

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT (1545-1563)

*“By what right do you teach doctrines not found in the Bible?” “Because the origin of our faith is not in the Bible alone, but the Church which gives us both the written and the unwritten word.” – Bertrand L. Conway, *The Question Box*, p. 75.²²³*

Council of Trent: The Answer to Protestant Challenge
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A. Council of Trent: The Answer to the Challenge of Protestantism

The Council of Trent, the 19th ecumenical²²⁴ council of the Roman Catholic Church, was held at Trent in northern Italy between 1545 and 1563, meeting in three separate periods under the leadership of three separate popes (Paul III, Julius III, Pius IV).

The Council had been forced upon the Roman Catholic hierarchy by the Catholic people themselves as a result of the challenge of the Protestant Reformation launched by Martin Luther. It should be noted that in the early years of the Reformation, Catholics were leaving the Roman church in great number, and the Protestant churches, though divided, were experiencing some growth. Catholics thought they needed a clear and comprehensive statement of what they believe and what they must believe, if they were to clash head-on with and win over Protestantism. The Council of Trent “marked a major turning point in the efforts of the Catholic Church to respond to the challenge of the Protestant Reformation and formed a key part of the [Roman Catholic Church’s] Counter-Reformation.”²²⁵

²²³ Bertrand L. Conway, *Question Box*, 1913 Edition, p. 75; quoted by O. C. Lambert, 1:22.

²²⁴ Strictly speaking, it was not even an “ecumenical council.” “An ecumenical council” is a gathering of “bishops and other representatives of the Christian church from all over the world to formulate positions intended to bind or influence the members everywhere.” “After the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, it became impossible for Western Christians to convoke fully ecumenical councils, since those that have been held under papal auspices, the Council of Trent (1545-63) and the First and Second Vatican Councils (1869-70, 1962-65), have excluded Protestants and Orthodox Christians” (GME 2000, art. “Ecumenical Council”).

²²⁵ GME 2000, art. “Council of Trent.” Microsoft Encarta editors say that the growth of Protestantism in all of Germany was checked only because of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The Jesuits, whose number dominated the sessions of the Council of Trent, established centres in German cities, where they won many Germans back to Catholicism. Also, the Catholic rulers of Bavaria, Austria, Salzburg, Bamberg, and

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The Council of Trent, though, was a long-delayed answer for the need to reform the Catholic Church. “As early as 1520, Luther called for a council to reform the Church and to settle the controversies that he had provoked. Although many leaders on both sides echoed this appeal, Pope Clement VII feared that such a gathering might encourage the view that the councils, rather than the pope, have supreme authority in the Church” [the view called conciliarism, ETM].²²⁶

B. Not Truly an Ecumenical Council

The Council of Trent initiated a “general reform” of the Catholic Church in answer to the challenges of Protestantism, and precisely defined its essential dogmas. The decrees of the council were confirmed by Pius IV on January 26, 1564, and set the standard of faith and practice for the Catholic Church until the mid-20th century.²²⁷ Attendance at the council “was often relatively meager,” it was “dominated by Italian and Spanish prelates,”²²⁸ specifically those of the Jesuit order.²²⁹ Thus the Council of Trent considerably does not speak for the Catholic church as a whole.

C. The Council Not Conciliatory in its Purpose

The Council of Trent was not conciliatory in its purpose, and refused to concede to the differing opinions of the former Catholics who had now become Protestants.²³⁰ “In the area of religious doctrine, the council refused any concessions to the Protestants and, in the process, crystallized and codified Catholic dogma far more than ever.”²³¹

D. The Council Reaffirmed What Had Been Taught by Catholic Church

The Council of Trent reaffirmed the dogmas and doctrines believed and taught by Catholic theologians all along, even though these doctrines and dogmas have no Biblical basis and are contrary to reason, such as “the seven sacraments, the necessity of priesthood, doctrines of purgatory, transubstantiation, and justification by meritorious works.” The Council of

Würzburg restored Catholicism by force, thus creating a Catholic bloc in southern Germany (MEPS 2005, art. “Germany, Federal Republic of”).

