

to forsake evil habits, to love God, and to believe in Jesus as the Saviour.

Those who believed the apostles' testimony, were immersed into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This was the universal practice in the first age of christianity.

Then, they were formed into Christian societies. Each society, or church, met every Lord's day to worship God,—to call to memory the resurrection of the Redeemer,—to commemorate the sufferings and the death of Christ, by attending to the Lord's supper,—and to help one another on their way to heaven. Such were the "churches" of which we read in the New Testament, at Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Corinth, and many other places. There were neither councils at the formation of these churches, nor when their bishops were chosen. The New Testament knows nothing of councils; and teaches, that every scriptural church chooses its own officers, both bishops, and deacons.

The word of God clearly teaches that a Christian church, is a society of true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,—a congregation of godly men and women, who are united for the advancement of truth and holiness in themselves, and throughout the world. This cannot be denied, for it is evident from the nature of the exhortations contained in the epistles, which were written to the first churches. Those who composed the Christian church at Corinth, were addressed as "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." Likewise the members of the churches at Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse, were "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus"—"Saints in Christ Jesus"—"Saints and faithful brethren in Christ." The persons who composed the church at Thessalonica, were manifested to all around them, by their "works of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope." The individuals composing these and other churches to which the ambassadors of Jesus wrote, are uniformly addressed as brethren in Christ, joint partakers of grace, and fellow heirs of glory.

They are continually exhorted to perform spiritual acts, and to discharge their spiritual duties, by taking a part of the public worship in their assemblies. None except the godly in Christ Jesus can appreciate the motives by which these exhortations are enforced. It is a glorious truth that "the Lord added to the church daily the saved." A Christian or a believer in the Saviour in the days of the apostles, was understood to be a spiritual person, who had passed from death unto life. Such was his profession: his faith, led to this blessed result, for it "works by love and purifies the heart." That there were hypo-