

believes what the omnuch believed. Admitted. What then? Cannot any person who has heard others catechised or examined for his experience, *learn too* to describe what he never felt? So far the cases are perfectly equal. The same assurance is given in both cases. You take the applicant on his own testimony—so did they. We both depend upon his word, and we grant he may deceive us, and you know he has often deceived you. But we could easily shew, were it our intention, that you were more liable to be deceived than we. But we leave this, and ask for no more than what is abundantly evident, that the apostolic plan affords the same assurance as yours. We have the word of the applicant, and you have no more. These considerations shew that the apostolic plan is the wiser and the safer. It is more honorable to the truth too. It fixes the attention of all upon the magnitude of the gospel faith—upon the magnitude of the fact confessed. It exalts it in the apprehension of all as the most grand, sublime, and all-powerful fact. It makes it to the disciple, in his views, what the Saviour is in all the counsels of God—the *Alpha* and the *Omega*. It shews its comprehensive and fundamental import, which in fact transcends every other consideration. Moreover, the disciple thus baptized is baptized into the faith, but in the modern plan he is baptized into his own experience. It is then most honorable to the saving truth.

When your applicant appears before your assembly, say of one hundred disciples, and has satisfied them all, they lift up their hands or otherwise express their approbation of his experience, and their consent to his naturalization. Now admit that his profession was sincere, that he felt all that he described, still he may not be a disciple in truth. He may, indeed, have been in doubts himself whether his experience were genuine. But in your judgment he has some confidence, or he would not sincerely appear before you. He has then, in your decision, the concurrence of one hundred persons approving his experience as genuine. This emboldens him. He now feels himself somewhat assured that he is a true convert, for a hundred converts have approbated his experience, and stamped it as genuine as their own. He may be deceived. And you must admit it, or else contend that all such approbated ones, who speak what they have felt, are genuine disciples. I argue that there is, on your plan, a possibility of deceiving or of confirming an applicant to self-deception. On the apostolic plan no such possibility exists. For admitting in this case, as in the former, that he sincerely believes what he professes, then he is a true disciple. And they who receive him on this ground, only express their approbation of the faith he has professed. They assure him, by their concurrence, that believing what he professes, he is a disciple. This, then, fixes his attention upon the truth professed. In the one case the faith he has professed is only attested by the brethren as of paramount importance, which is so in fact; and in attesting which, there is no possibility of deceiving, whether his profession be feigned or sincere. In the other case his experience is attested by the brethren, as of paramount importance, which it may not be in fact; and attesting which, there is a possibility of deceiving, whether his profession be sincere or feigned.

But, says one, you may soon get many applicants in this way. Stop;