

Bible. We read the Old Testament from beginning to end and find no reference to the church. We read on in the New Testament to the sixteenth chapter of Matthew before we meet this word.

Our Lord, so far as the record goes, mentioned the church but twice during his earthly stay. His first mention of it is in the text; and a little later, conversing with his disciples on the subject of church discipline, he tells them that certain preliminary steps having failed to gain satisfaction, a trespassing brother should be reported to the church. These are the only occasions on which the church is mentioned in the gospels. It is not mentioned at all either by Mark, Luke or John. It is the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles that the institution of the church is developed.

Our text is a much disputed passage. More ecclesiastical and theological battles have been fought over this text perhaps than over any other in the Scriptures. It is claimed by some that Peter is here declared to be the foundation of the church, while others claim that Christ, by a gesture accompanying his words, indicated himself as the foundation. Still others think that our Lord had reference to the confession of Peter as the foundation.

There are reasons, to me perfectly satisfactory, found principally in a study of the original language, for believing that Christ did not declare Peter to be the rock or foundation. Nor did he in this passage declare himself to be the foundation. However true it may be that Christ is the chief corner stone, however, fully the fact that Christ is the foundation of the church may be set forth in other passages of Scripture, that is not what Christ is saying in this passage. In this passage Christ makes himself not the foundation, but the builder. "Upon this rock I will build my church." Nor do I believe that a mere confession is the foundation of the church. The foundation of the church is something deeper down than a verbal confession. I believe that the foundation of the church as indicated by this passage, is a divine revelation and consequent spiritual conception of Jesus Christ. Listen! Christ said: "Who do men say that I am?" The disciples said: "Some say you are John the Baptist, some Elijah or Jeremiah or one of the Prophets." Christ said: "Who say ye that I am?" Peter said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Christ said: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee." This is something more than a fleshly revelation, more than a human revelation. It is not something which you have been taught by man, not the product simply of intellectual reasoning, not a philosophical conclusion simply. Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." God the Father had taught Peter the true nature of Jesus Christ and upon this rock, a spiritual perception of Jesus Christ, resulting from a divine revelation of Jesus Christ, upon this rock, I will build my church. This is nothing short of regeneration. Christ taught Nicodemus that, except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God. Spiritual birth is essential to spiritual vision. Peter had a spiritual conception of Christ resulting from a divine revelation of Christ, and upon this, the fact of regeneration, divine revelation resulting in spiritual conception of Jesus Christ, upon this foundation Christ builds His church.

But I have not chosen this text for the purpose of entering into an extended exegesis of the text. I have chosen it simply because it is the first place in the Scripture where the church is mentioned, and I wish to spend a few moments in studying with you this new institution which we meet here for the first time. What is the church; what is its mission, and its goal?

It is not my thought to present any fine spin theory on this subject. I am not asking what living man thinks about it. I am not inquiring after the teaching of your denomination or mine on this subject. I am simply asking: In the light of the New Testament teaching, what is the church and for what purpose is it in the world? What is its mission? What is its goal? Said Chillingworth, "The Bible, the Bible only is the religion of Protestants."

First. In the light of the New Testament, WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

We sometimes use the word church meaning a building; we speak of the Baptist church, Methodist church, etc., etc., referring to buildings. Worcester's first definition of the word church is: "A building dedicated to Christian worship." But let it be remembered that the word is never used in the Bible in this sense. No amount of brick, mortar, iron, lumber, can constitute a New Testament church. A New Testament church is not made of dead stones, but of living stones; is not made of bricks, but of people. The word that we translate church occurs one hundred and fifteen times in the New Testament, but it is never used referring to a building, it always refers to a company of people.

The word we translate, church, is a compound Greek word made by putting together two words, "Ekk" meaning "out of" and "Kaleo," meaning "to call." "To call out of" is therefore the etymological meaning of the word. In classic Greek it refers to any company of people who have assembled for any purpose. The word comes from the oriental custom in gathering an assembly. When an assembly of people was wanted for any purpose, a herald went to and fro in the community calling the people out of their homes, out of the community, to the place of meeting, and those who responded to the call not all who heard, but those who heard and heeded the call—and came to the place of meeting were the "ekklesia" or assembly, or church. Christ took this word which he found in common use and applied it to the institution which he founded.