²²⁶ “Conciliarism is both a theory and a movement in the history of the Roman Catholic church. As a theory, it holds that an ecumenical council (see council, ecumenical) is superior in authority to the papacy. In this view, the pope is like a constitutional ruler who receives his authority from the entire church membership, and whose decisions may be reviewed by the church community through an ecumenical council. As a movement, conciliarism originated with various canonists of the 12th and 13th centuries and was enunciated by the Council of Constance (1414-18; see Constance, Council of). It later appeared in other forms, mostly nationalistic movements such as Gallicanism. Conciliarism was condemned by the First Vatican Council (1869-1870). (GME 2000, art. “Conciliarism.” See also “Conciliar Theory,” MEPS 2005).

²²⁷ MEPS 2005, art. “Council of Trent.”

²²⁸ GAE, 19:290; GME 2000, art. “Council of Trent.”

²²⁹ MEPS 2005, art. “Germany, Federal Republic of.”

²³⁰ “Three councils have been held since the Reformation. The first, at Trent, met over a period of 18 years to deal with the Protestant revolt; it was decisively anti-Protestant in its decrees” (GME 2000, art. “Ecumenical Council.”

²³¹ GAE, 19:290. “The long-delayed council, dominated by the Jesuits, reformulated the Catholic doctrine and worship so as to preclude reconciliation with Protestantism” (MEPS 2005, art. “Federal Republic of Germany,” sub-article, “Catholic Reformation”).

Trent also “maintained clerical celibacy and monasticism, and issued decrees in favor of relics, indulgences and veneration of Mary and the dead saints.”²³²

E. Council Affirmed the Authority of both the Bible & Traditions

One of the first decrees affirmed during the first period of the council (1545-1547) was that the Scripture has to be understood within the tradition of the [Roman Catholic] Church—an implicit rejection of the Protestant principle of the “Scripture alone” as the rule of faith.²³³ The Council of Trent also declared tradition as co-equal in authority with the Scriptures, and asserted the right of the Roman Catholic Church to be its sole interpreter.²³⁴ It must be understood that throughout the years of its early existence, the Church of Rome had accepted traditions as equal in authority with the Word of God. This was not officially declared, although it had been practiced. At the Council of Trent, the opportunity had come to give voice to this attitude. The Council thus affirmed (during its fourth session) “that Christian revelation was contained in “written books” and in “unwritten traditions.”

F. What the Canons and Decrees of the Council Say:

Firstly, The Council says God’s truth is contained in both the Written Books and the Unwritten Traditions.

(a) *“And seeing clearly that this Truth and Discipline are contained in the written books and the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand...the Synod, following the examples of the Orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety and reverence, all the books both of the Old and New Testaments, 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 continuous succession.”*²³⁵

Secondly, The Council says more harm than good will result from reading the Sacred Books.

(b) *“Since it is clear from experience that if the Sacred Books are permitted everywhere and without discrimination in the vernacular, there will by reason of the boldness of men arise therefrom more harm than good, the matter is in this respect left to the judgment of the bishop or the inquisitor, who may with the advice of the pastor or confessor permit the reading of the Sacred Books translated into the vernacular by Catholic authors to those who they know will derive from such reading no harm but rather an increase of faith and piety, which permission they must have in writing. Those, however, who presume to read*

²³² GME 2000, art. “Council of Trent.”

²³³ MEPS 2005, art. “Council of Trent.”

²³⁴ GME 2000, art. “Council of Trent.”

²³⁵ *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (London: B. Herder Book Co., 1950). Approved by Pius IV, 1563 A.D. Translated by H. J. Schroeder.

*or possess them without such permission may not receive absolution from their sins till they have handed them over to the ordinary.”*²³⁶

G. “The Bible Not Safe Method to Find Out What God Says”

In the main, Catholic scholarship agrees with this pronouncement of the Council of Trent. Says Bertrand L. Conway, author of the *Question Box*: “The very nature of the Bible ought to prove to any thinking man the impossibility of its being the one safe method to find out what the Saviour taught.”²³⁷ This thinking is also echoed by John Francis Knoll, in his book *Catholic Facts*, saying, “The Bible was not intended to be a textbook of Christian religion.”²³⁸ One should not be surprised then why majority of the Catholics have remained in the dark concerning their own Bible. Lack of knowledge once destroyed a nation (cf. Hosea 4:6). Lack of knowledge too could destroy a church.

