

FREEDOM AND SUSPICION AT TRENT: BONUCCIO AND SOTO

The important work of the opening months (Dec., 13, 1545 to April 8, 1546) of the Council of Trent culminated in the fourth public session held in the cathedral church of St. Vigilius on April 8, 1546. Here the first official teaching of the Council—the dogmatic decree concerning the canonical Scriptures and the reform decree concerning the edition and the use of the sacred books—was solemnly approved and published.¹ The session had been well prepared. The preliminary discussions, which had taken place in general congregations and special classes, had been reasonably thorough and open; and, considering the difficult circumstances under which the Council labored in its first days, they had performed a valuable service.² These two decrees, therefore, were the fruit of a common effort and were unanimously accepted by the fathers who were in attendance at the fourth session.

The records of the preliminary conciliar meetings which Angelo Massarelli, secretary of the Council, and Ercole Severoli, its promoter, transcribed, are rich in information which they provide both on the Council's method of work and the character of its personnel. In handling the agenda (both dogmatic and reform) the Council observed within certain well-defined limits a parliamentary procedure which was remarkable for that distant day. In the debates there is discernible a certain independence of intellectual expression, a sense of the personal freedom that belonged to the disputants as members of an ecumenical assembly, and a professional sensitivity that often revealed itself in colorful displays of passionate zeal in defense of theological positions. Seldom were the fathers of Trent indifferent to theology, never to dogma; and while discussion was intended to be free, it was never intended to be so free as to transgress the limits of what were commonly believed to be matters of faith and morals.³ To have tolerated such excursions would have been against the inner spirit of sixteenth-century Christianity.

¹ *Conciliarum oecumenicorum decreta*, ed. J. Alberigo *et al.* (Freiburg, 1962), pp. 639–41. The third decree, *Indictio futurae sessionis*, specified the date (June 17, 1546) of the next public session.

² The service was “valuable,” but only in a very relative sense. The preliminary discussions did in fact prepare the way for the public session of April 8, which inaugurated the magisterial career of the Council. This was an important contribution to its success; but the two decrees of the fourth session were not universally welcomed either by Protestants or by Catholics. For example, Antonius Corvinus in a letter of May 20, 1546 testified to the extreme irritation which the decree on Scripture and tradition caused the German Protestants. Cf. P. Tschackert, *Briefwechsel des Antonius Corvinus* (Hanover, 1900) pp 199–203.

³ The remark which Cardinal Madruzzo made in the course of his fiery debate with Cardinal Pacheco on March 17, 1546, exemplifies the sense of freedom of which the fathers

The conciliar discussions preparatory to the formulation of the two definitive decrees on Scripture commenced early in February, 1546. Almost from the outset it became clear that certain of the questions to which the fathers of the Council were to direct themselves were burning issues. The delicate problem of the preparation and the use of vernacular Bibles is an example in point.⁴ As the debate on this problem developed, some of the most bitter words exchanged in the whole long history of the Council of Trent were spoken; for there was question here of one of the key issues of the Reformation which touched the traditional Catholic attitude to the Bible. Thus, as the dialogue proceeded in the late winter of 1546, national (Spanish and German) interests came into sharp conflict with one another; and personalities (Cardinals Pacheco and Madruzzo) emerged as focal points around whom committed factions grouped themselves. Inherent in the debate and determining the drift of its thought were two mentalities—the humanistic and the scholastic, the new and the old—which represented two profoundly different appreciations of the problematic of reform and renewal.⁵

It is to the credit of the astute, diplomatic papal legates, especially Cardinal Del Monte, that the fathers, after more than eight weeks of difficult debate, were in a position to formulate the first two decrees of the Council. A consensus had been reached, and though not all were fully satisfied with the final formulation, agreement was sufficiently clear to allow the Council to proceed to a definitive promulgation in solemn session. On April 8 the fathers gathered together in the cathedral church under the presidency of the three legates, Cardinals Giovanni Del Monte, Marcello Cervini, and Reginald Pole. Solemn Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Salvatore Alepo. "After the solemnities Bonuccio, General of the Servites, preached a celebrated sermon whose open, magnanimous spirit was to have serious repercussions later."⁶ The Archbishop then read to the assembled fathers the two decrees (dogmatic and reform) on Holy Scripture, which then by acceptance of the Council became part of the Tridentine corpus.

