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The Council of Trent As a Landmark in the History of Roman Catholicism

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THE COUNCIL OF TRENT
AS A LANDMARK IN THE HISTORY OF
ROMAN CATHOLICISM

A Thesis presented to the
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by
1) I question the possibility of a reform of the Roman Church which would have
kept Christmas united under one head.

Carl Otto Beiderwieden
Concordia Seminary
April 30, 1943

2) More use should have been made of Script.
Th. G.

Approved by

Thos. Stoyer.
Thos. G. Fisher

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I. Introduction

The Council of Trent is the most important assembly in the history of the Latin Church.¹ To exaggerate the importance of this Council is impossible. On the action of that assembly was to depend whether Europe was to have one religion or many, whether the creed which for so many centuries had shaped the characters of mankind was to continue to speak as the united judgment of all wise and good men, or whether Christendom was to split into factions which would rend and tear each other in every segment of the globe, 'till the very faith for which they were spilling their own and other's blood was to fade away out of their hands, fade away from the most absolute of certainties into a disputed opinion.²

There are several reasons which mark this Council as a great landmark in the history of Roman Catholicism. Besides formulating a Catholic system of doctrine it introduced wholesome disciplinary reforms -- and gave a distinct increase in papal power. Chiefly under Jesuit influence the Council took the stand that papal confirmation was necessary for the validation of its decrees. Thus the Council of Trent pointed straight to the Vatican Council of 1870, when papal infallibility was formally prescribed as a dogma of the church.³ But the real significance of the Council of Trent is that it dates the Church of Rome. Its far reaching issues have often been missed, sometimes through lack of historical perspective, and sometimes

1. Concordia Cyclopedia, sub: The Council of Trent.

2. Froude, James Anthony: Lectures on the Council of Trent, p.272.

3. Concordia Cyclopedia, op. cit.

because of the very multiplicity of the details of the proceedings and decrees. In some respects it did for the Church of Rome what the revocation of the Edict of Nantes did for France. It involved a permanent impoverishment and loss of light and truth. It was a kind of moral and intellectual suicide. Since then Rome has been bound hand and foot with the graveclothes of medievalism and priestism; and whatever is new has in anticipation been condemned as untrue. The doors and windows of the great cathedral were then closed, so that with all its magnificence the light and air might no longer find their way in even fitfully as before.⁴

The Council of Trent truly marked the beginning of the Roman Catholic sect, for it marked "off the domain of traditional catholicism as holy ground and pronounced an anathema upon the wild steppes of heresy. It took stock of the vast accumulation of doctrinal Roman Catholic heritage and stamped it with the seal of final authority." These resolutions (namely the decrees on doctrine) repudiated practically all points of the Gospel - teaching especially that the justification of the poor sinner by grace alone was impossible, and definitely established the status of the Church headed by the Pope of Rome as a sect.⁵ The Council of Trent -- decided to close the door of the Roman church firmly against all forms of Protestantism.⁶

"The causes and intrigues of an ecclesiastical convocation, which, desired and procured for various ends and with

4. Muir, William, The Arrested Reformation, p. 225.

5. Concordia Cyclopaedia, op. cit.

6. Qualben, Lars P., A History of the Christian Church.

various means, and for eighteen years now assembled and then adjourned - but always for various purposes, attained to a form and a completion diametrically opposed to the designs of those who had furthered it, and thus became a lesson to us to be resigned to the divine will, and not to rely too much on human prudence. For this Council, designed and procured by pious men for a reunion of the Church then commencing to be divided, so firmly fixed the schism and rendered the parties so obstinate, that now they are irreconcilable; and although princes depended on it for a reformation of ecclesiastical matters, it caused the worst deformation that the world has seen since the sounding of the Christian name."⁷

And so it shall be the design of this paper to show how the Council of Trent, through its formation of doctrine and political manipulations closed the door to the Reformation and dated the Roman Church.

7. Sarpi, Fra Paola, History of the Reformation.

II. The Condition of the Church.

In every great event or period in history the preparation for that crisis must be traced to some previous event or period. The one is necessary for the production of the other. It has been said that the Reformation is the hinge on which all modern history turns. The Reformation is generally thought of as a change in doctrine, and so it eventually was. But the movement was at first not against the doctrines of the Church, but against immorality and tyranny alone.¹ And it is this tyranny and immorality which finally led to the Council of Trent. We must get a view of the condition of the Church of that day to really understand the complete picture.

The wealth, luxury, and ostentatious style of living of the clergy called for reform. Men were convinced that a reformation was wanted when they saw the rulers of the Church indulging in all those vices which often follow in the train of wealth and rank, adopting an ostentatious style of living, issuing from their feudal castles on the gaily caparisoned palfrey, or exhibiting the same marks of grandeur as the highest and mightiest of potentates.² A Letter from an earnest Catholic written to Cardinal Savelli, describes the enormities of the Vatican. Says that writer: "The benefices and offices which ought to be given to persons of merit are offered for public sale to the highest bidder. Men go with gold to the palace to buy the mysteries of faith. Everything can be had for money - dignities, honours, marriages, dissolutions of marriages,

1. Froude, op. cit.

2. Pennington, A.R., The Counter-Reformation in Europe, p.3.

divorces -things which our fathers never heard of and which Christian custom forbids. Crimes grosser than Scythian, acts of treachery worse than Carthaginian, are committed without disguise in the Vatican itself, under the eyes of the Pope. There are rapes, murders, incests, debaucheries, cruelties exceeding those of the Neroes and Caligulas. None are spared, not even the highest. Licentiousness, past description, is paraded in contempt of God and man. Sons and daughters are polluted. Harlots and procuresses are gathered together in the mansion of St. Peter. On All Saint's Day fifty women of the town were invited to dinner. Gold is gathered in from all quarters. Indulgences are sold in all churches of Christendom to provide a portion for the Pope's daughter Lucretia. The cardinals of the better sort, if such there be, are silent, or effect not to see. They bought their rank with money. They preserve it with criminal compliance, and continue to speak smoothly of the Pope and praise and flatter." Thousands of such damning letters and documents are to be found. Petrarch, in "The Mysteries" becomes eloquent on the subject: "All that they say of Assyrian and Egyptian Babylon, of the four labyrinths, of the Asernian and Tartarean lakes, is nothing in comparison to this hell. All that is vile and execrable is assembled in this place. God is the only means of escaping from this labyrinth....Here reign the successors of poor fishermen who have forgotten their origin. They march covered with gold and purple, proud of the spoils of princes and of people. Instead of those little boats in which they gained their living on the Lake of Gennesaret, they inhabit superb

palaces....To the most simple repasts have succeeded the most sumptuous feasts; and where the apostles went on foot, covered only with sandals, are now to be seen insolent satraps, mounted on horses ornamented with gold, and champing golden bits."

It was supposed that supernatural power was bestowed on the clergy at ordination. "Noli tangere Christos meos" (touch not my Christ, or my anointed) was taken to mean that no lay hand could be laid on the clergy. Hence they were immune from civil jurisdiction. They were subject only to spiritual tribunals, from which, for an easy term, they could obtain absolution. Thus the clergy were emboldened to plunge without scruple and remorse into the practise of every vice and perpetration of every crime. While malefactors among the laity were brought before the ordinary tribunal, and suffered the condign punishment which they had fully merited, clerical offenders dared to stand before the altar and to perform the most sacred rites of their religion, even after they had been guilty of the greatest enormities.³

But if the clergy were exempted from lay jurisdiction, the laity were not exempt from the jurisdiction of the clergy. The law of the land might deal with common rights and obligations definable by statute or precedent. The clergy, as the spiritual fathers of the people, were the guardians of morality. They had courts of their own, conducted on their own principles, before which clergy and laity alike were bound to appear. They had their own canons with which crown and parliament could not interfere. They enforced their sentences with censures, fines,

3. Pennington, op. cit., pp.3.4.

imprisonments, and in the last resort with excommunications which carried civil penalties, and deprived a man of his rights as a citizen; and all these penalties had come to be convertible to money payments.⁴

But the greatest reason for protest was the system of the Papacy itself - "it was the cause for its own breakdown."⁵ We cannot fix the exact time when the Papal empire over mankind began to be shaken. We have the same difficulty in settling when old age creeping on a man robs him of his strength.⁶ These symptoms grow from before the time of Boniface VIII, through the "Babylonian Captivity" and the "Great Schism," down to the time of the Reformation. Trying to be ruler of both State and Church, and failing in both, gave rise to nationalism verses the Papacy. The Pope could not expect to hold the lives of the world in his hand, and rule them, maintaining the moral and spiritual standards he had set himself. This was not only felt by the laity, but first of all by the clergy. Cardinal Gasper Contarini writes to Paul III as follows: "The law of Christ is a law of freedom, and forbids a servitude so abject that the Lutherans were entirely justified in comparing it with the Babylonian Captivity. But furthermore, can that be called a government of which the rule is the will of one man, by nature prone to evil, and liable to the influence of caprices and affections innumerable? No; all true dominion is a dominion of reason, whose aim is to lead all whom it governs to the proposed end - happiness. The authority of the pope

4. Froude, op. cit., p.11.

5. Pennington, op. cit., p.5.

6. Ibid.

is equally with others a dominion of reason, God has conferred this rule on St. Peter and his successors, that they might lead the flocks confided to their care into everlasting blessedness. A pope should know that those over whom he exercises this rule are free men; not according to his own pleasure must he command, or forbid, or dispense, but in obedience to the rule of reason, of God's commands, and to the law of love, referring everything to God, and doing all in consideration of the common good only." ⁷

Thus, to say nothing of the monasteries, "which were the fruitful parent of all those vices which disgrace human nature, and reduce man to the level of the brute creation," ⁸ and the many means created by the Papacy for filling its coffers, the condition of the mendicant clergy, and many other abuses of the Hierarchy, we see the cause of the cry for a reform council. It is necessary to understand this condition of the church, for against it the first cry of the reformers was raised. Erasmus, Savanorola, Huss, Wycliff, Gerson, Luther, and many others had raised their voice first against the system of the Papacy and its moral condition. It is essentially this condition of the Church, and not its doctrine which led to the Council of Trent. And it is so important to keep in mind this condition, for in trying desperately to keep it in the background, the Papacy maneuvered its political dealings and doctrinal reforms which closed the door to the Reformation, making union impossible.

7. Ranke, Leopold von, A History of the Popes, Vol. 1, p.102.

8. Pennington, op. cit., p.4.

III. Historical Background

All through the 15th and earlier part of the 16th centuries everyone looked to a general council to provide a solution for ecclesiastical difficulties.¹ Martin Luther provided the occasion for the calling of a general council when he appealed to a general council on the 28th of November, 1518.² He had great courage in appealing to such an assembly, for Pius II, with his bulla "Execrabilis" in 1460 and his reply to the University of Cologne three years later, had set aside the theory of the supremacy of a general council over the authority of the pope.³ Papal policy since then was to avoid the councils and the free discussion they developed. But now Emperor Charles V, of the Holy Roman Empire, urged such an assembly as the means of settling the Reformation controversy and reuniting the church. The Pope, Paul III, had to listen to the insistence of the Emperor.⁴ And then, too, the pope desired to remove doubts concerning some doctrines, and a general council alone could do this. Now it remained for the pope to choose a time for the council which would make circumstances favourable to his ideas.⁵

Starting in 1522 the German diets joined the Emperor in the appeal for a general council.⁶ The Diet of Nuremberg, 1523, demanded a free "Christian council" on German soil. The following year the same diet demanded a German national council to temporarily settle the dispute and then also demanded a

1. The Encyclopedia Britannica, sub "Trent, Council of."

2. The Catholic Cyclopedia, sub "Trent, Council of."

3. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, sub "Trent, Council of."