H. Latin Vulgate Determines the “Authentic Canon”?

The Council of Trent decreed that the authentic canon was to be determined by what had been included in the Latin translation of the Old Testament, the Vulgate,²³⁹ up to that time the common Bible of the Western Church. “The Vulgate, in part a translation of the Greek Septuagint, in part an original translation by St Jerome of the Hebrew Scriptures as he knew them, included certain books and parts of books that Jews and most Protestants today term Apocryphal.”²⁴⁰ These “certain books and parts of books,” which the Jews and most Protestants call “apocrypha,” the Roman Catholic Church now calls “Deuterocanonical Books.” These are “writings included in the Roman Catholic canon of the Bible and also, with certain exceptions, in the canon of the Orthodox Church, but not in the Hebrew canon.” These writings were “fixed in the Roman Catholic canon by the Council of Trent in 1546, their place in the Bible having been disputed previously for some 12 centuries.”²⁴¹

How authentic is the present-day Latin Vulgate? Sixtus V (1585-1590) overhauled Jerome’s Latin Vulgate and introduced thousands of changes. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* says: “Sixtus V, though unskilled in this branch of criticism, had introduced alterations of his own, all for the worse. He had gone so far as to have an impression of the vitiated edition printed and partially distributed, together with the proposed Bull enforcing its use. He died, however, before the actual promulgation.”²⁴² Clement VIII (1592-1605),²⁴³ with

²³⁶ 4th rule concerning prohibited books, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 1563.

²³⁷ Conway, *The Question Box*, p. 67; quoted by O. C. Lambert, 1:20.

²³⁸ Knoll, *Catholic Facts*, p. 50; quoted by O. C. Lambert, 1:21.

²³⁹ In Latin, *vulgata editio*, “popular edition.” “The name originally was given to the ‘common edition’ of the Greek Septuagint used by the early Fathers of the Church. It was then transferred to the Old Latin version (the *Itala*) of both the Old Testament and the New Testament that was used extensively during the first centuries in the Western Church.” (MEPS 2005, art. “Vulgate”).

²⁴⁰ See MEPS 2005, art. “Apocrypha.”

²⁴¹ MEPS 2005, art. “Deuterocanonical Books.”

²⁴² *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2:412

²⁴³ For his pontificate, see MEPS 2005, art. “Popes.”

the help of Robert Cardinal “St.” Bellarmine²⁴⁴ “recalled all the copies” issued by Sixtus “as they could, and hastily substituted their own.”²⁴⁵ Here we see two “infallible” popes – Sixtus V and Clement VIII-- trying their hand at translation but only made the Vulgate worse! And yet Bertrand L. Conway in his book says the Vulgate “was substantially faithful to the original Scriptures.”²⁴⁶

THE FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL (JULY 18, 1870)

*“If it is not identical in belief, government, etc., with the primitive Church, then it is not the Church of Christ.” — John Francis Knoll, *Catholic Facts*, p. 27.²⁴⁷*

First Vatican Council Defined the Dogma of Papal Infallibility
Definition of the Dogma
The Doctrine that Says the Church is Infallible
The Doctrine that Says Infallibility is a Divine Gift
Since the Church is Infallible, the Pope Too Must Be Infallible
Authority of Pope Now Supplants Christ’s Authority
Papal Infallibility is a New Doctrine, and a Mistake!
The Dogma Divided the Roman Catholic Church
Conflict With Germany Over the Dogma of Papal Infallibility

A. The Council that Defined the Dogma of Papal Infallibility

The First Vatican Council, the 20th ecumenical council recognized by the Roman Catholic Church, is known for its definition of “papal primacy²⁴⁸ of jurisdiction and infallibility.” Convened by Pius IX, the pope of Rome, the council met in St Peter's Basilica in Rome 93 times between December 8, 1869, and September 1, 1870.²⁴⁹

B. The Dogma Defined

Definition of the dogma by the Vatican Council (quoted from Henry Edward Manning in his book *The Vatican Council and Its Definitions*): *“Therefore, faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the beginning of the Christian faith, for the glory of God our*

²⁴⁴ His full name is Roberto Francesco Romolo Bellarmino (1542-1621), Italian Roman Catholic theologian and one of the leaders of the Counter-Reformation. (MEPS 2005, art. “Robert Bellarmine”).

