

The Church in Crisis: A History of the General Councils: 325-1870

Dogmatic Decrees

Here, in chronological order, is the list of the dogmatic decrees, with the dates of the sessions when they were passed, and a note of the number of the canons attached to them and of the length (in printed pages) of the decrees:

Doctrine	Session	Date	Canons	Decrees
The Holy Scriptures	4	8 th Apr 1546	None	1
Original Sin	5	7 th Jun 1546	5	4
Justification	6	13 th Jan 1547	33	16
The Sacraments in General	7	3 rd Mar 1547	13	1
Baptism	7	3 rd Mar 1547	14	None
Confirmation	7	3 rd Mar 1547	3	None
The Holy Eucharist II [15]	13	11 th Oct 1551	11	8
Penance	14	15 th Nov 1551	15	15
Extreme Unction	14	4 th Nov 1551	4	3
The Holy Eucharist II [16]	21	16 th Jun 1562	4	3
The Holy Eucharist II[17]	22	9 th Sep 1562	9	4
Holy Orders	23	15 th Jul 1563	8	3

Marriage	24	11 th Nov 1563	12	1
Purgatory	25	4 th Dec 1563	None	1
Cults: Saints Relics Images	25	4 th Dec 1563	None	3
Indulgences	25	4 th Dec 1563	None	1

CHAPTER 19. The General Council of Trent, 1545-63

Martin Luther's revolt was, almost from the beginning, an essential matter, i.e., it was explicitly directed against the pope's essential claim that he is the ruler of the whole Church of Christ. He had already moved away from the Catholic belief, in certain matters regarding the divine forgiveness of sins, by the time he made the famous attack on Indulgences with which Protestantism began (1517). Within a further six months he was writing that the first thing needed in order to cure the manifold ills that afflicted religion was to overthrow the whole accepted system of theological teaching (1518). To the papal legate who now called on him, in the name of a fundamental papal law, to withdraw his teaching about Indulgences Luther replied by denying the validity of that law; and, within a few weeks, by appealing from the pope who had commissioned the legate, to the judgment of the next General Council whenever it should meet--an appeal made in due legal form, and in defiance of the papal law that forbade such appeals. The controversies continued without intermission, and a year later than the appeal (i.e., in 1519) Luther's mind had moved so far that he now denied that General Councils had any special divine protection that kept them from erroneous teaching when deciding questions about belief.

These rebellious principles were listed among the errors for which Luther was condemned by the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* (June 15, 1520). He

was given sixty days to appear and publicly recant his sayings. Instead, he wrote two most violent--and exceedingly popular--pamphlets, the one to show how the popes had systematically corrupted the whole teaching of Christ for a thousand years and so led all the world astray, the other denouncing the papal institution as a vast financial racket which, for centuries, had been draining the life out of Germany. In impassioned phrases he called on the princes of Germany to destroy the papacy, and to wash their hands in the blood of the sacrilegious impostors at Rome. As to the bull Exsurge, Luther waited until the fatal sixtieth day, and then with a vast amount of public mockery, he threw it into the bonfire kindled on the town dunghill--and into the flames he threw, after the bull, the whole collection of the popes' laws binding the whole Church of Christ.

This was spectacular, and symbolical. Not for centuries had there been any defiance so far-reaching--and with the encouragement and protection of the state. To what means were the popes, drawing on a vast experience of crisis, now to turn and so avert the general destruction that threatened German Catholicism? There could only be one answer, since this was the opening of the sixteenth century. From all quarters came a demand for the classic panacea. The pope must call a General Council. And finally the General Council met, the Council of Trent--but not until twenty-five years after the great defiance of the appeal to the princes and the Wittenberg bonfire.

Since in all that long time the needed council never ceased to be talked of by Catholics and by rebels, by princes and by popes, and since it was amid the angry dissensions on the subject between Catholic princes and the popes that the men were largely formed who actually were the Council of Trent, to recall something of those twenty-five unhappy years is a first condition of understanding the history of the council, of its failures as of its splendid successes.

The sentences of bishops, and popes also, against heretics were mere noise until they were taken up by the State and put into execution. Luther was

assured that his own sovereign, the elector Frederick the Wise, would not execute the bull *Exsurge*. It was however quite another thing to be assured that the sentence would remain a dead letter once the pope had appealed to the emperor and the princes of Germany, assembled at the first diet of the new emperor's reign. It met at Worms in January 1521, and in the way it both thwarted and supported the pope it was curiously prophetic of the history of the coming years. The princes accepted the papal sentence, and they made it their own by outlawing Luther. Whoever could, might kill him without fear of punishment, as though he were a dangerous bandit. But they ignored the papal sentence to this extent that they re-tried Luther; that is to say, they gave him a hearing, under a safe conduct, refusing to listen to the protestations of the ambassador whom the pope had sent to direct the action of the diet. The action of this solemn assembly was thus a great public flouting of the papal law, a serious repudiation, in a most serious matter, of the will of the man whom all these princes acknowledged to be the head of their church.

This is not the place in which to tell again the familiar story of the events of the next ten years. But something must be said, however briefly, about the papal delay in applying the only remedy that could meet the German situation--the General Council.

The general attitude towards the plan of a General Council may thus be summed up: the man who was pope through the greater part of the period, Clement VII (1523-34), was at heart consistently hostile; the cardinals and other officers of his Curia were, for quite other reasons, still more hostile; the German Catholics were eager for a council, but a council in which they would really matter, a council fashioned rather after the pattern of a parliament than General Councils have usually been; the Catholic kings who enter the story are Charles I of Spain (just lately become the emperor Charles V), the life-long champion of the council idea, and Francis I of France, its bitterest opponent. And the history of Europe during the crucial twenty-five years, 1520-45, is little more than the history of the duel

between these two princes. In their wars Clement VII, as often as he dared, sided with the King of France, for purely political reasons--it was, invariably, the side that lost.

The council problem comes to this, that a General Council was absolutely necessary, and that, for political reasons, it was just not possible to summon one. Whence, inevitably, on the part of Charles V, and of the German princes, a succession of schemes to bring back the Lutherans (for this, in the early years, is what it was hoped the council would achieve) by negotiations, conferences, local councils, informal councils, and the like. All of these failed and, in the long run, these ventures complicated the problem of reconciliation or submission; while the refusal of the Holy See really to take action gradually destroyed all confidence in its integrity among the Catholic princes of Germany. To such a depth, indeed, had the prestige of Rome sunk that when the successor of this timorous, vacillating, and all too worldly-wise pope announced, in the first hours of his reign, that he proposed to summon a General Council, the news stirred not a ripple among the Catholic reformers of Germany.

This second pope was Paul III (1534-49) and ultimately he lived to see the council he had dreamed of meet at Trent, but after bitter vicissitudes--for some of which history must hold his own personal failings responsible. The catalogue of these events needs to be set down.

By the time of the election of Paul III (October 13, 1534) the situation in Germany had radically altered since Leo X had first faced the problem in the Diet of Worms (1521). The Lutheran movement had long since passed from the stage where it was a matter of preachers and writers and the masses they influenced. The state was now in control of it, half a dozen princes in central Germany and a number of leading cities north and south. In all these places the adherents of the new religion and the preachers were organised into churches, installed in the buildings that had once been Catholic; monasticism had been abolished and the monks' properties taken over by the state; the clergy who wished had married, with the

state's approval; the mass was everywhere forbidden and the new rites made obligatory; and these Lutheran states were banded together in a formidable military alliance, so powerful that it had been able (at a moment when a Turkish invasion threatened) to ignore the diet's summons to disband and submit, and furthermore it had won for their sect's new status in these regions a provisional acquiescence from the emperor.

