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Abstract

The debate between Luther and the Council of Trent arose in part out of the theologies of Late Scholasticism. The antipelagian interpretation of the doctrine, unchallenged in the West from the time of St. Augustine was vitiated by the nominalist experiment by William of Ockham and his more moderate successors, Biel, Gerson and Geiler. Their emphasis on the importance and freedom of man could also be found in humanism and in mysticism. The augustinian school was still important and Staupitz stressed the covenantal status of the Christ event.

Luther's own interpretation of the doctrine went even further than St. Augustine in emphasising the divine role. The whole man without Christ is a sinner; the whole man with Christ is totally righteous, through the righteousness of God imputed to him by God through faith. Only such a justified man is able to perform good works.

The Council of Trent, not uninfluenced by nominalism, replied by giving an important role to man in his justification, even admitting the possibility of a de congruo claim on justification through good works. The council still left a major place for God.

The insights of modern theology and psychology provide us with material for a critique. Luther was surely right in his analysis of the role of faith and the relationship with God that it presupposes. Nonetheless both parties failed fully to appreciate the communal and eschatological dimensions to the doctrine.

C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER 1

THE NOMINALIST BACKGROUND

There is no beginning to the history of the doctrine of justification. Since the Gospel was first preached, the theme of the reconciliation between man and God has been at its centre. The history of man's quest for justification has, however, an even longer history than this and could, I suppose, be traced back to almost the beginning of man. All this, however, lies far outside the scope of this thesis, for our concern is with the doctrine presented by Luther and the Council of Trent. We do, however, consider it necessary to say something concerning the nominalist approach to justification, for not only were the nominalists influential in the history of Luther and Trent, but they also illustrate many of the difficulties which these two had to face.

There is inevitably dialogue between theology and the culture of the age within which it is written. The theologian is himself part of the social structure of a particular time and therefore cannot be unaffected by it. The Christian Gospel is indeed for all men, but it must also be addressed to particular men at a particular time; Christianity impinges on the lives of men in different ways according to their social conditions and thought forms. The late mediaeval and reformation periods are no exception.

There is continuity rather than discontinuity between the society[1] of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and that of their immediate predecessors. The alleviation of the lot of the peasant, a consequence of the black death, was short lived, for by the turn of the sixteenth century the population of Europe exceeded what it had been before the onset of the epidemic. Peasant labour was no longer as scarce as it had been and was

therefore correspondingly less valuable. Some of the advantages gained had proved to be permanent; for example, in South Germany the contractual relationship of the peasant with his lord had become the norm. Nonetheless the peasantry was again beginning to feel the pinch, inflation having driven landlords to increase rents; the effect of this was particularly felt in Northern Germany where there was no central authority(2) to protect peasant rights. Such courts as there were, were usually expensive and corrupt.

The result was considerable social unrest. Apocalyptic and egalitarian movements flourished. The Peasants' War of 1522 was merely the culmination of a series of local risings,(3) so frequent in the previous half century, round Lake Constance, in the Black Forest, and in Wurtemburg, Styria and Carthingia. The difficulties were exacerbated by the lawlessness of society as a whole and local and national wars created further hardships.

The peasantry were not the only class to suffer economic difficulties. The landlords themselves and even the lesser nobility were not unaffected. Indeed, the imperial knights(4) had never recovered from the agrarian recession of the thirteenth century, some in fact finding themselves among the peasantry, whilst others only retained their status by pillaging off the local countryside. The artisans and the lesser craftsmen were the victims of the growing powers of the town guilds.

This was not without its repercussions on popular religion. In art and drama, God was often portrayed as a mighty Judge before whom Everyman must finally kneel in terror at the Last Judgement Day.(5) His wrath, if at all, could only be appeased by the passion of Christ, the merits of the

saints, and the sacramental ministrations of the Church;[6] the latter often being interpreted in a very mechanical way.

This can nevertheless be exaggerated; there is evidence to suggest that the parish priest of the sixteenth century was, if anything, better educated than his fifteenth century predecessor,[7] and some no doubt were good. The atmosphere of gloom was far from total, for the festivals[8] of the church, Christmas, Easter and Saints' days were occasions of colour and splendour in what was for many a dull and hard life.

On the whole, however, the church was ill equipped to meet the spiritual needs of her members. As temporal landlord owning over a fifth of Europe, she was herself party to some of the gravest injustices. She was led by a vast bureacratic[9] machinery whose object rarely arose above the accretion of wealth and power. The temporal schemes and ambitions of successive popes was yet another sign of the worldliness of the church of the period. The monastic orders,[10] with some very notable exceptions, not only failed to command the respect of those they were sent to serve, but were themselves examples of the despair, lethargy and greed which was so endemic in the church of the time. While accounts[11] of immorality within them are often exaggerated, there can be no doubt that their best days seemed over. Even Cardinal Pole believed that they could be left to decline to extinction.

Inadequate leadership, a lack of spiritual fervour and the harshness of the times all contributed to an ethos of despair. Lortz considers that the dominant religious mood of the period was that of fear.[12] There was indeed a tremendous interest in personal salvation. Pilgrimages, relics,

indulgences, entry into religious orders and requiems - all were means zealously used to appropriate the mercy of God. While the evidence for a significant moral decline is ambiguous, the sermons of the period reflect a profound dissatisfaction with the present morals and forecast a terrible judgement.(13)

Much of the above is a continuation of the trends that had already begun early in the fourteenth century. There were, however, two movements in the latter part of this century which would have been difficult to foresee in the thirteenth century. First in importance is the emergence of a middle class.(14) Increase in trade brought with it a new class organised into oligarchical guilds. The new class had a certain book-keeping mentality and provided a literate laity capable of creating their own cultural norms and religious inclinations without reference to the ecclesiastical authorities. The second movement was the renaissance.(15) The munificence of the Italian city prince, not to say of successive popes, encouraged a new form of art, whose inspiration was classical. The classical background introduced a new confidence in the ability of man to decide his own destiny. It was in this cultural setting that humanism found its birth-place and home.

The conditions and changes of the time were inevitably mirrored on the intellectual scene. The universities reflected the uncertainties of the period. Many thinkers were totally disillusioned with the incessant bickerings between the established philosophies of the time.(16) The Scotists, Thomists and Albertists had already ceased to exercise the influence which they once had had; the lead had gone to the nominalists and nominalism was

itself an expression of the uncertainties and scepticism of the Age. Humanism proved to be another vital factor in the intellectual trends of the time, while the devotia moderna provided a spirituality, lacking in many of the traditional offices of the church. It is to these three movements, nominalism, humanism and mysticism that we are to turn if we are to understand the intellectual and religious resources of the time.

Nominalism is difficult to characterise. It never really became a theological system, though there were nominalist systems of thought. It was more an approach to theology which found expression in a number of competing theologies. Indeed there were few theologians even among its opponents who were unaffected by the via moderna.

We see in nominalism an attempt to free God from the machinations[17] of theological necessity; secondary causation, natural and supernatural, were minimised in matters of faith to give greater freedom to God. Scepticism led to a reluctance to make assertions about the nature and the activity of God; paradoxically the result of this was often to give greater freedom to man. If God was liberated from the labyrinths of metaphysics, so also was man. Man could no longer be thought of as the mere recipient of supernaturally infused virtues and habits.

Obermann[18] has tentatively suggested a number of nominalist schools. While the groupings must be treated as provisional in the present state of nominalist scholarship, they do at least illustrate the variety which is to be found within the movement. William of Ockham and his immediate disciples, including Robert Holcot, Thomas of Buckingham and Adam of Woodham form the

first and the most radical of the nominalist groups. The views of this school were condemned in the fifty-one articles of Avignon; subsequently few scholars advocated a theology so radical and unorthodox as this. The second school, the Parisian one was led by John of Ripa and Peter of Cordia, but its influence was negligible and it therefore need not concern us. The third school was that of Biel, Gerson and Geiler, which was the most influential. It was in this form that nominalism reached the pulpit and penetrated into the popular religious disputes of the period. The final school is right wing, augustinian as well as nominalist in origin. Bradwardine and Gregory of Rimini, while attacking the other schools of nominalism for pelagianism, were so much influenced by them, that they can rightly be regarded as nominalist themselves.

Philosophically,[19] nearly all the schools of nominalism followed the lead of William of Ockham. He carried further than Scotus the reaction to Thomism. While the latter still retained a metaphysical framework in which to construct a natural theology, Ockham and his disciples dispensed with this framework and with it natural theology. Duns had retained many of the traditional categories, matter and form, potency and act, etcetera, but had refused to apply them to God. Ockham, however, went much further in rejecting the categories themselves, asserting that as far as natural knowledge was concerned, what mattered was the sovereignty of the individual thing, and concerning the supernatural, faith was the sole arbiter. The result was a dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural which made it impossible to argue from the empirical for the existence of God.

To a lesser or greater extent, this dissociation of matters of faith from empirical knowledge held good for nominalism as a whole, and this is true even of the right wing school. Bradwardine[20] denied the reality of secondary causation, making all action subject necessarily or contingently to the divine will, the result of which was strangely similar to that of William of Ockham. By denying the reality of the empirical Bradwardine also isolated theology from philosophy and metaphysics.

Our main concern is not, however, with philosophy, but with the theology of justification.[21] It was here that nominalism was to make its greatest attack on the received doctrines of the church. While there was considerable disagreement over details, the doctrine of justification was presented at least in outline in much the same way from the time of St. Augustine to Duns Scotus.

Man is a fallen creature, who can only be saved by divine grace. At every stage of his spiritual pilgrimage, he is totally dependant on the appropriate grace, if he is to proceed towards final glory. Grace is thought of in three ways, general grace or the favour in which God holds all his creatures (uncreated grace), special grace by which God leads rational creatures into union with himself, and final grace by which God allows the predestined to persevere to the end. Special grace is further subdivided into actual and habitual grace, or operative or cooperative grace. Only by these graces can man reach his heavenly destiny.

By actual grace, the sinner is moved to contrition, a turning away from sin and towards God; actual grace is in this instance, prevenient for

it goes before anything that man can do to win salvation. Faith is then infused with the habit of charity (habitual grace) and made active. Thus, the sinner is changed from a state of unrighteousness to a state of righteousness. From this there follows logically, but not chronologically, the remission of sin. Justification thus consists of the two twin and inseparable aspects, namely, the change from a state of unrighteousness to one of righteousness, and the forgiveness of sin. If the justified is to remain in a state of grace, he must also be given final grace, the grace of perseverence to guard him against mortal sin and perdition. This process, that leads through baptism to life eternal, is set in the sacramental context of baptism and penance.

Justification was considered wholly gratuitous. Man could not earn it, for it was a gift of righteousness and forgiveness from God. Only the justified man could win or earn merit. Even then he must still be in a state of grace and aided by actual grace. The deed too must be motivated by faith and love, must be good in itself and performed voluntarily. Election to the grace of justification did not necessarily mean election to glory. By mortal sin, man both lost the grace of justification and the gift of righteousness; not till the end could man therefore have any certainty concerning his final destiny.

Continuity[22] was affirmed between the natural and the supernatural order. Natural man was indeed a fallen creature, but his love of himself was not in itself wrong, though it was misdirected. Indeed, properly directed, it should lead the creature to his Summum Bonum i.e. to God Himself.

Justification was much more a matter of the redirection of the old man to his proper goal than of rebirth.

Over many matters there was strong disagreement. Predestination and prescience, sufficient and efficient grace, the primacy of the intellect or the will, were all matters of great disagreement and controversy. Nonetheless, the above description reflects the view of nearly all theologians from St. Augustine to Duns Scotus.

This is indeed no more than a caricature of the scholastic teaching on justification. It does, however, illustrate two important factors in the development of the doctrine. Firstly, the Christian life is seen as a pilgrimage, a process in which the sinner is weaned by a series of graces from love of self to love of God, his summum bonum. The pilgrimage is divided into a number of compartments i.e. preparation for justification, justification itself, growth in grace after justification, and finally life eternal with its concommitant grace, the grace of perseverance.

Secondly, and as a result of seeing the Christian life as a pilgrimage with a number of stages on the route, the Christian life is always to be seen as in via; the Christian can never be regarded as having arrived. Justified one moment, he may fall from grace the next. To have reached one stage of the pilgrimage does not mean that he will necessarily reach the next. There could be no certainty concerning his final destiny; the issue is always uncertain, because so much depends on his response to grace. In this schema, the danger is that grace herself is reified and through its segmentation separated from the personality of God. Then God Himself becomes

merely a judge whose task it is to decide whether man has responded sufficiently to the grace that has been offered.

Both these factors were to be exploited by the nominalist tradition. In the mainstream of the tradition, the objectivity of the gift of justification was safe-guarded through the doctrine of election.

As we shall show later, there were important differences between the nominalist and the traditional presentation of the doctrine of justification. There is, however, continuity, as well as discontinuity, between the two. Our contention is that both descriptions see the Christian life as a pilgrimage and therefore for both of them there can never be certainty concerning one's final destiny. However, the nominalists questioned much of the traditional interpretation of the doctrine of justification, particularly concerning man's natural powers to attain both grace and glory, the psychological and metaphysical freedom of man, the necessity of grace and the value of supernatural habits.

The English[23] School was here as elsewhere the most radical of the nominalist schools. They made use of the traditional distinction[24] between God's potentia absoluta and his potentia ordinata to safeguard the omnipotence of God. God's potentia absoluta, denoted his freedom to will, unrestricted by the order of the universe and unhindered by space or time. God's potentia ordinata was the power that God had chosen to use in the maintenance of the universe. De potentia ordinata, God's acts and promises revealed in scripture, were immutable. However, God's potentia ordinata lay within his potentia absoluta and therefore, in the last analysis, was subservient to it; God's potentia

ordinata in theory could be revoked. Such a suggestion made the activity of God in the last analysis unpredictable and illustrated for Ockham the impossibility of proving matters of faith. This attempt to free God from the laws of theological necessity imposed by earlier theologies introduced a note of indeterminacy in the dealing of God with man. Paradoxically the result was to give greater freedom to man; the supernatural element in men's lives becomes less pervading because it is less defined.

The effects of this are particularly felt with regard to the doctrine of justification. Ockham questioned the value of the idea of supernatural habits. De potentia absoluta, God can give man eternal life, although he has no supernatural virtues, and at the final judgement supernatural habits need not be distinguished from natural ones. It follows that supernatural habits have little intrinsic value; they offer in themselves no guarantee of God's acceptance. As man can be accepted through natural as well as supernatural habits, it is no longer the habit that really matters, but the deed which the habit produces. It is the act, not the habit, which is either accepted or rejected, and therefore supernatural habits are thus reduced to a merely formal status. Among Ockham's immediate disciples the devaluation of grace continues. Adam of Woodham even thought that de potentia absoluta, grace can co-exist with mortal sin and even damnation. If the concept of grace had been more closely associated with the 'personality' of God, it is difficult to see how such a view could have been adopted; the separation of 'grace' from the 'personality' of God is now complete.

For Ockham the removal of the necessity of supernatural virtues is merely a prelude to the exaltation of man's natural powers. De potentia

absoluta man can accomplish with his own power all that God wills him to. Again, acts rather than habits are given priority; Ockham claims that only an act proceeding from freewill can be regarded as meritorious. It is the act rather than the habit which are made by the divine fiat good or bad and rewarded either by everlasting glory or eternal perdition. It follows that merit consists of two factors only, the will of man which produces the act and the will of God which chooses whether to accept or reject it. De potentia absoluta, the will of man is capable of anything that God wills of it, including love of God, super omnia. Some of Ockham's disciples were to take the matter even further. Buckingham and Woodham so extended the power of human freewill that they denied to God all but a contingent knowledge of man's future actions.

The conclusion of Ockham's argument is that man, de potentia absoluta, can earn meritum de congruo, without the help of grace. Ockham here is using the distinction between meritum de congruo and meritum de condigno. Meritum de condigno signified merit in the strict sense of the term; merit that one could earn from God, as of right. Meritum de congruo on the other hand was a term used of works which, although they make no claim upon God, were nonetheless, through His mercy, accepted as meritorious. De potentia ordinata, Ockham retains the traditional affirmation of supernatural virtues; but man is still capable of contrition without the help of prevenient grace, though contrition is regarded as little more than hatred of sin. De potentia ordinata, this contrition must be rewarded by the infusion of grace. Man can therefore still earn meritum de congruo by use of his own natural powers,

and de potentia ordinata God cannot refuse his grace to the contrite. The conclusion is clear. As G. Leff says, "In one case God's will is so free that he can reward man's natural act with merit; in the other he has so ordained it that he cannot refuse to do so".(25)

While in theory this theology began as an attempt to stress God's omnipotence and freedom, in fact it becomes a thinly masked pelagianism, and as such it undermines the doctrine of justification as it had been affirmed since the time of St. Augustine. In the traditional pattern, the hierarchy of graces had preserved to some extent the objectivity and gratuitousness of the doctrine of justification. The removal of the necessity of these graces, inevitably put more responsibility on man to win his salvation.

Such a view could not go unchallenged by ecclesiastical authority. Ockham's views on supernatural habits, on the non-necessity of grace, and on the extent of man's natural powers were condemned at Avignon. The condemnation succeeded in stemming the tide in the interests of orthodoxy. The school with which we have now to deal, namely the school of Gerson, Geiler(26) and Biel, was both in its aims and in its conclusions more conservative. The most influential members of the school were pastors as well as theologians; Gerson was at one time Dean of the Church of St. Domatia and spent his final years in seclusion at Lyons devoting himself both to the practice of the spiritual life and pastoral work; Biel was a cathedral vicar and preacher as well as one of the leaders of the devotia moderna; Geiler was a notable public preacher. Pastoral interests led them not only to see the role of grace as much more important than Ockham had asserted, but also to stress

the responsibility of man for his own destiny, in order that their congregations should avail themselves of the opportunities that were offered.

It was natural therefore that both Geiler and Biel should follow a middle course between the extreme of the English School and the rigour of the tradition in their assessment of man's capabilities without grace. On the one hand both emphasised the seriousness of the Fall. Disobedience on the part of man had led to the withdrawal of original righteousness. According to Geiler,(27) fallen man is no longer obedient to the dictates of reason, he has lost joy and enlightenment and is now the victim of pain, anxiety and ignorance. Man's natural powers are wounded beyond even sacramental repair and even after baptism man retains the habit of concupiscence. Biel(28) also is insistent on the limitation of man's natural powers because of the Fall. He describes man's situation after the Fall as one of misery and utter depravity. On the other hand, somewhat ambiguously, Gerson, Geiler and Biel accord fallen man, even without grace, considerable powers. Biel describes the impact of the "formes peccati" as matched by another instinct, a witness to man's original dignity, so indomitable that hell itself would not suffice to extinguish(29) it. Man retains both psychological and metaphysical freedom. Geiler stresses too that, although man is wounded in naturalibus, the naturalia are not in themselves corrupted; in other words, man retains his original faculties, but these act at less than maximum efficiency. By misuse of freewill, man sins but he still can and should use his freewill to overcome sin.

By use of this freewill,(30) it is expected of man that he will do

his best (facere quod in se est), but as Biel and Geiler both indicate, this will vary according to a man's particular circumstances. The opportunities of the Christian are greater than those of the pagan; of the former it is expected that he will love God 'super omnia' (Biel) or with the love of friendship 'amor amicite' (Geiler) and detest sin (Biel and Geiler). This is an act of contrition (both Geiler and Biel refuse to raise attrition to the same status as had Scotus) de potentia ordinata, God accepts this love and rewards it with grace. To do, what in one lies, gives one a de congruo claim on grace. In effect contrition raises man into a middle state between that of grace and culpa - that of the viator. After justification, through his own efforts, man can remain in a state of grace, though assisted by the supernatural virtues. He can also win meritum de condigno. The latter is rewarded with the augmentation of the grace of justification and finally by the gift of life eternal.

It might well be asked what place is left in this schema for the prevenient gift of grace. More in fact than one might suppose. Biel(31) for example softens his estimate of man's natural powers by affirming that God usually sends his grace of vocation to lead the sinner to an attitude of contrition. Geiler(32) is somewhat inconsistent on this point, for in some of his writings, notably on the virtue of humility, he affirms that man cannot make a step towards his own salvation without the aid of grace. More often, he regards contrition as itself a cry of help which is then answered by the grace of God. Unlike Ockham, both Geiler and Biel retain the traditional categories of the supernatural virtues and habitual grace, thinking

them necessary for the acquisition of meritum de condigno; it is only by virtue of them that man can have a claim on life eternal.

We see that the responsibility of man is carefully balanced with the initiative of God. This is well illustrated by Biel's[33] views on predestination. De potentia absoluta, God has chosen to elect a certain number to salvation. This decision is ante praevisa merita. De potentia ordinata, he delegates some of his power to his creatures, allowing them the possibility of earning merit, grace and glory by doing their best. His election of individuals therefore takes into account their own efforts and is therefore post praevisa merita.

In spite of these not inconsiderable modifications to the English nominalist schema, the theologians of this school also allow man a considerable role in the choice of his final destiny. By doing what in him lies, the sinner can earn de congruo, the grace of justification which in turn gives man a condigno claim on eternal salvation. In spite of their attempts to preserve the initiative of God in the matter of salvation, it remains true that the theologians of this school, had propounded a theology of justification which at least in practice put the onus on man to work for his salvation.

