Durham University

Durham E-Theses

The study Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend? and its statements on justification: analysis and critique

Gereon Johannes Olbrisch

How to cite:

Olbrisch, Gereon Johannes (1994) The study Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend? and its statements on justification: analysis and critique. Masters thesis, Durham University.

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/5552/ is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the full Durham E-Theses policy for further details.

Academic Support Office, The Palatine Centre, Durham University, Stockton Road, Durham, DH1 3LE
e-mail: e-theses.admin@durham.ac.uk Tel: +44 0191 334 6107
https://etheses.durham.ac.uk

Gereon Johannes Olbrisch
The study *Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend?* and its statements on justification: analysis and critique
MA - Thesis 1994

Abstract

Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend? is a study issued by a group of German theologians in 1986 considering the fundamental church dividing condemnations of the reformation era regarding the doctrines of justification, the sacraments and the ministry. The study sought to investigate whether these condemnations maintain their dividing power even today. Though, generally speaking, it found that they did not, its results are open to question. This thesis investigates whether its statements on justification are tenable. Since the study confined itself to the consideration of Lutheran and Roman-Catholic condemnations, this thesis concentrates on the Lutheran/Roman-Catholic dialogue only.

The thesis is divided into the following parts. Section A starts by giving a brief introduction to the mediaeval origins of the discussion of justification in the reformation era. In Chapter II several Roman-Catholic studies on Luther and Protestant studies on the Council of Trent are examined, along with some modern ecumenical approaches to the problem of justification. The concluding chapter of the introduction gives details of the study *Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend?* itself.

The study's findings can only be criticised on the basis of a thorough investigation of both Luther's and the Council of Trent's account of justification. Therefore section B gives a detailed comparison of Luther's view on justification and the Council of Trent's decree on justification following the seven "distinguishing doctrines" identified by the study. The investigation confirms the distinguishing nature of these doctrines.

Section C investigates the study's findings using the same structure as section B. The conclusion of this section is that the study's arguement is in most cases a weak one. Finally section D gives an evaluation of the study.

The study *Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend?* and its statements on justification: analysis and critique

by Gereon Johannes Olbrisch

MA-Thesis
University of Durham
Department of Theology
1994

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author.
No quotation from it should be published without
his prior written consent and information derived
from it should be acknowledged.

UNIV DUNELM

14 FEB 1995

UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences

Statement to accompany Higher Degree Entry Form

I confirm that the thesis conforms with the prescribed word length for the degree for which I am submitting it for examination*.

or ~~I confirm that the Faculty has given approval for submission of a thesis which does not conform with the prescribed word length for the degree for which I am submitting it for examination*.~~

I confirm that no part of the material offered has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or in any other University.

Signed .....

Date .....

* delete as appropriate

I confirm that the thesis conforms with the prescribed word length for the degree for which I am submitting it for examination

I confirm that no part of the material offered has previously been submitted by me for a degree in this or in any other University.

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author.
No quotation from it should be published without his
prior written consent and information derived from
it should be acknowledged.

Table of contents:

A. Introduction 1

I. Historical aspects 3

II. Ecumenical perspectives 17

III. The study 25

B. Comparison of Luther's view on justification and the Council of Trent's decree on justification 44

I. The depravity of human nature 44

II. Concupiscence 52

III. People's passivity towards the attaining of grace 54

IV. The nature of righteousness 60

V. The way of attaining grace 82

VI. The necessity of assurance of salvation 93

VII. Merits 95

VIII. Summary 99

C. Considering *Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend?* 102

I. The antitheses, and whether they have been correctly analysed 102

II. New insights, and the value of them 111

III. Ancient condemnations, and whether they really no longer apply to christians of the other denomination today 121

D. Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend! 149

Bibliography

A. Introduction

Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend? is a study issued by a group of German theologians in 1986 considering the fundamental church dividing condemnations of the reformation era regarding the doctrines of justification, the sacraments and the ministry.[1] The study sought to investigate whether these condemnations maintain their dividing power even today. Though, generally speaking, it found that they did not, its results are open to question. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate whether its statements on justification are tenable. Since the study confined itself to the consideration of Lutheran and Roman-Catholic condemnations, this thesis concentrates on the Lutheran/Roman-Catholic dialogue only.

The thesis is divided into the following parts. Section A starts by giving a brief introduction to the mediaeval origins of the discussion of justification in the reformation era. In Chapter II several Roman-Catholic studies on Luther and Protestant studies on the Council of Trent are examined, along with some modern ecumenical approaches to the problem of justification. The concluding chapter of the introduction gives details of the study *Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend?* itself.

---

[1] For more detailed information see below A.III.

The study's findings can only be criticised on the basis of a thorough investigation of both Luther's and the Council of Trent's account of justification. Therefore section B gives a detailed comparison of Luther's view on justification and the Council of Trent's decree on justification following the seven "distinguishing doctrines" identified by the study. Section C investigates the study's findings using the same structure. Finally section D gives an evaluation of the study.

I. Historical aspects

Any discussion of justification at the time of the reformation has to be firmly grounded in the way in which this crucial issue has been tackled in earlier centuries. Indeed, all later discussions are firmly rooted in the earliest of all treatments of the doctrine - that in the New Testament. The Pauline stress upon faith and James's insistence upon the role of works established a dialectic which formed one of the recurring themes of theological history. It received its classic statement in the argument between Augustine and Pelagius over the nature of salvation in the fifth century. Augustine taught that the resources of salvation are in God alone, while Pelagius thought of them as located within humanity.[2] Augustine's views were acknowlegded as authentically christian, and Pelagius' as heretical.

Nevertheless, despite the condemnation of Pelagius's views the controversy was in many ways replayed in the middle ages.[3] The early middle ages were dominated by two major schools: Thomism (propagated by the Dominicans) and Scotism (the Franciscans). These had, however, no major influence upon the reformation. By contrast, the high and later mediaevval *via moderna* and *schola Augustiniana moderna* were of primary importance for the reformation debate on justification.[4]

---

[2] McGrath, *Thought*, p.74.
[3] Ibid., p.73.
[4] Ibid., p.72.

The *via moderna* tended towards (though in theory it avoided) the position of Pelagius. It was highly optimistic about human abilities, suggesting that it was possible for a human being to do everything that was necessary to enter into a relationship with God. This relationship was defined as a covenant between God and people, and just as a political covenant between a king and his people defined the obligations of king to people and people to king, this religious covenant defined God's obligations to his people and vice versa, in spite of being unilaterally imposed by God. A catchphrase of the *via moderna* was **facere quod in se est**, meaning that people have to do their best to reach salvation, reject evil and try to do good.[5] The difference from Pelagianism - scholars of the *via moderna* argued - was that works in the Pelagian concept had an inherent value, while according to the *via moderna* this was only ascribed to them by God as an act of charity.

On the other hand the *schola Augustiniana moderna* tended towards the position of Augustine, suggesting that people were totally unable to enter into such a relationship without the grace of God. The doctrine of the *schola Augustiniana moderna* was developed in contrast to that of the *via moderna* by Thomas Bradwardine. It represents a return to the views of Augustine which were developed in the Pelagian controversy. These ideas were taken up by Gregory

[5] Ibid., p.76.

of Rimini at the university of Paris and promoted by the Augustinians although not every Augustinian monastery or university school seems to have adopted them. Its basic concerns were the need for grace, the corruption of human nature, the divine initiative in justification and predestination. The Wittenberg reformers may be regarded as having rediscovered and revitalized this tradition. Luther's rediscovery of Augustinian thought certainly played a role in his theological breakthrough on justification.[6]

The young Luther (1509-1514) followed the *via moderna*.[7] His later theological development, however, took place in reaction against its covenantal understanding of justification.[8] He was threatened by the idea of a righteous God who rewarded and punished people according to their merits, for he thought that this could only offer people condemnation.[9] This destruction of the framework upon which his early soteriology was based is essential for his theological breakthrough.[10] Luther's reinterpretation of his concept of *iustitia Dei*, and the consequent change in his understanding of justification seems to have taken place at some time in

---

[6] Ibid., p.79.

[7] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, pp.4/5; on the basis of the Ciceronian concept of *iustitia* as *reddens unicuique quod suum est*, underlying the concept of *Iustitia Dei* associated with the *via moderna*, the man who failed to do *quod in se est* was condemned (ibid., p.8).

[8] McGrath, *Thought*, p.78.

[9] Ibid., p.95.

[10] The term "theological breakthrough" is to be prefered to the widely used term "tower experience" (Mc Grath, *Iustitia II*, p.9).

the year 1515, though scholars differ over the precise dating.[11] McGrath argues that it is evident in the early stages of the Romans lectures of 1515/16.[12] The investigation of the relation between Romans 1.17a and b is a crucial element in this discovery.

As a result of these insights, Luther challenged what he saw as the Pelagian excesses of the mediaeval church, and developed his concept of justification by faith alone depending on God's promise rather than on human works. This led to radical changes in Luther's perception of faith and justification. Faith no longer had a mere historical but a personal reference. Furthermore justification was not an evolving process but rather an instant event.[13] Thereby he overturned the whole order of the process of justification.[14] The basic theme underlying Luther's concept of justification is that of redemption through Christ, i.e. Christ achieved redemption for sinful people by his death on the cross. The key image of this is a change of legal status: people "are acquitted of punishment, and given the status of being righteous before God".[15] The granted righteousness is an alien one and remains outside the

---

[11] Ibid., p.6/7; McGrath, *Thought*, p.97; compare Iserloh, *Kirchenspaltung*, p.75.
[12] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.6.
[13] McGrath, *Thought*, pp. 113/114; Iwand, *Luther*, p.51; Baur, *Einig?*, p.75; Beißer, *Konkordienformel*, pp. 218/219.
[14] Compare Pannenberg, *Gespräch*, p.237.
[15] McGrath, *Thought*, p.87.

believer. It is an unmerited favour of God, and even after receiving this righteousness people remain sinners in themselves so that they are **simul iustus et peccator.** However, God treats this righteousness as if it was people's own.[16]

The initial Catholic response to this was hesitant.[17] A serious attempt to create a doctrinal consensus was made by some of the more moderate figures on the Catholic and Protestant sides at Regensburg in 1541. A compromise was worked out, but it was rejected both by the pope and by the reformers.[18] Those present at the Diet were simply not regarded as representative by their respective institutions: whatever personal agreement might be found to exist on the matter of justification between men such as Bucer, Contarini and Gropper was more than outweighed by the institutional differences between Lutheranism and Catholicism.[19] Though this compromise was rejected by both Luther and the papacy, it surfaced again in the debates of the Council of Trent in the attempt by Seripando and Reginald Pole to leave open the possibility of double justification.

---

[16] Ibid., p.106; the points of Luther's concept crucial for this thesis will be discussed in more detail in section B.

[17] For the usage of the terms **Catholic** and **Roman-Catholic** compare below footnote 20.

[18] Heinz Scheible, Art. *Melanchthon*, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Bd.22, Berlin - New York 1992, p.379.

[19] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.60.

This council was concerned with Luther's challenge. Trent is a defining feature of the counter-reformation and marks the turning point of the **Catholic** into the **Roman-Catholic** church.[20] In general councils were summoned when the church was in a crisis - "indeed, it could be argued that the nature of doctrinal developement is such that definition proceeds by controversy".[21] So at the beginning of the fourth century the church's doctrine was challenged by Arius and defined by the Council of Nicaea in 325.[22] In the 16th century the Catholic church was ill prepared to meet the challenge posed by Luther.[23] Up to Trent there had never been a definitive conciliar decision on justification.[24] The challenge posed by Luther, however, could not be ignored. The doctrine of justification sola fide "amounted to an implicit declaration of war upon the Roman curia". Early anti-Lutheran polemic failed to tackle the important questions such as justification.[25] There was in fact a

> doctrinal confusion of the immediate pre-Tridentine period in relation to the doctrine of justification. ... This doctrinal confusion ... inevitably meant that the Catholic church was in no position to attempt a

---

[20] Some modern scholars argue that the protestant churches still belongs to the **Catholic** church. Accordingly in this thesis the term **Catholic** is used when referring to the western church before and **Roman-Catholic** when referring to the Roman-Catholic church after the Council of Trent.

[21] McGrath, *Justification*, p.518.

[22] Jedin, *Geschichte*, pp.16/17.

[23] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.54.

[24] McGrath, *Justification*, p.518.

[25] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.54.

> coherent systematic refutation of the teaching of the evangelical faction in its crucial initial phase.[26]

The popes of the time were reluctant to summon a council, but the voices demanding it grew louder, and eventually, on 15 December 1545 - after great difficulties had been overcome - the Council of Trent finally opened.[27] It met in twenty-five sessions between 1545 and 1563. It was assembled in the Holy Spirit, and its decrees were, accordingly, "sacrarum Scripturarum et sanctorum Patrum ac probatissimorum conciliorum testimonia et ipsius Ecclesiae iudicium et consensum secuta".[28] The final assembly in 1563 accepted all decrees. They were also ratified by pope Pius IV in 1564. In 1713 the teaching on justification in the *Constitution Unigenitus* faithfully echoed the Tridentine decree. It was later confirmed by several popes, and the dogma of infallibility (1870) gives a retrospective infallibility to the document.[29]

It has been argued that Luther would never have reacted so strongly against Catholic theology if the Tridentine decree had been issued at the start of the sixteenth century. Indeed Luther developed his theology in opposition to the

---

[26] Ibid., p.57.
[27] K.D.Schmidt, Art. *Tridentinum*, in: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bd.6, Sp.1012-1017, Tübingen 1962, 3rd ed.
[28] Denzinger 1510; compare "Christus Iesus ... docuit, Apostoli tradiderunt et Catholica Ecclesia, Spiritu Sancto suggerente, perpetuo retinuit" (Ibid. 1520).
[29] McGrath, *Justification*, pp.527/528.

via moderna and other Catholic theologians whom Trent would see as rather unrepresentative of true Catholic theology rather than against the official Catholic doctrine. After Luther's pronouncements on justification the Catholic church moved away sharply from the *via moderna* and produced a much more nuanced and less semi-Pelagian interpretation of justification in the Tridentine decree. This thesis is concerned only with the end product of both these processes: with Luther's final doctrine of justification and the council's decree, but not with the ways in which they were arrived at.

The Tridentine fathers considered both doctrine and discipline, but they could not agree as to which should be given priority. It was finally decided to give equal attention to both: decrees on doctrinal issues as well as others mandating reform of church life and practice would be formulated, debated, and approved simultaneously. The decree on justification - as a prime example of the first - was intended to set forth Roman Catholic teaching at the midpoint of a century marked by bitter religious controversy.[30] "'Die Bedeutung dieses Konzils auf dogmatischem Gebiet', schrieben die Legaten am 21. Juni (1546) nach Rom, 'besteht in der Hauptsache auf dem Artikel von der Rechtfertigung; er ist der wichtigste, der überhaupt dem Konzil vorliegt.'"[31] The canons were much more carefully formulated than the doc-

---

[30] Peter, *Decree*, p.219.
[31] Jedin, *Trient*, p.144.

trinal chapters. Many of them were directed against the Reformers.[32] They are particularly important because fighting against errors is the main purpose of councils.[33] Indeed, the canons were formulated before the doctrinal chapters. Consequently they deserve greater attention.

McGrath identifies four main points of difference between Luther and Trent. These are: the nature of justification, the nature of justifying righteousness, the nature of justifying faith and the assurance of salvation.[34] Contrary to Luther, Trent maintained the perception of justification as a process of regeneration and renewal within human nature. McGrath further states that the Council of Trent condemned opinions rather than people.[35] This is, however, only half the truth. It is correct that the Council did not condemn anyone explicitly. Nevertheless not one of the considered canons begins: "the doctrine that ...", but all begin: "people who say/ deny etc ...", or rather: "if anyone says/denies etc ..." ("Si quis dixerit/negat etc ..."). So it actually anathematizes people who teach a particular doctrine rather than the doctrine itself.[36]

---

[32] Peter, *Decree*, p.219.
[33] McGrath, *Justification*, p.518.
[34] McGrath, *Thought*, p.113.
[35] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.85; compare Baur, *Einig?*, p.43.
[36] Pesch, *Canones*, p.244.

The need that human beings have of Jesus Christ and his saving action is confessed of course in the doctrine of original sin. Accordingly the doctrinal documents of both the Protestant as well as the Roman-Catholic church deal with justification only after considering original sin.[37] Indeed, chapter I of the decree on justification incorporates a summary of the main points of the decree on original sin.[38] Consequently the decree on justification cannot be fully analysed without considering the decree on original sin, a point of considerable importance, as shall be seen below.

The discussion of the doctrine of justification started on 21 June 1546 and lasted for well over six months. The atmosphere of the time was tense and deeply hostile to Luther, so much so that Reginald Pole, one of the papal legates to the Council, feared that this might produce a decree so unconciliatory to the Protestants that it might even reinforce their opposition. Indeed Luther himself was identified with Lucifer, and Protestantism as threatening to expel the church from Europe.[39] The long discussions bear witness to the importance and difficulty of the issue and the careful consideration required. The Council set out to keep the Catholic faith free from errors, pure and unstained by deciding "de peccato originali eiusque remedio non solum

[37] Peter, *Decree*, p.219.
[38] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.81.
[39] Chadwick, *Justification*, pp.1/2; compare ibid., p.19.

nova, sed etiam vetera dissidia"[40] and to put forward "veram sanamque doctrinam ipsius iustificationis" against "erronea quaedam ... de iustificatione doctrina" which obviously denotes Luther's doctrine of justification because it is "hoc tempore"[41], that is of the first half of the 16th century. There is, as a result some truth in the "complaint frequently made by Protestant writers against the Tridentine decree on justification ... that it is merely a negative reaction against Protestantism: "Luther says this, so it must be wrong"."[42]

In the case of original sin the Council of Trent, as was customary[43], did not give a coherent account of Roman-Catholic doctrine but confined itself to 5 canons anathematizing people who teach contrary ideas, including not only Lutheran but also Pelagian, Manichaean and Priscillian theology, though without naming their authors. In the case of justification the Council did not just anathematize other teachings but also summarized the Catholic doctrine, giving an account of justification in XVI chapters. This was the first time in conciliar history that a positive account of a specific doctrine was provided. Until then councils had confined themselves to canons only. The decree outlines the process

---

[40] Denzinger 1510.
[41] Ibid. 1520.
[42] McGrath, *Justification*, p.517.
[43] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.80.

of the justification of adults rather than children because these receive the grace of justification by baptism.

According to the Council of Trent there are three steps in the process of justification, to each of which several chapters are devoted.[44] There are various suggestions of how to analyse the structure of the decree. One of them is:

1) overview on God's plan of salvation
   (chapters I - III)

2) the attaining of righteousness (chapters IV - IX)

3) the preservation and increase of righteousness
   (chapters X - XIII)

4) the recovery of righteousness (chapters XIV + XV)

5) the problem of merits (chapter XVI).[45]

Though this schematization is clearly modelled on the three steps in the process of justification (2-4), it can nevertheless be amended in two respects. First, chapter IV presents in general a summary of chapters I - III.[46]

---

[44] Ibid., p.81.
[45] Neuner/Roos, *Der Glaube der Kirche in den Urkunden der Lehrverkündigung*, Regensburg 1986, 12th ed., p.497.
[46] See below p.61.

Therefore it belongs to the overview of God's plan of salvation rather than to the section on the attaining of righteousness. Second, the latter should be divided into two. Chapters V + VI deal with the preparation for righteousness while chapters VII - IX describe the features of righteousness. So an alternative breakdown of the decree could be:

1) overview on God's plan of salvation (chapters I - IV)

2) the preparation for righteousness (chapters V + VI)

3) the features and nature of righteousness (chapters VII - IX)

4) the preservation and increase of righteousness (chapters X - XIII)

5) the recovery of righteousness (chapters XIV + XV)

6) the problem of merits (chapter XVI).[47]

---

[47] There is of course the problem that this pattern is not modelled after the distinction of the three "status iustificationis" any more. The so-called "first justification" is dealt with mainly by part 2, so that part 3 comes in between the first and second justification.

There are 33 canons with anathemas which correspond to the chapters. These canons list statements on justification which are rejected by the Roman-Catholic church as heretical. They anathematize not only teachings which contradict main features of the Roman-Catholic doctrine, but also those which differ from it only in details. So some people might agree with the Council as far as the nature of righteousness is concerned, but still be anathematized by a canon regarding the increase of righteousness. On the other hand: if people have already been anathematized canons on the nature of righteousness, those on subordinate issues such as the increase of righteousness cannot apply to them any more. Consequently there are canons which *really* apply to Luther and others which only *seem* to apply to him. The former apply because of fundamental doctrinal differences. The latter cannot really apply because the text presupposes one of these fundamental doctrinal differences.[48]

Both Luther's concept of justification and the Council of Trent's decree on justification have been subject to discussion from the reformation era to the present day both

---

[48] Like all texts the Tridentine canons have a particular form, and as with all texts this form conveys something beyond the content. It is therefore appropriate to stick to this form as much as possible even when not quoting. For this reason canons are introduced as follows: "Canon ... anathematizes all those who say ... " Protestant condemnations are introduced: "Condemnation ... rejects the teaching..." In these introductions the word deriving from the original Latin word has been used.

within the churches (e.g. Jansen, Tillich, Barth, Küng) and in the ecumenical context. In view of this it is intended in the next section to give a short overview of recent studies on Luther by Roman-Catholic and the Council of Trent by Protestant scholars as well as ecumenical approaches to the division caused by the differences in the doctrine of justification.

II. Ecumenical perspectives

During the present century there has been a significant change in tone and approach to the study of the issue of justification in the reformation and counter-reformation, as both Roman-Catholic and Protestant theologians and historians have sought to come to terms with the divisions of the sixteenth century. The changes are perhaps most notable in Roman-Catholic scholarship. The views of a Roman-Catholic scholar such as Denifle, writing at the beginning of this century, may have been somewhat extreme in their hostility to Luther and Lutheranism, but his belief that Luther was either ignorant of the Catholic tradition or deliberately perverted it, was representative of traditional Roman-Catholic interpretations of Luther. Modern Roman-Catholic research has moved in a markedly different direction, seeking to explore the common ground between Roman-Catholic and Protestant approaches, seeking to narrow, rather than enlarge the differences between Luther and Catholicism. The

classic, if somewhat extreme, statement of this approach is that of Hans Küng in his early work on justification. He compares the Tridentine decree and a Protestant concept of justification, Karl Barth's *Kirchliche Dogmatik*. The latter, he claims, comes very close to the Roman-Catholic doctrine, but nevertheless remains Protestant.[49] Küng's main aim seems to be to show that Roman-Catholic and Protestant doctrine are congruent.

