

was not for their failure to recollect what He had told them, - important as that was - but rather their failure to have studied the books of the Old Testament in such a way as to gather from them the vital message that God had placed there.

In Mark 7:13 we have another very interesting illustration of Christ's attitude on this matter. Here He summed up his whole criticism of the Pharisees in the words, "making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition."

All through the centuries every great Christian church has witnessed to its belief that the Bible is a revelation from God. Yet all too often the ideas of the founders or leaders of the particular group have assumed the place of prominence, and the responsibility of each member of the church to study the Bible for himself and to learn from it the principles that God wishes him to know has been forgotten. When the Pharisees made the Word of God of none effect through their tradition, a great reform was needed, and a similar situation in any group will make a reformation necessary. Such was the case at the beginning of the Reformation of the sixteenth century. When Luther and Calvin and the other great reformers brought the Bible into the foreground, it resulted in a tremendous revival that made itself felt throughout Europe.

To me one of the most inspiring incidents in the whole story of the Reformation is the incident that occurred when Martin Luther stood before the Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms. All of ~~the~~ Luther's books were placed on a table, and the question was asked, "Dr. Luther, Are these your books?" He confessed authorship of the books. Then he was asked, "Are you ready to retract the positions expressed in these books.?" In answer Luther declared that he would gladly retract any position, provided that it was demonstrated to be contrary to the statements of the Bible. He said: "Prove from the writings of the prophets and apostles that I have erred. As soon as I am convinced of this, I will retract every error, and be the first to lay hold of my books and throw them into the fire." He continued, however, by saying that he could not possibly disavow whatever was based upon clear scriptural statements. He concluded with the words. "Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me, God."

It was through a ^{return} Return to loyalty to the Word of God that the great Reformation of the sixteenth century came into being. Sometimes we think of the Reformation as a return to the teachings of St. Augustine and of the other great early Fathers, and indeed it was. It was a return to the pure doctrine of the days of the early church, but far more, it was a return to the Bible, which is the source of all true doctrine.

Our day is very similar to the sixteenth century. People are turning away from the Word of God. They are substituting all sorts of human ideals for the ideals taught in the Bible. Ecumenism is the great cry of the day. But organizational unity is never taught or insisted upon in the New Testament.