4. Ibid.

5. Ranke, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 136.

6. The Catholic Cyclopedia, op. cit.

general council for the final settlement. But because of the nationalistic spirit of the times, these requests of the Nuremberg Diet were rejected both by Rome and by the Emperor. Nothing further was done in the years following 1524 because of a dispute which arose between Charles V and Clement VII.⁷

Rome took the next step. At the Diet of Speyer, 1529, the papal ambassador, Pico della Mirandola, declared that:

- 1) the Pope was ready to assist the Germans against the Turk;
- 2) he urged peace among Christian rulers; 3) he would convoke a general council to meet the next summer. But when the Emperor and the Pope met at Bologna in 1530, the latter said that he would call a general council -but only if necessary. The fact that the Emperor wanted a council and that he was now joined in this request by the Roman Catholic princes of Germany, particularly the dukes of Bavaria, seems to have been ignored by the Holy Father. The opinion of the cardinal legate to the Diet of Augsburg, 1530, is indicative of the general trend of thought at the Vatican. Lorenzo Campeggio held that the Protestants had no right to demand a general council and forcefully rejected the proposal of granting one.⁸

Charles V, in a conciliating mood, now continued to agitate for a general council, but under the condition that the Protestants restore earlier conditions until the council had decided. The Roman Catholic princes agreed with the Emperor in this proposal and added that the council be held in Germany. After a discussion in the college of cardinals, in which opinion

7. The Catholic Encyclopedia, op. cit.

8. Ibid.

differed, the pope told Charles that he would convoke a general council with his consent - provided that the Protestants return to the obedience of the Church. The Holy Father proposed Rome for the site. Clement VII did not actually want a council at this time, as the Emperor correctly suspected, and realized and expected that his proposals would not be accepted by the Protestant princes.⁹

In the years 1531 and 1532 two attempts were again made to convoke a general council. Things had gone so far that legates with briefs were sent to Germany, France, and England, but Francis I, Henry VIII, and the Protestant princes all rejected the conditions proposed by the pope. This was the last attempt made at calling a general council under Clement VII.¹⁰

The next pope, Paul III (1534-1549) had received his cardinal's mitre because of "an adultrous intrigue of his sister Julia Orsini with Pope Alexander VI."¹¹ Paul III was not interested in reform at all -all he wanted was a condemnation of the Protestants.¹² Nuncios announcing a general council were sent to France, Spain, and the German king, Ferdinand. An Italian city was proposed as the site for the assembly, which suggestion was rejected by the Protestants at Smalcald in December 1535. Finally after a visit of Charles V with the pope, an agreement was reached. On June 2, 1536, Paul III published the bulla calling all patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, and abbots to assemble at Mantua on May 23, 1537, for

9. The Catholic Encyclopedia, op. cit.

10. Ibid.

11. The Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit.

12. Ibid.

a general council. In July of 1536 a commission for reforms was appointed which drew up a report as a basis for the correction of the abuses in ecclesiastical life. But the Duke of Mantua raised objections which made it impossible to hold a general council at Mantua. The council was temporarily postponed until November 1. Then on account of the Turkish war, it was prorogued until May 1, 1538, when it was to open at Vicenza.¹³ At the appointed time only six bishops assembled at Vicenza. Francis and the pope met at Nice and postponed the council to reassemble at the pope's discretion.¹⁴

In 1541 the pope learned that the Emperor, tired of Rome's "postponing policy," was considering calling a general council himself and so made definite moves to assemble a council. On May 22, 1542, the pope convoked a general council to meet at Trent on November 1.. Trent was chosen as the site because of the Emperor's insistence on a German city as the place of convocation. Francis I opposed this proposal energetically, and even prohibited the convocation bulla from being published in his kingdom.¹⁵ The Council did not open until the 22nd of November and then a majority of representatives was lacking because of renewed hostilities between Charles V and Francis I.¹⁶

On the 19th of November, 1544, Charles V concluded a peace with France at Crepy.¹⁷ Now the way was again clear for the convocation of the council. Soon afterwards, the pope in bulla "Laetare Hierusalem," convoked the general council for

13. The Catholic Encyclopedia, op. cit.

14. Kurtz, Professor, Church History, Vol.2, p.417

15. The Catholic Encyclopedia, op. cit.

16. von Ranke, Leopold, op. cit., p. 131.

17. Lindsay, Thomas M., A History of the Reformation, Vol.1, p.383.

March 15, 1545, at Trent.¹⁸ Cardinals Giovanni del Monte, Marcello Cervini, and Reginald Pole were appointed as papal legates to preside. No one expected this council to really open on the set date, and no one was disappointed. By May only twenty bishops had arrived at Trent, and the papal legates delayed the inauguration. The opening of the council was postponed until December 13th, 1545.¹⁹

Now the time was ripe for the pope to really have a general council. We noted before that during all the years between 1518 and 1545 the pope was waiting for a time when circumstances were in his favor, so that he could procure a condemnation of the Protestant heresy. The pope now thought that the "psychological moment" had come, for "the old loiterer, Time, did at length bring the wished-for moment. For when could one occur more propitious than when the Emperor was at variance with both the chiefs of the Protestant party, and preparing to make war on them? Since he would require the aid of the pope, the could not venture now to assert those claims which he was believed to intend to bring to the council. By the war he would be kept entirely occupied; the power of the Protestants made it impossible to foresee the extent of embarrassments in which he might become involved; he would thus be in no condition to press too earnestly for those reforms with which he had so long threatened the papal throne. The pope had, besides, another method of baffling his purposes: the Emperor demanded that the council should begin with the subject of reform, but the papal

18. The Catholic Encyclopedia, op. cit.

19. The Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit.

legates carried a resolution that the question of reforms and the questions of the Church should be treated together; in effect, however, the discussion of the dogmas was the first entered on." 20

And so on the 13th of December, 1545, the eighteenth or nineteenth ecumenical Roman Catholic council opened in the choir of the Cathedral of Trent after Cardinal de Monte had celebrated the Mass of the Holy Ghost. (The Council takes its name from the city of Trent, which is located in the southern and Italian section of the Tyrol, seventy-three miles northwest of Venice.)²¹ Present at the council's opening session were the following: The three presiding legates, Cardinal Madruzzo, Bishop of Trent, four archbishops, twenty-one bishops, five generals of orders, legates of Ferdinand, King of Germany, forty-two theologians, and nine canonists. The Tridentine Council lasted from its opening day until the fourth of December, 1563 -with interruptions, of course! In all there were twenty-five sessions, which can be divided into three periods under three popes. The first ten sittings were under Paul III and lasted from 1545 to 1547, the next six under Julius III in 1551 and 1552, and the last nine under Pius IV in 1562 and 1563.²²

In 1546 the Smalcaldic war started which changed the situation not a little. The Emperor was now at the height of his power, and the pope feared that Charles might insist on the reforms of the Church which he had so long advocated.²³ The pope acted immediately. He recalled his troops from the Emperor's army and sent a message to Francis I urging him to

20. von Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp.136-137.

21. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge,
Op. cit.

22. Kurtz, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

23. Fisher, George Park, The Reformation, p.144.

aid the Emperor's oponent, the Elector of Saxony, John Fredric.²⁴ On the pretext of the plague, the pope ordered, at the eighth session of March 11, 1547, that the Council should resume at Bologna, and immediately there was a division of ranks. Those who favored the pope left for Bologna, and those who favored the Emperor remained behind at Trent. This suited the pope's plans very well. On the 17th of September, 1547, Paul III indefinitely prorogued the council at Bologna.²⁵ The age-old Roman policy of waiting - waiting until Time brought favorable conditions.

It was not until May 1, 1551, that the pope was compelled by necessity to reopen the council. The pope was Julius III (1550-1555), whom we have known up to this time as Cardinal-legate de Monte.²⁶ Things really seemed to be going fine for a while in these sessions of 1551 and 1552. In the latter year Melanchthon and John Brenz left for Trent. Melanchthon prepared an ironical statement known as the "Confessio Saxonica," but got no further than Nuremberg.²⁷ But now politics and the war interferred again. The Elector Maurice of Saxony obtained a sudden victory over the Emperor and appeared with his victorious army in the Tyrol.²⁸ After the Council's sixteenth session on April 28, 1552, it was prorogued for two years after all Protestants had been condemned.²⁹

The next pope, Paul IV (1555-1559) was a fanatic. A General Council under him was inconceivable. He burned

24. Fisher, George Park, op. cit., p.144.

25. Kurtz, Professor, op. cit. p.418.

26. Ibid.

27. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, op. cit.

28. Ibid.

29. Kurtz, Professor, op. cit., p.418.

heretical books; opposed the Peace of Augsburg; released subjects from obedience to heretical princes and urged orthodox rulers to take their lands. Even the Catholics hated this Holy Father.³⁰

By contrast, the next pope, Pius IV (1560-1565), was mild and quiet. He recalled the Council for the last time on January 18th, 1562, and the sessions continued until the final adjournment on December 4th, 1563. The decrees were signed by 255 members, two-thirds of whom were Italians. The attendance of the twenty-five sessions varied greatly, but it never reached the 318 of the first ecumenical council of Nicaea. Most of the important decrees were passed with only sixty prelates present. Germany was never represented by more than eight representatives. At times liberal evangelical sentiments were uttered in favor of the supreme authority of Scriptures and justification by faith, but no concession whatever was made. Nothing is more indicative of Rome's attitude toward the Great Reformer than the sentence which closed the Tridentine Council, directed at all Protestants - "Anathema to all heretics, anathema, anathema."³¹

30. The Concordia Cyclopedia, op. cit.

31. The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, op. cit.

IV. The Door Still Open.

To attempt to show that the Council of Trent closed the door to the Reformation, making for all time the gap between Catholicism and Protestantism irreparable, would indeed be superfluous, if it could be proven that that door still stood open. Was reconciliation between the two parties still possible? Ranke asks himself that question and is reluctant to give a definite answer. He asks: "But had not these (namely the abuses and doctrines) already gone too far? Was not the breach too widely extended? Had not the dissentient opinions struck root too deeply? These questions I should be reluctant to decide."¹ Yet he goes on to quote the following: "There was also another Venitian, Marino Giustiniano, who left Germany shortly before this Diet (namely Ratisbon, 1541), and who would seem to have examined the aspect of things with great care. To him the reconciliation appears very possible (Bibl. Corsini in Rome, no. 481). But he declares that certain concessions are indispensable. The following he particularizes: - The pope must no longer claim to be the viceregent of Christ in temporal as well as spiritual things. He must depose the profligate and ignorant bishops and priests, appointing men of blameless lives, and capable of guiding and instructing the people, in their places; the sale of masses, the plurality of benefices, and the abuse of compositions must no longer be suffered; a violation of the rule as regards fasting must be visited by very light punishment at the most." If in addition

1. von Ranke, Vol. 1, p. 105.

to these things the marriage of priests be permitted, and the communion in both kinds be allowed, Guistaniano believes that the Germans would at once abjure their dissent, would yield obedience to the pope in spiritual affairs, resign their opposition to the mass, submit to auricular confession, and even allow the necessity of good works as the fruits of faith -in so far, that is, as they were consequences of faith. The existing discord having arisen because of abuses, there seemed no doubt that by the abolition of these it may be done away with.²

With Guistaniano we believe that the possibility was there, and that it could have been much more easily arranged than even he admits. For this conclusion there are a number of reasons. First of all, although it was eventually the formulation of doctrine at the Council which made the schism unbreachable, doctrine was not the original wound, and the sore could have been healed without touching upon it. "The doctrinal questions which were to cause such irreconcilable divisions were still in their infancy. The reform demanded was a reform of morals and discipline, a dethronement of an unrighteous tyranny, and a return to justice. In defect of a council, a national synod might be an alternative; but the whole Catholic lay world, even Spain itself, was crying for the same reforms which were demanded by Germany. Let a free council meet, in a free place, freely composed of all the orders. The corruption of Rome would be ended, and all would be well. Austria and Bavaria, where the Edict of Worms had been partially executed, united in the same entreaty."³

2. von Ranke, op. cit., p.108.