In part one of his book Küng gives an account of Barth's concept of justification. Barth takes the "via media radikaler Christozentrik zwischen den Irrwegen des Neuprotestantismus und des Katholizismus".[50] In a letter to Küng, which is incorporated in the book, Barth says that Küng rendered his concept of justification correctly.[51] He further admits that he misunderstood Trent if Küng's account is correct, but suspects that the misunderstanding may be Küng's rather than his.[52] As far as the doctine of justification is concerned, Küng demands "ein unermüdliches 'Zurück zu den Quellen'".[53] He thinks that it is necessary to see the Tridentine decree as the result of an evolving dogmatic process. Accordingly he proceeds from a biblical analysis of the term "justification" rather than from the decree itself. As a result he arrives at the conclusion: "die Protestanten reden

[49] Küng, *Rechtfertigung*, p.15.
[50] Ibid., p.17.
[51] Ibid., p.11.
[52] Ibid., pp.12/13.
[53] Ibid., p.267.

von Gerechtsprechung, die Gerechtmachung einschließt, und die Katholiken von Gerechtmachung, die Gerechtsprechung voraussetzt".[54] The German Protestant scholar Joest agrees with this particular statement.[55] In McGrath's opinion "Küng's study marks a major step toward ecumenical discussion on the issue of justification"[56], and, according to Peter Brunner, Küng agrees with Edmund Schlink, a Protestant scholar, as far as the doctrine of justification is concerned.[57] Brunner's own evaluation of Küng's book is: "Wie man auch im Einzelnen über Küngs Buch urteilen mag, auf jeden Fall ist festzuhalten, daß in ihm evangelische Grundmotive in einer Weise zur Geltung kommen, die Anlaß zu einer aufrichtigen Freude ist."[58] He does not want to give a final statement as to whether the proposed consensus is a real one or not.[59] However, one should note that Brunner speaks of the Tridentine doctrine "in der Küngschen Interpretation".[60] In other words, he does not agree with Küng. In his opinion Barth's concept of justification is even more different from the Roman-Catholic one than Luther's, a rather obvious fact which, he claims, Küng overlooked.[61]

---

[54] Ibid., p.218.
[55] Joest, *Lehre*, p.46.
[56] McGrath, *Justification*, p.517.
[57] Brunner, *Rechtfertigungslehre*, pp.93/94.
[58] Ibid., p.97.
[59] Ibid., p.100.
[60] Ibid., p.104.
[61] Ibid., p.112.

Otto Hermann Pesch approaches the problem differently. He suggests that Luther's concept of justification is rather scholastic[62], and therefore not dissimilar to the Roman-Catholic one. The Roman-Catholic scholar Erwin Iserloh approaches the problem from a historical rather than a systematic point of view.[63] He points out that Luther's discovery of "iustitia Dei" (1515) and his separation from the Catholic church (1518) are not identical.[64] From this he concludes that the idea of justification by faith did not necessarily divide the churches in the reformation era. The dividing issues were in his opinion Luther's ideas of the church, the papacy, the councils and the ministry, divisions which he believes persist to this day.[65] Iserloh even suggests that Luther's discovery of "iustitia Dei" could be just a rediscovery of Catholic ideas which had been forgotten in the late middle ages.[66]

In 1983 Peter Manns and Harding Meyer published the results of an international conference on Luther and his ecumenical significance, which focussed in particular upon the scholarship of Joseph Lortz, the pioneer of the more sym-

---

[62] Compare below section B.
[63] Compare his contribution to Hubert Jedin (Hg.), *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte Band IV. Reformation, katholische Reform und Gegenreformation*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1967; some scholars think that Roman-Catholic research is concerned with Luther as a human being rather than a theologian anyway (Meyer, *Lutherforschung*, p.90).
[64] Iserloh, *Kirchenspaltung*, p.74.
[65] Ibid., p.78.
[66] Ibid., p.74.

pathetic Roman-Catholic school of Luther scholarship.[67] Lortz distinguishes between Catholic and heretical (respectively non-Catholic and not thoroughly Catholic) features in Luther's doctrine.[68] The conference pointed out three possible ways of looking at Luther's doctrine. The first is that some of its originally non-Catholic features can become Catholic, i.e. can be accepted by Roman-Catholic theology. Pesch thinks that "simul iustus et peccator" is one of them. This perception proceeds from the assumption that truth is variable. The second is to take Roman-Catholic doctrine more seriously as a touchstone as to what teachings can be called Roman-Catholic. A catchphrase of this approach is Manns' statement: "die Wahrheit ist immer wahr".[69] The third way is to try to find a compromise by distinguishing between absolutely and relatively heretical teachings in Luther's doctrine. In addition to this it was suggested that it is not possible to tell which of Luther's teachings were criticized by the bull threatening condemnation. Finally attention was drawn to the fact that Luther is not expressedly named in the Tridentine canons so that it would have to be proved in each given case that a specific canon applies to him.[70] It is proposed to follow up this point in this thesis and investigate it in greater depth.

---

[67] Manns, *Erschließung*; Peter Manns himself is a representative of this school.
[68] Meyer, *Lutherforschung*, p.91.
[69] Ibid., p.92.
[70] It is proposed to apply this method in this study; it is also applied by Pesch, *Canones*.

Peter Bläser points out that modern Lutheran research has moved away from the idea that justification is the mere imputation of Christ's righteousness.[71] On the other hand he says: "auch die katholische Theologie hat noch keine Antwort gefunden, die das Verhältnis von göttlichem Handeln und menschlichem Akt rational erklären könnte". Thereby he admits that in Roman-Catholic doctrine people play an active part in justification while there is only a weak connection between justification and works in Lutheran theology.[72]

On the other hand modern Protestant research has been concerned with the Tridentine decree on justification. Here too scholars struggle to disentangle themselves from the legacy of the stark divisions of the reformation. Representative of two different approaches are the interpretations of Peter Brunner, whose account is open to an ecumenical dialogue, and Wilfried Joest, a Lutheran scholar, who takes a more sceptical point of view.[73] Peter Brunner analyses the Tridentine decree from an an identifiably Protestant point of view. He does not actually state what the Tridentine decree says but establishes what it should have said and investigates whether it says this.[74] He is anxious to interpret the decree in a way that Lutherans can accept.[75]

---

[71] Bläser, *Fragen*, p.85.
[72] Ibid., pp.86/87.
[73] Pesch, *Canones*, p.246, footnote 2.
[74] E.g. Brunner, *Lehre*, pp.159/160.
[75] See his examination of the Tridenine perception of faith in: *Lehre*, pp.155-158.

Wilfried Joest, in his treatment of the decree for the Theologischen Ausschuß des Lutherischen Weltbundes sets out to analyse it in terms of four basic questions:

1. Was ist überhaupt Rechtfertigung dem Namen und der Sache nach, und was bedeutet es, daß ein Mensch "gerechtfertigt wird"?

2. Welches sind die Ursachen der Rechtfertigung, das heißt: was wirkt Gott, und was ist von seiten des Menschen erforderlich?

3. Wie ist der Satz zu verstehen, daß der Mensch "durch den Glauben" gerechtfertigt wird?

4. Ob und inwiefern tragen die Werke im vorbereitenden und nachfolgenden Stadium etwas zur Rechtfertigung bei?[76]

He does not actually analyse the whole decree, but confines himself to answering these crucial questions. He eventually arrives at the statement that the decisive difference between the Roman-Catholic and Protestant concept is not the question of whether righteousness is inherent or imputed, but rather the perception of human nature itself.[77]

Turning from investigations by individuals to ecumenical dialogue, it is evident that, as a central topic of Lutheran theology, the doctrine of justification has always been important in such dialogue involving Lutherans, especially so in the Lutheran/Roman-Catholic dialogue.[78] In the last

---

[76] Joest, *Lehre*, p.43; an overview of texts concerned with the Council of Trent is given in Pesch, *Canones*, pp.243-245, footnote 2.
[77] Joest, *Lehre*, p.69.
[78] Meyer, *Dialogdokumente*, pp.296/299.

decade there have been two major attempts to reconcile Lutheran and Roman-Catholic doctrine through ecumenical dialogue. One is the American discussion group "Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue".[79] It considered justification comparatively late because it proceeded from an assumed consensus on this issue.[80] Nevertheless it did not set out to find a compromise between initially opposing views, but to identify common points, to assess the effect of the differences on the relationship of the churches, and generally to maintain a "sympathetic ear". In general it gives a short historical survey of each issue in question, briefly states features of both doctrines and works out either that these are not missing in the other doctrine or that a difference remains. In the "Declaration" (§§ 161-165) it gives a summarizing statement in general terms. It realises, however, that its members do not speak officially for the churches they represent.[81] In particular the study identified as a special problem the fact that neither side "could responsibly disregard the public expressions of Christian faith made by its religious ancestors in the sixteenth century". For the Roman-Catholics this was especially true with regard to the Council of Trent.[82]

---

[79] "Catholics" denotes "Roman-Catholics".
[80] Meyer, *Dialogdokumente*, p.300; Pannenberg, *Gespräch*, p.233.
[81] Burgess, *Justification*, p.9.
[82] Peter, *Decree*, p.218; compare below p.122.

The other major recent joint venture is the study *Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend?* which was compiled by a group of German theologians of both Roman-Catholic and Protestant denomination and edited by K.Lehmann and W. Pannenberg in 1986. The purpose of this thesis is to analyse this study and its claims concerning justification.[83]

III. The study

The study was written by the Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians. Describing the task of the Study Group, Landesbischof Eduard Lohse and Cardinal Ratzinger wrote in a letter of June 1981 to its chairmen and scholarly directors

> daß dem gemeinsamen Zeugnis Urteile entgegenstehen, die im 16. Jahrhundert von der einen Kirche über die andere abgegeben worden sind, und Aufnahme in die Bekenntnisschriften der lutherischen und reformierten Kirche bzw. in die Lehrentscheidungen des Konzils von Trient gefunden haben. Diese sogenannten Verwerfungen treffen nach allgemeiner Überzeugung nicht mehr den heutigen Partner. Das darf jedoch nicht nur private Überzeugung bleiben, sondern muss von den Kirchen verbindlich festgeschrieben werden.[84]

So, in contrast to the American Dialogue Group, the Study Group set out not only to state differences but to try to overcome them in the light of modern theology.

---

[83] A survey of ecumenical dialogues gives Reinhard Slenczka (*Gerecht*, p.297).

[84] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.10.

Landesbischof Lohse had already emphasized the need for improved ecumenical co-operation when pope John Paul II on November 17th, 1980, during his visit to Germany, met Protestant Christians in Mainz. To achieve this a Joint Ecumenical Commission was created. This soon pointed out that a closer co-operation on practical matters presupposed an agreement on basical theological questions. In other words: the mutual doctrinal condemnations of the sixteenth century had to become obsolete. So the investigation was narrowed down to the question whether the condemnations still apply to Christians of the other denomination today.[85] Strictly speaking, of course, it is not correct to speak of "mutual condemnations". Particularly on the Protestant side these "condemnations" in most cases are mere assertions which utter no formal anathema, although they might imply one in substance where the opponent is explicitly named. On the Roman-Catholic side there are, however, actual condemnations such as in the decrees of the Council of Trent, though it should be noted that these anathemas are rather guarded, anathematising people only if they teach a certain doctrine, with no opponent being explicitly named.

---

[85] "One may well wonder whether such an approach is sufficient. The commission limited its work to the Reformation (including the reaction of the Council of Trent) and to post-Vatican II theology. It did not go into the biblical basis of justification and the sacraments, nor did it attempt to suggest a common theology and practice for the future. This, then, is the limitation of this dialogue." (Tavard, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.301).

The task of investigating the "mutual condemnations" was entrusted to the Ecumenical Study Group of Protestant and Catholic Theologians. Initially consisting only of Lutheran theologians on the Protestant side, this was expanded by adding reformed theologians and a number of other experts. The task was confined to investigating the condemnations on justification, the sacraments and the ministry. Though the study's ambit included consideration of the products of recent ecumenical discussions, and, indeed, some comentators have argued that it "draws considerably on the international dialogue between Lutherans and Catholics and, to a lesser extent, on the U.S. dialogue between the two churches"[86], in fact it does not really consider such texts in any detail. Rather it retains as its primary focus the key Lutheran and Tridentine texts.

To ensure a thorough investigation, the Study Group applied four questions to the condemnations:

(1) against whom is a given condemnation directed,

(2) was it a correct rendering of the target position,

(3) does it still apply to the position of Christians of the other denomination today, and

[86] Ibid.

(4) if it does, what importance and what significance does the remaining difference have?[87]

The Study Group bears two things in mind: "Kein katholischer Theologe kann ... von sich aus einfach die Verbindlichkeit solcher Lehraussagen entkräften", and: "Die feierliche Verpflichtung auf die je geltenden Bekenntnisschriften ist ... im evangelischen Raum besonders lutherischer Prägung nicht zu übersehen."[88] Other things that had to be considered were that Protestants have a different attitude to their confessions than Roman-Catholics do to their dogma, and that a Protestant confession is easier to relativize. The Study Group, however, did not aim at complete agreement.[89] On the contrary it was aware of the fact that its work was only preliminary, preparing the way for later investigations.

With regard to the first question - against whom is a given condemnation directed - the study group proceeded from two presuppositions. First, many of the Protestant condemnations were directed at late-scholastic positions. Second the Council of Trent knew the Protestant position only from second and third-hand lists of errors. The contemporary

---

[87] The study proceeds from the assumption that even fundamental differences do not necessarily divide the churches (Pannenberg, *Gespräch*, pp.234/235).
[88] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, pp.12/13.
[89] "Die Studie behauptet nicht, daß ein ... Konsensus hinsichtlich der Rechtfertigungslehre heute gegeben sei." (Pannenberg, *Gespräch*, p.234).

relevance of the condemnations was further limited, the Study Group found, by three further considerations:

1. some apply only to extreme positions[90] and marginal assertions,

2. these were often personal opinions rather than the doctrine of the church,

3. there also was a great deal of misunderstanding.[91]

The investigation of each subject was entrusted to a working party consisting of members of the expanded Study Group. The party working on justification consisted of ten members, with a Roman-Catholic Bishop, Prof. Karl Lehmann as chairman.[92] In spite of being expanded by the inclusion of reformed theologians and the acknowledged necessity to consider also reformed theology[93], they considered only Lutheran and Roman-Catholic doctrine.[94] Only the Tridentine

---

[90] Beißer, *Konkordienformel*, p.211.
[91] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, Einleitung.
[92] Ibid., p.173.
[93] Compare above p.27.
[94] Therefore the term "reformatorisch", meaning rather "Protestant", is usually rendered "Lutheran" in this thesis. When the study is refering from the Roman-Catholic point of view back to the Protestant one, the correct translation is, however, kept because the study wants to include the non-Lutheran Protestants as well. There is of course still the question whether it is right in doing so; The reformed doctrine of justification does not differ essentially from the Lutheran one (Joest, *Dogmatik*, pp.439/442); nevertheless no reformed writings are con-

decrees on the Roman-Catholic side and the "Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-**Lutherischen** Kirche" (BSLK) backed by a few statements from Luther and Melanchthon on the Protestant side were considered.[95] The Tridentine decrees defined the Roman-Catholic doctrine of the time, and this is the Roman-Catholic doctrine to the present day. The *Bekenntnisschriften* contain the official Lutheran doctrine.[96] In other words by choosing these sources the working party not only excluded extreme positions, marginal assertions, and personal opinions from the start, but also confined itself to a limited theological and historical range.

The working party did not seek to compare Protestant and Roman-Catholic confessional documents directly, since these are not explicitly and deliberately related to one another. They claimed, however, that there are a number of essential differences called "distinguishing doctrines" which provide the central points over which the churches differ. The working party admitted that the points at issue had been oversimplified in the study, but it still thought that they could provide a starting point for a differentiated theological judgement.[97] However, it did not investigate the differences between the Protestant and Roman-Catholic doc-

---

sidered.

[95] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, Einleitung.

[96] Joest, *Dogmatik*, p.447.

[97] Ibid., p.35.

trine themselves but the way they were subsequently understood. This, of course, presupposes that the understanding of the condemnations changed.[98] This train of thought determines the structure of the study.

Having described the presuppositions of the study, the way the working party went about its task deserves closer attention. First of all, the members of the working party set out to analyse the understanding of the differences from the reformation era to the present. They think that the "Unterscheidungslehren" - as they call the differences - have to be re-examined and re-evaluated on the basis of new insights which have been given to the churches and theology today.[99] According to the study there are seven of these "Unterscheidungslehren" between Luther and the Council of Trent.[100] These are the perception of:

(1) the depravity of human nature,

(2) concupiscence,

(3) the relation of people to grace,

---

[98] This may be true in the broader context of modern theological discussion, but cannot be said of the doctrinal background of the condemnations.
[99] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.35.
[100] The translated text says that the differences "include" these seven (p.30); this is, however, not a fortunate translation of the German text.

(4) the nature of righteousness,

(5) the way of attaining grace,

(6) the necessity of assurance

and (7) merits.[101]

As in this study it is proposed to investigate the findings of the working party these differences have to be explored more fully. This in turn requires closer comparison between Luther's and the Council of Trent's doctrines of justification. This is given in part B of this thesis.

Considering the depravity of human nature the study employs two arguments from the Formula Concordiae:

> Vicissim autem credimus, docemus atque confitemur peccatum originis non esse levem, sed tam profundam humanae naturae corruptionem, quae nihil sanum, nihil incorruptum in corpore et anima hominis atque adeo in interioribus et exterioribus viribus eius reliquit[102],

and

> Credimus, quod hominis non renati intellectus, cor et voluntas in rebus spiritualibus et divinis ex propriis naturalibus viribus prorsus nihil inteligere, credere, amplecti cogitare, velle, inchoare, perficere, agere, operari aut cooperari possint, ... Inde adeo naturale liberum arbitrium ratione corruptarum virium

---

[101] This is the most detailed analysis of the differences that had so far been given (Meyer, *Dialogdokumente*, p.307).

[102] Epit. I, Affirmativa III: *BSLK* p.772, ll.10-16.

> et naturae suae depravatae, duntaxat ad ea, quae Deo displicentet adversantur, activum et efficax est.[103]

This leads the study to consider the problem of free will. The quote from the Solida Declaratio echoes a statement of Luther's when it teaches the tendency of free will to sin.[104] Against this the study puts canons 5, 7 and 8 of the Council of Trent's decree on justification. These anathematize all those who say

> liberum hominis arbitrium post Adae peccatum amissum esse ... aut rem esse de solo titulo, immo titulum sine re, figmentum denique a satanam invectum in Ecclesiam[105],
>
> opera omnia, quae ante iustificationem fiunt, quacumque ratione facta sint, vere esse peccata vel odium Dei mereri, aut quanto vehementius quis nititur se disponere ad gratiam, tanto eum gravius peccare[106],

and

> gehennae metum, per quem ad misericordiam Dei de peccatis dolendo configimus vel a peccando abstinemus, peccatum esse aut peccatores peiores facere.[107]

The question of concupiscence arises from the question of the depravity of human nature. Already Melanchthon had called concupiscence sin in the apology:

> Clare enim appelant [sc. testimonia Augustini et

---

[103] SD II, 7: *BSLK* p.873, ll.16-21; p.874, ll.17-21.
[104] "Liberum arbitrium post peccatum res est de solo titulo, et dum facere quod in se est, peccat mortaliter" (Luther, Disputatio, WA I p.354, ll.5/6).
[105] Canon 5; Denzinger 1555.
[106] Canon 7; Denzinger 1557.
[107] Canon 8; Denzinger 1558.

> Pauli] concupiscentiam peccatum, quod tamen his, qui sunt in Christo, non imputatur, etsi res sit natura digna morte, ubi non condonatur.[108]

This had been noted and condemned by canon 5 of the Council of Trent's decree on original sin. This anathematises all those who deny

> per Iesu Christi Domini nostri gratiam, quae in baptismate confertur, reatum originalis peccati remitti,

or say

> non tolli totum id, quod veram et propriam peccati rationem habet, sed illud ... tantum radi aut non imputari.[109]

Nevertheless Melanchthon's statement has been reinforced by the Formula Concordiae:

> Reiicimus ergo et damnamus dogma illud, quo asseritur peccatum originale tantummodo reatum et debitum esse ex alieno delicto absque ulla naturae nostrae corruptione in nos derivatum. Item, concupiscentias pravas non esse peccatum, sed concreatas naturae conditiones et proprietates quasdam essentiales, aut defectus illos et malum ingens a nobis paulo ante commemoratum non esse peccatum, propter quod homo Christo non insertus sit filius irae.[110]

Compare this with:

> Repudiantur igituret reiiciuntur veterum et recentiorum Pelagianorum falsae opiniones et dogmata vana ... Quod pravae concupiscentiae non sint peccatum, sed conditiones quaedam aut concreatae essentiales naturae proprietates.[111]

---

[108] Apol 2, 40: *BSLK* p.155, ll.11-15.
[109] Denzinger 1515.
[110] Epit. I, 11-12: *BSLK* p.772, ll.40-41; p.773, ll.1-10.
[111] SD I, 17-18: *BSLK* p.850, ll.12-14.19-22.

According to the study the third main difference is the perception of people's relation to grace. Again this problem narrows down to the question of free will. In addition to the arguments which had already been adduced when discussing the depravity of human nature, the study also mentions Luther's statement about the human will being like a beast of burden[112] and the following passage from the Formula Concordiae:

> ... ad conversiomam suam (ut sape iam est dictum) prorsus nihil conferre potest. Et hac in parte multo est deterior lapide aut trunco, quia repugnat verbo et voluntati Dei, donec Deus eum a morte peccati resuscitet, illuminet atque renovet.[113]

Against this the study quotes canon 4 of the Council of Trent's decree on justification, which anathematizes all those who say

> liberum arbitrium a Deo motum et excitatum nihil cooperari assentiendo Deo excitanti atque vocanti, quo ad obtinendam iustificationis gratiam se disponat ac praeparet, neque posse dissentire, si velit, sed velut inanime quodam nihil omnino agere mereque passive se habere.[114]

---

[112] "Humana voluntas in medio posita est, ceu iumentum, si insederit Deus, vult et vadit, quo vult Deus ... Si insederit Satan, vult et vadit, quo vult Satan, nec est in eius arbitrio ad utrum sessorem currere aut eum quaerere, sed ipsi sessores certant op ipsum obtinendum et possidendum" (Luther, *Arbitrium*, WA XVIII p. 635, ll. 17-22).

[113] SD II, 59: *BSLK* p.895, ll.11; p.896, ll.1-7.

[114] Denzinger 1554.

There is an evident connection between these three differences. They can indeed be taken as a group although the study does not say so.

The fourth difference concerns the nature of righteousness. The main question is whether righteousness is imputed or infused. Is it a reality on God's side alone which people can benefit from or does it become a quality of people's souls? Luther of course favoured the first approach.[115] Melanchton asked in the Apology: "Cur non exponunt (sc. adversarii) hic gratiam misericordiam Dei erga nos?"[116] Against this the Council of Trent set canon 11 of the decree on justification. This anathematises all those who say

> homines iustificari vel sola imputatione iustitiae Christi, vel sola peccatorum remissione, exclusa gratia et caritate, quae in cordibus eorum per Spiritum Sanctum diffundatur atque illis inhaereat, aut etiam gratiam, qua iustificamur, esse tantum favorem Dei.[117]

According to the study the fifth difference is the perception of the way of attaining grace. Is justification by faith alone or by co-operation of grace and free will? There are two reasons why it cannot be by co-operation of grace and free will for the reformers: in their opinion

---

[115] "Gratiam accipio hic proprie pro favore dei, sicut debet, non pro qualitate animi, ut nostri recentiores docuerunt" (Luther, *Rationis*, WA VIII p. 106, ll. 10/11).

[116] Apol 4, 381: *BSLK* p.232, l.3.

[117] Denzinger 1561.

there is no free will (1) and grace is not a quality of the soul (2). Already from this it can be seen that the way of attaining grace really does constitute a difference between Luther and Trent. Thus the Confessio Augustana says:

> Item docent, quod homines non possint iustificari coram Deo propriis viribus, meritis aut operibus, sed gratis iustificentur propter Christum per fidem, cum credunt se in gratiam recipi et peccata remitti propter Christum, qui sua morte pro nostris peccatis satisfecit. Hanc fidem imputat Deus pro iustitia coram ipso.[118]

This is confirmed by a statement of Luther from the Smalcald Articles.[119] The study puts canons 9, 11 and 12 of the Tridentine decree on justification against those statements. These anathematize all those who say

> sola fide impium iustificari, ita ut intelligat, nihil aliud requiri, quo ad iustificationis gratiam consequendam cooperetur, et nulla ex parte necesse esse, eum suae voluntatis motu praeparari atque disponi[120]

and

> fidem iustificantem nihil aliud esse quam fiduciam divinae misericordiae peccata remittentis propter Christum, vel eam fiduciam solam esse, qua iustificamur.[121]

---

[118] CA 4, 1-3: *BSLK* p.56, 11.2-10.

