

crites, in the first churches, who deceived for a while even the apostles, and that "ungodly men" sometimes crept in unawares, cannot be denied. Granting this, does not in the least contradict the statements which have been made. When any such characters were detected, they were expelled from the Christian societies of which they were really unfit members. Such individuals would not be permitted to remain in fellowship with primitive churches. Sometimes they withdrew on their own accord, being wearied with engagements which were uncongenial to their carnal minds. Exceptions strengthen the general rule. A scriptural church is a godly association; its objects are altogether spiritual. None except those who have repented of their sins, believe in the Saviour, and make a public profession of Christ in baptism, can be admitted as members of a christian church: Or in other words, none but the new born can scripturally obtain membership in a Christian church.

It is evident that the first Christians endeavored to keep the churches pure from unholy mixtures; and that they acted in harmony with the spirit and design of the gospel.

They rendered due obedience to the commands of the Saviour. The Lord Jesus is the "head of the church." Practical godliness consists in doing the will of Jesus. The members of every Christian church are his servants, and they ought to obey him in all things. Christian churches were formed with a view to advance personal piety. The full completeness of Christian character must be in Christian union. The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal, 1 Cor. xii. 7.

There should be free communication of thought. The interchange of friendly advice, and the stimulating influence of holy example, will prove eminently conducive to personal godliness. "As we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."

The ordinances of the gospel are appointed for the very same purpose. They are not merely intended as acts of obedience to the Divine Head of the church, but sources of benefit to Christians. The Lord Jesus manifests himself to his disciples, when associated for those pure Christian purposes, "as he does not unto the world." Fellowship with the saints is very closely connected with real fellowship with God.