8

The Counter-Reformation

CATHOLIC REFORMATION

THE name of Counter-Reformation suggests a fight against Protestantism. There was a political aspect of the Counter-Reformation, a league of Catholic powers ready to crusade against the new Protestant states. There was also a true sense in which the fight against Protestantism encouraged the reforming movement within the Roman Catholic Church. But it did not create it. The conflict with Protestantism gave to reform a new edge, to cut through the vested interests and administrative conservatism which everywhere frustrated reform. It gave to reform a dynamic, a vitality, an affection for ancient ways, and a mistrust of Protestant ways.

The vested interests were so powerful that no reformation, not even a Catholic reformation, was possible without an increase in the power of the secular state. Part of the difficulty was the independent power of the Church within each state. Part of the difficulty was the interest of the Roman court in maintaining all its financial and legal rights throughout the Church. Even a Catholic Reformation, in Spain, France, or Southern Germany, had as one consequence a further restraint upon the power of Rome in those countries, and derived its effective impetus as much from Catholic sovereigns as from the moral and intellectual leadership of popes or divines.

The fight against the Mohammedans in southern Spain welded Spanish State and Church into a unity of crusading fervour. The Spanish crown already exercised a decisive power over the Church through the Inquisition, which was a royal weapon, and through the normal restraints which a national monarchy placed upon papal action. By 1550 the

wealth of the newly discovered Americas was flowing into Spain; and new economic power, joined to the political status given by royal marriages, elevated the country to a leading place in the states of Europe. After 1562, France, split in two, was out of the political race, and Spain became the strongest power in Europe, without rival in means or in influence. By its rule of the Duchy of Milan and of Naples and Sicily it was able to dominate Italy, and the old titanic conflict of the Middle Ages between Pope and Emperor turned itself into petty bickerings between Pope and Spanish king; but only bickerings, for after 1562 the Pope depended as politically upon the king of Spain as ever medieval Popes had depended upon Saxon or Hohenstaufen or Angevin. Spain led the rest of Europe in military prowess, navigation, discovery. Spanish Catholicism was like a magnet, attracting towards itself the Catholicism of the Counter-Reformation.

Cardinal Ximenes, primate of Spain from 1495 to 1517, conducted a reformation of the Spanish Church on lines which would have been traditional if the royal power had not been so directly engaged. He enforced poverty among the monks and friars; dissolved religious houses which failed to conform to his standards, or stripped them of their endowments and devoted the revenues to hospitals or to impoverished monasteries; compelled incumbents to reside upon their benefices, to expound the Scriptures, and to educate children; and created the university of Alcalá, designed to train scholastic theologians and the clergy, where the study of the Hebrew and Greek languages was encouraged.

Here the leading scholars, some of them imported from Italy, warmly adopted the reforming and critical ideas of Erasmus. In the Spanish Netherlands, Vives edited St Augustine and devised enlightened schemes of education. Perhaps in no other country in Europe were the principles of Erasmus so zealously adopted, by a few eminent men, as a guide to reform. They were subjected to a battery of criticism in 1520–2 by a heresy-hunter, Zuniga, who tried

to persuade the Spanish that Erasmus was responsible for Luther, but without evident success. Alcalá rivalled Salamanca for the intellectual primacy of Spain. Between 1502 and 1517 a group of scholars, under the personal direction of Ximenes, produced the Polyglot Bible in six volumes, a Bible in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin texts, and a critical apparatus. The volumes were to be sold only with papal approval (not obtained until 1520) and therefore the publication was delayed until 1522, and the New Testament of Erasmus was known in western Europe before the Polyglot version. The critical attitude of the cardinal was more conservative than the critical attitude of Erasmus, but his scholarship was by no means inferior. In 1512 appeared a Castilian translation of the Gospels and Epistles, frequently reprinted, so that the Spaniard had little difficulty in buying a copy in his own tongue.

But after 1530 the Erasmians of Spain encountered the disapproval of the Inquisition. They were a small group of educated men, and their ideals took no hold among the people or among most of the Spanish clergy or monks. In 1537 the Inquisition prohibited the reading in Castilian of the works of Erasmus, and ordered his Latin editions to be expurgated. The inquisitors began to expect, and to hunt, Lutherans. They found a little evidence. A group in Seville was discovered to have smuggled Spanish Bibles from Geneva. Solemn burnings in 1558–60 destroyed the few powerless Protestants, and probably some others. Once in the chase, the inquisitors were hard to satisfy. In Italy the destruction of Protestantism was as rapid.

New Orders

Medieval Catholicism sought its highest expressions of devotion in the monastic life. The age-old method of reforming the church was to found new orders, or new forms of old orders. In Italy and Spain new orders were founded during the first half of the sixteenth century. It was easier to found new orders than to reconstruct the old, partly because

reformers, even within a religious community, are always likely to divide it, and partly because the monastic endowments across Europe were part of that system of worldly wealth and vested interest which was the most conservative force in the Church. Single monasteries or groups succeeded in reforming themselves, and some houses needed no reform. The most successful attempt at reconstructing an old order was that of Matteo da Bascio (died 1552), an Italian Franciscan of peasant stock who sought to revive the primitive simplicity of St Francis of Assisi and to observe the letter of the testament of St Francis. He insisted upon a beard, and wore a four-pointed hood upon his coarse brown habit. He later left his group and became an itinerant evangelist; but the group was recognized by the Pope in 1528, and the name of Capuchin – from the brown pointed hoods – is first found in a papal document of 1535. The Capuchins directed themselves to pastoral charity, lepers, hospitals, popular evangelism, eschewed those magnificent houses and city churches of older Franciscans, refused to encourage scholarship, and built little communities of mud or wattle far out in the country or mountain. They were fought at every turn by the Observant Franciscans, whom they were silently criticizing by their reform and from whom they were attracting good men. They endured an attempt at forcible suppression during the thirties, and they were almost suppressed when their superior, Bernardino Ochino, most popular of Italian preachers, turned Protestant (1542). Until 1572 they were prohibited from founding houses outside Italy, but thereafter they spread rapidly, and second to the Jesuits were the great religious order of the Counter-Reformation. The fear of towns and of scholarship was modified, and in 1619 the order at last acquired formal independence. The Capuchins, in a manner, were typical of what friars could do to reform the Church.