Agostino Bonuccio, the author of this "celebrated sermon," had been professor at the universities of Bologna and Siena. Elected General of the

of the early period of Trent were conscious. "I would not," he said, "oppose the views of my Lord of Jaén (Pacheco); but in view of that freedom of speech which God has given to us, I am compelled to speak what seems to me so true that it cannot be concealed. . . ." Cf. E. Severoli, *Concilium Tridentinum* 1 (Freiburg, 1901) 37. This edition is hereinafter cited as *CT*.

⁴ R. E. McNally, S.J., "The Council of Trent and Vernacular Bibles," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 27 (1966) 204–27.

⁵ L. B. Pascoe, S.J., "The Council of Trent and Bible Study: Humanism and Scripture," *Catholic Historical Review* 52 (1966) 18–38.

⁶ Cf. McNally, *art. cit.*, p. 225.

Servites of Mary in 1542, in his thirty-sixth year, he held this important office until his untimely death in 1553. He was an erudite man, well acquainted with the writings of the Reformers, unconventional in his way of thinking, and forthright in his way of speaking, even to the point of being contentious. His difference with Tomasso Campeggio, Bishop of Feltre, on the question of the parity of Scripture and tradition became so bitter and difficult that Cardinal Cervini was forced to halt the debate by imposing silence on both of them. His role in the conciliar discussions was direct and pointed. His evaluation of the decree on justification reveals decisiveness of judgment. "Decretum," he said, "in omnibus displicet, et quare displiceat, in scriptis referam."⁷ The sermon which he preached at the fourth session illustrates a pertinent remark of Hubert Jedin: "The conciliar sermons were a sustained examination of the Council's conscience."⁸ The originality, the independence, of Bonuccio's message struck the renowned Dominican theologian Domingo Soto (1494-1560) with such force that he bent every effort to bring him to book for heresy.

The lack of translated source material pertaining to the Tridentine age and, therefore, to a crucial phase of the history of theology is regrettable; it is especially regrettable in view of the fact that the current ecumenical dialogue is so very much concerned with the historico-theological origins of the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reform of the sixteenth century. In its own right Bonuccio's sermon is a valuable source for understanding the Tridentine approach to reform on the level both of theology and of morality; and it illustrates the role of homiletical literature as a vehicle for the transmission of theological thought.⁹ Without revealing classical affectation, Bonuccio expressed himself in a Latinity which is highly stylized, ornate, rhetorical, at times obscure. It is not a text which is easily translated into idiomatic English. That the fathers of Trent were able to follow the trend of this long, difficult Latin sermon testifies to their high humanistic education.¹⁰

To Bonuccio the Church of his day was involved in a politico-religious crisis as grave as any she had ever experienced in her long history. "The upheaval," he says of the Reformation, "which arose thirty years ago, has

⁷ Cf. *CT* 5, 2 (Freiburg, 1911) 410. The remark was made in the general congregation of August 17, 1546, at a time when the decree on justification was under serious discussion by the fathers.

⁸ Cf. H. Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent* 2 (St. Louis, 1961) 464.

⁹ Cf. *ibid.* 2, 452 ff., for a fuller treatment of the Tridentine sermons.

