

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

## Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

---

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

---

5-1-1948

### Rome's Doctrine of Justification

A J. Schauer

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir\_schauera@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Schauer, A J., "Rome's Doctrine of Justification" (1948). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 261.  
<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/261>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

**ROME'S DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION**

---

**A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary**

---

**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity**

---

by

**A. J. Schauer**

**May 1948**

Approved by:

J. E. Meyer  
John Theodore Mueller

Outline.

1. Definition of the Two Doctrines of Justification.

A. The Roman Catholic Doctrine.

B. The Lutheran Doctrine.

2. Anthropology in relation to the Doctrine of Justification.

A. Roman Catholic Conception of Sin and Free Will.

B. The Lutheran Conception of Sin.

3. The Source of the Two Doctrines of Justification.

A. Roman Catholic Doctrine.

aa) Roman Catholic Use of Holy Scripture.

bb) Roman Catholic Use of the Church Fathers.

B. Lutheran Doctrine.

aa) Lutheran Use of Holy Scripture.

- Bentley, St. Louis, Mo. Concordia Publishing House, 1931.
- Dieter, 1933.
- Fischer, N.Y.
- Gibbons, 1917.
- Harnack, 1903.
- Luther, Doctrinal, Leipzig, Deichert & Franke, 1914.
- Lake, Apostolic Fathers, New York, N.Y. Putnam, 1917.
- Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, London, Macmillan, 1906.
- Mueller, J.P., Christian Dogmatics, St. Louis, Mo. Concordia Publishing House, 1934.
- Pieper, P., Christliche Dogmatik, St. Louis, Mo. Concordia Publishing House, 1917.
- Pohlmann, Grace, Actual and Habitual, St. Louis, S. Werner Book Company, 1934.
- Pohlmann, Soteriology, St. Louis, Mo. S. Werner Book Company, 1934.
- Seeberg, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Vols. 1, 2, 3. Erlangen, Leipzig, Deichert, 1913, 1920.

### Bibliography.

- Aquinas, Thomas, Summa Theologia, St. Louis, Mo.  
B. Herder Book Company, 1934.
- Bente, Dau, Concordia Triglotta, St. Louis, Mo.  
Concordia Publishing House, 1921.
- Beharbo, Large Catechism, New York, Ny.  
Benziger Brothers, 1882.
- Dierks, Reconciliation and Justification,  
St. Louis, Mo. Concordia Publishing  
House, 1938.
- Engelder, Arndt,  
Graebner, Mayer, Popular Symbolics, St. Louis, Mo.  
Concordia Publishing House, 1934.
- Fischer, History of Doctrine, New York, N.Y.  
C. Scribner's Sons, 1923.
- Gibbons, Faith of Our Fathers, Baltimore, Md.  
John Murphy Company, 1917.
- Harnack, Dogmengeschichte, Tuebingen, 1905.
- Luthardt, Dogmatik, Leipzig,  
Doerfling & Franke, 1914.
- Lake, Apostolic Fathers, New York, N.Y.  
Putnam, 1917.
- Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, London,  
Macmillan, 1926.
- Mueller, J.T. Christian Dogmatics, St. Louis, Mo.  
Concordia Publishing House, 1934.
- Pieper, F. Christliche Dogmatik, St. Louis, Mo.  
Concordia Publishing House, 1917.
- Pohle-Preuss, Grace, Actual and Habitual, St. Louis,  
B. Herder Book Company, 1934.
- Pohle-Preuss, Soteriology, St. Louis, Mo.  
B. Herder Book Company, 1934.
- Seeberg, Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, Vols. 1, 2, 3.  
Erlangen, Leipzig, Deichert, 1913, 1920.

- How is a sinner justified before God? The answer to
- Waterworth, The Cannons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, Chicago, Ill. The Christian Symbolic Publication Society.
- Webber & Perry, History of Philosophy, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.
- Wilmers, Lehrbuen der Religion, Aschendorff; Muenster, Jos. Hantheim, 1909.
- Wilmers, Handbuch der Religion, Regensburg, Feistet, 1875.
- 
- Engelder, Dogmatical Class Notes, St. Louis. Concordia Mimeograph Company.
- Gesenius, Hebrew Dictionary, London, Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1857.
- Jamieson, into ruin".
- Faussett, Critical and Explanatory Commentary on the Bible, Grand Rapids, Mich.
- Brown, Hebraeisches und Aramaeisches Woerterbuch zum Alten Testament, Leipzig, Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1936
- Koenig, E. The Expositor's Greek Testament, Grand Rapids, Mich., Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Nicoll, W.R. Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, New York, N.Y., American Book Company, 1889.

How is a sinner justified before God? The answer to this vital question has promoted a violent conflict between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church ever since the days of Dr. Martin Luther. In its "Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent" the Church of Rome has placed a curse upon all those who teach the Lutheran doctrine of Justification, namely, the teaching that man is justified, or declared righteous, solely by the grace of God, for Christ's sake, through faith alone, without the deeds of the Law. While on the other hand, the Lutheran Church has always declared with Luther in the "Smalcald Articles" that "Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and whatever will not abide, should sink into ruin".

This conflict springs from basic differences in theology between these two divisions of Christendom. The Church of Rome proceeds from the concept of the Justice of God. God is always pictured as a righteous judge, who rewards man according to his efforts to please God. Christ is viewed as a new legislator whom we must obey. The phrase "our obligations" occurs frequently in its writings. Obedience is stressed more than faith. Rome operates mainly with the Law and neglects the Gospel. --- With Luther, the Lutheran Church proceeds from the love of God. John 3:16 and 1John 4:8 form the center of Lutheran theology.

The Lutheran Church, on the other hand, lets

God, through Christ, has and still does everything necessary for man's welfare. Faith is stressed. The Law is used to pave the way for the Gospel.

Such basic differences in theology are bound to result in widely different views concerning the sinner's justification before God. Since Rome operates mainly with the Law in dealing with man, it mingles Law and Gospel in the article of justification. To the question: "What must I do to be saved?" Rome answers: You must do all you can to earn your salvation. God has done and will only do what is impossible for you to do. The Lutheran Church, proceeding from the Love of God, answers: God, through Christ, has already done everything for your salvation. Believe this. Hence the Lutheran Church operates only with the Gospel in the article of justification.

A strange phenomenon in this conflict is that both Rome and the Lutheran Church appeal to Holy Scripture for proof that their respective teachings are Biblical. In some instances both church bodies appeal to the very same passages. This very fact has stimulated the writer's interest in the topic under discussion. It is plain that Scripture cannot support both views. Here we must remember that Rome interprets Scripture in the light of Tradition. In other words, Scripture is made to conform with the writings of the church fathers. The Lutheran Church, on the other hand, lets

Scripture interpret itself. With this in mind, we can understand why there is so much dispute about the concepts of Sin, Grace, Faith, and even the term Justification. To the Roman Catholic these words means something entirely different than to a Lutheran. Rome explains Sin, Grace, Faith, Justification in the light of Tradition, which is not always to Scriptural truth, as shall be shown in this thesis. While the Lutheran Church lets Scripture itself tell us what it means by Sin, Grace, Faith, and Justification.

This brings us to the question: Is the Roman Catholic or the Lutheran teaching the true Biblical doctrine of justification as it was once proclaimed by Jesus and His apostles? Or have both church bodies veered from divine truth? To answer these questions objectively is the main purpose of this thesis. In order to arrive at the truth, we shall let both Churches speak for themselves in the doctrine of justification. Then we shall examine their respective views on Man's Sin and Free Will, since these doctrines have a direct bearing on justification. Since both contestants appeal to Scripture, we shall examine their methods of dealing with Scripture and at the same time try to determine the reliability of the Church Fathers, upon whom Rome places much importance. Following this procedure, we hope to show that the Lutheran doctrine of Justification is a faithful reproduction of the teaching of the Apostles and



therefore deserves to be called the Biblical doctrine of Justification. May this study do its little part to strengthen the faithful and shed spiritual light upon those who are still confused by the question: How am I justified before God? What must I do to be saved?

the process of justification can begin. This preparation is described by the Council of Trent as follows:

1.

Definition of the two Doctrines of Justification.

A) The Roman Catholic Doctrine.

In spite of the fact that Holy Scripture is clear, decisive and brief in its answer to life's vital question, the Roman Catholic Church produces a long, elaborate, complicated answer when it is confronted with the question, How is a man justified before God? Rome indeed uses the terms Sin, Grace, and Faith, but it fills these terms with unbiblical concepts. This we shall see shortly. --- Justification is not a forensic, instantaneous act, but a long, drawn-out process. It is not a forensic act whereby God declares the sinner righteous in the moment he embraces Christ in true faith. Rome always speaks of justification as a "process", in which "sanctifying grace is infused into the soul". This "sanctifying grace makes the soul really intrinsically pleasing and holy in God's sight", and also enables the soul to do good works, which are truly meritorious in the sight of God. Man is not fully justified before God, until, with

the help of sanctifying grace, every trace of sin is removed from the soul. This is what Rome means by the term Justification. (1)<sup>3</sup>

A certain preparation is said to be necessary before the process of justification can begin. This preparation is described by the Council of Trent as follows:

Conceiving faith by hearing, Rom.10:17, they are freely moved towards God, believing those things to be true which God has revealed or promised - and this especially, that God justifies the impious by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Rom.3:24. And when understanding themselves to be sinners, they by turning themselves from the fear of divine justice whereby they are profitably agitated, to consider the mercy of God, are raised unto hope, confiding that God will be propitious to them for Christ's sake; and they begin to love Him as the fountain of all justice; and are moved against sin by hatred and detestation, by penitence to be performed before Baptism, lastly, when the purpose to receive Baptism, to begin a new life and to keep the commandments of God. (2)

Briefly stated the preparation consists in this: When man accepts as true the teachings of the Bible, he begins to fear God. But remembering that God forgives sin, he hopes that God will be merciful to him also. As a result he begins to love God, and out of love to God, man begins to hate sin, confesses it, and decides to lead a holier life. The important thing to note here is that man performs all these steps by his own free will without any assistance from God.

1) Catholic New Testament: notes to Romans 3:20,21, 4:3.

2) Session VI, chapter 6. Heb.11:6, Matt.2:5, Acts 2:38, Matt. 28:19, 1 Kings 7:3 used as Biblical proof.

Here we must pay special attention to the terms Faith and Free Will. It becomes evident at once that faith plays a minor role in justification according to Rome's teaching. Faith is called the "first requirement", the "beginning and root of all justification"(3). Such faith is not trusting, fiduciary faith, as Protestants understand it, but merely "a firm belief in the truths and promises of Divine revelation"(4). Hence faith does not apply the merits of Christ to the believer; it does not make the sinner certain that his sins are forgiven, but it, as we heard above, "awakens the hope of forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake". Catholic theologians call it the Protestant "fides historica"(5) and describe it as a "mental act"(6). By means of this act man holds true what God has revealed to them through Mother Church. Wilmore says: "Kraft des Glaubens halten wir fuer wahr unbezweifelt alles das, was Gott geoffenbart hat. Nur bei der katholischen Kirche ist diese genuengende Kenntnis der Glaubenswahrheiten zu finden"(7). Here we may see that the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran concepts of faith are worlds apart. Faith, according to Rome, is only the first step in the preparation that must take place before justification can begin.

3) Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 8, p. 577, col. 2.

4) Canons, Decrees of Council of Trent, I. C. chap. 6.

5) Phole-Preuss: Grace Actual & Habitual, p. 275.

6) Gibbons: Faith of our Fathers, p. 265.

7) Lehrbuch der Religion, vol. 1, p. 54. <sup>56</sup>

Now we come to the term free will. The preparatory steps of faith, fear, hope, love, hatred of sin necessitate a free will in man. If man by nature has the ability to love God, feel genuine sorrow over sin, and resolve to begin a new life, he must have a free will in spiritual matters. Hence man's free will is stoutly defended by all Roman Catholic theologians. It is said that "Original sin has weakened and deflected, but not entirely destroyed or extinguished the freedom of the human will".(8). Even in the state of unbelief, man is able to decide for God and do works that please Him. Pholo-Preuss says that "Not a few gentiles and unbelievers have led upright lives and thereby proved that man can perform good works without the aid of grace"(9). It is claimed that since man has a free will in all secular matters, it follows that his will is also free in spiritual things that pertain to God (10). Wilmers argues thus:

Bass die Seele in den meisten Faellen frei sei, und Herr ihres Aktes sei, dafuer spricht: 1) Unser innerstes Gefuehl. Wer traegt nicht das Bewusstsein in sich selbst, dass er rede oder schweige, stehe oder sitze, je nachdem es ihm beliebt? 2) Waere der Mensch nicht frei wozu dann die Beratungen, die er anstellt. 3) Die Willensfreiheit ist eine notwendige Folge der Geistigkeit der menschlichen Seele. 4) Die ganze Offenbarung anerkennt Freiheit im Menschen. Denn die Drohungen Gottes wollen ihn nur von Handlungen abschrecken, die er vermeiden, die Verheissungen ihn zu Handlungen anziehen, die er verrichten kann. (11)

8) Council of Trent, sess. VI, c. 1.

9) Grace: A. & H. p. 62. See also Th. Aquinas: Summa Theologia, vol. 9, p. 125.

10) Ibid. vol. 7, p. 155.

11) Lehrbuch der Rel. p. 610, 613.

Roman Catholic writers admit that their entire doctrine of justification stands or falls with their doctrine of man's free will. This is undoubtedly a reason why man's free will is so vigorously upheld and defended.

Having passed through the preparatory stages of "faith, fear, hope, love, sorrow over sin, and resolution to lead a new life", and having done all this by his own free will, man is now ready for the process of justification. Justification proper is defined by the Council of Trent as follows:

It is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of grace and of the gifts, whereby an unjust man becomes just, and of an enemy a friend, that so he may be an heir according to the hope of eternal life (12)

In the first place we note that justification consists of two parts: forgiveness of sins and renewal of the inward man. This is indeed strange language to a Protestant who believes that justification is the forensic act whereby God declares or pronounces the sinner righteous and forgives his sins for Jesus' sake. To him it becomes clear that Rome combines justification and sanctification, merges them into one, and calls this merger justification. Rome views justification not only as an external act taking place outside of man, but also as a process going on inside of man. Another declaration of the Council of Trent will

12) Session VI, chapter 7. See also Wilwers, Handbuch der Religion, p.300.

make this very clear:

In order to exclude the Protestant idea of a merely forensic absolution and exterior declaration of righteousness, special stress is laid on the fact that we are justified by God's justice, not that whereby He Himself is just but that whereby He makes us just, in as far as He bestows on us the gift of His grace which renovates the soul interiorly and to it as the soul's own holiness (13)

Which part; the remission of guilt or the inner renewal: is the more important part, according to Catholic thinking? The forensic declaration of righteousness on the part of God, or the forgiveness of sins, plays a minor role in the act of justification. Inner renewal, which we call sanctification, is the important thing. Whenever justification is discussed in popular writings, the first part, namely the remission of guilt, is seldom mentioned, but the second part is greatly stressed. When justification is mentioned in the Catholic New Testament, nothing is said about the forgiveness of sins, but the doctrine is repeatedly defined as "infusion of sanctifying grace, which makes the soul pleasing and holy in His sight"(14). The Catholic Church even goes so far as to say that in justification, the remission of sins depends on the interior renewal. It was Thomas Aquinas who said, "We could not conceive the remission of sins (guilt) without the infusion of grace"(15).

13) Trent I.c. chap. 7. See also Cath. Ency. vol. 3, p. 577

14) Cath. N.T.: footnotes to Rom. 5:20, 21, 4:3.

15) Summa Theologiae, vol. 3, p. 383. 2

This virtually means that before sin can be forgiven, it must be completely abolished and removed from the person to be forgiven. According to Lutheran terminology, it means that we must be sanctified before we can be justified. We are justified only to the extent that we are sanctified; we are declared just before God only in the measure in which we are actually just. Rome declares that "remission of sin without a simultaneous interior sanctification is theologically impossible"(16).

Now what is it that produces the inner renewal in the soul of man? The answer is: Infused Grace, also called Habitual or Sanctifying Grace. This grace is said to produce the inner renewal in the soul of man by obliterating or destroying sin. "It blots out our sins and makes the sinner perfect and holy"(17) It is described as a kind of light, which destroys all spots in man's soul and renders the soul itself more beautiful and glorious (18).

The true nature of this grace is not even clear to Catholics. Some call it "a supernatural something infused into the soul"(19). It is defined as "the grace and the charity which is poured forth in human hearts by the Holy Ghost"(20). And the Catechismus Romanus describes it as

16) Cath. Ency. vol. 8, p. 704.

17) Summa Theo. vol. 8, p. 577

18) Catechismus Romanus, p. 167.

19) Phole-Preuss: Grace, A. & H., p. 329.

20) Canons, Decrees: Trent, sess. VI, Can. XI.

"eine der Seele innehaftende goettliche Beschaffenheit und gleichsam eine Art von Glanz und ein Licht"(21). Whatever the nature of this grace may be, one thing is certain. It is definitely not the loving favor of God toward sinners for the sake of Christ. That is what Lutherans mean by grace. Sanctifying grace, according to Rome, is not a disposition or attitude of God toward man, not something that exists in the "heart" of God, but grace is something supernatural, which God imparts to the human soul, and which then actually exists in the human soul. This grace is a merit which was won for man by Christ in His passion (22). Incidentally then, earning the grace of justification is the only part which Christ plays in the sinner's justification; a rather minor role, indeed.

This grace is infused into the human soul by God. It is therefore commonly called "Infused Grace" or "Gratia Infusa". The means whereby this grace is infused into the human soul are the Sacraments. Says Wilmer:

Durch die Sakramente wird die Gnade nicht nur angedeutet, sondern auch bewirkt, Apöst.2:38. Werden die Sünden durch die Taufe vergeben, so ist sie nicht bloss andeutendes, sondern ein wirksames Zeichen. Dasselbe gilt nun von den uebrigen Sakramenten, weil sie bezueglich der Gnaden-wirkung mit der Taufe in einer Reihe stehen.(23)

21) Page 167.

22) Canons, Decrees, Trent, sess. VI, chap. 3. Gibbons: F. of Fathers, p. 265.

23) Handbuch der Rel. s. 328. See also Trent. I. C., chap. 4.



Here it becomes evident why the Church of Rome must have an elaborate sacramental system. In order to insure a continual flow of grace into the human soul there must be a sacrament which meets the needs of man in every age group and walk in life. By means of the seven Sacraments is sanctifying grace physically infused into the human soul. Infusion is conceived as a physical act.

By virtue of infused grace man is now able to perform good works which not only earn more sanctifying grace but also truly merit eternal life. People who are living in the state of grace may augment it by good works" (24). That good works performed by one living in the state of grace are truly meritorious and that they truly merit eternal life is clearly seen from these statements: (27).

Die guten Werke besitzen eine wahre Verdienlichkeit, Matt.5:12; 1Cor.3:8; 2Tim.4:8. Das die Seligkeit verdient werde, lehrt die heilige Schrift, wenn sie dieselbe einem Lohn und zwar einem der Arbeit entsprechenden Lohn nennt, Matt.5:12, 1Cor.3:8 (25).

Not only virgins and those who practice continence, but the married also, who please God by having the right faith and performing good works, deserve to obtain eternal happiness (26)

Thus according to Rome's doctrine, man, after all, must save himself. In the final analysis, it all depends on his efforts.

24) Phole-Preuss, Grace A. & H. p.385.

25) Wilms, Handbuch der. Rel. s.323.

26) Phole-Preuss, Grace, A.& H.,p.400.

God plays a minor role indeed. God's efforts are necessary only inasmuch as God must give man a start or initial push in the right direction. After that, everything depends on man. With the aid of the initial measure of grace which is given gratuitously by God, man can and must not only earn more grace to increase his state of justification, but also earn and merit eternal life.

Since in the doctrine of justification which Rome has devised, almost everything depends on man's effort, it follows that man can at no time be certain of his justification. Rome is quite consistent when it declares: "No man knows with certainty whether he is justified or not, because no man can be entirely certain that he has complied with all the conditions necessary for salvation" (27). This is the very thought that almost drove Luther to despair when he was still a good Roman Catholic. For years he was plagued with the thought: Have I done enough, and is that which I have done, good enough? Not only will man ever remain ignorant as to the adequacy of his good works, but also at no time does he know whether he has received a sufficient amount of grace through the Sacraments for his justification. He may have placed an obex in the way, and thus prevented the grace from coming to him. The Council of

21

27) Pholo-Preuss: Grace, A. & H. p. 379, 380.

Trent claims that "no one can know with a certainty of faith, which cannot be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God"(28). Only in rare cases, in the case of a direct revelation, such as the apostle Paul received, according to Catholic claim, would the privileged person be obliged to believe in his justification. What a theology of doubt!

In the final place let us note that Rome speaks of an "unequality" of justification. With this term it wishes to state that some people possess a higher degree of justification than others. The Church of Rome may well speak thus, because it identifies the concept justification with what we mean by sanctification. Who will deny that there are various degrees of sanctification in Christians? So Rome, speaking of the same subject but in different terms, may also speak of various degrees in the state of justification.

Sanctifying grace may be present in the soul in a greater or lesser degree, according to the liberality of God and the disposition of the individual Christian; and the degree of justification is directly dependent on the measure of sanctifying grace possessed by the Christian (29).

Das Grad der Seligkeit entspricht naemlich dem Grade der heiligmachenden Gnade, weil der Gerechte um so mehr der Seligkeit teilhaft wird, je mehr er durch die goettliche Kindschaft, d.h. durch die heiligmachende Gnade, das Recht dazu erworben hat"(30).

28) Ecce. VI, chapter 9.