This can be illustrated from the doctrine of assurance, as it is taught by the school. There can be no certainty concerning a particular man's final destiny, because there can never be certainty that he has done all that is in him to win salvation. Such certainty as there is, is conjectural. It rests on a number of signs. The individual can point to his love of God,

to the absence of mortal sin, and to the glad acceptance of his earthly lot (according to Geiler). Biel's list of witnesses is similar, a genuine love of Christ and a firm determination to fulfil the will of God, but he adds that a fear of damnation is itself a sign that one is on the way to salvation. He remarks that a constant oscillation(34) between fear and love is a sign that the viator is on the road to the heavenly Jerusalem. The Christian life is to be full of temptation, and spiritual and physical suffering. Geiler especially notes that the Christian must show a willingness to suffer in the steps of the Master and yet still there can be no certainty of final salvation. It is hardly surprising that scruples were the spiritual epidemic of the age and that fear featured so large in popular religion. We see both continuity and discontinuity between their teaching and the traditional presentation of the doctrine. They still see the life of the Christian as a pilgrimage divided into various stages of possible progress. What is new is the emphasis which they put both on the ability of man to earn salvation and also on the obligation on God de potentia ordinata to reward effort with meritum de congruo.

While the school of Gerson, Geiler and Biel had more influence than any other school in the late medieval universities, it is not to be supposed that it had no rivals. Quite apart from the influence of the via antiqua both in the universities and in the religious orders, there was another(35) group of thinkers, whom we have somewhat loosely classified as right-wing nominalist. Bradwardine(36) and Gregory of Rimini were the most prominent members of this school. It is perhaps less than accurate to classify them

as nominalist, as they drew their inspiration from a number of schools, and their aims were rather different from those of the nominalists with whom we have had so far to do. However, their theology departs from the traditional combination of nature and supernature; by minimising the role of secondary causation and attributing all to the direct activity of God, they exercised a similar concern for God's omnipotence that we have already seen in the nominalist tradition as a whole. This concern led them by different routes to similar conclusions, namely the separation of faith from reason.

Their soteriology was, however, opposed to that of the other nominalist schools. They stated with full augustinian rigour the seriousness of the Fall, the necessity of grace, the doctrine of predestination ante praevisa merita, and the importance of the supernatural virtues. On the question of merit after justification, they denied the possibility of meritum de condigno and stressed the importance of the divine acceptance. Merit could not be earned prior to the infusion of first grace. Even after this, merit only gave the justified a de congruo claim on increase of grace and eternal life.

One theologian who challenged the pelagian tendancies of his time was Staupitz,(37) Luther's friend and superior at Wittenburg. His influence upon Luther, in addition to the originality and depth of his own thought, require that we give him fuller treatment.

Staupitz was not primarily an academic. His theological reflections were almost entirely devoted to the explication of the drama of the redemption. He was, however, well acquainted with the theological systems of his day, particularly the thomist and nominalist systems. He is indeed difficult to

categorise into any school. Wolf's[38] attempt to label him a Thomist fails because it does not take into account either the originality of Staupitz or his indebtedness to nominalism.

Fallen man, according to Staupitz, is very much in need of redemption. He is the victim of the habit of concupiscence (interpreted in the wider sense of 'love of self'). He is liable to punishment, to condemnation to death, death of the soul (the loss of right being), the death of the body (loss of being), and loss of soul and body together (ultimate desertion by God). He is ignorant of God; his intellect is so impaired that he cannot even recognise the gravity of his own situation, and his will is so wounded that even if he knew the truth about himself, he is incapable of supplying a remedy. His freedom is limited to the choice of acts of disobedience and he is certainly in no position to love God 'super omnia'. It follows that man can take no step towards his salvation without the aid of grace.

However, God wills that some men are to be saved. In his humility and mercy He has decided to elect some men to final glory without regard to their actual deeds. Election is ante-praevisa merita, because good works are the fruit of election rather than the cause of it. In the very act of election, God loves the elect. By virtue of the promises that he has voluntarily made to them, He comes in Christ to win their salvation. Staupitz is insistant that the Christ[39] event and the act of election are so connected as to form one act of mercy, and from election and the Christ event all blessings flow. By the mediation of the eternal Son of God, God is made acceptable to the beloved; the sinner is pardoned and healed of

his infirmities, becoming a member of the church, the Bride of Christ and finally sharing in the merits and the eternal glory of Christ. Even the sins of the Elect are used by God to lead the sinner to eternal life. Staupitz neglects the negative aspects of predestination; his central concern is with the graciousness and mercy of God. Even the reprobate hear the law, the prophets and the apostles, and are condemned not on the ground of non-election, but on the basis of unrepented sins.

Justification is again discussed in the traditional augustinian terms. There is, however, a difference in the presentation of this framework. Staupitz is concerned to show how justification is connected with the redemptive work of Christ, for example through the help of prevenient grace, the soul is led, as usually taught, to an act of contrition, but this contrition is firmly grounded by Staupitz in the sufferings of Christ. The character of the contrition is determined, not so much by the human will strengthened by grace, but through the sufferings of Christ Himself. The cross nullifies all human achievement, and yet paradoxically also makes it possible. Only when all attempts at self-justification, all attempts to do what in one lies have been frustrated and the sinner has been led to the virtue of humilitatio, is the sinner receptive to the activity of God in Christ. Contrition is only a preparation for justification, justification itself consisting of forgiveness, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the subsequent infusion of habitual grace. The function of the enfused grace is primarily to direct the justified to imitate the love of Christ. Staupitz here departs from the tradition by stressing the importance of

uncreated grace. Thus the Holy Spirit leads the sinner into union with the Father.

Until a man is justified, he cannot earn merit, and even after justification, the important factor is not so much the works themselves, as the mercy of God who accepts these works as merit. For the justified, merit is necessary for the increase of the grace already received, but even so, merit is only meritum de congruo; there is for Staupitz no meritum de condigno.

The difference between Staupitz and Biel is shown very strikingly in their attitude to the doctrine of assurance. Both affirm that there can never be more than conjectual certainty concerning man's final destiny, but whereas Biel carefully balances the opus spei of Christ against the iustitia dei, Staupitz emphasises the covenantal promises and activity of God in Christ.

There is much that is traditional in Staupitz. His Christocentricity, however, gives the old formulae a new dimension which was destined to influence Luther. The stress that he puts on the power of the cross, in addition to the virtue of humilitas, preserves all that is best in the mystical tradition, while at the same time his conservative augustinianism provides this with an adequate doctrinal framework.

The christocentricity of Staupitz preserves him from many of the pitfalls on the traditional framework. The christian life is not fragmented into stages on the road to the heavenly Jerusalem, because all of it is covered by the eternal covenant of Christ. The scope of man's freewill is minimised to give more credit to the saving work of Christ.

The Universities and the religious orders did not have a monopoly of religious insight. There the debate between the via antiqua and the via moderna held the floor; however humanism in the court circles and mysticism among some of the rising middle class held the centre of attention.

Humanism(40) did not consist of one particular feature but was many sided. It was not even primarily a religious movement, though some of its supporters were also advocates of the via moderna. It was intellectual, deriving most of its inspiration from classicism; it manifested itself in the art, literature and science of the renaissence. Appreciation of her own achievement, in addition to admiration of the work of her classical ancestors, led to overwhelming confidence in the ability and potentiality of the educated man. It led to an important change of emphasis. The proper interest of man is man, whose task is to explore the potentialities of the world around him.(41)

Such a point of view was not, however, without its doctrinal implications. At its most extreme, in Italy it led to a thinly veiled neo-pelagianism, together with disparagement(42) of the sacraments. This is so even though there was hardly a humanist who explicity denied a doctrine of the Church. The new confidence in the powers of natural man implied a complete reorientation of values. Gelder puts the point well when he says of the Italian humanists "If the medieval Christian religion was a doctrine of salvation, their/s was a doctrine of life. If people in the Middle Ages wished to be free from the world as being sinful, the Humanist seeks the world in order to combat sin and practise virtue."(43)

Knowledge instead of grace is the true path of salvation. The place of salvation is no longer regarded so unambiguously as the life to come, but also consists of the present world with all its potentiality. The new point of view is well expressed by Ficino when he says "It is possible (for man) to have what he desires and to be what he wants to be".(44) It is scarcely surprising that it was on the issue of the scope of freewill that Luther was to take up swords with the relatively conservative Erasmus.

The secularity of the Movement can of course be exaggerated. The humanists of Northern Europe were perhaps more concerned with man's final destiny than were their southern colleagues; some of the protagonists, as we have already stated, were also members of the devotia moderna. Erasmus(45) himself regarded the study of the classics as merely a good preparation for the study of Holy Scripture. In St. Thomas More, we find humanism side by side with traditional doctrine and great personal sanctity. The point is, however, made, when we direct our attention to More's Utopia, a blueprint for an earthly paradise.

Humanism changed the religious scene in three directions. Firstly, as a movement, it made a sustained attack on the abuses of the church; in this connection Erasmus' "In Praise of Folly" is an outstanding example of the Northern Humanists' disgust and concern at the state of the Church. Secondly, humanism was a stimulus to the laisization of the Church. Thirdly, the movement provided new linguistic tools for Biblical Criticism; Reuchlin's Old Testament Text and Erasmus' Greek Text of the New Testament are both particularly important.

If humanism was particularly influential in the courts of the Renaissance princes, mysticism was to prove particularly attractive among a minority of the rising middle classes.(46) We know this from the printers' accounts of the period. The mystical movement had its origins in the simple mysticism of St. Bernard of Clairvaux and the school of St. Victor, and under the leadership of Gertrude the Great (c.1270) and Mechtchild of Mafdeburg, its popularity increased; Gertrude indeed wrote a number of prayers for the use of the laity. At this stage mysticism was a way of illumination through prayer and was circumscribed by an orthodox dogmatic framework. However, because it was another path to the Divine, from the beginning it tended to gloss over the role of priest and sacrament.

The movement(47) received new inspiration from the writings of Meister Eckhart (1260-1327). Brought up as a Dominican, Eckhart never entirely lost his Thomist background, combining this with leanings towards neo-platonism. Eckhart describes God as the source of all being, rather than as first being. Beings participate through illumination in the divine. Man is unique among creatures, because the intellect of his soul mirrors the divine intellect. By casting off all desire and voluntarily leading a life of poverty, man can rediscover his unity with the pure being of God. For Eckhart, the sacraments, grace, and even prayer, have a merely preparatory role; they too are finally set aside for complete unity with the Divine.

Eckhart's views were condemned two years after his death, but he continued through his writings to influence the movement. Of his immediate

disciples Suso and Tauler are the most important. Both were more orthodox than their master. Suso's "Das Büchlein der ewigen Weishart" was particularly important among the educated laity of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Tauler incorporated into a Thomist theology a careful description of the mystic way. Progress was to be made by acquiring the virtue of humilitas,(48) so making oneself receptive to the Divine operations. God would then enable men to live through love and fortitude a life of suffering and self sacrifice after the pattern of Jesus Christ. Only this kind of life could lead to union with God. The Theologica Germanica, an anonymous work belonging to the same tradition as Tauler, shares his concern for humility. Salvation is to be achieved, not so much through good works, as by a growing openness and abandonment to the divine will. The Theologica was particularly popular in Germany. Luther was influenced by it as also by Tauler.

Groote(49) began a new mystical movement known as the devotia moderna. It was to mysticism what nominalism was to academic theology. Rather than develop a new spiritual methodology and teaching, it urged a simple life of prayer, obedience and honesty. Of this St. Thomas à Kempis is typical. Like the theology of justification, nominalism, the devotia moderna, was primarily concerned with individual salvation and the contribution that the individual could make towards his or her final destiny. The dangers were precisely the same. The first was to minimise the divine initiative. The second, a consequence of the first, was that it tended to increase man's fears concerning his final destiny. The movement appealed to secular priests, particularly in Holland and Germany.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the doctrine of justification

was very much a live issue. The traditional interpretations of the doctrine left in the hands of the fiercely competitive theological schools had lost much of its power to convince and persuade. It had been challenged by the nominalist critique, humanism and mysticism. For all their differences, these three movements had at least this in common; they all tended to put the onus on man for his own salvation. As we have argued above, the augustinian framework with its division of the Christian life into various stages, made it easy for exploitation in this way. Many found it difficult to live up to the standards required. This is no doubt one of the factors that led to the deep mood of pessimism and despair that were seen hanging like a cloud over the period. What had been a religion of hope had for many been turned into a religion of despair; what had been a religion of love had for many become a religion of fear. It was inevitable that a reaction to these movements should take place. As it was, it came from Luther.

CHAPTER 2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LUTHER'S DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

Luther's theology was a platform for revolt against the Church as it had evolved up to the end of the sixteenth century. The revolt was on two closely connected fronts. On the one hand it entailed a protest against the spiritually unedifying theologies of the day, and on the other it provided a focus for anti-papal reform. Indeed for Luther's contemporaries the two issues could not be separated. The curia(1) saw the attack on the traditional theology as an attack upon herself, while her own abuses of wealth and power made her an easy target for anti-papal propaganda. The complexity of the situation can be illustrated from Luther's interviews with Cajetan, for the talks broke down not on the subject of justification but on the authority of the Pope and general councils.(2)

An important consequence of the confusion between these two issues was that it put the Pope doctrinally on the defensive. The history of the Council of Trent cannot be understood unless this is taken into account. The well-nigh disasterous delay(3) of the Council was due almost entirely to political factors. In the eyes of the papacy, what was at stake was not only doctrine but her own power and influence. In these circumstances no pope would wish to call a Council whose probable result would not only be the condemnation of heresy but a curtailment of his wealth and authority. The papal demand that when the Council met it's agenda should be doctrinal rather than reformatory, inevitably came into conflict with those who like Charles V saw papal reform as the primary object of the Council. For him doctrinal discussion could only lead to further division in the Empire. Charles too wanted a Council, but again, on his own terms.(4)

excuse us from taking his work seriously.

The contribution of nominalism to Luther's development is easier to assess. It can be evaluated from the primary sources; there is no need to resort to secondary accounts or recollections of Luther himself committed to paper many years after the events described. Luther's more controversial works, particularly "De Servo Arbitrio" an the "Contra Latromium" are fine examples of the cut and thrust style of the university disputation. They are exhibitions of the wit, logic and learning which Luther must have received from his nominalist teachers. However, Luther learnt far more from his teachers than how to argue a case. Ockham's desire to free theology from philosophy was shared whole-heartedly by Luther; it could even be claimed that Luther widened the chasm between the two disciplines. Luther's[4] invective is applied page after page against those who allow philosophy to intrude into theology. To liberate theology from the envelope of philosophy was for Luther a prerequisite for sound theological thinking. More negatively Luther's anxiety concerning his final destiny was no doubt stimulated by the nominalist insistence that man should do what in him lay (facere quod in se est).[5]

Luther's entry into a religious community was perhaps typical of Luther at this stage, and indeed of the age. The monastery provided a higher, more arduous, but for that reason, more certain path to final glory, and it was possibly with this in mind that Luther joined the monastery. Within it Luther made his first detailed acquaintance with the Bible[6] and began to read Augustine. Membership of the Order set Luther off on his academic

career, as well as bringing him into friendship with Staupitz.

Such information[7] as we do possess about Luther's early years in the Order, lead us to the conclusion that, despite considerable self-discipline and austerity, Luther was profoundly unhappy concerning the state of his soul, and his final destiny. Scruples were indeed the spiritual disease of the age, but they are not sufficient to explain the kind of experience endured frequently by Luther and which he later called the "anfechtung". As Gordon Rupp has argued, this experience was not limited to a single phase of his career; it continued and even grew worse towards the end of his life. The "anfechtung" is not temptation as we ordinarily understand it, but rather a kind of spiritual trial or battle concerning one's relationship with God. It became for Luther an important factor in his theology, a theology of the cross rather than a theology of glory. Later Luther described the "anfechtung" in the following terms. It was to feel oneself under the wrath and judgment of God. In this judgment, one's own conscience and indeed the whole creation concurred. It was to feel one-self hemmed in, in a spiritual claustro-phobia, threatened by all that is and in particular by a mighty and just God. This led to a desire to flee from His presence and to escape divine condemnation, and yet to know that there could be no escape from this ubiquitous and omnipotent Tyrant. In such a state the sinner often hated and cursed God. Luther describes the experience which he purports rather implausibly to be about another man. The passage[8] was written in 1518. "I knew a man" claims Luther "who said that he often suffered these pains so great and infernal that nor tongue nor pen can show

nor can those believe who have not experienced, so that if they were completed, or lasted half an hour or the tenth part of an hour, he would utterly perish. Thus God appears horrifyingly angry and with him, the whole creation. There can be no flight, no consolation, neither within nor without but all is accusation".

Such an experience was later to be regarded by Luther as the strange work of God whereby God teaches the sinner not to rely on any works or virtues of his own but to flee to Christ and to hide and trust only in Him. The anfechtung in this light is seen as part of the salvation work of God; it is not a work of damnation. The merciful wrath(9) of God may lead the sinner to the very gates of hell, but its ultimate purpose is to lead the sinner through the gates of heaven! Before Luther came to this understanding, the anfechtung caused Luther much spiritual anguish and anxiety. It revealed itself in Luther's practice of penance. So unsure was Luther of his own contrition and of the mercy of God, that he would go to penance as many as six times a day. Fear of having made an improper confession forced Luther back again and again into the midst of the spiritual hell we have described above. Luther was indeed a man of the most "unquiet conscience".

The first works(10) we have from the pen of Luther are marginalia on St. Augustine and on the sentences of Peter Lombard. Much that Luther says lies within the nominalist tradition. The vocabulary for example is wholly traditional. At this stage, Luther asserts that it is necessary to earn merit for an eternal reward. Even after receiving prevenient and created grace, it is necessary for the Christian, belonging neither to the Beati nor to

the Miseri, to do good works if he is to earn life eternal. As Biel had taught, the Christian life is a struggle; Luther had learnt this too from bitter experience. In spite of these traces of nominalism, there are passages which suggest that Luther is already leaving the conventional fold. Luther's own personal experience had taught him that sin could not be glossed over, but was an important, if not the overriding factor of man's relationship with God. Later this led Luther to repudiate all notions of merit. How can sinful man earn anything from God who is just and loves righteousness? At this early stage, Luther had no answer to this question. However, we do see even in the marginalia, components from which his answer was finally derived. We note in particular emphasis on the importance of faith and on the centrality of Christ.

An important, indeed a decisive step, towards Luther's final answer to this problem, seems to have occurred while Luther gave his first lectures on the psalms. In the following passage, Luther describes how he discovered what he called the passive righteousness of God; this he regarded as a breakthrough in his theological development. He says "Meanwhile in that year, I turned once more to interpret the psalms ... Certainly I had been seized with greater ardour to understand Paul in the epistle to the Romans (captus fueram cognoscendi) but it was not coldness of the blood which held me up until now but one word that is in chapter one 'The justice of God is revealed in it'. For I hated the word 'Justitia Dei' which by the use and consent of all the doctors, I was taught to understand philosophically of that formal or active justice with which God is just and punishes sinners".

"For however irreproachably I lived as a monk, I felt myself in the presence of God to be a sinner with a most unquiet conscience nor could I trust that I had pleased him with my satisfaction ... I was angry with God, saying 'As though it were not enough that miserable sinners should be eternally damned with original sin and have all kinds of calamities laid upon them by the law of the ten commandments, God must go and add sorrow upon sorrow and even through the gospel itself bring justice and wrath to bear ... ' I began to understand that the justice of God is revealed in the gospel, to be that passive justice with which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written 'the just shall live by faith'."(11)

More has been written about this passage than perhaps any other of the Reformer. It is not only the only autobiographical description of a real break-through, it is also a matrix of problems. In the first place, there is the problem of chronology. Luther did not deliver his second series of lectures on the psalms until 1519. Even in the first series, "iustitia dei" is interpreted passively, and the lectures on Romans, delivered in 1515 and 1516, are the work of a mature theologian. The difficulty here is not however insuperable; the words "captus fueram" allow the possibility that Luther's reflections have passed to an earlier period.(12)

It is the content of the quotation that is, however, the chief difficulty. Denifle(13) collected a catena of references from medieval and late medieval commentaries to show that it was usual to understand "iustitia dei" in a passive sense as a righteousness which did not condemn the sinner but justified him. Luther was both liar and a fool when he claimed to have

discovered something new about the passive righteousness of God. This evidence is, however, weakened by the arguments of Holl[14] and Hirsch. They correctly observed that Luther referred to the systematic theologians, not to the biblical exegetes whom Denifle uses. Denifle still has a case to answer. Is it true that Luther had really discovered something new in this discovery, or is Luther's point of view to be found in the work of the medieval exegetes? Is Luther's claim to a fresh insight fraudulent? Lortz's[15] statement that Luther had merely found something new for himself, robs the reformer of any real claim to originality. Neither Luther nor his disciples saw matters in this light.

As Heiko Obermann[16] has argued, the answer is to be found in the passage itself. Luther does not simply say that he discovered the passive righteousness of God. This much could be found not only in the commentaries which Denifle quotes, but also in Luther's marginalia to the writings of St. Augustine. The important point that Luther is making is that in the scholastic and nominalist tradition which he had inherited, the Gospel itself is regarded as a vehicle of God's wrath and justice. Luther insists that as far as the Gospel is concerned the "iustitia dei" is always to be understood passively and never actively. Luther is not so much concerned with the final state of the predestined as with the life of the Christian man in via. It is of the man in via, who has not yet arrived at the doors of heaven, that Paul says "the just shall live by faith". The nominalist gospel was one at which in every stage of the pilgrim's progress, the viator had to make a fitting contribution towards his own salvation, and only in this way he earnt grace.

