

REFORMATION ANNIVERSARY

by

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"THE PROTESTANT FAITH"

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whether Luther knew it or not, he had put his finger on the nerve of the Roman Catholic church system, namely the authority of the church and of the Pope over christian consciences, laying down what they are to believe and how they are to act.

Though much has changed since then, and is still changing in the relationship between the Roman Catholic and Protestant denominations, this central and basic point of division has not changed at all. Luther and his fellow protestants affirmed that only God's word written in the Bible had final authority as to what we should believe about God and how we should act to please Him. The Bible does not teach anything about purgatory or about indulgences. Consequently protestants reject both as having no basis in reality. For God alone can tell us the truth about the unseen world and about how He will treat His penitent children, and He has said nothing about purgatory or indulgences in His word, written in the Bible. Indeed, the Bible teaches that our sins are completely forgiven when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. God puts our sins behind His back. There is no such place as purgatory in reality but at death those who are trusting in Jesus go to be with Him. As St. Paul says "Absent from the body, present with the Lord". The nub of the reformation controversies is simply this, whether the word of the church and the word of the Pope has the same authority as the word of God in the Bible. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent said it did, the Protestants replied that the Bible **only** is the religion of protestants. The problem is unchanged today, the Pope still requires the consciences of Roman Catholics to obey his own decisions and commands and to believe what he states

to be true even if there is nothing in the Bible to this effect.

The doctrine of the assumption is just one example; the requirement that married couples should not use the pill is another. The jurisdiction of the Pope over a christian's conscience, focusing as it were the jurisdiction of the church, was the basic division at the time of the Reformation, and it still remains the basic problem between Roman Catholics and Protestants four hundred and fifty eight years later.

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