3. Froude, The Council of Trent, p.65.

There was no desire to break away from Rome. Even Luther was a long time in realizing that that would be his last recourse. The people, so long under the shadow of the Church, so long having been engrained with the thought that in the Church, and only in the Church, was there salvation, no matter how corrupt that institution may be, wanted only reform. They knew not where to turn, were they to leave this shadow."The strength of Romanism lay where it still lies, in the craving of Human nature for authoritative certainty about religion and our own souls. Death, when our short lives are over, lies before us all as an inevitable fact -death and the consciousness of the many sins we have committed. To make existance tolerable, some fixed belief seems necessary as to the meaning of life and as to our condition hereafter. Such a belief, Romanism, with all/its faults, professed to give, and if the authority of Rome was overthrown, there seemed nothing before any one but blank darkness." 4

The laity, when they claimed to be represented on the council which they were demanding, had no thought of a reformation of doctrine. The Church insisted that they were no judges of such high matters. Some of them were willing to believe it. All, with a few fanatic exceptions, would have thought it a crime to disturb the peace of Europe on questions of speculative belief. Their complaint was of definite material wrongs, for which they demanded redress. An overwhelming majority would have been content to leave the mysteries of

4. Froude, op. cit., p.55.

faith untouched and unchallenged, if the clergy would have consented to enforce their own canons. Luther himself said that if the pope had withdrawn his indulgences he would have gone no further.⁵

Luther, and a number of men who held strongly to, and understood the Biblical convictions underlying his actions, would never have been satisfied with a purely moral reform of the Church. They understood that the doctrinal differences would have to be straightened out so that satisfactory reformatory results might be obtained. "When treating of the commencements of Protestantism, we noted that in 1520 Luther replied to the censures of the Pope Leo X by appealing to a future General Council. The same appeal was urged in 1530 by the Lutheran princes in Germany in their Confession of Faith presented to the Diet of Augsburg; and these same princes continued until 1540 to denounce the Roman Pontiff for what they alleged to be either fear or supine negligence in not convoking the seemingly desired assembly which might put an end to the woes of Christendom. But when, in 1542, the Papal Bull for the convocation of the Council was issued, the ex-Augustinian used both voice and pen to propagate a distrust, in the minds of his followers, to everything that the Council might effect."⁶ This is said accusingly against Luther, blaming him in part for what we are wont to lay at the feet of the fathers of Trent. But it only shows the great foresight, and the true knowledge which Luther had of the ways and wiles of the Roman

5. Froude, *op.cit.*, p.96.

6. Parsons, Studies in Church History, Vol. III.

Pontiff. Luther certainly wanted a Council - but a true ecumenical council, not one under the influence and the leadership, and ruled by the majority of the Pope. He knew Rome too well to believe that any good could come of this. Luther felt and knew, before the Council ever assembled, that there would be no union of Christendom coming from it. He felt assured, before the conclave gathered, that the ends of the Protestants were already defeated. But even so, had the council attacked reform, including the arrogant claims of the pope, the bulk of the Protestants would have been willing to assemble with them. Having eliminated the outward defects of the Church, and having weakened the papal authority, progress could have been made in reformation of doctrine. At least the door would have been left open, instead of being solidly closed as actually resulted.

This feeling of a need for reform was found in the Roman Court itself. Adrian admitted that the trouble came from the root of the system, and that the poison had gone so deep that he would have to move slowly in his cure. "If Hadrian had been supported by the Cardinals and by the king of France and the Emperor, and had he been spared a few years longer, he would have introduced such reforms in clerical and monastic life and in papal and episcopal administration as would greatly have lessened the force of the Lutheran criticism and might have effectively checked the success of the Protestant Revolution."⁷ This desire of Adrian, the Pontiff during these pre-council

7. Newman, A Manual of Church History, p. 353.

years who, I believe, really wanted reform, was wide felt in Catholic circles. We will touch on this in detail a little later. The fact of importance here, is that the desire for reform was the big reason for the falling away of the majority from Catholicism and their alliance to the Reformation. "It was not Luther's doctrine which had captivated the hearts of the German people. He was the hero of the hour solely because he stood for national opposition to Rome." ⁸

"When the sixteenth century opened over Western Europe, there was as little notion that there could be two separate religions, as that there could be two suns, or two multiplication tables. The Turks were infidels. The Greek Church was far off and no one thought about it. The faith of Western Christendom was the faith of the Catholic Church, of which the pope was primate. Unbelief in its doctrines was treason to God and to man. The feeling attaching to heresy survives in the word miscreant -misbeliever. The storm which had risen had no connection with doctrine. It had been merely a boiling over of indignation against the tyranny of the ecclesiastical administration, the impurity of the lives of the clergy, and their cynical disregard of the practical duties prescribed by the creed which they taught. The disease had spread through all ranks. At the Court of Rome the corruption was at its worst." ⁹

The origin of the whole Reformation movement was a natural attempt on the part of man, with the progress of enlightenment, to emancipate himself from the clerical tutelage under which he had labored for centuries, and to remedy the abuses which were an inevitable outcome of the exclusive

8. Cambridge Modern History, Vol.1, p.147

9. Froude, op. cit., p.146.

privileges and authority of the Church. These abuses were traced directly or indirectly to the exemption of the Church and its possessions from secular control, and to the dominion which it exercised over the laity; and the revolt against this position of immunity and privilege was one of the most permanently and universally successful movements of modern history.

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It was the beginning quite independent of dogma, and it has pervaded Catholic as well as Protestant countries. The State all over the world has completely deposed the Church from the position it held in the Middle Ages; and the existence of Churches, whether Catholic or Protestant, in the various political systems, is due not to their own intrinsic authority, but to the fact that they are tolerated or encouraged by the State.¹⁰

This was roughly speaking, the main issue of the Reformation; it was practically universal, while the dogmatic questions were subsidiary and took different forms in different localities. It was on this principle that the German nation was almost unanimous in its opposition to Rome. The whole nation, wrote a canon at Worms, was of one mind with regard to clerical immorality, from Emperor down through all classes to the last man. Nine-tenth of Germany, declared the papal Nuncio, cried: "Long live Luther," and the other tenth shouted: "Death to the Church." Duke George of Saxony was calling for a council to reform the abuses, and Gattinara, Charles' shrewdest advisor, echoed the recommendation. Even Jean Glapion, the Emperor's

10. Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., p. 148.

confessor, was believed to be not averse from an accommodation from Luther, provided he would withdraw the "Babylonish Captivity." 11

The Catholic Church had always been willing to let a man believe what he wanted, as long as the authority and supremacy of the Hierarchy was not endangered. Luther's grave sin was not that he attacked doctrine, but that he had attacked the very foundation of the papal throne. A complete set of Catholic doctrine had never yet been authoritatively set forth. Speaking of the doctors of theology of the day, Murdock tells us: "These doctors disputed among themselves with sufficient freedom on various points of doctrine, and even upon those which were considered essential to salvation. For a great many points of doctrine had not yet been determined by the authority of the Church, or, as the phrase was, by the Holy See; and the pontiffs were not accustomed, unless there was some special reason, to make enactments that would restrain liberty of opinion on subjects not connected either with the sovereignty of the Holy See or the privileges and emoluments of the clergy. Hence many persons of great eminence might be named who safely advanced the same opinions and not without applause, before Luther's day, which were afterwards charged upon him as a crime. And doubtless Luther might have enjoyed the same liberty with them, if he had not attacked the system of Roman finance, the wealth of the bishops, the supremacy of the pontiffs, and the reputation of the Dominican order." 12

11. Cambridge Modern History, op.cit, p.148.

12. Murdock, Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, p.15.

Therein lie the crux of the entire matter. Had the Reformation only been a matter of changing doctrine, the history of the Middle Ages would have been much changed, for then it would not have seen the great division in the Church, the Counter-Reformation, and the religious wars. It would have been no great burden on the conscience of the Roman See to reconcile Luther's doctrine and that of the Catholic Church, for that ecclesiastical body had for many years harbored the very doctrines which Luther taught - the Roman Church had in the past reconciled many contrary doctrines and had taken them all in her stride. Since the Capture of Rome, the Holy See had fallen into contempt. A pert Imperial secretary said the Germans might have any religion they pleased, if they would only send money enough to the Sacred College!¹³ In fact, the Catholic Church had no system of doctrine at this time with which to reconcile that of the Reformation! The clergy were in the majority of cases too illiterate to understand or meddle with doctrine - the popes of the Renaissance were indifferent to it. There had been many before Luther who held to his doctrine, to the Scriptural doctrine, for instance, on justification by faith alone. In St. Bernard we read: "There is need that you must first believe that you cannot have forgiveness of sin except by the grace of God; next, that there after you can not have or do any good work, unless God grants it to you; lastly, that you can not earn eternal life with your works, though it is not given you without merit." And in the Apology

¹³. Froude, op. cit., p.89.

to the Augsburg Confession we read: "Anthony, Bernard, Dominicus, Franciscus, and other Holy Fathers selected a certain kind of life either for the sake of study (of more readily reading the Holy Scriptures) or other useful exercises. In the mean time they believed that by faith they were accounted righteous for Christ's sake, and that God was gracious to them, not on account of these exercise of their own." And these men were canonized saints in the Holy Catholic Church! We shall also see, that during the doctrinal discussions of the Council (of) itself that again and again Catholic bishops and divines rose with doctrinal declarations that were entirely Scriptural and in keeping with Luther's teachings. But until the supremacy of the Roman See had been attacked they had been completely unmolested. In other words, the split in the Church was due entirely to lack of moral reform. Had the pontiffs not been so successful in delaying reforming action in order to save their own necks, reconciliation between, at least the vast majority of the Protestants and their mother Church, would have been very possible.

Secondly we notice that in both the Protestant and Catholic camps there was the honest desire for reconciliation.