In Luther's view this was to put the viator under Law rather than Grace. The grace of God is conditional on the human response, a response demanded by the "iustitia dei". We recall that Biel's doctrine of assurance is a careful balance between the opus spei of Christ and the iustitia dei. In Luther's view this turned the gospel into law. Luther's discovery was that the iustitia dei coincided with the iustitia Christi; by faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, man is guaranteed the passive righteousness of God which does not condemn the sinner but declares him righteous in Christ.

Such an insight removed from the traditional interpretation all reference to merit - even meritum de congruo after the bestowal of first grace. It challenged the framework of the doctrine as it had been accepted since the time of St. Augustine. The Christian life could no longer be seen essentially as a pilgrimage in which, with the aid of various graces, the Christian struggled heavenward. Instead of seeing election to the grace of justification as quite distinct from election to glory, faith and justification are now seen as eschatological realities. Justification anticipates the verdict on the Last Judgement Day; the sinner with faith in Christ is declared righteous now.

Bizer's argument that Luther only found a solution to his theological difficulties in 1519, rests on the contention that Luther's new understanding rests on his distinction between Gospel and Law. This is indeed true, as is also his contention that Luther did not use this dialectic frequently till 1518. We do not however draw the same conclusion, but we still maintain that the period of break-through occurred much earlier than this; i.e.

during the first lectures on the psalms. The disparity between the date of the discovery and the new vocabulary can be accounted for by the difficulty Luther had in expressing and working out his revolutionary ideas. For evidence for our point of view we turn to these lectures on the psalms.

The lectures on the psalms were delivered between 1513 and 1515. In these lectures there are traces of the influence of St. Augustine,(18) the German mystics and Luther's superior at Wittenburg, Staupitz. In particular Luther refers frequently to the African Bishop's conversion experience. Both this experience of the dependence of man upon God for salvation and Augustine's example of humility was attractive to Luther. Luther also found in Augustine an acknowledgement of the gravity of sin. To Augustine the root of all sin is superbia, pride, the cause of the Fall which so wrecks the divine image in man that the will of man is impaired even after baptism. The sacrament of baptism removes original sin but does not heal the will. So far Luther and St. Augustine are in broad agreement. Luther however takes matters further than the bishop of Hippo. The latter perceives that man without the grace of God is the willing victim of selfish egoism and that this could only be removed by the grace of God. Nonetheless there was a proper self-love (amor sui), a love which found its fulfilment in the "summum bonum", God Himself. What was required was the redirection of the will to its summum bonum,(19) and therefore there is continuity between the natural man and the man of grace. Luther instead tended to widen the gap between the justified man and the man without Christ. Man without Christ is not so much as misdirected as positively evil. It is probable that even

at this stage, Luther had rejected the Augustinian conception of grace because it tended to support this continuity. Luther denied the reality of a right-self-love. As a fallen creature he was not worthy of love, and the sinner must accuse himself, and even hate himself, if he is to turn in repentance to God.

At this stage the influence[20] of the German mystics and of Staupitz is at least as strong as the influence of Augustine. Their insistence on the virtue of humilitas fitted in well with Luther's experience of the Anfechtung. Humilitas was an attitude of mind in which the sinner was conscious of his own unworthiness and helplessness. Rather than attempt to live a life of obedience, the sinner was advised to repent wholly of himself and his own deeds and implore the divine mercy. The sinner must accuse himself (accusatio sui) and even regard himself as justly punished if he is damned. Humilitas counteracts the root of sin, pride. In some of the earlier passages Luther seems to regard humilitas as a human work, a kind of predisposition for grace. Later Luther affirms the gratuitousness of humilitas; it is God's gift and not man's achievement. It may be that this change in Luther's outlook was due to Staupitz, who[21] advised Luther that poenitentia entailed such a change of heart that it could only be accomplished through the grace of God. Staupitz's [22] concern for the divine initiative, his appreciation of the certainty of God's promises and his concentration on the covenantal mercy of God are, however, more important factors in Luther's religious development.

In methodology and language these lectures on the psalms are traditional,

but already however we have a passive understanding of the iustitia dei. Although human effort is still regarded as essential for salvation, its role is greatly restricted to that of humilitas. Already the human contribution is overshadowed by the divine initiative. Although Luther still continues to use the phrases meritum de congruo and meritum de condigno, they have already been evacuated of their content; merit is out of place in a theology which puts all its emphasis on the undeserved grace of God. The synderesis still plays a vital part in bringing sinful man to God; later Luther was to consider that even the conscience was so damaged by the Fall that it was of little use in bringing man back to God. The need of fallen man is matched by the power of faith which is the gift of God whereby the sinner is given a vision of God's glory in which he will one day participate. The object of this faith is Jesus Christ, in particular the human Christ, who on account of human sin, suffered the dereliction of the cross and gave his life vicariously for sinful man. The righteousness of God is expressed uniquely in the Christ event in which and by which the sinner is not condemned but judged righteous.

These lectures on the psalms are therefore transitional, for they retain much that is traditional but look forward to a new point of view.

Between these lectures and those on Romans, Luther [23] seems to have been recognised for the importance of his discovery. The lectures on the Epistle are the work of a mature theologian, and are indeed proof, if it were needed, that the watershed has been crossed. Now Luther can state quite unambiguously that the activity of God supercedes any activity of man

in the winning of salvation. Man cannot win salvation because of sin and the aim of the epistle, to put it in Luther's words, is to "pull down, to pluck up and to destroy all wisdom and righteousness of the flesh ... and to implant and establish the reality of sin".(24) By sin Luther means far more than actual sin; it is endemic, pervading and destroying every part of man. Without grace and faith, good works are a delusion, blinding men to the depth of their wickedness and the consequent wrath of God. Only through the love and grace of God can good works be performed with the love of God "super omnia". Luther himself says that "only an utterly unrestricted readiness to love performs an act or refrains from it, because that is God's good pleasure, without regard for any other good or without fear for anything evil, apart from God wanting it so. Nature is not capable of this, but only grace is, namely the grace that is given by faith in Christ through the Holy Spirit."(25) To love God super omnia even includes for Luther a willingness to go to hell joyfully if this should be the divine good pleasure. The high standards of morality he had learnt from the nominalists makes its mark. They are, of course, quite impossible for fallen man who has suffered the "loss of all uprightness and power of all (our) faculties of body and soul and of the whole inner and outer man" (26) and has fallen into "proneness towards evil(27) the loathing of the good; the disdain for light and wisdom but fondness for error and darkness". The sum total of man's natural powers and efforts cannot lead the sinner a step nearer heaven. Indeed the natural faculties are a positive danger in that they are occasions for pride and as such hinder the merciful activity of God. The whole man (totius

homo)[28] is therefore under condemnation, that is if he is without Christ.

The purpose of the coming of Christ was to save man from this terrible predicament; man cannot be justified by his own work, but only by the redeeming work of Christ. Repentance, the "medium between unrighteousness and righteousness"[29] is not the work of man but of God. Through the activity of the Law,[30] God unmasks the true nature of man and He shows him that his own efforts are of no value and that he must look to the help of God. The law demands of man that which he finds he himself cannot give and thus it brings the sinner to a true knowledge of his own predicament. "The law" says Luther "declares all men to be unrighteous and that they cease to consider themselves boastingly as righteous, keep silent about it and confess themselves guilty before God's righteousness".[31] Considered in this way, the Law is a vehicle of God's strange work. While the sinner remains under the Law, it is an instrument of wrath and even an incitement to sin, but its purpose is to drive the sinner through despair in his own righteousness to the righteousness of Christ.[32]

Luther sums up the effect of the Law upon the penitent by saying that, through it, God leads the sinner to humilitas. Later he was to reject this word, because he thought it too mancentred; the content of the word is, however, taken up into Luther's understanding of faith[33] which even includes confession. He preferred the word "faith" because it stressed the gratuitousness of justification. Luther says "The faith that leads to righteousness or salvation does not reach its goal, if it does not arrive at confession. For confession is the principal work of faith; man denies himself and

confesses God and he does this to such an extent that he will deny even his life and everything before affirming himself.(34)" This use of the word faith embraces all that Luther had meant by humilitas and indeed much more.

Thus despairing of himself, the sinner is led to put all his trust and faith in Christ and in him alone. Such a faith was never simply a matter of an emotional experience; faith built on the sensus was very unsure indeed. As Rupp says "Faith (according to the reformer) is the good fight that has to be maintained against our own judgements, feelings and experience. The opposition of fides to the sensus is an important technical usage; in this connection it denotes the wisdom of the flesh.(35) Grace comes against all understanding and counsel. Faith is a gift of the Holy Spirit".

The sinner is regarded by God as righteous not on account of any works that he might have done, but because of his faith in the righteousness of Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit is to lead the sinner to belief in the forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit showing the sinner that it is not just sins which are forgiven in general, but his sins; "If you believe that only God can take away sin, you have the right faith, but from here must you go on to believe (and it is not you who can do this but the Holy Spirit must enable you to believe), that through him you really have forgiveness of your sin. This is the testimony of the Holy Spirit in our hearts that says to us 'Your sins are forgiven you'."(36) The object of this faith, which is communicated through the Holy Spirit, is Jesus Christ and his redemptive work. Luther is quite insistent that justification is through Christ alone.

He says "These people, therefore who approach God through faith but not at the same time through Christ, actually go away from Him." (37)

By faith in Christ the believer receives salvation, for through faith God regards the sinner as righteous. It is not our own righteousness that we receive "for God does not want to save us by ours but by an extraneous righteousness, which does not originate in ourselves but comes to us beyond ourselves, which does not arise on earth but comes from heaven".(38) This alien righteousness which is accredited to us is none other than the righteousness of Christ. "Wherefore" asks Luther, "shall we take that which excuses us? Only from Christ and in Christ. For when his own heart reproaches the Christian and accuses him by testifying against him that he has done evil, he presently turns from it and turns to Christ and says 'He made satisfaction, he is righteous, he is my defence, he died for me, he made righteousness to be mine and made my sins his own'. Thus the sinner is now justified, righteous in the eyes of God, though sinful in his own eyes."(39) Again Luther says "Now can we say that he is perfectly righteous? No, but he is at the same time both a sinner and righteous, a sinner in fact but righteous by virtue of the reckoning and certain promise of God that he will redeem him of sin, in order in the end to make him perfectly whole and sound. And therefore he is already whole in hope while in fact he is a sinner but he has already begun to be righteous and always seeks to be more so, always believing himself to be unrighteous".(40)

This interpretation of justification is more than can be accounted for by a passive interpretation of the iustitia dei. Here God is indeed not

regarded as a Judge who demands his ounce of flesh, but as a merciful God who makes righteous. However, the originality of Luther does not lie in this, but there is more to follow. The path to salvation cannot and is not determined at any stage by our response. So serious is the Fall, that any righteousness a man might claim for himself is a false righteousness. The only true righteousness is the righteousness of Christ; this cannot be achieved by anything that man does, but is given through and in Christ, by the gift of faith. There is no other way than through Christ and through faith that man can be saved. This is true not only of man before first justification, but also of the man who has been justified as well. Justification is a continuous event, which is not just a step towards salvation; indeed it anticipates in itself the Last Judgment. Man is therefore saved sola fide and sola gratia. It is Luther's insistence on the sola that marks him off from his predecessors, even St. Augustine.

If man cannot win justification, does he contribute to his sanctification? Luther's Doctrine of Sanctification is far from easy to understand. Indeed it has received a number of quite contradictory explanations.(41) This is just what we would expect. Justification was for Luther the decisive moment of redemption and as such it anticipated the Last Judgment. Sanctification had to take a subordinate place. Indeed, Luther never treated sanctification on its own; it is as it were looked on as the "flip-side" to justification.(42) Some points are, however, beyond dispute. Firstly, Luther regarded the justified man as both righteous and a sinner. This excludes any view that might think of sanctification as instantaneous. Indeed

it was for Luther a life-long process which was never completed until death. Secondly, Luther strongly believed that one of the fruits of justification were good works. Indeed there was no possibility of good works in those not justified. "The only thing that matters is God's mercy and therefore it is not necessary for anyone to will or to run but we must take it to say 'A man owes his ability to will and to run, not to his own power but to the mercy of God, who gave him this power to will and to run'."(43) Luther adds "Works of faith he calls deeds which are done in the spirit of liberty and only from the love of God. These can only be done by people who have been justified by faith".(44) Hard work is expected of the justified, even if this does not win or contribute towards salvation. Luther puts this point particularly strongly in the following words "We are not called to a life of ease but to labour against passions, which would not be without guilt unless the mercy of God did not impute them".(45) Works done by the justified are elsewhere called "prayers" for our final righteousness.

Such passages led Holl(46) to the belief that Luther taught that justification made people righteous. Justification included the conditions upon which a man would become righteous. There is much truth in this point of view. The emphasis that Luther puts on good works after justification, certainly convinces us that for Luther, justification was far more than a legal fiction. The justified man does good works. Luther also seems to have regarded faith as a gift of real righteousness, for through faith God was given his due. The first requirement of God was faith and it is the beginning of a real righteousness. Luther also uses frequently, the metaphor of

the doctor and the good Samaritan to describe the work of Jesus in the justified man. Luther clearly expected that there would be a real growth in righteousness in the justified. The real difficulty arises when we ask whose is this righteousness which grows. Prenter (47) argues that, even after justification, the sinner never has a righteousness of his own. The righteousness that he does receive, is through the increase of faith and is always an alien righteousness. Only the life of Christ deserves to be called the justified's spiritual life. The progress we make is the progress of Christ from his baptism to his resurrection. In baptism and in justification, life takes on an eschatalogical character and thereafter the sinner takes part in God's own progress towards His final goal. Yet that goal is already present in Christ in justification. Rupp concludes his statement of Luther's doctrine of santification with these words "It is true that Luther speaks of growth, and of the sanctification of the sinner, but his growth from baptism to death in this world is "semper peccator, semper penitens, semper justus". On the one hand, he is a sinner, and his own righteousness is under condemnation; on the other hand, again and again he turns to the righteousness of Christ (iustitia aliena). In this life he is "flesh" "the old man", and "spirit" "the new man", but there is progress in this Christian life for the old man is disappearing. But this progress is not growth into a righteousness of one's own on the ground of which man stands "coram deo", but a progress in faith and hope and love, a dwelling in the righteousness of Christ, through faith, in the power of the Holy Ghost". (48)

Luther therefore refused to separate sanctification from justification, both being a single life-long event. Luther says "The whole life of the new people, the believing people, the spiritual people is this; with the sigh of the heart, the cry of deed and the toil of the body to ask, seek and pray, always for justification, ever and ever again to the hour of death, never to stand still and never to rest in any accomplishment; not to regard any works as if it ended the search for righteousness but to wait for the end as if it dwelt somewhere ever beyond one's reach; and to know that as long as one lives, he will ever have his being in his sins".(49)

The importance of this refusal to separate justification from sanctification can hardly be exaggerated; for Luther they stand together as twin aspects of God's work in man. This flies in the face of all the traditional interpretations of justification. There can never be a stage in this life at which a man can be regarded as righteous in himself. The verdict of God in justification and it's fruit in sanctification are not finished works, but they run parallel through the Christian life. It is therefore incorrect to speak of a life after justification, for throughout the whole of one's life, one is being justified.

In Luther's view, the distinction between justification and sanctification cannot be measured chronologically, but logically, for only logically must justification preceed sanctification; sanctification wholly depends on justification. There can be no sanctification for the unjustified man. This contrasts with the left-wing nominalist view which saw human effort and achievement as a prerequisite for justification.

These famous lectures on the Epistle to the Romans sum up Luther's theological development to the year 1516. They are original and they challenge the accepted theories on justification of all schools (not just the nominalist), but they do not mark the end of Luther's theological development. He was yet to discover an adequate vocabulary to express his convictions, for at this stage, Luther only glimpsed the implications of his work. After 1516, Luther grew in confidence and gradually discovered vocabulary(50) adequate for his revolutionary ideas. The range of Luther's theology extended as he realises the consequences of his teaching on ethics, christology and sacramental theology. Nonetheless the decisive moment in Luther's theological development is now past and what follows is more predictable. We therefore content ourselves with only a general portrait of Luther's theology as it developed from 1517 to 1536.

The depth of human sin and the effect of the Fall on Adam's posterity was not only the subject of two of Luther's most technical works, but claimed much attention in his subsequent commentaries and sermons. This is indeed not surprising. Luther was anxious to show that the only righteousness a man might have was the righteousness of Christ. Man was a fallen creature incapable of redemption through works, guilty of the greatest sin of all and liable to eternal punishment. Not only this, but in the Fall, man had made himself a prisoner of the devil, from whose grip he cannot free himself. In the final section of "De Servo Arbitrio"(51) Luther lists biblical quotations to substantiate his view, that the universal guilt of mankind and the universal domination of sin, deprive man of free-will.

This would of course nullify any contribution to justification that man might attempt and this is precisely the point that Luther goes on to make. Works have no contribution to make to justification or salvation, and therefore "All that is done by man is either righteousness or sin in God's sight - righteousness if faith is in it, sin if faith is lacking".(52) Here the doctrine of the "totius homo" is used with devastating simplicity to show the impotency of the natural will.

Even after baptism, the power of evil continues to drag the sinner to terrible sins, even though they do not affect the final destiny of the justified. Luther makes both points in his "Contra Latomum". "Thus sin in us after baptism is of its nature truly sin," says Luther, "but only according to substance and not in quantity, quality or action, for it is wholly passive. The motive of anger and of evil desire is really the same in the godly and the godless, the same before and after grace ... but in grace, it can do nothing, while outside grace it gets the upper hand."(53) The conscience, which Luther had thought in his younger days to be a reliable faculty, is now dismissed as a "timid, frightened and terrified thing". Often it does positive harm, by urging the sinner to save himself by his own efforts.

Man is so blinded by the Fall that he cannot even appreciate the seriousness of his own condition. Only the Law is sufficient to attain a right knowledge of self. It was not until 1518 that Luther frequently employed the dialectic between Law and Gospel to describe the Strange and Proper work of God. The vocabulary is new but the thought behind it is not.

Luther had constantly denied that works could win salvation. The alien righteousness of Christ was the only righteousness which could save. The merciful wrath of God is an instrument of salvation, because it leads the sinner to distrust any righteousness of his own and turn to the righteousness of Christ. All this had been central to Luther's thought before 1518. The contrast between Law and Gospel appealed to Luther, not only because it was biblical, but also because it put the onus on God for the preparation for justification.(55) Confession is as much a work of God as justification itself. Law and Gospel are in antithesis to each other. In man, though not in God, the work of the Law and the work of the Gospel are always in opposition. The Christ of the Gospel can never be confused with the Law; he can only be seen as a saviour. The righteousness revealed in Christ does not condemn but makes righteous. This contrast between Law and Gospel becomes more and more important for Luther. In 1531, he can even state "Therefore whoever knows how to distinguish The Gospel from the Law should give thanks to God and know that he is a real theologian".(56)

The role of the Law is to show man his own impotence, to fulfil the moral demands of God. Indeed the Law embodies the strange work of God "which serves to increase transgression".(57) It is a vehicle of God's wrath, a tool which destroys all self-righteousness; it is a "huge and powerful hammer", "The hammer of death, the thunder of hell and the lightening of divine wrath".(58) Paradoxically the Law contributes to salvation, because it impels the sinner to the promise of grace, and makes it sweet and desirable. When the Law is not regarded as a standard to be achieved

for salvation, it is part of the proper work of God; to live by the Holy Spirit is to fulfil the Law and yet to escape the curse of the Law.

The task of the Gospel is to be contrasted with the work of the Law. "The Law" says Luther, "introduces us to sin and overwhelms us with the knowledge of it. It does this so that we may seek to be freed and to sigh after grace, for the Gospel also preaches and teaches two things, namely the righteousness and gift of God. Through righteousness it heals the corruption of our nature. This is done by the true righteousness, which is the gift (donum) of God, faith in Christ".(59) If the work of the Law is the strange work of God, the Gospel is the proper work of God. ("If the law destroys all human works, the gospel sets before men and before me, the righteousness of God.") Under the Law, there is condemnation; under the Gospel salvation. The central message of the Gospel is that "redemption has been won for us who have faith in Jesus Christ, and that Jesus Christ is Our righteousness".(60)

The themes that make up the Gospel, faith, righteousness and Christ, are fully treated in Luther's work after 1516. Faith is given a wider meaning. Faith is a work of God, not of man and God. It is the faith of promise, not of the Law.(61) It is given by the Holy Spirit, in the "hearing" of the Gospel. Neither is it simply a feeling; Luther is still insistent that faith is not produced from the sensus. He says "Therefore faith in Christ is an exceedingly arduous thing because it is a rupture and a removal from anything that one experiences within and without, to the things one neither experiences within and without, namely to the invisible

and high incomprehensible God".(62) Yet this faith glues the heart and Word together and makes them one. Through faith the Word and the heart become one spirit "just as man and wife become one flesh".(63) "Faith is the truth of the heart, that is the right knowledge of the heart about God."(64) "To believe is to have forsaken the earthly thing, and to cling to the invisible, indeed to have one's life 'hidden in God'."(65) And again Luther says "Faith is that which hides the sinner under the wings of Christ and which glories in His righteousness".(66) The life of faith is therefore inevitably a lonely life, which Luther describes in existentialist terms as follows. "The world is a house in which men are enclosed and sleeping. I alone am outside the house, on the roof, not in heaven, and still not in the world. The world is below me and the heaven is above me. I hover between the life of the world and eternal life, lonely in the faith."(67

The object of faith is Jesus Christ. The sinner must first turn to the incarnate and human Christ, for the divine Christ is to be apprehended only through the human, and only in this way can God be seen as a saving and not a judging God. Luther puts the point in his commentary on Hebrews, when he says "One should note here that he (the author) mentions the humanity of Christ before he mentions the divinity, in order in this way that he may establish the well-known rule that one learns to know God in faith. For the Humanity is the Holy Ladder of ours mentioned in Genesis 28:22 by which we ascend to the knowledge of God. Therefore John 14:16 also says "no-one comes to the Father but by me" and again "I am the door".(68) The sufferings and temptations of Christ are testimonies to this humanity;

they cannot be overlooked if the Christian faith is to be truly a theology of the cross and not a theology of glory. Through the humiliation of the cross, the Christian like his Master passes through death to life. The anfechtung is an experience not peculiar to the disciple; it is but a reflection of the humiliation of the Master. Faith then is faith in Jesus Christ and far more than either intellectual assent and an emotional response to the love of God in Christ. By faith the Christian man recapitulates in his own life the experience of Christ.

