at Vicenza on May 1, 1538, and legates were despatched thither to make the preliminary arrangements, and to preside so soon as the members should assemble. But when the appointed time was only five days off not one bishop had arrived, and the pope was forced to prorogue the council again and again. Meanwhile, the method which Contarini and Sadolet had recommended, that of conferences between the Catholics and Protestants, was being acted on in Germany, and meetings of this nature were convened successively at Haguenau, Worms, and Ratisbon, at the last of which, in 1541, Contarini was present as legate of the pope, and showed so much tact, moderation, and sympathy that he succeeded in securing a large measure of agreement upon the controversies in dispute, notably on the vexed question of Justification. But, as his concessions and explanations were promptly repudiated at Rome, no practical result followed. In 1542 Paul III. sent Morone as his envoy to the diet of Spires to offer Trent as his final concession of the place of assembly, on the ground that its position in Tyrol, and its being part of the dominions of the king of the Romans, ought to meet all the reasonable requirements of the German princes. Ferdinand, king of the Romans, who presided at the diet, was content with this offer, as were the Catholic princes generally, but the Protestants con­tinued to object, and refused any council which should not be completely free from papal influence and authority. However, the pope issued, on May 22, 1542, a bull appointing the meeting of the council for November 1 fol­lowing. He sent three legates to Trent to make prepara­tions,—Morone, Parisio, and Reginald Pole ; but they did not reach the city till three weeks later than the appointed date for opening the council, and so few bishops arrived during seven months from that time that it was necessary to prorogue the assembly. In fact, the idea of the council was distasteful to a very large proportion of the Latin clergy, especially such as apprehended danger to their private interests from the reforming plans of the pope, and also such as were alarmed lest serious religious innova­tions might be made in order to conciliate the Protestants. While this delay continued, another diet at >Spires in 1544 resulted in great advantages to the Lutherans, who availed themselves of the political straits of Charles V. to extort several important concessions from him. The obnoxious edicts passed against them at Worms and Augsburg were rescinded ; they were permitted to retain such ecclesiastical property as they had seized ; they were made eligible for such civil and ecclesiastical offices as had been previously barred against them ; and general tolera­tion for the time being was established. This policy was extremely distasteful to the pope, who addressed a brief to the emperor, strongly remonstrating against it, and renewing his offer of a council. Charles V., who had not been a free agent in the matter, was much of the pope’s mind, and proceeded to relieve himself of one difficulty in the way of reversing his action, by concluding peace with Francis I. of France on September 8, 1544. Hereupon Paul III. directed public thanksgivings to be offered throughout the whole Latin Church, and issued a bull removing the suspension of the council, and summoning it to meet at Trent on March 15,1545. Unable from age and illness to be present himself, as he had wished, he named Giammaria del Monte, bishop of Palestrina (after­wards Pope Julius I1I.), Marcello Cervini (afterwards Pope Marcellus IL), and Reginald Pole as his legates. The ex­perience of former abortive openings was repeated, for they found but one bishop awaiting them, and so few con­tinued to arrive that a fresh prorogation was forced upon the legates, and the pope, in the bull authorizing this action, added a proviso that no proxies should be received, but that all bishops summoned should attend in person, under severe penalties for contumacy. On November 7, 1545, the legates received final instructions to open the council upon December 13, and did so with solemn cere­monial, but only as a formal initiative of the proceedings, for the first session was postponed till January 7, 1546. When that time arrived, no more than some five and twenty archbishops and bishops, five generals of religious orders, and the ambassadors of King Ferdinand had as­sembled, and none of the conciliar officers had yet been nominated, nor any programme of procedure sketched out. The most important question arising under this last head was whether the voting should be taken by nations, as at the council of Constance, or by individuals, and the matter was referred to the pope, who gave his decision for the latter, as at once the more ancient (since Constance and Basel were the only precedents for the national vote) and the more convenient. Moreover, this ruling secured from the outset a working majority of Italian bishops in the assembly, at once by reason of the small size of the average Italian diocese, and of the greater ease with which Trent could be reached from Italy than from any other country which sent representatives thither, besides enabling the pope to swell the majority (as in the Vatican council three centuries later) with bishops *in partibus,* having no dioceses or jurisdiction, thus amply justifying the objec­tion taken all along by the German Protestants to the assemblage of the council anywhere outside Germany.

Some preliminaries had to be settled before the second session, and the plan of holding private “general congregations,” where theologians of non-episcopal rank could sit and share in the dis­cussion and preparation of the decrees to be proposed and voted on in public session, was at once adopted and observed thenceforward. And first, the question was raised whether any persons except bishops should be allowed to vote upon matters of doctrine. The decision was that the vote should be allowed to the generals of religious orders also, and that the right of the proxies of absent bishops to vote should be referred to the pope. The title to be given to the council at the head of the decrees in each session was then discussed, and a proposal to add the words “representing the church universal ” (as at Basel and Constance) to the usual formula “general and œcumenical” was rejected at the instance of the legates, as indirectly menacing to papal autocracy. The legates also privately informed the pope that the majority of the members desired to take up the question of practical reforms before that of doctrine, and that it might be necessary to yield the point to avoid scandal or the imputation of sympathy with abuses, but that they would insist, in that case, on making the measures of reform apply all round, to princes and laymen as well as to ecclesiastics, which would probably damp the ardour of its advocates.

The actual business of the second session (January 7, 1546) was confined to the promulgation of a decree touching the discipline to be observed by the members of the council during its progress, as well in the matters of their private devotion and their food as in the conduct of the debates. The congregations which preceded the third session were mainly occupied with debating the thorny question of the order in which the discussion of faith and of dis­cipline was to come, and it was at last agreed to take them simultaneously.

So few additional bishops had arrived up to this time that it was judged inexpedient to promulgate any decrees in the third session (February 4, 1548), and little was done except the public recitation of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan creed as the authoritative con­fession of the Roman Church, and, as the council worded it, “that firm and only foundation against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.” A fortnight after this third session Martin Luther died (February 18, 1546), just as the situation in Germany was becoming more strained, and the emperor, alarmed at the rapid advance of Reformed opinions and practices (notably in the Palatinate, where the elector had made large concessions), was taking measures for suppressing the religious revolt by force of arms. The canon of Scripture was proposed in the congregations before the fourth session as the subject for discussion, and the three following questions were raised :—(1) Were all the books of both Testaments to be approved and received ? (2) Was there to be a fresh inquiry

into their canonical character before giving such approval? (3) Should there be any distinction drawn between the books, as being some of them read merely for moral instruction, and others for proving the doctrines of Christian belief? The first of these questions was decided affirmatively. The second led to much de-