

every thing as baptism which men may think as that ordinance. The church has not only a right to be satisfied with the qualifications of persons becoming its members, but it is accountable to God for receiving and retaining improper persons in its communion, Rev. 3, 14—  
 “But I have a few things against you, because thou hast them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, which thing I hate.” Private judgment is every man’s birthright and privilege considered as an *individual*. But every voluntary Society that is accountable for the members it retains must, in order to be accountable, have the right of judging the qualifications of the members it receives. From the above scripture, a church is such an accountable society, and therefore has the right of judging the qualifications of persons becoming its members.

You may inquire if the persons joining our churches are not examined before or by the whole church, how is the church to be satisfied with these qualifications. I would answer, the age, wisdom, and experience of the church should be called into requisition for that purpose. The Pastor, Deacons, and some of the experienced members of the church appointed with them, meeting alone with the persons wishing to be baptized and to join the church, could obtain the most correct knowledge of their repentance and faith in the Redeemer, and when satisfied with their piety and moral character they could report them to the church as fit subjects for the ordinances of Christ, and members of the house of God, the Pastor making the inquiry if any member had any scriptural objection against such persons, if not they would be considered received. Thus the fellowship and union of the church would be secured without laying a cross on young converts, which Christ never laid on them, or without making a law the King in Zion never made. It is well known that a person speaking feelingly and acceptably before a church, often arises more from the temperament of the mind and the courage of the individual, than from his strong faith. Many from the circumstance of their speaking, for the first time, before such a large body of christians, feel deeply so as to make others feel, but soon after give evidence that their religion was only excitement by their laying down all christian duty in the absence of such feelings.

If such had been examined alone, their state might have appeared different. Others who may be truly pious, yet, if called before a large church, may be so confused as not to be able to give that satisfaction required. But visit those persons alone, they manifest so much knowledge of the heart, and consistent views of the way of life, through a crucified Redeemer, and humble dependence in that way, and love to the Saviour as to remove every objection. Again, sir, does not common sense, as well as scripture, condemn the practice of young christians acting in those matters of church government which require experience and age to manage. Much of the schisms which have troubled our churches, have arisen from this course. It may be well to remark that there are two great questions which God in his word has left to be settled by the suffrage of the whole church. First the electing of officers, Acts 6, 2. Look ye out brethren. The second, the