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THE CHURCH.

A SERMON

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"And I say also unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Matt. xvi. 18.

WHEN we think of the humility, simplicity and poverty of the life of Christ, we are amazed that Peter had already discovered that Jesus was the Christ, the son of the living God. At a time when there was a great conflict of opinion, as to the person of his Master, he had caught the right idea. It was not because he was intellectually sharper than other men that he conceived Jesus to be the Christ, the son of the living God, but because it had been revealed to him by the Father; and it was in being the recipient of this gracious revelation that his blessedness consisted.

This confession shows that Peter had living faith—that he had become a living stone, as the name signifies; and it also shows that he had grasped the fundamental truth of Christianity, namely, that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the incarnate son of the living God. On this truth Christianity is built. It is the foundation of the church of God. Take this truth away and the whole structure must tumble into ruins. If Jesus of Nazareth, the historic Messiah, be not the Christ the son of the living God, then the church is without foundation; it is built upon sand and will be swept away in the floods of time. This truth is the solid rock foundation upon which the kingdom of God rests. And it is not strange that, when Peter confessed the true nature and character of his Master, Jesus should utter the words of this text: "Thou art Peter, *petros*, a stone, a single stone, "and upon this rock," *petra*, this foundation or mass of