29) Pohle-Preuss: Grace A. & H. p. 386.

30) Wilmers, Handbuch d. Rel. s. 325.

Thus we have defined the complicated answer which the Roman Catholic Church gives when it is confronted by the question, What must I do to be justified before God? Popularly stated, the answer is this: Prepare yourself for a worthy reception of the grace of God by going through the stages of Faith, Fear, Hope, Love, Hatred of sin. Then, when receiving the Sacraments, the grace of God, which Christ has earned, will be infused into your soul. This sanctifying grace will blot out your sins. Then you will be able to do good works. With these works you must earn more grace and also merit eternal life, for you are justified before God only to the extent that you fulfill these obligations. The degree of your remission of guilt or justification depends directly on the degree of your sanctification. Hence you never know when you are fully justified before God.

The Church of Rome claims that this doctrine is Biblical and that it accurately reproduces the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Apostles concerning the way of salvation. But there is another Church which makes the same claim for its doctrine of justification. When these two doctrines of justification are placed side by side, they are found to differ radically even in the smallest details. Let us therefore now hear from the other contestant and see how the Lutheran Church proclaims the doctrine of justification.

## 1.

Definition of the two Doctrines of Justification.B) The Lutheran Doctrine.

When the Lutherans were called upon for the first time to make a public declaration of the doctrine of justification, they briefly and clearly said in the fourth Article of the Augsburg Confession:

Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who by His death has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight, Romans 3 and 4.

Everything that can be said concerning this doctrine is included or implied in these simple words. But because these words were vehemently opposed, misunderstood and confused, the later Lutheran Confessions expanded and explained more fully the thoughts contained therein.

Justification by faith alone, according to the Lutheran Church, presupposes man's total depravity and Christ's complete objective reconciliation and atonement. Concerning man's total depravity, the Lutheran Church states: "Although nature is able in a manner to do the outward work, yet it cannot produce the inward notions, such as fear of God, trust in God, chastity, patience, etc"(1). In expla-

1) Augsburg Confession, II, 9.

tion to Romans 7:8 and 9, the Apology says: "If the carnal mind is enmity against God, the flesh sins, even when we do external civil works" (2). The Lutheran Church claims that it is a false statement, which dishonors Christ, when it is said that man does not sin, when in the unconverted state, he does the commandments of God (3), for man, by nature, is dead in sins and trespasses, spiritually blind and an enemy of God. Therefore the Lutheran Church insists that the objective reconciliation of Christ is absolutely necessary for man's justification. "Christ was given for us, in order that He might make satisfaction for the sins of the world" (4). Christ is our mediator and propitiator "perpetually, and not merely in the beginning of justification" (5). He was made a "sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men" (6). To this the Formula of Concord adds:

For sinful man is justified before God, that is, absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins, out of pure grace, because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Christ alone, whose obedience is reckoned to us for righteousness (7).

Hence, by taking away the sins of the whole world, Christ has fully reconciled God, the Father, and won for all men the forgiveness of their sins.

2) Apology IV, 33.

3) Ibid. IV, 29-32.

4) Ibid. IV, 40.

5) Ibid. III, 196.

6) Augsburg Confession III, 3.

7) Formula of Concord, III, 9.

Such forgiveness of sins and justification through Christ is offered in the Gospel. "These treasures are offered us by the Holy Ghost in the promise of the holy Gospel"(8). The Gospel is described as "a good and joyful message", because it tells us that God will not punish sins, but forgive them for Christ's sake (9). This Gospel promise is received by faith alone. Otherwise this promise is void and useless (10). If man were obliged to depend on his works and merits, he would never be justified (11).

The nature of such saving and justifying faith is "confidence in the promise or the mercy promised in Christ" (12). That saving faith is essentially firm trust or confidence in the promises of God offered to man by the Gospel is clearly seen from such passages as Job.29:25ff, 2 Tim. 1:12 and Heb.11:1. It is called a "special faith", because the individual must believe for himself (13). Such faith is the instrument whereby we are justified. "Faith justified and saves, not on the ground that it is a work in itself worthy, but only because it receives the promised mercy"(14). Such faith is not merely assent to the truth

8) Apology IV, 5, 40, 44. Formula Concord, III, 10.

9) Ibid, V, 21, 22.

10) Apology IV, 41-43.

11) Ibid. IV, 42.

12) Ibid. IV, 44.

13) Ibid. IV, 45.

14) Ibid. IV, 56, 46.

of God's revelation, nor is it a vague, indefinable feeling of confidence in God, but it is a definite faith directed to a definite promise. "It is to wish and to receive the offered promise of the remission of sins and of justification"(15). Also children, who are converted, have this faith. "Their faith, created through Baptism is not conscious, discursive (reflexiva) faith, but true faith, personal and actual trust in the Savior, Matt.18:2,6, 21:16, Luke 18:15,44, Mark 10:14, Eph.1:19"(16). Hence it is very certain, then, that the promise of justification and salvation pertains also to children (17).

How does man receive faith? By the process called conversion(18) Conversion consists in turning from the terrors of conscience, which have been produced by the Law, to faith in Christ as the Savior revealed in the Gospel.

In the Apology we read:

Sin terrifies consciences; this occurs through the Law; but we gain the victory through Christ. How? By faith, when we comfort ourselves by confidence in the mercy promised for Christ's sake (19).

In Scripture, turning to the Lord, regeneration, vivification, and illumination are synonyms of conversion (20).

15) Apology IV, 49.

16) Popular Symbolics (Concordia) p. 56.

17) Apology IX, 52.

18) Ibid. IV, 115; Formula Concord III, 26.

19) Apology IV, 79.

20) Acts 11:21, Gal. 3:26, Col. 2:12; 1 John 5:1, Col. 2:12, Eph. 2:5, 8, 2 Cor. 4:6, Acts 26:18.



It is clear, then, that faith is not a work which man performs by his own powers. The Lutheran Church calls faith "a gift of God" (21) and, more specifically, the work of the Holy Spirit (22), and herein it follows Scripture (23).

Justification Proper.

Now we have come to the act of justification, and for an excellent definition of the same we turn to a statement by J. T. Mueller:

As soon as a contrite sinner believes the divine promises of grace which for Christ's sake is offered to him in the Gospel, or as soon as he puts his trust in the vicarious satisfaction which Christ has made for the sins of the world by His perfect obedience, he is justified, or declared righteous before God, Rom.3:23,24. This is the so-called subjective justification, Rom.4:6, or personal application, through faith, of the merits which Christ has secured for the whole world by His substitutionary atonement (objective justification), 2Cor.5:19ff (24).

The same truths are stated more briefly in Popular Symbolics as follows: "Justification is a judicial act of God, whereby He pronounces the sinner righteous who by faith accepts the universal pardon offered in the Gospel, imputing to him the righteousness of Christ" (25). These statements are in full harmony with the Lutheran Confessions,

(26)

21) Formula of Concord III, 11.

22) Apology IV, 64, 115.

23) Eph. 1:19, Col. 2:12, Gal. 3:14, Heb. 12:2.

24) Christian Dogmatics, p. 367.

25) page 63.

26) See Formula of Concord III, 4, 17, 37, 38, 39.

Three points must be noted here: the sinner is justified freely by God's grace; he is justified without the deeds of the Law; he is justified by faith alone. Regarding the first point, the Formula of Concord forcefully declares:

Poor sinful man is justified before God -- without any merit or worth of our own, also without any preceding, present, or any subsequent works, out of pure grace, because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Christ alone (27).

Here again the Lutheran Confessions follow Scripture, which declares that we are justified freely, by the grace of God (28). It is sola gratia from beginning to end. And grace is not the "infused grace" of the Church of Rome, but it is the favor and good will of God toward the sinner gained by Christ's vicarious satisfaction.

The second point follows out of the first one; if man is justified solely by grace, it follows that no part of his justification is accomplished by his own deeds. Human works play no part in justification. "This is the meaning of the Apostle Paul when in this article he urges so diligently and zealously the particulas exclusivas, words by which works are excluded from the article of justification: by grace, without merit, without works, not of works" (29).

27) Formula Concord, III, 9.

28) Rom. 3:24, 11:6, 3:27f, 4:6.

29) Formula Concord, III, 36.

In the third place, since the forgiveness of sins or justification is a promise given to man in the Gospel, it can only be received and appropriated by faith. And for this reason the Lutheran Church declares that justification is by faith alone. "It is faith alone, without works, which lays hold of the blessing"(30). "Faith justifies not for this cause and reason that it is so good a work or so fair a virtue, but because it lays hold of and accepts the merit of Christ in the promise of the holy Gospel"(31). Faith is the open hand which lays hold of the treasure. In this sense is the sinner justified by faith.

Justification according to the Lutheran Church is not a physical or medicinal act whereby God infuses some good quality into man, but an external declaration or forensic act whereby God pronounces the sinner righteous. Says the Formula of Concord:

The word justify here means to declare righteous and free from sins, and to absolve one from eternal punishment; this use is common in the Holy Scriptures: Phil.3:9, Prov.17:15, Isa.5:23, Rom.8:33"(32).

Since the Gospel promises the forgiveness of all sins and since all who believe this promise receive the forgiveness of all of their sins, justification is not partial,

progressive, but complete and perfect in the moment in

30) Formula of Concord, III, 41.

31) Ibid. III, 13.

32) Ibid. III, 17.

which the person believes (33). It was against the claim of the Church of the Papacy that Luther declared: "Justification does not come in pieces, but in a heap" (34). Faith is not only the beginning, but also the middle and the end of justification and brings the whole act to a close. There is no more "condemnation for them that believe"; they have "peace with God through Jesus Christ" (35).

Justification is certain. It is based upon the divine infallible words of forgiveness which the believer receives in true faith. The believer has such forgiveness and justification as long as he believes such word and promise. "It (justification) alone brings sure and firm consolation to pious minds" (36). Being united with Christ in true faith, the believer has boldness and confidence (37). His faith is in its very nature certainty, assurance, the very opposite of doubt (38). Not the assurance of faith, as Rome claims, but carnal security is reproved in Scripture (39).

33) Pieper: *Christliche Dogmatik*, vol. 2, p. 646: "Weil sie in der Vergebung der Sünden besteht, Rom. 4:7f, die Christus vollkommen erworben hat, welche uns in Evangelium zugesagt wird, Luk. 24:47. Wer daher das Evangelium glaubt hat die ganze Rechtfertigung".

34) In Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 377.

35) Rom. 8:1, 5:1.

36) *Apology IV*, 118.

37) Eph. 3:12.

38) Heb. 11:1.

39) 1 John 5:10, 1 Cor. 10:12, Rom. 11:20.