One root of Clement VII's troubles had been his ambition to strengthen the hold of his family--the Medici--as rulers in what had been the republic of Florence. With Paul III there was the like family concern, to see his son, Pierluigi, established among the reigning families of Europe. In the end the pope succeeded, giving him in fief the duchies of Parma and Piacenza, carved out of the States of the Church, and marrying Pierluigi's son-- Ottavio--to a natural daughter of Charles V. The intricate business of forcing his offspring into the charmed circle of royalty-by-birth, the negotiations with Charles for example over recognition of the new duchies, runs like a subtle poison through what was, despite the very evident Renaissance worldliness of this great pope, the leading policy of his reign, the calling of this council that would reform the life of the Church and heal the divisions in Germany.

Paul III's first obstacle was his cardinals, who voted unanimously against the plan to call a council, when he proposed it. After an exhaustive study of the situation in Germany--a matter where he had everything to learn-- he despatched nuncios to all the courts of Europe, to the Lutherans as well, with invitations to attend. The French king was unfavourable, the German Protestants refused with insults. In these negotiations a whole year went by, and then, on June 2, 1536, the official announcement was made: the council would meet at Mantua, May 23, 1537. What followed next, however, was a whole series of postponements that finally brought the Catholics of Germany to feel that the new pope was as shifty as the old;

postponements first to November 1537, then to May 1538, then to April 1539, and then a postponement indefinitely.

The reasons given were real enough, the steady refusal of the French king to co-operate (i.e., in practice, the impossibility of any French bishop or cardinal taking part in the council), the renewal of the war between France and the emperor, and so forth. But it came to be believed that the true cause was that the pope really preferred that the council should not ever take place.

Actually, as the years went by, Paul III came to understand that the task before the council was much more complex than he had conceived, or his official advisors. As was to be the case with the Vatican Council, three hundred years later, the official world began by oversimplifying the problem. The heresies, it was thought, could be simply dealt with by re-enacting the various decrees in which, at their first appearance, centuries before, they had been condemned. There would, of course, be no need to discuss such burning topics as the reform of the Curia Romana--that was not the business of any council, but a matter for the pope's personal action. The reform of Catholic life, again, called for no great research; the old laws were adequate, if only they were enforced. The council, once it met, would accomplish its task in a matter of weeks. Actually, the working time of the Council of Trent--to anticipate the story--was to amount to four and a half years; the constant hard work of the bishops and theologians who attended would produce a mass of decrees and canons exceeding in volume the whole of the legislation of all the previous eighteen General Councils.

What was also gradually borne in on Paul III was that the kind of council he had in mind--the traditional meeting of bishops--was not at all what Charles V was thinking of, nor the Catholics of Germany. Was the coming council to begin with a new religious crisis, with all these champions of the council demanding a say in how it should conduct its business, in what should appear upon its agenda? The Catholic critics of the intolerable

abuses--for which the Roman Curia was generally held responsible--now expected to be heard, at the council. Luther's insistent cry, that there would never be any reform so long as Rome controlled the council, found echoes in the secret thoughts of many of Luther's Catholic adversaries.

And the achievement of the councils of Constance and of Basel, in those sessions ever since officially disregarded, came into the mind of more than one Catholic reformer as the obvious instrument to bring off the desired improvement. The acts of these councils, the wholeheartedly Catholic bishop of Vienna (for example) wrote to Rome, were indispensable as a guide to the council now under consideration. German bishops, supporting the pope's desire for a council, were taking for granted that just as they desired it should meet in Germany, so it would follow the pattern of these two classic German councils. How was the pope to accept this position, and not risk at the outset a new damaging controversy about the nature of his own authority? a controversy that might send thousands of Catholics in Germany, not, indeed, into the Lutheran body but into schism no less disastrous. Then there were the Catholics who, for years, had been thinking that unless the power of the Curia to grant dispensations were checked, reform legislation would be a dead letter from the day it was enacted.

"The pope was not merely having bad dreams when he saw these dangers." [1] And so he hesitated, time and again, and even when he did not hesitate he failed to be insistent. With all his gifts--and with the merit of the great reform he had achieved in his own personal life--Paul III was far from that perfect state where the supernatural controls every act and every thought. He was not a saint. And as his great servant Cardinal Girolamo Morone once expressed it, "He who conducts God's business must not be exclusively actuated by human considerations." [2]

The emperor now won over the pope to try what another, much lauded method might do to bring peace to Germany, the method of peaceful negotiation between the theologians of both parties, with reunion

(perhaps) as the fruit of “a better understanding of what it is that divides us.” For many years some leading Catholics had been urging that this way promised better results, some of them influenced in part--let it be bluntly stated--by the fatal delusion that the differences between the Church and the Lutheran bodies did not amount to a real separation. This seemingly incredible blindness had one source in the dangerous superficialities of Erasmus, who, for example, saw no reason why any differences mattered provided men agreed in accepting Christ, and who could not understand why either party would not accept as a sufficient statement of the Eucharistic mystery the unexamined ambiguity that Christ is here present somehow. The “appalling” intellectual confusion of which Jedin[3] speaks is indeed, by this time, a leading characteristic of the age among the Catholics.

Let it be remembered, also, that in the twenty years since the somewhat elementary directions of the bull *Exsurge*, Rome had not said a word about the divergencies. Lutheranism had, since then, developed all its doctrines, and a varied host of Catholic writers, each according to his lights and temperament, had, in criticising the heresiarch, offered his own solution for the new theological problems he had posed. For the Catholic princes and their political advisors the “conference” method offered this advantage that an official business like the General Council must result in clear-cut definitions of doctrine; in sentences, that is to say, and a summons to accept these or take the appropriate punishment; in strong resistance, and--who knows?--in civil war. And this with Francis I longing to renew the war against Charles; and the French ally, the Turk, already at the gates! Of the emperor’s critical position, in the world of armies, of the grave risk of a Catholic defeat, the belligerents in the Sacred College and the Curia knew all too little. Paul III never lost sight of all this. His knowledge was one reason for his reluctance to act with decision.

The high-water mark of the reunion-through-negotiation movement was the conference held at Ratisbon in the summer of 1541 about which

historians are still arguing. This history is of interest because it does much to explain what, at first sight, is utterly incomprehensible, viz., that nearly thirty years went by before the vitally necessary council met, and also because it reveals the nature of one serious weakness that hampered the Catholic champions in these critical years.

To Ratisbon, where most of the princes of Germany attended and the emperor himself, there came two of the principal reformers, Philip Melanchthon and Martin Bucer, the last-named bringing with him a reformer of the second generation who was soon to eclipse in influence all the rest, the young John Calvin. The pope sent, as legate, the Venetian Gaspar Contarini, theologian and statesman, the greatest figure the Curia had known for generations, and a man of saintly life. If Contarini, a steady opponent of extreme solutions, went to Ratisbon still really believing that disagreement about the essentials was not so serious as many believed, he was soon enlightened. Though he contrived an apparent, momentary harmony on the question of Justification, there was no resolving the flat contradictions he encountered on the doctrines of the Eucharist and of the sacrament of Penance. The conference failed utterly, and when Paul III announced that the preparation for the General Council would be resumed the emperor did not dissent. The conference had had this useful result: it demonstrated to the “practical” minds the truth which the controversial theology of twenty years had ever insisted on, that Catholicism and the new theologies were contradictory, and impossible to reconcile.

The bull convoking the council is dated May 22, 1542. It was to meet on November 1 following, at the episcopal city of Trent, the first town outside Italy on the great road along which for a thousand years and more the traffic had travelled between Rome and Germany. Trent was a city of the empire, a German city where the bishop was also the reigning prince. Eighty miles to the north, along the same road, is Innsbruck, the capital of Charles V as Count of Tyrol.