In 1537, at the Diet of Schmalcald the Protestants drew up the articles which the council (when it would meet) must treat. The first part states briefly four uncontested positions on the Trinity and the Person of Christ; the second part deals with the office and work of Christ, or our redemption, and marked the points of difference between the two confessions; the third part treats of those points which the council may further discuss. When the articles had been subscribed by the

theologians, Melanchthon added under his name: "As to the pope, I hold that if he will not express the Gospel, for the sake of peace and the unity of those Christians who are or may be under him, his superiority over bishops *jure humano* might be allowed by us." ¹⁴ "Melanchthon and his friends, who had drawn the Augsburg Confession, were willing to revise the points which had been most objected to." ¹⁵ After Luther's death the tendency of Melanchthon to yield largely for the sake of peace became more evident.

In referring to the Augsburg Confession Murdock says: "Three modes of getting rid of these troublesome contentions remained. One was to allow those who would not obey the mandates of the pontiff, to enjoy their own sentiments on religion, and to worship God as they saw fit, without allowing the public tranquillity to be thereby destroyed. Another was to compel them by force of arms, to cease from dissenting from the Roman Church, and make them return to the spurned friendship of the Roman prelate. A third was to attempt an honorable and equitable compromise, by each party relinquishing some portion of what it considered as its just claims. The first method was accordant with reason and justice, and would meet the wishes of the wise and good; but it was totally repugnant to the arrogant claims of the pontiff, and to the ignorance of the age, which abhorred all liberty of opinion concerning religion. The second accorded with the customs and views of the age, and with the violent counsels of the Roman Court, but it was abhorrent to the prudence, the moderation, and the equity of the Emperor and all

14. Kurz, *Church History*, Vol. 2. p.282.

15. Froude, *op. cit.*, p.90.

good men. The third, therefore, was adopted, and met the approbation of all who were solicitous for the good of the Empire; nor did the sovereign pontiff himself seem to be wholly averse from it." 16

The fact that the Edict of Worms was not immediately carried out against Luther was not so much due to the fact that the princes were Lutheran in doctrine, but because they saw it their duty to protect Luther against the papacy and to preserve peace. We find throughout the negotiations in the following years, that these princes, often referred to as staunch Lutherans, were just as interested, if not more, in opposing the supremacy of Rome and preserving peace as they were in the principles of Luther. For that reason they were willing to make concessions. This comes out again and again. At the Diet of Nuremberg in 1532 they held that the administration of the Church was so corrupt, that it could only be remedied by a council; a council, not of bishops only, and called by the pope, but one in which the laity would have a voice, and which must be called by the Emperor. Such a council there must be, and it must be called within a year. If the pope agreed, the Diet would undertake that Luther and the preachers should be silent until the council had sat and given its decisions. 17

The Emperor was always ready for conciliation. He had chiefly at heart the reunion of western Christianity as a means of strengthening the imperial power against Turkish invasion and putting an end to the ruinous internal strife caused by

16. Murdock, op. cit., p. 55.

17. Froude, op. cit., p. 70.

the Protestant Revolt. He had become convinced that Protestantism had become too firmly rooted to be forcibly extirpated. Any attempt at coercive measures would, he was sure, lead to a civil war. As stated above, this was one of the chief reasons, also, for the backing Luther had from many German princes. Stalwart Catholic though Charles was, he fully recognized the terrible corruption of the ecclesiastical administration, the reality of the grievances that had long been accumulating, and the absolute necessity of such reforms as would lead to the conciliation of all who had not become hopelessly estranged from the Church.¹⁸ In the Augsburg Interim, 1548, he granted the cup to the laity and marriage to the priests, but held by the Tridentine doctrine of justification. It represented the pope as simply the highest bishop, in whom the unity of the Church is visibly set forth. The right of interpreting Scripture was given exclusively to the Church. The Sacraments were enumerated as seven, and the doctrine of transubstantiation emphatically maintained. The duty of fostering and seeking the intercession of the Mother of God and the saints, observing all Catholic ceremonies of worship, processions, festivals, etc., was strictly insisted upon. The Emperor was satisfied, and so too, some of the Protestant princes! Maurice gave at least half assent, which the Emperor accepted as approval.... Landgrave Philip, whose power was forever broken, gave in.¹⁹

The Leipzig Interim, 1549, treated Romish customs and ceremonies almost as things of indifference, passed over many less essential doctrinal differences and gave to fundamental

18. Newman, op. cit., p.357.

19. Kurz, op. cit., p.294.

differences such a setting as might be applied equally to pure evangelical doctrine as to that of the Augsburg Interim. The evangelical doctrine of justification was essentially there, but it was not decidedly and unambiguously expressed: and till less were Romish errors sharply and unmistakably repudiated. Good works were said to be necessary, but not in the same sense that one could win salvation by means of them. On Church and Hierarchy, the positions of the Augsburg Interim were simply restated. The seven sacraments were acknowledged, though in another than the Roman sense. In the Mass the Latin language was again introduced, Images of saints were allowed, but not for worship, so too, the festivals of Mary and of Corpus Christi, but without processions, etc.²⁰

Had the pope been unafraid to call a free general council, which would discuss reform, and attempt to do away with the most obvious abuses in the Church, peace and unity would again have reigned. The French Ambassador to Rome told the pope that after all, a council, such as above mentioned, was his best chance. The Protestants would submit to it, he said, if it was called in a free country and fairly composed. The pope, perhaps, would have done better for himself if he had consented. No one wished for a schism; the tempers of men had not yet been hardened by persecutions and wars. If the pope had complied with a universal demand, and allowed a free council to meet, with the laity represented on it, and had submitted himself to its decisions, he might still have been left with an honourable supremacy. States where the majority were Catholic could have kept their

20. Kurz, op. cit., p.295.

Mass; the Church could have been reformed; varieties of ritual and doctrine could have been comprehended under ambiguous formularies; even the League of Smalcald might have been satisfied, and the spiritual constitution of Christendom might have remained outwardly unbroken.²¹

A few historians, especially those who are inclined to lean toward favoring Catholicism, state that after the Diet of Ratisbon, 1541, all reconciliation between the two parties was impossible, for there the Protestants shown forth with all their stubbornness. Let us consider that historical Diet for a moment and see whether this is true.

After the founding of the Smalcald League the pope attempted two methods of raising opposition to this party. One was to convince the Emperor to form a counter-league of Catholic princes. The other was to join with Francis and take Henry VIII to task, for in England, it was supposed, lay the seat of all the insurrection against the papacy. Charles, however, felt that should he take arms against England, the Protestants of Germany would immediately side with Henry. Also, should he form a counter-league against the Smalcaldic League, he would be throwing Germany into a civil war, and that a religious one, the most horrible kind of a civil war. And so he thought he must try once more to see what could be accomplished by a Diet. "It was still to be compromise, only compromise."²² Froude sums up the results of this conference in a different light than does either Newman, who states that

21. Froude, *op.cit.*, p.93.

22. *Ibid.*, p.125.

this Diet "between Catholics and Protestants demonstrated afresh the irreconcilable differences between the two parties,"²³ or Hulme, who concludes that after the Diet of Ratisbon, that "if religious unity was ever to be regained force would have to be employed."²⁴ Let us see what actually happened at this Diet. It was presided over by the Chancellor. Three champions were selected from either side,,and before them were laid twenty-four disputed articles. Concerning these they were to devise some common form of expression, which would admit of an elastic interpretation. All went well until they came to the Eucharist. The Romans held to their accepted view and the Protestants claimed that the efficacy did not depend on the consecration by a priest, and that it did not survive the ceremony. "The distinction was subtle and serious, but might not have been insurmountable, for it turned on the nature of substance when detached from its sensible qualities; and what substance was or is, when so detached, or whether it was or is anything at all, no one knew and one knows now."²⁵ When we remember that the Church had no clearly defined and inscribed doctrines, that tradition was by many more respected than Sacred Writ, which was unknown even to many clergy, and that metaphysics was certainly beyond the scope of those who could scarcely read and write, then this conclusion seems highly plausible. The other snag came when they discussed the power of the keys, and here the objection was not so much a doctrinal one, as a moral one;-objection to the lives of the Roman clergy, and here even Pallavicino admits that the Protestants had a point.

23. Newman, op. cit., p.111.

24. Hulme, Op. cit., p.265.

25. Froude, op. cit., p.129.

Complete agreement could not be arrived at, but progress had been made. The Emperor was well pleased, and promised that a complete and immediate reform in clerical manners and discipline was in the making. And at this we hear the first real objection at the Diet, and that from the Roman bishops. There had been no objection from these while the doctrinal discussions had been in progress, but once reform was mentioned, and their manner of livelihood threatened, then they immediately protested all that had been done. The bishops realized that in reform they would be the first to fall before the ax. To resort to doctrinal dispute was their only recourse, and this they did. But they were in a minority over against the lay representatives at the Diet. These were satisfied with what had been done. Even Contarini, the papal ambassador rebuked the bishops for their opposition and admonished them to change their ways before such reform measures were forced on them. Froude sums up the entire Diet with these words: "The future Western Christendom now turned on whether the long talked of council could or could not be immediately held." ²⁶ He firmly believes that such a council, properly conducted, could have yet reconciled the two parties.

The Diet of Speyer, meeting after that of Ratisbon, left even a more hopeful feeling in those who participated. "All Germany, Protestant and Catholic, was united and enthusiastic. The theological exasperations had lost their edge. The Emperor's action at Ratisbon had convinced the most suspicious that now they had nothing to fear. They at least had no alarm that he

26. Froude, op. cit., p.131.

was playing with their confidence about the council. Trent had satisfied the majority as a place of meeting. It was within the German border, and Charles had kept his promise, and in the general improved humour even the pope was more gently thought of. Cardinal Moroni had been sent as legate this time to attend to the Diet. Conciliation was the order of the day. The cardinal said that if Trent was not satisfactory, the pope would agree to Cambray. The larger part of the diet preferred to do as the Emperor wished. They would not add to his troubles by fresh contradictions. Satisfied that a real honest effort was now to be made to reform the Church and settle peaceably the questions dividing them, they were willing to meet the Emperor half way." 27

Now let us turn our attention to the Catholic camp and see how matters in relation to reconciliation stood there. The necessity of reform and of a spiritual regeneration of Catholicism had been acknowledged again and again in the opening of the sixteenth century by men of high position in the Church. Time after time it was admitted in the Sacred College, and at each conclave the entire body of Cardinals pledged themselves to reform. Commissions were appointed but nothing much came of them. "Ultimately two great parties evolved themselves among the Catholic reformers; the one desired conciliation and discovery of a common ground on which the old and the new ideas might be harmonized; the other, while sharing with the former party their indignation at the moral corruption of the Church, yet parted company with it with regard to reform of doctrine.