Justification by faith is the only power that produces true sanctification. "Faith alone quickens; it regenerates us and brings the Holy Ghost, the sole author of sanctification"(40). Lutheran dogmaticians have repeatedly stated that "faith alone justifies, but faith is never alone"(41). The Formula of Concord declares:

Love is also a fruit which surely and necessarily follows true faith. For the fact that one does not love is a sure indication that he is not justified, but is still in death, or has lost the righteousness of faith again, as John says 1 John 3:14 (42). And on the basis of Galatians, chapter five, verse 6, the Lutheran Church has always maintained with Luther:

It is a living busy, active, powerful thing that we have in faith, so that it is impossible for it not to do good without ceasing. Nor does it ask whether good works are to be done; but before the question is asked, it has wrought them, and is always engaged in doing them (43).

Hence we see that the Lutheran Church reverses the positions of justification and sanctification in the plan of man's salvation. Instead of agreeing with Rome that sanctification produces justification, it firmly maintains that the order must be reversed, since justification is the true and only source of sanctification.

40)Apostle II, 47, IV, 15.

41)Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik, vol. 2, p. 646.

42)Article III, 27.

43)Luther quoted in Formula of Concord, IV, 10, 11.

Having permitted the Lutheran Church to present her doctrine of justification, we are now painfully aware of the fact that Rome and the followers of Luther clash violently over the question, How is man justified before God? The Lutherans claim that man is pronounced righteous By God in the very moment he believes that Christ has atoned for all of his sins. The Lutheran watchword is: We are justified solely by grace, solely by faith, to the exclusion of all of our good works. Justification is entirely the work of God. Upon this teaching the Council of Trent has placed a vehement curse (44). -- The two contestants do not even agree as to the meaning of the terms that are employed in the presentation of the doctrine of justification. To Rome, faith means assent to Church doctrine, while the Lutheran Church defines faith, in relation to justification, as heartfelt trust in the merits of Christ. Rome describes grace as a supernatural something which God actually infuses into the human soul to blot out sin, while to the Lutheran Church Grace is God's love toward sinners for the sake of Christ. The act of justification to a Roman Catholic means the infusion of sanctifying grace into the human soul; to a Lutheran it means the verdict of righteousness which God pronounces over the believing sinner. The sinner remains a sinner after he is justified. Against this Rome raises an emphatic "No". It declares that before man can

44) Session VI, can. 9, 11, 12.

be justified in the sense that Lutherans take the term, namely, before God can forgive sin and declare the sinner righteous, man must thoroughly sanctify himself, with the help of infused grace, by doing a sufficient number of good works to truly merit eternal life. In other words, he must sanctify himself before he can be justified. Thus we see that Rome and the followers of Luther are hopelessly divided over the doctrine of justification, even though both contestants appeal to Scripture for proof and support.

It has been stated previously that the Church of Rome strenuously denies the total depravity of man and upholds the doctrine of man's free will in spiritual matters. And since Rome's doctrine of justification is based entirely on its doctrine of free will, it can be seen from this significant statement in the Catholic Encyclopedia:

If man is totally depraved and has no free will in spiritual matters, then Luther and Calvin taught very logically that a sinner is justified by fidei operibus in such a way, however, that sin is not absolutely removed or wiped out, but merely covered up or not held against the sinner (1).

Whoever then is willing to admit that if the doctrine of free will is false, the doctrine of justification is also false. If it can be shown that the Roman Catholic doctrine of free will is scriptural, much has been done to strengthen Rome's position in the matter of justification. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that Catholic anthropology is false

and anti-Scriptural, then Rome's position in the doctrine of justification will be 2. virtually overthrown.

## Anthropology in Relation to the Doctrine of Justification.

### A. Roman Catholic Conception of Sin and Free Will.

Before examining the use of Holy Scripture which the two contestants employ, let us study the anthropology of the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Church. For the Anthropology of both church bodies has a direct bearing and even largely determines their respective doctrines of justification. It has been stated previously that the Church of Rome strenuously denies the total depravity of man and upholds the doctrine of man's free will in spiritual matters. And that Rome's doctrine of justification is based squarely on its doctrine of free will, is seen from this significant statement in the Catholic Encyclopedia:

If man is totally depraved and has no free will in spiritual matters, then Luther and Calvin taught very logically that a sinner is justified by fiduciary faith in such a way, however, that sin is not absolutely removed or wiped out, but merely covered up or not held against the sinner (1).

Hence Rome is willing to admit that if its doctrine of free will is false, its doctrine of justification is also false. If it can be shown that the Roman Catholic doctrine of free will is Scriptural, much has been done to strengthen Rome's position in the matter of justification. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that Catholic Anthropology is false



and anti-Scriptural, then Rome's position in the doctrine of justification will have been virtually overthrown.

With this thought let us approach the Roman Catholic doctrine of free will. If so much depends on this doctrine in Catholic theology, we have reason to look for efforts to prove this doctrine from Scripture. Yet in the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, which otherwise quote Scripture quite frequently, not one Scripture passage is cited to prove this doctrine. It is taken for granted as being true and Biblical. Deharbe follows the same procedure in his Large Catechism (2). The doctrine of free will is based on reason only. Thomas Aquinas argues as follows: "Forasmuch as it is rational it is necessary that man have a free will" (3). This doctrine is read into Bible passages that speak of the bondage of the human will. Thomas Aquinas interprets Romans, chapter 9, verse 16 as follows: "Because the free will is not sufficient there- to unless it be moved and helped by God" (4). And to Jerem- iah, chapter 10, verse 23, the same writer says: "The choice itself, however, is in us, but presupposes the help of God" (5). Wilmore declares that since the doctrine of free will is reasonable and in harmony with human feeling, it must be true. His famous statement on this point has

2) Page 20.  
 3) Summa Theologia, vol. 7, p. 155.  
 4) Ibid.  
 5) Ibid.

been quoted earlier in this paper (6). Hence we see that the doctrine of free will rests on a very weak foundation. It is not Scriptural, but is defended as being logical and reasonable.

We can go a step farther to say that traces of Neo-Platonism can be found in the Roman Catholic doctrine of the sin and free will. According to Neo-Platonism, the soul, emanating from God is pure and holy. When it comes into contact with the material body, which is base and evil, it becomes impure and corrupted. Note this classic statement of Plotinus, quoted by Seeberg:

Es sehnt sich die Seele in ihrem natuerlichen Zustand und will mit Gott vereinigt werden, gleichsam eine Jungfrau, die eine edle Liebe hat zum edlen Vater. Wenn sie aber zum Werden gekommen ist, wird sie gleichsam durch die (irdische) Vermaehlung verblendet und geberdet sich frech indem sie den Vater verlaesst und eine andere sterbliche Liebe eintauscht. Und wieder faengt sie an das freche Wesen hier unten zu hassen. Und sich entsuehrend von diesen Dingen strebt sie wieder dem Vater zu, und nun ist ihr wohl. Dort aber ist das wahrhaft Liebenswerte, mit dem vereint bleiben kann der es ergriffen hat und wirklich besitzt, ist es doch nicht aeusserlich mit Fleisch bekleidet. Wer es aber geschaut hat, der weiss, was ich meine, wie naemlich die Seele darn ein anderes Leben empfaengt, die hinzutritt und schon hinzugekommen ist und teil an ihm gewonnen hat (7).

These thoughts have been taken over almost bodily into Catholic doctrine. Rome teaches that the body is the seat

6) Lehrbuch d. Rel. p.610,613.

7) Dogmengeschichte, vol.1, p.483.

of sin and that the soul is essentially pure. Thomas Aquinas writes: "Since creation implies a relation in the soul to God alone, it cannot be said that the soul is tainted through being created. But only with regard to the body into which it is infused" (8). Hence, according to Catholic doctrine, the soul is morally free; it can go in both directions, either up to God or down to the base and evil. The soul strives upward, but the concupiscence that dwells in the flesh pulls it downward, because the spiritual powers of the soul have been weakened ever since the "donum gratiae superadditum", given to Adam, was lost in the Fall. All of these thoughts are permeated by Neo-Platonic philosophy. They are not Scriptural. Nowhere does Scripture make a sharp distinction between the body and soul, when it speaks of man's sinfulness. Rather, man is a great sinner before God in body and soul. Sometimes the soul is pictured as the seat of sin (9). When Jesus speaks of "flesh, born of flesh" He is referring to the entire person, body and soul (10). And when He declares that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (11), He is not stating that the soul is struggling toward God while the body is offering resistance, but Jesus is here picturing the struggle between the old

8) Summa Theologiae, Vol. 7, p. 425.

9) Gen. 8:21, Ezek. 18:20, Matt. 15:19, Rom. 8:7.

10) John 3:6.

11) Matt. 26:41.

Adam, man's corrupt nature, and the new spiritual nature which has been planted in man by the Holy Spirit at the time of man's conversion. The new spiritual life of a Christian dwells in the body as well as in the soul (12). Holy Scripture knows nothing of the sharp cleavage between the human body and soul, which is so prominent in Roman Catholic theology.

At this point it might be well to review the entire Catholic doctrine of man and his fall. Man, created in the image of God, was endowed with natural and supernatural gifts. The natural gifts consist in that the soul is immortal and endowed with understanding and a free will. The supernatural gifts consisted in sanctifying grace, which made man certain of his eternal salvation, endowed him with great knowledge, and rendered him free from all inclination to evil. In other words, God gave Adam the supernatural gifts, the "donum gratiae superadditum", so that his soul could successfully resist the natural concupiscence of his body, stay close to God, and maintain his spiritual balance. In the fall, Adam lost only the supernatural gifts, namely, the ability to resist the natural concupiscence of his body, this concupiscence not being necessarily sinful and evil in every case. Man merely lost his spiritual balance.

12) 1Cor. 6:19 and 20.

Hence man by nature is not totally depraved, but merely bent or inclined toward the evil(13). "Free will, bent towards the earth and weakened by concupisence, is yet filled with love of good and horror of evil"(14). Using Neo-Platonic phraseology, we might say that the soul has forsaken its first love, God, and is now infatuated with its second love, namely the material body, with which it is now united. But it has not entirely forgotten its first love, God, from whom it came. With a little help from God in the form of infused grace, the soul is able to regain its spiritual balance and return to God, its former lover. Here we see what a harmless thing sin is in Roman Catholic theology. And this is something that has been taken over directly from Neo-Platonic thought. If sin, particularly original sin, is minimized to such an extent, one can easily see why such a church cannot teach salvation by grace through faith alone. Here Luther's remark is in place: "Je mehr du die Sünde verglimpfen und gering machen wirst, je mehr wird auch die Gnade gering und klein werden"(15).

---

13)Deharbe,L.Catechism,p.20,21. Concordia P. Symb.,p.166.

14)Catholic Encyclopedia, vol.6,691.

15)Luther's Works, St. Louis ed.vol.1,p.174.

Neo-Platonism claims that the soul can return to God by its own power and ability, without any help from God(16). Rome somewhat modifies this bold claim by saying that the soul needs help from God. Such help is given in the form of "infused grace", which strengthens the spiritual powers of the soul, so that it can strive successfully back to God. It is common knowledge among students of philosophy that the early church fathers were influenced by Neo-Platonic thought and that this infection is still prominent in Roman Catholic theology (17). This is evident in Rome's doctrine of original sin and man's free will. This doctrine is not based on Bible truth, but has to a large extent been borrowed from Neo-Platonic philosophy. And for this reason the Scripturalness of Rome's entire doctrine of justification may be called into question.