By faith, Christ is recognised as the Redeemer. Many images are pooled by Luther to explain the mystery of the atonement. In his earlier days, Luther followed Staupitz in preferring exemplarist theories of the atonement; like Staupitz(69) he had affirmed the justification of God through the faith of the believer. After 1516 what Aulen(70) has called the classic theory of the atonement proved more and more attractive to Luther. The death and resurrection of Christ are seen as a decisive victory over powers, in particular, sin, the devil, death and the Law that have imprisoned man. The drama of the redemption is unfolded as a duel between Christ and the powers of darkness. By the cross of Christ, the devil and his kingdom are defeated. Faith is faith in the conquering Christ. The classic idea of the atonement appealed to Luther for at least two reasons. Firstly, it safeguarded the objectivity of the atonement; the event that won salvation is exclusively the Christ event. Man as man played no part in winning this victory. Secondly, the martial imagery fits Luther's experience of the spiritual life; the life of faith like the life

of Christ is a struggle not simply against human forces but against the devil and all his works.

It is not enough for the Christian to believe that Christ has won redemption for mankind, he must also believe that Christ has won redemption for him. The birth, death and resurrection are pro nobis. Christ died for us. The doctrine of assurance is indeed to be based on this astounding fact - not on anything that man might do, but on the promises of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Justification is the means whereby the redemption is applied to individuals. The cause and the agency of justification is again nothing that man does; justification is given through Christ and the Holy Spirit. To the question "How can a man be righteous before God?" Luther gives a twofold answer. "Two things" he says, "perfect Christian righteousness, the first is faith in the heart which is a divinely granted gift (donum) and which formally believes in Christ; the second is that God reckons this imperfect faith as perfect righteousness, for the sake of Christ the Son who suffered for the sins of the world."(71) Both this faith and this righteousness proceed from Christ and in Christ. The faith that is necessary is God-given faith in Jesus Christ and the righteousness that is required is the righteousness of Christ. In some passages Luther makes the point that faith is no less than a real righteousness. On Galatians 3:6, Luther comments "With these words, Paul makes faith to God, the supreme sacrifice, for it attributes to God, glory, the highest thing that can be attributed to him ... Therefore faith justifies because it renders what is due to him."(72) Faith, not works

is the basis of the righteousness of the sinner.

The righteousness of faith is not a legal fiction; it is a real righteousness. Nonetheless, the sinner is still a sinner, and the only difference between the justified sinner and the unjustified sinner lies in this - that the sin of the justified is covered by the righteousness of Christ. Luther says "On account of faith in Christ, God does not see the sin that still remains in me. But meanwhile Christ protects me under the shadow of his wings, and spreads over me the wide heaven of the forgiveness of sins under which I live in safety. The righteousness of Christ is therefore the true righteousness of the believer, since he can possess no righteousness of his own."(73) The same idea is conveyed typically by Luther in these words "I will not preach about man's righteousness or praise his works, but only thy (Christ's) work that nothing is greater than this righteousness by which all sinners are justified and without which all others are sinners."(74)

The passive righteousness of God coincides with the righteousness of Christ. The iustitia dei is shown in this; in Christ, man is made righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. There is therefore no difficulty in balancing the iustitia dei with the work of mercy in Christ. The iustitia Christi is none other than the iustitia dei.

Justification is seen by Luther in his latter years, as indeed in his lectures on Romans, as a life-long event. Throughout all the Christian's life he is covered by the righteousness of Christ. Luther says "Forgiveness of sins is not just a passing work or action but of perpetual duration. For the forgiveness of sins begins in baptism and remains with us all the way

to death until we arise from the dead and it leads to life eternal. So we are continually under the remission of sins".(75)

Luther's attitude to sanctification hardly changes after 1516. The removal of actual sin does not contribute to our final salvation. The whole of the Christian life is covered by the umbrella of the forgiveness of sins. This does not mean that good works are unimportant, but they are not the ground of salvation. The good works of the sinner who is justified by faith are merely tokens of thanksgiving for the grace that he has already received. Neither are good works to be seen as constituting for the justified a righteousness of their own. Even these works are the outworkings of the alien righteousness, the righteousness of Christ. Luther says "The life and behaviour of every Christian should be so constituted that he does not know or have anything but God and in no other way than in faith."(76) Nevertheless this faith is not a dead faith, devoid of good works, but a lively faith that leads to them.

The Christian life is always in via. The Christian must therefore expect to experience the sufferings of Christ. Luther says "nothing is more unlike a throne and the throne of God, than the people of Christ since it does not seem to be a kingdom but a place of exile, to be living but actually dying, or to be in glory but to be in disgrace or to dwell in wealth but to dwell in extreme poverty as everyone who wants to share in this kingdom is compelled to experience himself"(77) and "it is necessary that the body of sin and the law if the flesh be destroyed for it is impossible for anything unclean to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. But such destruction comes about

through Christ's sufferings, deaths and disgraces. Therefore God kills in order to make alive".(78)

Luther's doctrine of justification is a radical departure from both the nominalist tradition in which Luther was trained and also the theories of High Scholasticism. It is now out of place to speak of meritum de condigno or even meritum de congruo and to suggest that man should do what in him lies. The truth is that on his own he can do nothing. Not only this, but all those terms of the scholastic period which suggested a grace given by God but which becomes as it were the possession of the recipient, are also found to be misleading. Included in this category is the notion of infused grace with its concommitant theological virtues. The old distinctions between created and uncreated grace, and operative and co-operative grace, have no place in this new theology, because they imply a parcelling out of the responsibility for man's salvation; in reality that responsibility is God's alone. Therefore it is the grace and favour of God alone which can give men peace and win salvation for them through Christ; this is the only kind of grace of which Luther can speak. That it is truly grace, something given rather than a reward, something received rather than something earned, is proved by the fact that it coexists with human sin. The traditional vocabulary implies that the life of the Christian on earth, is a gradual progression towards the Heavenly Jerusalem, made possible at every stage by the gift of the appropriate grace. Luther thinks differently. Faith in Christ and the gift of justification anticipate the final judgement of God upon the sinner. The iustitia dei and the iustitia Christi meet in justification declaring man

righteous through the alien righteousness of Christ, while man as man is still a sinner and still a viator.

What we have here is something that is essentially new. Luther differs not only from his nominalist teachers, but from the scholastic tradition as a whole. Other theologians had insisted on the necessity of prevenient grace, and on the theocentric nature of the doctrine of justification. The distinctive feature of Luther's theology is his understanding of the iustitia dei which not only condemns but declares righteous, not only at the end of the Christian life before the Judgement Seat of Christ, but also within the Christian life itself, in the act of justification by faith alone through Christ.

It will be our purpose in the next chapter to describe the response of the tradition to this new theology. Only then can we fairly state the importance of Luther's contribution for his own age and for ours.

CHAPTER 3

JUSTIFICATION AND THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

Luther's theology was a platform for revolt against the Church as it had evolved up to the end of the sixteenth century. The revolt was on two closely connected fronts. On the one hand it entailed a protest against the spiritually unedifying theologies of the day, and on the other it provided a focus for anti-papal reform. Indeed for Luther's contemporaries the two issues could not be separated. The curia(1) saw the attack on the traditional theology as an attack upon herself, while her own abuses of wealth and power made her an easy target for anti-papal propaganda. The complexity of the situation can be illustrated from Luther's interviews with Cajetan, for the talks broke down not on the subject of justification but on the authority of the Pope and general councils.(2)

An important consequence of the confusion between these two issues was that it put the Pope doctrinally on the defensive. The history of the Council of Trent cannot be understood unless this is taken into account. The well-nigh disasterous delay(3) of the Council was due almost entirely to political factors. In the eyes of the papacy, what was at stake was not only doctrine but her own power and influence. In these circumstances no pope would wish to call a Council whose probable result would not only be the condemnation of heresy but a curtailment of his wealth and authority. The papal demand that when the Council met it's agenda should be doctrinal rather than reformatory, inevitably came into conflict with those who like Charles V saw papal reform as the primary object of the Council. For him doctrinal discussion could only lead to further division in the Empire. Charles too wanted a Council, but again, on his own terms.(4)

The delay of the Council had a profound impact on its composition and character. Attempts at reconciliation had already failed, notably at Ratisbon. The mood of appeasement had already departed from Rome. The liberal cardinals appointed in 1538 had been matched by conservative ones, and the "Consilium de Emendenda Ecclesia" had been whittled away by conservative elements in the curia into a merely very superficial reform. The Order of Jesus had been licensed in 1540 and the inquisition had been established in Rome. Rome was no longer interested in compromise; now she needed a stance from which to condemn Luther and instruct the faithful.

The composition(5) of the Council reflects the mood, for no protestant theologian attended the Council and there was only one German delegate, the majority of the members being either Spanish or Italian. The decision to vote as individuals rather than by states further restricted the impartiality of the Council.

More important, the delegates by and large were members of the traditional orders and schools, Thomist and Scotist, many of them profoundly influenced by nominalism. There were in fact no fewer than twenty-three bishops and twenty-eight theologians of the dominican order taking part in the discussions at Trent on justification.

Although pelagianism and double predestination had both been condemned,(6) there was much spade-work to be done. No previous Council had defined justification. Not only was there little material provided by Church Councils, but much anti-Lutheran polemic was not helpful either. Initially Catholic apologists had tended to concentrate on the sacraments rather than on

justification,(7) and even after it had moved into the centre of the stage, Catholic apologists were often content to denounce Luther's theory without providing their readers with an alternative. There were, of course, exceptions to this, of which Gropper's Echiridon is the most notable example. Nonetheless, the Tridentine Fathers were short of good material with which to construct a rejoinder to Luther.

Inevitably the fathers tended to turn to their scholastic predecessors for material, and although we do not wish to minimize the differences between the schools, we claim they had this in common. They viewed the Christian life as pilgrimage, as a journey, as a course which began with baptism and justification and finally led to eternal life. Once the Christian had been justified, he could in no sense be regarded as having arrived; he was merely a viator, a pilgrim, a traveller on the road to the Heavenly Jerusalem. Viewed in this way, it follows that however much the traveller must be pushed and dragged on his journey, it is he who must actually do the walking! The viator must in some sense win his salvation, though of course he cannot do so without the grace of God.

The scholastic tradition is also unanimous in seeing justification as a dual event, namely the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of the inner man. This is even true of most nominalist theologians and in particular the most influential, Biel, who taught that "De potentia ordinata", in justification, God both forgives the sinner and bestows the supernatural grace of righteousness.(8)

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this dual understanding

of justification, for it undergirds the Scholastic and Tridentine doctrine of merit. If man is not merely forgiven, but actually reborn and made righteous, he has a status from which he can demand his rights from God. The just man, the man who has been made righteous, actually deserves increase of grace and finally eternal life, if he performs good works, from a just God who rewards every man according to his works.

It is on this basis that the doctrine of merit has its foundation. We illustrate this from the scholastic and nominalist distinction between meritum de congruo and meritum de condigno. Meritum de congruo was that which man did out of his own strength, ex puris naturalibus, before justification, and it's effect was to aid man's preparation for receipt of righteousness. It was not merit strictly speaking and God was not obliged to give grace on account of it; it merely removed barriers to justification. Only after a man had received supernatural grace and had been made righteous, could he actually earn anything from God. This interpretation received greater sophistication from the nominalists. Robert Holcot,(9) the nominalist, extended the distinction by using "promereri" when he had meritum de condigno in mind but the bare "mereri" where meritum de congruo was applicable. Our point is that this distinction between meritum de congruo and meritum de condigno rests on a particular understanding of justification which sees a discontinuity between the natural man and the justified man, based on the infusion of grace. The distinction, it is true, is a comparatively late development, but its source is the Augustinian description of the justified life as a pilgrimage. In this framework it is logical to think of the viator

as a possible earner of merit, even if one must add the saving clause that God need not reward the justified man.

While the Augustinian framework provides an answer to the origin of a doctrine of merit, at least as it is applied to the justified, we have still to explain how a doctrine of merit was also provided for the natural man. For an answer to this we turn to the nominalist-scotist tradition. It has been argued that Trent represents a victory for the Thomists against this tradition, but we shall argue later that this is not true. Augustine and his disciples fought hard for a doctrine of prevenient grace, denying that man could even in the most vague sense earn anything from God until he was justified. However the nominalist and scotist attempt to free God from the nexus of Thomist necessity, also erroded the affirmation that supernatural virtues and habitual grace were de potentia absoluta necessary for salvation. The result of this was oddly to give greater scope to freewill. De potentia absoluta the distinction between natural and supernatural virtues was blurred, and more and more was claimed for the natural man. Ex puris naturalibus, a man could prepare himself for his justification by doing good works and could earn merit, though not in the strict sense. Oberman gives the example of Vega, as an early sixteenth century advocate of this view. While he denies that man can earn his justification "sinners still can perform acts of such moral quality that it is fitting for God to accept them in his goodness as 'half' merits".(10) This is the same view as that which advocates meritum de congruo as we have described it above. This view is somewhat safe-guarded by the scotist, because for him the doctrine of justification, and therefore of

merit, is circumscribed by a high doctrine of predestination. Nonetheless, it can be seen that the concept of meritum de congruo, to a great extent, undoes Augustine's work against pelagianism.

As we shall argue below, the Tridentine Fathers borrowed scholastic and nominalist concepts to provide an adequate framework for their reply to Luther. The dearth of good apologetic material against Luther, in addition to the membership of the Council, made this inevitable, the consequence of which was to carry both a dual interpretation of justification and a high doctrine of merit into Catholic dogma. The task in the rest of this chapter is to substantiate these claims from the decrees and the discussions which led to them.

At the beginning of the discussions on justification, Cardinal Pacheco,(11) aware of the importance and difficulty of the task, wisely recommended that the theologians be asked to report to the Council on certain questions which were in dispute. Del Monte, the presiding legate agreed. These questions are important and indeed the final text is little more than an attempt to answer them. The questions are as follows.

1) What is the essence and meaning of justification; what is meant by the expression a man is justified?
2) What are the causes of justification; that is what does God effect and what is required on the part of man?
3) How are we to understand the words of St. Paul, "man is justified by faith?
4) Whether and in what manner, works before or after justification relate to it and what share have the sacraments therein?

5) What precedes, accompanies and follows justification?

6) The authorities; whether Scripture, Councils, Fathers or Apostolic Tradition on which the answers to the proposed questions rest?

We intend to use the first four of these questions as a framework to our presentation of the discussions and decrees on justification in the Council for several reasons. In the first place we shall thereby be forced to confine our analysis to the questions which the Fathers considered important, and therefore run less risk of judging Trent entirely in our own terms and challenging her on questions which were not at that time on the agenda. Secondly, presentation by means of question and answer is likely to lead to clearer exposition than an analysis of the final decree chapter by chapter. Finally these questions allow us to make full use, not only of the final text, but also of the discussions which led up to it.

<u>What is the meaning and essence of justification and what is meant by the expression a man is justified?</u>

The answer to this question, as we have already argued, is particularly important, as it is in a sense the watershed which divides protestant from catholic thought. The disagreement between catholics and protestants on the subject of justification is not confined to different valuations of the contributions of God and man for its attainment, continuation and conclusion. Disagreements begin on the very nature of justification itself. The Tridentine Fathers suspected that Luther was so concerned to stress the divine role in justification that he had distorted the nature of justification itself. At the hands of Luther it had become merely imputative. Luther had

indeed argued that righteousness is never man's own possession; it is always Christ's, always an external righteousness, and from the beginning the fathers were concerned to affirm that justification works a real change in man and that man is not merely called but is righteous after justification.

This insistence on the dual nature of justification, consisting of two aspects, namely the forgiveness of sins and the bestowal of righteousness, follows the mainstream of Christian thought. If the Christian faith means anything at all, it must of course change people, and on this Luther and Trent would have agreed. Where they differ is in the status and role which they give this change. The fathers thought of it as integral to justification, and therefore as a necessity for salvation, but Luther, on the other hand, thought of it more as a consequence of justification. For him justification, the forgiveness of sin, determined a man's final destiny; good works proceeded from this, rather than led towards it. The Tridentine definition fits in well with the Augustinian tradition. Man is forgiven and equipped by grace for the Christian warfare, for the pilgrimage to the Heavenly Jerusalem, but the final verdict is not necessarily anticipated in justification but depends on man's response to justifying grace. Election to grace need not imply election to glory.

A basis for a definition of justification had already been prepared in the Edict on Original Sin. The canons of this decree, already implies a twofold interpretation of justification. After describing the Fall, the decree goes on to discuss the remedy, stating in Canon 3 that there is no other remedy "than the merit of the One Mediator, who hath both reconciled

us to God in His own blood and made unto us justifice, sanctification and redemption". There is here already a hint that justification actually makes righteous, and Canon 5 is even more explicit, stating very positively "By the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is confirmed in baptism the guilt of original sin is removed". Negatively it anathematises those who say "the whole of that which has the true and proper nature of sin is not taken away ... (but) is only raised not asserted". The target of the anathema is clearly the Lutheran doctrine of justification. Canon 3 is still just capable of a Lutheran interpretation, but the clear implication of Canon 5 is that justification consists, not only of the forgiveness of sins, but also in the gift of righteousness.

In the debates preceding the edict on justification, the bishops and theologians were unanimously agreed on two points; firstly[12] that justification removed the curse of Adam and liability to condemnation, and secondly, that justification consisted of two parts, namely the forgiveness of sins and the acquisition of grace. Although there were disagreements on minor points (e.g. on the exact relationship of these two aspects and on the scotist identification of habitual grace with the habit of charity) no member questioned that both aspects were integral to justification. It is true that a few of the bishops and theologians preferred the more Augustinian formula "justification is the imputation of righteousness through Jesus Christ"[13] but even they would have shrunk from a definition which might seem to have reduced justification to a mere forgiveness of sins. Man is not merely declared righteous;' he is made righteous.

The final text of the decree on justification states quite unambiguously that justification consists of these two parts, the forgiveness of sin and the translation of man from a state of sin to a state of grace. Chapters 3 and 4 are here explicit, the former reading "if they (fallen men) were not born again in Christ, they never would be justified; seeing that in that new birth there is bestowed upon them, through the merit of the passion, the grace whereby they are made just" and the latter adding that justification is "a translation from the state wherein man is born a child of the first Adam to the state of grace and adoption of the sons of God, through the second Adam, Jesus Christ our Saviour". The words "state of grace" are here synonymous with "state of righteousness"! Canons 10 and 11 should be taken in conjunction with these two chapters, for they anathematise all who wish to limit justification to the forgiveness of sins and denial of the infusion of grace into soul.

In their insistence on the twofold aspects of justification, the Tridentine Fathers had passed over the more radical English nominalist thought and the reformers and returned to the scholastic tradition. It would, however, be entirely wrong to regard the fathers at Trent as merely traditional, because they made an important contribution in a fresh and, to our mind, welcome emphasis on the Christocentric character of the grace infused in justification. The grace which is given in justification is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every time the twofold nature of justification is asserted, there is in the decree a direct reference to the redemptive

work of Christ. Chapter 7 is highly significant in this respect, stating that "we are not merely reputed, but truely are called just and are just" and then adding "Although no-one can be just but he to whom the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet is this done in the said justification of the impious, when by the merit of the same most Holy Passion, the love of God is poured forth by the Holy Spirit in the heart of those who are justified and is inherent therein; whence man through Jesus Christ in whom he is ingrafted, receives in the said justification, together with the remission of sins, all these gifts infused at once, faith hope and charity". For the Tridentine Fathers the grace of justification can never become our property over and against God. It is the fruit of the passion of our Lord. It is ours, truly ours, but it is at the same time dependent on the favour of God and the work of the Holy Spirit. This point is to be amplified in our answer to the next question.

What are the causes of justification, that is what does God effect and what is required on the part of man?

The content of this chapter had already been a subject of controversy and definition, and the Council had to steer a narrow course between pelagianism and its counterpart, semi-pelagianism and the doctrine of double predestination. Both options - that which made man as totally responsible for his justification and that which gave the responsibility entirely to God - had been condemned at previous Councils, Carthage, Orange and Quiercy. The Tridentine Fathers had to give a role to both God and man. But what in both cases was that role to be?

