

referred to something quite different. He referred to all these who are connected with Him by faith. They were to be His church. And therefore we have a great many Bible Presbyterians who are a part of His church but I am sure there are some who are not. We have a great many Baptists and a great many Methodists and a great many Congregationalists who are part of His church, but I know there are some of all these groups who are not. And I am sure that there are Roman Catholics who may not understand the map very well, who may never have studied the map much ~~like~~ that their church puts out, but who hear the Word in the service about Christ having died for their sin, and who put their trust in Him and are truly saved and are truly part of Jesus Christ's church. "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He there referred to an organism, not an organization. To an organism which is made up of all of those who are united with Christ through faith. This truth is particularly brought out in Eph. 4 -- perhaps in the whole book of Ephesians -- but particularly in Eph. 4. In the book of Acts we find many uses of the word church in the plural. Churches is used in Acts and in other parts of the NT to refer to local groups of professing Christians. But the word "church" is used in Mat. and particularly in Eph. and elsewhere in Paul's epistles to represent the entire body of those who believe in Christ.

Now the church then has a very close and intimate relation with Christ. The church is spoken of as the Body of Christ. In Eph. 5, after Paul has spoken about the relations of husbands and wives, he says, This is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and the church. In 2 Cor. 11:12 Paul says, For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy for I have espoused you to one husband that I ~~may~~ may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Now these two are the only references that I have found, aside from the Book of Revelation, to the church as the bride of Christ, unless we ~~take~~ take the inference perhaps in Mat. 25 where it speaks about the wedding feast. But in Rev. this truth is perhaps brought out more strongly, in Rev. 21:2 where I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride for her husband. This organism, this group of all those who have truly been related to Christ through the ages. this is the Bride of Christ. But this term the Bride of Christ is not used nearly as much about the church, as the term the Body of Christ. This is used considerably more.