[119] "Sie sind allzumal Sünder und werden on verdienst gerecht aus seiner Gnade durch die Erlösung Jhesu Christi inn seinem Blut (Ro. 3). ... solches mus gegleubet werden und sonst mit keinem Werck, Gesetze noch verdienst, mag erlanget oder gefasst werden" (Luther, *Artikel*, WA L p. 199, 11. 3-14). The study does not quote the WA here.

[120] Canon 9; Denzinger 1559.

[121] Canon 12; Denzinger 1562; for conon 11 see above p.36.

The study argues that the sixth major difference concerns assurance of salvation. Luther had favoured it in the *Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute* and the *Acta augustana*.[122] This has been taken on by Melanchthon in the Apology:

> Sola fides, quae intuetur in promissionem et senit ideo certo statuendum esse, quod Deus ignoscat, quia Christus non sit frustra mortuus etc., vincit terrores peccati et mortis. Si quis dubitat, utrum remittantur sibi peccata, contumelia afficit Christum, cum peccatum suam iudicat maius aut efficacius esse, quam mortem et promissionem Christi.[123]

The Council of Trent put canons 13 and 14 of the decree on justification against these statements. They anathematise all those who say

> omni homini ad remmissionem peccatorum consequendam necessarium esse, ut credat certo et absque ulla haesitatione propriae in infirmitatis et indispositionis, peccata sibi esse remissa[124]

and

> hominem a peccatis absolvi ac iustificari ex eo, quod se absolvi ac iustificari certo credat, aut

---

[122] "Cur dixit Christus: Quorum remiseritis peccata, remittuntur eis, nisi quod non sunt remissa ulli, nisi remittente sacerdote credat sibi remitti? ... Non enim sufficit remissio peccati et gratiae donatio, Sed oportet etiam credere esse remissum" (Luther, *Resolutiones*, WA I p. 543, ll. 14/15.23/24); compare for "dixi, neminem iustificari posse nisi per fidem, sic scilicet, ut necesse sit, eum certa fide credere sese iustificari et nullo modò dubitare, quod gratiam consequatur. Si enim dubitat et incertus est, iam non iustificatur, sed evomit gratiam." (Luther, *Acta*, WA II p. 13, ll. 6-9).

[123] Apol IV, 148f.: *BSLK* p.189, ll.32-40.

[124] Canon 13; Denzinger 1563.

> neminem vere esse iustificatum, nisi qui credit se esse iustificatum, et hac sola fide absolutionem et iustificationem perfici.[125]

The last difference the study mentions is the perception of merits. Luther summed up his criticism of the doctrine of justification of the Catholic church in his 1531 lecture on Galatians and the disputation *De homine*.[126] According to the study the Council of Trent put canons 31 and 32 of the decree on justification against this. These anathematise all those who say

> iustificatum peccare, dum intuitu aeternae mercedis bene operatur[127],

and

> hominis iustificati bona opera ita esse dona Dei, ut non sint etiam bona ipsius iustificati merita, aut ipsum iustificatum bonis operibus, quae ab eo per Dei gratiam et Iesu Christi meritum (cuius vivum membrum est) fiunt, non vere mereri augmentum gratiae, vitam aeternam et ipsius vitae aeternae (si tamen in gratia decesserit) consecutionem, atque etiam gloriae augmentum.[128]

These seven differences can be summarized into two groups. The main differences are the nature of original sin and the nature of righteousness. The first three differences

---

[125] Canon 14; Denzinger 1564.

[126] "Contra iustitiarios qui gratiam et vitam aeternam non volunt gratis accipere ab eo (sc. Deo), sed illa mereri suis operibus" (Luther, *Gal.35*, WA XL.I p.224, ll.30-32); compare for "Impie philosophantur contra Theologiam ... qui dicunt, hominem faciendo, quod in se est, posse mereri gratiam Dei et vitam" (Luther, *De homine*, WA XXXIX. I p.176, ll.21-23).

[127] Canon 31; Denzinger 1581.

[128] Canon 32; Denzinger 1582.

belong to the former, the last four to the latter. As Baur puts it, the first three define the human being. However, he reckons only differences 4 and 5 as refering to righteousness, while differences 6 and 7 as refering to features of christian life. Though this distinction is possible, in fact the latter as well as the former relate to the different perception of righteousness.[129]

So though not **seeking** to compare Protestant and Roman-Catholic confessional documents directly, the study actually **did** so in the end. Summing up, one sees that the study considered only 11 of the 33 canons on justification. Even fewer of the canons of the decree on original sin were considered - only one out of five. From this observation the question arises whether all **relevant** canons were considered. In other words: whether the impact of the Tridentine decree on Luther's doctrine has been thoroughly worked out. The same applies to the Lutheran condemnations. In addition it is equally disturbing that the condemnations have been considered without the underlying positive accounts of the doctrine. As a result, the study sometimes mistakes the meaning of the canons. This raises the third question of whether it is appropriate to proceed from prefixed differences rather than from a detailed investigation of the relevant texts.

---

[129] Baur, Einig?, pp.4/5; the study itself does not assign the seven mentioned differences to these two groups.

There were, in short a number of inherent difficulties and contradictions in the methodology and approach of the study. Some have already been pointed out. Jörg Baur criticised the study from an academic point of view, disagreeing not only with the method employed by the study but with its arguments and conclusions as well.[130] He also criticises the study for its use of conditional language and rather vague formulations. It is, however, proposed to concentrate on the doctrine in this thesis.

There are two distinct critical approaches which can be taken to the study's doctrinal findings. One is to attempt to place them in the context of the theological history of the discussion on justification from the early church to the present day and analyse them from this perspective. The other is to confine oneself to the same limited range as the working party.[131] It is proposed to take the second course in this thesis. Even within this limited context, however, the analysis has to be broader than that of the study including not only all the canons of the Council of Trent but its positive doctrine as well. In addition, this study will pay closer attention to the earlier Tridentine decree on original sin, something which, as shall be seen, the study tends to ignore. Furthermore, due account has also to be taken of Luther's teaching.

---

[130] Baur, *Einig?*, p.V.
[131] See above footnote 85.

The main purpose of section B will be to examine two essential points concerning the Tridentine decree and canons:

1. whether the Council was refering to Luther in a given canon

and

2. whether this anathema does in fact apply to Luther's concept of justification.[132]

Both Luther and the Council of Trent claim to derive their doctrine from Augustine, and furthermore the study pointedly includes him. It is therefore appropriate to consider his views where relevant. Harding Meyer points out three aspects of the discussion of the doctrine of justification which are to be expected to be considered in an ecumenical dialogue involving Lutherans:

a) details of the doctrine itself,

b) the central status of the doctrine and

c) the understanding of justification as the presup-

[132] Every single canon has to be considered to guard the thesis from the reproach that it missed out on important canons.

position of other doctrines.[133]

Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend? considers only the first aspect.[134] However, a dialogue which does not consider the second aspect is incomplete.[135]

---

[133] Meyer, *Dialogdokumente*, pp.303/304.
[134] Compare ibid., p.317.
[135] Ibid., p.316.

B. Comparison of Luther's view on justification and the Council of Trent's decree on justification

I. The depravity of human nature

The depravity of human nature is in fact the fundamental feature of the doctrine of justification. If human nature were not depraved, there would be no need for justification. "Depravity" means being deprived of a free will. However, from the very first chapter of the decree on justification[136] the Council of Trent establishes the existence of such a free will. This results in canon 5, which anathematizes all those who say

> liberum hominis arbitrium post Adae peccatum amissum esse ... rem esse de solo titulo, immo titulum sine re, figmentum denique a satanam invectum in Ecclesiam[137],

and in canon 7 which anathematizes all those who say

> opera omnia, quae ante iustificationem fiunt, quacumque ratione facta sint, vere esse peccata vel odium Dei mereri, aut quanto vehementius quis nititur se disponere ad gratiam, tanto eum gravius peccare.[138]

This implies that according to the Council of Trent there are, or at least can be, good works before justification, although these do not contribute to it. Therefore human nature cannot be totally depraved.[139] This of course contradicts Luther who had taught that free will after the fall in

---

[136] Denzinger 1521.
[137] Ibid. 1555.
[138] Ibid. 1557.
[139] Joest, *Lehre*, pp.43/44.

reality has no substance.[140] According to him "there is no such thing as a neutral mediating power in the soul called the freedom of the will."[141] He even thought that to establish a "liberum arbitrium" meant to deny God and vice versa.[142] Luther of course agrees to the statement that people can decide freely where earthly things are concerned, but the Council of Trent's perception of free will goes beyond that. So canons 5 and 7 **do** apply to Luther. It is obvious that the Tridentine fathers were referring directly to Luther in canon 5 because they partly used his words ("liberum hominis arbitrium post Adae peccatum ... aut rem esse de solo titulo").[143] The doctrine of the second council of Orange is reaffirmed while Luther's doctrine is rejected.[144]

However, this free will is weakened and sapped in strength. It is not able to respond to God appropriately on its own. The Council further establishes

> quod, cum omnes homines in praevaricatione Adae innocentiam perdidissent, facti immundi et (ut Aposto-

---

[140] "Liberum arbitrium post peccatum res est de solo titulo, et dum facere quod in se est, peccat mortaliter" (Luther, *Disputatio*, WA I p.354, ll.5/6); compare "liberum arbitrium esse nihil et rem ... de solo titulo" (Luther, *Arbitrium*, WA XVIII p.756, ll.7/8), "liberum arbitrium est figmentum in rebus seu titulus sine re" (Luther, *Assertio*, WA VII p. 146, ll.5/6); Iwand, *Luther*, p.32.

[141] Chadwick, *Justification*, p.4.

[142] Ebeling, *Luther*, Sp.516.

[143] Pesch, *Canones*, p.250; compare above footnote 140.

[144] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.81.

lus inquit) naturare filii irae.[145]

Thereby it repeats the doctrine of canon 2 of the decree on original sin. This anathematizes all those who say

> Adae praevaricationem sibi soli et non eius propagini ... nocuisse , acceptam a Deo sanctitatem et iustitiam, quam perdidit, sibi soli et non nobis etiam eum perdidisse; aut inquinatum illum per inoboedientiae peccatum mortem et poenas corporis tantum in omne genus humanum transfudisse, non autem et peccatum, quod mors est animae.[146]

This canon presupposes canon 1 of the same decree which anathematizes all those who deny

> primum hominem Adam, cum mandatum Dei in paradiso fuisset transgressus, statim sanctitatem et iustitiam, in qua constitutus fuerat, amisisse incurrisseque per offensam praevaricationis huiusmodi iram et indignationem Dei atque ideo mortem, quam antea illi comminatus fuerat Deus, et cum morte captivitatem sub eius potestate, qui mortis deinde habuit imperium, hoc est diaboli, totumque Adam per illam praevaricationis offensam secundum corpus et animam in deterius commutatum fuisse.[147]

It should be noted that this teaching had also already been anathematized by the second Council of Orange (529).[148] The doctrine is included in the quote from chapter I in a subordinate clause.[149] Trent is saying that after the fall human will changed for the worse. Luther would have agreed happily. According to him, people try to

---

[145] Brunner, *Konzil*, pp.141/142.
[146] Denzinger 372; this follows the second council of Orange.
[147] Denzinger 1511.
[148] Ibid. 371.
[149] Cum omnes homines in praevaricatione Adae innocentiam perdidissent (see above p.45).

adjust God's word to their own wishes. Thereby they reduce God to a mere name for their own wish to be God - that is their own master. This wish was already in Adam before the fall, for it brought the fall about.[150] So it is not a quality but rather a drive.[151] Teaching this, he is of course left with the question of whether God created it and in this way is responsible for evil. He denies this and solves the problem by assuming the existence of a devil.[152] So the **nature** of human will did not change, but since the fall it is no longer free and therefore changed for the worse. It is reduced to a mere name.[153]

Luther, then would have agreed with the wording of canon 1 of the Tridentine decree on original sin though his underlying theology would have been different from Trent. For it is clear that Trent's view of original sin, as outlined in

---

[150] "The slavery of man's will is understood by Luther to be a consequence of his creatureliness, rather than his sin" (McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.15).

[151] Iwand, *Luther*, p.41.

[152] When he says that human will is like a beast of burden which goes where God or the devil - depending on who is seated on it - leads it, he presupposes that the devil exists. "Humana voluntas in medio posita est, ceu iumentum, si insederit Deus, vult et vadit, quo vult Deus ... Si insederit Satan, vult et vadit, quo vult Satan, nec est in eius arbitrio ad utrum sessorem currere aut eum quaerere, sed ipsi sessores certant op ipsum obtinendum et possidendum." (Luther, *Arbitrium*, WA XVIII p. 635, ll. 17-22); McGrath thinks that "for Luther, it is God who is the author of sin: Deus operatur et mala opera in impiis" (*Iustitia* p.15). He derives this from WA XVIII. p.709, ll.28-36.

[153] See above footnote 143.

canon 2, bears litte relation to Luther's.[154] What the Council claims is that Adam's sin not only harmed himself but also his descendants. So, unlike Luther, it understands Adam's change for the worse as a consequence of his sin rather than his creatureliness. According to Tridentine doctrine, Adam further transmitted to all people death of both body and soul. In other words; every child inherits the consequences of original sin from its parents by propagation.[155] Original sin in this sense is a quality of the soul. People who teach that original sin is not inherited are anathematized. One of them is Luther.

Pesch claims that according to Luther people are born with original sin because they are related to Adam, and that original sin derived from Adam's actual sin and is passed on by propagation, though not by generation.[156] Thereby he turns Luther's teaching into that of an inherited corruption ("Erbsünde"), as if there was no difference between the Lutheran and the Roman-Catholic doctrine. Augustine's view of original sin also stresses inherited corruption ("Erbsünde").[157] According to him sin, in the beginning, was the result of a totally free choice. This is not true later on.

---

[154] See above p.46.

[155] This is better expressed by the German term "Erbsünde" though "peccatum originale" is more correctly translated "Ursünde" (Hünermann prefers the latter); compare Iwand, *Luther*, pp.40/41.

[156] Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, pp.89/90.

[157] E.Kinder, Art. *Sünde und Schuld V. Dogmengeschichtlich*, in: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bd. 6, Sp.490, Tübingen 1962, 3rd ed.

After the fall, Adam's nature had changed, and this not only affected Adam himself but also his descendants. There is no newly-created soul in each individual.[158]

Luther's idea of original sin is therefore certainly not an Augustinian one. On the contrary: "In his pronouncements upon free will ... Luther appears to move increasingly away from Augustine."[159] This immediately places him at odds with the Council of Trent, which derives its doctrine directly from Augustine. Thus the references in canons 3 (Adae peccatum, quod ... propagatione, non imitatione transfusum omnibus inest) and 4 ("nihil ex Adam trahere originalis peccati, quod regenerationis lavacro necesse sit expiari ad vitam aeternam consequendam") of the decree on original sin[160] and in chapter III ("Nam sicut revera homines, nisi ex semine Adae propagati nascerentur, non nascerentur iniusti, cum ea propagatione per ipsum, dum concipiuntur, propriam iniustitiam contrahant") and IV ("statu, in quo homo nascitur filius in primi Adae") of the decree on justification.[161]

---

[158] Brown, *Augustine*, p.354.
[159] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.15.
[160] Denzinger 1514; in canon 4 the repetition is not only in a subordinate clause (as in canon 3) but in the actual refutation (as in canon 2); the remedy for original sin is conveyed by baptism (see below B.V).
[161] Denzinger 1523-1524.

The Council of Trent continues that people were after the fall

> usque adeo servi ... peccati et sub potestate diaboli ac mortis, ut non modo gentes per vim naturae (that is by their free will), sed ne Iudaei quidem per ipsam etiam litteram Legis Moysi inde liberari aut surgere possent[162],

Luther would have agreed with this for he emphasizes the necessity of grace for people, and so canon 1 of the decree on justification which anathematizes all those who say

> hominem suis operibus, quae vel per humanae naturae, vel per Legis doctrinam fiant, absque divina per Christum Iesum gratia posse iustificari coram Deo[163]

does not apply to him. Canon 2 of the same decree anathematises all those who say

> ad hoc solum divinam gratiam per Christum Iesum dari, ut facilius homo iuste vivere ac vitam aeternam promereri possit, quasi per liberum arbitrium sine gratia utrumque, sed aegre tamen et difficulter possit.[164]

The gist of this canon is that grace is indispensable for salvation, and therefore it is obvious that it does not apply to Luther. He argues that human works have no share in the attaining of righteousness, and therefore people need grace. For him leading a just life without grace is im-

---

[162] Decree on justification, chapter I; Denzinger 1521.
[163] Denzinger 1551.
[164] Ibid., 1552.

possible. Canon 6 of the same decree anathematizes all those who say

> non esse in potestate hominis vias suas malas facere, sed mala opera ita ut bona Deum operari, non permissive solum, sed etiam proprie et per se, adeo ut sit proprium eius opus non minus proditio Iudae quam vocatio Pauli.[165]

It is a bit difficult to say whether this anathema applies to Luther, for he is certainly saying "non esse in potestate hominis vias suas malas facere", but not that it is God who brings about evil.[166] This is, however, the predominant teaching which is anathematized by the Council of Trent. It is also considered to be the only alternative to people making their works evil themselves. This canon does not consider the possibility, as Luther does, of the existence of a devil who makes people do evil things. So here the Council of Trent actually anathematizes the statement that God does evil things rather than the statement that people cannot make their works evil themselves, that is that there is no free will. This had already been anathematized by canon 5.[167] Thus canon 6 does not apply to Luther.

To sum up there are areas of common ground between Luther and the Council on the issue of the depravity of human nature. Equally, however, one can also identify points of

---

[165] Ibid., 1556.
[166] Compare above footnote 152.
[167] See above p.44.

clear departure. Finally some aspects Luther would have agreed with, but for theological reasons markedly different from those of the Tridentine fathers.

II. Concupiscence

According to Luther "concupiscentia spiritualis" is the same as "peccatum originale".[168] It denotes the seeking of peace, quietness and happiness somewhere beyond this life, exploiting God merely as a means of achieving these.[169] The "concupiscentia spiritualis" is aroused by the law and stands up against it. What it denotes has already been discussed in the last chapter.[170]

Canon 5 of the Tridentine decree on original sin anathematises all those who say

> non tolli totum id, quod veram et propriam peccati rationem habet, sed illud ... tantum radi aut non imputari.[171]

The Council of Trent professes that concupiscence or a tendency to sin remains in justified people. It is left for people to wrestle with, but it cannot harm those who do not

---

[168] Compare Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.90.
[169] Iwand, *Luther*, pp.22/23.
[170] See above B.I.
[171] Denzinger 1515.

give in but steadfastly resist by the grace of Jesus Christ. It is occasionally called sin by the apostle, but according to the Council only because it comes from sin and inclines to sin, and not because it is sin in the true and proper sense in those who have been reborn. On the contrary all that pertains to the true essence of sin is removed from them. People who nevertheless teach that concupiscence is sin are anathematized.

This anathema obviously applies to Luther. According to him, concupiscence is not just what is left of original sin ("Erbsünde") after the guilt has been taken away, but is original sin ("Ursünde") itself i.e., people's wish to be God, that is their own master. His perception is that this "concupiscentia spiritualis" is not taken away and so remains sinful. This is a new teaching in marked contrast with scholastic orthodoxy.[172] "Luther specially scorned the scholastic view, derived from Augustine's concessive clauses, that the sexual impulse in concupiscence is natural and, though all too liable to become a vehicle of sin, is not in itself sinful but implanted by the Creator."[173] "Das luthersche Verständnis und die luthersche Beurteilung der Konkupiszenz stehen in einem Gegensatz zur katholischen Lehre, der kaum überbrückbar scheint."[174]

---

[172] Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.93.
[173] Chadwick, *Justification*, p.3.
[174] Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, pp.96/97.

III. People's passivity towards the attaining of grace

The issue of people's passivity towards the attaining of grace includes the questions: why do people deserve grace; and how it is applied to them. The Council of Trent tackles these in chapters II and III of the decree on justification. Generally speaking, there is a similarity here between the teaching of Luther and the Council since the latter stresses the importance of Christ. However, when the underlying theological assumptions of Luther and Trent are explored they are often found to be fundamentally different. Chapter II of the Tridentine decree on justification states

> caelestis Pater, Pater misericordiarum et Deus totius consolationis, Christum Iesum filium suum, et ante Legem et Legis tempore multis sanctis Patribus declaratum ac promissum, cum venit beata illa plenitudo temporis, ad homines" missit, "ut et Iudaeos, qui sub lege erant, redimeret, et gentes, quae non sectabantur iustitiam, iustitiam apprehenderent, atque onmes adaptionem filiorum reciperent.[175]

The primary purpose of this passage is to establish a link between justification and christology, a link which is also emphasised in Chapter VII which explains why Christ is essential for justification. Christ is the "causa meritoria" of justification, since he earned it for all people by his death. Luther, impelled by his elevated vision of Christ's role in justification, would have gone further than the Tridentine approach. In Luther's eyes, Christ was not merely

[175] Denzinger 1522; Joest, *Lehre*, p.44.

the meritorious or even the primary cause of justification, but justification itself. For while Trent sees Christ as just the first - though indispensable - presupposition for justification, Luther argues that Christ directly brings it about.

The link between justification and soteriology is further explored in chapter III. This establishes that though

> verum ... ille (sc. Iesus Christus) pro omnibus mortuus est, non omnes ... mortis eius beneficium recipiunt, sed ii dumtaxat, quibus meritum passionis eius communicatur. Nam sicut revera homines, nisi ex semine Adae propagati nascerentur, non nascerentur iniusti, cum ea propagatione per ipsum, dum concipiuntur, propriam iniustitiam contrahant: ita nisi in Christo renascerentur, numquam iustificarentur, cum ea renascentia per meritum passionis eius gratia, qua iusti fiunt, illis tribuatur.[176]

The gist of this is that not all people are saved, but only those who are reborn in Christ. Through the merit of his passion, these had been granted grace by which they become just. Apart from the renewed repetition of the doctrine of original sin as an inherited corruption ("Erbsünde") Luther seems to concur. His often quoted statement that human will is like a beast of burden driven either by God or the devil clearly implies, first, that the devil can lead human will to eternal death just as God can lead it to

---

[176] Denzinger 1523; Brunner, *Konzil*, p.148.

eternal life, and second, that the devil is of equal strength to God so that they struggle over each human will.[177]

At this stage one needs to examine the underlying theological assumptions of Luther and the Tridentine fathers about the nature of election and damnation. Luther, it has been argued, "explicitly teaches a doctrine of double predestination".[178] The reasons for such divine choice are of course hidden in the Deus absconditus.[179] Such a doctrine is very far from the assumptions of the Tridentine fathers. Hence, although chapter III establishes a doctrine which seems to be close to Luther, the Council of Trent differs significantly from him in its underlying presuppositions and it would therefore be wrong to claim that Luther and Trent really agree on this issue.

Proceeding with its task of defining Roman-Catholic doctrine, the Council of Trent calls Christ the second Adam, for just as the condemnation of all people was brought about by the work of a single man, the first Adam, salvation was

---

[177] Chadwick, *Justification*, p.3; Joest's translation of Luther, *Arbitrium*, WA XVIII p. 783. ll.29-33 (Deus ... potens et magnus (est), ut nulli daemones, nullae adversitates eum frangere aut me illi rapere poterant.) implies that Luther thought that the devil is weaker than God. However, this translation is incorrect. Joest puts "Teufel" for "daemones" where he should have put "Dämonen". Demons are just servants of the devil (G.Gloege, Art. *Dämonen*, in: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bd.2, Sp. 3, Tübingen 1958, 3rd ed.).