Augustinianism prevailed sufficiently in the Council for there to be no dispute among the fathers on the prevenience of grace. In the edict on original sin, man is described as much in need of redemption, and Canons I and 4 are here particularly important. After the Fall, Adam is injured in body and soul, losing his original holiness and justice and incurring the wrath and indignation of God. The plight of Adam is not his alone, it is the plight of the whole human race which has participated in the sin of Adam, not simply by imitation but by being infused with this sin. The edict does not preclude a human contribution to justification, for it remains silent on the vexed question of man's intellectual attainments after the Fall. The phrase "changed in body and soul" is deliberately vague, and leaves open the question of injury to the will and intellect. The door is left open for a high doctrine of free will.

The opening chapter of the edict on justification refers again to the fall of Adam and the consequences of this fall for Adam's posterity, consequences so severe that they cannot be attenuated by the labours of natural man, even with the guidance of the Law. Chapter 2 extends the argument. It states that God sent his Son into the world "that he might redeem Jews who were under the Law ... and Gentiles who followed not after Justice". Canons I and 2 are complementary; they deny that man is able to save himself by his own efforts or that he can save himself with the help of Christ without his grace, or even that he is able to prepare himself for justification without the prevenient inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Tridentine Fathers were anxious to clear catholic doctrine of the charge of pelagianism.

The pre-eminence of the Divine role in justification is put in even greater clarity in chapter 7 of the decree where the causes of justification are listed. The final cause is the glory of God and Jesus Christ, and life everlasting; the efficient cause is the merciful God who washes and sanctifies us gratuitously, signing and annointing us with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the pledge of our inheritance. The meritorious cause is "the most beloved only begotten our Lord Jesus Christ who when we were sinners for the exceeding charity wherewith he loved us merited justification for us by his most Holy Passion on the wood of the cross and made satisfaction for us unto God the Father"; the instrumental cause is the "sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of faith without which faith no man was ever justified" and lastly the only formal cause is "the justice of God whereby he makes just".

The subject of all these causes is in every case not man but God. Justification is not a movement upwards from man to God, but a movement downwards from God to man. Nothing that man can do, can cause it. Of particular importance in this connection is the meritious cause. It is not our merit that wins justification but the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ. And human merit has to be seen in the context of this merit and outside that context it had no value. Also of significance is the efficient cause, the merciful God who washes and sanctifies through the Holy Spirit. The phrase "efficient cause" is Aristotelian; the efficient cause is the motive power which produces an event. Only through merciful God can man realise salvation but the phrase is not exclusive of a human contribution; "washes and sanctifies" implies both baptism and a twin conception of justification, but of this we

have already written.

Although this section in chapter 7 was a comparatively late addition, it expresses the mind of the Council as a whole. In the opening discussions, Salmeron had insisted that God was the "totius auctor nostrae justificationis".[14] John of Udino[15] admittedly at the time suspected of Lutheran sympathies, submitted a list of causes not unlike that in the final draft. Few, at least on this point, would have disagreed with either of them. This section in Seripando's draft was little altered.

The Council, however, was not to be content with a statement simply of this kind. Not only had it to be affirmed that God in Christ was the Author of salvation, but the Council also was obliged to say how that authorship was exercised in the soul of the individual believer. Therefore they went on to say that grace is prevenient, proceeding any work of man. By this grace, irrespective of our merits and virtues, God incites the soul for preparation for justification; this preparation is a divinely aided response to the vocatio of God. When the sinner is so prepared, he is justified by God who forgives the sinner and infuses grace into his soul. God sustains the soul in the state of grace and by his gift of perseverance leads it to life eternal. The role of God is determinative.

While there was unanimity concerning the role of God in justification, theologians and fathers were sharply divided concerning the role of man. In the preliminary discussions and reports of the theologians, the majority[16] considered that man had an important, if subsidiary role, to play in his own justification. However, there was a minority who considered that that role

was merely passive; this was the view advocated by John of Udino.(17) If the reports we have of the discussions are accurate, John stressed that faith alone was needed for man's justification. By faith, we receive the forgiveness of sins and, through the merits of Christ, rather than through merits of our own, we are justified. Other members of this minority group, including Gregory of Sienna, denied that freewill contributed to justification. There was disagreement too in the general congregation. Again the majority, following the scotist and nominalist traditions, believed that good works merited justification de congruo, but a few,notably the Bishop of Belluno and Bishop Aquino, however, denied the reality of good works and therefore their acceptance by God before justification.

Again, the majority certainly believed that there was such a thing as preparation for justification, but even within this majority there were great differences. Some thought that merely the consent of man to the work of God was required, but most of the bishops wished to say more. With the aid of prevenient grace, man renounces his sin, believes in the gospel and intends to live after the pattern of Jesus Christ. The scotist and nominalist traditions were better equipped to deal with the question of the preparation; thomism had been more hesitant in constructing a psychology of conversion. In the case of second justification, all agreed that penitence was a necessary prerequisite.

In the final text, Trent's answer to the question of man's contribution is given in chapters I, 5, 6 and 14 in addition to canons 4, 5 and 7. As we have said above, the edict on original sin had left open the question of

freewill. Chapter I of the decree on justification is, however, quite explicit. It affirms the reality of freewill after the Fall. Without it there is no possibility of a human contribution to justification. Although chapter 5 stresses the preveniency of grace, it states that the role of this grace is merely that it "aids and quickens man to convert themselves to their justification"(18) and also asserts that, by freewill, man can reject the prevenient grace of God. The doors are open to a theology of the human contribution. In chapter 6, several stages of preparation are outlined. Having received faith by hearing (as distinct from infused faith), the sinner is led to believe that which is divinely revealed and promised, especially that the sinner is justified by God in Christ, and there follows a recognition of sin, a fear of God and then confidence in the divine mercy, a love of God, and a hatred of sin and finally a resolve to receive baptism. Chapter 7 is clearly written in the conviction that faith alone is not enough. While the text avoids phrases like "love of God super omnia," and refuses to decide between the contritionalist and the attritionalist, it is clear that it represents a victory for the scotist and the nominalist.

Chapter 14 redefines the preparation required in the case of post baptismal sin. This consists not only of the detestation of sin, a determination to avoid sin, and a contrite and humble heart, but also confession, satisfaction and absolution. In respect to the question we have raised, Chapter 14 adds little new, except to underline the Tridentine conviction that faith alone is an insufficient preparation for justification. Canons 3 and 5 maintain the necessity for a preparation and also the freewill for it.

The difficult question of the Tridentine attitude to meritum de congruo prior to justification must now be discussed. The second draft of the decree included the phrase "tamquam proprie merita excludantur". This quite obviously excluded meritum de condigno, but the "proprie" clearly admits some idea of meritum de congruo. Meritum de congruo we remember was not merit in the strict sense of the word; it only affirmed the suitability of a reward. The emphasis was on the graciousness of God, who through His mercy rather than his justice, de potentia ordinata rewarded the efforts of the unjustified by giving his grace. Seripando attacked this phrase; to his Augustinian it smelt of pelegianism, but many of the Fathers were in favour of the retention of the "proprie" precisely because it retained the possibility of meritum de congruo.

In the final text no mention is apparently made of merit prior to justification, and from this many scholars have concluded that it represents a victory for the Thomist against nominalist and scotist rivals. Heiko Oberman has drawn our attention to the word "promereri" which is to be found in the final text in three places. He argues that promereri is to be distinguished from mereri, since the former was only used by the nominalists when they referred to meritum de condigno. This still allows for meritum de congruo. The final text of the decree only denies that man can earn merit in the full sense (promereri) and this leaves quite open the question of meritum de congruo. It is quite clear also from the debates that a large number of members probably a majority applied this interpretation. To this we would add two points in favour of the Oberman hypothesis. The preparation described in the final

text is regarded as necessary and is not to be considered as an optional extra. It is essential for justification. While no specific works are in mind, it could be claimed that the disposition itself was some kind of meritum de congruo. Secondly, Canon 7 not only refutes the contention that works done before justification are evil, but also applauds the seeking of this grace through good works and this implies the possibility of a reward.

The reply of the fathers to this second question can be summarised as follows. God initiates, works and brings to completion, the justification of the soul. This does not, however, preclude an important contribution on the part of man; indeed this has been made possible by the retention of freewill after the Fall. In response to the vocatio of God, man must prepare himself for justification. The good works that he does at this stage allow him the possibility of de congruo claim on the grace of justification. It is easy to see the influence of nominalism here on this final statement.

The Council of Trent thus defines the roles of God and man in the process of justification. Both the initiative of God and the co-operation of man are essential; without either there can be no justification. In effect this clashes with the reformation dictum "sola fide sola gratia." What indeed is left of the Pauline insistance on the priority of faith? For the answer to this question we turn to our next subject.

How are we to understand the words of St. Paul, we are justified by faith?

The Council's reply to the previous question to a very great extent determines her answer to this one. Chapter 6 clearly implies that faith alone is not of itself sufficient preparation for justification, and yet the

Pauline teaching on justification by faith alone could not be ignored, for scripture and tradition were the source of doctrine. There was only one course open to the Council and that was to interpret the Pauline phrase in such a way that it was not inconsistent with Chapter 6 of the decree.

This indeed had been the problem from the start. In the early discussions, the majority of the Council had wished to affirm that man made a large contribution towards his own justification, but fidelity to scripture and tradition entailed the belief that justification was wholly gratuitous and that thepath to it was God-given faith. The debates themselves reflect the tension between these two motifs. The issues were complicated by the different understandings of what Paul meant by faith. A few, mostly those who wished to minimize the human contribution, understood by the word faith "fiducia", a sure and certain trust in Jesus Christ who has procured our redemption and through whom the Father has forgiven sinners. In the first debate, Seripando had interpreted faith in this sense (Fidei, says Seripando[23] "huius efficium utest applicare nobis et communicare iustitia dei, hoc est merita et satifactionem, Christi quae per fidem nos communicantur".) Although Luther had interpreted faith as fiducia, it does not follow that all who interpreted faith in this way were Lutherans. This illustrates both the confusion on the lexical meaning of faith, and also on its importance and role for justification. The compromise statement at Ratisbon[24] had indeed accepted Luther's interpretation of faith, but had also affirmed the reality of meritum de condigno after justification.

On the other hand, Salmeron[25] before the general congregation had

refused to identify faith with fiducia. Faith is not fiducia, it is the substance of things hoped for; it is to believe divinely revealed truths. If this was not enough, there was disagreement between the schools on the role of faith in justification. The thomists believed that faith was integral to justification and it was infused with charity into the soul. Their point was not that of Luther, for they did not interpret faith as fiducia. For them the faith which justified was belief in the Divine revelation infused with charity into the soul. The vote of Bertano(26) of Fano is here illuminating. He states that by means of an active faith, we participate in our justification. The accent is on a lively faith, a faith infused with love, a faith that performs good works. To Bertano therefore good works are not merely a token of our justification, they are an essential element within it. On the other hand the scotist and nominalist schools gave to faith a merely preparatory role. Indeed, while all the Council disagreed with the Lutheran dictum "justification by faith" alone (at least in the way the reformers interpreted it) they were not agreed upon an alternative. Inevitably the final draft represents something of a compromise.

The final text of the edict on justification, outlines the importance and role of faith, in chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9. Chapter 6 discribes the role of faith as a disposition for justification. Faith here is not thought of as fiducia; it is "credenda vera esse quae divinitas revelata et promissa est". Faith is the work of prevenient grace and is the basis of all the other factors that go to make up the preparatory disposition, but it does not however exhaust the human contribution to justification. So far we have scotist

teaching. In chapter 7 faith, following the thomist tradition, is described as an integral part of justification. The faith which justifies is not, however, merely faith; "nam fides, nisi ad eam spes accedat et caritas, neque unit perfecte cum Christo neque corporis eius vivam membrum efficet". Faith and hope and charity ingrafted into the soul makes man a new creature and an heir of eternal life. Chapter 8 has to be interpreted in the light of the two preceeding chapters. It owes its inclusion to the work of Cervini, who collected a whole series of patristic and scholastic quotations to support the contention that man is justified by faith. Faith as belief in divine revelation and promise is indeed the beginning of justification, and faith inclusive of hope and love, is the foundation and root of justification. However, the primacy of faith does not mean that there is no room for good works in justification or that faith exhausts the human preparation for it. Faith does not cause justification, and the penultimate clause of this chapter makes this very clear, for it states "we are therefore said to be justified gratuitously because none of those things that precede justification, neither faith or works merit justification". The true causes of justification are indeed listed in chapter 7 and all of them stem from the mercy of God. It is only therefore in a very limited sense that faith is to be understood as "the beginning root and ground of our justification". Canons 9, 12 and 13 specifically deny to faith the title of a cause of justification, firstly as a preparatory disposition and secondly as a human contribution to justification.

A corollory to the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone is the doctrine of assurance. The differences between Luther and Trent is

All Saints House,
Hawton,
Nr. Newark,
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12th March, 1973

Dear Mr. Thursh,

M.A. Thesis

With reference to our telephone conversation earlier this afternoon, I should be most grateful if you would send to the examiners the following amendment.

The sentence in Chapter 3 at the bottom of page 22 and the top of page 23 should read:

"Chapter 15 affirms that faith can co-exist with mortal sin".

I am most sorry to put you to this further trouble.

Yours sincerely,

Richard A. Kirton

brought into prominence by the fathers' condemnation of Luther's teaching on this point. Luther regards faith as fiducia, as personal trust in Jesus Christ, and as belief that He has not just redeemed anybody but us. The pro nobis character of the redemptive work of Christ and his attack on works as a means of earning justification leads Luther to a strong doctrine of assurance. Trent, however, saw both faith and works in a different light from this. While there could be no doubt concerning the sufficiency of Christ's work, its efficiency was always in doubt, because of the uncertain response of man. There were indeed many disagreements concerning the doctrine of assurance in the Council, but these did not directly affect attitudes to Luther's doctrine. The dispute within the Council concerned the scholastic argument on the subject of sacramental certainty.(27) Baring a human obstacle, the scotists claimed there could be certainty of justification in the sacraments of Baptism and Penance, but then added that election to grace did not mean election to glory, and therefore the final fate of the baptised or penitent was still in doubt. The thomists, who strongly insisted on the need for contrition, would not even affirm the validity of sacramental certainty.

Chapters 9, 12 and 13 are devoted to a refutation of the Lutheran doctrine of assurance. Chapter 9 asserts that belief that one is justified provides no guarantee that this is the case, and denies the Lutheran assertion that the man who does not believe he is justified, in fact is not. Chapter 14 underlines these contentions, chapter 12 adding a denial of certainty of election to glory and chapter 13 denying that there can be any certainty that one has received grace of perseverence. Chapter 15 affirms that faith can

coexist with mortal sin. Canons 15-17 support these assertions with anathemas.

We do not therefore find in Trent a clear sola fide, for faith has to be taken alongside other things as a condition of justification. In effect, faith and works lead to it. Again we find a nominalist conclusion to the argument. We now consider the role of works in greater detail.

Whether or in what way, works before or after justification concur thereto?

We have already answered the first part of this question in our discussion of the preparation for justification. We recall that, while the Council specifically denied that man could earn his justification strictly speaking, the Council supported the theory that man was able to merit de congruo.

The answer which Trent gave concerning works performed after justification likewise divided them from Protestant thinkers. It is, however, not fair to think that the Tridentine position simply affirmed that once given the grace of justification man could earn salvation. Trent's teaching on merit has to be understood in the whole context of the edict on justification or it is misleading.

The Tridentine Fathers almost unanimously regarded good works as an important factor in deciding a man's future destiny. They were anxious to safeguard both the freedom and responsibility of man. In the preliminary discussions, only the Bishop of La Cava[28] was not prepared to state that good works performed after justification were meritorious; his own formula is particularly reticent (Ea tamen opera merentur quatenus merita Christi

nobis merita Christi). Other members were all convinced of the meritorious nature of these works, but the context in which this was understood is important. Pinaroliensis[29] in particular insisted that the good works performed by the justified are the works of God, and only so constituted meritum de condigno. Such works only merit because they are done in Christ, for He is made our wisdom, our justice, our sanctification and our redemption. In the same sense the Bishop of Calahorra[30] can say "Our works are wholly ours and wholly God's". Works performed in a state of grace are not to be differentiated or put in opposition to the supreme work of Christ, because our works derive from that greater work. The claim that these good works merit de condigno increase of grace and finally life eternal has to be understood against the whole redemptive activity of God in Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the believer. Some of the fathers in the nominalist tradition, wanted to lay more stress on the divine acceptance rather than the human work. The General of the Servites[31] suggested the nominalist formula "Good works are meritorious of eternal life in as much as God accepts them", and the Bishop of the Canaries[32] emphasized that our merits rest on the divine mercy.

The July draft[33] was rather cautious on the subject of merit. Although stating that good works increase our justification and merit life eternal, the emphasis is on the role of grace in doing good works and thus safeguarding the idea that God is the origin of merit. The second draft is even more reticent. It simply states that the justice of God is the efficient cause of merit; this could be easily interpreted and accepted by those who upheld

the theory of double justice.

This draft led to a full discussion of the theory of double justice.(34) The theory had originally been put forward by the Cologne school of theology. Albert Pighi and Gropper were its most able supporters. It had even been accepted by the liberal papal legate at Ratisbon, Contarini. The theory advocates two distinct phases in the acquisition of merit and its acceptance. At the first stage, man being justified and having received justice by infusion into Christ, is said to be capable of meritorious works, meriting increase of grace. However, by reason of the frailty of man, this can never be in this life a complete process and life eternal cannot be wholly merited. At the second stage, that is at the last judgement, over and against man's own and inadequate justice, is imputed in Christ the justice of God. This view is in effect a middle course between the Lutheran assertion that the righteousness of God is wholly imputed to us, and the final solution of Trent whereby the righteousness of God is wholly inherent in the soul in a state of grace.

The difficulty with this via-media view is obvious. If merit cannot of itself win life eternal, in what sense can it still be called merit? If it is not sufficient for a man to be in a state of grace for the last judgement, in what sense is it truly a state of grace? Laynez was the ablest critic of Seripando, the chief advocate of this theory at Trent. Laynez pointed out that good works and merit are not directly related. Good works are only meritorious because they are done in a state of grace, and works not performed with the help of habitual grace did not constitute a condigno claim on

eternal life. Only when man is infused with grace of Christ are his good works truly meritorious. Once again the point is made that works performed in a state of grace, while truly ours, are also the work of Christ. Only because of this do they require augmentation at the Last Judgement. Laynez's next point is that the judgement seat is truly a seat of judgement, not a seat of mercy.

Laynez illustrates well the importance of the two-fold nature of justification on the doctrine of merit. Only because man is actually made just and is in a state of grace, can he earn merit. Only in a state of grace can man claim anything for his good works de condigno; mercy is the only hope for the unjustified man but, the justified man has been given a status from which he can receive a reward from the God, who rewards every man according to his works.

Although Seripando only found three supporters for his theory at Trent, the discussions it aroused affected the final text of the decree. Seripando's opponents were forced to emphasize the Christocentric basis of merit.

In the final text of the decree, the role of merit after justification is discussed in chapters 10, 11 and 14. The groundwork for a doctrine of merit is however to be found in chapter 7. Justification is here described, not only as the forgiveness of sins, but also the infusion of grace. The latter is closely associated with Christ. In justification, man is ingrafted into Christ and receives, through the Holy Spirit, the gifts of faith, hope and charity. The same chapter significantly states that there is a quantitive differentiation of justice "according to each man's proper disposition and

co-operation". This clearly allows room for the possibility of augmentation of this justice through further co-operation. Indeed, the same chapter goes on to insist that the justified are bidden to preserve that justice and speaks of a necessity of a lively faith, a faith infused with faith, hope and charity, and urges adherence to the commandments. Three points here which help us to understand Tridentine teaching on merit are firstly, that a close connection is inferred between the justice of Christ and the justice of the man who is justified, secondly the chapter opens up the possibility of the augmentation of grace, and thirdly the keeping of the commandments and life eternal are closely connected.

Chapters 10 and 11 deal with the first and third of these points, chapter 10 underlining the need for an increase of virtue and justice through obedience to the commandments. Under the influence of grace, the good works of the justified augment the justice already given. Chapter 11 is really apologetic, affirming both the possibility and the necessity of keeping the commandments.

Chapter 16 makes explicit what had been implicit in chapters 7, 10 and 11, opening with a reminder of the biblical demand that those in Christ must strive to the end. On this basis it proceeds to establish the meritorious character of good works. Although good works require human co-operation, they proceed from Christ Himself. The justified are ingrafted into the person of Christ, as a branch into a vine; the justified become members of the body of Christ and the virtue of Christ is infused into the soul. This virtue proceeds and accompanies every good work of the justified; only so are these

works meritorious. Good works are pleasing to God because they proceed from Christ. Thus they satisfy the divine law and earn life eternal. The decree stresses very clearly the Christocentric character of meritorious works. Our justice is not to be set in opposition to the justice of God, for our justice is in essence none other than the justice of God enfused into the soul through the merit of Christ.

The Tridentine understanding of merit is far from simple. It does not simply say that works done after justification merit increase of grace and life eternal. For the fathers merit can only be understood in the context of the redeeming work of Christ, and the appropriation of the benefits of the passion through the infusion of grace into the soul. The fathers were concerned to argue that in justification, man really is made just and justification is no legal fiction. From this they drew the corrollary that justification introduces the possibility of obedience to the commandments and therefore of earning eternal life.