¹⁰ The text of the sermon is printed in *CT* 5, 2, 95-101; it is also found in J. Le Plat, *Monumentorum ad historiam concilii Tridentini potissimum illustrandam spectantium amplissima collectio* 1 (Louvain, 1781) 63-72. Under the date April 8, 1546, Severoli (*CT* 1, 49) presents a pointed summary of the sermon.

been greater than any before."¹¹ And this desperate situation which the reform movement occasioned had so profoundly shaken many of the faithful that they felt powerless to reconcile the almost universal collapse of the Church with God's promised providence for her. He describes the tension this way:

Astonished . . . and in wonderment at the disturbed, deformed state of the Church, many are practically giving up their faith. Surely they must think that Christ our Saviour is not so benign, powerful, wise, certainly not very faithful; for in an unbecoming fashion He is allowing his Church—which He promised to maintain invincible and firm against all the power and work of the devil, and to preserve without stain and blemish as a devoted, reliable servant of the heavenly Father—to be defiled, overtaken, and almost destroyed by many powerful errors, by furious schism, by great moral corruption.¹²

The crisis, according to Bonuccio, is rooted in the harsh confrontation between the Church as an object of faith and history as a matter of experience.

In preaching, therefore, to the fathers of the Council who were so intimate a part of this crisis and responsible for its resolution, Bonuccio centered his sermon on those theological themes—the Christian faith, the saving gospel, the Cross of Christ, and His Church—which are fundamental to the Catholic religion. The epitome of his central message runs this way: "The Church has been born of, is formed by, and rejoices in faith; faith in turn springs from the gospel, the gospel from the Cross. To the extent, therefore, that the Church in this world rests on Christ, it bears His Cross amid the torment of evil."¹³ The sermon must be read and understood in the broad context of that Catholic reform which the Council had commenced in its fourth session. It is an exhortation to courage and confidence in the face of the adversity towards which the Church was drifting in the tide of history; it is also a plea for a more sympathetic, but realistic, appreciation of the mystery of the Church which suffers in this world.

"The Church is the gathering of the faithful";¹⁴ it is a unity—the one people of God—inspired by the unifying force of faith, "which arises from the saving word of the gospel."¹⁵ Bonuccio does not see his concept of faith as part of the contemporary tradition. Those with whom he stands "differ

¹¹ Cf. *CT* 5, 2, 99, line 10. The sense of decline, "the going down of the Church," was a theme well known to mid-sixteenth century preachers. Note, for example, the curious "epistolary" sermon preached by the Conventual Franciscan Sigismondo Fedrio da Diruta on May 1, 1546. Cf. E. Severoli, *CT* 10 (Freiburg, 1916) 481 ff. Bartolomeo Carranza, O.P., also preached on this theme. Cf. H. Jedin, *op. cit.* 2, 459.

¹² Cf. *CT* 5, 2, 95, lines 2-8.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, lines 11-13.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, line 20.

¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 96, line 10.

completely from those who think that faith is nothing more than knowledge and acceptance of the heavenly mysteries of our salvation—mysteries, which transcend the strength and comprehension of human intelligence, are clearly presented in the Apostles' Creed."¹⁶ Then he adds a clarification of the concept of this faith which was calculated to create resentment among the conservative fathers and theologians:

In the opinion of theologians, perfect Christian faith embraces beyond assent to the wisdom of the gospel a certain hope and confidence (*fiducia*) in the goodness of God and His Church, which forgives our sins; in this very confidence (*fiducia*) which Christ looked for in almost everyone whom He healed, the true and perfect meaning and character of Christian faith is situated and founded.¹⁷

Bonuccio could not have been more daring had he tried. The whole problem of Christian faith was one of the most delicate theological questions of the mid-sixteenth century.