But most of the new orders were of a new age, and a new spirit – Theatines (founded by Gaetano da Thiene in 1524); Somaschi (1532); Barnabites (1533); Jesuits; and looser groups named 'oratories', like that brotherhood of prayer and pastoral works in Rome called The Oratory of Divine Love (1516), or the group of secular priests founded by St Philip Neri in 1575, which raised the name of Oratory into that of a great religious institute. Though these orders were in a line of descent reaching back through the friars, their ethos and their institutions were novel. They were not withdrawn from the world. Their intention was pastoral endeavour and parochial renewal. They lived severe lives, preached, established orphanages or hospitals or homes for fallen women, educated children, and undertook the relief of the sick or destitute. Even the new order for women, the Ursulines (1535), at first designed its members to live at home and worship in their parish churches while they lived the life of charity and social endeavour. If we seek a single theme running through the reforming endeavours of the Catholic Reformation, it would be the quest for a more adequate clergy – better-trained and better-instructed priests, priests resident in their parishes, bishops resident in their sees, pastors fervent and self-sacrificing and missionary-minded, trained as confessors, celibate, mortified, able to teach in school, wearing canonical dress; a priesthood uncorrupted and incorruptible, educated and other-worldly. From Gaetano da Thiene near the beginning of the century to St Philip Neri near the end, the conservative reformers directed themselves to this end. And in spite of the novelty of their ideas or institutions, they were proving that the traditional ways of the Middle Ages were practicable. There might, for example, be legitimate argument whether the enforced celibacy of the clergy was Scriptural, or desirable, or harmful, or useful; but the Counter-Reformation gave an answer to those radicals who argued that in the light of medieval concubinage it was impossible.

THE JESUITS

Ignatius Loyola appears first in the pages of history during 1515, at Pamplona in Navarre, accused of 'great crimes' in

though he has not deserved it, lifting him little by little from the proximity of agonies to contemplate the peace and the glory of Mount Sion, from living upon Calvary to living with the Resurrection. The month was planned to lead to an act of will – the choice of a new way of life. This new way is to be lived by obedience to the teaching and the ordinances of the Church. Obedience to a superior is the condition of a soldierly service of God and of a total self-abnegation in the individual. The soul undertook to obey the Church, as the bride of Christ, and to sacrifice its own judgement; to practise confession, frequent communion, the recitation of the hours of prayer; to maintain such institutions of the Church as monasteries, the celibacy of the clergy, relics, fasting, indulgences, pilgrimages; and to defend the scholastic theology, the Church's tradition and the decrees of the Popes. The book ends with 'Rules for Thinking with the Church'. In these rules comes the celebrated hyperbole that he is to be ready to believe that what seems to him white is black, if the Church declares it to be so. (Contrary to a common opinion, however, it has been shown that for many years there was no regularity about the practice of these exercises by Loyola's disciples.)

In 1523 Loyola went as a pilgrim to Jerusalem. In 1526 he was a student at Alcalá preparing himself for ordination. His rigours and his little groups of prayerful friends made the Spanish Inquisition suspicious of him, and for a time he was imprisoned. He tried again at Salamanca and was imprisoned. In 1528 he tried again at the University of Paris, where he was again denounced to the Inquisition. He had begun at last to learn wisdom and prudence in picking his disciples. At Paris in 1534, his first six men joined him in a brotherhood – Francis Xavier, also from Pamplona, Faber (Pierre Le Fèvre), Lainez, Salmerón, Bobadilla, and Rodríguez.

In a chapel on Montmartre (15 August 1534) the little band vowed to go to Palestine to work for the conversion of the Turks; or if this proved to be impossible, to offer themselves to the Pope to be sent on any work which he chose, even if it were a mission to the Turks or other persecuting powers. By 1538 it was clear that Palestine was impossible; and though the mind of Xavier was already turning towards the Indies, they offered themselves to the Pope. They had become aware of the crying needs of Italian parishes, and became known as educators of children, as conductors of missions or retreats, as popular preachers, as chaplains to hospitals. At Rome in the spring of 1539 they formed a 'Company of Jesus' which was to instruct the children and the illiterate in the commandments of God. Its members were to take a special view of obedience to the Pope, to go wherever the Pope should send them. The priests of the Company, though bound to recite the hours of prayer, were not to do so in choir, that they might not be withdrawn from the works of charity.

It was not a good time for founding new orders. In the Papal court, reform made a stumbling beginning under Pope Adrian VI (1522–3), remained quiescent or worse under Clement VII (1523–34) and by 1539, with Paul III as Pope, began markedly to influence public opinion in Rome. Persons with revolutionary ideas could be found in high places. The canonist Guidiccioni, whom the Pope consulted about the Jesuits, believed that all the existing male orders except four (perhaps except one) should be suppressed. At last, on 27 September 1540, the Society was established by a Bull entitled *Regimini militantis ecclesiae*.

The Society was in no sense designed to be a weapon for fighting the Protestants. Nor at first had it any reputation for intransigence. The Bull of 1540 declared its object to be the propagation of the faith, and the phrase 'propagation *and defence*' of the faith was not added till 1550. Nor was it in origin an autocratic society. Ignatius himself was less autocratic by temperament than John Wesley. But between 1540 and 1555 the Society grew so rapidly in numbers, influence, and range of activities that it could only be directed, perhaps could only have been held together, by a

strong hand at the centre. And while Ignatius was not temperamentally an autocrat, and would probably have been content if another had governed the society which he had founded, he stamped it with his own religious ideals and therefore with the virtue of obedience at the centre of its devotional life. The rule of obedience taught in *The Spiritual Exercises* was not new. It may be paralleled in the rules of St Francis of Assisi, and its origins go back to the Rule of St Benedict and beyond. Yet he succeeded in imparting into his Society an atmosphere of religious obedience which easily fitted the autocratic constitution desirable for practical reasons, and which culminated in the special promise of obedience made to the Pope by fully professed members of the Society.