The fathers clearly recognised that it was on the subject of merit that they differed most widely from the Lutherans. The Tridentine teaching on merit is hedged round by a series of canons, anathametizing Lutheran opinions (Canons 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 31 and 32). They add little to the content of the chapters we have discussed above. Canon 32 represents the conclusion of the arguement. We quote "If anyone says that the good works of one that is justified are in such manner the gift of God, as they are not also the good merits of him that is justified, or that the said justified, by the good works he performs, through the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ,

whose living member he is, does not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life and the attainment of that eternal life ... and also increase in glory, let him be anathema".

And what share have the sacraments therein?

This question (second part of question 4) was no mere after-thought. Luther had attacked any view of the sacrament which made it an opus operatum. The validity of the sacrament depended upon whether the recipient had fiducia or not. This was to challenge traditional interpretations of the scholastic period and it was therefore inevitable that the fathers should rally to their defence. The sacrament was the efficacious sign which brought about the event signified. The two sacraments which were traditionally associated with justification are baptism and penance. Within the final text of the decree on justification, the sacraments are mentioned in chapters IV, Vl, Vll and XIV. Our exposition of the view of the Council on the sacraments and their relationsip with justification will be on the basis of these; some of these chapters are, however, rather sketchy and will need to be supplemented by material from the separate decrees on the sacraments passed by Trent.

Chapter 6 tells us that baptism is the instrumental cause of justification. It is a sacrament of faith without which nobody can be justified. Very little argument for this point of view is provided in this chapter. The clue to the mind of the Council is, however, to be found in canon 6 on the sacraments in general and canon 4 on the sacrament of baptism. The former reads "If anybody says that the sacraments of the New Law do not obtain the grace they signify ... let him be anathema". The latter canon refers to

John 3:5 as the dominical declaration on baptism; the conclusion is that baptism signifies rebirth. As the sacrament contains the grace it signifies, it follows that baptism contains the grace of new birth, the grace of justification. The fathers here underline that justification does not only consist of the forgiveness of sins, but also of the renewal of the inner man.

Therefore the relationship between the sacrament of faith and baptism is as it must be, the same as the relationship between faith and justification. Faith is not here fiducia; it is the acknowledgement of the truth of divine revelation. In the case of baptism, the faith of the Church alone is sufficient. Here Luther would have parted company with the Fathers. As baptism implies, justification, the preparation for both, is the same. Again, faith by itself is not an adequate preparation for justification.

The whole teaching of Trent on justification is presented in miniature in the teaching on the sacraments. Baptism is something given by God, a sacrament of the new law instituted by Christ. Thus the objectivity of the sacrament is here maintained. Baptism is something that is given to men by God. In baptism is symbolised the two aspects of justification, the forgiveness of sin and the renewal of the inner man. The preparation for justification and baptism is again the detestation of sin, faith and the intention of receiving the sacrament. This is not a denial of prevenient grace; it is indeed a result of it. The sacrament of penance is the subject of Chapter 14 of the decree on justification. The chapter contends that for those who fall from a state of grace by mortal sin, there is another sacrament to enable restoration. The merits of Christ being applied afresh through the sacrament

of penance, the sinner can again receive the grace of justification. The fruit of this sacrament is therefore justification and its benefits. There is therefore an equation between baptism and penance. However, the disposition differs. In addition to the cessation and detestation of sin, the sinner is also required to confess his sins, receive absolution (in the sacrament) and make satisfaction by temporal punishment.

This chapter is supplemented by the decree on the sacrament of penance. Chapter 1 gives the reason for the sacrament as the frailty of man and the mercy of God, and the sacrament therefore differs from baptism in its judicial nature. The words of absolution are the form of the sacrament. The twofold structure of justification is retained through the declaration of forgiveness and the gift of new life. The matter of the sacrament is threefold, contrition, confession and satisfaction. The definition of contrition is an extended form of what has already been said in chapter 14 of the decree on justification. In spite of Thomist opposition, it accepts the efficacy of a rigorous attrition and even describes this attrition as the gift of God. Chapter 8 of the decree is devoted to the subject of satisfaction. Works of satisfaction have a similar context to that of good works performed after justification, and like meritorious works is closely related to Christology. The decree declares that "neither in this satisfaction that we discharge for our sins, are so our own as not to be discharged through Christ. For we who can do nothing of ourselves, as ourselves can do all things he cooperating who strengthens have not wherein to glory, but all our glorying is in Christ; in whom we live, in whom we merit; in whom we satisfy, bringing forth fruit

worthy of repentance which for this have their efficacy; by Him are they offered to the Father and through Him accepted by the Father". Satisfaction is not therefore a work of reparation that we make for ourselves, but an offering of repentance that we render through Christ.

Penance and justification stand side by side. Because the sacrament is declared to be a judicial act, it tends to strengthen the imputative nature of justification without going back on anything that has been said about justification as the act of the renewal of the inner man. The victory of the attritionists over the contritionalists presumably holds good for justification as for penance. Most important of all, chapter 8 of the decree on penance provides conclusive evidence that the Council saw the doctrine of merit, only in relation to the work of Christ in the soul of the believer. On the other hand, all that has been said concerning justification holds good also for penance, for penance is a sacrament of justification without which there can be no second justification.

While the sacrament of the eucharist receives no mention in the edict on justification, this too is important. It is a vehicle of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. In the sacrament the recipient receives spiritual food, is freed from venial sins and strengthened to avoid mortal sin. It is a means of the augmentation of grace after justification in the soul of the believer.

The Tridentine teaching on justification bears all the marks of a committee construction. This is not surprising. It was not written by one man; it had to embrace as well as possible the feelings of the Council as

a whole. On the one hand there were fathers who were concerned to show the gratuitousness of salvation but who at the same time were concerned to indicate how man could co-operate with the redemptive work of Christ. On the other hand there were also those who for pastoral reasons in the nominalist tradition were anxious to stress the responsibility of man rather than the activity of God. The final text reflects the tension between these two groups. On the one hand the gratuitousness of justification is emphasised in the chapters on the Fall, the list of the causes of justification, the stress on the importance of faith and perhaps most important in the Christological framework the fathers gave to the doctrine of merit. On the other hand, none of these things are pressed so far as to make man devoid of responsibility for his own destiny.

The Christian life is still seen as a pilgrimage, as a journey, as a course, at each stage of which man must make a fitting response if he is to win salvation. The augustinian framework is retained and it allows for man's contribution, while at the same time insisting on the preveniency of grace. But it was precisely against this kind of framework which Luther rebelled when he attacked, not only the nominalists, but also the scholastic tradition as a whole. Within this framework notions of merit both before and after justification were either affirmed at Trent or else still permitted. The notion of enfused grace, as the possession through Christ of the sinner, is also retained. Trent was not a compromise between Luther and High Scholasticism.

For what it set out to do, the Council had indeed done a good job of

work. It had produced a statement on the doctrine of justification, which was clear and intelligible, broad enough to embrace most of the supporters of Rome and yet narrow enough to exclude what it regarded as heresy. In so doing, it had often make its own contribution to doctrinal thought, particularly as we have already indicated concerning the doctrine of merit. It had defended, we believe successfully, the traditional viewpoint on justification from charges of pelagianism. Far more would have been needed to close the gap with Luther than an able tidying up operation. Trent and Luther were far apart, but that is for our next chapter when we compare and assess their two points of view.

CHAPTER 4

LUTHER AND THE COUNCIL OF TRENT

So far we have expounded the views of Luther and the Council of Trent on Justification as far as possible in isolation; this has been in the interests of clarity and impartiality. Our aim in this chapter is to compare and contrast their positions and to provide a critique of their contribution towards the development of the doctrine.

Both Luther and Trent arose out of the confusions in Church and Doctrine that had arisen during the latter part of the Middle Ages. Luther and Trent were both influenced positively and negatively by nominalism and although the roots of their disagreement affect their interpretation of the Scholastic explication of the doctrine, neither can be understood without some knowledge of the nominalist enterprise.

Luther reacted against the nominalist evaluation of the powers of natural man, that is man without the aid of grace. For him the onus for justification is to be put wholly on God to the exclusion of any effort on the part of man. At no stage of the Christian life can man even contribute to his justification, which is wholly gratuitous, consisting of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the sinner who has been given faith. The doctrine has several inter-related elements within it.

Firstly, the work of Christ is central to the Luther's teaching on justification. Indeed, the righteousness of Christ revealed on the cross, is the only righteousness of the Christian, who has no righteousness he can call his own. By faith, the Christian is bound to the events of Calvary; there too "in Christ" he was crucified and died and his sins wiped away. Through the cross there was a victory over all the forces that bound man to

the forces of sin and death. This does not mean that the justified no longer sins (indeed he is still a sinner, but that sins are of no account for his salvation, and that instead the righteousness of Christ is attributed to him, by the mercy of God.) While he is in Christ, he is totally righteous.

Secondly, the fruit of the redemption wrought by Christ is communicated to the Christian man through faith given to him through the Holy Spirit. Again, faith is the gift of God through the Holy Spirit and it is not man's achievement. Faith cannot be attained through any effort on the part of the will, nor is it a matter of feeling. It is entirely God-given. Luther understands faith to be a real trust and confidence in God and Christ and their redemptive work, and not merely an adherence to certain dogmatic articles. Faith links the sinner to the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to him. This is no fictional righteousness; faith is the only true righteousness available to man, for it alone gives God His due.

Thirdly, Luther does not only claim that justification is accomplished at a particular point in time. Justification is a life-long event; the Christian man is always entirely dependant on God for His righteousness. At every stage of the Christian life, he is totally a sinner without Christ and totally righteous with Him. Inevitably therefore this life is something of a struggle in which God teaches him to put all his trust in Christ and none in his own ability to win salvation. Through the Law, man is shown that he is a sinner under the condemnation of God. Man struggles against this verdict seeking a righteousness of his own, only to feel even greater condemnation.

Thus God, through the Law, crushes every attempt at self-justification and leads man to put all his trust in Christ and His Gospel. This trust gives man what he had never been able to achieve through his own efforts, a true righteousness. This is no righteousness of his own, or something that he possesses outside Christ. This dialectic covers the whole of man's life. He is always being led from his own righteousness to the righteousness of Christ; thus the Christian life is always the way of the cross, where all attempts at self justification are crushed so that the sinner can receive the righteousness of Christ. Justification is a life-long event and there is never a stage when the sinner is not wholly dependant upon God. There could scarcely be a more severe rebuttal to nominalist ideas on the powers of natural man. Indeed, it goes much further than even St. Augustine in its subordination of the efforts of man to the victory of God wrought upon the cross.

The Council of Trent presents a very different picture of justification from that of Luther. In outline the Council retained the old augustinian framework to the doctrine, but added the results of the more conservative nominalist schools. Justification is the work of God and man. By baptism, man indeed is made righteous and indeed given a righteousness of his own, but it is for him to keep it with the aid of grace; by mortal sin he forfeits that righteousness and any claim to life eternal. At every stage of the process, the action of God is matched by the requirement that man should make his contribution. Through the prevenient grace of God, man is led to make some preparation for his justification. As we have argued above, the

majority of the council influenced through nominalist sources, believed that man could incline God to give him the grace of justification through meritum de congruo. After justification, with the aid of habitual grace, man must, through his own efforts, retain that gift of righteousness and work for the increase of grace and for life eternal. The only remedy for mortal sin is the sacrament of penance, but once again, man must make some preparation for it. The Christian life is thus seen as a journey through baptism and penance in which by the operations of both man and God, the sinner is led first to righteousness and then to salvation; thus natural man is led towards his summam bonum, God Himself.

Some elements of the schema need pinpointing. The Tridentine Fathers certainly claimed that they were against pelagianism. Salvation could only be won by the grace of God, and only through him could the necessary graces (prevenient, habitual and persevering graces) be obtained; in this they rejected the extremes of left-wing nominalism who cast doubts on the efficacy of the supernatural graces. Nor is the place of Christ, lightly passed over. Only through the merits of Christ can man be made righteous, only through incorporation into Him, can he ever hope to reach the heavenly Jerusalem, and only through Him are the deeds of the justified accomplished. Yet at the same time, man is given considerable scope. By good works before justification, he can win meritum de congruo and must make adequate preparation for it. After justification, he must retain this gift of righteousness, and earn increase of grace and eternal life through meritum de condigno. The Tridentine teaching on justification, insists that justification is both

won and given through faith and works by God and man. In the schema there is always a balance between the work of man and the graces of God, reminiscent of the more restrained nominalist schools.

The debate still goes on. In spite of the ecumenical movement and in spite of notable attempts(1) to reconcile the two positions, the doctrine of justification is still a much disputed issue. Roman Catholic critics of Luther are more generous than they used to be and Denifle's position has been discredited as a result of modern critical study. Most Roman Catholic scholars(2) of today would agree that Luther was right to protest against the pelagian extravagances of nominalism and applaud his defence of justification "sola gratia". They still, however, make two important criticisms of Luther's stand. Firstly, they claim that Luther was led by his reaction to nominalism to teach a distorted anthropology, and that secondly, and as a result of the first, he taught a wholly imputative view of justification and thus made the work of God little more than a legal fiction.

The first of these two criticisms is well put by McDonough. He asks "Is not Luther's experience of sinfulness influenced and intensified, even distorted, by what Biel claims to be the ideal of perfection of human nature, the love of God super omnia? Does he not continue to ruminate, perhaps at times subconsciously on what he considers to be the exigences of the nominalist ideal and the distributive justice that it implies? Though he rejects the moral optimism of Biel, does he not judge the corruptions of his own nature by its failure to reach Pelagian standards - what man can and should do "ex puris naturalibus"(3)".

There is some truth in McDonough's observation. As we have stated above, it was partly as a reaction to nominalism that Luther puts the onus for justification entirely on God. No doubt too the nominalist school of thought presented to Luther an ideal of the perfection of human nature, which man could not possibly reach except by the grace of God alone. Yet whatever the origins of his theological development and the influences placed upon him, Luther still deserves to be assessed in his own right and not on the ground of the influence of nominalism.

The second criticism of Luther is that he taught a purely imputative view of justification making it little more than a legal fiction. The claim here too is that Luther was led into this error by his reaction to nominalist extravagances, and yet here it takes the form of a specific charge upon which he can be fairly judged. This is one of the criticisms that Bouyer makes of Luther. He says "We see him (Luther) identifying his affirmation about sola gratia with a particular theory, known as extrinsic justification. That is that he unites two statements so closely that they become inseparable; one an affirmation "grace alone" saves us; the other a negation "it changes nothing in us by so doing".(4)

It is, however, far from true that Luther made justification into a legal fiction, and some scholars have gone so far as to claim that he taught that justification actually makes man righteous. While Luther's view of sanctification and its relationship with justification is far from simple, our own view is that Luther speaks of growth and sanctification in the context of the formula "semper peccator, semper penitens, semper iustus".

Man on his own without Christ is totally a sinner and as such any attempt at righteousness on his own part, without the power of God, is condemned. However, the man in Christ, the justified man, is in an entirely different position, for the justified man is growing in faith, hope and charity, because he dwells in the righteousness of Christ. There is indeed growth, but the growth is not in his own righteousness, but through faith in his increased participation in the righteousness of Christ. Furthermore, faith in itself is a good work, although a gift of God, for it alone gives God His due. It is this context that Luther can stress the importance of the good works that proceeded from man's justification. It can hardly therefore be claimed that Luther's view of justification includes the negation that it changes nothing in us. The point that Luther makes is that salvation does not depend on good works or any effort on the part of man, but this is very different from a simple denial of any change wrought through justification.

What is really at issue here is not whether justification works a change in man, but what that change is, and how it comes about. From Luther's point of view, the change is a rejection of all attempts at self justification and a total dependance for one's righteousness on the righteousness of Christ. This destroys the traditional notion of justification as a completed act or event accomplished through the sacraments of baptism and penance. Instead, we are to look on justification as a life-long happening depending on the faith of the Christian man and on his relationship with Christ. The old augustinian framework provided a view of justification

in which the justified were made righteous and thus had some status from which to earn increase of grace and finally a place in heaven. The righteous man is rewarded according to his works. While Luther indeed taught that justification really changes much about man, the character of the change differs from any that had been pictured in the more traditional theories on justification. An assessment of these two different ways of describing and defining the change wrought by justification will be considered later in this chapter.

Protestant criticism of the Tridentine definition of justification has been centred on three related issues. The first of these concerns the relationship between grace and free will, the second on the definition of sanctification and justification, and the third on the respective roles of faith and works.

Karl Barth is one who maintains that "the central issue is the proclamation of the triumph and the omnipotence of grace in contrast to the Roman Catholic emphasis on grace and freedom".(5) The question for Barth is whether "the Tridentine emphasis on freewill vitiate(s) all that is said in the decrees on the gratuitousness of grace".

In contrast to Luther, the Tridentine Fathers ascribed to man an important role in his own justification and by so doing they implicitly affirmed the reality and effectiveness of freewill. The ground had already been prepared in the decree on original sin, where no mention is made of the impairment of the will, even though a list is given of the disabilities suffered by Adam and his posterity because of the Fall. The silence is

eloquent. In the decree on justification itself, it is stated that prevenient grace "aids and quickens men to convert themselves to justification" and that man can resist the vocatio of God through the use of freewill. The final draft of the decree also allows for a meritum de congruo claim on the grace of justification. Clearly the freewill is able to do much to hinder or co-operate with prevenient grace and could well be the decisive factor leading to man's justification! Even after justification, deeds can lose for man the grace of justification, or with the aid of grace, earn increase of grace and even a place in heaven. Should the justified commit a mortal sin, the will plays an important part in the path to restoration.

At the same time, however, the fathers stressed the gratuitousness of justification. Not only is this bluntly stated in chapter 8 of the decree, but also the causes of justification listed in chapter 7, all originate in God. Although the justified man can earn merit according to his "disposition and co-operation" he can only do so because he has been incorporated into Christ; in the Tridentine view, merit and christology cannot be separated.

The council therefore refused to make a radical antithesis between grace and freewill and at every stage of the process both freewill and grace are required. Freewill has the power of making grace ineffacious but without grace she can do nothing towards justification. This is merely an extension of the principle that grace does not destroy nature but perfects it. By contrast, Luther tended towards the view that grace is irresistable to the detriment of freewill.

The debate on the respective roles of grace and freewill is a difficult one to solve. One the one hand the Tridentine Council could claim considerable biblical support for their contention that freewill has a role to play on the road to justification, and yet on the other hand the Lutheran position receives support, not only from a few passages of the Bible, but also from the dogmatic necessity of ensuring the gratuitousness of justification.

On the second question at issue, Luther had carefully distinguished between justification and sanctification. Without such a distinction, Law and Gospel were confused and the latter rendered ineffective, for no longer could it be claimed that justification anticipated the final verdict of God, if that verdict depended on the progress of man towards his sanctification. The Tridentine fathers took a different line; justification went hand in hand with sanctification. Not only did justification include the renewal of the inner man, but also man's response to this grace through sanctification determined the final verdict of the Last Judgement. In the council's view, justification does not necessarily decide man's final destiny; election to grace is not the same as election to glory. From that point of view, the Lutheran doctrine of assurance is a presumptious blasphemy, for it amounts to the claim that the justified will in fact merit eternal life.

The difference we have noted in Lutheran and Tridentine interpretations of the relationship between justification and sanctification is extended into the controversy over faith and works. Luther's distinction between justification and sanctification allowed him to preach a doctrine of

justification by faith alone, exclusive of anything that man might do towards his spiritual growth. Although sanctification includes good works, they are of no significance for justification. The Tridentine union of sanctification and justification entailed also the belief that faith and works together led man to his final goal. The role of faith is clearly important to the council, but it is so with other things. Faith indeed is the beginning of justification, but this does not mean that justification is by faith alone. Faith is only part, even if the most important part, of man's response to the prevenient grace of God. Faith too is a gift included within habitual grace, but hope and charity also make up the gift. Even if it is the root and foundation of the others, faith does not stand alone. Not only is faith important, but works also have a role to play in justification, even though that role is not an exclusive one. The Council allowed the possibility of a de congruo claim on justification even though prevenient grace is required for it, and faith takes a prior place. After justification, the possibility and even the necessity of meritum de condigno is affirmed, though it is dependant on habitual grace.

For the fathers, justification is firstly by faith and secondly by works and without either of them there can be no justification. Faith and works are required. There is indeed truth in Barth's famous dictum "Trent robs faith of its central place and gives it the function of initiating justification, while justification is seen analytically in connection with and on the ground of the enfused grace of sanctification".(6)

This discussion of the controversy as it has seemed to the theologians

of the present day has been useful in clarifying some of the issues involved. We must, however, cast our net wider in order to suggest other ways in which an assessment can be made. There seem to us to be three standpoints from which this can be done. While all have their drawbacks, it is possible that by use of all three some headway can be made.

The three standpoints we have in mind are as follows. The first is the modern exegesis of the Bible. It should be possible to suggest certain ways in which Trent and Luther anticipated the results of more recent Pauline interpretation and how far the results of their exegesis have withstood the march of time. Recourse to biblical criticism is obviously fraught with difficulties for the Bible is capable of more than one interpretation; Luther, Trent and their disciples all believed that they were faithfully interpreting scripture and a different set of exegetical principles produces different results. Nevertheless, we deem this part of our inquiry both necessary and worthwhile. The renaissance of biblical studies has affected both protestant and catholic scholars and brought them much closer together, particularly on the Pauline doctrine of justification.