The three legates appointed to preside arrived at Trent on November 2. They found scarcely a single bishop awaiting them. In January 1543, the representatives of the emperor arrived, and very slowly bishops came in - very slowly, for by May there were no more than a dozen. The fact was that four months before the summons of Paul III's bull, the long-expected war had broken out between France and the empire. Francis I had explicitly refused to countenance the council, and had forbidden the hundred bishops of France to leave the country. The emperor, driven to fury by the pope's determined neutrality in the war, had taken a similar course, barring out thereby any participation of the bishops, not only from Spain, but from his kingdom of the Two Sicilies (110 bishops), from the Netherlands, from Austria and Hungary; and affording an excuse for all the bishops of the empire. A General Council, at a time when three fourths of the bishops of the world were violently prevented from attending? By July 1543 there was only one thing to be done, suspend the council yet once again.

How, upon the peace between the rival sovereigns (September 1544), Francis I withdrew his prohibition, while Charles was reconciled to the pope, and how next there supervened the new trouble over the investment of the pope's son with the duchies of Parma and Piacenza--all these highly relevant matters must be studied elsewhere.[4] But in November 1544 Paul III revoked the suspension of the council, and on March 13, 1545, the legates once more made their entry into Trent.

The council was solemnly opened there on December 13, with thirty-one bishops in attendance and forty-eight theologians and canonists, technical experts, summoned to assist them.

It will perhaps help the reader if, before the attempt is made to convey what is contained in the legislation of Trent--itself equal in volume to this present work--it is stated, once and for all, that the various political difficulties that had delayed the council's meeting for so many years never ceased to harass it during its entire progress. Here, of course, lay the cause

of the two long suspensions which the council suffered--one of four years and one of ten. The council's history has, in fact, three chapters: sessions 1-10, December 13, 1545, to June 2, 1547; sessions 11-16, May 1, 1551, to April 28, 1552; sessions 17-25, January 17, 1562, to December 4, 1563

What I now propose to do is to explain how the council organised itself, how the bishops and the technicians did their work, and then to show, by some examples, the tone of the council's treatment of the twofold task before it, viz., the restatement of belief in opposition to the new theologies, and the reformation of Catholic life.

The direction of the council was in the hands of the three cardinal-legates. Of these the senior, Gian Maria del Monte, a man of fifty-eight, had been in the service of the papal curia for well over thirty years. He was esteemed one of its leading canonists and had a vast experience of administration, civil and ecclesiastical. He was the practical man of the trio, level-headed, firm, and a good manager of men. The second in rank, Marcello Cervini, was another type altogether, a theologian primarily and a man of rigidly austere life, dedicated passionately to the extirpation of the abuses that had almost become an ecclesiastical institution. He was not really a curialist at all, and had come to the notice of Paul III as a tutor to the pope's two grandsons whom the old man had made cardinals, at the age of fifteen, in the opening weeks of his reign. The third legate was the solitary English cardinal, Reginald Pole, the near kinsman of King Henry VIII, and an exile for his faith this many a year. His mother, and other relations, had some years before been executed by the king, and the cardinal was continuously in danger from the Italian bravos whom Henry hired to assassinate him. Pole, at forty-five, was roughly Cervini's contemporary, a scholar primarily, the Christian humanist indeed, and learned in the Fathers, in the new Renaissance manner. With his great friend Contarini, whom a premature death had carried off in 1542, he was regarded by all as the very embodiment of the Catholic Reformation. It fell to him to write the opening address of the legates to the council--a

frank admission that it was clerical sin mainly that had brought religion to this pass, and a passionate plea for sincerity in the deliberations. One who was present has recorded that as the secretary of the council read the speech, the bishops instinctively turned to look at Pole, recognising from its tone and content who was its actual author. Paul III could have given no clearer sign of his own sincerity than in this association of Cervini and Pole in the direction of the longed-for council.[5]

As to procedure, the bishops decided that only bishops and generals of religious orders should have the right to a vote. The question whether to treat doctrinal matters first (as the pope required, to the anger of Charles V) or the reforms, they settled by treating both simultaneously-- along with each decree about a doctrine called in question by the reformers there would be enacted a definite law about reforms. After some experiments the following system of work was adopted. The technicians would debate the proposed decree with the bishops assisting as an audience. This was the meeting called the "particular congregation" of the council. Next the bishops, meeting alone, discussed the matter under the presidency of the legates--the "general congregation"--and came to a final conclusion about the text. Then, in a public meeting called a "session," an open vote was taken and the decree read out as the council's definition. In the first chapter of the council's history the public sessions took place in the cathedral of Trent, later in the church of S. Maria Maggiore. The particular congregations were held in various mansions of the little city. Of the twenty-five public sessions between 1545 and 1563, seventeen were devoted to definition of doctrine and the promulgation of reform laws. The rest were ceremonial occasions for the transacting of the inevitable legal formalities--the opening of the council, the various suspensions, and reopenings, and so forth.

The technical work done by the bishops, the theologians, and the canonists was of a very high order, and the work was done thoroughly. It took, for example, seven months to hammer out the decree on the key doctrine of

Justification, forty-four particular congregations and sixty-one general congregations. The decrees about belief especially are evidence of the theological revival that had begun with the emergence of the great figure of Cajetan, and is marked by the teaching of Francis de Vittoria and Soto - the last named of whom actually took part in the council. The language of the decrees, again, is that of men influenced by the new classical learning of the Renaissance--as is that other literary monument of the council, the so-called Catechism of the Council of Trent. And all in all, the theological achievement of Trent is a memorial to the small band of competent writers who, from Luther's first adventure, had never ceased to examine critically and to expose the weaknesses and the mischievousness of his theology.

It was a small band also who, at Trent, whether of the theologians or of bishops, brought about this great result. The modern French historian who, to a statement similar to this, appends the word *heureusement* was not merely cynical. The comparatively small number of bishops made for manageable discussions. When, three hundred years later, there appeared at the Vatican Council some seven hundred or so bishops and, in the early days, the drafts of decrees prepared proved inadequate, and debates dragged on endlessly, a prelate who knew his history said, feelingly, "If the Fathers of Trent could rise from their graves, they would disown us." The number of bishops present at the Tridentine sessions varied greatly. At the opening of the council there were, besides the legates, 32. During the remainder of this first (1545-47) period the numbers gradually increased to 68. In the two sessions of the second (1551-52) period there were 44 and 51, respectively. The third (1562-63) period began with 105, and rose to 228 at the session of November 11, 1563. At the closing session there were 176. As well as the bishops, there were also present the generals of five religious orders, who were full members of the council, with the right to speak and to vote. Two of these played a principal role in the council, the Augustinian Girolamo Seripando[6] in the Paul III period of the council, and the Jesuit, Diego Lainez in the two closing years.

Throughout the council, the great majority of the bishops were from Italian sees--which does not imply that they were all equally at the disposal of the Curia Romana. The Italy of the sixteenth century was not, of course, a single unified national state. In central Italy--one sixth of the whole Italian territory--the pope was the sovereign. To the south and in Sicily and Sardinia, it was Charles V (as King of Naples) who ruled, and he also ruled the Duchy of Milan in the north. Whether the 110 bishops of the kingdom of Naples were likely to favour papal policies against those of their king needs no telling. To the east of Milan lay the Venetian Republic, one of the most powerful states in Europe which, notoriously and for generations, had taken its own line in ecclesiastical affairs. In a list of 270 bishops present, at one time or another, during the third period of the council, 187 are set down as "Italians," 31 are Spaniards, 26 French, with no more than 2 from Germany.

The various orders of friars played a great part in the council, furnishing the bulk of the theological experts, and--many others of them--sitting as bishops. There were no fewer than 23 Dominican bishops at the council, for instance, and a total of 28 Dominican theologians besides. It was at Trent that St. Thomas Aquinas first really came into his own as the doctor communis among the theologians.