They intended to be a society of priests ministering to the heathen and the poor, and especially educating the children or the illiterate. Ignatius spent much energy in resisting the tendency of his more devotional followers to turn the society into a conventional, even a more contemplative, order. They established orphanages, houses for prostitutes, schools, centres of poor relief, in Sicily even a kind of banking institute for destitute peasants. Others among the new orders modified the obligation of the religious to say the offices in choir, but Ignatius carried this to a revolutionary abolition. There should be no common recitation of the office; thus the oldest obligation of the monastic community disappeared.

It is interesting to observe the balance with which the mature Ignatius, once a zealot and ascetic extremist, ruled his order. Though he maintained a severe and austere life for himself, he would allow no one to practise discipline so strenuously as to harm his health. He would even force some young ascetic, discovered to have been fasting beyond the rule, to eat a meal in his presence. His men were to be fit for hard work in the world. The success of the Jesuits sprang largely from this readiness to adjust the old ideals of the monks to the needs of the new generation.

The hierarchy of the order was complex. The novitiate lasted two years instead of one, and was different from the old enclosed novitiates in containing a period of work in a hospital and a barefoot pilgrimage. Then the novice took the simple vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity, and passed into the 'scholasticate', where he received a severe course of higher education, and might be received at the end into full profession of vows and membership of the Society. If received, he could later be allowed to take a fourth vow, that of personal obedience to the Pope; and those 'professed of the fourth vow' were the governing body of the Society. They were not numerous – in 1556 they were only 43 in number, out of 1,000 members. This governing body was summoned only to elect a General or at the will of the General (except in exceptional circumstances where the General was insane or incapable), and the General held office for life, restricted only by the advice of four elected assistants. The constitution in theory attributed no more power to the General, and exacted no more obedience from the fathers, than some medieval orders. But the old abbot had been limited by custom and enclosure and a body of tradition and a written rule, whereas the Jesuit General was administering a new body which needed strong government to control its rapid expansion and harmonize its various activities.

Their work became diverse as their numbers grew. The mission to the heathen was not allowed to drop – perhaps, indeed, it always remained as primary to the Society as were the struggles against the heretics. On 7 April 1541 Francis Xavier, with three Jesuit companions, embarked at Lisbon for the Indies. He was the first of a long line of missionaries to the Indies and the Americas.

In 1540 the Society was still a little group, primarily for education and pastoral work among the poor. By 1556, when Ignatius died, it had more than 1,000 members and had become one of the powerful forces in the Catholic world, by its ministry not to the poor but to the upper ranks.

This happened chiefly through its hold upon higher education. It began by teaching the urchins of the Roman slums. It ended by teaching princes and princesses.

The Franciscans had begun by a ministry to the poor and had soon produced professors at the university. The parallel extension of the Jesuit work was less of a change than among the Franciscans. Education of children, to be effective, must lead them upwards. The primary school cannot be efficient unless the secondary school is efficient, and the secondary school will not be efficient unless the university is efficient. The first Jesuit secondary school was opened at Messina in 1548. The good sense of Ignatius exacted modern methods, fresh air and exercise, admirable teaching of Latin in the spirit of the Renaissance, care of good manners. Soon they were educating the upper classes of Catholic Europe. And meanwhile, colleges were founded in university after university, the first at Padua in 1542, the chief at Rome in 1551. The Company of Jesus became a teaching order, the leading body engaged in the higher education of Catholics. And since its educational methods were effective, more effective than any other methods in contemporary Europe, it found itself educating aristocrats and kings. The association of the Jesuit with the Catholic court, an association to be perilous to both sides, was founded upon intelligent schoolmastering.

The Jesuits in Germany

Teaching the Catholic faith in the universities, they were brought into direct controversy with the swiftly spreading influence of the Protestant divines. Their own plan of reform encountered notions of Reform, and those notions in absolute conflict with their ideals of obedience to the Holy Roman Church. Their study of theology was first for pastoral uses, then for controversial uses, and finally it became an end in itself, an academic discipline. Ignatius, despite painful diligence, was never a scholar. But two of his original six, Lainez and Salmerón, rapidly gained a place among the leading theologians of Catholic Europe and were

among the Pope's more stalwart defenders at the Council of Trent. And from the moment (1542) that Jesuit Fathers were summoned by Catholic bishops to work in Southern Germany, they found that they were at once leading resistance to Protestant thought and seeking to confute Protestant theologians. In 1549 they began to teach at the Bavarian University of Ingolstadt, henceforth their German base. In 1552 the German college was founded in Rome; and from that time Ignatius regarded the battle against heresy as a primary task of his Company. He was succeeded as General by Lainez, the ablest theologian and controversialist among the early members.

For in 1555 sober men thought that the conservative cause in Germany was lost. Protestantism was still spreading in the Catholic lands like Austria, Bavaria, and Bohemia.

It had been difficult for the old theologians to resist the new theologians, except at the most superficial level of controversy. John Eck, by his cleverness, produced little handbooks which scored points against the Protestants. But at a deeper level the learned divines had been on the side of Reform. The universal belief that reform was necessary, the aridity and staleness of the older scholastic tradition, its fruitlessness in a world dominated by the insights of humanism, the second-rate quality of many of the defenders – these rendered the traditionalist apologetic scanty and unconvincing, during the first forty years of reform. There were exceptions; Spanish friars like Alfonso a Castro or Dominic Soto were already in the forties and fifties creating a new apologetic towards Protestantism. But as scholarship improved and confidence returned, as the theologians found much common ground with the Protestants in the study of the Bible and of the ancient Church, the controversy became less unequal. The conservatives discovered how in the new world they could defend the old ways, and were sometimes surprised to find that the old ways were defensible.

