

*"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build** my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." **Matthew 16:18** KJV*



Acts 2:47 says, *"The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."* Men may consider themselves "church-builders," but they are only thus endeavored when they submit to being part of the *"Body of Christ."* The whole Assembly is the "building." Christ, *"the Head of the Church,"* designs, directs, dedicates, and displays each and every "lively stone" of the Assembly. Charles Spurgeon wrote, *"In the building of Solomon's temple, 'there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house,' because all was brought perfectly ready for the exact spot it was to occupy-so is it with the temple which Jesus builds; the making ready is all done on earth. When we reach heaven, there will be no sanctifying us there, no squaring us with affliction, no planing us with suffering. No, we must be made meet here-all that Christ will do beforehand; and when He has done it, we shall be ferried by a loving hand across the stream of death, and brought to the heavenly Jerusalem, to abide as eternal pillars in the temple of our Lord."* The Church built by Christ through the inner working of the Holy Spirit in each believer of an Assembly, will literally prevail against the imps of Hell on their own turf. This is why it is vital that every single believer submit totally to the control of the Spirit through faithful and complete obedience to God's Word. A misshapen stone must yield to the stone cutter if it would be fitted into the Temple. The rough edges must be shaved off every "lively stone" to allow it to conform to the line and likeness of the "Corner Stone," true and square that it might be aligned and fitted perfectly into the whole. The believer is resisting the Master's shaping in their life if they murmur against affliction. Is not the gem stone cut and ground before fitting? The gold hammered into shape? The cloth cut before stitching? The tree hewn for building? *"Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord...For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."* Christ changes men into "sons of God. If any man be in Christ, he is a NEW creature."

*"I will build!" said Christ our Lord,
"My tool will be my Holy Word,
Each faithful soul will have a place,
Around my Throne to see my face!" ~CGP*

If you view affliction as the Master conforming you to Christ, it becomes easy to *"greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."* No gem in the rough is fit for a crown. But if it patiently submits to grinding and polishing, its dull and lusterless portions are removed to reveal a comely shape so that it may brightly reflect the light that shines upon it. Our trials are meant to purge us of the dross of the "Old Man," so our gold may be pure and malleable in the Master's hands as He fashions us to build His Body, the Church.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:19-22 KJV