The prestige of the Council of Trent was to approach the fabulous in the ensuing centuries. And not surprisingly. In answer to the challenge of the reformers it had surveyed anew the greater part of the Christian belief and had reaffirmed it, always with an especial explicitness about the points where Luther and the rest had gone astray. It had looked directly in the face the dreadful disorders that had for centuries disfigured the practice of religion, and had laid the axe to the root of the tree. It had no less boldly innovated in the remedies it provided. The decrees of Trent "remain to this very day, the most noble part of all the Church's legislation," a modern authority can say.[7] All this is what every man knows about the Council of Trent. It remains for us to examine, a little more in detail, what

those scores of pages of reform decrees contain. Perhaps the summary will be less deadly if it follows the simple historical fact that the council abolished altogether many practices hitherto lawful, and introduced much that was new, and that it hoped to secure the future observance of what it now decreed by the related legal devices of a new kind of power for the diocesan bishop and of penalties for wrongdoing that would work automatically. The summary list of the achievements that follows is not, of course, complete, and it does not follow the chronological order of the sessions.

Of all the chronic scandals of the fourteen to the sixteenth centuries none had given rise to more continuous resentment than the papal licences to ecclesiastics to hold more than one see, or abbey, or parish simultaneously--scandals connected with what is called compendiously, the benefice system. Trent utterly forbade this practice--even where the beneficiaries were cardinals--and the council ordered all existing pluralists to surrender all but one of the benefices they held. It abolished, also, all expectatives, that is to say, all grants of posts when they next fell vacant; and, with these, "coadjutorships with the right of succession," the practice whereby the benefice-holder secured, in his own lifetime, the nomination of his successor (a relative usually) to whom, when something better for himself turned up, he could surrender the parish, or canonry, or see. The choice of coadjutors to sees was strictly reserved henceforth to the pope. Meanwhile the third chronic benefice scandal was checked--the absentee priest or abbot or bishop, who never even saw his flock but merely drew the profits while a hireling tended them at a salary. Dealing with which the council roundly says, "The law about residence has become in practice a dead letter." The new method of dealing with this old trouble was to forbid all licences allowing clerics with a cure of souls to reside away from their posts, to set out in detail the limits of the temporary leave annually allowed them, and to provide an automatic penalty of loss of right to the income--so that the delinquent who managed to get the income was, in effect, stealing it and bound to restitution. No

more were there to be sees where, like Milan, no archbishop had resided for a hundred years.

Other dispensations, to the profit of the benefice-hunting cleric, which were now abolished were the permissions which enabled newly appointed bishops to delay their consecration all but indefinitely, so that boys could be appointed to sees, draw their revenues (or their parents draw them in their stead), and, when arrived at an age to be ordained and consecrated, could remain in their semi-lay state until, succeeding to some lay dignity, they chose to resign an abbey or see, marry and found a family. No one, henceforward, is to be appointed to a see who has not been in Holy Orders for at least six months, and he must be consecrated within six months, or the appointment lapses. For lesser clerics, the dispensation, so often given, to delay receiving the orders which were the very condition of holding the post was likewise abolished; and also licences to be ordained by whatever bishop the cleric chose. Bishops were now told that it was their duty to ordain personally all the clerics destined to work in their own particular sees. The benefice-holder not yet ordained must go for ordination to the bishop of the diocese where his benefice lay.

Money--the cleric's need and desire for more and more of it--was certainly one main cause of the religious malaise whence Luther's chance came. Trent cut away two perennial sources of trouble by abolishing, under most stringent automatic penalties, the custom by which bishops, making the visitation of their dioceses, either levied a tax on the parishes visited, or were given tributes of affection, free gifts, etc., in the shape of money, and otherwise. And it abolished similar age-long customs for the benefit of the bishop at ordinations. Finally, the council remembered Luther, and how his revolution had started, in 1517, with a declaration against Indulgences which stressed the scandals deriving from the connection between these and the Christian duty to give alms to pious causes. The council speaks of these abuses as the occasion of heretical blasphemies, and of the wickedness of the alms collectors' practices being

the source of great mischief to the ordinary Catholic. The very office--name and thing--of clerical "alms-collector" (questor in Latin) is therefore abolished, the council bluntly stating that after two centuries of lawmaking there seemed to be no hope of their amendment. The duty of announcing Indulgences was reserved henceforward to the bishop of the diocese, and, for the future, the giving of an alms was never to be the necessary condition for the gaining of an Indulgence.

Finally, in the matter of marriage, the council restricted the force of the law which forbade marriage between in-laws (so to call them) related through sinful sex relations,[8] between those related through a brother or sister's solemn espousals (sponsalia), or by the spiritual relationship set up through the sacrament of baptism--the council frankly admitted that the number of these prohibitions had become an occasion of sin to very many, of invalid marriages, for example, contracted in ignorance, which the partners refused to abandon, and which could not be broken off without danger of further sin. The council also abolished secret marriages--marriages where none need be present but the man and woman who contracted the marriage. Such marriages--provided the parties were really free to marry--were true marriages. But since the fact of the marrying could not be proved by independent testimony, and since the mutual contradiction of the two partners (should one of them choose to abandon the other) was not capable of resolution, these secret marriages were a chronic source of trouble. The Church, says the council's decree (Tametsi, November 11, 1563), "has ever held the practice in detestation, and strictly forbidden it." To contract a marriage in this way was, generally speaking, a grave sin. Those married in this clandestine fashion were, once the fact was discovered or admitted, condemned to a public penance in reparation of the scandal, and compelled to renew their matrimonial pledges in due form in the parish church. The council's proposal, to decree that clandestine marriages were, by the fact, not marriages at all, met with strong opposition. All, of course, acknowledged the terrible evil they had caused from time immemorial, but many bishops doubted whether the

Church had the power to make the declaration which, for the future, nullified all marriages but those contracted before three witnesses, one of whom must be the parish priest (parochus, i.e., “pastor” in the modern American parlance) or a priest licensed by him or by the bishop.[9] The reader will perceive, behind the objection, the shade of a doctrinal controversy about the power of the Church of Christ with reference to the matter and form of the sacraments. To avoid the chance of a debate about this, the council dealt with the practical problem only, and it is among the disciplinary reforms, and not among the decrees on doctrine, that the great change was placed. At the same time the council refused to declare null for the future marriages of young people made without the consent of their parents. “Had there been no other reason for calling this council,” said a bishop who took part in it,[10] “this task alone, the condemnation of furtive marriages, would have justified its being summoned, for there was not a corner of the world that this plague had not infected, the occasion, for generations, of an infinity of wicked deeds.”[11]

The bishop’s arm as a reformer is strengthened, time and again, in the Tridentine reforms, by the clause that he acts “as delegated for this by the Holy See.” This in such matters as these: the visitation of all chapters within his diocese, of all monasteries which are held “in commendam,”[12] and of all “pious places,” i.e., places of pilgrimage, shrines, and so forth; for the examination of all dispensations sent through him, from Rome, to his subjects (and henceforth it is always to the petitioner’s bishop that dispensations will be sent), of all Roman permissions to change the terms of wills; the examination and correction of all notaries, a race whose costly incompetence is frequently complained of; the correction of all secular clerics who live in his diocese, and of all regulars there who are not living within a monastery; for the summary, out- of-hand correction of notorious and defiant concubinary clerics, and for the suppression of all abuses and superstitions centering round the mass.