[178] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.16; Joest, *Dogmatik*, p.677.

[179] Chadwick, Justification, p.5.

brought about by the work of a single man, Christ, the second Adam, who though he is God nevertheless took on human form to redeem people.[180] This time the link between justification and soteriology[181] is not only hinted at but explicitly stated ("Iesum Christum Salvatorem nostrum"). However, the most important issue for the doctrine of justification in chapter II[182] is that Jesus Christ was born to save the Jews who were under the law as well as the gentiles who did not pursue righteousness at all. This implies once again that righteousness can be reached neither by the law nor by free will.

Corresponding to this is canon 3 of the Tridentine decree on original sin which anathematizes all those who say

> hoc Adae peccatum, quod origine unum est et propagatione, non imitatione transfusum omnibus inest unicuique proprium, vel per humanae naturae vires, vel per aliud remedium ... tolli, quam per meritum unius mediatoris Domini nostri Iesu Christi, qui nos Deo reconciliavit in sanguine suo, factus nobis iustitia, satisficatio et redemptio,

restating an idea from the decree for the Jacobites issued by the Council of Florence (1442).[183] The canon points out that human nature can be restored only through Christ's merits. This is repeated in canon 10 which anathematizes all those who say

---

[180] Decree on justification, chapter IV; Denzinger 1524.
[181] See above p.54.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Denzinger 1347.

> homines sine Christi iustitia, per quam nobis meruit, iustificari.[184]

Luther would happily agree. According to him the main question is whether or not people acknowledge God, something which includes acknowledging that they are sinners who need Jesus Christ. He establishes that "nihil peccat nisi incrudelitas" and "nihil iustificat nisi fides".[185] Therefore Canon 3 is still just capable of a Lutheran interpretation.

Original sin belongs to all human beings whether their parents had already been liberated from it or not. This is pointed out in canon 4 of the decree on original sin, which anathematizes all those who deny

> parvulos recentes ab uteris matrum baptizandos ... etiam si fuerint a baptizatis parentibus orti.[186]

Luther agrees with this, though for different reasons, when he says that original sin originates from people's being ("Ursünde").[187]

One of the obvious differences between Trent and Luther is over the relationship between justification and sanctiication. According to the Council of Trent, people not only play an active part in the attaining, but also in the pre-

---

[184] Ibid. 1560.
[185] Luther, EA op.ex. 27, 337 (quoted from Iwand, *Luther*, footnote 20); compare Baur, *Einig?*, p.87.
[186] Denzinger 1514.
[187] See above 47.

servation and increase of righteousness.[188] Chapter VII explains that the preservation and increase of righteousness are a part of justification, and the Council returns to this theme in chapter X. According to the fathers at Trent, people are open for sanctification only after they are justified, and this is part of a process whereby people build upon the inherent righteousness that they have been granted, and by doing good works, become even more righteous. They stop living according to the law and start to live according to the spirit.[189] For Luther Christ's overwhelming righteousness was conferred on people in an instant at the moment of justification, and this was more than sufficient wholly to offset their sinfulness. As a result people were either justified or not justified, righteous or not righteous. Luther interprets *semper iustificandos* as "ever to be justified anew".[190]

Corresponding to this is canon 24. It anathematizes all those who say

> iustitiam acceptam non conservari atque etiam non augeri coram Deo per bona opera, sed opera ipsa fructus solummodo et signa esse iustificationis adeptae, non etiam ipsius augendae causam.[191]

---

[188] Brunner, *Konzil*, p.162.
[189] "Mortificando membra carnis suae et exhibendo ea arma iustitiae in sanctificationem per observationem mandatorum Dei et Ecclesiae."
[190] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.13.
[191] Denzinger 1574.

It seems to apply to Luther, for he says that good works are a necessary fruit of being saved.[192] The canon proceeds, however, from a particular idea of righteousness which Luther does not share, and can only, strictly speaking, be applied to those who who share this idea of righteousness. Another corresponding canon is canon 21 which anathematizes all those who say

> Christum Iesum a Deo hominibus datum fuisse ut redemptorem, cui fidant, non etiam ut legislatorem, cui obediant.[193]

This is just what Luther is saying. Neither is Christ a new legislator nor is grace a "nova exactio".[194] Therefore this canon applies to Luther.

IV. The nature of righteousness

The nature of righteousness includes questions of the perception of faith, and of the manner in which sins are remitted. It is clear from the amount of space devoted to the issue in both the decree and the canons that the latter was a very important issue for the Tridentine fathers. It is, however, appropriate to start with the first hint the Council of Trent gives about its views on the nature of

---

[192] Chadwick, *Justification*, p.4; compare Pesch, *Canones*, p.267.
[193] Denzinger 1571.
[194] Iwand, *Luther*, p.29; Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.54.

righteousness. This is in chapter IV where justification of the sinner is defined as

> translatio ab eo statu, in quo homo nascitur filius in primi Adae, in statum gratiae et "adoptionis filiorum" Dei, per secundum Adam Iesum Christum Salvatorem nostrum.[195]

People, as children of the first Adam, inherit at birth a corrupted free will. If they are reborn, however, through baptism, they can, through the agency of Christ, be translated into a state of grace and adopted as children of God.[196] This is in general a repetition of chapter III, leaving out the statement that not all people receive the benefit of Christ's death. Apart from giving a preliminary definition of justification[197], chapter IV is a summary of chapters I - III. As far as justification is concerned, the main teaching of chapter IV is once again that the grace of Christ is indispensable for the attaining of righteousness, and Luther happily concurs.

Corresponding to this are canons 12, 13 and 14. Canon 12 anathematises on all those who say

> fidem iustificantem nihil aliud esse quam fiduciam divinae misericordiae peccata remittentis propter Christum, vel eam fiduciam solam esse, qua iustificamur.[198]

---

[195] Denzinger 1524.
[196] Brunner, *Konzil*, p.153.
[197] Joest, *Lehre*, pp.44/45.
[198] Denzinger 1562.

People are justified, according to Luther, by imputation of Christ's righteousness and the remission of sin.[199] Though the importance of the latter is accepted by both Luther and Trent, each has a markedly different perception of it. This contrast is starkly expressed in chapter IX of the Tridentine decree on justification[200] which starts with a rejection of Luther's teaching. The Council acknowledges that it is necessary to believe that sins are only forgiven freely by divine mercy on account of Christ. It denies, however, the idea that sins will be forgiven because of the belief in their remission **only**. People such as Luther who teach this are declared to be heretics. The Council goes on to emphasise that belief in the remission of sins is in no way essential for their actual remission. On the contrary it establishes that "nullus scire valeat certitudine fidei, cui non potest subesse falsum, se gratiam Dei esse consecutum". So clearly canon 12 applies to Luther. Canon 13 anathematises all those who say

> omni homini ad remmissionem peccatorum consequendam necessarium esse, ut credat certo et absque ulla haesitatione propriae in infirmitatis et indispositionis, peccata sibi esse remissa.[201]

According to Luther, the vanishing of sin does depend on the belief in its remission. Consequently this anathema applies to him, even though - as Pannenberg points out - con-

---

[199] Althaus, *Theologie*, p.198.
[200] Denzinger 1533-1534.
[201] Ibid. 1563.

fidence and assurance of being saved mean something different to Luther than to the Tridentine fathers.[202] Canon 14 anathematises all those who say

> hominem a peccatis absolvi ac iustificari ex eo, quod se absolvi ac iustificari certo credat, aut neminem vere esse iustificatum, nisi qui credit se esse iustificatum, et hac sola fide absolutionem et iustificationem perfici.[203]

This is in fact a repetition of the doctrine of canon 13, looking at the issue from a different point of view. Like canon 13 also this applies to Luther. Pesch is right in claiming that Luther proceeds from a different perception of faith, but this does not mean that canons 12-14 do not apply to him as Pesch claims.[204] The Tridentine rejection of the doctrine that unshaken belief in the remission of sin is essential for its actual remission later on led to the question whether one could be sure of the remission of sin.[205]

However, if according to Tridentine doctrine belief in the remission of sin is not necessary for its actual remission, it cannot be the only feature of justification, and indeed in chapter VII of the decree on justification the Council establishes that justification

---

[202] Pannenberg, *Gespräch*, pp.237/238.
[203] Denzinger 1564.
[204] Pesch, *Canones*, p.261; compare Pannenberg, *Gespräch*, p.238.
[205] Chadwick, *Luther*, p.25.

> non est sola peccatorum remissio, sed et sanctificatio et renovatio interioris hominis per voluntariam susceptionem gratiae et donorum, unde homo ex iniusto fit iustus et ex inimico amicus, ut sit heres secundum spem vitae aeternae.[206]

So the remission of sin is supplemented by sanctification and the renewal of the human being.[207] These supplements will now be analysed. They denote that, grafted into Jesus Christ, people are - in addition to the remission of sin - granted faith, hope and charity.[208] Faith in this sense is distinct from the belief in God's revelations and promises which is before people are grafted into Jesus Christ. So there are two stages of faith.[209] Faith alone does not make people living members of Christ's body or grant them eternal life. This happens only when it becomes active in charity. It has to be sought before baptism. So faith, hope and charity are thought of as distinct gifts. Luther's perception of faith is, of course, very different, since he includes hope and charity within the concept of faith[210], clearly an important distinction.[211]

In canon 11 the Council teaches that next to the remission of sin, grace and charity have to be poured into people's hearts by the holy spirit and abide there.[212] Grace

---

[206] Denzinger 1528-1531.
[207] McGrath, *Thought*, p.114.
[208] Joest, *Lehre*, pp.46/47.
[209] Ibid., pp.61-63.
[210] Ebeling, *Luther*, Sp.499; Joest, *Lehre*, p.64.
[211] Joest, *Dogmatik*, p.468; compare *Joest*, Lehre, p.57.
[212] See above p.36.

in this sense is an infused righteousness, and it changes people's being.[213] An imputed righteousness as taught by Luther does not change people's being but co-exists with their corrupted free will.[214] In his opinion grace is no "qualitas" of the soul but rather a drive.[215] God declares people to be righteous by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and this declaration is the remission of sin which is grace.[216] Christ's righteousness includes charity. To sum up, all three elements - the remission of sin, grace and charity - appear in both Luther's and Trent's concept of justification. However, according to Luther grace and charity are only imputed, while according to the Council of Trent they are infused. Luther, in other words, has a completely different concept of grace. For him people do not **possess** righteousness.[217] They rather benefit from an alien righteousness. This meant that sin and righteousness co-existed side by side, and always would, thus excluding the Tridentine possibility of the overthrow of the power of sin.[218]

The remission of sins and the relationship between faith, hope and charity is, however, only preliminary to the further definition of the nature of righteousness. God's

---

[213] Pannenberg, *Gespräch*, p.242.
[214] Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.54; compare Pannenberg, *Gespräch*, p.238.
[215] Iwand, *Luther*, p.41.
[216] See above p.62.
[217] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.14.
[218] Chadwick, *Justification*, p.13.

righteousness is the "causa formalis" of justification, the means by which it is possible for people to be justified. God grants righteousness according to the measure which the spirit apportions to each single human being. At this point the Council of Trent proposes a paradox: that righteousness is granted according to the spirit's will as well as according to people's disposition and co-operation ("secundum propriam cuiusque dispositionem et cooperationem"). With - or, better, in - this righteousness Christ's merit is also conveyed.[219] That the Council took righteousness to be God's righteousness, which is infused into people rather than coming from them, is repeated in chapter XVI.[220] Here the Council states that

> ita neque propria nostra iustitia tamquam ex nobis propria statuiter, neque ignoratur aut repudiatur iustitia Dei.

Nevertheless righteousness is also people's own, because it abides in them and makes them righteous. The act of justification not only creates the justified human being but in its final stage also presupposes it.[221] This **could** mean that God's righteousness is not the actual power which is active in people but rather the reason why people are endowed with such a power. Still it is related to the **present** Christ as its origin.[222] According to the Council of Trent,

---

[219] Brunner, *Konzil*, p.151.
[220] Denzinger 1545-1550.
[221] Joest, *Lehre*, pp.49/50.
[222] Ibid., p.48.

Christ's merit is conveyed by pouring out God's love into the hearts of those who are being justified. This happens because of these very same merits of Christ. Once poured out into people's hearts, God's love abides in them. Indeed, it seems to be better to say it is infused, rather than simply poured out, into people's hearts. So righteousness is an inherent quality of the soul which brings about sanctification and changes people's being. This, needless to say, is totally at odds with Luther.[223]

The Council goes on to argue that after people have received righteousness (which had previously been lost by original sin as inherited corruption ("Erbsünde"))[224], they also receive certain rules which they have to follow in order to preserve their righteousness - this was part of the "sanctificatio et renovatio interioris hominis per voluntariam susceptionem gratiae et donorum".[225]

The Council further claims that though in scripture much is attributed to good works, people should nevertheless rely, not on themselves, but on God. Here the Council contradicts its own teaching that a preparation for justification is possible and necessary.[226] It states that God's grace is so great that he wants his own gifts to be people's

---

[223] Ibid., pp.45-47.
[224] See above p.48.
[225] See above p.64.
[226] See below p.84.

merits.[227] People are like mediators between God and good works. The latter bring about conservation and increase of the mercy of righteousness.[228] However, the Council of Trent does not say anything about the function of the law for unjustified people.[229]

In Luther's doctrine there is a distinction between people in themselves and in Christ. People are righteous in Christ but sinners in themselves, since the "reliquiae peccati" are still in them.[230] They are "simul peccator et iustus", and according to Luther faith also includes acknowledging this.[231] If people acknowledge that sin remains sin, grace remains grace for them.[232] They are only "formaliter" righteous which means that righteousness is only imputed. It is "extra nos", that is, not belonging to human nature.[233] So he agrees with the Council of Trent's idea of "causa formalis" in so far as he teaches that people are justified by the imputation of God's righteousness. However, according to him this righteousness is either given completely or not at all. The Council of Trent is teaching a mixed divine-revealed/human-earthly righteousness while

---

[227] Joest, *Lehre*, p.59.
[228] Ibid., p.58.
[229] Brunner, *Lehre*, p.144.
[230] Iwand, *Luther*, p.32.
[231] Luther, *Romani*, p.272 l.17; compare "Per hoc sanus est perfecte in spe, in re autem peccator", Rm II 108, 14 (quoted from Iwand, *Luther*, footnote 167); Ebeling, *Luther*, Sp.501.
[232] Ebeling, *Luther*, Sp.515.
[233] Chadwick, *Justification*, p.11.

Luther thinks of two separate kinds of righteousness.[234] In the Tridentine doctrine there is no "simul", no "et - et" but rather an "aut - aut".[235]

So, according to Luther, sin and righteousness are present at the same time. God's grace does not completely do away with sin. Remission of sin and doing away with it are not the same. In the state of grace there still are faults and weaknesses which point to God who alone is without fault. Only he and all that comes from him is good. In human beings sin, being weaker than God's grace, is put out of action by the latter.[236] The law, by letting them recognize sin, teaches people that faith is better than even the best work. So the law - and therefore also the commandments - is very important and worthy of being kept. The law is part of God's word. It is both a commandment and a demand, God's call by which he calls not only people's works but people themselves with body and soul and all their power.[237] "De coelo, id Cum tamen hoc nomine maxime docenda est lex."[238] "Das Gesetz ist heilig, göttlich und gut."[239] It is of spiritual nature which means that it is of God's spirit[240], "und darum muss der Mensch auch diesen Geist haben, um es

---

[234] Iwand, *Luther*, p.51.
[235] Brunner, *Konzil*, p.163.
[236] Compare Iwand, *Luther*, pp.21/22.
[237] Iwand, *Luther*, p.38.
[238] Luther, *2.Dis.*, WA XXXIX p.423, ll.14/15; compare Iwand, *Luther*, p.27.
[239] Iwand, *Luther*, p.33.
[240] "Lex in se semper est spiritualis" (Luther, *Gal.19*, WA II p.552, l.3).

recht zu erfüllen."[241] Three major arguments of Luther in favour of the law are that:

a) people with their corrupted knowledge of good and evil have to be shown what is God's will,

b) the "reliquiae peccati" remain in the sinner and it takes the law to hold sin back[242], and

c) the realization of the fact that they are sinners leads people to long for grace.[243]

So the law contributes to justification rather than only doing harm to people or making hypocrites of them. Like Paul, Luther does not want to eliminate the law but to teach it to be understood in a new and positive way.[244] "Der Mensch wird mit dem Verschweigen des Gesetzes heillos der Sünde und der Gewalt des Todes überlassen, denn der Kranke wird nicht dadurch geheilt, daß man ihn als gesund behandelt! Die Bitterkeit des Gesetzes ist Süße gegenüber dieser scheinbaren Güte, die in Wahrheit bitterste Grausamkeit ist, weil sie den Menschen seinem Schicksal überläßt und ihm das Gesetz verschweigt."[245]

---

[241] Iwand, *Luther*, p.33.
[242] Compare "Lex enim virtus peccati est" (Luther, *Gal.19*, WA II p.502, l.8).
[243] Iwand, *Luther*, p.32.
[244] Ibid., pp.30/31.
[245] Ibid., pp.34/35.

Nevertheless Luther thinks that for justified people it is impossible to observe the commandments. He implies this by establishing that people are "simul peccator et iustus".[246] Corresponding to this are canons 18-20, which deal with the relationship of justified people to God's commandments. Canon 18 anathematises all those who say

> Dei praecepta homini etiam iustificato et sub gratia constituto esse ad observandum impossibilia,

canon 19 all those who say

> nihil praeceptum esse in Evangelio praeter fidem, cetera esse indifferentia, neque praecepta, neque prohibita, sed libera, aut decem praecepta nihil pertinere ad Christianos,

canon 20 all those who say

> hominem iustificatum et quantumlibet perfectum ... non teneri ad observatiam mandatorum Dei et Ecclesiae, sed tantum ad credendum, quasi vero Evangelium sit nuda et absoluta promissio vitae aeternae, sine condicione observationis mandatorum.[247]

It has already been shown that Luther implies that it is impossible for people to fulfill God's commandments. Consequently canon 18 indeed applies to him. In canon 19 the Council of Trent actually anathematises people who teach a possible continuation of Luther's line of thought rather than Luther himself, for although, according to Luther justification is by faith alone, faith does not justify if it is without any work.[248] In relation to God, belief is

---

[246] See above p.7.
[247] Denzinger 1568-1570.
[248] Fides nisi sit sine ullis etiam minimis operibus, non iustificat, imo non est fides. Impossibile

without any work, but in relation to the world it does what there is to do without wanting to influence God. In view of this Luther also agrees to canon 20.[249]

Corresponding to this are canons 10 and 11. Canon 10 anathematises all those who say

> homines sine Christi iustitia, per quam nobis meruit, iustificari, aut per eam ipsam formaliter iustos esse[250],

taking a middle course between the ideas of, on the one hand people being justified without Christ's righteousness and, on the other, only formally. So both Christ's righteousness and people's inherent righteousness contribute to justification. Now Luther does not claim that people can be justified without the righteousness of Christ by which he gained merit for them. This part of the canon repeats the doctrine of canon 1 and like this does not apply to Luther.[251] However, Luther says that the righteousness by which people are righteous is not their own but Christ's righteousness, people being only declared righteous formally. So the second part of canon 10 applies to Luther.[252] Pannenberg's implied claim, that in Lutheran theology justification is not by the

---

est fidem esse sine assiduis, multis et magnis operibus (Luther, *Quaestio*, WA VII p.231, ll. 7-9).

[249] Joest, *Lehre*, p.57.

[250] Denzinger 1560.

[251] Pesch, *Canones*, p.256.

[252] Joest, *Lehre*, pp.48/49.

mere imputation of Christ's righteousness[253] may indeed be true of Lutheran theology, but it certainly is not true of Luther himself. The righteousness of faith "may appear to be totally inappropriate by human standards of justice, but it remains the criterion by which God will judge mankind".[254] Pesch claims that this canon does not apply to Luther because the Tridentine fathers considered his teaching against a scholastic background, thereby distorting it.[255] Nevertheless its wording directly contradicts Luther.

Canon 11 is one of the key canons of the Tridentine decree.[256] Its first part is directed at those such as Luther who teach that in the attaining of righteousness there is no co-operation on the part of those who are to be justified, since justification is merely by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, or by the remission of sin.[257] The last part of canon 11 repeats the rejection of Luther's teaching that the justifying grace is only the good-will of God, that is a totally gratuitous gift. It is indeed a difficult question why this is called "righteousness". Iwand cannot answer it, and he even asks: "Wer weiss, ob wir trotz reicher Darstellungen von Luther und seiner Lehre diesen letzten und entscheidenden Punkt bei ihm, ja mehr, diesen innersten Punkt des Evangeliums und der Offenbarung Gottes ganz verstanden

---

[253] Pannenberg, *Gespräch*, p.243.
[254] McGrath, *Cross*, p.115.
[255] Pesch, *Canones*, p.257.
[256] Ibid., pp.254/258; see above p.36.
[257] Althaus, *Theologie*, p.198.

haben."[258] So one has to say that the second part of canon 11 also applies to Luther. Nevertheless one should keep in mind that grace and righteousness are included in Luther's theology of justification.

Righteousness is also the main topic of canons 22 and 23. Canon 22 anathematises all those who say

> iustificatum vel sine speciali auxilio Dei in accepta iustitia perseverare posse, vel cum eo non posse,

canon 23 all those who say

> hominem semel iustificatum ... amplius peccare non posse, neque gratiam amittere, atque ideo eum, qui labitur et peccat, numquam vere fuisse iustificatum; sed contra, posse in tota vita peccata omnia etiam venialia vitare, nisi ex speciali Dei privilegio, quemadmodum de beata Virgine tenet Ecclesia.[259]

Although the Council of Trent here wants to anathematize Luther, these canons do not really apply to him because the Council of Trent proceeds from an idea of righteousness which Luther does not share.[260]

Chapter XI[261] of the Tridentine decree on justification deals with the life of justified people. First of all, the Council of Trent establishes that even these are not exempt

---

[258] Iwand, *Luther*, p.58.
[259] Denzinger 1572-1573; for canon 23 see Joest, *Lehre*, p.58.
[260] Compare Pesch, *Canones*, p.267.
[261] Denzinger 1536-1539.

from the observance of the commandments. Those who are children of God, which, according to chapter 10, justified people are, love Christ and therefore keep his word. It is true that it is possible for justified people to obey the commandments, for God does not command something impossible.[262] According to Caesarius of Arles, this had already been taught by the second Council of Orange (529).[263] God instructs people both to do what they can do and to pray for what they cannot do, and he gives them his aid. Nevertheless even the most justified people sometimes fall into - at least venial - sin, and yet do not cease to be righteous. On the contrary they still can make progress through Jesus Christ, through whom they also had access to that state of grace. God does not abandon those once justified by his grace unless he is first abandoned by them.

From this the Council of Trent concludes that justification - that is to say sanctification as the second stage of justification - is not by faith alone. Justification in the strict sense leads to a divine-revealed rather than to a human-earthly righteousness. To the latter is added sanctification as the second stage of justification. Consequently the Council of Trent anathematises the teaching that in every good work righteous people sin at least venially. It also anathematises the teaching that people sin if in ad-

---

[262] Joest, *Lehre*, p.57.
[263] Denzinger 397.

dition to the aim that above all God may be glorified, they do good works looking to an eternal reward. In contrast, for Luther sanctification is separate from justification.