27. Froude, op. cit., p.137.

The former party wished for a real Catholic reformation; the latter succeeded in educing a movement which started with so great a promise to little more than a counter-reformation."²⁸

The desire for reform within the Roman Church first found a nucleus in the "Oratory of Divine Love," which had been founded by some distinguished men of Rome for their mutual edification; "they met for the worship of God, for preaching, and the practice of spiritual exercises, at the Church of St. Silvestro and Dorothea, in the Trastevere, near the place where the apostle Peter is believed to have dwelt, and where he presided over the first assemblies of the Christians."²⁹ They numbered from fifty to sixty members, among whom was to be found the leading thinkers, the most learned and upright prelates and laymen of that day. There was a communion of feeling among these men from the beginning, but from this sprang the widest opposites which subsequent church history was to produce. Here was Contarini, "the zealous reformer, who stood for compromise and conciliation with the Protestants,"³⁰ and Caraffa, "who also wanted reform, although he was more a zealot and had become imbued with the Spanish idea of reform through internal discipline."³¹ Other members of note were Sadoletto, Gaetano de Thiene, Ghiberti, and Giuliano Bathi. This group was by no means opposed to the doctrines of the Protestants. They were motivated first by a desire for a closer alliance between Christianity and humanism. But not only this. Augustine had always been a force in the medieval

28. Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., p.639.

29. von Ranke, vol. 1, op.cit., p.93.

30. Newman, op. cit., p. 354.

31. Ibid.

Church, and the Augustinian elements in its theology were ever and again asserting themselves and claiming supremacy. The attraction of Augustine felt so strongly by Luther was not felt only by him. The end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries were marked by a renewed study of St. Augustine in many quarters, and by the consequent revival of Pauline ideas of justification in different forms. As Reginald Pole said in one of his letters, the jewel which the Church had kept so long half concealed was again brought to light. This trend of thought found expression in the writings of Thomas de Vio, Cardinal Cajetan, and for some time was looked on with favour in the highest quarters of the Church. That section of the "Oratory of Divine Love" which wished to spiritualize theology and deepen the bases of the Christian life found ample support in the accepted theology of the day.³²

These men were come together to discuss means of purifying the Church, but they accomplished very little along these lines, nothing more than keeping the faith alive in the church. However, the effect of their doctrinal beliefs were wider felt. About the year 1540, a little book, "On the Benefits bestowed by Christ," was put into circulation; it treated, as a report of the inquisition expresses it, "in an insidious manner of justification, undervalued works and merits, ascribing all to faith; and as this was the very point at which so many prelates and monks were stumbling, the book had been circulated to a great extent."³³ We find also, that various laypeople took an interesting part in the activities

³². Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 2, p. 641.

³³. Ranke, vol. I, p. 96.

of the "Oratory." Of these, Vittoria Colonna was probably the most outstanding, and ranking with her were the Duke of Palliano and his wife Julia Gonzaga. Their opinions made active progress among the middle classes. "The report of the inquisition would seem to exaggerate, when it reckons 3,000 schoolmasters as attached to them; but admitting the number to be smaller, how deep an effect must have been produced on the minds of youth, and of the people."³⁴

Venice had been the home from which came many of the thinkers of the type found in the "Oratory." After the sack of Rome in 1527 its members were scattered; but within a short time many of them met again in Venice, where they found new recruits. Ghiberti had become bishop of Verona in 1524 and his household became a new center for the reforming movement. At Padua Reginald pole spent many years and though he was only a layman, the manner of his life and ^{the} conduct of his household were not unworthy to be compared with Ghiberti. The University of Padua numbered among its teachers some of the most eminent scholars of the day, and it was one of the centers of the Renaissance. Modena also was one of the strongholds of the Catholic reformers; Giovanni Morone, who afterwards with difficulty escaped the charge of heresy, was its bishop. Sadoleto, Cortese, and other leaders of the movement for reform were either Modenese or had been connected with Modena. So the movement had found a more widespread field than the small community which it original was. They were not reformers of doctrine, and they were not interested in preaching their

³⁴. Ranke, op. cit., p.97.

ideas to the lower classes. Yet as von Ranke points out, "these new (?) doctrines had a large number of adherents in Italy."

Under Adrian VI, as stated before in this paper, nothing much was accomplished. His reign, nevertheless will ever remain memorable from his confession that the source of the poison which was corrupting the whole Church was in the papal court, nay, even in the pontiffs themselves.

To Clement VII the one remedy for the evils of the Church was a nightmare; namely a reform by a free ecumenical council. The cry grew in intensity and sprang up from many quarters during the vacillating reign of Clement. Not only from Luther, but from Catholics by a far greater majority. Luther's appeal for a free council was echoed in the Diets. Grievances were continually coming before the imperial Diets until they amounted to several hundreds. Many of them came from Catholic princes. There was the widespread feeling of the need of a thorough reformation of the administrative and financial methods of the hierarchy and of the lives of the clergy and monks, not only among those who were openly attached to Luther, but among those who clung to the old faith as well.³⁵

The General Councils had ominous memories for the papacy since the days of Pisa, Basel, and Constance; and Clement no doubt felt that the government of the Church during his pontificate would not stand the ordeal of public examination. General Councils were apt to get out of hand, and no one could foresee where they would ultimately end. Clement succeeded in putting

³⁵. Newman, op. cit., p.355.

off the evil day. And well he might have been afraid. "The readiness with which the Catholic prelates and princes ignored the orders of the supreme pontiff furnishes the most striking evidence of the depressed condition of the papal authority at this time. The papacy had deservedly lost the confidence of its constituency by reason of its corrupt administration, the devotion of the popes to personal interests, and the utterly unscrupulous diplomacy of the Roman curia." 36

With Paul III a new era began, and at last the party of Catholic reformers found their opportunity. One of the first acts of the new pope was to confer a Cardinal's hat on Gaspar Contarini; and soon after, Caraffa, Sadoleto, and Polo, received the sacred purple. The leaders among the Catholic reformers were summoned to Rome. With them on the Commission for reform sat Ghiberti, Aleander, Fregoso, Cortese, and Badia. In 1557 they presented their report, the well known Councilum delectorum cardinalium et aliorum praelatorum de emendanda ecclesia. The great principle to which they turn again and again is that laws ought not to be dispensed with save for grave cause, and that even then no money should be taken for dispensation. To the system of money payments they trace the great evils of the Roman Court. Everything could be obtained for money, however hurtful it might be for the general welfare of the Church. The report does not confine itself to the evils of the fountainhead. The whole church was affected with corruption. Unfit persons were habitually ordained and admitted to benefices. Pensions and charges were imposed upon the revenues of the benefices

36. Newman, op. cit., p.356.

which made it impossible for the holder to lead an honest life. Expectatives and reservations had a demoralizing effect. Residence was generally neglected by the bishops and the clergy. Exemptions from the authority of the Ordinary enabled leaders of scandalous lives to persist in their wickedness. The regular clergy were not better than the seculars. Scandals were frequent in the religious Houses; and the privileges of the orders enabled unfit persons to hear confessions. The Cardinals were as bad as the bishops with regard to residence, and accumulated offices in their persons. Indulgences were excessive in number, and superstitious practices were too often encouraged. Much evil had followed from the granting of marriage dispensations; and absolution for the sin of simony could be obtained for a song. In Rome itself the services were slovenly conducted and the whole priesthood was sordid. Loose women were openly received even in the houses of Cardinals. Unbelief grew apace, and unnecessary dispensations on trivial points disturbed the faith of the vulgar. It was the duty of the Mother and Mistress of all the churches to lead the way in the amending of these evils.³⁷ This all has a very familiar ring, for was it not the exact form of grievances which had caused the Protestants to raise their voice? Here a Commission on reform, come together at the request of the pope, found the condition of the Church which caused the split to be exactly what the opposition had claimed. Both sides saw eye to eye in this matter. Reconciliation seemed but a matter of time!

37. Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., p.643.

Because attempts to assemble a general council failed, Charles fell back on national conferences, in which endeavors were made to find some ground for common agreement which would serve as a starting point should a council be called. We have made reference to these when speaking of the possibilities of reconciliation on the side of the Protestants, when we mentioned that it was in pursuit of this policy that the famous Colloquy of Ratisbon took place in 1541, after the preliminary meetings at Hagenau and Worms. The discussions which took place are again of interest at this point as showing the extent of the reconstruction of the Church system to which the most liberal Catholic reformers were prepared to consent. Agreement was arrived at on the fundamental article of Original Sin, Free Will, and Justification. With regard to the last a neutral formula was arrived at midway between the Lutheran doctrine and that formulated later at Trent. Justification was two-fold, and depended both on "inherent" and "imputed" righteousness. It was attained by faith, but that faith must be living and active. The marriage of priests might be permitted but not encouraged, as also communion in both kinds. On the general doctrine of the Sacraments, and especially on the doctrine of the Eucharist, agreement was found more difficult.

The conciliating party of the Roman Church had tried their best. Now new influences began to turn the tide in favor of the other party of reformers within the Church - those who wished to reform by discipline, and by destroying the heretic. The Inquisition was the most potent weapon in the hands of the

papacy. The Jesuits were beginning to render yeoman service for the pontiff, also. Paul III definitely did not want the council to meet. After his first proposed council (Mantua) was set aside, various negotiations for restoring peace and harmony were held between the Emperor and the Protestants; but without any determined and solid benefit, because the pontiff, by his legates and others, generally disconcerted all their measures.³⁸ The reformed and tolerant Catholicism, which seemed about to prevail in the early years of his reign, found itself only partially supported, if not abandoned, and others were allowed to frustrate its efforts. Contarini, on his return to Italy, after the Colloquy at Ratisbon, was rewarded with the government of Bologna, but his influence was gone. His death occurred soon after, on August 24, 1542, and he was spared the further disallusionment which the Council would have inevitably brought him. He was one of the noblest figures in an age of great men, and the blessing of the peacemaker was his. Ghiberti survived him little more than a year, dying on December 30, 1543. The loss of Contarini and Ghiberti was an irreparable blow to the party of conciliation. Sadoleto, Pole, and Morone survived; but none of them had the force of character to fight a losing fight; and Pole and Moroni ended their days in trying to vindicate their orthodoxy, the one by playing the part of a persecutor in England, the other by winding up the Council in the papal interest. Everything now depended on the Council, and there was nothing to do but to await events.³⁹

38. Murdock, *op. cit.*, p.60.

39. Cambridge Modern History, *op. cit.*, p.660.

V. The Door Is Closed.

Though the Colloquy of Ratisbon had failed to achieve any permanent results, yet the Emperor Charles V did not despair of reconciliation. The breach in Western Christianity had been formed because of the moral condition of the Church. In the beginning of the Protestant Reformation doctrine had been a minor matter in the minds of the leaders, and it held such a place still in the thinking of the masses. There were parties on both sides whose great desire was a reconciliation at the expense of any doctrine. The Emperor and others still felt convinced that this could be brought about. They were in the midst of things, they had their hand on the pulse of the day, and they felt that there was still a chance -the door was still open for the Protestants to return, even on many of their own conditions, to the folds of the Mother Church. The varying circumstances of the political situation from time to time affected the Emperor's attitude towards the Lutherans, but he had a genuine desire all/along for a thorough reformation of the abuses of the Church by a general council, from which the Roman Court itself was not to be exempt. Paul III on the other hand had little desire for the council, at which it was clear after the events of Ratisbon, that the papal prerogative was to be severely handled. If Paul had been a great man and had followed the Emperor's advice for a council which should consider only reform in the Church, he might have made himself another St. Gregory. But far were any such aspirations from the present occupant of the Holy See. If the council was once

launched seriously upon reform, he well knew what would follow. The Church might be regenerated, and Catholic unity preserved; but the splendour of the papacy, the pride, the wealth, the world-wide dominion, would be at an end forever. A genuine searching inquiry into the disorders of the Church could have no other results. All that Luther had said would be proved true. The German Diet would send their representatives. The Catholic Germans would go with the rest. The Romans would be overwhelmed.¹