Bonuccio made a significant distinction between simple *fides* (faith) as an intellectual, cognitive assent to the truths of the gospel, and saving *fiducia* (confidence) as personal trust in Jesus as Saviour and Redeemer. Thus *fiducia* shares the character of gospel-commitment and all that this saving relation implies; it contains within it the qualities which Christ sought in those who approached Him with the hope of salvation. According to Bonuccio, the demons could have *fides*, but it is only the truly justified who have *fiducia*. The one brings knowledge, the other life.¹⁸ This way of describing faith proved irritating, even dangerous; for it seemed at face value to be infected with Lutheranism, whose concept of *fiducia* was to be explicitly condemned in the sixth session (Jan. 13, 1547) of the Council.¹⁹

A careful reading of Bonuccio's sermon shows the seeds of a theology of the Cross. Living faith in the gospel unites to Christ, to His Cross, and to His

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 95, lines 20–23.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, lines 27–31: "Vera perfectaue Christiana fidei ratio et proprietates . . . spem certam amplectitur atque fiduciam." Bonuccio further delineates this concept: "Haec igitur vera, perfecta, viva atque Christiana fides habitus est animo a Deo Opt. Max. infusus. . . ." Cf. *ibid.*, 96, lines 1–2.

¹⁸ In his sermon on the fourth Sunday of Advent (1545) the Carmelite Antonius Marinarius had openly declared: "From the beginning of the world to its end only one way leads to salvation, namely, faith in Jesus Christ. O that all Christians understood this benefit and made use of their Christian liberty! Then would the Church exhibit a different, a nobler aspect." No objections were raised against this way of talking; for the moment, at least, Marinarius was left in peace. Cf. H. Jedin, *op. cit.* 2, 456–57.

¹⁹ Cf. *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta*, p. 655: "Canon 12: Si quis dixerit, fidem iustificantem nihil aliud esse quam fiduciam divinae misericordiae, peccata remittentis propter Christum, vel eam fiduciam solam esse, qua iustificamur, anathema sit."

Church. Gospel, Christ, Cross, and Church are intimately related. The saving promise of the Christian gospel rests on the Cross, from which the Church derives her inner strength of character. It is the Cross which the Church represents and exhibits in her whole *manière d'être*. As Christ suffered then in His earthly life, so now He suffers in His mystical life, which is the life of the Church on earth. Bonuccio says it this way:

Christ suffered once in His person; He returned to life never again to suffer. But as often as the gospel-teaching and its piety are damned, attacked, reviled, crucified, buried, so in a way He suffers once again, and is tormented daily in His members. For it is only right that those who desire to reign in heaven with Christ should through the ignominy of the Cross return and once again follow Him.²⁰

Thus, the pain and woe which the Church experiences in her historical existence show forth corporately to the world the sufferings of Christ, His cruel passion, and His Cross.

It is in this context that Bonuccio offers the Cross as the key factor in ecclesiastical historiography. "The errors," he insists, "the schisms, the heresies, the bad morals which our age has produced, are the signs and the stigmata of the Cross."²¹ The spirituality of the Cross is not simply a matter of voluntary penance and good works performed out of a sense of mortification or for any other laudable motive; it involves submission to the anguish of history, whose development is seen as the working out of God's providence in this world, even when the forces of evil are conspiring to do violence there to His kingdom. The tragic collapse of Christendom (which Bonuccio imputes to the Reformation) is part and parcel of God's universal plan to introduce the Church more intimately into mystique of the Cross of Christ. For the Church it means a new sharing in the Passion, a reliving of its bitter experience, and self-giving on behalf of redemption.

As the continuation of Christ, the Church has a divine and a human aspect—divine in her Head, human in her members. The human element is the contingent, the variable, the deficient, the corruptible. It is the element which makes reformation possible and necessary. In the ecumenical council of which he was a member, Bonuccio could see a special instrument for the restoration of the Church. "Fathers," he said, "you must preserve the majesty of the councils, and proceed to define what touches the body and the soul of religion and faith and morals."²² Thus he stood for permanence in the midst of change. Tradition must be preserved. "But other matters may be handled with freedom."²³ Heresy-hunting should be eschewed.

²⁰ Cf. *CT* 5, 2, 97, lines 45-49.

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, line 50.

²² Cf. *ibid.*, 99, lines 47-48.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, lines 49-50.