In all these cases the bishop's sentence takes effect immediately. He is given the like power to unite neighbouring parishes, and to divide parishes that are, geographically, too large, and this whether the priests are willing or not, and he may finance the new from the revenues of the old as he judges best. Where the priest is too ignorant to preach, the bishop may provide him with a better instructed curate, fix his salary and compel the parish priest to pay it. Dilapidated churches are a frequent subject of comment in all medieval church records. The bishop's powers "as delegated," etc., make it possible to compel the repair of churches, i.e., to compel those to whom the parish revenues are paid to finance the repairs, even the repairs of monastic churches where the superior of the local abbot is negligent in this duty. Finally, he may use the same power to finance, out of the revenues of the cathedral chapter, the new public lectureship of Sacred Scripture which he is ordered to institute in his see-city, the Scripture teaching in the diocesan "high school," and the diocesan seminary which he is now ordered to found. One sometimes hears the nonsense that never have bishops really been bishops since the Council of Trent. Actually, with Trent there came to an end, once and for all, that reign of the exemptions from episcopal authority which had plunged the Church into an anarchy that had well-nigh destroyed her religious life, so that Pole, as legate at the council, could speak of "the almost ruined Church."

There are three phrases that continually recur in this new legislation, *tamquam delegatus*, *deinceps* (i.e., henceforward), and *ipso iure*, a phrase of the same force as our own common expression, English now as well as Latin, *ipso facto*--the fact here, being the law in which the phrase appears. This is the magical automatic penalty. The law issues an order, and states a penalty, and the delinquent incurs the penalty immediately he breaks the law, sometimes a spiritual penalty such as excommunication, sometimes the loss of a title to income. Some of these penalties we have met already, incidentally, on our voyage through the forest. Here are more specimens. It is the bishop who is the subject chiefly affected. The bishops at Trent

are legislating about their own order; they are reforming bishops, securing to the best of their powers that “Never again,” etc., etc. It is with laws providing against the catastrophe of bad bishops that the council’s reforms, indeed, begin; to which the blunt honest words of Pole’s keynote speech, at the opening of the council, all but compelled them. “Let us come to what are called abuses.... It will be found that it is our ambition, our avarice, our cupidity that have wrought all these evils on the people of God.” Trent may indeed have been the glorious triumph of orthodoxy over the new heresies, but we shall fail wholly to understand the real changes it brought about, unless we see also in the council the repentant episcopate, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. “Before the tribunal of God’s mercy we, the shepherds, should make ourselves responsible for all the evils now burdening the flock of Christ ... not in generosity but in justice....” So Pole, once more.

These reforming bishops, then, use the device of the “automatic” penalty so that the absentee bishop loses the right to his income, and the pluralist is deprived of sees he will not resign; that the concubinary prelate who defies the warnings of the provincial council loses his see; that the bishop becomes (in law) a thief who accepts gifts from those he ordains or from the parishes and other churches where he is making the visitation; and that the metropolitan is deprived of his right to officiate who fails to report to Rome the fact of a defiantly absentee suffragan. It is in the same way, too, that the pluralist of lesser degree is reached, and the non- preaching parish priest is fined.

The simplest remedy for whatever has been amiss in these matters is to appoint to the office none but good men, competently endowed with the needed natural gifts and technical training. And on this subject the council has much to say, about preliminary enquiries before the appointments are made. Ultimately the responsibility lies with that supreme authority whose bulls are the essential element in all these appointments. The council ventures to hint at negligence here as the chief source of the evils.

“In the last place, this holy synod, troubled by the number of these most serious evils, cannot refrain from putting on record, that nothing is more necessary for the Church of God than that the most blessed pope of Rome, who by his office is bound to the care of the whole Church, should give this particular matter his closest attention, [namely] to associate with himself, as cardinals, only men of exceptional character and gifts, and to appoint as diocesan bishops the very best and most suitable; and this all the more because our Lord, Jesus Christ, will require at his hands the blood of those sheep of Christ who have perished through the wicked misgovernment of neglectful bishops unmindful of their duty.”[13]

Both cardinals and bishops are explicitly warned that the natural affection of a man for his kinsfolk breeds nepotism, that this affection can be “a seeding-plot of many evils in the Church.” So the council forbids these personages to provide for their relations out of church revenues. If they are poor folk, they may, of course, be succoured like other poor folk. And one of the most obnoxious troubles of the past centuries is faced when the council begs bishops to be moderate in the use of excommunication, “for experience teaches that if this penalty is inflicted rashly, and for slight offences, it provokes contempt, not fear, and works harm to the offender rather than good”--excommunication being, in the mind of the Church, not a vindictive act but medicinal, something done to bring a man to his senses. Bishops are warned especially not to allow themselves, in this matter, to be made the tools of the state, excommunicating according to the wish of the prince.

Two more items in this lengthy selection and we have done; one of them about the layman--a rare subject for direct notice in these Canon Law sections. The subject is duels, the use of which, as an acknowledged social convention among the nobles--and what a curse it was to be down to the mid-nineteenth century!--is now first establishing itself. The council's principle is that the man who kills another in a duel is a murderer. The man killed dies with the stigma that his last intention, too, was murder.

The seconds are accessories to murder, and the friends of the parties who assemble to see the duel are approvers. All, then, are henceforward punished by ipso facto penalties: the principals and the seconds are excommunicated, and incur the legal penalty of “perpetual infamy”-- never again will a court of law consider their testimony in any case before it; they rank as professional criminals, and are all to be held as murderers. If one of the party is killed in the duel he is not to be given Christian burial. All who encourage the duel, and the spectators, are also, by the fact, excommunicated. Rulers, whatever their rank (and the emperor is explicitly mentioned), who make provision for the fighting of duels-- providing a kind of official duelling ground (for example) are ipso facto excommunicated, and lose all their jurisdiction over the place where this is situated, if it is a fief of the Church; if it is held by a lay prince, the place reverts to the suzerain.

“With regard to the ordination of priests, Holy Father, no care whatever is taken,” the cardinalitial committee on reform had reported to Paul III, eight years before the council met. “The most ignorant of men,” they said, “and sprung from the dregs of society, and even themselves depraved, mere youths, are everywhere admitted to holy orders.” We touch on one of the great mysteries of medieval Catholicism, not that there were bad priests, but that the Church never faced the problem of training and educating the rank and file of the parochial clergy--and this in the centuries which saw the rise of such remarkable formative institutions as the monastic orders and the orders of friars. Here, more than in any other point, with Trent a new age begins. “Youth, unless rightly trained, sinks to the pursuit of the lustful pleasures of the world,” say the venerable Fathers of the council. “Unless a boy has been formed in habits of prayer and religion from his tenderest years, before the habits of adult vice can take root, he will never perfectly persevere in ecclesiastical discipline, unless by some very great and more than ordinary grace from God.” So the council now decrees that every bishop shall set up a special college where picked boys shall live and be given a religious training, be taught

to live the clerical life. These are to be boys who give promise of perseverance in the Church's service, poor boys preferably. They must be twelve years old at least, and able to read and write well, and of legitimate birth. This college "will become a permanently fruitful seed-bed (seminarium) of ministers of God."

The council, in this aside, has given the new institution the name it will henceforward always bear--the seminary. The programme of studies is next set out, and the way of life: daily mass, monthly confession, Holy Communion as often as the boy's confessor judges. On Sundays, and at the great feasts, the seminarians will assist at the services in the cathedral, hard by which the college is to be placed, or in other churches in the town. Unsuitable boys, the incorrigible above all and the troublemakers, are to be sent away. As the years pass, they receive minor orders and go on to their professional studies, Holy Scripture, ecclesiastical treatises, the administration of the sacraments (especially the hearing of confessions), the Church's ritual. They will receive Holy Communion more frequently once they are in minor orders, and will begin to be associated with the practical work of the parish clergy. Once they receive the subdiaconate they are to communicate every week. For this first of the major orders they must be twenty-one years of age completed, for the diaconate twenty-two, for the priesthood twenty-four. The foundation of these new colleges the bishops are to take in hand *quam primum*--at the earliest opportunity.