²⁴⁵ Lambert, *Catholicism Against Itself*. 1:42. Unabridged Edition.

²⁴⁶ Conway, *The Question Box*, p. 69.

²⁴⁷ Knoll, *Catholic Facts*, p. 27; quoted by O. C. Lambert, 1:64.

²⁴⁸ This false doctrine actually has a long history. “After the fall of Rome (476) to Germanic invaders, the Roman pope was the only guardian of Christian universalism in the West. He began more explicitly to attribute his primacy to Rome's being the burial place of St Peter, whom Jesus had called the “rock” on which the Church was to be built” (MEPS 2005, art. “Orthodox Church”).

²⁴⁹ MEPS 2005, art. “First Vatican Council.”

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*Saviour, the exaltation of the Catholic religion, and the salvation of the Christian people, the sacred Council approving, we teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: The Roman Pontiff, when he speaks Ex-Cathedra, that is, when in discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his Supreme Apostolic Authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith and morals to be held by the universal church, by divine assistance promised him by the blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that His church should be endowed for the defining of doctrine regarding faith and morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not from the consent of the Church.”*²⁵⁰

Note this strange disclaimer from the *Catholic Dictionary*: “The pope in himself is subject to error like other men; his infallibility comes from the Spirit of God, which on certain occasions protects from error in faith and morals. He has no infallibility in merely historical or scientific questions. Even in matters of faith and morals he has no inspiration, and must use the same means of theological inquiry open to other men. He may err as a private doctor; nor is any immunity from error granted to books which he may write and publish. Even when he speaks with apostolic authority he may err.”²⁵¹

Concerning papal infallibility, here is another explanation from James Cardinal Gibbons: “Finally, the inerrability of the popes, being restricted to questions of faith and morals, does not extend to the natural sciences, such as astronomy or geology, unless where error is presented under the false name of science, and arrays itself against revealed truth. It does not therefore concern itself about the nature and motions of the planets. Nor does it regard purely political questions, such as the form of government a nation ought to adopt, or for what candidate we ought to vote.”²⁵² On the other hand, O. C. Lambert, citing the *Catholic Dictionary*, p. 241, says “the Regent of the Chancery in Roman Curia is the man who ‘revises the Bulls that have been expedited and promulgated [by the pope], and, if any error has crept in, corrects it.’”²⁵³ This is an incident of a fallible man correcting the “infallible pope”!

C. It is asserted, firstly, that the Church is Infallible

The dogma of “infallibility” is the doctrine “that in matters of faith and morals the [Roman Catholic] Church, both in teaching and in believing, is protected from substantive error by divine dispensation.”²⁵⁴ “Roman Catholic theology asserts that the entire Church is infallible (and therefore cannot err in matters of faith) when, from bishops to laity, it shows universal agreement in matters of faith and morals. Only the following people in the Church—those who hold its highest teaching office—are believed to proclaim Christian doctrine infallibly: (1) the entire body of bishops in union with the pope, the bishop of

²⁵⁰ Henry Edward Manning, *The Vatican Council and Its Definitions* (New York: P. J. Kennedy, 1896).

²⁵¹ Addis & Arnold, *Catholic Dictionary*, p. 677; quoted by O. C. Lambert, 1:24-25.

²⁵² James Cardinal Gibbons, *Faith of Our Fathers* (Baltimore, Maryland: John Murphy Co., 1917), p. 148.

²⁵³ Lambert, 1:26.

²⁵⁴ MEPS 2005, art. “Infallibility.”