Bonuccio was especially concerned with those churchmen who suspected serious religious error, deficiencies in faith, whenever new theological ideas were offered: "straightway they cry out with indescribable agitation and excitement: 'Heresy! This is Lutheran and Zwinglian teaching! To the torture chamber! To the stake!' They act as if they alone were the schoolmasters, and that all things are subject to their censures. . . ."²⁴ Then he added the warning: "If you try to control everything, you expose all things to the danger of endless controversy and leave nothing to be discussed according to the good pleasure, the leisure, and the liberty of men of talent." This plea for freedom of discussion would be congenial to the fathers of the first period of Trent. They highly appreciated their role as members of an ecumenical synod.

The strength of Bonuccio's position on Church renewal is suggested by a remark which reflects the realism of the humanistic approach to reform: "In my opinion, the worst poison in the work of reform which we so much desire is to want to reform others without being willing to be reformed ourselves."²⁵ The reform, as Bonuccio envisioned it, should be objective, progressive, and realistic.²⁶ It should touch all classes of society, higher and lower clergy, secular and ecclesiastical princes, and learned men, the doctors of theology and law; nor are the ordinary citizens of the *respublica christiana* excluded from the orbit of reform, as Bonuccio conceived it. Inherent in his approach to the problem of ecclesiastical renewal is the conviction that the Church must find the beginning of its reformation in the hearts of individual men. Good Christians make a good Church.

That the Church is made up of "the good and the bad" is a Gospel idea. In the Catholic tradition the Church is like the "net which was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind" (Mt 13:47). The one visible Church, while holy in her Head and in her spirit, is good and bad in her human members. He put the matter this way: "Though the Church militant is holy, nevertheless she advances daily, because she has not yet attained that holiness, complete in all respects, which she expects in the world to come. Daily she is afflicted through the Cross, that through daily renewal her association with Christ might become more intimate."²⁷ Bonuccio laid stress

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, lines 44-52.

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 100, lines 4-5.

²⁶ A classical statement of the need of objective, realistic reform is Cardinal Pole's sermon, the so-called *Eirenikon*, delivered for him by Angelo Massarelli at the second session of Trent on January 7, 1546. "Before the tribunal of God's mercy," he said, "we, the shepherds, should make ourselves responsible for all the evils now burdening the flock of Christ." See the translation by V. McNabb, "Cardinal Pole's *Eirenikon*," *Dublin Review* 198 (1936) 149-60. Cf. H. Jedin, *op. cit.* 2, 26.

²⁷ Cf. *CT* 5, 2, 98, lines 10-13.

on this dichotomy, this progression in the way of holiness. He distinguished two aspects of the Church (but not two churches) according to the internal quality of her adherents: the defective and sinful who are doomed, and the perfect and holy who are to be saved. Of this latter group he says: "The Church, which stands in the presence of God, is known to Him alone who fashioned her. . . . She embraces those who with living faith in Christ are admitted to the glory and the honor of the sons of God, predestined before all ages and called at a determined time, justified and magnified. . . ."²⁸ Then he adds the significant observation on the defective and the sinful: "Those whom Satan entices to damnation do not belong to this Church which Christ built on a firm rock."

It was this unguarded way of speaking of the Church as visible and invisible, of her membership as divided between the two groups, of *fides* and *fiducia* as distinct, that created the unfortunate suspicion in the mind of Bishop Juan Fonseca of Castellmare that Bonuccio was infected with the Bohemian virus of John Hus's invisible Church of the justified, the *universitas praedestinatorum*. It was the impression (but only an impression) which the sermon had made,²⁹ but it was sufficient to make Bonuccio suffer through many miserable days of public accusation and humiliating slander. This contention, which arose out of this case, was especially regrettable since in its opening months the Council's position was insecure; it was anxious, therefore, to establish its prestige on the basis of reasonable consensus and concord.