The remainder of this very long decree is taken up with rules about the choice of teachers, and their needed academic qualifications. As to finance, the bishop is given exceptionally wide powers to call upon all the ecclesiastical revenues of his diocese, of the regulars (even the exempt) as well as the diocesan clergy, the mendicant orders alone excepted. Special provision is made for the diocese that is too poor or too small to provide its own seminary.

These clergy, thus carefully trained, and now duly ordered, how are they to live? The sixteenth-century parish rarely needed more than one priest

to attend to it--so numerous were the parish churches, even in the cities.[14] In most churches there were chapels built by pious men of means, where mass was daily offered for the repose of the souls of themselves and their family--the chantries. The funds left were sufficient to keep the priest appointed to the duty--this was his benefice. Very often also he served as schoolmaster. Now one of the trials of the pious man down to the end of the Middle Ages had been the sight of the horde of beggar-priests--priests without any benefice at all, driven to live by their wits out of the general benevolence of the laity. As well as founding the seminary system, Trent forbade bishops to ordain candidates who could never be of service, and also all who were not able, at their ordination, to bring legal proof that they were in peaceful possession of a benefice the income of which was enough to support them. Even good, suitable candidates are not to be ordained, says the new law, if they are lacking here. This benefice, if it is the only one the priest possesses, he is never allowed to resign without expressly stating that it is the benefice by title of which he was ordained.

The sixteen dogmatic decrees of the council, for all their terse style, would run to some sixty pages of this size even in a terse translation. Little more can be done than to list them, and for the student of history especially, to point out the excellent starting point they are for the study of the Catholic religion as it was in the early sixteenth century, and of the theological case between the Church and the reformers. It is a statement of that case as simple and as clear as it is authoritative. These decrees are, in form, miniature theological treatises, and they are carefully not written in the technical language theologians use. To each decree there is a list of canons annexed, statements, that is to say, of some point of the reformed teaching which is contrary to the teaching set forth in the decree and therefore condemned.

Here, in chronological order, is the list of the dogmatic decrees, with the dates of the sessions when they were passed, and a note of the number of

the canons attached to them and of the length (in printed pages) of the decrees:

Doctrine	Session	Date	Canons	Decrees
The Holy Scriptures	4	8 th Apr 1546	None	1
Original Sin	5	7 th Jun 1546	5	4
Justification	6	13 th Jan 1547	33	16
The Sacraments in General	7	3 rd Mar 1547	13	1
Baptism	7	3 rd Mar 1547	14	None
Confirmation	7	3 rd Mar 1547	3	None
The Holy Eucharist II [15]	13	11 th Oct 1551	11	8
Penance	14	15 th Nov 1551	15	15
Extreme Unction	14	4 th Nov 1551	4	3
The Holy Eucharist II [16]	21	16 th Jun 1562	4	3
The Holy Eucharist II[17]	22	9 th Sep 1562	9	4
Holy Orders	23	15 th Jul 1563	8	3
Marriage	24	11 th Nov 1563	12	1
Purgatory	25	4 th Dec 1563	None	1

Cults: Saints Relics Images	25	4 th Dec 1563	None	3
Indulgences	25	4 th Dec 1563	None	1

It will be observed that more than half of the text of the decrees is given to the doctrine of the sacraments. This, indeed, ever since Luther's famous tract, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) had been the main point of the Protestant assault, in this sense, that what was challenged here was what every man could appreciate immediately, namely, the actual practice of the religion instituted by Christ our Lord. All could see here the difference between the old and the new, where only a select few were in a position to judge the implications of the new key-doctrine that Justification is through faith alone. With this heresy, the Council dealt very faithfully, in a single decree of sixteen chapters that takes up one-quarter of the whole text.

Trent, it is sometimes said, put an end once and for all to the indefiniteness and confusion of thought among Catholics--to their comparative freedom to believe pretty much what they liked, in one version of the criticism. But this matter of terminating differences, when true at all, is true only with a great reservation. The confusion, or division of opinion, was not about traditional doctrine but about the problems raised by the new theories, differences in part related to the practical problem how best to deal with the points raised by Luther, and how to reconcile the Lutherans by so stating the tradition that it would satisfy them also. The idea that the Catholic unity in the fundamentals of belief about grace, original sin, justification, and the sacraments is the fruit of the Tridentine restatement of Catholic doctrine, is too grotesque for patience to bear. Nowhere does the council say--in effect--so far, some Catholics have believed it is X, others that it is Y. but from henceforth, all shall believe it is Y. It is, on the contrary, forever using such phrases as, "following the teaching of the

Fathers we define...” Where is the doctrinal definition of this council, for comment on which the theological lecturer will not turn for guidance to St. Thomas, to say nothing of one or other of the Fathers?

Trent is a witness to the age-long tradition, to the Apostolic tradition, as truly as Nicaea twelve hundred years before or the Vatican Council three hundred years later. It never does more than state, with the peculiar authority and explicitness of a General Council, what the body of the teaching theologians had been agreed on for centuries and the Church as a whole had implicitly accepted and practiced. As to questions which do not touch the substance of a particular doctrine, but regard methods of explaining and defending it, questions of its history, its relation to other doctrines, questions arising from the various ways in which different ages have set it out, the council decides nothing. From the learned warfare of the Catholic theologians about such matters, it carefully distinguishes its own role, which is not theological scholarship but the preservation of the traditional belief, and the exposure, and condemnation therefore, of whatever contradicts this. As to the theological views put forward in the council, and rejected, in, e.g., the long discussions that preceded the decree on Justification, when what was called the theory of the double Justification was proposed as an orthodox solution that might reconcile Lutheranism and Catholicism--how new such ideas were among Catholic theologians is illustrated, it may be suggested, from the fact that when the leading theologian of the age, Cajetan, was dealing, in 1507,[18] with St. Thomas' refutation (two centuries in advance) of Luther's basic theory, he has no comment to make about this that would suggest that anywhere among theologians was there any division of opinion on the essence of the question.

The decrees restate the whole doctrine; they are not merely a contradiction of the reformers' innovations. The canons attached to the decrees are short summary condemnations of heresies that contradict the doctrine set out in the decree, and not of the new, contemporary heresies only. Thus, along

with the Lutheran theories about Original Sin, there are also condemned (yet once again) the heresies of Pelagius. To show something of the council's teaching, the canons on the key doctrines of Justification, the Sacraments in General, and the Holy Eucharist will now be summarised.

In the matter of Justification, a doctrine which now makes its first appearance--in its own right--at a General Council, these new errors are condemned:[19] the theory that man is passive, like a stone, under the influence of grace; that since Adam's fall there is no real freedom in the human will, this last idea being an invention brought into the Church by the devil; that the good works done by man before he is justified are sins meriting damnation; that nothing but faith is requisite to achieve Justification; that man can be justified otherwise than through the justice of Christ;[20] that man is justified by the imputation only, of the justice of Christ--Justification being no more than God showing favour to a man; that the faith without which man cannot be justified is the trustful confidence that the divine mercy has forgiven his sins for Christ's sake; that it is a condition for a man's sins being forgiven that he believes, without any hesitation, that his sins have been forgiven; that no one is justified unless he believes he is justified, this belief being what brings about absolution and justification; the justified man is bound to believe, as of faith, that he is numbered among those predestined [to eternal life]; that all men except these are, by the Divine Power, predestined to evil; to believe is the only thing commanded in the Gospel, all the rest being neither commanded nor forbidden, the Ten Commandments having nothing to do with being a Christian; Christ our Lord was sent as a Redeemer to save, not as lawgiver to be obeyed; man, once justified, cannot sin or fall from grace; there is only one sin that is mortal, the sin of not believing, and through no other sin can grace once attained be lost.

This is not a complete account of what the thirty-three canons about Justification contain. It omits some more subtle statements that would call

for a lengthy explanation, and it omits canons which state, not a theory the reformers put out, but Catholic doctrine which they deny.

