

were called of God from the morning of their existence. The same difference is apparent in the manner of the sinner's conversion to God; while some are awakened by strong terrors, others are broken down by melting sorrow; some are convinced and converted under the same sermon, and others under the gradual work of years. Some are called by the preaching of the Gospel, and others are brought to God by awakening providences, such as sickness or death. No definite rule is laid down in the Scriptures as it regards the time, the manner, or the occasion of the sinner's conversion; but the scripture gives us the evidences of a converted state, and the true works of one born of God. Such as humility of heart, sorrow for sin, entire dependence on Christ, love to the people of God, joy in God, and love to holiness.

It is our duty, when persons present themselves as candidates for baptism, to inquire, has the change they have professed to have met arose from principle, such as the exercise of the judgment and understanding in discovering their condemned state as sinners, and the plan of salvation throughout Christ, as the only remedy by God provided, or has their professed change been only in the excitement and impulses of the mind.

Again it is the duty of Ministers and Churches not to lay a cross on young converts which Christ has not laid on them, nor to appoint any thing as a pre-requisite to baptism which Christ has not appointed.

The practice of requiring persons before they can be baptized to stand up before the whole church, and there profess their faith in Christ, by giving a reason of their hope, I cannot vindicate as an appointment of Christ, or as a prerequisite to baptism. I know many think it is taking up the cross; I would only wait to inquire, is it a cross imposed by Christ on his followers? I do not find a precedent in God's word for the practice, and consequently I cannot acknowledge it as a test of discipleship, or an evidence of true faith. But, Sir, it would appear from your last letter that you disapprove of either Church or Minister judging the qualifications of persons wishing to be baptized and becoming members of the Church of Christ. That your views are inconsistent on this subject, will appear, if you apply them to your own practice. Suppose a universalist demanded baptism, saying he believed; if you made any inquiry about his faith might he not retort and say that you or the church had no right to judge, that you were no court to try his case. Why, sir, you must rather be guilty of the criminal practice you charge on the baptists, or receive him as a true believer. Still farther, if a pious person was to come to you who thought he had the true baptism of the Spirit, and believed in no water baptism, and wished to become a member of your church. You told him the church could not receive him, or they did not consider his baptism scriptural. Might he not also say you were trying his case. And if on your principles the church is not to judge the qualifications of persons wishing to become members by baptism you must receive him as a baptized believer. In short, if every man entering into the church of God is to be his own judge in matters of faith and practice, then we must admit all as true believers who think they are such, and