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Rome, when it teaches with moral unanimity; (2) an ecumenical council that receives papal approval; (3) under certain conditions, the pope alone.”²⁵⁵

Says John Francis Noll: “If there be a ‘Church of the living God’ upon earth; if it has been commissioned to ‘teach the nations,’ if the Church is nothing less than Christ continued through the centuries, then it must be able to speak with infallibility.”²⁵⁶ The dogma, however, is widely rejected by Protestants on the grounds that only God can be described as infallible.

D. It is asserted, secondly, that Infallibility is a divine Gift

“The matters subject to infallibility are doctrines rooted in Scripture and in the ancient traditions of the Church, neither of which can be contradicted; thus, novel doctrines and other innovations are believed to be excluded.”²⁵⁷ “Infallibility is not regarded by its adherents as something miraculous or as a kind of clairvoyance. Rather, it is considered a grace, or divine gift, that is biblically and theologically grounded. Proponents point to many scriptural passages, such as the farewell discourses in John, especially the promise of the Spirit of Truth (see John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). They hold that the Church derives this gift from God, who alone is the ultimate source of infallibility.”²⁵⁸

E. Since the Church is Infallible, the Pope too Must Be Infallible

“According to the definition promulgated in 1870 by the First Vatican Council, the pope exercises an infallible teaching office only when (1) he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is, in his official capacity as pastor and teacher; (2) he speaks with the manifest intention of binding the entire Church to acceptance; (3) the matter pertains to faith or morals taught as a part of divine revelation handed down from apostolic times. The pope is never considered infallible in his personal or private views.”²⁵⁹

Says John Francis Noll: “...We merely mean that when [the pope] speaks for the Church on matters that God has revealed pertaining to what must be believed or done for salvation, he is protected by the Holy Spirit from teaching error. We claim no such protection for him when he speaks on other matters, nor in his personal or private life.”²⁶⁰

F. Authority of the Pope Now Supplants the Authority of Christ

Says James Cardinal Gibbons, the first American appointed as archbishop, in his book, *Faith of our Fathers*: “The pope’s letter is the most weighty authority in the church.”²⁶¹

²⁵⁵ MEPS 2005, art. “Infallibility.”

²⁵⁶ John Francis Noll, *Father Smith Instructs Jackson*, p. 46.

²⁵⁷ MEPS 2005, art. “Infallibility.”

²⁵⁸ MEPS 2005, art. “Infallibility.”

²⁵⁹ “Since the middle of the 19th century, only two *ex cathedra* pronouncements have been made in the Roman Catholic Church: the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 by Pope Pius IX, and the definition of the Assumption of the Virgin in 1950 by Pope Pius XII.” (MEPS 2005, art. “Infallibility”).

²⁶⁰ John Francis Noll, *Father Smith Instructs Jackson*, p. 46.

²⁶¹ Gibbons, p. 93; quoted by O. C. Lambert, 1:27.

“All the faithful of Christ must believe that the Holy See and the Roman Pontiff possesses a superiority of ordinary power over all other churches... not only in matters which belong to the faith and morals, but also in those that pertain to the discipline and government throughout the whole world... This is the teaching of Catholic truth from which no one can deviate without loss of faith and of salvation.”²⁶² The Roman Catholic church has thus supplanted the authority of Christ with the authority of mere human beings. Since the life, work and teachings of this church revolve around a person, it thus becomes a cult.²⁶³

G. The Dogma of Papal Infallibility is a New Doctrine and a Mistake!

Of course, papal infallibility, is a new doctrine, something which old Catholicism never believed before. Says the *Catholic Dictionary*, “It would of course be a monstrous anachronism were we to attribute a belief in papal infallibility to Ante-Nicene Fathers.”²⁶⁴ Papal infallibility, too, is “an enormous mistake,” says the *Plain Facts*. “It would be an enormous mistake to suppose that the pope is infallible, even on matters of faith, in his ordinary conversation; nor is he believed to be so in preaching; nor necessarily in his writings concerning matters of religion.”²⁶⁵

H. The Dogma Divided the Roman Catholic Church

Papal infallibility is a dogma. The Roman Church defines dogma as “an authoritative statement of a religious doctrine that is advanced, not for discussion, but for belief.” For a doctrine to qualify as dogma “it must be derivable from revelation, as attested by Scripture and tradition” and “it must be promulgated by some widely recognized ecclesiastical authority.”²⁶⁶

The following eyewitness report tells what happened when finally the dogma of papal infallibility was debated and voted upon by the Catholic bishops.