From the very beginning Luther and his followers had demanded a council. Since 1522 the German Diets joined in the demand, and Charles V seconded it as a means of restoring unity to the empire. But the popes wanted no council; since the Council of Constance, 1414-1418, and the Council of Basel, 1431-1449, which had threatened the sovereignty of the pope, it was the papal policy to avoid councils and the free discussions which they developed. The Emperor's father confessor, Cardinal Garcia de Loatsa, wrote him that, though a council was no doubt the surest way of eradicating heresy in Germany, yet to his knowledge pope and cardinals were consigning a council to the devil. And the Emperor's secretary, Granvella, stated: "The pope fears a council like fire." Above all, the pope wanted no council in which Charles V would have a controlling hand because Charles wanted reconciliation, and therefore was not averse to compromise, whereas the pope demanded unconditional surrender to Rome. But Charles was powerful; it would not do to flaunt his desires. Grievances by the hundreds were coming before the Diets; the demand for reform was universal. Time and again,

1. Froude, op. cit., p. 164.

when in the course of that three-cornered struggle between France, the Emperor, and the pope, the last-named had fallen into the Emperor's hands, he had promised, as a condition of the peace treaty, to call a council; but the promise was promptly forgotten when the Emperor had turned his back.²

Paul at first tried rather desperately to avoid the council. Learning that practically everybody was opposed to a council in Italy, he promptly called one for there. First at Mantua in 1537 and then at Vicenza, in 1538, but not a single bishop appeared. "It was all a method of stalling off the Emperor and keeping him from attacking the problem at a diet."³ It was impossible, however, for him to resist the demands of the Emperor altogether: and after an interview between them at Lucca, Paul at length again agreed to summon a council, and Trent was selected as the place. This would satisfy the German demand that it should meet on German territory, yet it was in easy access to the Italian bishops and was not so far distant as to be beyond the pope's control. Thus the pope actually won round one before the Council opened. He was certain of a majority of Italian bishops, who were in the main, pawns to be moved to his liking.

In August, 1542, Parisio, Morone, and Pole, the legates appointed to open the council, started for Trent; and the council was duly opened on November 1. There were, however, only a few Italian prelates present; and, as no more arrived, by a Bull of July 6, 1543, the pope again adjourned the Council. The war between Charles and Francis I again made the Council

2. Ev. Luth. Synod. Conf., 1938, "Union Movements in the Church," Prof. Theo. Hoyer.

3. Ibid.

impossible, and at the Diet of Speyer it was agreed that all proceedings against the Lutherans should be stayed until a free and general council could be held in Germany. The Lutherans were privately assured that an endeavor should be made to frame a scheme of comprehension, and that the pope should not be allowed to stand in the way.⁴

The proceedings at Speyer alarmed the pope. He wrote a very strong letter to the Emperor, telling him that the sin of Eli would be his if he did not stop the Diet from interfering with spiritual matters. Toleration, he said, was pernicious, and any attempt to regulate the affairs of the Church in a national assembly largely composed of laymen -that was absolutely unheard of. "Sooner than allow religion in Germany to be ordered by a lay diet, he would abdicate and give St. Peter back his keys!"⁵ He was trying to awaken in the Emperor the old fear that had so often been a very successful weapon of the papacy in the past. But not with Charles. The pope realized that it was necessary for him to take active steps if the control of the situation was not to pass out of his hands. Unless something was done, Charles might be driven to follow the example of Henry VIII, and the entire German Church might fall away from the Roman See. The Council must be held to satisfy Charles, but it must be conducted with quite other objects than those contemplated by him. So Paul issued a Bull for the opening of the Council on December 11, 1545.

4. Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., p.661.

5. Froude, op. cit., p.160.

This move gave the pope the jump on Charles. The Germans were still not decided as to what to do about the council. The Protestants, and even many of the Roman Bishops in Germany refused to attend the council which was so close to the guiding hand of the pontiff, and so evidently under his control. They were deeply distrustful of their Father in Rome.⁶ So Charles advised that considerations of doctrine should at least be postponed until it was seen what the Germans would finally resolve upon. He recommended the pope to take up morals in earnest. The fathers would be in a better condition to deal with spiritual mysteries when their hands were cleaner.⁷

But this the pope did not intend to do. The formulation of doctrine must be the chief business. The old traditional doctrine of the Church must be laid down afresh so as to make all conciliation of the Protestants impossible.⁸ He thought that his best means of escape was to appeal to the dread of heresy, and to stand forth as the uncompromising champion of the orthodox faith. For that reason de Monte was directed to open the council on heresy, to take up the Articles of the Augsburg Confession, and to do the work so quickly that no voice might be raised about hearing the opposition. Having obtained this he wished to abolish the Council. The reform of abuses might be entrusted to him as the judge in ecclesiastical matters. So we can understand the instructions which were given to the legates: "As to reform, it is not necessary to discuss it before doctrine, nor indeed, at the same time with them, because it is quite a secondary end of the Council."

6. Newman, op. cit., p.356.

7. Froude, op. cit., p.160.

8. Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., p.662.

Also, the instructions were to make all decrees run in the name of the Holy see and the legates.⁹

The pope was to run into some stiff opposition, French and German representatives were in favour of making reasonable concessions to the Protestants. Several prelates, following out the demands of their Emperor, ventured to urge that the Council should leave doctrine alone. This had been the strong advise of Mendoza, who sat in the Council in the Emperor's name. He had dared in a sermon in the Cathedral to tell the fathers to weep for their sins. They well knew that there was occasion for it. Things were looking serious for the pope. "All his schemes, all his hopes would be defeated if the council were to fling itself into reform; and if doctrinal questions were to be suspended till the German heretics could be present to help in discussing them, fatal consequences would follow. He wrote passionately that in all councils the rule had been to take doctrine first. A sound faith was more important than morality; and that it was not a fit time to weaken the defender's arms by proclaiming their faults to the world when the enemy was beating at their gates. The bishops might talk about sins and immoralities. Paul said he saw what they meant. They were aiming at him and at the Court of Rome. They must be brought to their sense. Inferiors were not to judge their superiors. Popes were to be venerated, no accused. It was easy to talk about reform; men were willing surgeons upon their neighbors' limbs." 10

9. Pennington, op. cit., p.9.

10. Froude, op. cit., p. 169f.

He had also to address himself to the princes, those of the Emperor, for here, too, he found a den of powerful enemies opposing his schemes concerning the council. His big grief was the approaching Spaniards. These prelates came from a country whose Church did not know the immoralities rampant in the Church at large, and they were for reforming the entire body to meet the qualifications of their own dear Spain. Their firm conviction was that heresy sprang from the immoral conditions of the Church. The way to rid the Church of heresy, therefore, was not to attack heretical doctrine, but to reform the Church. "A few faithful voices echoed Paul's phrases: 'Belief was the foundation of Christian life...good conduct could grow only out of a right creed...errors of opinion were more dangerous than sin.' But it was evident that a good many did actually believe that the Church was in a bad way and needed mending, and this party, when the Spanish bishops arrived, would be irresistible. The pope had ordered (the legate) to shelve reform. It could not be shelved." 11

De Monte was at last obliged to agree that doctrine and reform of moral and discipline should proceed in alternate sessions. He had to trust to his own ingenuity to keep the situation from becoming dangerous. But this dexterity was not enough. With the help of a majority of Italian bishops, faithful to the Holy See, and especially later, when the Jesuits came into the picture, he had a strong force on his side as far as swinging his doctrines was concerned. There was also a

11. Froude, op. cit., p.171.

consolation. Doctrine had still the first place, and with good management, the Articles of the Augsburg Confession might still be condemned before a synod could meet in Germany, or German deputies arrive at Trent. "In order to give himself more time, Paul started diplomatic and political intrigue rolling. While he urged the Fathers to oppose the Germans in the Council, he encouraged the Northern Germans to resist the Emperor."¹²

We need, therefore, not be surprised to find that with a little dexterity, the decrees were passed by the Council, which and when the Court of Rome insisted upon them. Paul III had made a noble effort to keep reform altogether from the Council. In this he had failed. But only as a matter of form. The reform sessions under him became more or less a farce. It was in order to satisfy the Emperor that the arrangement had been made that there should be alternate discussions, for if the Emperor could be satisfied the remainder of the opposition to Paul would be negligible. So "they now made some show to propitiate him (Charles). They proposed a decree as to the residences of bishops. They allowed the cardinals who held several bishoprics to choose in six months which of them they would keep. This Bull, however, designed to deceive the Emperor and the people, remained a dead letter. Under various pretexts the cardinals continued to procure a large number of rich benefices. This decree was brought forward at least three times, and while it was making slow progress the doctrines made rapid progress."¹³

12. Pennington, op. cit., p.106.

13. Ibid.

Despite the demands of the Emperor, the wishes of the Spaniards, the general desire for reform, and the resolution that doctrine and reform be discussed alternately, the pope was successful in pushing through doctrinal decrees which should make it impossible for the Germans to appear at the Council. He was successful in this for three reasons mentioned before: the majority of Italian prelates, the Jesuits, and the fact that he was able to keep Charles busy at home. No less credit should be given to the able management of his legates. In looking at the major doctrinal decrees of the Council we shall see that the resolutions arrived at were not the mere formulation of the universal belief of the Church at that time, they were not the result of sincere theological study to determine the truth - but the motivation behind every doctrine was to formulate it so, that the Protestants would be heretics!

"In certain essential respects the Council and not the Reformation was the watershed between the old and the new, the dividing line between the pagan clericalism and the New Testament evangelicalism. It professed only to formulate what had always been held, but it changed in formulating; making the irregular null and void; and with sinister instinct and ingenuity causing the worse part to appear the whole. Till then there had been the possibility that some common ground might be found for all who wished to reform, some basis on which the unity of Western Christendom might be preserved, and in which loyalty to the essentials of the Gospel might be combined with freedom in their detailed application. But Rome then made explicit choice of obscurantism instead of

light; and has found no place for repentance since. It is true that she set herself to remove certain abuses, and thereby reassured some who were waivering in their allegiance. She likewise perfected her organization, regimenting her priesthood so that no new revolutionary movement need be feared. The burden of her doctrinal definitions, however, was that she deliberately separated herself from the friends of the Evangel, not a few of whom had hitherto found it impossible to maintain a precarious existance within her borders. As Reformation Genealogies show, it was not the reformers who separated themselves from Catholicism even as it had existed in the later Middle ages. It was Rome who was schismatic, and she separated herself formally from the unity of the Church at Trent: that Council which cursed so much which not a few had fain hoped it might bless.¹⁴

The first doctrinal propositions selected to be placed before the Council show the trend to be taken throughout. They were not set forth as propositions to be discussed in order that the Catholic doctrine might be arrived at, but they were set before the Council as doctrines of Luther which the Council was asked to anathematize. The first four were as follows:

"That Holy Scriptures contained all things necessary for salvation, and that it was impious to place apostolic tradition on a level with Scripture."