In Germany the *Catechism* of the Jesuit Peter Canisius (published in 1555) is a mark of this changing atmosphere.

It was written in a style to be understood, it was lucid and attractive and supported by Biblical texts, it was not (as a catechism by Eck would have been) armed to the teeth against assailants. It was an uncontroversial statement of the Catholic faith, and won praise even among Protestant divines. Canisius toured the Catholic south, stirring the princes to the defence of their religion, disputing and preaching, founding colleges and institutions. For much of the century even informed Germans supposed that the founder of the Jesuits was Canisius.

It should not be forgotten that controversial disputations or pamphlets formed one of the least important parts of the battle against the Protestants. The only way to counter the Protestants was to reform the Church. In the Bavaria of 1550, for example, all the old abuses were continuing, and continuing in spite of a pious prince. The clergy were often illiterate, the monasteries often like country inns, the vicarages commonly contained a concubine and numerous progeny, there were many drunken priests. This was the condition which invited the Reforming ideals from the north to spread southward, and some of the Bavarian middle class were already affected by the teaching of the Lutherans or of the Anabaptists. The only way to stem the tide was to reform the Church. It was pastoral endeavour as well as militant antagonism which was at the base of the Counter-Reformation advance in South Germany. 'The best way to fight the heretics is not to deserve their criticisms,' said the nuncio Bonomi in 1585. But this pastoral endeavour was an action of the state. In Bavaria the pious prince Albert summoned Jesuits to his aid and reformed the parishes of his duchy with a soldierly severity. And to expel heretics or destroy Anabaptists or burn false books was for every Catholic sovereign a part of his endeavours to reform his parishes.

CONTARINI AND CARAFFA

The Protestants – Luther, Henry VIII (if he was a Protestant), Calvin – appealed to a future General Council of

the Church. The memory of the fifteenth-century councils was still potent. The most traditional of reformers looked to a General Council to reform the Church in head and members and, after the German revolt, to bring peace. The difficulty lay in the question when a General Council was free, who might attend it, and what might be its agenda. Papal divines held that the Pope alone had the canonical right to summon a General Council. Protestant divines could not expect, or did not expect, fair dealing at a Council summoned and arranged by their principal opponent. A moderate peacemaker, like the Emperor Charles V, was confronted with the formidable and unlikely task of summoning, or causing to be summoned, a Council which sensible men upon either side would recognize to be a true Council, of an authority and prestige comparable with the great Councils of the primitive Church.

Many moderates, especially in Germany, were passive in the growing schism because they looked for remedy to a future Council. They might not want Luther, but they wanted reform, and they suspected the Popes of failing to call a Council because they wished not to be reformed. The Germans wanted 'a free Christian Council in German lands'. By 'free', most Germans meant that it must be independent of the papacy. The Emperor Charles V wished the Council to meet in Germany, partly because he was a good Catholic and partly because he wanted and needed a united Germany.

The Pope and his advisers followed their predecessors of a century before in eyeing with suspicion and fear any Council which a German Emperor, however Catholic, might convoke. Their fear sprang as much from the fact that the vested interests of the papal court were afraid of the 'reform in head and members' on which everyone was theoretically agreed, as from the memory that any General Council raised constitutional hindrances to the freedom of papal action. They remembered how the Council of Basle had lectured the popes like a nagging wife. They remembered how the

Council of Constance had deposed popes and elected a new pope. They feared that a General Council outside their control would conduct a revolution in which Catholicism would be transformed and the See of Rome swept into insignificance. They admitted that sooner or later a Council must be held, but they were determined that this Council should be under the presidency of the Pope or his legates, should be held in the traditional manner with bishops attending, and should be as immediately under the direction of the Pope as the Lateran Council of 1512–17. They thought that the popes were capable of reforming the Church by papal decree, so far as it needed reform. If a Council could not be avoided, it should be held at Rome or in the papal dominions. They sometimes believed that no new decrees were needed, and that the nations needed only to enforce the existing canon law. 'What is the point of a Council,' said Cardinal Campeggio at the Diet of Augsburg (1530), 'when the Lutherans do not obey the canons of earlier Councils?' 'We . . . have no need of a Council,' said Luther to the papal nuncio in 1535, 'but Christendom has need of a Council, whereby it may recognize its inveterate errors.' Between these opposing viewpoints it took long years for the Emperor Charles V and the Pope Paul III to agree upon the place and time and agenda of a Council.

Paul III Farnese (Pope 1534–49) was the Pope who recognized that a General Council must willy nilly be summoned, and abandoned the policy of his predecessors that a Council must at all costs be avoided lest Rome perish in the ensuing constitutional conflict. In his personal habits Paul was no great example of a reformed Pope, for he suffered from a numerous and avaricious family. But reformed or not, he was convinced by the urgent need to reform the Church from within. And his performance was courageous. Though he elevated a nephew aged fourteen to be a Cardinal and sent the red hat to his school, he also elevated several Catholic leaders of reforming zeal or humanist sympathy: Fisher, Contarini, Sadoleto, Caraffa, Pole. The reformers were given an immediate opening. In 1536 he appointed a commission of nine – including Sadoleto, Caraffa, Contarini, and Pole – to produce a memorandum on reform. In 1537 they issued a *Report of a Select Committee . . . on Reforming the Church* (*Consilium de Emendanda Ecclesia*). They recommended that residence be made compulsory, that a certain standard should be exacted of persons to be admitted to benefices. Though they were oddly silent upon ignorance and the need of education, they recognized the peril in indulgences and superstitious devotions. They were unpalatably frank in their denunciations of monastic abuses, the misuse of episcopal authority, the avarice and irresponsibility of the cardinals, the prostitutes in the city of Rome, and the claims of extreme canonists that the Pope, even if he sold benefices, could not commit simony. Unpalatably frank, for the text soon leaked out and was published by Protestants in Germany. A picture was circulated of three cardinals sweeping a church with foxes' tails instead of brooms.

