever name. If any should wish to debate with me, I beg leave in advance to decline for three reasons: 1. No time; 2. No inclination: 3. No conviction of duty to induce me to spend five minutes in debating with any body. I have written all these letters on my knee as I sat on the deck of a deeply laden vessel sluiced daily fore and aft by dashing seas, occasioned by the two hurricanes which sent the Vera Cruz and many other noble ships and their passengers and crews to a watery grave.

WILLIAM TAYLOR.

STEAMSHIP BESSEL, Sept. 1, 1880.

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LETTERS

TO A QUAKER FRIEND ON BAPTISM.

I.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH MAN.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN JESUS: In accordance with your request, I propose to write you a few plain words on the subject of Christian baptism. You will allow me to begin at the beginning.

God is a king; we are his subjects. God is a father; "we are the offspring of God." Our twofold relation to him involves inherently the mutual obligations growing out of such relationships. Hence the necessity and the fact of a revelation from God, and the inspired record of those revelations, for the benefit of all the successive generations of the human family.

8 Letters to a Quaker Friend on Baptism.

These inspired Scriptures contain the history of our origin, our fall and forfeiture by sin, and of God's provision of redemption and restoration in Christ, and embody a COVENANT of GRACE, with its overtures of love and mercy to a fallen world. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Acts xvii, 26.

All nations of men, therefore, bear the same natural relations to God; hence all have the same claims on his paternal regard and sympathy.

As it was "by the disobedience of one" that "judgment came upon all men to condemnation," and that one being the progenitor of the whole race of man, all his descendants stood on the same footing in relation to God; hence what he would provide essentially for one, he would provide for all. This agrees with the fact as revealed: "Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the right-