

THE GOOD NEWS.

A SEMI-MONTHLY PERIODICAL:

DEVOTED to the RELIGIOUS EDUCATION of the OLD AND YOUNG

THE CHURCH.

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CONTINUATION OF SERMON ON "MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM."

Mankind never did agree upon any religious topic since the controversy between Cain and Abel. The first man who ever died, died for religion. But there is no religious topic upon which men have disagreed so extensively, as the subject of the Church; and, perhaps, there is no disagreement, or misunderstanding which has been more injurious to the peace and harmony of Christians, than the misunderstanding of this subject. Therefore, methinks, that it is a very befitting subject: for me to say a word or two upon, when I am preaching the Gospel to a congregation composed of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and perhaps to some who have never been connected with any Church. While I do not expect to make you all think alike upon all points of lesser moment, on which the wisest and best Christians have held a great diversity of opinion; yet, I hope that we all agree upon the grand, essential, vital truths which involve man's eternal salvation.

The Church is used by all religious bodies to represent that particular demoniation to which they belong. The Independent and Free Church-man talk of the Church as if they alone were the centre of infallibility. Let me show you, in as few words as perspecuity will allow, what is the primary meaning in which the term is used in the Bible. *First*—the name—

Secondly—a few of its distinctive characteristics.

The word Church literally means a people called out: that is, a people called from the service of Satan to the service of God; or, it means the house of the Lord, God's spiritual temple built of *living stones*. Thus Paul characterizes believers, *God's building; a habitation of God through the Spirit*. Having an High Priest over the House of God. By the Church is uniformly meant in Scripture, the whole body of believers, of which Christ is the head. Our Lord himself fixes the meaning of the word where he tells his disciples to rejoice because *their names were written in Heaven*. By the Church, therefore, is meant true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ of every age, nation and kindred, the whole body of Christ both in Heaven and Earth. In our Communion Service it is denominated the "blessed company of all faithful people: members incorporate in the mystical body of Christ;" the Church of our text, the Church of the Bible, is God the Father's redeemed family, God the Son's *Meeke Bride*, God the Holy Ghost's sanctified *Temple*. This is the *stock of Christ*—the *royal priesthood*—*chosen generation*—*peculiar people*—*light of the world*—the *salt of the earth*.

Secondly.—Characteristics of the Church—1st. *Mystery*—yes, mysterious is the union of the divine and human natures in Christ the Church's head,