Our second standpoint presents even greater difficulties. We intend to compare the psychology of Trent and Luther with what is known as a result of modern psychological inquiry. The difficulties we admit are immense. There is little uniformity or agreement among psychologists concerning the development of the human psyche. Psychology as a discipline is still in its infancy and has not reached the accuracy or the impartiality of an exact science. Such an approach also presupposes that the

spiritual life of man follows the same or similar rules to those governing his psychological development and that some kind of parallel can be made between them. Yet in spite of these difficulties, it seems right to put some questions before the psychologist. For example it seems right to ask what sort of factors, if any, can lead to a change in the personality. This kind of approach should help us to assess the plausibility of either of these two approaches to justification in an age which has seen so much interest and progress in our understanding of the psyche.

Our third standpoint is that of modern theology. Again there are difficulties. Modern theological thinking is very diverse and there is no modern theology in the sense of a single system accepted by even a majority of thinkers. It would also be presumptuous to claim that the moderns are always right and the ancients wrong. Nonetheless, it seems proper to ask how far Lutheran and Tridentine views on justification have stood the test of time.

Each one of these approaches is of course in itself inadequate, yet there is something more compelling about a united witness. Our conclusions will be based on the results of all three enquiries in order to give them as wide a base as is possible.

We begin first with the biblical standpoint.

Most scholars(7), whatever their tradition, agree that the primary meaning of the word "dikaiosis" and its cognates "dikaioun" and dikaiosune" is to account righteous, to acquit, to declare not guilty as in a law court. Paul, however, often gives the word a much wider meaning. Sometimes it is

even equivalent to the English word "to save". Jeremias[8] calls this wider usage of the word the soteriological usage. The problem is not, however, chiefly lexical, but exegetical.

"Justification" is only one of a number of images Paul uses to express his experience and belief in forgiveness through the work of Christ. Justification itself is closely associated with baptism. Baptism is the rite of the forgiveness of sins. It is, however, much more than this; baptism in Paul's eyes is also a sign of new birth, of dying and rising with Christ, and of initiation into the Body of Christ, the Church. If justification and baptism are taken together, a pure doctrine of imputation becomes quite untenable, though we have argued above that this is a false presentation of Luther's views. Justification introduces man into a new relationship in which he is not only accounted righteous, but actually becomes righteous. An important proof-text for the doctrine of imputation is to be found in Romans 4; 22-25. "Logzesthai" here means "to be accounted as having a certain value"; the background to the word is commercial. Vincent Taylor[9] argues that in its total context, the text does not support a doctrine of imputation; Paul means that Abraham's faith revealed the sort of man that he was. It does not imply that the righteousness reckoned to Abraham was a fiction. Justification has to be understood with the Pauline teaching on baptism, the sign of new birth. When these two are considered together, they bar any interpretation which would suggest that imputation is only imputation, and that it does not affect the life of the believer any more deeply than that.

The legal background[10] to the metaphor "dikaiouv" is important. The metaphor is used to express the conviction that man is justified with faith without the works of the Law. If the works of the Law, which is God's gift to Israel, are insufficient to win man's salvation because of man's sin, this automatically excludes other laws of a lesser origin. All attempts at self-justification are ruled out. The metaphor to some extent demands this interpretation. The accused does not stand before the judge to recount his noble deeds. Nor are his feelings likely to be those of love. The attitude of the suppliant, who knows that he is guilty, is at best, faith in the mercy of the judge. Yet even this faith cannot win acquittal; the decision to acquit or condemn is the judge's alone.

Justification in the thought of St. Paul is the gracious activity of God, by which he accepts men who are guilty as righteous through the redemptive work of Christ. Nothing that man can do wins or contributes, in Paul's view, to his justification. Only God and the cross can win justification for man. It seems that Paul, at least in this respect, was as pessimistic as Luther on the extent of human powers to win justification. To what extent does Paul regard man as responsible for remaining justified?

The roots of the Pauline doctrine of justification are eschatological; the originality of St. Paul[11] lies in the fact that he transmitted the idea of justification into the present. In Jesus Christ, men are presented here and now with the mercy of God. As Quell and Shrink[12] state "the divine absolution of sins, made effectual in the cross, and accepted by faith here and now, is expected to reach its final consummation in acquittal

at the Last Judgement".

However, on the basis of 1 Corinthians 4:4 and 2 Corinthians 5:10, many scholars,(13) both protestant and catholic, are prepared to claim that the final verdict also rests on the quality of a man's life and deeds. There need be no absolute contradiction here. The man who is justified does good deeds; good deeds and the quality of a man's life are a measure of his justification.(14) This does not mean that man is justified through his good works; Paul explicitly denies this possibility.

Baptism(15) which, as we have seen, is to be closely connected with justification, signifies the entry of the justified man into new life, the life "en Christo". It is in this context that we are to understand sanctification. Sanctification has the primary meaning of separation. A sanctified man is "agios", that is separated to God. The term is usually used in the context of worship, though Paul extends its use to cover the whole Christian life. The New Testament saint has not reached perfection; nonetheless his holiness is anticipated in the church "en Christo".

The Pauline phrase "en Christo" has received a great number of interpretations.(16) Deissman, who first indicated the importance of the phrase, thought it denoted "fellowship-mysticism"; Pratt took the same point of view. Schweitzer and Gilpatrick have emphasized the ecclesiastical context of the expression; to be in Christ is to be a member of the church. The comparatively recent discovery of the eschatalogical dimension to the New Testament has led to a new interpretation. C. K. Barrett and O. Cullman think that to be "in Christ" is to participate in the new age, the age of Christ, rather

than the age of Adam. This participation is always an incomplete one. It is a feature of the whole church rather than of the individual in isolation.

All scholars are now agreed that the "en Christo" is a partial reality in the believer's life. The old life, the life of the old man, the life of Adam still continues with and alongside the new man, to death itself. The believer has to grow in the fulness of Christ; here the co-operation of the Christian is essential and so the Christian is urged to strive for the goal. Yet the new life is not merely a continuation of the old. The new life opens up a new dimension of life, discontinuous with the old. The work of sanctification is not that of the believer alone, the Holy Spirit sanctifies the church and therefore the life of the believer.

Our analysis of Pauline[17] theology brings us to certain conclusions that may help towards an evaluation of Luther and Trent. Four points are of particular importance for this assessment. Firstly, Paul was no advocate of a merely imputative theology of justification; for him justification includes a making righteous. Secondly, justification is by faith and not works; justification by faith anticipates the last judgement. Thirdly, the New Testament places emphasis on the effort and activity of man in sanctification and yet sees it as the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Finally, and most important, the term "en Christo" is to be understood eschatalogically, a view not open to the catholic and protestant writers of the sixteenth century, because of the relatively undeveloped critical apparatus. We believe that these factors give us some basis on which to assess both Luther and Trent.

Luther was clearly in agreement with St. Paul when he insisted that faith is the only response necessary for justification; justification cannot be won by good works and the Law is an instrument of condemnation. If we judge Luther by Paul, he was right to insist that justification was a lifelong process. We have been justified in the sense that Christ has died for us and caused our justification, we are being justified in that here and now we receive the declaration of the forgiveness of sins, and we shall be justified in the sense that we shall be acquitted at the Last Day. While Luther goes further than the Apostle in his analysis of faith, Luther is only taking his arguement to its logical conclusion.

However, Luther is much more inclusive than Paul in his use of the word justification than St. Paul. Justification was only one of a series of metaphors to express the idea of forgiveness. Exclusive use of this metaphor has the demerit of over-emphasising the imputative character of soteriology. Luther does not indeed teach a pure doctrine of justification, but insists that the declaration of forgiveness changes the position of the sinner. Nonetheless, it seems that Luther does stress the imputative character of the doctrine more than the Apostle, possibly because of the influence of nominalism.

Luther also puts less stress on sanctification than St. Paul, and again this can be accounted for by the negative influence of nominalism. Luther comes near to denying that the new man, the inner man, has an existence of his own. Luther's theology of sanctification would have been strengthened by a greater appreciation of the eschatalogical and ecclesi-

ological context to Paul's understanding of the Christian life.

Comparison between Trent and Paul is more difficult because of their different vocabularies. In some respects she was closer to Paul than was Luther. For example her analysis of sanctification, correctly describes the Christian as entering a new life "en Christo" and recognised that this new life was discontinuous with the old. The role of the church within which the Christian receives this new life is strongly emphasized, though perhaps in ways with which Paul would not have been completely in agreement.

Where Trent departs from Paul is in her different understanding of time. The fathers seemed totally unaware of the eschatological dimension to Paul's teaching on justification. They tended to think of justification as an event completed in baptism. For the same reason they tended to confuse sanctification with justification and claim that once a man has been justified he can be saved by works. Yet in Paul's view, justification can never in this life be a completed process, although the end is anticipated by faith.

Trent, as a result, goes much further than St. Paul in her emphasis on merit. As we argued in our third chapter, this was because of associating justification with a sacramental mement. Once baptised, the Christian is given some status from which through good works he can earn his rights. Paul, by contrast, sees justification as founded and existing through faith exclusive of works and the language of merit would have been foreign to him.

Theology does not end with St. Paul. It was right and proper that his thoughts should be expanded and developed and indeed re-evaluated in

accord with the culture of a particular time. Yet the value of this brief and inadequate survey is that it shows where Luther and Trent went further than St. Paul and thus it isolates where that development had been made. Many of the important questions were not considered by St. Paul, because they were not then matters of controversy. In particular we are thinking of the appropriate psychology in which to express the doctrine of justification.

Our analysis of Luther and Trent reveals that they used a different vocabulary, a different set of concepts and a different psychology through which to express the doctrine of justification. Vocabulary is not a neutral factor in the controversy, it is at its very centre. A vocabulary has its own history and its own presuppositions. What can be expressed through one mode of thinking, becomes almost untranslatable into another. Words are both a means of expression and yet paradoxically they also circumscribe expression and to some extent are the masters of thought rather than the servants. Perhaps Luther's greatest achievement was to provide, and a new set of words and concepts in which to express the doctrine of justification.

Scholastic theology[18] uses words and concepts culled from Aristotelianism to construct a vocabulary for justification. Some words as "enfused grace" "virtues" and "habitus" belong to a system of thinking quite different from that of the New Testament. Whether the ideas of the New Testament are communicatable in this different vocabulary is our first consideration in this section of the arguement.

One of the concepts borrowed from Aristotle to convey the doctrine

of justification was that of the habitus. In Aristotle it is used to express the way in which habits are acquired. One learns how to drive through practice. The habit of driving, once achieved, is that which gives the driver competence to drive. However, when the category was taken over by the scholastics and applied to the theology of justification certain modifications had to be made. The supernatural habits were no longer regarded as acquired through habit, for it was enfused and God-given in justification. Nonetheless, the same function was given as before. It was to bring forth the appropriate good works. The justified man was given the habit from which issued the deeds of faith, hope and love. The difficulty with this is that it turns the justified man into a man of works whose function it is to perform them and earn an eternal reward. As Aquinas says "man needs the twofold help of God, first an habitual gift, whereby corrupted human nature is healed and after being healed is lifted up so as to work deeds meritorious of eternal life which exceed the capacity of nature."(19) The vocabulary leads to yet another consequence that these works are seen as the achievement of man.

By contrast to this vocabulary, Luther introduced a new conceptual framework in which to show that the primary effect of justification was not so much to alter the intrinsic nature of man and turn him into a man of works, but rather to put him into a new relationship with God. Out of this new relationship there arose good deeds, but they were no longer determinative of the relationship. The central place is reserved entirely for the work of Christ and the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit and on these two

factors alone depended the fate of the sinner. Luther's use of the term "totius homo" is an important example of the way in which Luther attempts to express this. The whole man with Christ is totally righteous, but without Him, wholly a sinner. The determinative factor is here uncompromisingly declared to be the relationship which the sinner has with Christ. The aim, the means and destiny of the Christian life is declared to be not a matter of right conduct but of right relation.

The psychoanalytic school of psychology is much closer to Luther than to Trent, at least on this issue. It regards the relationships which the patient has established with his parents and friends, particularly in early life, rather than the habits he has acquired as the important factors which govern the psyche. The habits derive from the relationships rather than the other way round. It could, of course, be argued that this is of no significance to the theology of justification and that it is one thing to argue that good relationships lead to the health of the psyche and quite another to apply this to the theology of justification. We cannot agree with this point of view, for it seems better to use analogies from the natural order than to develop a theology in a terminalogy of its own. Certainly the doctrine of the incarnation leads us towards the view that human analogies are likely to be the most profitable.

Another facet of the controversy is of interest to the psychologist as to the theologian. As we have stated above, many catholic theologians think that Luther was led astray by an excessive sensation of guilt. On the other hand, protestant theologians accuse their catholic opponents of

a failure to take sin seriously. The dispute is best illustrated from the different understandings of the relationship between the justified man and Christ. Trent tended to think of the relationship of Christ to the justified to be grounded in the infusion of grace. By contrast Luther maintains that the relationship is established through faith; without this faith man is totally sinful and there is no justification. There is nothing intrinsic to man which is righteous. Such righteousness as he has is the righteousness of Christ, an alien righteousness. It is easy to see that this point of view is liable to the criticism that it undervalues the redemptive work of Christ by stressing the sinfulness of man, even justified man.

We have, however, argued above that the dynamics of justification can best be understood in terms of human relationships. In the context of such a relationship, people are changed and receive fresh strength from which to meet the difficulties of their lives. Faith and the relationship that it brings with Christ presumably does the same. Yet as Paul Tournier says "However decisive the change that faith makes in our lives, each of us lives his new life in his own natural style. Little by little, the dominant features of our temperament reassert themselves once more in one form or another".(20) He adds elsewhere "Faith does not deliver us from all our ills. It does not liberate us in this world from our natural temperament. It allows us temporarily to overcome it, which is quite another matter. Those who turn to Christianity as a universal remedy for success are inevitably disappointed. I have seen many such. A man who had been liberated from an inveterate vice after being converted came to see me in a state of

deep despair, because after years of almost easy victory, he had slipped back into it again. He had, so to speak, identified his experience of Christ's power with this particular deliverance, which was only a reflection of it. I had to persuade him to accept the fact that, in spite of all the grace he had received, he was still a weak mortal, always in danger of backsliding, just when he thought himself to be strong".(21) It would not be difficult to parallel this experience with Luther's own insistence that the Christian has no righteousness of his own. The insights of modern psychology seem to support the view that man is changed through his relationship with God, rather than through the infusion of grace or graces into the soul, and, that further, the change itself is dependant on the continuation of that relationship or something akin to it.

So far the insights of psychology tend to support much that Luther says. Yet we must add that many of the experiences that Luther regarded as normative for the Christian life, would be regarded now as abnormal, not only by the layman, but also by the psychologist. What is one to make of such concepts as the "resignatio ad infernam" and the "accusiatio sui". Surely these point to very exaggerated experiences of sinfulness. Here perhaps the catholic critic is on firmer ground, even if we take account of the climate of the age in which Luther lived.

Psychology has shown that the rejection of self can lead to very serious consequences. The self becomes divided as it seeks to come to terms with itself. R. S. Lee comments "Repentance that concentrates on contrition for sins and throws emphasis on the repudiation of them is in

danger of dividing the total self instead of changing it. It seeks to disown that part which produces the sins - that is those impulses from the Id that have come into conflict with the Super-ego - because they are expression of the oedipus wishes or derivations of them. The Super-ego is reinforced to put a stronger ban on them and they are pushed into the subconscious. This is not a fundamental change of outlook. What is required is not the imprisonment of our natural forces, but release, not condemnation but transformation".(22) How far does Lee's warning apply to Luther's teaching on justification?

The position is rather complicated because there is no direct parallel between what Luther says and the situation that Lee criticises. Luther never regarded the Law as an instrument of salvation, only when it operates with the Gospel can it bring man to repentance. Without the Gospel, Luther would agree that man is totally broken by the Law. Its purpose is to bring man to the Gospel. Far more is included in Luther's definition of the repentance than merely contrition and repudiation of sin, and the threats of the Law and the attitudes that man takes with regard to it have to be balanced with the promises of the Gospel and the gift of faith. Secondly, the Law does not in Luther's view simply condemn man's individual sins. It condemns the whole man and all human wisdom, all human achievement and even the conscience is called into question by it. This in some measure protects Luther from the charge that his psychology of justification divides the personality, particularly when we recall that for him the sinner is justified even though he remains a sinner; warts and all are accepted by God and to

the man with faith is imputed the righteousness of Christ. It is not the perfect man who is acceptable to God but the sinner who has faith in Christ.

Paradoxically, the Tridentine position is more open to Lee's criticism, for the fathers paid much more attention to individual sins than Luther and mortal sin led, in their view, to the forfeiture of the benefits of justification. The contrition that they advocate is more likely to turn the self against itself and bring man to self-hatred.

Yet the charge against both Luther and Trent goes deeper than that. As the Earl of Longford says "Most of us, I suppose, feel that our egos are more in need of bolstering up than slapping down. We are convinced that we would be not only happier but better people if we could a better opinion of ourselves. We would be kinder more unselfish and more public spirited".(23) The counsel that both Luther and the Tridentine fathers would give us is distrust of self but utter trust in God. The boost that most of us feel we need to our own ego would be more than supplied by total faith in God and His redemptive work. In addition, both would add the assurance that God's work in the world now, is forwarded by men and women in spite of their sins.

We turn to our third standpoint - that of modern theology. There is, of course, no such thing as "modern theology". Not only is there no single theology accepted by all today, but theology also has an ambivalent attitude to the culture of any age. She must indeed speak to the people of her time, but what she says does not depend wholly upon contemporary culture but also on the eternal truths and historical facts she regards as the normative expression of faith in any age. This is true even in the case of the most

radical theologian.[24] Yet it is still possible to speak of the way in which contemporary culture has changed the perspective of the theologian. This is not something merely negative, for it does not mean that theology simply cow:- tows to the thoughts of the age in which she is written, but rather that there is always a dialogue between theology and culture, sometimes to the enrichment of both.

The culture of our age is indeed very different from that of the sixteenth century. Then the questions that man asked were religious questions and the answers he posited were religious answers. This was so in fields which today would hardly be considered religious at all. Thus the world was the centre of the Universe because it seemed that the psalms inferred this. God directly altered and corrected the positions of the stars. The power struggles of the Day were carried forward with frequent recall to Holy Writ. Primary causation was to the forefront of man's mind. The issues with which we have been concerned could call nations to arms. The evolution of science[25] has changed this, for she has provided an explanation of the world without recourse to God. Man does not look today for God to explain the mysteries of the universe, but looks to science to provide the answers.

Many of the assumptions which could be taken for granted by Luther and Trent in their thinking on justification are now matters of dispute, at least in this Society if not in the Church Herself. Men find it difficult to think in terms of God at all and to speak in terms of life everlasting now begs a question. Even the Church has not been unaffected by the dis-association between faith and knowledge and perhaps more important the

severance of faith from sensibility?

One effect of this on theology is that there is much more emphasis on the transcendance of God. Since it is no longer plausible to suggest that God directly manipulates the course of this world, emphasis is now put on secondary causation[26] and God is seen as working "behind, within and beyond the passing flux of things." This is not without its effect on the doctrine of justification, and the Tridentine schema of grace, which divides grace into different graces allocating a separate task to each sounds strange to twentieth century ears for this reason. It supposes that the action of God in justification is achieved through divine interference in the natural order. Luther's doctrine of grace avoids what today can only be regarded as serious pitfalls, precisely because his model is not that of substance and being but of relationship. For similar reasons much that Luther says regarding man's religious experience seems unreal to us today. Our concerns are more secular and the intense preoccupation with religious doubts and difficulties has few modern parallels; such parallels as there are are secularised e.g. Sartre, Camus, Kafka and Golding.

Another important change in the foci of our thinking has been the emancipation of ethics from theology. It is no longer acceptable to define good and bad in terms of God; discussion of good and bad is now pursued without reference to God. This has important ramifications for the doctrine of justification. Many of the ideas that the Reformers and fathers of the Tridentine Council regarded as axiomatic, we must question from our different perspective, because they imply that God is somewhat lacking in

charity and goodness.

The charge can be addressed at both sides of the controversy. Much that Luther says would be unacceptable today, because the view of God he presents to us is sometimes that of a cruel tyrant. Does not also the notion of substitution which runs through his teaching on justification imply a great deal of injustice? Much the same can be said of Trent. The immediate removal of grace following mortal sin seems a callous and unconstructive means of dealing with the sinner. The implication is that God only loves man when he is virtuous. The charge still stands, although the fathers insisted that the active of grace of God leads the sinner back towards a state of grace. Indeed it is substantiated by reference to the Tridentine system of merit.

The question remains "Are these stumbling-blocks to the modern conscience central to the thought of either Luther or Trent?" The idea of substitution is softened when we remember that all three persons of the Trinity are involved in the act of the Atonement, the end of which is the justification of the sinner. The Father does not angrily punish an innocent Son and the Son does not simply offer himself to appease an unjust Father. Instead God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit operate together and through the cross provide the means of man's justification and redemption. Luther always saw the cross as a victory won by God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit against evil and sin, and no division in intention is implied of the Godhead. Lutheran(27) descriptions of the wrath of God can similarly be defended. In Luther the wrath of God has to be understood alongside other ideas,

notably those concerning His love. The two descriptions of God are not to be set in opposition, for seen correctly the wrath of God is an aspect of His love. The wrath of God is part of His concern for righteousness and therefore for the mankind. Luther discriminates carefully concerning the merciful wrath of God and the wrath of his severity. The aim of the former is not the condemnation of the sinner, but his redemption, and it is questionable how far the word "wrath", with all its connotations is really appropriate. In the case of the wrath of God's severity, Luther himself found difficulty with it and it was not central to his thought. For Luther the doctrine of double predestination is subordinate to his doctrine of justification. He distinguishes between the deus revelatus, that is God as he is revealed in Jesus Christ and deus absconditus, God to be revealed at the end of time. Only in the light of glory can it be seen that God in fact acts with perfect justice, in respect of this doctrine, and here on earth we are not to concern or worry ourselves about it. Man cannot today agree with his teaching on reprobation and yet clearly Luther himself regarded it as incomplete.

