

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:18-20).

It is our purpose as we consider the developments of history pertaining to "The World's Greatest Battle," to look at three periods of time in the history of the Christian Church. First, we shall consider the Battle of the Apostles of our Lord; second, we shall examine a few high lights of the Battle of the Reformation; and third, we shall look at some of the thrilling aspects of the Battle for the Twentieth Century Reformation.

I. The Battle by the Apostles of our Lord

When the risen Saviour returned to Heaven, He left behind Him a group of followers who had failed Him in His hour of greatest need: Peter, James, John. All the rest had deserted the Lord during His trial and His crucifixion. You might think that the Lord would have chosen an entirely new team to carry out the Great Commission, they had failed him so completely. But something happened. These disciples were changed. They had a message now, and that message described a risen Saviour. Peter made a speech to the same wicked religious establishment that had crucified his Lord. He engaged in a direct confrontation: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the

pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:22-24).

Was this the proper approach? Would it not have been more appropriate, since these Jews had so recently driven Jesus Christ to the cross, for Peter to preach a nice, positive message, avoiding a direct confrontation in hope of winning them by his rhetoric and persuasive powers? No, Peter had changed. No longer was this the weak, vacillating follower who had warmed his hands by the evening fire that night when Jesus had been arrested and brought into court. Now, he had a message. He had been commissioned a missionary, and he had seen the risen Saviour. He ended his first sermon with these words, "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (v. 36). What happened? Did they leap upon Peter and take him also to Golgotha? No. "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter gave them the precious invitation to "repent, and be baptized... in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." We are told in the Scriptures that "the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (v. 41).

When one looks at the record in the New Testament of the lives and the trials of those who followed Jesus, the emerging picture is not good! Here is Stephen, a man "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." He preached a powerful sermon to the religious leaders, telling them of the marvelous way in which God cared for the Old Testament saints. His message was full of references to how God demanded that their worship should be directed only to Him. He talked about how