"That certain books accepted as canonical in the Vulgate were apocryphal and not canonical."

"That the Scriptures must be studied in the original languages, and that there were errors in the Vulgate."

14. Muir, op. cit., p.226.

"That the meaning of Scripture is plain, and that it can be understood without commentary with the help of Christ's Spirit."

It was not to be expected that these propositions were accepted without argument. Some wished, like the Emperor, to stop arguments on doctrine altogether. Others, like Erasmus, deprecated precise definitions. A Carmelite friar said that no doubt the Church was complete before any book of the New Testament was written. The apostles themselves had taught by word of mouth and much of what they had said was known only by tradition. Tradition, therefore, had always been held in respect. But the fathers of the Church generally in their writings had appealed to Scripture rather than tradition, and it might be wise to follow their example. On the whole he thought the first proposition might be left alone. To condemn it would make divisions and raise new questions.¹⁵ Macchianti, Bishop of Chioggia, maintained that Scripture was the sole rule of faith.¹⁶ Others proposed to distinguish between apostolic traditions and tradition in general. But in the end the opposition was altogether too weak to withstand the papal power and his hold over the Italian bishops. In the Fourth Session of the Council, in the Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures, we find the following resolution concerning tradition: "... and seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions, which, received by the Apostles by the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were

15. Froude, op. cit., p. 125.

16. Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., p. 662.

from hand to hand; (the Synod) following the examples of the orthodox fathers, receives and venerates, with an equal affection and piety, and reverence, all the books, both of the Old and of the New Testament - seeing that one God is the author of both - as also the said traditions, as well as those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession.¹⁷

In formulating this doctrine, placing tradition on the same level as the Inspired Scriptures, the Catholic Church departed from the best of what she had formerly taught. Certainly there is evidence that Tradition held a place in the doctrines (unformulated though they were) of the Church prior to the Council of Trent, but the significant thing is that what was only a part of what had been held, and the least worthy part, was made the whole! "When the reformers made their appeal to the Bible there was no novelty in their doing so, and their opponents, far from challenging that appeal, made it themselves!"¹⁸ "Traditions, whether relating to faith or to morals, dictated either orally by Christ or by His Holy Spirit, and preserved in continuous succession within the Catholic Church" were to be received "with an equal feeling of piety and reverence" as the books of the Holy Scriptures. Not only was this an entirely novel position as far as the early Church was concerned, but at the Council itself a speaker was free to pronounce it an ungodly thing to pay equal respect to Tradition and the Scripture. The final decision of the Council,

17. Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Waterworth, J., trans., p.18.

18. Muir, op. cit., p.228.

however, in making binding on all what had never before been an article of faith, provided the means for warding off any attacks based on the Bible alone - which boiled down to this, that placing tradition next to Scripture was the best means of excluding the Lutherans and other Protestants from ever finding a means of reconciliation with the Catholic Church. The door was beginning to close.

2 The same sinister ingenious for choosing the worse part appears in connection with the exaltation of the Vulgate as the authoritative text of Scripture. "This Synod...ordains and declares, that the said old and vulgate editions, which, by the lengthened usage of so many years, has been approved of in the Church, be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, held as authentic; and that no one is to dare, or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever."¹⁹ "This was not only new, but in violent opposition to the best usages of the Medieval Church."²⁰ "It cast aside," says Lindsay, "as worse than useless the whole scholarship of the Renaissance both within and outside of the Medieval Church, and on the pretense of consecrating a text of Holy Scripture, reduced it to the state of a mummy, lifeless and unfruitful." The Council deliberately made itself the slave of the letter; and since many of its members had shared in the Humanist revival, this decision was very keenly debated. It was a deliberate and characteristic attempt to shut out the light - and with the light the Reformation. The position of the Vulgate in the Church had

19. Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, op. cit., p. 8.

20. Muir, op. cit., p. 229.

never been defined. It had been declared to be of authority, but, after the criticisms of Erasmus, no one knew of how much authority. It could no longer be said to be free from errors, yet, if private individuals were allowed to translate it for themselves no authority would be left. "It was observed that the primacy of Rome rested on the single text, 'Thou art Peter,' - a different construction might be given to the words, and what was to happen then? Another important objection was raised. How were the inquisitors to deal with heresy? If they were to refer to the original, they would have to learn Greek and Hebrew - an intolerable addition to their labours. The longer the fathers considered the less they could see their way, and they concluded naturally that the Vulgate must stand as it was."²¹

The canon of Scripture being made coextensive with the Vulgate, and the errors therein disallowed, three of Luther's four propositions were disposed of. There remained the fourth, on the meaning of Scripture. The same tendency to make the worse part the whole comes out further in connection with the growing unwillingness of the ecclesiastical authorities to allow the people to read the Bible for themselves. For Luther had said that the Bible was so plain and clear that anyone of ordinary intelligence could read and understand it. It helps to show how real the possibilities of a universal reformation had been that the division on this point in the Council was acute; but, as usual, obscurantism prevailed. "The Medieval Church had never encouraged a knowledge of the vernacular Scriptures, but the practise had not been uniform; and even in Spain

²¹. Froude, op. cit., p.177.

there had been vernacular translations. The German bishops demanded whether the children were not to be taught the Lord's Prayer in a language they could understand. But in the end the interpretation, and by inference, the study of the Bible by private persons was prohibited."²² "The bishops generally

were under the opinion that the reading of the Scriptures was

al the principle cause of heresy. All heretics quoted Scripture and nothing could be more dangerous than for private persons to try to form their own opinions out of it."²³ This of course was what the pope was aiming at. Let the doctrines be what they may, as long as they could be used against anyone raising his voice against the Church and the primacy of Rome and brand him as a heretic. There were of course, voices raised against this closing the Bible to the people but it was soon over-ruled.

Luther's propositions were duly condemned. The Vulgate was canonized, tradition and Church authority were declared to rank with Scripture as the rule of faith, and the vulgar were forbidden to think that they could understand Scripture for themselves. "The emphatic anathema of one at least of Luther's positions was accomplished, and Paul saw everything was going as he wished."²⁴

The outside world was not pleased. The masses as well as many clergymen had felt that the Council had been called to settle differences. But instead of that they were continually, decree by decree, making the breach wider and more irreparable. The Emperor was anything but satisfied. "Two score

22. Muir, op. cit., p.232.

23. Froude, op. cit., p.178.

24. Ibid., p.179.

of Italian bishops, without a single man of learning among them, taking upon themselves to regulate the creed of all Christendom was, he said, an extraordinary spectacle. The theologians whom they had with them he understood to be below mediocrity. Their canonists might know law, but knew nothing of divinity. The Council as it stood did not represent the thousandth part of the Christian world, yet it had canonized the Vulgate. It had ruled what was Scripture and what was not. It had declared tradition equal to Scripture, but had not explained the nature of tradition, nor the limits within which it was confined." 25

But the pope cared little who was satisfied and who was not as long as things were going his way. The more doctrines which could be forced through without the presence of the Lutheran representatives, and without the authority of the Roman See being molested, the better the future looked to him. He saw that Charles' position as a pious Catholic was every day growing more difficult and he pressed his advantage. Since the resources of moderation were not as yet exhausted, the legates were instructed to proceed with the doctrine of original sin. "Original sin would interest the fathers, divert their attention from the papal court, and more than anything else exasperate Protestant sensitiveness."²⁶ A wrench was thrown into the works by the arrival of the long dreaded Spaniards. Reform was demanded. Mendoza again raised his voice in their support. They claimed that original sin was a touchy question and that war was close enough in Germany now

25. Froude, op. cit., p.180.

26. Ibid., p. 181.

without stirring up the opposing factions by breaching a discussion on what was considered the key-stone to heresy. "But the pope had given the note and the Italian bishops assented in chorus. They would rather see the Council dissolved, they said, than that original sin should be left an open question. The Italian bishops did not want to discuss doctrine and reform alternately. Still less did they like to be dictated to by the Emperor and the Castilian new-comers. They hated Trent. They, like the pope, wanted to hurry through the doctrinal business and get back to their soft skies and vineyards." 27

The legate was not sure how far the Spaniards would go, neither was he sure how much in earnest the Emperor was when he threatened to take the Council in hand if they continued to ignore his demands for reform. He felt that he had better go easy. So the promise was again made that the alternate sessions of reform and doctrine should continue as had been planned. However, since original sin had already been started on, it should be continued until some definition was reached. The pope could well be thankful many times for the dexterous guiding of the faithful de Monte.

As soon as the question of original sin was entered upon the old dispute between the Franciscans and Dominicans as to whether or not the Virgin Mary was to be included in those who have inherited corruption from the Fall of man. This waged back and forth. Mary was finally excluded. An objection was raised that no definition was necessary on this doctrine. The Lutherans maintained that original sin remained

27. Froude, op. cit., p.181.

after baptism but was not imputed. Catholics said that it did not remain at all. What, was asked, was the difference? This gives a very good idea as to the theological ability of those present. However, it was brought out that the Lutherans taught that original sin remained after baptism. That was a heresy, since it came from the Lutherans, and therefore had to be condemned. And so it was: "If any one desires, that, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted; or even asserts that the whole of that which has the true and proper nature of sin is not taken away; but says that it is only rased, or not imputed, let him be anathema."²⁸

The victory was celebrated by a solemn Mass, a special prayer, and the invocation of the Spirit. The legate was so elated over the way things were going, that he decided to swing immediately into the matter of justification. At the objections of the Spanish Ambassador, the legate explained that original sin and justification were really all the same doctrine, at least so closely connected that they might as well finish with it before going into the matter of reform. So then it was the old story. There was to be nothing but doctrine after all. Years might pass before all these questions could be disposed of, for they all were closely connected. The promised reforms were still to be shirked.²⁹

But the opposition was not to be so easily beaten. They would have reform and the legate finally had to give in.

28. Waterworth, op. cit., p.23.

29. Froude, op. cit., p.187.

Residence was brought up and this led from one thing to another, until the Council was finally attacking the "jure divino" of the pope. De Monte again saved the day by leading the discussion back to the favorite argument of the Franciscans and their doctrine concerning Mary and original sin. Once more having control of things in hand the legate made some concessions and conciliated the fathers by agreeing that some general supervision of the religious houses might be allowed them, subject to the pope's final authority. The bishops having aired their feelings and abuses and having received some satisfaction forgot about the question of the "jure divino" of the pope, and they felt even more relieved when several decrees were passed concerning preaching.