The Catholic Church was no monolithic uniform structure. The medieval Church contained a wide range of opinion, and now the Pope found himself pressed by two different schools. Everyone agreed upon reform. But must reform mean an approximation towards the Protestants, conciliation and concession, an allowing of clerical marriage or the cup to the laity, an eschewing of the admitted abuses of the doctrine of merit by encouraging a more Scriptural teaching of justification by faith? Or was reform rather to be obtained by fighting the Protestants, refusing all concession, developing the unprotestant elements of devotion in the medieval tradition, strengthening the authority of the hierarchy?

The history of the Counter-Reformation is in part the history of the triumph of the conservatives and the militant over the conciliatory and the liberal.

Among the cardinals elevated by Paul III and among the

authors of the *Consilium de Emendanda Ecclesia*, two have been seen as symbols of the rival schools: Cardinal Contarini who patronized the early Jesuits, and Cardinal Caraffa who organized the Theatines. Contarini* studied philosophy among the humanists, was then a civil servant in the city of Venice, attending the famous 1521 Diet of Worms as the Venetian ambassador, and was still a layman when Pope Paul III made him a cardinal in 1535. Humane and courteous, he was for seven years the guide and inspirer of the Catholic Reformation. He believed that the Protestants had a measure of truth in their pleas upon merit, and to express the doctrine of justification he was ready to find formulas which would satisfy both Protestant and Catholic. He believed that the traditional abuses, even the highest, even the abuses of the Roman Curia, must be ended.

Colloquy of Ratisbon, 1541

The policy of conciliation reached its climax in the Colloquy of Ratisbon in 1541. There Contarini, accompanied by the most moderate of German Catholic divines, and possessing vague but liberal-sounding instructions from Pope Paul III, sat round a table with the most moderate of German Protestant divines, Melanchthon and Bucer. Contarini exceeded his instructions. The Pope demanded that the supremacy of the Pope must be recognized at the outset. Contarini saw that the demand would wreck the conference, and postponed it to the last item on the agenda. John Eck, who though no moderate was attending the conference, caused trouble to the pacific programme but was at last brought to heel. And under Contarini's leadership the conference attained the astonishing success of agreement upon the doctrine of justification by faith.

Moderate men who engage in ecumenical conferences need to remember that not all the members of their respective churches are moderate men. Luther was suspicious

* Despite many histories, he had not been a member of the Oratory of Divine Love at Rome.

when he heard what was happening. He found the agreement incredible. In Rome Cardinal Caraffa protested bitterly against the theological betrayal. The French king, Francis I, suddenly afraid that the Emperor Charles V might succeed in uniting Germany on the basis of a religious peace at Ratisbon, protested with equal vehemence against the concessions. The German Catholics of the right wing thought that concession was illusory, and must go further, to intolerable limits if it was to satisfy the Lutherans. Meanwhile the conference at Ratisbon was itself breaking down upon the article of transubstantiation, which Contarini could not abandon and the Protestants could not accept. Pope Paul III declared that he would not tolerate ambiguous formulas, and the opportunity of peace had gone.

In Italy Cardinal Contarini found himself everywhere rumoured to be a heretic. He died in the next year, 1542.

The failure of Contarini opened the way to the opposing party. Reconciliation was now believed to be a mirage, and the proper policy for the Church was to define its doctrine and condemn error more precisely.

In the same year that Contarini was at Ratisbon, Caraffa recommended the Pope to found a new and powerful Inquisition into heresy. He and his school believed that the way to purify Catholicism was by assaults upon heresy, and that the policy of conciliation was encouraging the growth of heresy. A small but distinguished crop of Italian conversions to the Protestants during 1542, including the famous Bernardino Ochino of the Capuchins and Peter Martyr Vermigli of the Augustinians, lent substance to the belief. The Roman Inquisition was founded by a Bull (*Licet ab initio*) of 21 July 1542, appointing six cardinals (including Caraffa) as inquisitors-general and subjecting all Catholics to their authority. They were given power to imprison on suspicion, to confiscate property, and to execute the guilty, while the power of pardon was reserved to the Pope. Caraffa would not wait for a grant from the papal treasury, but bought a house which he fitted with offices and dun-

world; a difference not dependent upon the contrast of the individual personalities. By 1559 the Catholic Reformation, so hopelessly longed for by godly men throughout the past decades, had at last attained power in Rome. It is true that individuals governed and directed the change. But it is not only a contrast of individuals. It would have been almost unthinkable for the Pope of 1459 to be elected in 1559, or vice versa. On the one side is a world of Italian Renaissance: gay, humane, corrupt, reasonably content with the old ways and the old abuses, still thinking of crusades against the Saracens when it thought of crusades at all, valuing the ascetic life deeply but regarding the ascetics as men to be admired rather than imitated by the world. On the other side is a world in earnest: seeking discipline and order, not only admiring the friars but wanting the Church to conform to the ascetic or puritan pattern, suspicious of nudes and pagan statues, fiercely struggling to diminish or eradicate the venality of church administration.

The atmosphere of religious, moral, and intellectual life was being transformed. Bishops who had once been tranquil in their non-residence now issued circulars denouncing non-residence. Secretaries who once drafted the seamier documents of the indulgence traffic were now loud in denouncing the abuses of the indulgence. Humanists who once hired their pens to immoral literature were not ashamed to publish books of devotion. In the fifteen-fifties some of them still inserted pagan phrases or legends into their writings to the Pope, but the phrases now looked strange. Peter Aretino had lived in a kind of harem at Venice and made money out of writing obscenities and panegyrics. While the Counter-Reformation triumphed, he engaged in writing ascetic books, acquired a reputation for pious fervour and hatred of heretics, and died in 1556 as a Chevalier of St Peter, asserting with brazen effrontery that he had refused the offer of a cardinal's hat.