What was the sequel to this long, moving sermon at the fourth session of Trent, on Thursday, April 8, 1546? The first indication of the great displeasure which Bonuccio's performance occasioned is contained in a notice in Massarelli's diary for Sunday, April 11.³⁰ Here we learn that the whole tenor of the Servite General's remarks had seriously scandalized the Emperor's legate, Don Francisco de Toledo, and that in back of this resentment stood Domingo Soto ("to whom much deference was due") and his report on the sermon as he understood it. The accusation of Soto, at once imperial theologian and personal representative of the Dominican Master General, could not be dismissed by the legates without the benefit of at least a fact-

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, lines 21-24.

²⁹ Note, e.g., how Laurentius Prée (Pratanus) reports the position which Bonuccio had taken in his sermon: "Hoc autem illi [Bonuccio] obiecerat episcopus eo quod in concione quandam invisibilem ecclesiam fingeret. Numquam tamen id pertulisse dici potest, sed alio atque alio sermonis colore [calore] ecclesiam inquirens hoc prae se ferre visus est." Cf. *Laurentii Pratanti Actorum sacrae et oecumenicae Tridentinae synodi epilogus* (CT 2 [Freiburg, 1911] 383).

³⁰ Cf. *A. Massarelli Diarium* 3 (CT 1, 534-35).

finding inquiry. Bonuccio was not the first (neither was he to be the last) Tridentine preacher to feel the bite of this ardent dogmatic purist.³¹ Cardinal Madruzzo of Trent favored, therefore, the plan of calling together both Bonuccio and Soto, "that the two might be given a hearing in the presence of Cardinal Pacheco, Don Francisco, and the Cardinal of Trent himself."

The meeting was arranged for Tuesday, April 13; but already on Monday the legates in a well-attended session with the fathers (including the Franciscan theologian Alfonso de Castro, who would be no friend of Bonuccio's ideas) were ready to look into the matter of the celebrated sermon "which had given offense to so many." Massarelli reports the proceedings of this long meeting in these few words:

The legates summoned the General of the Servites and Doctor Soto to appear before them, that they might become acquainted with their differences. The General defended himself with high excellence, saying: "If my sermon can be censured as heretical in any respect, I am ready to be punished with death; but if it is not heretical, let the one who is accusing me be beaten with whips in the market place."³²

Thereupon Juan Fonseca, Bishop of Castellmare, rose and in most biting words objected to the concept of the Church which Bonuccio had developed in his sermon—"a seedbed of errors." Beside himself in his invective, the Bishop openly accused the General of being a Hussite in that he maintained the existence of an invisible Church. Massarelli informs us that Bonuccio replied "most exactly" (*exactissime*) to the Bishop's pointed accusation. He had been insulted, injured, and calumniated publicly by the unrestrained manner in which Fonseca and Soto had spoken of him; he was not, however, a convicted heretic. Meanwhile "Soto said nothing, but he did ask for a copy of the sermon. [When he had the text of the same, he replied,] then he would have his say." Perfectly within his rights, Bonuccio refused to comply with this request.³³

³¹ The Carmelite Marinarius was denounced by Soto for certain questionable remarks in his sermon preached on Laetare Sunday (April 4, 1546). By the middle of the following week, when Bonuccio delivered his sermon, the Dominican theologian found that he had two cases on his hands. Later, on May 1, 1546, the sermon of the Conventual Sigismondo Fedrio da Diruta caused a first-rate scandal among the fathers of the Council, and Cardinal Cervini requested that the friar be punished for his antics in the pulpit. Cf. n. 11 above.

³² Cf. A. Massarelli, *op. cit.*, p. 535.

³³ The words with which L. Prée's account of the proceedings of April 12 terminate are difficult to evaluate. Thus he writes: "Morem iis [patribus concilii] gerens frater generalem concinatorum non repugnantem argumentationibus suis Scoticis facile vicit atque adegit ad palinodiam." Cf. L. Pratanus (Prée), *op. cit.*, p. 383.

