

regions the clergy continued to be ignorant and superstitious, in other regions its educational level was greatly improved. Reform is good, but if reform is not united with opening up of the teachings of the Word of God and leading people to salvation through faith in Christ, it can become a hindrance rather than a help.

Along with these movements for reform came a very great measure of active opposition to Protestantism. This opposition was really very effective. In its early stages the Reformation was accepted by the overwhelming mass of people not only in northern Europe but also in an area considerably south of the center of Europe. We can safely say that about two-thirds of Europe was strongly under the influence of the Reformation. The Counter-Reformation, largely led by the Jesuits, a newly founded order that took as one of its primary purposes the destruction of Protestantism, succeeded in winning back nearly half of the territory that had been lost to Protestantism. Before this almost all of Austria and southern Germany, as well as northern German, had gone over completely to the Reformation. At one time the ~~papal~~ in Vienna, the capital of Austria, wrote to the pope that the archbishop and the emperor seemed to be just about the only Romanists left in that city. So successful was the Counter-Reformation that Protestantism was completely ended in Austria and also in the southern third of Germany. Great areas of France were overwhelmingly influenced by the Reformation. Its defeat there took a bit longer, but within a period of something over a century Protestantism was almost entirely wiped out of France.

In Poland the greater number of the nobles, and a sizable number of the other people became Protestant. Here the Jesuits worked so skilfully and so effectively that within a few decades Protestantism almost disappeared from Poland.