

Yet it is very interesting to read on in the succeeding verses and to find that, after enunciating this great truth, Jesus proceeded to explain other truths that are equally vital, that are in fact, absolutely essential to salvation. Verse 21 reads: "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." The death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His following resurrection - the fact that He died for our sins and that He was raised again as evidence that God had accepted the sacrifice - these are the <sup>fact</sup> ~~foundation~~ <sub>base</sub> of the salvation of every believer.

It is easy to see why this truth did not appeal to Peter. Peter loved Jesus. He could not bear to think of Jesus as going through this suffering. Peter's great love for Jesus led him to put his knowledge ahead of that of his Lord, and even to rebuke the Lord. Verse 22 reads: "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." Peter was putting his human reason ahead of the Word of God as proclaimed by the very Son of God Himself.

It is interesting to read what Jesus said now, and to contrast it with his statement five verses earlier. Verse 23 tells us that Jesus "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." Very seldom do we find Jesus expressing such strong condemnation as this. Never, so far as I recall, did He speak so harshly to any other apostle.

Last summer I stood in the largest ecclesiastical edifice in Christendom, St. Peter's Church in Rome. High under the dome of that great building I saw written in letters of gold the Latin version of the words of verse 18: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." Nowhere ~~in the church~~ did I see posted the words of verse 23: "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." Yet both of these verses are parts of the scripture. Both are equally statements of the Lord Jesus Christ. Both are equally vital in understanding the nature of the Christian church.

We might perhaps call this the first reformation in the history of the church. Peter, that great disciple, that wonderful apostle, that man who so deeply loved his wonderful Lord, allowed his human wisdom to lead him into denying the Word of God and opposing the revelation given by Jesus Christ. When he did so, he was rebuked in the strongest possible terms.

When false ideas come into the church of Christ, and are not rooted out but are allowed to grow and to spread, there is always a danger that they may secure control in some particular branch of the church. If this happens, reformation becomes absolutely necessary.