“Two constitutions were promulgated by the [Vatican] council: *Dei Filius* (April 24, 1870), stating Roman Catholic teaching on faith and reason, and *Pastor Aeternus* (July 18, 1870), declaring as Roman Catholic doctrine that the pope has jurisdictional primacy over the entire Church and that, under specific conditions, he is endowed by God with the infallibility (freedom from error) in teaching faith and morals that God willed the Church to have. The definition of papal infallibility was hotly debated, although opponents in the council never numbered more than one-fifth of those present. Some thought a definition inopportune, given the tense religio-political atmosphere in Europe, and others had serious historical and theological doubts about the doctrine itself. Some opponents absented

²⁶² Teaching of the Catholic Church, *Decrees of the Council of Trent* quoted in 143, 144; also in *Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 159-160; quoted by O. C. Lambert, 1:101.

²⁶³ “In modern colloquial use ‘cult’ can also imply extreme veneration of a leader... or a group organized around unusual or extreme beliefs and practices.” (GME 2000, art. “Cults”).

²⁶⁴ *Catholic Dictionary*, p. 674; quoted by O. C. Lambert, 1:61.

²⁶⁵ *Plain Facts*, p. 38; quoted by O. C. Lambert, 1:25.

²⁶⁶ Dogmas that come from later times and are binding within the Roman church include the Marian dogmas of the immaculate conception (1859) and the assumption (1950), and the dogma of papal infallibility (1870). (MEPS 2005, art. “Dogma”)

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themselves from the July 18 session at which a final vote of 433-2 was registered in favour of the constitution *Pastor Aeternus*. No bishop of the Church refused to accept the new definition. A small number of Catholics in Germany and neighbouring countries separated from the Roman Catholic Church and formed the Old Catholic Church in protest. They took inspiration from the renowned Church historian Johann Joseph Ignaz von Döllinger, who was excommunicated for refusing to accept *Pastor Aeternus*.²⁶⁷

“Propositions drawn from Pius's Syllabus of Errors (1864) formed the original agenda. The council was internal to the Roman Catholic Church but was made the occasion for an invitation to the Orthodox and Protestant Churches to submit to Rome. Cardinals named by the pope presided and strictly controlled the proceedings. Topics discussed, but on which no resolutions were taken, included adoption of a universal catechism and disciplinary rules for priests. Written comments were collected on a draft proposal concerning the nature of the Church, but the topic was never debated.”²⁶⁸ The doctrine was imposed in spite of the objections made by bishops and priests.²⁶⁹

Those were the times when Roman popes had absolute rule over the church.²⁷⁰

The Times report says, “...Many of the seats of the Fathers also were vacant, certainly nearly 250, 130 or 140 prelates²⁷¹ having absented themselves only for the day... The relative numbers of the votes given yesterday were as follows:—Two certainly were “*Non Rigant*,” Monsignor Ricio, Bishop of Cajazzo, in Southern Italy, and the Bishop of Little Rock (American); the “*Placets*” are stated by an Infallibilist Archbishop to have been 533; and those who abstained, or who were not present, certainly amounted to 130 or 140. Before leaving, as most have done, the recusant Fathers signed a letter to the Pope, which was drawn up at Cardinal Rauscher’s on Saturday night. This you will find annexed to my letter. It was to have been presented to His Holiness yesterday, and the 533 Fathers, many of whom are Bishops *in partibus*, many more mere official Bishops, were perfectly satisfied to be shorn. Yet the world will hear that upwards of a hundred of the highest dignitaries of the Church, including at least three Cardinals, men eminent for their rank, talents, and learning, refused to attend the Council, and by their last act and deed withheld

²⁶⁷ MEPS 2005, art. “First Vatican Council.”