Having dealt with the preservation of righteousness, the Council of Trent in Chapter XIV turns to those who do not endure to the end but fall.[264] If righteousness is lost, it has to be restored. Again it is very difficult to compare this concept of justification with Luther's because he has a completely different perception of grace.[265] The Council of Trent proceeds from the idea that one can by sin lose righteousness, which is thought of as an infused quality of the soul. According to Lutheran doctrine, righteousness, being imputed rather than infused, co-exists with the corrupted free will of human beings, and this righteousness cannot be lost.[266] However, it has a different status than the corrupted free will.[267] Pesch claims that for Luther the former is slowly increasing, while the latter is slowly decreasing.[268] This applies to the Council of Trent and to Augustine in so far as for them the liberated will and grace work together to attain a higher degree of righteousness.[269] It does not apply to Luther.

---

[264] Denzinger 1542-1543.
[265] Compare McGrath, *Thought*, p.115.
[266] Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.110; compare ibid., p.354.
[267] Ibid., p.115.
[268] Ibid., p.120.
[269] Compare McGrath, *Thought*, p.115.

The Council of Trent established that once righteousness has been lost, it can be recovered. It is necessary that - at God's prompting - people make an effort to recover it through the sacrament of penance.[270] This is in accordance with what the holy fathers called the second plank for those whose grace is shattered in a storm. This recovered grace is, however, different from the grace received in baptism because it averts eternal punishment indeed, but temporal punishment is not completely discharged. Its place has to be taken by certain works of satisfaction. Here of course a great deal of the doctrine of the sacrament of penance comes in. This is different from Luther's concept. He taught that sin does not merely consist of evil works. These are just symptoms of the real sin. Real sin does not just stick to people like sinful works, but belongs to their nature. Accordingly, there is in his opinion no special grace for those who fall after baptism. He thinks that the remission of actual sins, that is the guilt of people who do evil works committed after baptism, is included in the grace of baptism, in the remission of original sin, and that it is sufficient to recall this grace when one repents of actual sins.[271] Accordingly works of satisfaction are not necessary.[272]

---

[270] Joest, *Lehre*, p.56.
[271] *De captivitate babylonica ecclesiae praeludium* (1520), in: WA VI pp.484-573, Weimar 1888.
[272] Pfnür, *Verwerfungen*, p.206.

This train of thought is continued in chapter XV.[273] This is very short. The anathematised teaching is clearly Luther's - he is adressed as one of certain people with subtle modes of thinking, who "per dulces sermones et benedictiones seducunt corda innocentium".[274] Against those people the Council of Trent confirms that the grace of justification can be lost not only by apostasy, but also by any other mortal sin, even if faith is kept. It hints at the teaching that real faith is always joined by hope and charity. However, people like Luther who teach that these are included in faith are anathematised.[275]

There are four canons corresponding to this.[276] Canon 27 anathematises all those who say

> nullum esse mortale peccatum nisi infidelitas, aut nullo alio quantumvis gravi et enormi praeterquam infidelitas peccato semel acceptam gratiam amitti.

Now sin is only mortal if it leads to eternal death. When Luther says that nothing but belief in the remission of sin is vital for its actual remission[277], he implies that nothing but doubt in the remission of sin hinders its actual remission. However, something which does not hinder the remission of sin is not mortal. So according to Luther there

---

[273] Denzinger 1544.
[274] This is a quote from *Romans* 16,18.
[275] Joest, *Lehre*, p.67.
[276] Canons 27-30; Denzinger 1577-1580.
[277] See above p.62.

is no mortal sin except unbelief, and therefore this canon applies to him.[278] Canon 28 anathematises all those who say

> amissa per peccatum gratia simul et fidem semper amitti, aut fidem, quae remanet, non esse veram fidem, licet non sit viva, aut eum , qui fidem sine caritate habet, non esse Christianum.[279]

It is directed against a teaching opposite to that rejected in canon 27. Sin by which grace is lost denotes any mortal sin except unbelief. So it seems that it cannot apply to Luther, because according to him there is no mortal sin except unbelief. The last part of it ("aut eum, qui fidem sine caritate habet, non esse Christianum") sets a special problem. Here the Council of Trent said that one can have faith without charity and still be a christian. However, in canon 11 the Council said that in addition to the remission of sin, grace and charity have to be poured out into people's hearts by the holy spirit and abide there if they are going to be saved.[280] It actually seems to have said that not all christians are saved, but this contradicts the teaching of canon 17 which anathematizes all those who say

> iustificationis gratiam non nisi praedestinatis ad vitam contingere ... reliquos vero omnes, qui vocantur, vocari quidem, sed gratiam non accipere, utpote divina potestate praedestinatos ad malum.[281]

---

[278] Compare Baur, *Einig?*, p.87.
[279] Denzinger 1578.
[280] See above p.36.
[281] Denzinger 1567.

Luther asserted double predestination.[282] He proceeds from the idea that God has a foreknowledge of things, and he establishes:

> est itaque et hoc imprimis necessarium et saluta re Christiano, nosse, quod Deus nihil praescit contingenter, sed quod omnia incommutabili et aeterna infallibilique voluntate et praevidet et proponit et facit.[283]

From this it is clear that according to Luther there is no free will but rather predestination. So he does not say that those who are called are not necessarily justified. Therefore he is not anathematised by canon 17, but the last part of canon 28 applies to Luther because Christ's righteousness, which in Luther's opinion is imputed to people, includes charity[284], and without this imputed righteousness people are not justified. Canon 29 anathematises all those who say

> eum, qui post baptismum lapsus est, non posse per Dei gratiam resurgere; aut posse quidem, sed sola fide, amissam iustitiam recuperare sine sacramento poenitentiae, prout sancta omana et universalis Ecclesia, a Christo Domino et eius Apostolis edocata, hucusque professa est, servavit et docuit.

It does not at first sight apply to Luther, because it seems to exclude apostasy from the reasons for falling from grace, while according to Luther apostasy is the only reason

[282] Joest, *Dogmatik*, p.677.
[283] Luther, *Arbitrium*, WA XVIII p. 615, ll. 12-14.
[284] See above p.64.

for falling from grace. Nevertheless, apostasy is included when the Council of Trent anathematizes all those who say that righteousness can only be recovered by faith. This is just what Luther is saying, for if the loss of faith is the only reason for falling from grace, regaining faith is the only way to recover grace. So canon 29 indeed applies to Luther. Canon 30 is linked to canon 27. It anathematises all those who say

> post acceptam iustificationis gratiam cuilibet peccatori paenitenti ita culpam remitti et reatum aeternae poenae deleri ... ut nullus remaneat poenae temporalis, exsolvendae vel in hoc saeculo vel in futuro in purgatorio, antequam ad regna caelorum aditus patere possit.

This canon really cannot apply to Luther because again it proceeds from the idea of righteousness being an infused quality of the soul which can be injured by sin and healed by works of satisfaction. As Luther has a different idea of righteousness and therefore is already anathematised by canon 11, canon 30 does not apply to him.

Finally, according to chapter VII of the Tridentine decree on justification the purpose and first cause of justification is the glorification of God which is called "causa finalis". Luther of course agrees to this.

V. The way of attaining grace

Knowing that human nature is deprived, and having described the nature of righteousness, the way people attain grace has to be examined. The Council of Trent gives the first hint about the way of attaining grace in chapter IV of the decree on justification, where it establishes that justification "post Evangelium promulgatum sine lavacro regenerationis aut eius voto fieri non potest".[285] In chapter VII it is explicitly stated that the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, as one of the five causes of justification, the "causa instrumentalis", conveys the merit of Christ, the "causa meritoria".[286] Without faith there is no justification.[287] Luther had raised several objections to the doctrine of the sacraments as contained in the decree for the Armenians which the Council drew upon. His statements were rejected by pope Leo X in the bull "Exsurge Domine" in 1520[288], the first official rejection of Luther's doctrine. The rejected statements are selected from his works, mostly in his own words. Luther also laid great stress on baptism, arguing that God used the sacraments to convey to people what the words of the sacrament denote.[289]

---

[285] Denzinger 1524.
[286] See above p.54.
[287] Nevertheless Brunner thinks that faith is not sufficiently stressed (*Konzil*, p.155). Here he criticises the Council of Trent from a Lutheran point of view.
[288] Denzinger 1455-1464.
[289] E.Kinder, *Sakramente I. Dogmengeschichtlich*, Sp. 1324, in: *RGG* Bd.5, Tübingen 1986, 3rd ed., Sp.

It has, however, not the same status in his theology as it has in Trent's. The Council thought of baptism as being effective by the mere application. According to Luther only faith is necessary. Baptism is only the external sign.

Corresponding to the positive Tridentine account of the importance of baptism is canon 3 of the decree on original sin which anathematizes all those who deny

> ipsum Christi Iesu meritum per baptismi sacramentum, in forma Ecclesiae rite collatum, tam adultis quam parvulis applicari.[290]

The Council of Trent discussed the doctrine of the sacraments, which in some parts is a related topic, later than the doctrine of justification. In session 6 the Council dealt with doctrinal statements on the sacraments in general[291], while baptism and confirmation are to be found in sessions 7 and 21[292]. Sessions 13, 21 and 22 deal with the eucharist[293], session 14 with penance extreme unction[294], session 23 with ordination[295] and session 24 with the sacrament of marriage.[296] However, it only repeats and expands the doctrine of the decree for the Armenians of the

---

1321-1326; compare Joest, *Dogmatik*, p.565.

[290] Denzinger 1513.

[291] Ibid., 1520-1583.

[292] Ibid., 1600-1630.

[293] Ibid., 1635-1643; 1645-1648; 1651-1661; 1726-1734; 1738-1749; 1751-1759.

[294] Ibid., 1667-1680; 1684-1697; 1700-1719.

[295] Ibid., 1764-1778.

[296] Ibid., 1797-1812.

Council of Florence (1439).[297] The Tridentine doctrine is repeated in canon 5 of the decree on original sin which anathematizes all those who deny

> per Iesu Christi Domini nostri gratiam, quae in baptismate confertur, reatum originalis peccati remitti.[298]

According to chapter V of the Tridentine decree on justification[299], children receive God's grace by baptism without any action on their own part, while adults have to prepare themselves to receive it. However, they can not do this by themselves but need a predisposing grace ("gratia praeveniens") from God through Jesus Christ. People have to be summoned by God to co-operate with this grace which incites and helps them. They receive it, just as children receive justifying grace, without any action on their own part. Having been summoned, they have to assent to and co-operate with this predisposing grace and in this way turn towards their own justification.[300] So the Council is taking a middle course between people being absolutely passive, and people being the only active partner with God only granting righteousness when it is justly due. For though God touches hearts through the light of the holy spirit, people them-

---

[297] Ibid., 1310-1327.
[298] Ibid., 1515.
[299] Ibid., 1525.
[300] Joest, *Lehre*, p.51.

selves play an active role. They can still reject that grace.[301]

On the other hand they are not able to move themselves towards righteousness in God's sight by their own free will and without God's grace. So according to the Council of Trent people still have freedom in the process of justification, but it is admitted that they are forestalled by the grace of God. In chapter VII[302] the driving force of justification is called "causa efficiens", and this is God who sends the spirit. Luther agrees that God is the driving force of justification.[303] The Council, however, like Augustine, favours a co-operation of spirit and free will. This is a marked difference because according to Luther there is no co-operation at all.[304] Consequently he would have rejected chapter V. According to him people are saved "sola fide et sola gratia". It is Luther's insistence on the "sola" that marks him off from his predecessors, even Augustine. In contrast to Luther, the Tridentine Fathers ascribed to people an important role in their justification.

Apart from co-operation there are other features in the Tridentine doctrine which oppose Luther. Canon 3 of the decree on justification anathematizes all those who say

---

[301] Ibid., p.44.
[302] Chapter VII; Denzinger 1528-1531.
[303] See footnote 126.
[304] Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.325; compare above p.73.

> sine praeveniente Spiritus Sancti inspiratione atque eius adiutorio hominem credere, sperare et diligere aut paenitere posse, sicut oportet, ut ei iustificationis gratia conferatur.[305]

According to Luther, people certainly cannot believe, hope, love and repent as they ought without God's grace because in his teaching free will is reduced to a mere name.[306] However, in his concept God's grace is not only predisposing but already justifying grace. So this believing, hoping, loving and repenting is not considered to be meritorious. Indeed people "cannot perform good works which are capable of earning justification on a *quid pro quo* basis", they can only "totally abase" themselves, "and cry out to God for grace".[307] In Roman-Catholic doctrine this believing, hoping, loving and repenting certainly is meritorious ("ut ei (sc. homini) iustificationis gratia conferatur"). So clearly this canon applies to Luther.

Canon 4 anathematizes all those who say

> liberum arbitrium a Deo motum et excitatum nihil cooperari assentiendo Deo excitanti atque vocanti, quo ad obtinendam iustificationis gratiam se disponat ac praeparet, neque posse dissentire, si velit, sed velut inanime quodam nihil omnino agere mereque passive se habere.[308]

---

[305] Denzinger 1553.
[306] Compare above footnote 143.
[307] McGrath, *Cross*, p.153.
[308] Denzinger 1554.

This anathema cannot apply to Luther because like chapter V it presupposes a free will. So it can only apply to those who are not already anathematized by canon 5.[309] For if there is no free will, there is nothing which could be moved and roused by God, or which can co-operate with or reject this predisposing grace. Not only is there no free will according to Luther - there is even no predisposing grace. On the contrary Luther teaches that people can do nothing at all and remain merely passive.[310] "Luther's theological breakthrough was intimately linked with the realisation that man was not justified upon the basis of any human work, but through the work of God within man." Nevertheless does Luther not, "as he is frequently represented, reject the necessity of good works in justification: opera sunt necessaria ad salutem, sed non causant salutem, quia fides sola dat vitam (WA XXXIX.I p.96, ll.6-8)."[311]

Chapter VI[312] continues the train of thought of chapter V. The preparation for righteousness includes people being moved freely, that is not against their free will, towards God. When the decree says "libere", free will is certainly involved, and regarding canon 4 it must play an active part.[313] As a result of the co-operation of free will with the "gratia praeveniens", people are moved towards God. Pre-

[309] See above p.44.
[310] See above footnote 140.
[311] McGrath, Iustitia II, p.16.
[312] Denzinger 1526-1527.
[313] See above p.86.

paring for righteousness also includes belief in the truth of God's revelations and promises, especially the promise to justify the wicked by his grace through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.[314] Here the Council of Trent again pointed to the previously mentioned link between justification and soteriology.[315] The faith comes from hearing. The whole process is started and supported by God's grace, that is by the "gratia praeveniens".[316] During the process of preparing themselves people become aware of the fact that they are sinners, and the fear of God's justice, which led them to believe (this is meant by "quo utiliter concutiuntur"), leads them on to consider God's mercy.[317]

From this consideration arises hope for and confidence in God's mercy, as fear of God turns into love of God as the fount of all righteousness. In a contrary movement the inclination to sin turns into hatred and detestation which is true repentance. People have to repent before they are baptized. As final step of this preparation people have to decide to be baptized, to begin a new life and to keep God's commandments.[318] This desire for baptism is at least necessary to gain righteousness if baptism itself is not avail-

---

[314] Joest, *Lehre*, p.61.
[315] See above p.54.
[316] Joest, *Lehre*, p.50.
[317] Brunner, *Konzil*, p.154.
[318] Brunner is not sure whether this perception of the conveyance of righteousness corresponds with the new testament. In his opinion it does not sufficiently take into account that grace can be conveyed by the oral proclamation of the gospel (*Konzil*, p.153).

able.[319] So faith alone is not of itself sufficient preparation for justification.[320]

Luther does not teach such a step-by-step approach to God. According to him people are either with God or with the devil, but not somewhere in between, as if they were just bodies without soul.[321] As this chapter, like the preceding one, presupposes free will, he would have rejected it. A detail Luther and the Council of Trent agree upon is that God justifies sinners.[322]

Canon 7 taught that there are good works before justification which contribute to it.[323] According to Luther, no preparation for righteousness involving free will is possible because there is no free will, and there further can be no neutral works, because people can only be with God or with the devil but not in between. So Luther is actually saying "opera omnia, quae ante iustificationem fiunt, quacumque ratione facta sint, vere esse peccata". According to Luther to try to prepare oneself for righteousness is to rely on one's own works - even if free will is only cooperating with "gratia praeveniens" - and therefore sinful.

> Selbst wenn es gelänge, alle Gebote zu halten, würden an der Frage, wie dieses Halten der Gebote aus-

---

[319] Joest, *Lehre*, p.53.
[320] Ibid., p.54.
[321] See above footnote 140.
[322] Compare for Ebeling, *Luther*, Sp.500.
[323] See above p.44.

> sieht, Anklage, Sündenerkenntnis und Vernichtung des Menschen neu zum Zuge kommen.[324]

For to rely on one's works, to seek one's own right and defend it against God, and to judge God according to human measures means not to believe, and unbelief is the real sin against the first commandment and the begining of all other sins. It can be concluded that the harder people try, the more gravely do they sin. So Luther is also saying "quanto vehementius quis nititur se disponere ad gratiam, tanto eum gravius peccare"[325], and therefore this anathema applies to Luther in both of its parts.

Canon 7 is also related to the bull "Exsurge Domine". The rejected statements include the idea that contrition, which arises from examination, consideration and detestation of sins, makes people hypocrites and greater sinners than before (1), the idea that belief in the remission of sins is essential for their actual remission (2) and the idea that people are not absolved on account of their contrition but on account of Christ's word (3). According to Luther "justification is *propter Christum*, and not *propter fidem*".[326] According to one modern commentator, this anathema cannot refer to works done before the call. Rather, it is argued that these are sins in any case.[327] This is, however,

---

[324] Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.42; compare ibid., p.88.
[325] Baur, *Einig?*, p.45.
[326] McGrath, *Iustitia II*, p.14.
[327] Brunner, *Konzil*, p.145.

a rather Lutheran interpretation. It cannot be derived from the wording of the canon. Canon 8 anathematizes all those who say

> gehennae metum, per quem ad misericordiam Dei de peccatis dolendo configimus vel a peccando abstinemus, peccatum esse aut peccatores peiores facere.[328]

It is again returning to statements of Luther's which had already been rejected by pope Leo X in the bull "Exsurge Domine" in 1520.[329] Consequently it certainly applies to Luther. Canon 9 anathematizes all those who say

> sola fide impium iustificari, ita ut intelligat, nihil aliud requiri, quo ad iustificationis gratiam consequendam cooperetur, et nulla ex parte necesse esse, eum suae voluntatis motu praeparari atque disponi.[330]

This is, however, just what Luther is saying.[331] In his opinion people should seek God's honour in their works, but those who believe do not need works to form their being. Belief cannot be without works but it is Christ who does them.[332] Works done acknowledging "die bittere Wahrheit über sich selbst" and "die selige Wahrheit über Gott"[333] differ

---

[328] Denzinger 1558.
[329] See above p.82; Pesch, *Canones*, p.253.
[330] Denzinger 1559.
[331] Also this canon is related to the bull "Exsurge Domini" (see above p.82); Pesch, *Canones*, p.253.
[332] "Non fit per charitatem talis (sc. opera), sed confirmatur in Christo" (Luther, *De Veste*, WA XXXIX.I p.311, ll.8/9).
[333] Iwand, *Luther*, p.45.

from the works of the law even if they seem to be the same because they please God and are in fact his works.[334]

> Iam sequitur, quod iustus per fidem nulli dat quod suum est per seipsum, sed per alium, scilicet Iesum Christum, qui solus ita iustus est, ut omnibus reddat quod reddendum est, immo omnia ei debent.[335]

So these works can only be done by faith. "Wer so wirkt, wirkt wie ein Werkzeug Gottes."[336] The presupposition of these works, being righteous, is a possibility "extra nos i.e. in Christo".[337] So works are essential indeed, but as a consequence rather than a presupposition of justification.

The Council of Trent explains how to understand the words of the apostle Paul on justification by faith and justification as a gift in chapter VIII.[338] Justification is "per fidem" because faith is the first stage of human salvation and the root of all justification. Faith is here "ein wesentlich in den Bereich der Denkzustimmung gehörender *Teil*vollzug des menschlichen Verhaltens zu Gottes Gnade".[339] It is impossible to please God without faith, but although faith belongs to justification, it still is only the start-

---

[334] "Alle die selben werck. gahn äuszerhalb dem glawbenn drumb seyn sie nichts und gantz todt" (Luther, *Werke*, p.2).
[335] Luther, *Gal.19*, WA II p.504, ll.4-6.
[336] Iwand, *Luther*, p.45.
[337] "Extra vires et consilia nostra in solius opere Dei pendere salutem nostram" (Luther, *Arbitrium*, p. 634, ll.16/17).
[338] Denzinger 1532.
[339] Joest, *Lehre*, p.67.

ing point of the process, and not, as it is for Luther, all that is needed for justification. There is nothing preceding justification which would merit it. There is a kind of faith preceding justification indeed but this does not merit it. This is contradicting the teaching of chapter VII that righteousness is granted according to people's disposition and co-operation.[340]

VI. The necessity of assurance of salvation

The necessity of assurance of salvation is dealt with by chapter XII of the Tridentine decree on justification.[341] This is a very short chapter, a reflection of the uncertainties and disagreements of the debate. All it is saying is that people in their earthly days cannot know for certain that one day they will come to salvation. It is linked to chapter XIII[342] which deals with the gift of perseverance. This perseverance can indeed have no other source than God himself, but though all should rely on God's help with an unshakeable hope, they cannot be absolutely sure about the outcome. So they have to work out their salvation with good works because they are only reborn to the hope of glory rather than to glory itself.[343] The Council of Trent, in

---

[340] Baur, *Einig?*, p.12.
[341] Denzinger 1540.
[342] Ibid. 1541.
[343] Brunner, *Konzil*, p.162.

other words, establishes that people should live according to the spirit rather than according to the flesh.

There are four canons corresponding to these chapters. These are canons 15, 16, 22 and 23.[344] Canon 15 anathematizes all those who say

> hominem renatum et iustificatum teneri ex fide ad credendum, se certo esse in numero praedestinatorum.

This statement is a conclusion from Luther's doctrine. The canon is linked to the preceeding canons on the remission of sin. In Luther's opinion grace is the remission of sin as a result of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and this leads to salvation.[345] If belief in the remission of sin is vital for their actual remission, belief in being one of the predestined, that is in coming to salvation, is vital to actually being one of the predestined. This is basically the same issue. It has only been carried a bit further. So canon 15 applies to Luther. Canon 16 anathematizes all those who say

> magnum illud usque in finem perseverantiae donum se certo habiturum absoluta et infallibili certitudine ... nisi hoc ex speciali revelatione didicerit.

---

[344] Denzinger 1565-1566+1572-1573; Canons 22 and 23 have been considered previously (see above p.74).

[345] Denzinger 1562-1564.

It cannot really apply to Luther because like canons 18-20[346] it proceeds from a certain idea of righteousness which Luther does not share. Again it only applies to people who are not already anathematized by canon 11.[347]

VII. Merit

The problem of merit is discussed in chapter XVI of the Tridentine decree on justification, a chapter which stands on its own.[348] In addition to what had been said about merit in preceeding chapters the Council of Trent now stresses the necessity of good works. Although eternal life is given to people as a grace of God's mercy, it is nevertheless also a reward for people's good works and merits. According to Tridentine doctrine the strength for doing good works is imparted to one by Jesus Christ.[349] It is present before, during and after the performance of good works. It is the presupposition of doing anything meritorious and pleasing to God. Those who are justified do not lack anything, since they possess this strength. Taking the state of earthly life into account, they can well be considered to have fulfilled the law.[350] Thereby they earned eternal life. Finally the Council of Trent confirms that each person should consider

[346] Ibid. 1568-1570.
[347] Ibid. 1561.
[348] Ibid., 1545-1550.
[349] Joest, *Lehre*, p.57.
[350] Brunner, *Konzil*, p.165.

both God's grace and mercy as well as his severity and judgment. It would not allow people to judge themselves, even if they are not aware of any sin.[351] Thereby it excludes self-condemnation. Apparently it proceeds from the idea that people would not condemn themselves. Final judgment will not be by human but by divine measures, which reveal what is hidden. The Council proceeds from the assumption that good works are ethical actions. In contrast to this Luther thought that all actions done giving the glory to God are good works.[352] This of course may include ethical actions but also every other action. On the other hand ethical actions are excluded if they are not done giving the glory to God.