It might seem that the Tridentine scheme of merit would be easy to rehabilitate into a culture in which incentive has become something of a watchword. Furthermore a strong defence for the concept of a heavenly reward can be made from the Sermon on the Mount. However, the impression that Trent leaves in our minds is that of a somewhat calculating God who rewards the good man and punishes evil on a profit and loss basis. God seems depersonalised(28) and the picture we have of a merciful and loving

Father is vitiated. Trent indeed insisted on the prevenient grace of God, but the objection does not lie here but in the conditional nature of the state of grace. This defect in the Tridentine position is central to its thinking and is therefore incapable of correction or much improvement within its own framework.

In one other important respect, contemporary culture has affected our view of justification. We are today more aware of our dependance on each other; from the moment of our birth we need the community for our development. Our home, our friends, our town or city, our church and our work all help us to be the people we are. We are part of a huge community which in the last resort is world wide. The discipline of sociology, in particular, has made us aware of this truth. For both Luther and Trent, justification is very much individualistically orientated. The individual is given or wins salvation. This seems unreal today because of our sensitivity to our dependance on others. Justification is not simply an individual concern but embraces the whole community and finally the whole world. In this respect the Tridentine fathers were closer to the truth than Luther, for the sacramental basis of the Council's position to some extent protects it from excessive individualism; baptism was not only the occasion of justification, but also the admission rite into the community of faith, the Church. A modern presentation of the doctrine would, however, have to give much more scope for the role of the community.

A book on the doctrine of justification today would also have to be far more open/secular thought than this simple historical study. New tools

have arisen with which to construct a theology of justification. The range[29] of comparison would have to include the perspective of the non-Christian religions also, together with an appreciation of the insights of contemporary literature and philosophy if it was to convey the doctrine with conviction to a twentieth century audience. Yet despite this, an important place would justly be found for the views of both Luther and Trent, for both have been important for the development of the doctrine and both still have something to contribute. In particular, Luther's understanding of faith and of the relationship of the Christian to his God is of permanent value, and the clarity with which the Council of Trent presents her views is an example to us all.

NOTES

Notes to Chapter 1

1) On the social background I have relied largely on information given in the following works: a) Lortz; The Reformation in Germany Vol. 1 p.3-157.
b) G. R. Elton; Reformation Europe 1517-59
c) M. Seidlmayer; Currents of Medieval Thought with particular reference to Germany.

2) For details of the situation in Northern Europe during the period and for the effect of lack of a good central government see:
Duby; Rural Economy and Country Economy in the Medieval West p.520 et seq.

3) See G. R. Elton; Reformation Europe 1517-59 p.39

4) For the unfortunate fate of the imperial knights in the period see:
Seidlmayer p.118 et seq.

5) See Roland Bainton; Here I Stand p.21; and Ford; The Age of Chaucer p.47-51.

6) Norman Sykes; The Crisis of the Reformation quotes B. J. Kidd (The Later Medieval Doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice) "It was on this widespread belief in the quantitative assignable and so marketable value of each Mass, coupled in a belief in a penal purgatory that the popular religion of calculation and fear was based ..." p.19.

7) Heiko Oberman: Forerunners of the Reformation p.7, though he warns us that the evidence at this stage cannot be regarded as conclusive.

8) J. M. Todd; Martin Luther p.7-14.

9) This fact is well illustrated from the Consilium de Emendenda Ecclesia,

not only from the document itself, but also from the disputes that it prompted within the Curia. See: Jedin; History of the Council of Trent Vol. 1.

10) A. G. Dickens; The English Reformation p.197; and D. Knowles; The Religious Orders in England Vol. IV.
There were some notable exceptions to this. The Greyfriars of London were to give Henry VIII much trouble in opposing the separation of England from the Papacy and were renowned for their quality of living.

11) For a refutation of the argument that monasteries were at that time morally corrupt see:
A. G. Dickens p.83.

12) Lortz; The Reformation in Germany Vol. 1 p.100

13) M. Seidlmayer p.112. Yet as Oberman points out it is difficult to assess the morality of any period from sermons, since this depends as much on the standards of the preacher as upon his congregation. See: H. Obermann; Forerunners of the Reformation p.9.

14) M. Seidlmayer p.112 emphasises the increase in the power of the Middle Classes. However see Elton p.307-8 where he asserts that the sixteenth century itself was a time of difficulty for this new class.

15) V. H. H. Green: Renaissance and Reformation p.35-55.

16) This was particularly so among the humanists of Northern Europe. Erasmas and More both ridiculed the excesses of the traditional schools.

17) See Gordon Rupp: The Righteousness of God p.88-9 where Rupp argues against the so-called voluntarism of Ockham's theology.

18) Heiko Oberman: Some Notes on the Theology of Nominalism. Harvard Theological Review Vol. LIII p.47 et seq. Oberman makes only suggestions

of the different schools and acknowledges that at the present stage of our knowledge of nominalism little accuracy is possible.

19) Gordon Leff: Medieval Thought p.281 et seq forms the basis for this paragraph.

20) Gordon Leff: Bradwardine and the Pelagians p.40 et seq argues that Bradwardine was influenced as well as incensed by his nominalist opponents.

21) The substance of the next paragraph is based on Leff: Bradwardine and the Pelagians p.140 et seq.

22) P. S. Watson: Let God be God p.49 et seq; and Gordon Rupp: The Righteousness of God p.141.
Both of these writers take the view we adopt in the thesis. However, John Burnaby in Amor Dei considers that this gives scant justice to scholasticism.

23) Gordon Leff: Bradwardine and the Pelagians p.188 et seq forms the basis for the next section of the thesis on the English nominalists.

24) Heiko Oberman: The Harvest of Medieval Theology p.34-8. Oberman discusses the implications of the distinction between the potentia absoluta and the potentia ordinata.

25) Gordon Leff: Bradwardine and the Pelagians p.205.

26) Heiko Oberman: The Harvest of Medieval Theology forms the basis for what we have to say concerning Biel; and J. Dempsey Douglass: Justification in Late Medieval Preaching forms the basis for the summary of Geiler.

27) See Douglass p.106.

28) See Oberman p.46.

29) See Oberman p.141.

30) See Oberman p.130 et seq. "Facere quod in se est" has indeed become the watchword for the nominalist emphasis on the role of man.

31) Oberman: The Harvest of the Medieval Theology p.140.

32) Dempsey Douglass p.110-115. Douglass here cites a number of passages in which Geiler emphasises the importance of freewill. By freewill man has the power to choose not to sin. Nonetheless man does not do this except through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

33) Oberman: Harvest of Medieval Theology p.185. Oberman comments "It is a reliable rule of interpretation for the historian of Christian Thought that the position with respect to the doctrine of predestination is a most revealing indicator of the doctrine of justification". This is notably so in the case of Biel where Biel balances the potentia ordinata with the potentia absoluta and the power of freewill with the necessity of freewill.

34) For the doctrine of assurance in Biel see Oberman p.220 et seq. For that of Geiler see Douglass p.149.

35) The question of a late medieval school, Augustinian in its doctrine of justification, is discussed in Steinmetz: Misericordia Dei. He concludes "In spite of all the qualifications which must be added in order to make it precise, the thesis itself still stands. There was in the later middle ages a tradition of theology which stressed the centrality of grace for justification and which minimised without eliminating the significance of the human contribution" p.33. With this Oberman is in

agreement (Forerunners of the Reformation p.123).

36) I have used Leff's "Bradwardine and the Pelagians" for this paragraph, especially p.66 et seq.

37) This section on Staupitz is almost entirely indebted to Steinmetz' "Misericordia Dei".

38) Luther and Staupitz p.45. Wolf.

39) Steinmetz p.88 et seq. Steinmetz considers that perhaps the most important contribution that Staupitz made to the doctrine of predestination and justification is to insist on their Christocentricity.

40) This is inevitable when one considers the individuality of many of the leaders of the movement; indeed one of the main features of the movement was its insistance on the independence and responsibility of the individual. In this respect Seidlmayer quotes Petrach "I am an individual and would like to be completely and wholly an individual; I wish to be true to myself so far as I can." (Currents of Medieval Thought p.157-8)

41) R. Bainton: Here I Stand p.95-96.

42) Gelder: The Two Reformations of the Sixteenth Century p.224 stresses the extent to which many of the Southern Humanists disparaged the sacramental ministrations of the church.

43) Op cit p.53.

44) Op cit p.25.

45) M. Philipps: Erasmas and the Northern Renaissance; chapter 2 considers Erasmas' emphasis on the study of classics and concludes that Erasmas regarded their study as merely a preparation for the study of Scripture.

46) M. Seidlmayer p.155 speaks of the mysticism of the devotia moderna reaching the secular classes. Yet it is not only the mysticism of the devotia moderna which reached the Middle Classes. In this respect two factors are significant as evidence for this. Firstly, many of the mystical writings of the period were written in the vernacular e.g. Richard Roll's "The Fire of Love" and Hilton's "An Epistle on Mixed Life" was aimed specifically at the educated layman. Secondly, early printing lists and extant copies of the works themselves show a predominant lay readership (Moorman: History of the Church of England p.129).

47) For the next two paragraphs I have used E. Underhill "The Mystics of the Church" and Clark "The Great German Mystics".

48) The mystical tradition's emphasis on humility was to have a great influence on Luther's development, but this will be described in the next chapter.

49) See Hyma: Devotia Moderna 1380-1520.

Notes to Chapter 2

1) Gordon Rupp traces the history of Lutheran studies in "The Righteousness of God" p.14.

2) Op cit p.84.

3) For example in Erikson's "Young Man Luther" esp. p.36-7 and 87-8.

4) For Luther's views on the relationship between theology and philosophy see esp. Ebeling: Luther An Introduction to His Thought p.76-92.

5) On this both Catholic and protestant writers are in agreement. There is, however, disagreement on the extent of Luther's emancipation from nominalism. For example, McDonough writes "Though he (Luther) rejects the moral optimism of Biel, does he not judge the corruptions of his own nature by its failure to reach pelagian standards - what man can or should do ex puris naturalibus". We shall attempt to assess the truth of this assertion in the final chapter.

6) Lortz: The Reformation, A Problem for Today" p.119 et seq. Lortz emphasises the importance of the bible in the monastic curriculum.

7) This section of the thesis on the anfechtung is indebted to Rupp: The Righteousness of God p.102 et seq.

8) W.A. 1:558.7.33.

9) For the distinction between the "wrath of God's severity" and the "merciful wrath of God" see: Rupp p.156-7.

10) See Rupp's comments p.97 et seq.

11) W.A. 54:179.8.7.

12) See Rupp p.123.

13) Denifle: Luther und Luthertum.

14) K. Holl: Ges Aufs III, Westen 171-88.

15) Lortz: The Reformation; A Problem for Today p.119.

16) H. Oberman: Iustitia Dei and Iustitia Christi. Harvard Theological Review 1966 p.1.

17) Bizer: Fides ex auditu.

18) The relationship between Luther and St. Augustine is an exceedingly complex subject. See:

Rupp p.139;

A. Hamel: Der Junge Luther und Augustin;

H. Oberman: Iustitia Dei and Iustitia Christi Harvard Theological Review 1966 p.1; and

Ebeling: Luther, An Introduction to His Thought p.141.

All of these authors, while they acknowledge the debt of Luther to the African Bishop, emphasise the discontinuity as well as the continuity between their views.

19) See Watson: Let God be God p.49 et seq; Prenter: Creator Spiritus p.4 et seq; and Rupp p.139 et seq. These authors emphasise the differences between the Augustinian and Lutheran concepts of love. The differences are well illustrated from Luther's teaching concerning the readiness of the sinner to be resigned to hell if it should be the will of God. Such a view would have been almost incomprehensible to St. Augustine.

20) Rupp: Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms p.43 for Luther's relationship with mysticism and also Rupp: The Righteousness of God p.149 et seq for his views on the virtue of humilitas.

21) W.A. 1:525.

22) Steinmetz: Misericordia Dei esp. p.145 et seq.

23) It is difficult to assess precisely when the discovery of the iustitia dei as a passive justifying righteousness took place. Rupp and Vogelsang p.43 have attempted to date the discovery. H. Oberman is convinced that the discovery took place during the lectures on the psalms. He thinks that Luther's distinction in the Lectures on the Psalms between the Letter and Spirit is equivalent to his later distinction between the Gospel and Law. (Rupp: The Righteousness of God p.135; and Oberman: op cit p.1 et seq. See also Ebeling: Luther, An Introduction to His Thought p.110).

24) W.A. 56:157.

25) W.A. 56:360.

26) W.A. 56:312.

27) W.A. 56:312.

28) W.A. 56:312. The doctrine of the totius homo is of fundamental importance for an understanding of Luther's theology of justification. The whole man, even his virtues, is under condemnation apart from Christ. The whole man with Christ is justified. This doctrine underlines the difference between Augustine and Luther. The former thought of a natural love which had to be directed aright.

29) W.A. 56:442.

30) Jedin Vol. II, p.186.

31) Michel p.124.

32) Michel p.125.

33) Michel p.126 et seq.

34) Michel p.157.

Notes to Chapter 3

1) For the reactions of the Papal Curia to papal reform see:
H. Jedin: History of the Council of Trent Vol. 1 p.419.

2) Fife: The Revolt of Martin Luther p.293-299. Fife correctly makes this point.

3) Jedin: History of the Council of Trent Vol. 1 p.220 et seq traces the history of the delay of the Council. Political factors were in this of paramount importance and are themselves a comment on the worldliness of the Late Medieval Church.

4) Philip Hughes comments "While a Council was absolutely necessary, it proved impossible to call one" (The Church in Crisis p.267).

5) Pastor: The History of the Popes Vol. IX p.254.

6) At the Council of Carthage (412) and the Second Council of Quiercy (538).

7) Cajetan was the first catholic apologist to realise that Luther's point of departure lay in the doctrine of justification.

8) Perhaps the only exception to this was the English nominalist school (see chapter 1). However the influence of the school was to some extent curtailed by the condemnation at the Council of Avignon; the school's view of the unimportance of supernatural grace for man's salvation does not seem to have affected the proceedings of the Council.

9) This paragraph is based on "The Tridentine Decree on Justification in the Light of Late Medieval Theology" (H. Oberman: Journal for Theology and the Church Vol. 3 p.28).

10) Oberman p.54.

11) Michel: Les Decrets de Concile de Trente p.66.

12) Michel p.72.

13) Michel p.72.

14) C.Trid IV 2, p.267.

15) C.Trid IV 2, p.274.

16) H. Jedin p.177 and Michel p.71.

17) C.Trid IV 2, p.274.

18) Jedin Vol. II p.177-80 and C.Trid IV 2, p.273. Jedin explains the difficulties concerning the text of John's submission.

19) Bishop Aquino asks "Iustitia quam? Fidei quam bona opera praeceaserunt". He then proceeds to refer to the example of Abraham to substantiate his case (C.Trid IV 2, p.327).

20) The onus for conversion is clearly put on man in this chapter. Grace is seen more as a necessary catalyst rather than the essential ingredient.

21) Michel p.127.

22) Oberman p.43 et seq.

23) C.Trid IV 2, p.335.

24) Jedin Vol. I p.380.

25) C.Trid IV 2, p.268.

26) Jedin Vol. II p.185.

27) Op cit p.297 et seq.

28) C.Trid IV 2, p.294. It is significant that the Bishop was suspected of Lutheran sympathies, largely because of this statement. He was very much in the minority.

29) C.Trid IV 2, p.276. The whole of his submission is important for understanding the Council of Trent at its best.

30) For the distinction between the Gospel and the Law see later. The distinction only became central for Luther in c.1518, though the thought that underlies it is already to be found in these lectures.

31) W.A. 56:247.

32) W.A. 40:489. Luther here puts the point very clearly. He says "It follows therefore that the Law with its functions does contribute towards justification; not because it justifies but because it impels one to the promise of grace and makes it sweet and desirable".

33) See Rupp p.167.

34) W.A. 56:419.

35) Rupp p.112.

36) W.A. 56:370.

37) W.A. 56:299.

38) W.A. 56:158.

39) W.A. 56:204.

40) W.A. 56:272.

41) Views have varied considerably. In his own day, many catholic theologians tended to think that Luther was totally disinterested in good works, whether as a means to justification or not. Holl emphasised that Luther did not teach a forensic doctrine of justification; he even claimed that in Luther's view, through justification, a man was actually made righteous. See later.

42) Prenter comments on this in the following words "Luther views sanctification and justification as one inseparable act of God. (Prenter: Spiritus Creator p.226).

43) W.A. 56:390.

44) W.A. 56:230.

45) W.A. 56:350.

46) Holl: Luther p. 111 et seq.

47) Prenter p.224.

48) Rupp: The Righteousness of God p.183.

49) W.A. 56:264.

50) Ebeling: Luther, An Introduction to His Thought p.29. The question of language was one which fascinated Luther. Ebeling quotes Luther "Although the gospel came and comes every day, nevertheless it came by means of languages, spread through them and must also be maintained through them, ... And let us realise that we shall scarcely be able to maintain the Gospel without languages. Languages are the sheaths in which the knife of the Spirit is contained".

51) W.A. 18:756.

52) W.A. 18:768.

53) W.A. 8:81.

54) W.A. 18:502.

55) Ebeling p.110 et seq.

56) W.A. 40:206.

57) W.A. 40:48.

58) W.A. 40:48.

59) W.A. 8:106.

60) W.A. 40:23.

61) W.A. 30:90.

62) W.A. 52:149.

63) W.A. 57:3.

64) W.A. 40:375.

65) W.A. 57:214.

66) W.A. 8:111.

67) W.A. 18:511.

68) W.A. 57.3.99.

69) Steinmetz p.55.

70) Aulen: Christus Victor.

71) W.A. 40:367.

72) W.A. 40:361.

73) W.A. 40:371.

74) W.A. 18:505.

75) W.A. 29:23.

76) W.A. 18:484.

77) W.A. 57:108.

78) W.A. 57.3.122.

Notes to Chapter 4

1) e.g. Hans Kung: Justification; and John Macquarrie: Principles of Theology.

2) Lortz: The Reformation, A Problem for Today; Bouyer: The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism; and McDonough: Law and Gospel.

3) McDonough p.38. Lortz is in agreement with McDonough p.125.

4) L. Bouyer: The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism p.139.

5) Berkouwer: The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth p.174-5.

6) Ido Iodem.

7) H. Kung: Justification p.203; V. Taylor: Reconciliation and Forgiveness p.33; Jeremias: The Message of the New Testament p.51; and Whiteley: The Theology of Saint Paul p.157.

8) Jeremias: The Central Message of the New Testament p.53.

9) Vincent Taylor: Reconciliation and Forgiveness p.53.

10) This point is put by Gilpatrick in Kung: Justification p.294.

11) C. K. Barrett: From First Adam to Last p.103.

12) Quell and Shrenk: Righteousness p.64.

13) e.g. Cerfaux: The Christian in the Theology of Saint Paul p.211.

14) See Vincent Taylor: Reconciliation and Forgiveness p.37 et seq.

15) Gilpatrick p.295.

16) Gilpatrick p.295; Cerfaux: Christ in the Theology of Saint Paul p.328 et seq; C. K. Barrett: From First Adam to Last p.92 et seq; and O. Cullman: Christ and Time p.217 et seq.

17) We have not attempted to survey the whole teaching of the New Testament

on the doctrine of forgiveness, but have referred to the Epistles of St. Paul exclusively. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, Paul has the most highly developed doctrine of forgiveness in the New Testament. Secondly, Luther and the Tridentine Fathers relied much upon him for this reason. Thirdly, there is not space in a thesis of this kind for a study of the doctrine of forgiveness as it is presented in the whole spectrum of the New Testament.

18) This section of the thesis is based on Ebeling: Luther, An Introduction to his Thoughts p.150-158.

19) T. Aquinas, Summa II, Pt. 1, Q.109, Art. 9.

20) Paul Tournier: The Strong and the Weak p.244.

21) Op cit. p.241.

22) R. S. Lee: Freud and Christianity p.166.

23) Earl of Longford: Humility p.129.

24) Gregor Smith concludes his contribution to the question of our attitude to tradition with the following words "Faith demands to be understood. And as soon as this demand is honestly faced, the traditional doctrines play their part; not as normative, not as a substitute for faith, but as servants in the house of faith. Faith without doctrine is a wildly swaying weathercock, driven around by every gust of the arbitrary imaginative or speculative power of man. Doctrine without faith is a sullen and joyless taskmaster; but the reality of the doctrinal tradition keeps faith from fantasy." (The Doctrine of God p.47-48)

25) C. F. von Weizsacker: The Relevance of Science.

26) Compare for example John McQuarrie's "Principles of Christian Theology

p.219-228 with Calvin's Institutes!

27) Rupp: The Righteousness of God p.295 puts Luther's thought on the wrath of God in a wider context.

28) Jenkins considers our understanding of what it means to be human as itself a product of Christianity. (D. Jenkins: The Glory of Man)

29) F. W. Dillistone: The Christian Understanding of the Atonement is such an attempt. For his approach of comparison see p.23 following.

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