

some tie, on account of which it may be contemplated as a unit. This accounts for the manner in which we find it applied to Christ's professed followers, united in the bonds of ecclesiastical fellowship in a province, a city, or even in a house. They are regarded and spoken of as being, in the judgment of charity, what they profess to be, a society or community of the members of Christ's mystical body. (Acts ix. 31, Revised. 2 Cor. i., 1, and Romans xvi., 5). In the New Testament, believers are required to associate themselves for Christian fellowship, mutual watch and care, and the extension of the Kingdom of Christ. These societies thus formed, are spoken of as Churches. But unworthy members may easily find a place in the fellowship of these visible Churches, and this fact also is recognized in the Scriptures but the body, as a whole, receives the name which is appropriate to it, from the profession and standing of its members. But while unworthy members are in the visible Church, they are not there as its rightful members. They do not share in the promises and prerogatives of the body of Christ, whose name they have assumed. And they are not members of that Church of which we predicate Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity and Apostolicity.

And when, in the providence of God, their real character is revealed, and they are separated from the fellowship of the faithful, we can say of them with John, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would, no doubt, have continued with us." (1 John ii. 19).

It is manifest that if we predicate of a mixed society, made up of all sorts of men, what the Scriptures affirm only of the true people of God, we will be led to conclusions very remote from the truth, and our reasonings upon the unity of the Church, and, indeed, upon nearly all matters connected with this mixed society will be entirely vitiated.

We have mentioned two views of the Church, radically distinct, one or other of which men who think clearly should embrace.