

When we look at conditions at the beginning of the 16th century, it is easy for our attention to be concentrated on the need for reform. Therefore, it becomes necessary that we make a clear distinction. Reform is important, but reformation is far more important. Reform deals largely with externals. Reformation gets to the heart of things. Reform deals with mismanagement or selfish mishandling of the affairs of the church. Wherever there is sin there will be need of reform. A certain amount of reform can be brought about on a purely human basis. In such a case, however, nothing lasting or vital is accomplished. But if true reformation comes, reform inevitably follows.

The need of reform becomes visible to everyone, but the need of reformation is discernible only to those who know Christ as Saviour, and who know the Bible as God's Word. The ordinary person sees the need of reform, and these two, reform and reformation, can easily become confused. From the viewpoint of this world reform is always good. From the viewpoint of eternity, reformation is far more vital; moreover, reformation, if properly carried out, inevitably produces a great measure of reform.

#### THE COUNTER-REFORMATION

I have before me a Roman Catholic book entitled The History of the Christian Church by Centuries. Its chapter on the 16th century is called "Protestant Revolt and Catholic Reform."

What the Roman Catholic book calls "Catholic Reform" is often designated as "the Counter-Reformation." This latter title is a better one for it since the movement was two-pronged. It endeavored to oppose the Reformation, partly by fighting it, but also by removing some of the great abuses that had become so widespread. There can be no doubt that there was real reform in the Roman church during this period. Some of the worst evils were removed. Simony was tremendously reduced. Pluralism and absenteeism were greatly reduced, if not completely eradicated. While in some