Learned Italy was returning to the piety of the Church; Italian poets were turning to sacred poetry, Italian artists

to devout practice. And not only in Italy was the atmosphere changing. The Portuguese Inácio de Azevedo was the son of a priest, the grandson of a bishop, the son and the grandson of nuns. When he learned of his birth, he held it to be a fourfold sacrilege, believed himself called to a life of sacrificial reparation, joined the Society of Jesus and its Brazilian mission, and was murdered by pirates in mid-Atlantic. The wave of moral severity, which in another part of Europe was creating puritanism, was now strengthening the hand of the Catholic reformers.

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

The Council of Trent is important, in the first place, because it failed to meet until 1545.

The Cardinals, if they must have a Council, wanted it at Rome. The Emperor Charles V was determined to have a Council in Germany. For long years papal diplomacy was directed to securing that a Council never met. The legate Aleander offered welcome advice to Pope Clement VII: 'Never offer a Council, never refuse it directly. On the contrary, show you are willing to comply with the request, but stress the difficulties in the way. Thus you will be able to ward it off.' 'Commit yourself to nothing,' the legate Cervini warned Pope Paul III at the eleventh hour, 'until it is agreed that the Pope is absolute master of the Council.'

The postponement, perhaps a fatal postponement for Christendom, was made easier because Charles V was usually at war with the King of France. France, fearing a united Germany, feared a General Council. The French king was almost as anxious as the Roman cardinals to put off the Council indefinitely. After repeated false starts under Pope Paul III, who saw that the danger in not summoning was now greater than the danger in summoning, the Council was at last enabled to meet in 1545, because the Emperor and the French king signed the Peace of Crépy

in 1544, containing a secret clause whereby King Francis pledged himself to further the Emperor's plans for a Council.

As early as 1524 the name of Trent was mentioned as a possible site: a little town on the south side of the Alps and the Brenner pass, under the rule of a Catholic bishop, in Italy, easy of access to Italian bishops, and yet also within the Holy Roman Empire and therefore complying with the German demand that the Council must meet 'in German lands'.

The Council of Trent opened after an infinity of delays upon 13 December 1545, with only twenty-eight bishops present. The Emperor and the Pope wanted the Council to perform different functions. The Emperor hankered for religious peace in Germany, by reforming the abuses and corruptions of the Church and by giving to the Lutherans certain concessions, like the marriage of the clergy and communion in both kinds. He therefore desired the Council to attend to the questions of discipline and leave the questions of doctrine, which his experience of divines led him to think insoluble. The Pope on the contrary instructed his legates, who presided, that the Council must first treat the questions of doctrine. It was therefore agreed that doctrine and discipline should be treated in parallel. But of the three sessions during which the Council sat (1545–8, 1551–2, 1562–3) the first was chiefly concerned with the doctrinal definitions believed needful upon the questions in controversy with the Protestants, and the last was chiefly concerned with those efforts at disciplinary regulation and correction which the traditionalists meant when they used the word *reform*.

The Fathers of the Council felt no obligation to be tender to the Protestants. In the session of 1545–8 they were mainly from areas unaffected by Protestant ideas, and they wished to condemn what appeared to them to be erroneous doctrines. Confronted by the doctrine of justification by faith alone, they declared that faith alone was not sufficient for justification, but must be accompanied by hope and

love. Confronted by the Protestant appeal to the Scripture, they declared that unwritten traditions and Scripture were to be received with equal reverence. Confronted by the Protestant declaration that the sacraments of the Gospel were three or two in number, they affirmed that the sacraments were neither more nor less than seven. Protestant scholars believed that the Hebrew Bible was the source of the authentic text, and therefore put the Greek apocrypha upon one side as instructive for morals but uncanonical (the question had never been settled by the medieval theologians). The Fathers of Trent declared that the Latin Vulgate was the canonical and sacred text. The Protestant divines believed that the doctrine of a repeated sacrifice of Calvary in the mass, a doctrine which they attributed too sweepingly to the Catholic divines, was perilous and unscriptural; and they abolished 'private masses' root and branch. The Fathers of Trent declared that in the mass there was a truly propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and commended those masses at which the priest alone communicated. The Protestants contended that the liturgy should be in a language understood by the people. The bishops declared that the mass should normally continue to be in Latin.

These definitions or decisions effectively ended the hopes of the Emperor and other moderates that the Council might seek a measure of reconciliation with the Protestants. It is not to be denied that the fear of Protestantism led the bishops towards direct confutation of its doctrines. There were rumours in the Council, from time to time, that Protestant armies were marching upon Trent. The bishops sometimes felt themselves to be legislating under an imminent threat from heretical force. In 1552 a Protestant army under Maurice of Saxony was but a few hours' march from Trent, and the Council hastily adjourned. But it should be observed that the doctrinal decrees of Trent, because they were sometimes given a polemical tone, sounded more hostile to the Protestants than they really

were. In the early sessions of the Council, when the most momentous of the doctrinal decrees were passed, the numbers of bishops present (about sixty) was still comparatively small. But even within this number, there was sufficient variety of opinion to illustrate the diversities of medieval theology. One bishop, Nacchianti of Chioggia, even believed that all things necessary to salvation are contained in Scripture, and protested his right to continue to believe this until the Council declared otherwise. The bishops of Trent, in framing their decrees, needed to allow a breadth which men of diverse opinions could accept as the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church. The decrees of Trent were framed with care; their language was designed to allow more liberty of opinion than their Protestant critics believed. The care with which they were framed has only been fully evident during the twentieth century. During the last fifty years the Görres Society has been engaged in publishing the minutes of the debates and discussions which lay behind the formal promulgation of the canons.

