

Now one great purpose and office of the Church of God is to bear testimony to Christ, and the power of his grace; that church which the Apostle Paul declares to be "the pillar and ground of the Truth," as it is in Jesus, can prove true to its character only as it shows forth, exemplifies and supports that "truth" in the spirit of faith and love. The church is to testify from age to age that Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life," the only and all-sufficient "mediator between God and men."

A Christian church is a society, company, or collection of regenerate souls, baptized on credible evidence of their faith in Christ acting together in obedience to His commands for their own edification, the promotion of His kingdom and the maintenance of the truth in the world.

It is through receiving the gospel testimony concerning Christ that sinners are justified before God and saved. Great consequences depend, therefore, on the faithful performance of this duty by the church. And every church is required to bear testimony to Christ.

There are several ways in which this can be done, and none of them superfluous or unnecessary, for God is the author of them all.

1st. By providing and maintaining, according to God's ordinance, an earnest, faithful, Christian ministry to proclaim and expound the gospel in the community. The ministry is appointed and called of God for the work of publishing and setting forth the truth as fully, clearly, and forcibly as possible, both to the church itself, and to all to whom access can be had. The ministers of Christ are required to "declare the testimony of God" concerning His Son in the flesh and the glorious work accomplished by his humiliation and death; and by sustaining them in the performance of this great duty the church is bearing testimony for Christ.

2nd. In maintaining, and in faithfully and devoutly attending the public worship of God. In a community the church testifies to the truth, excellence and glory of Christianity, and calls attention to the claims of God on all men for recognition, reverence and acknowledgement. Incalculably good results to individuals and to society generally results from having Christian worship steadily carried on among them in the spirit of faith and hope through Christ.

3rd. Testimony can be given to Christ by a church keeping in their full integrity and due order the ordinances which have been appointed by the Lord Jesus for his kingdom and to be observed to the end of time.

Baptism represents in figure the most important facts and doctrines of the gospel, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and testifies of Him as the crucified, risen and glorified Lord. Believers in Christ are the scriptural subjects of this sacred ordinance, according to the New Testament; for without faith it is impossible to please God by any outward ordinance or service whatever; and *immersion*, the form prescribed and sanctioned by the same authority, and significant, as it is, of the most precious