Good and evil works are also the topic of canons 25, 26 and 31[353] which look at the same issue from different angles. Canon 25 anathematizes all those who say

> in quolibet bono opere iustum saltem venialiter peccare ... aut (quod intolerabilius est) mortaliter, atque ideo poenas aeternas mereri, tantumque ob id non damnari, quia Deus ea opera non imputet ad damnationem,

canon 26 all those who say

> iustos non debere pro bonis operibus, quae in Deo fuerint facta, expectare et sperare aeternam retributionem a Deo per eius misericordiam et Iesu Christi meritum, si bene agendo et divina mandata custodiendo usque in finem perseveraverit.

---

[351] Ibid., p.59.
[352] Luther, *Werke*, pp.2/3.
[353] Denzinger 1575-1576+1581.

They are related to canon 7.[354] Canon 25 is further related to a statement of Luther which had already been rejected in the bull "Exsurge Domine".[355] According to Luther the spirit in which good works are done has to be taken into account. If people rely on their works, this is truly sinful.[356] In addition, of course, Luther argues that people are righteous because God declares them to be righteous, and not because of good works as canon 26 says. It is not true that here "das Anspruchsdenken ausgeschlossen ist" as Pesch claims.[357] Believing this is the remission of sin. It is of course a righteousness before God and not before man.[358] So Luther is in fact saying that evil works "non damnari, quia Deus ea opera non imputet ad damnationem". Consequently canons 25 and 26 actually apply to him in all their parts.[359] Canon 31 anathematizes all those who say "iustificatum peccare, dum intuitu aeternae mercedis bene operatur". This is, however, merely a conclusion from canons 25 and 26 and applies to Luther for the same reasons.

The problem of merit is also tackled in canon 32. This anathematizes all those who say

---

[354] See above p.44.
[355] Denzinger 1481-1482; Pesch, *Canones*, p.267.
[356] See above p.90.
[357] Canones, p.269.
[358] McGrath, *Cross*, p.115; compare idem, *Iustitia II*, p. 12.
[359] For canon 25 see Joest, *Lehre*, pp.47/58.

> hominis iustificati bona opera ita esse dona Dei, ut non sint etiam bona ipsius iustificati merita, aut ipsum iustificatum bonis operibus, quae ab eo per Dei gratiam et Iesu Christi meritum (cuius vivum membrum est) fiunt, non vere mereri augmentum gratiae, vitam aeternam et ipsius vitae aeternae (si tamen in gratia decesserit) consecutionem, atque etiam gloriae augmentum.[360]

This is simply a conclusion drawn from the teaching that is rejected by canon 24.[361] Indeed canon 32 is looking at the same matter from a different angle. Like canon 24 it cannot apply to Luther because it proceeds from a particular idea of righteousness which Luther does not share. Nevertheless its first part -

> hominis iustificati bona opera ita esse dona Dei, ut non sint etiam bona ipsius iustificati merita -

applies to Luther, since for him good works are in no way meritorious. Here "the Lutheran opinion that the justified person does not <u>truly merit</u> increase of grace by the good works which are done by the grace of God and the merit of Jesus Christ" is anathematized. "Truly merit" suggests condignity, which contradicts the teaching of chapter VII that there is nothing preceeding justification which would merit it.[362]

---

[360] Denzinger 1582.
[361] See above p.59.
[362] See above p.93.

VIII. Summary

There are of course many minor differences between Luther's and Trent's approaches to justification. There are also, however, two major differences. It is proposed to concentrate on these in this study. The first is the perception of the nature of original sin. This focuses in canon 2 of the decree on original sin. It is linked to the perception of sin in general.[363] The second is the perception of righteousness. This focuses in canon 11 of the decree on justification.

To what extent then does the Council of Trent anathematize and directly contradict Luther? In the decree on original sin Luther would only have fully agreed to canon 1 (the statement that Adam changed for the worse by the fall). He disagrees with the doctrine of canon 2 that this corruption is passed on by propagation ("Erbsünde"). Since this doctrine is repeated in every following canon - which shows that it is a major issue - Luther would not have fully agreed to any of them. He agrees, however, as far as the point the canon wants to make is concerned, to canon 3. Therefore this does, like canon 1, not apply to him, but he is anathematized by canons 2, 4 and 5.

---

[363] "Luther hat ... *die* Sünde neu begriffen."; Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.79; compare ibid., p.88.

Looking at the decree on justification, one sees that 14 canons out of 33 do indeed not apply to Luther. There are, however, 10 canons which do not apply to him only because he is already anathematized by other canons. So there are only 4 canons (1, 2, 6 and 17) which do not apply to Luther. Amongst these there nevertheless is one - canon 6 - which still applies to Luther since it presupposes an utterly unlutheran concept of free will. Canons 16, 18-20, 22-24, 30 and 31 proceed from a certain idea of righteousness and do not directly apply to Luther because he does not share this particular approach. He is already anathematized by canon 11, but those canons only apply to people who agree to canon 11. In the same way canon 4 does not apply to him because he is already anathematized by canon 5.

According to the Tridentine fathers they are teaching "doctrinam, quam nisi quisque fideliter firmiterque reciperit; iustificari non poterit"[364], and Canon 33 anathematises all those who say

> per hanc doctrinam catholicam de iustificatione, a sancta Synodo hoc praesenti decreto expressam, aliqua ex parte gloriae Dei vel meritis Iesu Christi Domini nostri derogari, et non potius veritatem fidei nostrae, Dei denique ac Christi Iesu gloriam illustrari.[365]

---

[364] End of chapter XVI; Denzinger 1550.
[365] Denzinger 1583.

Keeping the just quoted sentence from chapter XVI in mind, one sees that canon 33 anathematizes all those who say something which differs from the just defined Roman-Catholic doctrine. So it certainly applies to Luther. Having found so many differences in the doctrine of justification, one cannot agree with Meyer when he says: "Die gewichtigen und zum Teil trennenden Unterschiede liegen nicht mehr im Verständnis der Rechtfertigung als solcher."[366]

Following Wolf, Pesch claims that the Tridentine doctrine of justification is a single doctrine amongst others.[367] This is true in so far as there are other Tridentine decrees. It is, however, not a wholly correct evaluation. One must not overlook the link between the doctrine of justification and soteriology and the doctrines of original sin, baptism and penance.[368] Indeed, the papal legates on the Council of Trent themselves recognized the importance of the decree on justification.[369]

---

[366] *Dialogdokumente*, p.323.
[367] Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.153.
[368] See above p.54.
[369] See above p.10.

UNIV DUNELM

C. Considering *Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend?*

I. The antitheses, as they were hitherto understood

Now that the condemnations of the reformation era concerning the doctrine of justification have been analysed a closer look at the study *Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend?*'s findings is appropriate. Even in its very title the study implies that its underlying aim is to show that the condemnations of the reformation era no longer divide. This is reinforced by the assumption that the members of the party working on justification make, that their analysis of the way in which the differences over justification have been previously interpreted will pave the way for a subsequent re-evaluation of the nature and extent of the differences between the two sides.

Like this study, *Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend?* also starts with an analysis of the doctrinal differences of the reformation era. One of the major difficulties with its approach, however, is that it concentrates solely on how the relevant texts relate to each other, without exploring how they relate to the basic theological issues - such as original sin and justification. Ultimately this leads it to neglect some of the fundamental differences identified in the reformation period.[370] This can be seen more clearly when

---

[370] Baur, *Einig?*, p.2.

one examines in more detail the seven differences identified by *Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend?*.

The consideration of the perception of the nature of original sin deserves special attention. Epitome I[371] is used to introduce the issue on the Protestant side. This statement contradicts canon 2 of the Council of Trents decree on original sin.[372] However, the study does not consider it. So the argument is not as incisive as has been claimed.[373] Here the question arises of why the study does not allude to this obvious disagreement. A possible interpretation is that it was omitted simply because the Catholic and Protestant positions over it seemed so irreconcilable.[374] In view of the aim of the study[375], this indeed would seem plausible. For, apart from amnesia, there is no other obvious reason why it should not be mentioned. The study did not, it is true, set out to consider the decree on original sin, but this is inseparably linked to the decree on justification.[376] Furthermore the study considers canon 5 of the decree on original sin in the section on concupiscence.[377] Last but not least, there is no obvious reason why the question of original sin should be brought in on the Protestant but not

---

[371] See above p.32.
[372] See above p.46.
[373] Atkinson, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.408.
[374] See above section B.
[375] See above p.25.
[376] See above p.54.
[377] See above p.51; Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.37/38.

on the Roman-Catholic side. Could this canon really have been overlooked? If it has been left out deliberately, this would be an issue which is - contrary to Atkinson's claim - fudged.[378] If, on the other hand, one takes into account that the text has a given aim and therefore is biased[379], this bringing in of the perception of the nature of original sin on the protestant side appears merely incidental. Also, canon 4 of the decree on original sin, which links the problem of original sin to baptism, is relevant here because it teaches original sin as inherited corruption.[380] This too is not considered by the study. The canons referred to are, however, correctly applied.

A quote from the Solida Declaratio, which is also brought in here[381], leads the study to consider the problem of free will rather than the problem of original sin. Canon 3 of the Council of Trent's decree on justification seems to agree to the Solida Declaratio. The list of things which people are incapable of is longer and there is only one common element (credere), but they clearly refer to the same issue. One has, however, to bear in mind that the Tridentine canon implies that the believing, hoping, loving and repenting is meritorious, with the natural strength of people contributing to it. According to the reformers the believing, hoping,

---

[378] Atkinson, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.408.
[379] Eventually it actually verifies the convictions that launched it (Duffy, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.76).
[380] See above p.48.
[381] See above pp.32/33.

loving and repenting is brought about by the justifying grace. The natural strength of people does not have any part in it. So the statement from the Formula Concordiae is in fact contradicting the Tridentine canon. Again, however, this is not considered by the study. To sum up, then, the study's analysis of the depravity of human nature is insufficient as far as the Roman-Catholic perception is concerned. This in turn leads to a distorted presentation of the relationship of the Roman-Catholic and Lutheran doctrines.

Baur further criticizes the study's use of ethical language in this section. According to him the connection between Lutheran and Roman-Catholic doctrine is only possible because the working party put the Lutheran doctrine into ethical terms.[382] Finally the study did not consider all relevant Lutheran texts (e.g. a passage from the Smalcald Articles).[383]

In the case of concupiscence - which is considered separately, in spite of its close relation to the depravity of human nature - the study considered all the relevant canons of the Council of Trent. It even stated that in Lutheran doctrine concupiscence and original sin are synonymous.[384]

---

[382] Baur, *Einig?*, p.5.
[383] Ibid., p.6.
[384] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.37; see also the equivalence of peccatum originale and concupiscentia spiritualis with Luther (above p.52); Ebe-

Nevertheless the differences in the Lutheran and Roman-Catholic perception of the nature of original sin are again not considered, and this seriously undermines the accuracy of its treatment of concupiscence.[385]

The study quotes canon 4 of the Council of Trent's decree on justification as being directed against the reformers perception of people's relation to grace. However, this canon can only apply to those who agree to the existence of a free will and therefore cannot really apply to those it is ostensibly aimed at, that is the reformers.[386] It is therefore not appropriate to quote it as if it did apply to them. However, this is just what the study is doing. One possible reason for this mistake is the way in which the discussion of free will is split into two parts. This is a product of the different points the study wants to make about the depravity of human nature and the relation of people to grace. It is, however, unfortunate to split the discussion on free will and interrupt it by the consideration of concupiscence, since the latter certainly belongs to original sin and is linked to the depravity of human nature. The study fails, however, to analyse original sin, concupiscence and free will in the correct order: original sin as the fundamental feature should come first, followed by concupiscence as (in the Lutheran perception) being identical with or

---

ling, *Luther*, Sp.501.

[385] Baur, *Einig?*, pp.5/6.

[386] See above p.86.

(in the Roman-Catholic perception) arising from it, and free will as being influenced by it. As it is, the document appears a bit confused and not very helpfully arranged.

Taking up the analysis of the study's findings again, one can say that the study's identification of canon 11 of the Tridentine decree on justification as the key canon for the Roman-Catholic perception of the nature of grace is certainly correct. The canon contradicts both Luther's statement and Melanchton's implication which are cited by the study at this point.[387] So the study is perfectly right to quote it here. It does, however, not consider canon 10 which is also relevant at this point and which applies to Luther in its second part.[388] Another question which is connected with the nature of righteousness and which has not been considered in the study is whether it includes charity. The Council of Trent is not very clear on this matter. Canon 28, which has not been considered by the study, deals with the problem. Here the Council of Trent implies that one is a Christian even if the faith one has is without charity, and anathematises people who teach something else. As, according to Luther, faith necessarily includes charity, this anathema applies to him.[389] Baur raises objections to the statement that righteousness is "*ausschließlich eine Wirklichkeit auf Sei-*

---

[387] See above p.36 and footnote 115.
[388] See above p.58; also Baur, *Einig?*, p.66.
[389] See above p.80.

ten Gottes".[390] He says that God relates to people and thereby righteousness would become a reality also on the side of people.[391] He overlooks that the study is speaking of the origin of righteousness and of the state of affairs before God relates to people. At this point he seems to be a bit too keen to criticize the study.

With the study's analysis of the perception of the way of attaining grace Baur criticizes the study for not making it clear that "by" faith it does not mean a quality of faith but the only way of attaining righteousness. In his opinion it should also have said that confidence in this sense - that is in the Protestant perception - is not a psychic act but people's acknowledgment that they cannot reach justification themselves. This is, however, just what "faith" does not mean in Roman-Catholic doctrine: a confidence which leads human beings away from themselves. This is directly expressed in canon 12 but the idea also appears in chapter 8 of the Tridentine decree on justification.[392] In spite of considering canon 12 the study does not work out this difference.

In its analysis of the difference in the perception of the necessity of assurance of salvation the study overlooked

---

[390] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.39.
[391] Baur, *Einig?*, p.8.
[392] Ibid., p.9/10.

canons 15 and 29.[393] The study further does not give reasons why the Roman-Catholic side rejected the statements of the reformers here. Nor are they given in the consideration of the other differences though here it is especially obvious.[394]

The study's analysis of the differences in the perception of merits is correct but incomplete. It seems that canon 32 cannot really be quoted in this context because it obviously proceeds from an idea of righteousness which Luther does not share and therefore does not really apply to him. Nevertheless its teaching includes the claim that good deeds are meritorious and in this way it still applies to Luther. Next to this there are other canons corresponding to this issue which the study did not consider. These are the canons 25 and 26.[395] Last but not least the study seems to have totally forgotten about canon 33.[396]

On the other hand there are differences the study does not mention. One of these is the understanding of grace which must not be mixed up with righteousness. This focusses in canon 21 of the Tridentine decree on justification. In contrast to this Luther said that grace is no "nova exactio".[397] Another difference the study does not mention is the

[393] See above pp.80 and 94.
[394] Baur, *Einig?*, p.11.
[395] See above p.96.
[396] See above p.100.
[397] See above p.60.

perception of mortal sin, mentioned in canon 27.[398] The study further does not consider whether, according to Trent, the co-operation of free will in the attaining of righteousness is meritorious. According to chapter VIII of the Tridentine decree on justification it is not, but according to chapter VII the amount of grace attributed to each human being depends not only on the holy spirit but also on human preparation. "Joest schließt aufgrund dieser Aussage sehr vorsichtig: Dies lege "zumindest in der Sache den Gedanken ... eines meritum de congruo" - eines Billigkeitsverdienstes - "nahe"."[399] In view of this Schmidt's statement that on the Council of Trent the idea of "meritum de congruo" was overcome seems open to question.[400] There certainly is no meritum de congruo in Luther.

Furthermore the study overlooks the importance attributed to good works in canons 24 and 32 which say: "der Christ erlangt das ewige Heil *aufgrund seiner Leistung*, die von der Wirkung der Gnade nicht abgehoben werden darf, diese vielmehr steigert und zugleich von ihr ermöglicht und getragen ist." Contrary to this the study proposes "die gänzlich untridentinische Alternative" that justification is granted

---

398 See above p.78.

399 Baur, *Einig?*, p.11; with a quote from Wilfried Joest, *Die tridentinische Rechtfertigungslehre*, KuD 9.Jg., 1963, pp.41-69, p.55.

400 K.D.Schmidt, *Tridentinum*, in: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bd.6, Sp.1014, Tübingen 1962, 3rd ed.

"nicht aufgrund der menschlichen Leistung, sondern kraft der Gnade und des Verdienstes Christi" (42, 6f.)".[401]

This closer look at the study's analysis of the differences in the churches' doctrines shows that the Council of Trent's impact on Luther was actually bigger than the study shows. The omission of one big problem (original sin) and the (deliberate?) overlooking of several canons and of a few minor differences make the study's analysis appear rather superficial, and, ultimately, unreliable and inaccurate.[402]

II. New insights, and the value of them

In the section dealing with New Insights the working party states that as far as the doctrine of justification is concerned, the doctrinal differences cannot be overcome so easily because in the reformation era they were formulated in an over-simplified way, and have been maintained with particular intransigence ever since. This makes it very difficult to arrive at a consensus. Baur thinks it odd

> daß die Schwierigkeiten eines solchen Unternehmens (that is "Mittel zu benennen, um der widerständigen Materie eine einheitliche Form zu geben") das den Bruch von Jahrhunderten heilen soll, nicht in der Sache selbst gesehen werden,

---

[401] Baur, *Einig?*, pp.12/13.
[402] Ibid., p.13.

> sondern in wissenschaftlichen und moralischen Defekten der bisherigen Kontroverstheologie.[403]

To overcome these, the working party suggests a recourse to christology. The need of this had already been emphazised by the American Lutheran/Roman-Catholic dialogue group.[404] Baur criticises the argument of this group claiming that in this case it is rather vague and does not pay sufficient heed to the reformers' rejection of Christ as legislator.[405] He obviously takes the word "Norm"[406] - which is used by the dialogue group - in the very strict sence of "severe rule". It seems, however, that in this context it rather has to be taken as denoting "example". Here Baur again seems too keen to criticise the study. The working party thinks that the nearer the christian denominations draw to Christ, the closer they come to each other, for the whole subject and content of the doctrine of justification is nothing else than the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The study sees that the doctrine of justification was the fundamental difference over which Catholics and Protestants parted company in the sixteenth century, and that an analysis of this doctrine therefore represents an essential task in ecumenical dialogue. The working party argues: "Jeder andere Konsens ist auf Sand gebaut, wenn nicht ein echter Kon-

---

[403] Ibid., p.14.
[404] Burgess, *Justification*, Common Statement, § 156.1 (p. 71).
[405] Baur, *Einig?*, p.15.
[406] Also the English text uses the word "norm".

sens in der Rechtfertigungslehre ihn trägt."[407] Stating this, it forgets about the presupposed consensus in christology which it mentioned itself and which is already required by the link between soteriology and justification both in Luther's concept and the Tridentine decree.[408] Furthermore the working party does not realize that a consensus on the doctrine of justification presupposes a consensus on the doctrines of original sin, baptism and penance, and on the perceptions of sin in general, concupiscence and righteousness rather than being presupposed by them.[409] The working party claims that in the dialogue about the doctrine of justification essential progress has been made in the light of the fundamental reference to Christ and his gospel, but it neither names this progress nor gives any references for it. However, it gives three reasons for a re-evaluation of the condemnations of the 16th century which demand closer investigation.

The first reason lies in the field of biblical studies. The study points out that as far as these are concerned, theologians of both denominations have learned to distinguish between the fundamental biblical assertions about justification and the later theological form given to biblical testimony in the various doctrines of justification. In

[407] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.43; compare Tavard, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.301.
[408] See above p.54.
[409] Also Baur does not seem to realize this (Baur, *Einig?*, p.16).

addition to this, the results of Lutheran and Roman-Catholic exegesis today are more similar than they used to be. Following Paul, justification has been recognized to be a totally unmeritable, divine act on behalf of sinful people.[410] This is a rather Protestant point of view, but according to Baur the study sees the justified christian as "neu ausgestatteten Täter".[411] This denotes rather the Roman-Catholic perception of righteousness as an infused quality of the soul.

All the extremes and over-statements of the "distinguishing doctrines" are said to be pushed into the background in the light of these new biblical insights. They are relativised in the light of today's perception of the differences. The study does, however, not say what this means for the definition of justification.[412] A recourse to the bible seems rather difficult anyway, for "der formale Kanon begründet nicht die Einheit der Kirche, sondern die Vielheit der Konfessionen".[413]

According to the study, the second reason is that research into church history and the history of theology showed that the late scholastic doctrine of grace and justification differed fundamentally from that of the high schol-

---

[410] Still the question remains, whether modern exegesis really should focus only on Paul and leave James out.
[411] Baur, *Einig?*, p.18.
[412] Ibid., p.17.
[413] Ernst Käsemann, quoted from Joest, *Dogmatik*, p.64.

astic period, and that the Council of Trent did not want to declare either of them to be binding. The study claims that the Council of Trent affirmed "Christus als alleinige Quelle der Rechtfertigung".[414] This, however, would seem to be a major error for here the Tridentine statement that righteousness can be recovered by "works of satisfaction" has been ignored. In general this paragraph is rather vague and uses a language which makes the existing differences appear less serious.[415] An example of this is that the study speaks of "rejection" where the Council of Trent formulates an anathema.

The third reason is that Protestants and Roman-Catholics in the reformation era employed different language, but that this does not have to be an exclusive antithesis. This is the more true as some of the Protestants also occasionally employed the language which was mainly employed by the Roman-Catholics. Now it is clear that there is no theological difference just because views are expressed in different terms. The study seems to be implying that Protestants and Roman-Catholics may have said the same thing in different terms. This may in some cases have been so but, as has been seen, in other cases quite clearly was not.

---

[414] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.44.
[415] Baur, *Einig?*, p.19/20.

All this, according to the study, leads Protestants as well as Roman-Catholics nowadays to a better understanding of the concerns of the other party in the reformation era. The study suggests that this understanding should provide a starting point for a further understanding of each other's doctrine of justification. "Weil man so beiderseits die "Anliegen" und Schwerpunkte des Partners anerkennt, muß man die Lehr- und Bekenntnisformulierungen beider Kirchen zur Rechtfertigungslehre von da aus zu verstehen suchen, so daß sich die beiderseits bejahten Anliegen stützen, statt einander zu behindern."[416] Here the study seems to proceed from the assumption that there is a general consensus, that the two churches just stress different aspects of the same thing and that this only appears to distinguish one church from the other. Thereby it obviously overlooks that there is a disagreement rather than a consensus on basic issues concerning the doctrine of justification. In addition, to know the other denomination's doctrine does not mean to understand it; to understand it does not mean to acknowledge it; to acknowledge it does not mean to accept that it is different, and as long as there is no mutual acceptance of the other denomination's doctrine, the condemnations of the reformation era cannot be invalidated.

In spite of these differences there have been talks carried on for decades at all levels about the controversial

[416] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.45.

questions of the doctrine of justification. At first these talks were conducted independently by academic theologians but later on they gained a more official status, in dialogues of official interchurch commissions. The study mentions that these led to hopeful results, and this encouraged Protestants and Roman-Catholics to consider other controversial issues.