One example will suffice: the decree of 8 April 1546 upon the canonical Scriptures. Later critics of the Council contended that this decree elevated tradition into a second source of revelation, outside and independent of Scripture: an unwritten word spoken by Christ to his apostles and guaranteed by its acceptance in the Catholic Church. Many defenders of the Counter-Reformation understood the decree in this way. But the minutes of the discussion show that, if the decree is patient of that interpretation, it was not intended by all the disputants. Some bishops would have liked all the 'traditions' of the Holy Roman Church to be declared sacred. Other bishops felt that this was too generalized; that the only traditions which could claim this sacredness were 'apostolic' traditions, traditions handed down in the Church from apostolic times. It was suggested that a list of apostolic traditions might be framed in the canon; and this was rejected on the ground that a list might unwittingly omit an apostolic tradition and

thereby cause Christians to neglect or repudiate it. The clause was therefore framed to sanctify only traditions 'which have always been maintained in the Catholic Church'; and it is clear that some of those who framed it were thinking not of an unwritten heritage of doctrine but of certain practices, like the keeping of Sunday or the baptism of infants. Though the decree was intentionally directed against certain beliefs of Protestants, it was less hostile to the Protestant doctrines than was afterwards believed. And the same measure of diversity may be found among other decrees, even those on the eucharistic sacrifice or justification by faith.

Yet it is certain that the immediate effect was calamitous for the programme of the peace-makers.

In October and November 1551, after a period when Pope and Emperor were in vehement conflict, Lutheran representatives at last arrived at Trent to prepare the way for their theologians. They refused to participate in the Council unless the bishops would begin to discuss the questions of doctrine again from the beginning and regard as null all the decisions which had been taken. Understandably; and it is equally understandable that the papal legates and the bishops should have rejected the suggestion with warmth. By the word *Council*, the two sides meant different assemblies. One assembly at Trent could not serve for both.

The Council was not under the immediate control of the Pope, who never came to it. His legates presided and received frequent communications and instructions from the Curia at Rome, just as the representatives of the Emperor or the kings of France and Spain received frequent instructions from their respective sovereigns. The majority in the Council was Italian; but as the number of bishops rose (in the last session of 1562–3 it was over 200) the successive Popes needed to exercise vigilant diplomacy through agents at Trent. It was important to the Popes that the Council should not be swayed by the political desires of

It was not difficult to assert that the clergy must be educated and must preach sermons. It was more difficult, and took far more time, to secure that the sermons which they preached were not offensive to instructed ears. It was easy to legislate that a seminary should be instituted in every diocese. It was long years before there were seminaries in most dioceses and before many of those seminaries were purveying an education worthy of the ideal which inspired their foundation. It is possible that in the Protestant countries the problem of ministerial education was made easier to solve because the revolutionary changes in the ecclesiastical constitution gave the authorities a hand less tied, and also allowed a somewhat larger proportion of endowment to be diverted into education. But in Protestant as in Catholic countries a long age of endeavour was needed.

In the Protestant countries the reform was often carried through by the princes against the Pope. In the Catholic countries the process was not so different – it was carried through by the ecclesiastics with the active or reluctant assistance of the princes. In Catholic France and parts of south Germany the decrees could not even be received, and Spain helped itself to what it preferred. It was not easy to reform the episcopate when so many Catholic kings, including those of France and Spain, exercised an almost absolute control over the choice of men to be bishops. As late as June 1569, the Venetian ambassador in Paris said that at the French court 'they deal in bishoprics and abbeys as merchants trade in pepper and cinnamon'. The Council of Trent was an effective reforming council mainly in Italy; elsewhere it was an encouragement and stimulus to reform. The decrees were accepted by some French provincial councils in 1580–4, and solemnly in 1615 by the representatives of all the French clergy, at a brief moment of independent assertion. Spanish councils of clergy consented to them forthwith (1564) but could not put them into practice without leave from the crown. In south Germany, thanks to the skill of the papal legate Commendone, the bishops

and Catholic princes (except the Emperor) received the decrees of Trent in 1566, though with a few reservations.

POPE PIUS V

The reforming party in the Church was helped to overcome the conservative traditions of Rome by the new political predicament of the Pope. Considered as a political sovereign, the Pope was less important to the European powers in 1565 than in 1510. In 1510 Julius II made the Papal State one of the powers of Europe, maintaining the political balance between France and Germany and so preserving papal independence and sovereignty. In 1565 all this was changed. The Pope was much poorer, for Germany and England had defected, France was fighting a civil war, and fees and dues were not paid. The Spanish Cardinal of Compostella wrote with a cool cynicism to the Emperor Charles V in 1555 that the Pope must reform the Church, because he was now too poor to do anything else. The rules of the Council of Trent hampered traditional and lucrative sources of profit, and made the Papal State a less happy ground for adventurers ready to be ordained in exchange for a fortune. Then Pope Paul IV (Caraffa) attacked the Spanish in Naples with his armies, was defeated, and threw the Papacy under the dominance of Spain for forty years.

In 1565 Michele Ghislieri, the Grand Inquisitor of Pope Paul IV (though no disciple or favourite), was elected Pope and became Pius V (1565–72, canonized in 1712). A holier man than Paul, he looked upon reform with a similar contempt for compromise, politics, and diplomacy. He was another ascetic with a decisive mind, a body which made him look nothing but skin and bones, and a way of life which was still that of a strict friar. He once said that the Church had need neither of cannon nor of soldiers, that its weapons were prayers and fasting, tears and the Bible. But

he was prepared to use other weapons than the spiritual when they were available. He encouraged the killing of Huguenot prisoners. He sent the consecrated hat and sword to the Duke of Alva to show his gratitude for the reign of terror in the Netherlands.