As to the new theories about the kind of thing sacraments are, the canons[21] condemn those who say: that there are more or less than seven sacraments instituted by Christ our Lord--baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, order, marriage--or that any one of these is not truly a sacrament in the full sense of the word; that these sacraments only differ from the sacraments of the Jewish dispensation as one ritual from another; that the sacraments are not a necessity of salvation, but that through faith alone, and without the sacraments at all, man can obtain from God the grace of Justification; that the sacraments were instituted for the purpose of nourishing only faith; that the sacraments do not contain and confer the grace which they signify--as though they were but outward signs of the grace or justice received through faith, badges of Christian profession that mark off the believer from the infidel; that the sacraments do not themselves confer grace by the very activity of the sacrament (ex opere operato), but that only faith in the divine promises is sufficient to obtain grace; that all Christians have the power to administer all the sacraments; that any pastor of the Church can change the received and approved rites used by the Church in the solemn administration of the sacraments.

As to the doctrine called the Real Presence,[22] the council condemns: those who, denying that Jesus Christ, God and Man, is truly, really, substantially present in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, hold instead that He is only present as in a sign or image or manifestation of power (in virtute); those who say that the substance of the bread and the wine remains along with the body and blood of Christ, denying that marvellous and unique changing of the whole substance of the bread into the Body [of Christ] and the whole substance of the wine into [His] Blood, while the appearance of bread and wine still remain--the change which the Catholic Church most suitably calls Transubstantiation; those who say

that the Body and Blood of Christ is not there following upon the consecration (*peracta consecratione*), but only while the sacrament is in use, while it is being received, that is to say, but not before this or after this, and that in what is left over of the consecrated hosts or particles after communion has been administered, the true Body of the Lord does not remain; who say that the main fruit, or the sole fruit, of this sacrament is the forgiveness of sins; or that Christ the only begotten son of God is not to be adored in this sacrament with the externals of the reverence called *latria*,^[23] and that those who do so adore Him in this sacrament are idolaters; that Christ is shown forth in this sacrament to be received [by the communicant] in a spiritual manner, and not also sacramentally and really; that only faith is sufficient preparation for receiving this most holy sacrament.

The Council denies^[24] that there is a divine command that all shall receive Holy Communion under both the forms, i.e., of wine as well as of bread, and that it is a necessary sacrament for little children It condemns those who deny that the whole Christ is received when Holy Communion is received under the form of bread alone.

There remain the canons attached to the decree about the sacrifice called the Mass,^[25] clear statements in everyday language. The Council condemns those who say: there is not offered in the Mass a true and proper sacrifice to God; nothing more is meant by this word “offered” than that Christ is given to us to be eaten; Christ by the words *Do this in commemoration of Me*,^[26] did not constitute the apostles priests, or ordain them, so that they and other priests should offer His body and blood; the sacrifice of the Mass is a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving only, or a mere commemoration of the sacrifice offered on the Cross, but not a sacrifice whereby God is appeased; [the sacrifice] profits only those who receive [Holy Communion]; Mass should not be offered for the living and the dead, or for sins, penalties, satisfactions, and other necessities; a blasphemy is inflicted, through the sacrifice of the Mass, on the most holy

sacrifice wrought by Christ on the Cross; the Mass takes away from the sacrifice on the Cross; the Canon[27] of the Mass is full of errors and should be done away with; the masses where none but the celebrating priest receive Holy Communion are unlawful and should be abrogated.

It has been a simpler task to tell the story of what the council accomplished, without any reference to the contemporary events of those eighteen years, 1545-63. But, without requiring anything like the history of those years, the reader is entitled to ask, Why was the council twice interrupted, and for so long a period? In 1547 the cause was the outbreak of the plague at Trent. The council hastily voted an adjournment to Bologna (March 10) to the fury of Charles V (who took for granted that the plague was mere excuse) and to the embarrassment of Paul III, who realised he would be held responsible for what was, in fact, in no way his doing. Several sessions were held at Bologna in 1547, a mere marking of time. Meanwhile the emperor carried his attack on the pope to the uttermost limits--ordering his own bishops not to leave Trent, proclaiming that this handful was the real council and the majority at Bologna a mere conventicle.

This crisis had come, in fact, at a moment when the political relations of emperor and pope were at their worst. The opening of the council in 1545 had found them allies in Charles' often-delayed, but now about to be executed, war against the German Protestant league. But by the time of Alva's crushing defeat of the princes at Muhlberg (April 24, 1547) relations between the chiefs were strained. The pope's unsatisfactory son, Pierluigi, whom he had invested with the duchies of Parma and Piacenza, against the emperor's will (and possibly against his rights) in 1545, was a thorn in the emperor's side. The imperial viceroy in Milan arranged the duke's assassination (September 10). Was Charles V privy to this? It is hardly likely, but he had assented to the plan to expel Pierluigi by force (May 31). This crime was committed in the early weeks of the Bologna period of the council. Charles, by virtue of Muhlberg, was master of

Germany as no emperor had been for hundreds of years. A brittle glory it was to prove, but the threat of this prince, already ruler of half of Italy, to the independence of the pope was real indeed. And the emperor used his mastery to impose on Catholic and Protestant, in Germany, a religious settlement of his own, the so-called Interim. Was Charles now going to prove himself a Spanish Henry VIII? The old pope found somewhere a reserve of patience, and the explosion never happened. The bishops went home from Bologna, and from Trent, and then in November 1549 the pope died.

There followed the long dramatic ten weeks' conclave of 1549-50, in which Pole almost became pope, and from which the senior president at Trent, Del Monte, emerged as Pope Julius III. And now began the old weary business of persuading Charles to cooperate in the reassembly of the council, and the French king too. Charles had a new point to urge--the reassembled council should be a new council altogether; the Protestants would be pleased if all the matters defined at Trent were treated anew as open questions. The French king, Henry II, whose reign[28] had barely begun utterly refused to have anything to do with the council. He was, in fact, on the verge of war with the pope, the casus belli being the revolt of Paul II 's grandsons against the new pope. The French king had taken up their cause. Julius III, as more than one incident at Trent, especially with Charles V's bullying commissioners, had shown, had one of the great tempers of the day. But somehow he managed to stifle it, and despite some bad blunders and vacillation he managed to get the council on its feet again in 1551. It was in this period that the Protestants accepted the invitation to come to the council--an incident which merely showed beyond all doubt that the new doctrines were not reconcilable with the old.

And now in Germany the war with the Protestant League took up once more. This time it was the emperor who was defeated and his army destroyed, in southern Germany. he pursuit was so hot that Charles

himself narrowly escaped capture, and as he made his way over the mountains to a precarious safety at Innsbruck, the bishops of the council decided it was high time they, too, moved south. So, ended the Julian period of the Council of Trent.

Julius III died in 1555, to be succeeded by his one-time colleague at Trent, Cervini, whose reign lasted but a short three weeks. Then came Gian Pietro Caraffa--Paul IV--a hale old man of seventy-nine, the grimmest reformer who ever sat in St. Peter's chair. As a young bishop, forty years earlier, he had sat in the all but futile Fifth Council of the Lateran. Perhaps it was here that he developed his strong belief that little good came of councils. He had other methods, and for heretics they were simple enough--the stake. Paul IV's four years of government in Rome was a reign of terror for evildoers and lawbreakers of every sort, clerical as well as lay.

His death was followed by a conclave that lasted four months. From it came forth a pope as great a contrast to this passionate, unbalanced Neapolitan as could be imagined, Gian Angelo de' Medici, a Milanese, who took the name Pius IV. He was by training a lawyer, and by his career a professional administrator, who had governed one city after another for Clement VII and Paul III; and for his moderation he had found it prudent to leave Rome, in the days of Paul IV. His election had produced the ideal character for the delicate business of reconciling to Rome the various Catholic princes recently alienated--particularly the Hapsburgs for whom Paul IV had had an unconcealed personal hatred.