The working party realizes that the doctrine of justification of each single church is a whole and therefore has to be considered as a whole. On the other hand one cannot consider everything because this is far too much, but when one is looking at a single problem, the whole has at least to be kept in mind. To achieve this the working party employs four principles:

1. The council of Trent focuses on the process of justification in which baptism is a central feature. The reformers focused on the actual remission of sin which happens because of Jesus Christ. So the doctrine of justification is applied christology and a summary of the doctrine of the sacraments.[417] Both sides emphasize, however, different aspects. In addition to this there are - so the working party claims - misunderstandings which are due to structural differences in the understanding of justifi-

[417] Compare Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*, p.322.

cation. These structural differences are said to arise from the different practical emphases. This is backed by the fact that the positive pastoral concerns of the Tridentine decree on justification have their place in Protestant teaching as well.

2. The aim does not have to be to prove that the churches are at one in the structure of their thinking and their trains of thought, let alone in their modes of expression. It is, however, important to lay bare the hidden common foundations which underly these differences.

3. One must consider the innermost centre of the interpretation of justification maintained on both sides and recognize it unreservedly in its christian truth, together with the mutual tension of the two understandings.

4. As far as the Tridentine decree is concerned the working party prefers in case of doubt the view which is closest to Augustine. It admits that no problem can nowadays be settled by an appeal to Augustine, but it thinks that this principle can help to clarify what was meant in the reformation era, and both the reformers - at least as far as Luther is concerned - as well as the Council of Trent refer to Augustine.

> Chapter 1-4 and the corresponding canons 1-3 of the Tridentine decree on justification are expressed in the language of the Pelagian controversy.[418] On the other hand a major argument of the reformers was that there was a "Pelagian spirit" in the church of the late middle ages, which means that human nature and human abilities in general were ascribed a capacity to achieve merits before God. So the doctrine of Augustine provides not a touchstone but nevertheless a compass for the Roman-Catholic evaluation of the Protestant doctrine.

There are unfortunately several points raised by these principles which are open to question. The third principle, for example, can only be applied as long as there are really only "mutual tensions" and not fundamental differences, and indeed the given abstracts of the two concepts do not contradict each other.[419] However, Baur takes the question put to the Protestants to be almost an insult.[420] As has been seen in section B of this study, there are indeed fundamental differences between the Lutheran and Roman-Catholic concept of justification which cannot be denied, and it has furthermore been shown that these lie in the innermost centre of the interpretation of justification. Another problem is that the study seems to proceed from the assumption

[418] Ibid.
[419] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, pp.46/47.
[420] Baur, *Einig?*, p.30.

that both centres are christian truth. Thereby it is again implying that there is no difference between the two concepts.[421] The study claims that already in the sixteenth century there have been points on which the reformers and the Roman-Catholics agreed.[422] This is true, but neither Luther nor the Council of Trent stressed these points.

As far as Augustine's concept of justification is concerned, Baur states: "Wenn hier der Eindruck erweckt wird, Augustins Gnadentheologie biete für die Reformation und zumindest für Teile des tridentinischen Textes eine gemeinsame Basis ..., dann werden hier wissenschaftlich unvertretbare Behauptungen aufgestellt."[423] He is, however, at least as far as Luther is concerned, incorrect, for there **are** points - even if they are few - on which Augustine and Luther as well as the Council of Trent agree. Nevertheless Augustine's attitude towards free will is ambiguous. He taught a free will, but this is subject to the will of God, and God provides it with the power to do what it wants to do.[424] It is easy to derive two different concepts of justification from this paradox.

---

[421] Also Baur, *Einig?*, p.32.
[422] Ibid., p.47.
[423] Ibid., p.33.
[424] *Ag. Jul.*, book IV, 7.38.

III. Ancient condemnations - and whether they really no longer apply to christians of the other denomination today

Having compared Luther's and Trent's doctrines of justification, and looked in general at the approach of *Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend?*, a closer examination of the distinguishing differences is now possible. The study claims that many of these differences are caused by insufficient mutual understanding, misinterpretation and too little trust, or simply by a different way of thinking or speaking. It admits, however, that a few differences remain which still have to be worked upon.[425]

Before starting to examine the "distinguishing differences" the status of the Roman-Catholic and Protestant doctrine has to be kept in mind so that it is clear whether it is in fact possible to move away from the condemnations of the reformation period. Certainly on the Roman-Catholic side, it is very doubtful whether participants in ecumenical dialogue have the authority to do anything beyond suggesting certain interpretations of existing doctrine. One has to keep the position of the pope in mind. On June 18th, 1870 Vatican I had defined the infallibility of the pope in moral and doctrinal matters. Thereby a common practice which had

---

[425] Baur asks why these "differences" are not called "contradictions" (Baur, *Einig?*, p.36).

already been applied for several centuries was made an official doctrine of the Roman-Catholic church. This doctrine was reinforced by the canon law in 1983[426], and the infallibility applies also to councils as long as they go along with the pope.[427]

On the other hand, even on the Protestant side, though the *Bekenntnisschriften* are easier to relativize, nevertheless they are subject to constant examination by the people, Holy Scripture being the touchstone. A revision is therefore possible though very improbable. This is of course a very traditional approach, but it gives greater attention to historical truth. Doctrinal development of course always took place by people going beyond existing doctrine[428], but acknowlegded doctrine has never been invalidated even by the magisterium, let alone by individuals or by a consensus of several individual theologians.

Infallibility is the main obstacle in interchurch dialogue because it takes more than just an academic discussion

---

[426] CIC canons 331 + 333 § 3; compare canon 212 § 1; the problem of canon 331 is especially dealt with by Slenczka, *Gerecht*, p.315.

[427] CIC canons 336, 337 § 1 + 341 § 1; compare Joest, *Dogmatik*, pp.52+82/83; compare Slenczka, *Gerecht*, pp.297/302; later Slenczka states - in view of canons 959-997, but this applies to other canons as well: "Was als möglicher Konsens in dem Rechtfertigungs-Dokument behauptet wird, steht in einem völligen Widerspruch zu den geltenden kanonischen Bestimmungen" (*Gerecht*, p.312).

[428] Compare above p.8.

to invalidate decrees of councils, and as long as they have not been invalidated, they rather have to be maintained by the Roman-Catholics. According to Slenczka theologians participating in interchurch dialogue groups represent "für ihre Kirchen zugleich den gegenwärtigen Stand der Lehre".[429] However, this cannot be said of those Roman-Catholic theologians working on the statements on justification for *Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend?*. Roman-Catholic condemnations cannot be made obsolete by mere theological and liturgical developments as the study claims.[430] Both Baur and Slenczka are aware of the problem of what the former describes as "das Damoklesschwert des inzwischen unfehlbar gewordenen Lehramtes".[431] The theological implication of this is that ecumenical progress from the Roman-Catholic point of view can only mean the adoption of the Roman-Catholic doctrine by the Protestants. In this light the identification of the papacy by the American Lutheran/Roman-Catholic dialogue as a "minor difficulty" represents a considerable understatement.[432] On the other hand Slenczka's statement that theological decisions are "niemals durch geschichtliche Vorgänge für alle weiteren Zeiten erledigt"[433] appears to be too optimistic.

---

[429] Slenczka, *Gerecht*, p.298.
[430] Tavard, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.301.
[431] Baur, *Einig?*, pp.33/34; compare Slenczka, *Gerecht*, pp. 310/311, 314/315.
[432] Meyer, *Dialogdokumente*, p.300.
[433] Slenczka, *Gerecht*, p.294.

The problem of the position of the pope is the problem which marks the Lutheran/Roman-Catholic dialogue off from any other ecumenical dialogue involving Lutherans.[434] Indeed "most observers regard communion between Rome and Lutherans as unlikely to come closer while John Paul II is pope".[435] The problem of the different understanding of the position of the pope is linked to the problem of the different understanding of the church. "Der reformatorische Kirchenbegriff begründet die Überzeugung, daß die unsichtbare Kirche (that is: all those who really believe as opposed to those who are only called Christians) in allen christlichen Kirchen verborgen zu sein vermag. Anders lehrt hier nur die römische Kirche, die damit eine entscheidende Grenze den evangelischen Kirchen gegenüber aufrichtet."[436]

However, according to the study "steht die Lehre der katholischen Kirche den Einsichten der Reformatoren" as far as the depravity of human nature is concerned "nicht nach: Die Gnade tritt nicht etwa zum Bemühen des Menschen *hinzu*, sie *befähigt* ihn zum ersten Schritt zum Heil und darum auch zu allen weiteren Schritten, noch mehr: sie *ist* das Heil".[437]

---

[434] Meyer claimed a similarity (*Dialogdokumente*, pp.323/324).

[435] Carl J. Peter, *"The ecumenical unburdening of the mariological problem: a Roman Catholic response"*, in: *Journal of ecumenical studies*, vol.26 1989, No.4, p.697.

[436] Dietrich Rössler, *Grundriß der Praktischen Theologie*, Berlin - New York 1986, p.264; compare Slenczka, *Gerecht*, p.315.

[437] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.48.

This sentence, based on the early mediaeval Indiculus, seems indeed to be consistent with the Protestant doctrine.[438] The study does, however, not see - or pretends not to see - that there is a gap of more than a thousand years between this text and the Council of Trent, and that in this time Catholic doctrine developed further.[439] The Tridentine decree does not contradict the text refered to, but it is itself contradicted by the sentence quoted from *Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend*. This sentence indeed is an incorrect rendering of the Roman-Catholic doctrine.[440]

The major mistake of the study is the confusion of prevenient and justifying grace. It is indeed true that prevenient grace is not preceded by works but rather enables people to do these. It does, however, not justify them. Justification is the result of a co-operation of this prevenient grace with a liberated free will.[441] So it is no misunderstanding or "Entartung" of the Roman-Catholic doctrine to say that according to it "die Mitwirkung des Menschen zur maßgeblichen Bedingung und Voraussetzung der Taufgnade geacht wird".[442] For also "bene operantibus "usque in finem" (Mt 10,22; 24,13) et in Deo sperantibus proponenda est vita aeterna, et tamquam gratia ... et "tamquam merces" ex ipsius Dei promissione bonis ipsorum operibus et meritis

[438] Denzinger 238.
[439] Compare Baur, *Einig?*, p.37.
[440] Baur, *Einig?*, p.38.
[441] See above p.84.
[442] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, pp.49f.

fideliter reddenda".[443] As the idea of co-operation is an Augustinian one, the study failed to apply the fourth principle that the Tridentine decree should be interpreted in the light of the Augustinian doctrine.

According to Augustine the grace of God not only shows people what is good but also helps them to do good works. In the state of the restored divine image - that is after they have received grace - they can do good works with the help of God's grace.[444] Once having been justified people have to give in order to receive and to forgive in order to be forgiven. For nobody is without sin[445] but with God's help they are able to do good works (which of course are not their own). In this way they fulfill the law and thereby earn justification. There are several degrees of holiness as well as several degrees of damnation.[446] So the Roman-Catholic doctrine is in this case closer to Augustine. Now Augustine was proposed to be considered only in case of doubt. So the study obviously thinks that in this case there is no doubt. However, as it proceeds from the wrong presupposition that there is no co-operation in Roman-Catholic doctrine, it is bound to arrive at wrong conclusions.

---

[443] Denzinger 1545.
[444] *De spir. et lit.*, III.5.
[445] Ibid., XXXVI.65.
[446] *De spir. et lit.*, XXVIII; compare *Ag. Jul.*, book IV, 3.25 and Bonner, *Aug.*, p. 382.

Finally the study claims that canons 5, 7 and 8 of the Tridentine decree no longer apply to the Protestants, but it does not give any reasons for this.[447] All of them applied to Luther, and as they have never been invalidated nor the Lutheran assertions of the reformation era ever been retracted, they still apply to Lutherans today.[448] The study proposes to analyse the Lutheran condemnations on this matter when the passivity of people towards God is considered, and so the consideration of them is postponed here. However, Baur mentions several Protestant condemnations which have not been considered by the study.[449]

Moving on to consider the study's findings regarding concupiscence, one can say that it may be true that "insoweit der Begriff der *"Konkupiszenz"* das Verständnis von Sündenverderbnis zusammenfaßt, ... der Streit um diesen Begriff kein neues Problem schaffen" kann, "wenn die gegenseitigen Verurteilungen im Blick auf das Verständnis von der Sündenverderbnis tatsächlich gegenstandslos geworden sind".[450] It is important to note the conditional phrase. It has just been shown that the mutual condemnations regarding the depravity of human nature have **not** become obsolete - at least on the Roman-Catholic side. So what remains is not

---

[447] This is also criticised by Baur, *Einig?*, p.44.
[448] Baur, *Einig?*, p.45.
[449] Ibid., pp.45-47.
[450] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.50; Baur wonders why the study uses conditional language (Baur, *Einig?*, p.47).

just "eine historisch wie sachlich keineswegs unbedeutende, aber lösbare Definitionsfrage". Again the study proceeds from wrong presuppositions. Still, its statements have to be analysed.

First the study goes back to the scholastic positions on original sin to show that Luther attacked only one of them. It implies further that he had only one particular understanding of this position in mind, namely that people did not change for the worse by the fall. At this stage the study mentions that on the Protestant side original sin and cuncupiscence are identical. It also states that one difference remains: for with Luther concupiscence remains sinful, while for the Council of Trent it is just an inclination to sin, that is, what remains of original sin after the guilt has been taken away.

Next the study refers to the agreement on original sin reached by Melanchthon and Eck at Worms in 1541.[451] What it does not say is that this agreement does not say whether concupiscence is sinful, that it was prior to the Council of Trent and the *Bekenntnisschriften*, and therefore prior to the mutual condemnations, and that it has no official character. The study claims, however, that this agreement was reaffirmed by the Council of Trent[452] which also reaffirmed a

---

[451] Ibid., pp.51/52.
[452] Also Baur is sceptical (Baur, *Einig?*, p.49).

scholastic position other than that which Luther attacked. This, however, ignores canon 2 of the Tridentine decree on original sin. The *Bekenntnisschriften* state

> Clare enim appelant (sc. testimonia Augustini et Pauli) concupiscentiam peccatum, quod tamen his, qui sunt in Christo, non imputatur, etsi res sit natura digna morte, ubi non condonatur[453],

taking up a statement of Melanchthon. Against this the Council of Trent had put canon 25 of the decree on justification.[454] If other sins, however, do not lead to condemnation only because they are not imnputed, this is certainly the case with original sin. The study extensively points out features of the doctrine of justification that Luther and the Council of Trent agree on. In doing this it makes great efforts to show that they really agreed. Even the question whether concupiscence is sinful appears not to be controversial any more. Finally the study states that it is not appropriate to discuss the question of the perception of sin only in relation to concupiscence, and that modern Roman-Catholic theology has drawn closer to the Lutheran perception. There is, however, a difference between modern Roman-Catholic theology and official Roman-Catholic doctrine which the study does not mention. Regarding the canon law of 1983 one might even ask whether academic theology is entitled to move away from the Tridentine doctrine. Anyway, in this

---

[453] *Apol* 2, 40: *BSLK* p.155, 11.11-15.
[454] See above p.96.

section the study does not point out any particular condemnations which it claims not to be valid any more.

Regarding the passivity of the human being towards God's justifying act, which the study had identified as the third "distinguishing doctrine", the Lutheran doctrine is rendered correctly, but when the study says: "*Beiden* geht es darum, daß der Mensch gegenüber Gott in keiner Weise auf seine eigenen Bemühungen schielen kann", it gives a very distorted account of the Roman-Catholic view.[455] Indeed, according to Baur even the Protestant doctrine has been distorted by introducing an individual response to God's call.[456] As has already been pointed out, the Council of Trent favours a co-operation of the human being with a **prevenient** grace to attain **justifying** grace.[457] The statement ""*Mit*wirkung" kann es nur in *dem* Sinne geben, daß das Herz beim Glauben dabei ist" does apply to the Lutheran position indeed but not to the Roman-Catholic one.[458] The study appeals, however, to the Protestants to take this to be the Roman-Catholic doctrine.

For a correct evaluation of this appeal it is important to note that the party working on justification included less than 10 Roman-Catholic scholars, and these were not representing the magisterium. One may ask if they were en-

---

[455] Compare also Baur, *Einig?*, p.55.
[456] Ibid., p.53.
[457] See above p.84.
[458] Also Baur, *Einig?*, p.56.

titled to appeal to the Protestants in the name of Roman-Catholic theology, but even if they were; such an appeal should rather be made by the Roman-Catholic church.

Finally the study claims that canon 4 of the Tridentine decree on justification no longer applies to the Protestants today. It never, however, really applied to Luther and his followers.[459] In other words, the study again arrived at the wrong conclusions because it proceeded from wrong presuppositions.[460] It is true that the Protestant condemnations do not apply to this distorted Roman-Catholic doctrine, but they may still apply to the Tridentine doctrine. The condemnations in question are number 4 and 5 of the Formula Concordiae, Solida Declaratio II.[461] Condemnation 4 rejects

> der Synergisten Lehre, wölche fürgeben, daß der Mensch nicht allerdings in geistlichen Sachen zum Guten erstorben, sondern übel verwundet und halb tot. Derhalben, obwohl der freie Wille zu schwach seie, den Anfang zu machen und sich selbst aus eigenen Kräften zu Gott zu bekehren und dem Gesetz Gottes mit Herzen gehorsam zu sein: dannoch, wann der Heilige Geist den Anfang gemachet und uns durchs Evangelion berufet und seine Gnade, Vergebung der Sünden und ewige Seligkeit anbeut, daß als dann der freie Wille aus seinen eigenen natürlichen Kräften Gott begegnen und etlichermassen etwas, wiewohl wenig und schwächlich, darzutun, helfen und mitwirken, sich zur Gnade Gottes schicken und applizieren und dieselbige ergreifen, annehmen, und dem Evangelio gläuben, auch in Fortsetzung und Erhaltung dieses Werks aus seinen eigenen Kräften neben dem Heiligen Geist mitwirken könne.
>
> Dagegen aber ist oben nach der Länge erwie-

---

[459] See above p.87.
[460] Compare Baur, *Einig?*, p.58.
[461] *BSLK* pp.903-905 nn.77-79.

> sen, daß solche Kraft, nämlich *facultas applicandi se ad gratiam*, das ist, natürlich sich zur Gnade zu schicken, nicht aus unseren eigenen natürlichen Kräften, sondern allein durch des Heiligen Geistes Wirkung herkomme.

It rejects the teaching that there is a free will which is not completely dead, or that such a free will could co-operate with God's grace or persevere in it if it existed. This is, however, just what the Tridentine decree is saying. Therefore also this condemnation is still valid.[462]

Condemnation 5 rejects

> diese der Päpste und Münche Lehren, daß der Mensch könne nach der Wiedergeburt das Gesetz Gottes in diesem Leben gänzlich erfüllen und durch diese Erfüllung des Gesetzes für Gott gerecht sei und das ewige leben verdiene.

It is not clear whether this is really the Tridentine teaching.[463] At least the Council acknowledges that there are people who fall from grace. It seems to be implying that it is possible not to fall from grace. In this case it is appropriate to have a closer look at Augustine. For Augustine, people can keep the law if God helps them, but only in theory. This never happened before and also will never happen, but it is nevertheless possible for God.[464] So this

---

[462] Beißer points out that the condemnation could be abolished if the Tridentine decree could be interpreted in such a way that a co-operation of free will with grace was not necessary (*Konkordienformel*, p.217), but this is not possible.

[463] Also Baur, *Einig?*, p.58.

[464] *De spir. et lit.*, I.1; compare for Mt 26,53.

condemnation actually never applied to the Tridentine decree if the decree is read in the light of Augustine's teaching. The study does, however, not consider Augustine. Again it fails to apply its fourth principle. Baur complains that the study did not really investigate the different perceptions of people "coram Deo" and in this way avoided the real dissent.[465]

Leaving the section that is concerned with original sin, the study states that there **seems** to be no misunderstanding about the nature of righteousness but a real difference.[466] The Lutheran and Roman-Catholic point of view are rendered correctly. Even the understanding of justification as a process in Roman-Catholic doctrine is mentioned, but the study still does not distinguish between prevenient and justifying grace. To these facts the study puts, however, the question: "stehen wir hier wirklich vor einem Gegensatz, der alle Gemeinsamkeiten durchkreuzt und gegenseitige Verurteilung zwingend macht?"[467] Certainly there are things Lutherans and Roman-Catholics have in common, but the study seems to be refering to the statements which it has just made. These are, however, not at all accepted by both Lutherans and Roman-Catholics. As far as the question whether Roman-Catholics and Lutherans were forced to utter mutual condemnations in the reformation era is concerned, the

[465] Baur, *Einig?*, p.54.
[466] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.53.
[467] Ibid., p.54.

answer is of course "No". It has, however, to be affirmed that they choose to, and today's christians as their heirs have to cope with the fact.

There is a third aspect which has to be considered: the question implies that the differences regarding the nature of righteousness are a minor issue which is topped by more important ones. However, the analysis of the Tridentine decree showed that next to the perception of original sin, the perception of righteousness is the central and therefore **most** important feature of the council of Trent's doctrine of justification, and the same applies to the Lutheran doctrine.

The study refers to new testamental exegesis to show that both concepts are founded in the bible, but in the process of doing this it confuses infusion and imputation ("die "außerhalb von uns" verbleibende Liebe Gottes wird gleichwohl "in unsere Herzen ausgegossen""), and thereby seems to be proposing a paradox.[468] The study further states that in the light of these new exegetical insights old quarrels have lost their rigidity, and that thereby a new understanding was reached. The concluding rendering of the present situation has, however, its weak points: it may be true that Roman-Catholic doctrine does not overlook what Protestant theology stresses - the personal character of grace and its

[468] Ibid.

link with God's word. But it actually **does** maintain what Protestant theology is afraid of: grace as an objective possession of the human being which is infused.[469] On the other hand, it may be true that Protestant theology does not overlook what Roman-Catholic doctrine stresses - the creative and renewing character of God's love - but it never maintained God's impotence to do away with sin rather than just forgive it as the study would have it. There has never been a reason for Roman-Catholic doctrine to be afraid of that.

Baur takes a different approach to these assertions. He states that even if they were right, there would still remain a significant difference .[470] So again the study is proceeding from wrong presuppositions. This necessarily leads to the wrong conclusion: that the mutual condemnations applied even in the sixteenth century only to indistinct and misleading formulations, but not to the actual view of the other denomination. The problem is that the study only investigated the Tridentine canons and not also the chapters. So it failed to consider the doctrine underlying the condemnations which led to a distorted perception of the canons. Contrary to what the study says canon 11 definitely **does** apply to Luther.[471]

---

[469] See above p.65.
[470] Baur, *Einig?*, pp.65/66.
[471] See above p.73.

On the Lutheran side the study wants to abolish the condemnations 3-7 of the first group of rejections of the Solida Declaratio III of the Formula Concordiae and the condemnations 5 and 6 of the second group of rejections of the same section.[472] Regarding the first group of rejections, condemnation 3 rejects the teaching

> daß unser wahrhaftige Gerechtigkeit vor Gott sei die Liebe oder die Erneuerunge, welche der Heilige Geist in uns wirket und in uns ist,

and condemnation 4 the teaching

> daß zwei Stück oder Teil zu der Gerechtigkeit des Glaubens für Gott gehören, darinn sie bestehe, nämblich die gnädige Vergebung der Sünden und dann zum andern auch die verneuerung oder Heiligung.

There can be no doubt that both refer to the Roman-Catholic teaching of grace being infused. There can be no doubt that they are still valid. Condemnation 5 rejects the teaching

> der Glaube rechtfertige nur anfangsweise, oder teilweise, oder hauptsächlich; und unsere Erneuerung oder Liebe rechtfertige auch vor Gott entweder gänzlich oder weniger hauptsächlich,

condemnation 6 the teaching

> daß die Gläubigen für Gott gerechtfertigt werden und gerecht seien zugleich durch die zugerechnete Gerechtigkeit Christi und den angefangenen neuen Gehorsamb, oder zum Teil durch die zugerechnete Gerechtigkeit Christi, zum Teil durch den angefangenen neuen Gehorsamb,

and condemnation 7 the teaching

---

[472] *BSLK* p.931 nn.47-51 and p.935 nn.64-65.