To be Continued.

Religious News.

The missionary spirit of the church has not reached its highest development. There is room for growth along this line. More will be done in the near future.

The pastor has a large place in the hearts of his people, and if both of them get in right relations with their Lord, their ought to be a good work done. The present outlook all along the line is good, may it never grow less. M.

A sister was received by HOPKIN, N. B. letter at our last Conference at Albert, and the hand of fellowship was extended on Lord's Day morning. Three have been excluded for holding false views of doctrine, and following after the "Holy Ghost and us" people.

F. D. DAVIDSON.

Sunday evening, Feb. 23, WOODSTOCK, N. B. five happy believers were baptized. Others are awaiting the ordinance. During the special services which we have been holding, I have been very ably assisted by the Rev. J. C. Bleakney, whose home is here. Bro. Bleakney leaves this week for a short visit to New England. I can very heartily recommend him to the pastorate of one of our churches; and hope he will soon be settled again in the work he loves so much. We continue the special services this week. At our Roll Call in January \$231.25 in cash was cheerfully given. A pledge for \$60 from the B. Y. P. U. was received. This goes to pay off part of the church debt.

Z. L. FLASH.

I began work with this church UPPER GAGETOWN, Nov. 1st. Here we have a N. B. good meeting house in which to worship and a comfortable parsonage in which to live. Good congregations meet us on the Lord's day, among whom are

many faithful workers in the Lord's vineyard. We also have a Sabbath School doing excellent work under the competent leadership of J. W. Travis and his staff of faithful workers. On Lord's day morning, Feb. 16th we listened to an excellent discourse delivered by the Rev. H. F. Adams in the interest of twentieth century funds. The committee made a mistake in their selection of a man to plead that cause. On the evening of the 22nd a large number of the members of the church and congregation met in their town hall, spent the evening very pleasantly, and gave their pastor a cash donation of \$40, for which they have our sincere thanks, and best wishes for their present and future prosperity.

R. MUTCH.

Three more believers in FAIRVILLE. Jesus obeyed their Lord in baptism Lord's Day, February 16. The spiritual life of our people has been quickened, as a result of our special meetings, and a number of helpful additions made to our membership. The membership of our B. Y. P. U. was increased by an addition of eight last evening.

A. T. DYKEMAN.

February 20. On Lord's day morning, Feb. 16, Pastor D. Hutchinson baptized seven more new converts. The good work is still going on. Pastor Hutchinson is now in the fifth week of special meetings and has preached each evening excepting four. The church is co-operating most heartily, and many parents are rejoicing over the conversion of their sons and daughters. Quite a number are now ready for baptism.

Our hearts were made glad HOPKIN, N. B. at our last Conference, when a young sister came forward and told her Christian experience and asked for baptism. She came as the result of deep conviction, none of us being aware of her intentions; which proves over again that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Our sister was baptized last Lord's day and received the hand of fellowship into this church.

F. D. DAVIDSON.

We began special meetings CENTRE VILLAGE, here two weeks ago. The WEST. CO. Lord's people are somewhat divided and discouraged. Many are away in the woods. It has been very stormy but we have enjoyed meetings three times on Sundays and each week night except Saturdays. The Holy Spirit has been working, Christians are apparently being drawn together and revived. Five already have accepted Christ and confessed him with the mouth. Many are attending who are not Christians and seem to be interested, we are laboring, hoping and praying that a large number more may be brought into the Master's fold. We wish to acknowledge the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Stokes who have kindly put their organ into the church during the meetings, which under the operation of Bro. Hurst proves to be a great help. In the person of Sister Isaac Kay we have an active mission worker. They held Mission Band on Sunday, ten of the boys and girls became members. One of the boys was over 60. Kindly remember us in prayer for greater blessing.

SALISBURY.

As I expect to leave this place on Friday morning of this week for my new