

tical-experience, or that in this matter we are to measure ourselves by ourselves or compare ourselves among ourselves; but as you admit that men must be *born again*, and that this change is more or less known, or knowable to the subject of it, in proportion to their age and circumstances, and that such change is always followed by correspondent fruits of *love* to Christ, to holiness, and to christians, with a manifest abhorrence of sin, whether discovered in themselves or in others; of *joy* in believing in Christ, and in doing his will; of *peace* with *God* the Spirit, in the heart, crying *Abba, Father!* with *men*, in seeking their good, &c. &c. Shall we not, I say, require such a confession with the mouth, as will give us a charitable conviction that they have "believed with the heart unto righteousness;" and that according to their age, or the circumstances under which they have been raised, or in which they have lived. These remarks I submit to you with the confidence of a brother in Christ, believing, when understood, there will be no material difference of sentiment on this subject. Indeed I think I already understand you, but wish you to be more explicit for general satisfaction. You can make what use you please of any part of this letter; and as my name fixed to any composition of mine will likely never bring me to great honor, I wish it always to appear. I remain your unfeigned brother in Christ Jesus our Lord.

B. ALLEN.

REPLY.

Brother Allen—I perfectly agree with you "that we should require the strongest evidence that can *now* be given of a real change of heart in those whom we now baptize." The only question then is, What is that evidence? We must remember that we have no right, no law, nor precedent for putting off an applicant for one single day. The applicant *may*, and, indeed, *ought*, to solicit baptism the hour he believes. We cannot say to him, Go and show us by your works for a week, a month, or a year, that you are a genuine convert. This would be a glaring infraction of every principle, law, and precedent in the kingdom of Jesus. What then? Shall we require the testimony of others respecting the character of the candidate? This cannot be satisfactory. They may tell us he is moral, virtuous, and was always so; or they may tell us he is reformed; but still this is not sufficient evidence. Nay, should they testify that he is known to be devout, still a question arises, Why was he not long since immersed if so good a man—if so devout? We are at length reduced to a necessity of taking his own word, and acting upon that. Now the question is, In reference to *what* shall we take his word? Shall we require him to declare what he *believes* or what he *feels*, or both? For the first we have apostolic example, but for no other. Suppose, however, that we have found a safer way, (the apostles were deceived