Now that things seemed to be going better and that some attempts at reform had already been made, the Emperor was more satisfied and felt that with a clear conscience he could again urge the German diet to send its deputies to the Council. The legate now had a chance also to get back to doctrine. "To have the Lutheran theology condemned throughout before the Lutherans themselves could come to argue it was the key of his position."³⁰ And so he immediately launched the discussion into the citadel of Luther's position: justification by faith. "The Emperor endeavored to defer the discussion on this speculative point; but the pope was determined to obtain definitions which would make the breach with the Protestants irreparable. The legate requested (June 2, 1546) that more Italian bishops might be sent to the Council to cope with the opposition; and the con-

³⁰ Froede, op. cit., p. 195.

sideration of the nature of justification was entered upon. A Neapolitan, Thomas de San Felicio, bishop of La Cava, and a few theologians, maintained the doctrine of justification alone by faith, but their views could obtain no hearing.... The discussion then confined itself to the mediating view which Contarini had advocated in his *Tractatus de Justificatione*. Pighius, Pflug, and Gropper had maintained a similar position in Germany; and it had the adherents of some of the ablest Catholic intellects, both north and south of the Alps. Seripando, the General of the Augustinians, was the chief champion in the Council on this view. Serpiando in many respects resembled Sadoletto. The best elements of Humanism and Christianity were united in him; and the position he took up on this doctrine was in harmony with the traditions of the Augustinian Order. He distinguished between the "inherent" and the "imputed" righteousness; and the "inherent" only justified because of the "imputed;" the one was needed to complete the other. In the imputed righteousness of Christ alone, however, lay our final hope. The inherent righteousness, the righteousness of works, was by itself of no avail..." Such a view made reconciliation with the Protestants not impossible, while that of Laynez brought all hopes of an agreement to an end."³¹

The discussion raged furiously back and forth. There were thirty-three Canons passed on this matter, which was finally decided by the brilliant and persuading Jesuit Laynez,
 31. Cambridge Modern History, op. cit., p.667.

the papal theologian at the Council. He seemed to handle the fathers as though they were putty in his hands and arrived at conclusions which the pope wanted. Some of these thirty-three canons follow:

Canon xviii - If any one saith that the commandments of God are, even for one that is justified and constituted in grace, impossible to keep; let him be anathema.

Canon xxiv - If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema.

Canon xxix - If any one saith, that he, who has fallen after baptism, is not able by the grace of God to rise again; or, that he indeed is able to recover the justice which he has lost, but by faith alone without the sacrament of Penance, contrary to the Holy Roman and universal Church -instructed by Christ and His Apostles -hath hitherto professed, observed and taught; let him be anathema.

Canon xxxii - If any one saith, that the good works of one that is justified are in such a manner the gifts of God, as that they are not also the good merits of him that is justified; or that the said justified, by the good works which he performs though the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life, -if so be, however, that he depart in grace - and also an increase in glory; let him be anathema.³²

32. Waterworth, op. cit., p.47ff.

The decrees concerning justification are usually regarded as a master-piece of dexterity; but this very dexterity proves that more than codification took place. The Reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone had to be rejected. Yet justice had to be done to the followers of Aquinas, who were not unfriendly to a moderate presentation of that doctrine. A place had also to be found for the doctrine of merit from good works. The result is that what seems to be given with one hand is taken away with the other; and while much is said with which Evangelicals can agree, room is left for a system of righteousness by works. Instead of making justification consist in an act of God performed for the sake of Christ on the exercise of faith, the decrees make it consist in an act of God performed for the sake of what has been done in man to occasion it. The all-sufficiency of Christ as Savior is obscured, and men are led to seek acceptance with God through the cultivation of dispositions, the doing of good works, and the observance of rites. Here and there concessions are made to the Augustinianism which had had a surprising hold on their best minds, but the decree is anti-Evangelical throughout, and this is the measure of what was effected under cover of definition..." it was the heretical and not the orthodox tendencies which prevailed; Pelagius and not Augustine, Abelard and not Bernard."⁵⁵ As Lindsay puts it: "It is sufficient to say that that the theologians of Trent do not seem to have the faintest idea of what the Reformation meant by faith, and never appear to see that there is such a thing as religious experience."

⁵⁵ Muir, op. cit., p.231.

The essentially anti-Christian nature of the canons on justification should have been set forth. Canon III should have been quoted.

Even in regard to the doctrine of Transubstantiation and the Mass, which lay at the root of most of the aberrations and corruptions of the later Medieval Church, the Council of Trent was far from summing up or including all that had been generally held. Here also there had been more than one stream of tendency, and the pagan stream was chosen as that which alone should flow in the days to come. On the whole subject of the sacraments the Council was faced with great difficulties owing to opposition between the earlier and more evangelical Thomists and the later Scotist and Nominalistic theology; and these were surmounted by dexterous ambiguity, by statements at variance with the facts of history, and by giving the real victory to the Jesuits. The propositions ultimately adopted, with many anathemas on all who did not accept them, were only arrived at by majority votes, and amid a conflict of the most irreconcilable opinions.³¹ Nothing, I believe, shows more plainly, that all doctrinal decrees were adopted with the specific view of closing the door to the Reformation, than the heated, lengthy debates which every doctrine brought forth, and the absolutely opposing views which were aired. Certainly it was not a canonizing of what the Church had always held. If it was, the fathers present at this Council had no idea as to what they had been teaching and believing all their lives!

Charles V again made things a little difficult for the pope by taking things in hand in Germany. Once more having freed himself from his duties as Emperor he could again turn his attention to the Council. He demanded that the doctrines

³¹ Muir, op. cit., p.251.

passed be disregarded until the Protestants arrived. At the same time the Spanish bishops brought forth some remarkable articles called the "censurae," designed to diminish the authority of the pope. To avoid these being carried out, under the pretense of a plague, the pope had the Council removed to Bologna, "where it was immediately under his control."³⁵

But he did not live long enough to find whether or not he would be able to control things there. He died in November, 1549. Pennington gives us a fitting eulogy on Paul III: "If it be a merit to have defeated by his crafty policy the honest designs of an emperor anxious to purify the Church, and to have made absolutely impossible a union between Roman Catholics and Protestants, Paul III deserves a high place among those spiritual heroes whom his Church embalms with her praises because they have advanced her best interests, and have given her a high place in the annals of the world."³⁶

Thus came the end of round one of the Council of Trent. The remaining sessions were definitely anti-climax. Before leaving Bologna a decree was passed that all decrees so far decided would stand. Let the Protestants come, with these doctrines formulated they had no chance. I believe at this time there was only one man left in Europe who really believed that the Council still had the possibility of accomplishing unity in Western Christianity, and that was the Emperor, Charles V. He believed this possible if the Protestants had a voice in the proceedings, and to this end he worked in the second round of sessions.

35. Pennington, op. cit., p.106.

36. Ibid.

The conclave which elected the next pope, Julius III, had good intentions. They honestly wanted to elect the best man available for the job. But there wasn't much from which to chose. They considered that Julius would at least not be an objectional pope. But he proved unequal to the task before him. His one great desire was to enjoy life - and that in a quiet easy-going way. One way to obtain such a peaceful existence was to be at peace with the Emperor, and so he made this his first objective. Complying with the Emperor's demands, he reassembled the Council of Trent.³⁷ The second thing demanded by the Emperor was that all the princes, Lutheran as well as Catholic, be present at this assembly. The German princes were not as trusting as their Emperor, and they demanded a safe-conduct. So Julius again agreed and a safe-conduct^t for both spiritual and secular parties was drawn up. However willing, Julius seemed to be, to comply to the wishes of the Emperor, he was still a pope, and when the safe-conduct arrived, it was found to be with a loop-hole which could easily have allowed the pope to disregard the whole thing. And so it had to be amended. Finally it appeared in a form which would allow the Germans to attend with safety. However, there was still no word about allowing the Protestants a vote, no word about revocation of the dogmatic decrees already passed, and with these still standing, the Lutheran attendance was nothing but irony.³⁸ During the delay afforded by the amending of the safe-conduct, the fathers in Trent had been busy piling up

37. Froude, op. cit., p.250.

38. Fennington, op. cit., p.108.

doctrinal decree upon decree in rapid progress, rejecting doctrine after doctrine held by Luther. The Emperor made loud protest but was ignored. He had even lost what control was once his over the German bishops in attendance.

And so we see that even though it had seemed for a short time that the Lutherans would be able to change the stand of the Council after the death of Paul III, yet what showed on the surface was only a subterfuge for the ominous progress against the "heretics." Now that they had no more chance, what had the pope to lose in letting them air their griefs at the Council. It was too late, he felt, for them to do any harm.

Therefore, when the Lutherans finally did arrive, the legate gave them permission to plead their cause before the Council. They made a deep impression on many present. They spoke without hesitation or fear, with a boldness and orthodoxy which would have made Luther's heart glow. They denounced all the decrees of the Council. They minced no words in telling the fathers that they, and not the Lutherans, were the heretics. Their bold language horrified the legate and his adherents and the Lutherans were allowed no concessions. The pope also, demanded that they should not again be allowed on the floor. The Council was demanded to renounce them and that as heretic and schismatic they be allowed no seat in the Council or even a right for further speech. "He (the legate) was not satisfied with words. Notwithstanding the loud complaints of the Protestants he directed the Council not to pay the least attention to their devices, and to hurry on their resolutions.

In fact, the pope, the Curia, and their partisans were determined not to allow them to change one iota of any decree of the Council. The hope of Charles V that he should solve the religious question in a Council under the influence of Rome was a mere Chimera."³⁹

The Council had thus, as far as the Protestants were concerned, proved a failure and a farce. The general feeling was that the Council should be dissolved. The presence of the Protestants could no longer be expected. The Catholics wished the dissolution of the Council. The Germans were dissatisfied because of the Italian domination. The Emperor reluctantly directed its cessation on March 5, 1552, but it was prolonged because the representatives of the pope and the Emperor did not like to take upon themselves the suspension of the Council. Historical events settled the matter for them. The army of Saxo, of Hesse, and of the Marquis of Brandenburg was coming south to chase the Emperor from Germany. They were coming too close to Trent for comfort, and so in April, 1552, the pope directed the suspension of the Council. The bishops fled for their lives. But before leaving they passed a hurried vote that all those decrees already sanctioned, and those which waited the pope's approval, should be held valid forever. Thus the fate of the Protestants was sealed. They were heretics in the sight of the Church. Every vestige of reunion was gone. The Council which met ten years later was a new assembly, and there was no pretense of desiring peace with the Protestants or any sort of reconciliation.

³⁹. Pennington, op. cit., p.109.

"In the earlier session of the Council itself there was room for opinions for which there was no room when it closed. Even as regards such fundamental matters as the canon of Scripture, the relation of Scripture and tradition, the doctrine of original sin, the nature of the atonement, the meaning and effect of justification, the theory of the sacraments and the claims of the episcopate, views were freely advocated by those whose orthodoxy was not in question which were anathema when the Council was at an end. Nothing indeed is more remarkable than the way in which the divines of unquestioned loyalty as well as conspicuous ability gave expression to opinions closely allied to those of the reformers. Every subject awakened controversies; and what was ultimately decreed not only restated old propositions, but formulated new ones, and shut many a door which had at least been ajar. Even if it had been the case, as it was not, that the final decisions were in harmony with what had always been the doctrine of the Church, it remains that difference of opinion were no longer tolerated. Freedom was destroyed in the name of unity and logic. The voice of controversy was hushed, so that the Church of Rome, instead of perpetuating the unbroken Christendom of the West prior to the Reformation became a sect, the thing she professes so heartily to abhor."⁴⁰ In short - the Council of Trent "closed the door to the Reformation."⁴¹

40. Muir, op. cit., p. 260.

41. Qualben, op. cit., p. 342.

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