

still more of all fictitious things, deliberately left therein, which perverted the true sense, or the historical truth and sincerity; that he had also filled up several gaps and vacancies to keep up the thread of the text, otherwise interrupted, and leaving the reader in doubt for want of the full sense, or leading him into error by a wrong meaning." It does not seem unreasonable to suppose that unscrupulous writers have made out St. Thomas, by their suppression or alteration of passages, or even their additions, an opponent of a doctrine of which certainly his piety, mighty genius and learning would lead us to believe him a strenuous defender. It seems quite plain to Cardinal Lambruschini that like St. Augustine and St. Bernard, St. Thomas has been maligned and totally misunderstood; he has been unjustly accused of opposing the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

Previous to the holding of the Council of Trent, a provincial synod at Avignon, in 1457, declared in favor of the doctrine, and a large number of theologians, Italian, French, German, Polish, Flemish, English, Scotch, Spanish, Portuguese and Oriental, adopted the same tenet. Many academies and universities taught this doctrine. The University of Paris, in 1496, exacted an oath from all candidates for the doctor's degree to defend the teaching of the Immaculate Conception under penalty of being expelled from the university and forfeiting its grades and privileges. The Tridentine Council was favorably disposed to determine the question, and at one time actually resolved to proclaim the Immaculate Conception a dogma of Catholic faith. But in the discussion many Dominican bishops and other Dominicans present at the Council op-

posed warmly the resolution and pleaded for the adoption of terms prejudicial to neither of the two opinions, so that the question might remain as it was hitherto in the Church. The Council, which had other important measures to consider, consented to the compromise, but its true feeling may be interpreted in its Decree, which reads: "The Holy Council declares that, in this Decree, where there is a question of original sin, it does not intend to include the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ, and means to declare nothing more on that subject than what has been decreed by Sixtus IV. of happy memory." Cardinal de Jaen was not satisfied with this declaration, asserting that, in the preceding Congregation, more than two-thirds had consented to add these words: *Of whom it is piously believed that she was conceived without original sin.* The result of investigation evidences that while the majority of the Fathers of the Council believed in Mary's Immaculate Conception, they deemed it, on account of the circumstances of the times, expedient to withhold any formal rejection of the contrary opinion. The fires of heresy were at this period lighting up half of Christendom, and the Council prudently abstained from increasing the flames.

Reference has been made to the Constitutions of Sixtus IV., which the Council of Trent wished to be observed. These Constitutions were two in number, one issued in 1476, and the other in 1483. In the former the Pope granted indulgences to those who said the Mass and recited the Office which he approved for the Feast of the Conception. In the latter he condemned those who accused persons who celebrated the Feast of mortal sin, or