16) Porphyry: Ennead V,6: "Matter is farthest away, and so becomes the source of evil. But it is not wholly evil, since it is derived from God. Nevertheless, it is the part of wisdom to treat with contempt the body and whatever else partakes of matter and to climb again the steps back to the source of Being". Ennead V,1.(part 6): "In voking God himself, not with external speech, but with the soul itself, extending ourselves in prayer to him, since we shall then be able to pray to him properly, when we approach by ourselves alone to the alone".

17) Seeberg, Dogmengeschichte, discussion of Neo-Platonism. Wobber begins his discussion of the philosophy of the Middle Ages by saying: "The breath of expiring Hellenism passed into Christianity. The doctrines of Plato and his latest interpreters continued to influence the ablest thinkers among the followers of the Gospel, and the philosophy of the Church during the entire Middle Ages merely re-echoes the teachings of the great Athenian philosophers". Wobber, Porphy: History of Philosophy, p.143.

2.Anthropology in Relation to the Doctrine of Justification.B. The Lutheran Conception of Sin and Free Will.

Turning now to the Lutheran answer in the matter under discussion, we find that also here in the doctrines of Sin and Free Will the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Church are fighting on opposite sides. One church body upholds and defends vigorously what the other vehemently rejects and denies. In direct opposition to Rome, the Lutheran Church declares:

Hereditary sin is so deep and horrible a corruption of nature that no reason can understand it, but it must be learned and believed from the revelation of Scriptures, Ps.51:5; Rom.5:12ff; Ex.33:3; Gen.3:7ff. Hence it is nothing but error and blindness in regard to this article what the scholastic doctors have taught (1).

The reference is to Rome's teaching that the natural powers of man have not been corrupted in the fall, and that therefore man has a free will to do either good or evil. According to Rome, the inclination toward evil is not sinful in itself. Such concupiscence becomes evil and sinful only when it produces a sinful act. To this the Lutheran Church replies:

They do not mention the serious faults of human nature, to wit, ignorance of God, contempt of God, hatred of God's judgment, flight from God, when He judges, anger toward God, despair of

1) Smalcald Articles III,1.

grace, putting one's trust in present things. These diseases, which are in the highest degree contrary to the Law of God, the scholastics do not notice; yea, to human nature they meanwhile ascribe unimpaired strength for loving God above all things and for fulfilling God's commandments according to the substance of the acts (2).

When Rome declares that original sin is not an innate evil, but a defect and burden which we bear since Adam's fall into sin, the Lutheran Church insists that:

The nature of man is born corrupt and full of faults. Not a part of man, but the entire person with its entire nature is born in sin as with a hereditary disease (3).

Hence we see that also in regard to anthropology the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Church clash violently.

For a clear presentation of the Lutheran doctrine of original sin we turn to the Formula of Concord (4). Here we are told that original sin is not a part of man's substance, since body and soul remain God's creation even after the fall, and since God is not the author of sin and Christ is not the Savior of sin, but of the sinner. Original sin is an "accident", namely something that has happened to the nature of man. It is a "horrible, dreadful malady", which involves the entire person, body and soul, and whose true nature is not fully known. It consists of three parts: hereditary guilt, inherited from Adam and Eve, lack of

2) Apology, Art. II, 8.

3) Ibid. Art. II, 6.

4) Thorough Declaration, Art. I.



righteousness and fear of God, and finally, concupiscence. Concupiscence, however, is not merely an inclination toward the evil as Rome sees it, but an "inborn wicked disposition", an "inward impurity of the heart". It is described as "a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable, and unspeakable corruption of the entire nature and all its powers". Such original sin truly merits eternal death. It is so great and horrible that only for the sake of Christ it can be covered and forgiven before God.

On account of this corruption -- and by reason Special effort is made to prove this doctrine from Scripture. Romans, chapter 5, verses 12 and following and Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 3 are cited to prove that original sin involves hereditary guilt. Because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve all mankind is under God's displeasure and all human beings are by nature the children of wrath. Man by nature lacks the righteousness which God demands of him, for Scripture declares: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (5). Natural man does not fear and love God, for it is written, "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (6). And that concupiscence is truly sin is shown by Paul's statement: "I had not known lust except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet (7). And again, "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and

5) Rom. 5:23. Also Gen. 6:5, Ps. 51:5, Luke 11:13, Rom. 7:18.

6) Rom. 8:7.

7) Rom. 7:7.

bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members"(8). To this the Apology adds: "These testimonies can be overthrown by no sophistry. For they clearly call concupiscence sin, which, nevertheless, is not imputed to those who are in Christ"(9). And to show that original sin alone truly merits eternal death, attention is called to the statement, "We were by nature the children of wrath"(10). To this the Lutheran Church adds by way of explanation:

On account of this corruption -- and by reason of the disobedience of Adam and Eve we are all in God's displeasure --- Even though a person would think, speak, and do nothing evil (which, however, is impossible in this life since the fall of our first parents), his nature and person are nevertheless sinful, that is, thoroughly and utterly infected and corrupted before God by original sin, as by a spiritual leprosy(11).

Since the Lutheran Church upholds the total depravity of man, it must of necessity deny the doctrine of free will. And here again it clashes with the Roman Catholic Church. The Lutheran Confessions ascribe no spiritual powers to man before his conversion. "Man is by nature blind, that, when the Word of God is preached, he neither does nor can understand it, but regards it as foolishness(12)."

8) Rom. 7:23.

9) Apology, II, 59. Ephesians 3:2.

10) Eph. 2:3. Also John 3:5,6, Rom. 5:12, 18.

11) Formula of Concord (Th. D.) I, 5-9.

12) Formula of Concord (Th. D.) II, 5.

Therefore man cannot cooperate in his conversion, for he is not free to think and do the good, but can think and do only the evil. The Formula of Concord declares:

In spiritual and divine things the intellect, heart, and will of the unregenerate man are utterly unable -- to aid, do, work, or concur in working anything towards his conversion, either wholly, or half, or in any, even the least or most inconsiderable part; but that he is the servant of sin, John 8:34, and a captive of the devil, by whom he is moved, Eph. 2:2; 2Tim.2:26. Hence the natural free will according to its perverted disposition and nature is strong and active only with respect to what is displeasing and contrary to God (13).

Hence the Lutheran Church, in opposition to Rome, teaches the bondage of the human will in regard to spiritual matters.

In support of its position, the Lutheran Church cites a host of Scripture passages,(14). These passages are correctly applied, for Scripture states that unconverted man is God's enemy, who cannot in the least degree obey God's laws (15). If this is true, man's will must be bound and not free, since obedience is mainly a matter of the will. When Scripture speaks of natural man being "carnal, sold under sin" and as being "dead in trespasses and sins"(16),

13)Article II,7.

14)Ibid. II,9-17.

15)Romans 8:7.

16)Romans 7:14 and Ephesians 2:2.

it wishes to stress that fact that man's intellect and will are so helplessly bound that man can do absolutely nothing to improve his sinful condition. If, according to Scripture, "the imagination of man's heart is evil" and "only evil continually"(17), then the will of the unconverted must be so bound that they cannot of themselves think and will the good. Time and space does not permit us to enter upon a discussion of the other passages cited. When carefully studied, the reader will find that they repeat the truths just stated. Such a formidable array of Scripture proof ought to convince everyone that when the Lutheran Church teaches the total depravity of natural man and denies his free will in spiritual matters, it is merely repeating Bible truth. The Lutheran conception of original sin and the bondage of the human will is truly Biblical, while the Roman Catholic doctrine of sin and free will find no support in Scripture, but rest solely on the tenets of heathen, Neo-Platonic philosophy.

passages we shall examine to see whether (or not) Rome is letting Scripture interpret itself or whether it reads its doctrine into Scripture.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that faith is the first step in the process of justification. To prove that such faith is merely an intellectual "movement toward God" whereby man holds true those things which God has revealed

3.The Source of both Doctrines of Justification.A. Roman Catholic Doctrine.aa) Use of Holy Scripture.

Since Roman Catholic doctrine of sin and free will are not based on Scripture but on heathen philosophy, we have good reason to question Rome's entire teaching concerning justification. For Roman Catholic theologians are willing to admit if their doctrine of sin and free will is false, then their doctrine of justification is also necessarily false. A quotation to this effect has been stated before in this paper (1). But before we declare Rome's doctrine of justification as false, let us in all fairness examine some of the Scripture passages that are used to defend this doctrine, to see what method of interpretation the Church of Rome employs. The Council of Trent quotes Scripture rather copiously. Some of these passages we shall examine to see whether (or not) Rome is letting Scripture interpret itself or whether it reads its doctrine into Scripture.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that faith is the first step in the process of justification. To prove that such faith is merely an intellectual "movement toward God whereby man holds true those things which God has revealed

---

1) Page 27.

and promised", Romans 10:17 is quoted: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God". When the entire tenth chapter is considered, it becomes evident that Paul is speaking of justifying or saving faith. In the fourth verse he states that to the believer Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness. The believer in Christ is no longer obliged to keep the Law to earn righteousness and salvation. By faith he already possesses this righteousness which has been merited by Christ. For this reason he shall not be ashamed before God. See verse eleven. When he gives expression to this faith in prayer and confession, he is absolutely certain of eternal salvation. See verses ten and thirteen. How can faith be only the beginning of justification, when to faith alone, with nothing added, is given righteousness and salvation? The moment a person embraces Christ in true faith he is completely justified and saved. Contrary to Rome, faith is not only the beginning of justification; it is also the middle and end!

When Romans 3:24 is quoted to prove that faith is "an act of believing -- especially that God justifies the impious by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus", the element of personal trust in the concept of faith is carefully avoided, and eliminated. According to Rome, man is merely to hold as true, or to hope, that God will justify man by His grace through Christ's redemption. But look

closely at Romans 3:24. Here we have a solemn declaration of a most glorious act of God. Moved by His mercy, God has and still does justify man, for the sake of Christ's redemption. That is what God has done and still does. And the sinner who comes "short of the glory of God" should take note of this and believe it with all his heart, and not only hope for it. Then he has and possesses what these words declare, namely full and free justification before God.

It is noteworthy that the word "freely" is omitted, when this passage is quoted by the Council of Trent(2). The word "freely" means without any merit or worthiness on the part of man, and without any activity on his part whatsoever. If man's justification does not in any way depend on any act of man which is simultaneous with or subsequent to man's act of faith, then surely man's justification is solely an act of God, and the believer is fully justified in the moment he believes and trusts in the merits of Christ. No other step or steps are necessary to obtain justification, as the Roman Catholic Church declares.

Hebrews 11:6 literally reads:

"But apart from faith it is impossible to please Him (God) well; for it behooves him who approaches God to believe that He is and that He becomes a rewarder to those that seek Him out.

2) C. & C. Trent, S. 6, chap. 6.

