

has established His Church for the same purpose. He has constituted it to stand visibly before men's eyes a living pillar and ground of truth.

Such the Scripture states to be the nature of the Church. It was founded, it exists, it renews itself from age to age; it survives shocks and disasters, it smiles serenely at its foes—for the sake of being what God has made it to be, a columnar support, an unshaken basis, for truth. Think of it my hearers. Here is the ark of human hopes, afloat on the waste flood of the world's ruin, sublimely lying in a kind of colossal calm across so many waves at once of secular storm vainly heaving beneath it and about it that it does not feel their stir. Built on the billows, it sits firm and still, and abides a pillar and ground of truth. We are a part of it, we individual believers. But we come and go, we are buffeted with the winds, we are tossed with the waves. Not so the Church. The Church remains, and is not moved. God is in the midst of her. And the meaning of this miracle of history is, that God founded the Church to be a pillar and ground of truth—that is to say, a fixed centre and stay of right opinion. The offices of the Church, the ordinances of the Church, the worship of the Church, the existence of the Church, have this end and cause, to make men orthodox and keep them orthodox. We as individuals, may throw ourselves athwart God's purposes. But God's purposes execute themselves. If we pervert God's ordinances appointed for His Church, we fail so far of our part in sustaining the truth, but the truth will be sustained. While the Church endures, the truth will have its pillar. The Church itself is thus, according to Scripture, God's sign, created out of living souls, to show to men how much He values orthodoxy. What a reason does this view of the Church involve for our being sure that we exhibit to men by our Church order, and our Church ordinances, that truth, unimpaired and unchanged, of which the Church was constituted to be the pillar and ground!

5. Yet once more. The Scripture tells us that God has appointed an order of men whose special work in the world it shall be to win their fellow-beings to right thinking, to orthodoxy. Paul expressively says that he was Christ's apostle for the purpose of bringing men everywhere to "obedience of the faith." Now, "obedience of the faith" means acceptance for truth of that body of doctrine which the Gospel proposes to men. We obey the faith when we adopt the faith for our own. To do this is to think right, for it is to think with God. In one word it is to be orthodox. To make his fellow men receive the truth, obey the truth with mind and heart—this was the end of Paul's apostleship. That