

you were baptized, I would not much dissent from the answer which you were taught to give to that question. These circumstances, however, alter the case very much. The sprinkling of a speechless and faithless babe never moved it one inch in the way to heaven, and never did change its heart, character, or relation to God and the kingdom of heaven. *But not so a believer, immersed in obedience of the gospel. He has put on Christ; and whatever belongs to the husband belongs to the wife: "You are Christ's property, and therefore all things are yours."* You and I agree that we have righteousness, or pardon; that we have all the blessings of salvation through Christ; that his blood cleanses from all sin; and that the reign of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in a holy spirit. The question is, *At what instant of time do we enter this kingdom, or come under this reign of God, and by what means?* I say, the moment we view allegiance to the King in the constituted way—the moment we are naturalized—the moment we are born of water and the Spirit—the moment we put on Christ—the instant we are *converted*, and not before.

It was, you say, upon the face of the waters that the Spirit first moved in creating. It is upon the face of the waters the Spirit still moves in recreating. Jesus himself came by water before he came by blood. It was while wet with the waters of the Jordan, the Spirit descended upon him. Thus the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, agreed in one testimony concerning him. You have referred to the Spirit moving upon the waters—I refer to the New Testament allusions. I do not, however, argue from them, save allusively, to this subject. No; it depends upon a plainer, a more literal, a positive testimony. Please examine again my essays upon immersion.*

The question between us is not whether the reign of God is not righteousness, peace, and joy in a holy spirit; but the question is, Do we come under that reign, or enter that kingdom, *before* or *after* immersion? This is the single question which embraces all the ground about immersion. After the most minute, patient, devout, and long protracted examination; after hearing all objections, and examining them with care, I am more and more confirmed in the conclusion to which I had come in my debate with Mr. McCalla in 1823. I will, however, examine, and regard, with all attention, whatever you may please to offer upon that question which embraces the whole subject.

The next point, and the remaining one in your letter, is what refers to the operation of the Holy Spirit. You favor me with what you suppose to be a correction of a mistake into which I had fallen concerning your early reading and teaching. I am much pleased with the narrative which you give, though it does not relate to what I had in my eye in the remark quoted. I did not mean that period of your life from childhood to twenty, so much as the early part of your public life as a preacher and teacher. This, however, is a small matter. Your narrative is an interesting one, and worthy of attention.

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