Edicts imposed savage penalties for simony, blasphemy, sodomy, concubinage. They limited luxury in dress or in banquets, expensive marriages or marriage settlements. They expelled all the prostitutes from Rome within six days, unless they would marry or enter the convent of the Penitents – a decree which was not carried out in its full rigour, but those who preferred not to brave the perils of flight were confined to a special quarter, which was walled in and where special sermons were arranged for their instruction. Another edict forbade all residents with houses to visit taverns. The Pope was narrowly dissuaded from imposing the death penalty for adultery. Parents were subjected to special penalties if they failed to send their children to Sunday schools. Priests, who had commonly dressed like laymen, were compelled to wear clerical dress and to shave off their beards. Physicians and doctors were forbidden to wear the biretta. Doctors were not to visit the sick for more than three days without receiving a certificate that the patient had confessed to a priest. The Pope tried to restrain the luxury of banquets, of weddings, and of dress; his police raided jewellers' shops to confiscate the world's baubles; his taxes discouraged carriages; his decrees limited dowries and forbade shopkeepers to hang out signboards with saints painted upon them. He thought it unfitting that pagan images should decorate his residence, and gave a few of the classical statues to the Roman people. He wanted to give away many more, including some of the great statues housed in the gallery of the Belvedere, and allowed them to remain only on condition that the collection should not be open to the public. He approved of the covering of the statue of Neptune on the fountain at Bologna and hired an artist to clothe more of the frescoes,

though in general he did not further drape the nudes. Gossips began to say that Pope Pius wanted to change the whole city of Rome into a monastery.

Sumptuary legislation of this sort was impossible to enforce effectively in the Rome of 1570. Outside the power of the papal government it was altogether ineffective. The Pope published a decree abolishing bull-fights, but the Spanish bishops dared not publish it. These sumptuary laws were more important as a symbol of a programme and an ideal than as a practical venture in moral government. In the realm of administration the Pope ran into those obstacles which had frustrated the reforming efforts of his predecessors. The Pope once professed that the Church needed no wealth. In fact, Rome contained a great civil service, a network of administration, and the papal government could not be carried on without money. Offices had been sold for money; and in moments of imminent bankruptcy, popes had created more offices, with incomes attached, in order to find capital. To clear out the hangers-on, the corrupt and petty officials from the papal court, was not only an act of administrative reform. It meant finding huge sums of money to compensate persons who had bought offices in good faith and would now find their offices and their income abolished. Pope Pius told some officials dismissed from the Penitentiary that 'it is always better to die of hunger than to lose one's soul'. He said that it was preferable for the Curia to be ruined rather than Christianity. But common justice could not sweep away the bureaucrats of Rome without making provision for them. He tried to force every priest and bishop who had a cure of souls outside Rome to go back to his benefice, and even imprisoned in the Castle of Sant'Angelo some bishops who failed to obey the order. It was an attempt to cure the symptom rather than the disease. Yet it was much for the future that a Pope should have attempted so fearless a reformation of the Papal administration. 'Men in Rome,' said the Venetian ambassador Tiepolo, 'have become a

great deal better – or at least they have put on the appearance of being so.'

In 1568 the Pope reformed the Breviary. He adopted some of that programme which Cranmer had wanted earlier – making it clearer and simpler, restoring the Psalms and the reading of the Bible to their dominant place, removing passages from the non-Scriptural readings that were spurious or incredible. He restrained the issue of indulgences; and in every way he attempted to carry into practice the decrees and the spirit of the Council of Trent. In St Maria Maggiore in Rome may be seen the copy of the decrees of Trent which Pope Pius V used. The historian Pastor looked upon that little book with deep emotion, and commented: 'It became in his hands the hoe by which he uprooted a whole world of weeds.'

Charles Borromeo

The strength of the movement at its best is seen in the work of Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan from 1560 to 1584. He experienced one of those colourful conversions so exuberantly plentiful in the Counter-Reformation. The nephew of Pope Pius IV, a beneficed clergyman at the age of twelve, a pluralist and an archbishop at the uncanonical age of twenty-one, a cardinal at twenty-two, a devotee of hunting in a manner criticized as unfitting for a cardinal, a lover of splendour and display who clothed his 150 retainers from head to foot in a livery of black velvet, he suddenly received holy orders at the age of twenty-five, undertook the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius, tried to resign most of his lucrative sinecure benefices, dismissed half his retinue and prescribed austere rules for the other half, lived on bread and water one day a week, used a scourge of spikes upon his body, and began to preach sermons – which the people thought striking, for they had never heard of a cardinal preaching. His abilities and his standing at Rome enabled him to play a large part in the last session of the Council of Trent (1562–3). The Council created a commission to

ensure that its decrees were observed, and another commission to draw up a revised catechism in Catholic doctrine; Borromeo helped to direct the work of both these commissions and revised the first draft of the catechism. It is characteristic of the Counter-Reformation that this famous catechism should have been designed not for the child or the illiterate, but for the instruction of the parochial clergy. He helped to revise the Breviary, as Trent had decreed. He attempted to carry out in his archdiocese the disciplinary decrees of Trent. Trent had ordered him to reside in his diocese, but he had the greatest difficulty in persuading the Pope to allow him even to visit it. He succeeded in persuading Pope Pius V and lived at Milan, the first archbishop to reside in the diocese for many years. He held provincial and diocesan synods of his clergy as Trent had ordered. He was the new model of a Catholic bishop, constantly engaged in visiting his parishes. He established not one seminary but three in Milan and three more outside it. He put these at first under the control of the Jesuits, but later lost his confidence in the Jesuits and founded a teaching society, the Oblates of St Ambrose, for the purpose. He founded a 'Swiss college' to train priests for Catholic Switzerland. He instituted an educational society which by the time of his death was controlling 740 schools. He was a grimly austere, often unpopular, heroic man, ready to risk life in a plague or his comfort in a fight with the governor. He died in 1584 and was canonized in 1610.

THE ENGLISH RECUSANTS

Every state which became Protestant lost churchmen by flight or banishment. A small number were not reconciled to change and preferred to maintain their traditional worship in other lands. These men were not attracted by the whitewash and the destruction or by seeing vestments, pyxes, images, copes, altars and censers being sold on the open market.