²⁶⁸ MEPS 2005, art. “First Vatican Council.”

²⁶⁹ The predominant opinion among Catholics was that the prelates who gathered at the Vatican council were “infallible,” and they finally on July 18, 1870, declared the pope to be infallible (Lambert., 1:184).

²⁷⁰ John Emerich Edward Dalberg, 1st Baron Acton, British historian and liberal philosopher, was most famous for his statement: “Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” “A member of an English Roman Catholic émigré family, Acton was born in Naples and educated in England and Germany, where he was introduced to German historical methods by his teacher, the liberal Roman Catholic scholar Johann Joseph Ignaz von Dollinger. In 1859 Acton succeeded John Henry Newman as editor of the English Roman Catholic periodical *The Rambler*, but resigned in 1864, when the publication’s liberal views were condemned by [Catholic] Church authorities. He also came into conflict with Church policy when he opposed defining the doctrine of papal infallibility at the time of the First Vatican Council in 1870” (MEPS 2005, art. “Acton, John Emerich Edward Dalber, 1st Baron Acton”).

²⁷¹ He is a “high-ranking member of the clergy, for example an abbot, bishop, or cardinal” (MS Encarta Dictionary).

their sanction of a dogma at which their consciences revolted. In the words of the Prelates themselves, then, the Council is not ecumenical, and the dogma promulgated yesterday is not worth the paper on which it is written.”

“It was an interesting scene at the station last evening when the Austrian Ambassador and a host of the Fathers left—so many, indeed, that the train was detained three-quarters of an hour behind its time. Most of the Diplomatic Body had come up to take leave of their bishops, and there were pleasant interchanges of friendship between those diplomatists whose countrymen will soon be cutting each others’ throats. In the city the fancy lamps were lit instead of the ordinary gas lights, and a few houses had paper lights, but very few. There was, in fact, no illumination, and the band which played in the Piazza Colonna attracted but a small crowd. The Romans, I believe, abstained from going. The *façade* of St. Peter’s was illuminated, but that was only a family affair. There were no flags, no salutes fired, no symptoms of rejoicing, either private or public, and the Roman world was as indifferent as if your Correspondent had been declared infallible instead of Pius IX.”²⁷²
(Source: *The Times* [<http://www.the-times.co.uk>]).

I. Conflict With Germany Over Papal Infallibility

Now comes the conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the German Empire as a result of the promulgation of the dogma of papal infallibility, known as the “Kulturkampf”²⁷³

“In 1870 the First Vatican Council moved to strengthen the power of the pope by promulgating the dogma of papal infallibility. The German Chancellor Prince Otto von Bismarck felt that the increasing subservience of German Catholics to Rome, combined with the political power of the Centre party (composed of Catholic groups) threatened the authority of the empire. In 1872 Bismarck passed a law suppressing the order of the Society of Jesus, and all Jesuits were expelled from Germany; the following year the May Laws, or Falk Laws, making the Roman Catholic clergy in Germany subject to the authority of the state, were announced.

“For the next two years, despite bitter opposition from Catholic elements in Germany, civil marriage was made obligatory; religious orders (except nursing orders) were dissolved; and other laws repressing the power of the Roman Catholic clergy were passed. Hundreds of priests were imprisoned, and half the Roman Catholic bishops in Germany were displaced, many of them forced to flee abroad. After the death of pope Pius IX and the accession of Leo XIII, negotiations between the Vatican and the German Empire reopened. Some repressive laws were gradually abandoned before a compromise was reached in 1883. The only repressive laws that then remained in effect were the proscription of the Jesuits and the law making civil marriage compulsory.”²⁷⁴

²⁷² MEPS 2005, art. “First Vatican Council.”

²⁷³ From the German, “culture,” “struggle,” the name is “applied to the conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the German Empire between 1871 and 1883. (MEPS 2005, art. “Kulturkampf”).

²⁷⁴ MEPS 2005, art. “Kulturkampf.”