This passage speaks of a person who has already come to faith. "Pistousai" is Aorist infinitive, inchoative, and means "has come to faith" once and for all (3). Faith is first, then coming; no other sequence is possible. What is meant by the expression "coming to God"? It means approaching God in order to pray to Him, praise and thank Him and serve Him with holy works. The Expositor's Greek Testament calls this "the semi-technical sense of "proserchomai", a use which is common in the Epistle to the Hebrews". "Coming to God", then, means walking with God as Enoch did. It does not mean, as Rome claims, coming nearer and nearer to God with the hope of being eventually justified. The person who "is coming to God" is already justified and already possessed the forgiveness of his sins.

Such a person who approaches God "believes that God is". This does not mean that he merely believes that there is a deity, as Rome would have us believe. The context forbids this. The heroes of faith listed in the eleventh chapter knew more about God than the fact that He exists and that He is a divine being. Believing that God is means to have the absolute confidence that God exactly as He has revealed Himself. The phrase "God is" is really the "I AM" of Exodus, chapter 3, verse 14, put into the third person.

---

3) Jamieson, Faussett, Brown: Critical & Explanatory Commentary on the Bible, p.471.





In the Decrees of the Council of Trent, the expression "justified freely" in Romans, chapter 3, verse 24 is understood in this sense that "none of those things which precede justification - whether faith or works - merit the grace itself of justification"(4). To this we answer that when Paul says we are justified freely, he means we are justified freely, gratuitously, all the way through and not merely in the first steps. The apostle Paul excludes man's works from the "whole process" of justification and not merely from the "beginning" when he says in Romans, chapter, verse 6: "If by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace".

In Matthew, chapter 19, verse 17, Jesus says to the rich young ruler: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments". This passage is used to prove that man contributes toward his justification by keeping the commandments. We admit that if man could keep the commandments of God perfectly, he would earn eternal life. But Jesus is here trying to show the rich ruler how impossible this is. By stressing the Holy Law He wanted to open the eyes of the young man to his sinful condition that he might despair of his own efforts to keep the Law and that he might seek a different way of salvation. Namely, that he might put all of his hope and trust in Jesus, who would do everything necessary for his salvation.

4) Session 6, chapter 8.

The words "The inward man is renewed day by day", taken from second Corinthians, chapter 4, verse 16, are used to show that justification is essentially a gradual progress of sanctification. But these words refer to the daily growth of the spiritual nature of a Christian, who is already justified before God. In the fourteenth verse of the same chapter Paul expresses his confidence that God will raise him and the believers, to whom he is writing, and bless them with a glorious fellowship with Christ. How can anyone glory in such a hope, if he is not yet fully justified before God. Rome does not follow Scripture when it practically identifies justification with sanctification.

In Colossians, chapter 3, verse 5 we read: "Mortify your members which are upon the earth". These words are spoken to people who are already justified and saved. They are "risen with Christ", verse 1, and their lives "are hid in Christ", verse 3. These people are urged, in verse 5, to avoid the common sins of the day, not because their justification would be increased thereby, but to show they are "dead to sin" and that their "life is hid with Christ".

Roman Catholics themselves admit that Romans, chapter

---

5) Decrees of C. of Trent, s. 6, chap. 10.

six, verses 13 and 19 speak of sanctification (5). In the first verse of the fifth chapter the apostle Paul closed the subject of justification by saying: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". In the sixth chapter he takes up an entirely different matter, namely the matter of sanctification. He begins by saying: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? And on the basis of this thought, the Apostle appeals in verses 13 and 19, that Christians, already justified before God, should no longer "let sin reign in their mortal body", but that they should "yield themselves unto God". Scripture speaks of sanctification to the sinner after he justified. But the Roman Catholic Church reverses the process. It urges the sinner to sanctify himself, in order that he might be justified by God, namely that he might be pronounced righteous and receive the remission of sins.

No passage in the Bible is used as frequently as Revelations, chapter 22, verse 11 to prove that there is an increase in the state of justification. There is some difficulty concerning the original reading of this passage. In some of the best ancient manuscripts the reading is:

---

5) Decrees of C. of Trent, s.6, chap.10.

"Let him do righteousness still"<sup>6</sup>). But in the letter of the Vienne and Lyons Martyrs in the 2nd century, found in Eusebius, the reading is: "He that is righteous, let him be righteous (or be justified) still". No manuscript is as old as this letter. If the first reading cited: "Let him do righteousness still", it is clear that the passage does not speak of justification, in the Biblical sense of the term, but of sanctification. The sense of the passage is: The righteous, or the believer, should continue to do what is just and right in the sight of God.

If the correct reading is: "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still", then the word "still" must be considered. All authorities seem to be agreed that "eti" is here an adverb indicating a duration of time. Luther translates it with "immerhin", meaning "always, all of the time". The King James Version and the Revised Standard Version render it with the word "still". Hence "eti" is taken as an adverb of time and not of quality to indicate an increase or decrease. Even the New Catholic Translation uses the word "still", and it does not in a foot-note indicate that the meaning is "still more". Hence even the Catholic translation does not give any support to the thought that an increase in the state of justification is taught in this passage.

<sup>6</sup>Codex A, B. Also Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic, Andreas, Cyprian.

It is clear that this passage says nothing about an increase in the state of justification. Rather it encourages the believer in Christ to continue in the true faith and remain in the blessed state of justification. According to the Expositor's Greek Testament, it speaks of "persistence in good" and the "perseverance of the saints". The thought that there is an increase possible in the state of justification is foreign from the text. And Roman Catholic theology reads something into the text when it uses this passage to prove that its doctrine of justification is Biblical.

The second chapter of the Epistle of James, particularly verse 24, is used to prove that faith and works have a place in justification. Here it must be remembered that James is speaking to people whose faith was merely intellectual; it lacked heart-felt trust in the Savior. It was a faith of the head and mouth, such as even the devils possess, according to verse 19. Such a faith is dead, because it exerts no influence over the person's conduct and life. On the other hand, genuine heart-felt trust in Christ and His redemption cannot but show itself in the kind of works that we do. And it is by these works that we prove to the world that we have the right faith. Men cannot see our faith, so we must prove our faith by our works. This is the great lesson of the second chapter of the Epistle of James. In the 21st verse we are told that Abraham

demonstrated his implicit faith in the Messiah, and his trust in God, by his willingness to offer his own son. God saw the heroic faith of Abraham long before this took place, and God considered Abraham righteous because he possessed this faith. This is clear from Genesis, chapter 15, verse 6 and also Romans, chapter 4, verse 3. Hence Abraham was already justified before God, before he performed the work of offering his son. But the world did not see Abraham's faith, until it saw his works. And this is what James is trying to impress upon the minds of his readers. He is trying to make it clear to them that they must prove to their fellowmen by their works that they are truly justified before God by their faith. Hence James is not speaking of our justification before God, but of our justification before men. Rome errs again when it uses this passage to prove that we are justified before God by faith and works.

From what we have seen until now, it is clear that the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification is not in harmony with Scripture. It is not built upon the "foundation of the apostles and prophets". Nowhere does Scripture claim that faith is the "beginning of justification", but it declares that the person is fully justified when he believes in Christ. Nowhere does the Bible mingle justification with sanctification, as Rome does, but it always re-

gards them as two distinct concepts which have nothing in common. Justification is treated first, and then, after the sinner is justified, it urges him to sanctification. While Rome urges the sinner on in sanctification with the hope of being eventually justified. And finally, Scripture knows nothing of an increase in justification. Hence, the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification is not built on Holy Scripture. It rests on Church Tradition, as we shall see in the following chapter.



### bb) Rome's Use of Church Tradition.

Church Tradition indeed provides ample support for the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification. But we soon learn that there is hopeless confusion among the Church Fathers. The earlier writers know nothing of Rome's elaborate system of justification. And although later theologians make statements that might be so construed as to support the Catholic doctrine of justification, it is only among the Scholastics of the 12th to the 15th centuries where we find the doctrine as it is proclaimed to this day. We have reason to believe that the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification is the product of a gradual development of unbiblical theology in the New Testament Church. This is what we shall endeavor to prove. By scanning the writings of the prominent church fathers, we shall try to trace the gradual development of the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification.

### Development during the Sub-Apostolic Age.

From this period we have the following writings: The Epistle of the Church at Rome to the Church at Corinth, written by Clement of Rome; the Epistles of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch; and an Epistle to the Philippians, written by Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna.

Clement of Rome writes: "we who by His will have been called in Christ Jesus are not justified by ourselves or by our wisdom or understanding or piety or the deeds which we have wrought in holiness of heart, but through that faith through which from the beginning Almighty God has justified all"(1). Hence with him, justification is by "faith alone" and this faith is the antithesis of works. Such justification is followed by sanctification. Imitating Paul, Clement writes: "What shall we do, then, brethren? Shall we be slothful in well-doing and cease from love? May the Master forbid that this should happen. But let us be zealous to accomplish every good deed with energy and readiness (2). Upon the question, Why should Christians do this?, he answers: "The Greater and Master rejoices in His works"(3). And again: "Having this pattern before us, let us follow His will without delay, let us work the work of righteousness with all our strength"(4).

Yet in spite of this beautiful testimony that we are justified by faith alone, Clement partially corrupts Biblical doctrine when he says that "we propitiate God by repentance and prayer"(5). At another occasion he urges his readers to "beseech the Master with tears that He may have

---

1) Epistle of Rome to Corinth, 32,4.

2) Ibid. 33,1.

3) Ibid. 33,2 and 7.

4) Ibid. 33,8.

5) Ibid. 7,7. Also: "Through love our sins may be forgiven", 50,5.

mercy upon us and be reconciled to us"(6). Hereby Clement sows the seed for the Catholic doctrine of penance. Summarizing we find that Clement clearly teaches justification by faith alone in Christ. But in his writing there is a tendency to let the truth that all sins have been once and for all forgiven in Christ slip away. He obscures objective justification.

In the Epistles of Ignatius the doctrine of justification is obscured by unclear, mystical language. To the Ephesians Ignatius writes that they were:

Stones of the temple of the Father, made ready by the engine of Jesus Christ, that is, the cross and using as a rope the Holy Spirit. And your faith is your windlass, and love is the way that leadeth up to God (7).

Ignatius continually places faith and love on the same level (8). The way of salvation to him is "faith towards Him and love towards Him, in His Passion and Resurrection" (9). He does not say that love or works save, yet he points in that direction. However, he pushes sin into the background, clothes justification in mystical language, and refers it to the future judgment, and thus sows more unscriptural thought.

7) Ep. Ephesians, 9,1.

8) Eph. 20:1, Trallians 8:1, Smyrna 6,1.

9) Ep. Ephesians, 20,1.