Charles V had died a few months only before Paul IV. In the empire his brother, Ferdinand I, had replaced him; in the rest of his dominions his son, Philip II. In France too there was a new ruler since June 1559, when Henry II was killed in a tournament--his fifteen-year-old son, Francis II. This boy, whose wife was Mary, Queen of Scots, lasted barely a year and a half, and the sovereign with whom Pius IV had to treat was this boy's mother, Catherine de' Medici, the queen-regent for his still younger

successor. Add that in England the short-lived Catholic restoration of Mary Tudor had just ended, and that Pius IV faced the fait accompli of a restoration of the entire Protestant regime, with Catholicism proscribed utterly in legislation that culminated in the death penalty, and with all the bishops the new queen's prisoners. The queen was, of course, Elizabeth

I. Given this unusual array of talent among the leading princes, and the fact that all the old prepossessions of those who were Catholics still survived-- the instinct to take control of the religious crisis into their own hands, to settle the problems of their own realms, for example, by a national council not under papal influence--given all this, the fact that Pius IV succeeded in reassembling the council, at Trent, within little more than two years would suggest that he is a more important figure than has usually been recognised.

With patience and prudence and a constantly firm purpose, he guided the council through what proved to be the major part of its work, and through a continuity of passionate discussions where Spanish and French bishops, as well as Italian, had to be considered and managed. The most dangerous moments were when the Spaniards strove for a decision that the personal obligation of the bishop to live in his diocese was an obligation of divine law, and not merely of synodal legislation. The danger was that this excellent idea masked a point of theology, and was meant to lead to a discussion of the loaded question, Is the pope the superior of the General Council or its servant? the question that had racked the Church of the previous century, and for a renewal of which the Church of the sixteenth century was by no means yet sufficiently healthy. That the premature discussion of this particular application of the defined doctrine of the papal supremacy was averted was due, in especial manner, to the great cardinal whom Pius IV sent to preside at the last months of the council, Girolamo Morone.

The great council[29] ended with what jubilation about the work done may be imagined. The pope by a special bull confirmed all it had decreed,

and by a second bull forthwith abolished all privileges and exemptions previously accorded by his predecessors which went contrary to the decrees; and to settle authoritatively all questions arising out of the interpretation of the decrees he created a permanent commission of cardinals, the Congregation of the Council of Trent, a body which developed into a kind of permanent Ministry of the Interior of the Catholic Church, and which functions to this day as one of the most important instruments of the government of the Church. The matter of providing the revised edition of the official Latin translation of the Bible, a revised Breviary and Missal, a Catechism and an Index of books dangerous to Faith and Morals, the council had left to the pope.

It was the immediate successor of Pius IV who saw to all these, except the new Bible. This successor was the Dominican, Michele Ghislieri, known to history as Pius V (1566-72), in whom the aspirations of good men for centuries were realised, a living saint ruling the Church. Of all the services rendered by St. Pius V (he was canonised by Clement XI in 1712) none was greater than this, that in his ruling of the Church he was as scrupulously obedient to the laws of Trent as he had been obedient to the Dominican constitutions during his long life as a friar. He set an example which none of his successors could ever ignore; and perhaps nowhere more powerfully than in what he did with the task from which the council, in its last moments, shrank--the reformation of the Catholic Princes, i.e., the defence of the rights of religion against the encroachment of the Catholic state. But to say more about this would be to write the tragic history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of a fight where there were defeats, but no surrenders. The ideal of the example set by St. Pius V was at times obscured. It was never forgotten. And never, since his time, has there been any such moral falling away--nor anything remotely recalling it--as what, in almost all his life before his election, he himself had been witness of in the highest place of all.

NOTES

1. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, I, 351. These last two pages of my account are especially indebted to this great book. Cf. 346-54.
2. *Ibid.*, 354.
3. *Op. cit.*, 369.
4. Pastor, *History of the Popes*, XII, chaps. 4, 5; a masterly summary in Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, 1, 490-544.
5. Del Monte is the future pope Julius III (1549-55), Cervini the all too short lived Marcellus II (1555) commemorated in the title of Palestrina's fine mass, and Pole only failed to become pope in 1549 through his refusal to take the least step--he would not even say he was willing--on his own behalf in the conclave.
6. Seripando, created cardinal by Pius IV (1559-65), later served as one of the presidents of the council, 1 562-63.
7. Maroto, *Institutiones Iuris Canonici* (1919),1, 87.
8. As King Henry VIII was "kin" to Anne Boleyn through his sinful association with her older sister, Mary.
9. The new law was passed by 155 votes to 55, G. H. Joyce, S.J., *Christian Marriage* (1933), 127.
10. Jerome Ragazzoni, coadjutor to the see of Famagusta, preaching the sermon with which the council closed, December 4.
11. These summaries, as has been said, are only of the principal matters. But among these surely is, also, the change by which the council abolished the age-long right of metropolitans (archbishops) to make the visitation of all the sees of the bishops of their province, the local bishop's jurisdiction suspended the meanwhile, and the archbishop correcting what he found amiss and ordering the penalties this called for.
12. A monastery was said to be "in commendam" which was granted as his benefice to a cleric who was not a member of the community or of the order or even of any religious order. These commendatory

abbots, who were not bound to reside at the monastery, were sometimes not even in major orders.

13. Postremo eadem sancta synodus, tot gravissimis ecclesiae incommodis com mota, non potest non commemorare, nihil magis ecclesiae Dei esse necessarium quam ut beatissimus Romanus Pontifex, quam sollicitudinem universae ecclesiae ex munens sui officio debet, eam hic potissimum impendat, ut lectissimos tantum sibi cardinales adsciscat, et bonos maxime atque idoneos pastores singulis ecclesiis praeficiat, idque eo magis, quod ovium Christi sanguinem, quae ex malo negligentium et sui officii immemorum pastorum regimine peribunt Dominus noster Iesus Christus de manibus eius sit requisiturus. Session 24 (Nov. 11, 1563) De Reformatione, chap. 1, the final paragraph.
14. In London, for example, a city of about 100,000 people at the beginning of the 16th century, there were 93 parish churches alone.
15. The doctrine of the Real Presence; the worship of God present in the sacrament, the use of the sacrament.
16. On Communion under both kinds, and the Communion of little children.
17. On the Sacrifice of the Mass.
18. Just ten years before Luther's 95 Theses appeared.
19. Session 6, January 13, 1547. The Latin text of the canons here summarised is in Denzinger, pp. 277-81. With respect to the phrase "all are condemned," which continually recurs in these canons, it is to be observed that the council has in mind Catholics and the ex-Catholics who, abandoning the traditional doctrines, founded the various reformed bodies. The bishops at Trent were not addressing that multitude of later, non-Catholic Christians who, born and bred in these forms of belief, worship God and keep His law after a non-Catholic fashion in all good faith. To these, the personal condemnation was not addressed, although the condemnation of the theories inevitably stands.

- 20.** A heretical caricature of traditional doctrine, found useful in the Reformation propaganda.
- 21.** Session 7, March 3, 1547. Latin text *ibid.*, 281-82.
- 22.** Session 13, October 11, 1551. Latin text *ibid.*, 290-91.
- 23.** That homage due to God alone, as the Creator of all.
- 24.** Session 21, June 16, 1562. Latin text *ibid.*, 310.
- 25.** Session 22, September 9, 1562. Latin text *ibid.*, 314-15.
- 26.** Luke 22:19.
- 27.** The long prayer which is the core of the rite, during which the consecration takes place.
- 28.** Francis I died March 31, 1547.
- 29.** December 4, 1563.