The next morning Massarelli visited the Cardinals of Trent (Madrizzo) and of Jaén (Pacheco) to report to them on the discussions apropos of the preparation of the conciliar agenda, and on the proceedings between the General of the Servites and Soto. This entry (April 13) gives a fuller and more colorful picture of the events of the day before. It is worth reproducing here for its dramatic characterization of the highly personal, sensitive, even tense atmosphere which developed so often in the first period of the Council of Trent. This is the way Massarelli describes the proceedings:

The General of the Servites came [before the legates in session] and complained much of Soto, because he had defamed him with the charge of heresy; [he said] he was prepared to furnish proof of his faith, and he appealed to the legates to give this matter their attention. Otherwise, he protested, he would look for another way of clearing himself. The most reverend legates sent for Soto; and the General asked him face to face to repeat what he had said against him openly in many places; for [he said] he was prepared to give an account of his faith. Soto replied that he would say nothing until he first had a copy of the sermon. [Then] the General said: "On hearing alone you have condemned me. Why do you need to see the sermon unless it be to reply to [the charges] which you have poured out on all sides?" Soto replied that he would say nothing until he had seen the sermon. The legates asked the General whether or not he had the sermon; when he replied that he had it, they ordered him to read it. After the reading, he again asked Soto what he thought. Once again Soto's response was that he would say nothing without seeing [a copy of the] sermon. The General replied in these words: "Do you dare to condemn me on all sides merely from what you have heard? But now that you have heard the sermon read to you, do you still dare to say nothing? Why do you need a copy of the sermon? Why do you not say here what you have been saying against me everywhere?" Again Soto answered that he wished first to see the sermon.³⁴

Massarelli concludes his account of the hearing with the words: "Thus the two were let go with whole matter still up in the air."³⁵

On April 14 Don Francisco approached Cardinal Del Monte with respect to the Soto-Bonuccio affair; he hoped "that [the Cardinal] might reconcile and pacify them."³⁶ This was indeed a noble gesture on the part of that great man; but it would have been far nobler of him had he been prudent

³⁴ Cf. A. Massarelli, *op. cit.*, pp. 535-36.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, where Massarelli sums up the reactions of Cardinals Madrizzo and Pacheco this way: "The Cardinal of Trent praised the way the two had been handled; so did the Cardinal of Jaén. Nevertheless, the Cardinal of Trent thought that the matter should be put quietly to sleep, while the Cardinal of Jaén thought that the two contestants should be publicly corrected." Neither seemed to think that the culprit should be sought out and punished.

³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*

enough from the beginning not to have allowed this unfortunate affair to develop. Surely he should have known that a churchman of Bonuccio's calibre—biblical scholar, university professor, and religious superior—would not have lightly tolerated the grave accusation of heresy. On April 18 (Palm Sunday), because of his insistence, he was allowed (in the presence of Soto) to clear his name before the tribunal of Cardinal Del Monte and four bishops. Before this informal court he replied to the charges which had originated ten days before in the circle of the Dominican theologian.³⁷

It is not possible to say whether Bonuccio successfully "purged" himself of suspicion of the heresy which had been imputed to him. The charge was most difficult to handle, because it had been made in an impersonal and unofficial way. It was the treacherous accusation of the coffee shop and the *salon de thé*. The human mind is too devious to trace out its way; we will never know, therefore, what was the last thought of Soto and Fonseca in this unfortunate matter. But at the same time it is true that Bonuccio himself was never legally censured for heresy. The greatest harm was done to him in a subversive way. It is a testimonial to his strength of character that he was able to surmount this obstacle and continue to render service to the Church by his activity at the Council. It is a matter of history that his enemies had the opportunity of hearing him deliver and redeliver his controversial sermon in the cathedral church of Trent; but we have the greater advantage (for which Soto contended in vain) of holding the text of his sermon in our own hands and judging it in the context of a new, more reasonable theological climate.

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³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 538. In the general congregation of May 18, 1546, Bonuccio had one more opportunity to proclaim publicly his orthodoxy on behalf of which, he declared, he was prepared to die. Cf. E. Severoli, *CT* 1, 59.