

129. Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages.

Upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. *Matt. 16,18.*

The Lord Jesus says that He will build His Church, that is, all His believers, on such a solid rock that even hell shall not prevail against it, though it should open all its gates and send all its hosts against the Christians. What is this rock? The disciples had been asked by the Lord: "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" They answered: "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias or one of the prophets." He then asked them: "But who say ye that I am?" Then Simon Peter answered and said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered and said to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter [a rockman], and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Now, which is the rock that we asked for? The Lord calls Simon Peter blessed because he confessed *Him* as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Yes, He calls him Peter, that is, a rockman, because he believed in *Him*, Jesus, the Son of the living God. And then He said that on this Rock, on Himself, on whom the rockman Peter built his faith, He would build His Church. Which, therefore, is this Rock? Undoubtedly He, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, or, we might also say, the confession of faith in Jesus Christ, which is based on the Word of God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And this is in harmony with the word of Paul 1 Cor. 3, 11: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And the same apostle says that the Christians are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone." Eph. 2, 20. Christ, then, is the Rock; and whoever is built on Him, on His Gospel, whoever firmly adheres to Him and clings to Him, is a rock-man like Peter, a member of Christ's Church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Prayer.

O dearest Jesus, I heartily rejoice in Thee and know for certain that I am a partaker of Thy grace; for Thou canst not hate Thine own flesh and blood and therefore canst not be wroth with me. Though I am sinful and unholy, I take comfort in Thy holiness and innocence. Though I have offended God with my sins, I know that Thou art the Mediator between God and me, that Thou appeasest His wrath by pointing to Thy meritorious suffering for me, and that Thou wilt save me from all ills that threaten me. Although I have deserved death and damnation, Thou wilt give me life and salvation. Where my Brother, my flesh and blood, reigneth, I, too, hope to be and remain in all eternity. Amen.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

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You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

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