

THE REFORMATION OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY AND THE REFORMATION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

Dr. Allan A. MacRae
President, Faith Theological Seminary, Philadelphia 17, Pa., U.S.A.

I have been assigned the title: The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century and the Reformation of the Twentieth Century. I am sure that many a person hearing this title will immediately ask the question, Why should so many Reformations be necessary? Why should more than one be necessary? In fact, why should any be necessary at all?

This is a very important question. As in the case of any important question in the spiritual or moral realm there is one place where we should first look for an answer. That place is the Word of God. If we find an answer there, we can be sure that it is the correct one. I believe that we can find the answer in Matthew 16:13-24:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 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. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

It would be a very strange figure to think of the gates of hell as something that is threatening to over-destroy the church? Certainly it is true that Satan is constantly doing all he can to interfere with and wreck the church of God. However, to call the "gates" would be to use a very strange figure. It is quite clear, when we think about it a little, that the phrase, "the gates of hell" is not a reference to something that is attacking the church, but to something that