Polycarp states that we are saved "by grace and not by works", but by the will of God through Christ (10). Christ is "our Hope and Pledge of our righteousness", because He died "for our sins", "in our stead and was raised by God for us"(11). God wills our salvation; therefore we should obey His will, forsake false doctrine, and believe on Him who raised Jesus Christ from the dead (12). Such faith brings forth fruit (13). And yet he says that "almsgiving sets free from death"(14). This is a most unhappy remark. Just what he meant is not clear. We cannot say with certainty that he meant that almsgiving saves. With the exception of this ill-chosen phrase, we find that Polycarp walks closer to Scripture than Clement and Ignatius, because he so emphatically states that we are saved not by our works but by grace, according to the will of God through Christ.

In the Sub-Apostolic age justification is a restatement of Apostolic teaching. Nevertheless, there are some disturbing signs. Clement claims that our sins are forgiven through love and that God is propitiated by repentance and prayer and reconciled by our tears. Ignatius assigns

- 
- 10) Ep. to Philippians, 1:3.
  - 11) Ibid. 8:1, 1:2, 8:1, 9:2.
  - 12) Ibid. 9:1.
  - 13) Ibid. 1:2.
  - 14) Ibid. 10:2.

justification to the future judgment and thus leaves the door wide open for all manner of work-righteousness. Seemingly he points to faith and works as the way of salvation. Polycarp unfortunately says that almsgiving delivers from death. All of these unscriptural statements are "seeds" from which false doctrines sprang up later. practically a "new law" (21).

### Development in the Post-Apostolic Age.

The Shepherd of Hermas knows nothing of justification by faith. In this period we have the Epistle of Barnabas, whose author is unknown; the Shepherd of Hermas; the second Epistle of Clement; the writings of Justin and Irenaeus; and the Epistle to Diognetus.

The Epistle of Barnabas no longer teaches justification by faith alone. Justification is not declaring but making righteous. We are justified when we "ourselves have been made perfect" (15). It even says "Thou shalt work with thy hands for a ransom for thy sins" (16). Faith is mere hope: "hope of salvation, hope of life, hope in Jesus, hope in the cross" (17). There is not even a suggestion of objective justification. Much is said about subjective justification, which is begun in Baptism and completed in the next world (18).

15) Ep. Barnabas, 6:19, 4:10.

16) Ibid. 19:10

17) Ibid. 1:3, 6. 6:9, 11:8

18) Ibid. 6:19.

Only in the Didache we read: "Of whatever thou hast gained by thy hands thou shalt give a ransom for thy sins; - for thou shalt know who is the good Paymaster of the reward"(19) Much is said about confession and repentance, but there is no mention of the forgiveness of sins and redemption through Christ (20). And the Gospel becomes practically a "New Law"(21).

The Shepherd of Hermas knows nothing of justification by faith. Faith is merely the "first virtue"(22). Justification means "making righteous". The author says, "Be justified and sanctified from all wickedness and crookedness"(23) Baptism is only for sins committed before Baptism. Satisfaction is necessary for all sins committed after Baptism. Faith can exist without works of faith. Hence faith is regarded as merely assent to church teaching. And many other unscriptural thoughts appear (24).

The second Epistle of Clement indicates the way of salvation as faith in Christ and keeping the commandments.

19)Didache 4:6,7.

20)Ibid. 4:14, 14:1, 10:6.

21)Ibid. 8:2, 15:3,4.

22)Shepherd of Hermas,3:8,3.7, 11:1, 19:3.

23)Ibid. 3:9,1. (Man.V,1:7, Sim.V,7:1.)

24)C. Bigg, in "The Origins of Christianity"(1909),p.81, rightly says:"Strange that this obscure and not very attractive writer should have set in motion a chain of causes that finally brought Luther into the field".

Only through Christ are we saved. But if we "serve God" we shall "be righteous"; and if we "do righteousness" we shall be saved at the end (25). Here we have vague phraseology and confusion of Law and Gospel.

The idea of justification by faith is so foreign to Justin Martyr, that he does not even use the expression in the Apologies. In the Dialogue with Typho, Justin clearly points out his way of salvation as follows: "Become acquainted with Christ, be washed in the fountain spoken of by Isaiah for the remission of sins, and for the rest, live sinless lives" (26).

We come to Irenaeus, who has been called the first theologian since the apostles. In his great work "Adversus Haereses" he stresses man's free will toward faith and works (27). Faith to him is essentially "the reception of the Rule of Faith" (28), and in "doing the will of God". Those who have this faith "possess the Spirit of the Father". The Spirit of God is "engrafted", must "be infused" into the substance of the flesh (29). Here we have the seed that later on grew into the doctrine of the "gratia infusa".

25) Second Ep. of Clement, 1:7, 11:1, 19:3.

26) Dialogue with Typho, c.44.

27) Ad. Haereses, IV:37,5,6 and 39,2.

28) Ibid. III:3,2-4 and IV:6,5.

29) Ibid. V:11,1

Because man has a free will, he must cooperate in his salvation. He must love God and his neighbor, preserve the natural precepts, and follow His Word, if he is to be saved (30). Hence we see that Irenaeus already thinks of the grace of God as a spiritual substance, and not as the favor of God for the sake of Christ. He stresses the free will, and teaches justification by faith and works.

Only in the Epistle to Diognetus do we find the doctrine of justification in all its Biblical purity (31). Upon justification inevitably follows sanctification (32). From this epistle we learn that the pure doctrine was still taught and held throughout Christianity in the second century, although erroneous ideas were gradually creeping in.

In the Post-Apostolic Age we find Clement of Rome sowing the seed of the doctrine of penance, Ignatius pushing justification into the distant future, the "Shepherd of Hermas" defining justification as "making righteous", and Irenaeus adding the thought that such justification is accomplished by the "infusion of God's Spirit". These un-Scriptural thoughts lay more or less dormant in the minds of the Post-Apostolic Fathers. But all of these thoughts were gathered into one system by Tertullian.

---

30)Ibid.IV:12,5. IV:15,1. IV:33,15.

31)Ep. to Diognetus, 9:2-5.

32)Ibid.10:2,3,4.



Development under Tertullian.

By introducing the legalism and moralism of the Post-Apostolic Fathers into Western Christianity, Tertullian established the trend in doctrine for more than one thousand years (33). To him the Gospel is the Law of the Christians. He said: "Lex proprie nostra, id est evangelium" (34). Therefore it is necessary for the Christian to keep the Law and earn merit before God. Fear of God as the Lawgiver and judge is the beginning of salvation. Who fulfills the Law of God makes Him a debtor (35). Even in Baptism the preceding repentance earns the forgiveness of sins (36). The same holds true for all acts of penance during life. Man should not only keep the "praecepta" but also the "concordia" (37). By doing this man earns a treasure of holiness and recompenses Christ for what He has done (38). The whole plan of the Catholic doctrine of merit is found with Tertullian; grace is earned by merits, and through grace, ability is given to merit eternal life.

With Tertullian we have all the elements of the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification with the exception

---

33) Seeberg: Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte, vol. I, p. 436.

34) de. monog. 8.

35) de paen. 2. and 6.

36) de paen. 6. cf. de. pud. 9.

37) c. Marc. II, 17 ad ux. II, 1.

38) de exh. cast. 10. de. resurr. 8. de pat. 16.

of the doctrine of "infused grace" and the doctrine of the sacraments. With Tertullian we have the following: Free will of man, faith as "intellectual assent to Church doctrine", justification as "making righteous", and the doctrine of "grace and merit". The seed of "infused grace" that was sown by Irenaeus is ignored by Tertullian (39). He does not divide grace into various classes, and still insists that God's grace is obtained by the Word (40). But on the other hand, he maintains that Baptism and the Word give the Holy Spirit as an "insectio and infusio spiritus", which produces the "transmutatio in melius(41). This is but one step from the doctrine of the "gratia infusa".

#### Later Development.

The theologians who immediately followed Tertullian brought nothing new. They kept the thoughts of Tertullian alive. Clement of Alexandria says this of justification: The Christian decides with his free will for God and His Law, goes from faith to fear with its righteousness, to "Gnosis" and love, to permanent union with God, to a life of prayer and good works, to the real righteousness (42). Origin, in spite of his Pauline formulas and Scriptural

39) See page 58.

40) Irenaeus V, 10, 1.

41) Irenaeus V, 6, 2.

42) Seeberg, Dogmengeschichte, vol. 1, p. 495ff.

language, makes justification dependent on conversion, penitence, keeping of the Law, and imitating Christ (43).

Cyprian says that Abraham with "fided ac iustitiae" earned recognition by God (44). Christians earn distinction as God's people with "the merit of faith" (45), and righteous is he who has "the works of righteousness" (46). Athanasius writes little about justification, but he states repeatedly that whosoever is "deified" by Christ is thereby an heir of eternal life (47). The thought that we must be "deified" by Christ in order to be saved is something that is found in all Eastern theology, which is summarized by John of Damascus.

In the period just before Augustine we find a partial return to the Biblical doctrine of justification (48). It was Ambrose who made the famous statement:

Non gloriabor, quia iustus sum, sed gloriabor, quia redemptus sum; gloriabor, non quia vacuus peccati sum, sed quia mihi remissa sunt peccata. (49)

Yet in spite of this glorious confession, Ambrose clings to Origen's thought that by our works of satisfaction we practically appease God and make our sins forgiveable (50).

43) Lev. n. 7, 2; 11, 1; 12, 4; Contra Cels. III, 77, 57.

44) de Mortal. 17, 12. bon. pat. 10.

45) ep. 63, 12.

46) de. mortal. 16, 26.

47) c. Arius II, 53; I, 46.

48) Seeberg, vol. 2, p. 376: "Die altlateinische Betonung der 'lex' und der 'merita' tritt zurueck, die 'iustificatio sola fide' rueckt vor".

49) de Jac. I, 6, 21.

50) de Poen. I, 17, 92; de Paradis. 14, 71.

While Tertullian injected legalism and moralism into the doctrine of justification, it was the corruptions of Augustine's statements that supplied the mystical elements. Tertullian practically said: Man must do everything. To this Augustine replied: God does everything, for all depends on the grace of God. The Scholastics compromised and said in effect: By and through the Grace of God, man works out his salvation.

Augustine taught a bondage of the human will. But John Cassian soon objected and insisted that the fall of man was "infirmetas liberi arbitrii"(51). In the year 529 the Council of Orange upheld the free will, but called it "inclinatum et attonuatum", so that man could not of himself believe or love God. This is still Roman Catholic doctrine. Pelagius looked upon sin only in the form of acts. To him sin was no state or condition. It was not a corruption of man's nature, but only a corruption of his will. Man must will the sinful act, otherwise it is not sin. This thought survived in the Roman Catholic Church until the present time, when venial sin or the concupiscence remaining in the believer after he has been cleansed by infused grace is not considered sin (52). In opposition to Pelagius, Augustine taught that man's whole nature was corrupt, and

51) Coll. III, 12.

52) Seeberg, Dogmengeschichte, vol. 2, p. 495ff.

not only his will, and that man is therefore absolutely in need of God's grace. Augustine taught that Grace was "inspiratio caritatis". The power to will and to do the good, this transformation in man, is the main effect of Grace(53). Augustine spoke of the impartation of grace to man in a metaphysical sense. But the Scholastic theologians perverted his statements and taught that the grace of God was imparted physically or actually "infused" into the soul of man. Such grace, infused physically and actually, renews man's nature and makes him capable of meriting eternal life. This is still Roman Catholic doctrine today.

The question of how and by what means man receives the "gratia infusa" already troubled some of the Post-Apostolic Fathers as well as later theologians (54). The Scholastics of the Middle Ages solved this problem. Their answer was: Man receives infused grace through the Sacraments. By giving this answer, the Scholastics completed the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification. Rome still teaches that the grace of God is infused into man through the seven Sacraments. All of the Scholastic theologians taught that the Sacraments produced "justification and sanctification", because they imparted to man the "gratia iustificans"(55).

---

53) Spiritus et Litt. 27,47.

54) Seeberg, Dogmengeschichte, vol.1, p.436.

55) Ibid. vol.3, p.453f.

The Scholastics agree in this that the main thing in the act of justification is the infusion of grace through the Sacraments. Through this grace the real obliteration of sin is effected. Such obliteration consists of "expulsio culpae" and "remissio peccati". All Scholastics distinguish sharply between the expulsion of guilt and the remission of sins. And the forgiveness of sins is looked upon as a result of the expulsion of guilt through infused grace(56). These doctrinal formulas of the Scholastics are still the source of Rome's doctrine of justification. This doctrine has not changed since the days of Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of the Schoolmen, who is still the great teacher in the Roman Catholic Church.

Speak on the subject.

By teaching that infused grace makes man able to perform meritorious works, which earn more grace and also eternal life, the Scholastics embodied Tertullian's work-righteousness in their system. This step brings to a close the development of their doctrine, which is still the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church to this day. Hence the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification is the result of a gradual development of unscriptural thought, which finds its roots in the erroneous statements of the early Church Fathers.

---

56) Seeberg, Dogmengeschichte, vol.3, p.427, 528.

3.The Source of Both Doctrines of Justification.B. The Lutheran Doctrine.

The Lutheran Church claims that it draws its doctrine of justification directly and only from Scripture. When expounding doctrine, the Lutheran Church frequently refers to its Confessions. But this is done only to show that the Confessions are true and correct expositions of Bible truth. The Lutheran Church has always maintained that "what is not Biblical has no rightful place in theology". In order to determine whether the Lutheran doctrine of justification, as presented in the Confessions, is in full harmony with Bible truth, we shall let Scripture itself speak on the subject.

When the Bible speaks of man's justification before God, it presupposes the total depravity of man, the redemption of Christ, and the final reconciliation with God. The Bible clearly teaches the total depravity of man, when it declares that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually", that the human heart is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked", and that therefore "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God", but that he is "an enemy of God"<sup>(1)</sup>.

---

1) Gen.6:5, Jer.17:9, 1Cor.2:14, Rom.5:10.

Scripture cannot speak more clearly when denying the free will of man and declaring his total depravity, and these are the same passages which the Lutheran Church uses to defend its doctrine of total depravity and the bondage of the human will. Here Scripture and the Lutheran Church are in full harmony.

With Scripture, the Lutheran Church also teaches the objective reconciliation of man through Christ's redemption. Christ, by His vicarious atonement, fully satisfied God's justice and thus completely redeemed the human race. It is written: "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His son"(2). And again: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them"(3). This means, then, that when Christ died on the cross, God ceased His hostility towards man. Before the divine bar of justice He fully forgave all men all their sins. And this is complete objective justification for all mankind, a most glorious doctrine of the Bible, which the Lutheran Church defends against all who would violate it(4).

2) Romans 5:10.

3) 2Cor. 5:19.

4) Pieper: Christliche Dogmatik, vol. 2, p. 414: "It is very important that we hold fast to this doctrine of the objective reconciliation or justification; for if we make a mistake here, we cannot rectify it afterwards". See also Dierks, Reconciliation and Justification, p. 39.



Here is where the Roman Catholic Church makes a serious mistake. It teaches falsely in the doctrine of subjective justification, because it perverts the objective reconciliation of Christ. This is seen from a statement of one of their theologians:

The privilege of participating in the merits of Christ's vicarious atonement does not relieve us of the duty of personally atoning for our sins. That Christ has rendered adequate satisfaction for the sins of the whole race, does not mean that each individual sinner is eo ipso subjectively redeemed (5).

Scripture declares that objective justification, or the forgiveness of all sins of mankind, is the content of the Gospel (6). Here the sinner can do just one of two things: either believe the Gospel or disbelieve it. If he rejects the Gospel, he is damned, lost and separated from God (7). If he believes it, he is saved or subjectively justified (8). Such subjective justification is by faith (9), which is the same as faith in Christ (10). Faith is the receiving hand which accepts the forgiveness of sins or objective justification offered in the Gospel (11). It receives Christ's righteousness, and for this reason, faith

- 5) Froelich-Prouss, Soteriology, p.40.  
 6) Luke 7:47, Acts 13:38, 26:18, Eph.1:7, Col.1:14.  
 7) Mark 16:16, John 3:18, 26, Rom.9:32, 1Cor.1:23, 1Pet.2:8.  
 8) Mark 16:16, John 3:17, 1Cor.15:2.  
 9) Rom.3:24, 25, 28, 4:24, 25, 1Cor.15:1-4.  
 10) John 6:47, 20:31, Acts 16:31, 1John 5:13.  
 11) Rom.5:1, 18, 9:30, Gal.3:24.

is "reckoned, counted" to the believer for righteousness (12). In all these statements Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions speak the same language.

The Lutheran Church teaches with Scripture that saving justifying faith is not assent to Church doctrine, but knowledge of Christ, assent to His teaching, and trust in God's promises (13). Its essence is confidence (14). It does not save, because it is a meritorious act, but because it is the hand which accepts the pardon and peace in Christ, which is offered in the Gospel.

With Scripture the Lutheran Church declares that we are saved or justified by grace, in as much as God's love manifested in Christ made such justification possible (15), and in as much as justification is a free gift (16). The grace of God, in relation to justification, is not a peculiar, mystical "infused something, and inherent in the soul", but it is, what the Lutheran Church declares, the gracious disposition of God toward the lost sinner for the sake of Christ (17). Grace is a synonym of God's love and His mercy (18); another word for His good pleasure and good

12) Rom. 4:5, 9, 10.

13) John 17:3, 1 Tim. 2:4, 1 John 5:13; John 17:8, Gen. 15:6

14) Heb. 11:1. 2 Tim. 1:12.

15) Rom. 3:24, 4:16, Eph. 1:7, 2:8.

16) Eph. 2:8, 9, Rom. 6:23.

17) 2 Tim. 1:9, Gal. 5:4, Eph. 1:7, Rom. 4:16.

18) John 3:16, Tit. 3:4, 5, Eph. 2:4, Rom. 5:8, 1 John 4:9, 10.  
Ex. 24:6, 7, Ps. 103:8-12, Tit. 3:5, Eph. 2:4, Luke 1:77, 78.

will (19). With Scripture the Lutheran Church declares that the term "justifying" does not mean "making just or righteous" but declaring righteous. Scripture conceives it as a "non-imputation of iniquity, forgiveness of transgression, a covering of sin (20). The quality of righteousness is not "infused into man", but it is "reckoned, counted, imputed" to him (21), so that man remains a sinner after he is justified (22).

With Scripture the Lutheran Church declares that justification by faith excludes all works of man as a means of obtaining merit before God (23). Grace is the very antithesis of works (24), so that justification is a free gift of God (25). When Paul excludes the "works of the Law" from the sinner's justification before God, he also means the good works performed in obedience to the Moral Law, the Ten Commandments. All these do not play a part in our justification, as may be clearly see from Scripture (26). Even faith, which accepts the merits of Christ, is a gift, a creation of God, and is preserved by God(27).

19) 2Tim.1:9, Gal.1:4, Eph.1:3-6.

20) Ps.32:1,2.

21) Rom.4:5,9,11.

22) Rom.7:13,19, 1John1:8, 2:1.

23) Rom.3:24, 4:5, Tit.3:5.

24) Rom.11:6, 4:5, Gal.3:10, 5:4.

25) Eph.2:8, Rom.5:15,16,18, 6:23.

26) Rom.3:20, 4:5,15, chap.6 & 7. Gal.3:10,19,24.

27) Eph.2:8, Col.2:12, Eph.1:19, 1Pet.1:5.

Again with Scripture the Lutheran Church declares that justifying faith is not a dead, inactive thing, but it is the power within the believer that causes him to do good works (28). By means of such good works the believer is justified before his fellowmen (29). Such good works testify that the door of those works has the true saving faith in Christ.

Finally, the Lutheran Church declares with Scripture that justification is complete as soon as the sinner embraces Christ in true faith. "No condemnation" strikes those who are united with Christ through faith (30). They have peace with God, and they wait patiently for their final glorification (31). And since man's justification is complete in the moment he believes, it is also certain. Nothing shall separate the believer from the love of God (32). Even in the day of trouble and sorrow he is sure of his salvation (33). There is no discrepancy anywhere between the Lutheran doctrine of justification and the clear, simple, and beautiful testimony of the Bible. The Lutherans faithfully reproduce in their doctrine the teaching of Christ and His Apostles.

- 
- 28) James 2:14, 1 John 2:3,4, 3:14, 1 John 4:1, 2 Cor. 5:10.  
 29) James 2:14, Luke 7:47, Matt. 7:20, 25:34-40, Tit. 2:14.  
 30) Rom. 8:1, 33, 34. John 5:24.  
 31) Rom. 5:1, Rom. 8:16-25.  
 32) Rom. 8:38.  
 33) Job 19:25, 2 Tim. 1:12.

It has always been the outstanding characteristic of the Lutheran Church to place all due importance on the article of justification. In this the Lutheran Church shows itself as being the true Bible Church. The Bible was written expressly for man's salvation. Therefore the Lutheran Church places the article of justification in the very center of Christian doctrine. For this doctrine of justification alone fully meets the sinner's need. It makes all the difference in the world whether the sinner appropriates to himself by faith the perfect righteousness of Christ, or whether he desires to stand before God in his own righteousness, which at best, is superficial, faulty and even stained with sin and guilt.

It is just in this doctrine that the Church of Rome shows its vicious, anti-Christian character. Its sharpest and vilest attacks are directed against the blessed doctrine of the sinner's justification by the grace of God, for the sake of Christ, through faith alone. And for this reason the Church of the Papacy is guilty of a conduct which Christ bitterly condemns in the Scribes and Pharisees,<sup>1)</sup> as these self-righteous men of old, so also does the Church of Rome "shut up the kingdom of God against men", when it grossly perverts the doctrine of justification and condemns all those who cling to the teaching of Scripture.

---

1) Matt. 23:13.

Let us, in spite of all opposition, study, accept, believe, proclaim and defend this blessed doctrine and not yield or surrender a single point, lest we lose the crown which has always been the glory of the Lutheran Church.