> daß uns die Verheissung der Gnade zugeeignet werde durch den Glauben im Herzen und durch die Bekenntnus, so mit dem Munde gaschicht, und durch andere Tugenden, das ist der Glaube mache allein darumb gerecht, daß die Gerechtigkeit in uns anfangen, oder also, daß der Glaube den Vorzug habe in der Rechtfertigung, gleichwohl gehöre auch die Erneuerung und die Liebe zu unser Gerechtigkeit vor Gott, doch dergestalt, daß sie nicht die vornehmste Ursach unser Gerechtigkeit, sonder daß unser Gerechtigkeit vor Gott ohne solche Liebe und Erneuerung nicht ganz oder vollkommen seie.

All three of them refer to the Council of Trent's assertion that there is a co-operation of free will and "gratia praeveniens" to achieve the justifying grace and of course apply to the Council. Regarding the second group of rejections condemnation 5 rejects the teaching

> daß der Glaube ein solch Vertrauen sei auf den Gehorsamb Christi, welcher in einem Menschen sein und bleiben könnte, der gleich keine wahrhaftige Buß habe, do auch keine Lieb folge, sondern wider sein Gewissen in Sünden verharre,

and condemnation 6 the teaching

> daß nicht Gott, sondern allein die Gaben Gottes in den Gläubigen wohnen.

These condemnations are directed against the Tridentine perception of faith and directly contradict canon 28[473], but this has not even been considered by the study in this context.[474] "Es ist nicht zu sehen, wo vom vorliegenden Dokument diese Bedenken sachlich überholt werden."[475]

---

[473] See above p.79.
[474] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.39.
[475] Baur, *Einig?*, p.67.

The thoughts on whether justification is by faith alone or the result of a co-operation of free will and "gratia praeveniens" - the fifth distinguishing difference identified by the study - are introduced by a conditional clause: "Wenn die vorstehenden Überlegungen tragfähig sind ..." The study seems to refer only to the consideration of the nature of righteousness rather than to all of its preceeding results. So the subsequent reflections depend on the tenability of the results the study has just arrived at. Now the analysis has shown that these results are not tenable, but nevertheless the reflections to come have to be considered.

The study starts off by pointing out that the reformers and the Tridentine fathers had a different perception of faith. Luther's perception of faith includes more than the Council of Trent's one. In fact it includes all relevant features which according to the Council of Trent are granted besides faith.[476] Nevertheless the study admits the difference that, for Luther, people's salvation is based on God's promise, rather than on their new being, as for the Council of Trent. The study pays special attention to the contrasting ways in which Luther and Melanchthon on one side and the Roman-Catholics on the other side used particular terms. It claims that Luther and Melanchthon used language in a rather vague way, so that it may be that it is not always clear

[476] See above p.64; for love and hope being separated from faith in the Tridentine doctrine compare Baur, *Einig?*, p.69.

what exactly they had in mind though this is open to question.[477] The study points out that there are seven points which have to be kept in mind:[478]

- both sides refered to the apostle Paul under the presuppositions of sixteenth century exegesis,

- both sides are supported by the witness of the new testament,

- Roman-Catholics nowadays acknowlegdge the main Protestant concern: trust in God,

- trust in God had already been important in scholasticism[479],

- scholastic elements have been integrated in Lutheran doctrine[480],
- the reformers attributed to faith all the consequences for human beings which Catholic tradi-

---

[477] Baur, *Einig?*, p.68.
[478] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, pp.57/58.
[479] Baur criticizes that here and with the previous point the Tridentine view is no longer considered (Baur, *Einig?*, p.71).
[480] Baur does not see the connection of justification by faith and "gratia gratum faciens" (Baur, *Einig?*, p. 71). The latter again is not distinguished from the "gratia gratis data" by which it is proceeded. There is on the contrary a totally different meaning applied to it (Baur, *Einig?*, p.73).

tion attributed to other gifts[481], and

- also for Luther faith is not without any works.[482]

From this the study concludes that Lutheran and Roman-Catholic doctrine were not as far apart as it seemed, even in the reformation era. This is true, but the study overlooks the importance of free will and subsequently human co-operation in the process of justification in Roman-Catholic doctrine ("Die katholische Lehre weiß sich mit dem reformatorischen Anliegen einig, daß die Erneuerung des Menschen keinen "Beitrag" zur Rechtfertigung leistet"[483]). Hence the study's conclusion that canon 9 and 12 of the Tridentine decree on justification are obsolete is not justified. The study claims the same for condemnations 1 and 2 of the first group of rejections in the Formula Concordiae, Solida Declaratio III.[484] Condemnation 1 rejects the teaching

> daß unser Liebe oder gute Werk Verdienst oder Ursach seind der Rechtfertigung für Gott, entweder gänzlich oder ja zum Teil,

and condemnation 2 the teaching

---

[481] The study does, however, not consider that in spite of the suggestion of the Roman-Catholic cardinal Willebrand ""Luthers Glaubensbegriff ..." sehr wohl etwas "anderes bedeutet als das, was wir in der katholischen Kirche mit Liebe bezeichnen" (Baur, *Einig?*, p.76; compare Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, pp.58/59).

[482] These works do, however, as Baur points out, not contribute to the actuall justification (Baur, *Einig?*, p.75).

[483] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.59.

[484] *BSLK* pp.930-931 nn.45-46.

> daß durch gute Werke der Mensch sich dazu wirdig und geschickt machen müsse, daß ihm das Verdienst Christi mitgeteilet muge werden.

Both are directed against the Tridentine teaching that there is human co-operation in the attaining of righteousness, the first explicitly (rejecting even the teaching that good works are only "zum Teil" the reason for justification), the second implicitly. "Verdienst Christi" denotes Christ's righteousness, the granting of which equals the granting of justifying grace which, according to Tridentine doctrine, is the result of a co-operation of free will and "gratia praeveniens". All the condemned teachings can be found in the Tridentine decree, and therefore also these condemnations cannot be abolished.[485]

The study claims that, as with the perception of faith, the condemnations regarding the assurance of salvation are due to misunderstandings. These misunderstandings are again said to be partly due to stressing the different points that Luther and Trent actually agreed upon. Both sides acknowledge that people are weak in relation to God. Only they express this in different ways. It has rightly been argued that this is simply not true: Luther's opponents did not even know about, let alone experience, a tempted con-

---

[485] There are also further condemnations and anathemas which should have been considered here, although some of the canons Baur mentions (Baur, *Einig?*, p.77) did not even apply to Luther (this applies to canons 19+20; compare above p.71).

science.[486] As far as the effectiveness of the sacraments is concerned, even Roman-Catholics can have full assurance.[487] It is in regard to themselves that people may be in doubt. Contrary to this Luther asks people not to consider their own weakness but just trust in God's promise.[488] The study states that the Roman-Catholic side interpreted this trust as trust in people's conviction - not to say in their own feeling - that they are saved rather than in God's promise while the reformers took this rejection as indicating that the Roman-Catholics wanted to keep people uncertain even if that meant doubt in God's promise.

The study, however, does not mention that according to the Council of Trent this uncertainty is an uncertainty about preparation, that is the co-operation of free will with prevenient grace. In addition to this the study confuses the scholastic doctrine of the sacraments and the experience of faith which was proclaimed by the reformers.[489] According to the study, both Lutherans and Roman-Catholics had extreme positions of the other side in mind when formulating the condemnations, disregarding later more moderate modifications. So the Council of Trent merely took up the condemnations of the bull "Exsurge Domine".[490] On the other

---

[486] Baur, *Einig?*, p.80.
[487] Sacraments are believed to be effective "ex opere operato", that is by the mere application.
[488] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.60.
[489] Baur, *Einig?*, p.81.
[490] See above p.82.

hand Luther said that grace is lost only by unbelief, but he himself is said to have changed his views later on. To prove this the study quotes a translation of the Smalcald Articles. Here Luther writes against those

> die da halten, daß alle die, so einmal den Geist oder Vergebung der Sünden empfangen hätten oder gläubig geworden wären, wenn hernach sündigeten, so blieben sie gleichwohl im Glauben und schadet ihnen solche Sunde nicht und schreien also: "Tu was du willst, gläubst du, so ist's nichts, der Glaube vertilget alle Sunde".[491]

This does, however, not mean that faith is lost by sin. Luther's statement has rather to be looked at in the light of the views of the people Luther rejected. He warned people of a faith without substance.[492] Still the study is right in saying that Luther wanted to exclude an assurance which is based on people's own conviction rather than on God's promise.

Finally the study concludes that the Council of Trent rejected exactly what Luther rejected: self-deception about the state people are in before God, and stressed exactly what Luther stressed: "die Verläßlichkeit und Allgenügsamkeit der Verheißung Gottes". The latter is, however, again simply not true. According to the Council of Trent, God's promise is reliable indeed, but it is not sufficient. Again the study overlooks the importance of free will and co-

[491] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.62.
[492] Compare Baur, *Einig?*, pp.86/87.

operation in the Roman-Catholic doctrine. So it is not true that this difference "schon damals zur gegenseitigen Verurteilung nur führen konnte, weil man einander nicht genug zugehört hat". The difference remains. As a result canons 13-15 at least still apply to the Lutherans today. Canon 16 and 23 never really applied to Luther because they proceed from an idea of righteousness he does not share.[493] Yet according to the study there are no explicit condemnations regarding this issue in the Formula Concordiae.

The study claims that the quarrel about merits - the seventh "distinguishing doctrine" identified by the study - is also largely due to misunderstandings. This, however, does not ring true. The reformers thought that, according to Roman-Catholic doctrine, people merit grace. The study now claims that according to canon 2 of the Tridentine decree on justification the Council banned exactly this doctrine (quasi per liberum arbitrium sine gratia utrunque, sed aegretamen et difficulter possit). Again the mistake the study makes is not to distinguish between prevenient and justifying grace. For it is the prevenient grace that cannot be merited. This, however, does not justify. It is, rather, co-operating with free will to gain the justifying grace. The study itself states that the Council derives its doctrine of merits from Augustine. However, according to Augustine, God rewards and punishes people according to

[493] See above chapter B.IV.

merits.[494] So contrary to the study's claim it is not true that the Council rejects "jedes Verdienst der *Gnade* - also der *Rechtfertigung*", but it certainly establishes "das Verdienst des *ewigen Lebens*". It also does not reject "jeden Gedanken an Anspruch", even not in chapter XVI, as the study claims.[495] On the contrary it rather establishes the idea of a claim. For in chapter VI the Council says:

> Atque ideo bene operantibus "usque in finem" (Mt 10, 22; 24,13) et in Deo sperantibus proponenda est vita aeterna, et tamquam gratia ... et "tamquam merces" ex ipsius Dei promissione bonis ipsorum operibus et meritis fideliter reddenda.[496]

"Für Trient ist die Rede vom "Verdienst" nicht nur möglich, sondern notwendig, um den Weg des Christen vom ersten Anstoß durch die Gnade bis zum Gewinn des ewigen Lebens als Werk Gottes *und* des <verantwortlich> mitbeteiligten Begnadigten zugleich religiös-sakramental und ethisch produktiv verstehen zu können."[497]

Finally the study suggests that many contradictions in Lutheran and Roman-Catholic doctrine could be overcome simply by looking at the term "merit" in the biblical context. This, however, is methodologically dubious. The term should rather be looked at in the light of its meaning in

---

[494] *Ag. Jul.*, book IV, 8.47.
[495] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.73.
[496] Denzinger 1545.
[497] Baur, *Einig?*, p.106.

Tridentine and Protestant doctrine, for these are what is at issue and cannot simply be passed by.

The study comes to the conclusion that canons 2, 24 and 32 of the Tridentine decree on justification have become obsolete. What canon 2 is driving at is that people cannot contribute to the attaining of justifying grace when they have not been given prevenient grace, and that therefore Christ is indispensable. The latter is also affirmed by Luther. So this canon actually never applied to Luther.[498] Canon 24 also never applied to Luther because it proceeds from an idea of righteousness Luther does not share. The same would apply to canon 32 if there was not the teaching that good works are meritorious in the first part of it. This part applied to Luther and indeed still applies to Lutherans today.[499]

Having dealt with the Tridentine anathemas, there is also one Lutheran condemnation the study wants to abolish in this context. This is condemnation 3 of the Formula Concordiae, Solida Declaratio IV, which says:

> Weil dann aus Gottes Wort offenbar, daß der Glaube das eigentlich einige Mittel ist, dardurch Gerechtigkeit und Seligkeit nicht allein entpfangen, sondern auch von Gott erhalten wird, soll billich verworfen werden, das im Trientischen Concilio geschlossen und was sonst mehr uf dieselbe Meinung gerichtet worden, daß unsere guete Werk die Selig-

[498] See above p.50.
[499] See above p.98.

> keit erhalten, oder daß die entpfangene Gerechtigkeit des Glaubens oder auch der Glaube selbst durch unsere Werk entweder gänzlich oder ja zum Teil erhalten und bewahret werden.[500]

This is the only Protestant condemnation which explicitly rejects the Council of Trent.[501] It not only teaches that good works preserve righteousness, but even that they lead to its increase. In this it was following Augustine who had taught that there are different degrees of holiness.[502] So this condemnation clearly applies to the Council and therefore also cannot be invalidated nowadays. Again the study failed to apply its fourth principle.

The first three differences are linked to one another. The consideration of the Protestant condemnations regarding the depravity of human nature is postponed until the passivity of the human being towards God's justifying act has been considered, and the results of the consideration of concupiscence are thought of as depending on the results of the consideration of the depravity of human nature. So the study seems to think that they all belong to the same complex. In the same way as the consideration of concupiscence and of the depravity of human nature, the consideration of the perception of faith and of whether justification is by faith alone are linked to each other. The remaining con-

---

[500] *BSLK* p.949 n.35.
[501] Baur, *Einig?*, p.107.
[502] See above pp.76/126.

siderations are not linked to these but nevertheless belong to the same complex.

D. Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend!

Finally the study summarized its results in three points. It is proposed to list and then criticise them:

1. "Was das Verständnis der Rechtfertigung des Sünders angeht, so treffen die beiderseitigen hier erörterten Verwerfungsaussagen des 16. Jahrhunderts nicht mehr den Partner von heute."[503] According to the study many condemnations did not even apply to the opponent in the reformation era. This is true of some condemnations because they presuppose a certain understanding the opponent did not share. It is, however, not true of all the condemnations of which the study states it is true, especially not of the condemnations regarding the nature of righteouness.

   The study states that there is a better understanding of the opponent's doctrine today because people have learnt to listen more attentively to each other. This may be true, but nevertheless there remain the condemnations of the reformation era, which have never been invalidated and therefore - especially on the Roman-Catholic side - still apply to Christians of the other denomination today. This is even true of most of the condemnations which have been

[503] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.74.

considered by the study. For neither the Roman-Catholics nor the Protestants have changed their doctrine, or retracted their anathemas and condemnations. "Am Gewicht der Sachfrage ändert der Umstand wenig, daß wir die Kunst der historischen Fragestellung beherrschen und deshalb in Abstand auch zu den eigenen Voraussetzungen und Gewißheiten treten können."[504]

2. The study admits that the abolition of condemnations does not mean that there remain no differences.

> Aber sie sind, wenn die vorangegangenen Überlegungen richtig sind, keine Entscheidungsfragen von der Art, daß mit ihrer Beantwortung über wahre und falsche Kirche entschieden wäre.[505]

This again is a conditional phrase. One may think that it indicates that the study itself is not sure whether its statements are correct and is trying to win supporters. Every text is biassed, but this text is extremely biassed. The study approaches the question of whether the condemnations of the reformation era still divide from the presupposition that it simply has to show that the answer is "No". Consequently

---

[504] Baur, *Einig?*, p.109.
[505] Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.75.

it comes out with the desired result, but this result has been reached at the cost of accurate analysis.

If the reflections of the study are incorrect it raises the question how the continuing differences over justification, which have been identified above, are to be assessed. Are the errors identified on the other side so serious as to challenge the very nature of the church that holds them? Or are they less important - are the Roman-Catholic as well as the Protestant concepts not mere constructs indicating possible truths? According to Baur the question of justification remains an "Entscheidungsfrage" as long as christians of different denominations have not agreed on the essence of christianity.[506] But who knows how God and everything that is related to him - except creation - really is? Can one church condemn the other just because it has different perceptions? This is of course contrary to what Baur writes "anstelle eines Nachwortes".[507]

3. Finally the study states that the differences regarding the doctrine of justification are really distinguishing if the churches insist on what was said

---

[506] Baur, *Einig?*, p.110.
[507] Ibid., p.111.

in the reformation era. Therefore the function of the doctrine of justification and their biblical foundations is "im Bewußtsein der Christen zu halten, daß wir Sünder allein aus der vergebenden Liebe Gottes leben, die wir uns nur schenken lassen, aber auf keine Weise, wie abgeschwächt auch immer, "verdienen" oder an von uns zu erbringende Vor- oder Nachbedingungen binden können". As always, the study is ignoring the importance of free will and co-operation in Roman-Catholic doctrine. It establishes its own summary as a touchstone of the true Christian doctrine instead.[508] Thereby it implies that the Tridentine doctrine cannot be called a Christian one. The summary is further said to be a touchstone of the preaching of the church. If the latter is in accordance with it, it is also in accordance with what is given to the church by the Lord. Now Roman-Catholic doctrine - which underlies Roman-Catholic preaching - differs from the summary the study suggests. Is the study in effect saying that Roman-Catholic preaching is not in accordance with what the Lord said?

---

[508] "Die "Rechtfertigungslehre" wird damit zum kritischen Maßstab, an dem sich jederzeit überprüfen lassen muß, ob eine konkrete Interpretation unseres Gottesverhältnisses den Namen christlich beanspruchen kann." (Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*, p.75).

An evaluation of the study is difficult. It received positive acknowledgement by some reviewers. The most optimistic of them is James Atkinson, according to whom *Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend?* is an "excellent, almost prophetic, book" which "may well change the whole nature of ecumenical study, still more, give it its last and successful impetus".[509] Other reviewers are more cautious. In Duffy's view the study is "an important scholarly addition to ecumenical studies".[510] Having said this, he leaves the evaluation of the study to its reader, though he thinks the study's statements on justification are commendable.[511] McFarlane simply points out that the study will be interesting for ecumenists as well as historical theologians and scholars of hermeneutics.[512] Carl J. Peter, one of the Roman-Catholic members of the American dialogue group, thinks that the Joint Ecumenical Commission showed at least that the doctrine of one church is not determined by the error which the other church or churches felt constrained to reject. He has, however, little confidence that the churches can make such an official declaration at the moment.[513] These statements show that even reviewers are not at one about the text

---

[509] Atkinson, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.409.
[510] Duffy, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.77.
[511] Ibid., p.76.
[512] McFarlane, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.125.
[513] Carl J. Peter, "Lehmann/Pannenberg: The Condemnations of the Reformation Era. Do they still divide?", in: *Catholic Historical Review*, vol.76 1990, No.4, pp. 845-846, p.846.

and that at least some of them do not seem to be sure about it.

The study's motive is clearly the search for a better understanding between Roman-Catholics and Protestants.[514] The claim of this analysis, however, is that the study can only achieve this aim at the expense of precise and accurate theological research. In most cases the study proceeds from a poor analysis of the differences or from wrong presuppositions. Besides this, there is another problem. It seems to be the case that what McGrath said of the Diet of Regensburg can equally be said of this study: whatever personal agreement might be found to exist on the matter of justification between men such as Pannenberg, Lehmann and Pesch, this is more than outweighed between the institutional differences between Lutheranism and Catholicism.[515] Indeed, the problems raised by the work of reconciliation which the study took upon itself led one of the participants, the protestant theologian Slenczka, to retract his agreement with its conclusions.[516]

It seems that Roman-Catholic and Protestant doctrine are incompatible. All attempts to reconcile Luther and the Council of Trent give a distorted account of the doctrine of at least one of them. Küng's study may mark a major step to-

[514] McFarlane, *Lehm./Pann.*, p.125.
[515] Compare above p.7.
[516] Slenczka, *Gerecht*, p.295.

wards ecumenical discussion on the issue of justification But it is only a small contribution towards the whole of that discussion, and ignores significant and important sections of Trent. In effect, Küng stresses those features of the Tridentine decree which correspond to the Protestant doctrine, but he does not mention those which speak of the necessity of works. As one scholar has concluded: "It is questionable whether Küng has demonstrated anything more than that Barth and the Roman Catholic *magisterium* share a common anti-Pelagian, Christocentric theology of justification."[517] Sometimes he "merely appeals to the theological *opinions* of some modern scholars - and not to the definite teaching of the *magisterium*."[518] There are points "which Küng neglects to discuss".[519] "It is evident that there is considerably less agreement between Barth and the magisterium than Küng makes out to be the case."[520] Thus when Joest agrees with Küng, he agrees only to the term "Gerechtmachung", not to what this term denotes.[521] He asks: "bleibt er (Küng) ... im Rahmen der katholischen Gnadenlehre?" and: "müßte sein (Küngs) Glaubensverständnis, konsequent durchgeführt, nicht letztlich das Gefüge der tridentinischen Lehre sprengen?"[522]

---

[517] McGrath, *Justification*, p.517.
[518] Ibid., p.521.
[519] Ibid., pp.521/524.
[520] Ibid., p.525.
[521] Joest, *Lehre*, p.50.
[522] Ibid., pp.50/65.

Consequently the best to be achieved is a mutual acknowledgement of the different concepts of the doctrine of justification. This presupposes, however, an invalidation of the mutual condemnations, which requires at least a papal statement "ex cathedra" on the Roman-Catholic[523], and an official statement on the Protestant side. As Luther said: "semper dixi, frustra laborari et sperari concordiam doctrinae, satis esse, si pacem politicam possimus obtinere".[524]

---

[523] Compare Pesch, *Canones*, p.256.

[524] "Luther an Justus Jonas in Augsburg. Feste Koburg. 21.Juli 1530", in: *WA Briefwechsel 5.Bd.*, Weimar 1934, Nr.1657, p.496, ll.15/16.

General bibliography:

Henry Chadwick, *Justification by Faith: a perspective*, ARCIC II 19/1 (84), unpublished (quoted as Chadwick, *Justification*)

Hubert Jedin, *Kleine Konziliengeschichte*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1978, 8th ed. (quoted as Jedin, *Geschichte*)

Wilfried Joest, *Dogmatik*, Göttingen Vol.1 1984, 3rd ed. 1989, Vol. 1986 (continual page numbers; quoted as Joest, *Dogmatik*)

Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei. v.II. From 1500 to the Present Day*, Cambridge 1986 (quoted as McGrath, *Iustitia II*)

Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought. An Introduction*, Oxford (UK) - Cambridge (USA) 1993, 2nd ed. (quoted as McGrath, *Thought*)

Augustine:

Texts and translations:

De civitate dei, Libri I-X (= Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, v. XLVII), Turnholti 1955 (quoted as *De civ. dei*)

De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus (= Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina, v. XLIV A), Turnholti 1975 (quoted as *De div. quest.*)

De spiritu et littera, übertragen von Anselm Forster OSB (= Aurelius Augustinus' Werke in deutscher Sprache), Paderborn 1968 (quoted as *De spir. et lit.*)

Against Julian, translated by Matthew A. Schumacher, C. S.C (= The fathers of the church, v.35), Washington D.C., 1957 (quoted as *Ag. Jul.*)

The city of God, translated by Marcus Dods (= A select library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene fathers of the christian church, vol.II), Buffalo 1887

Eighty-three different questions, translated by David L. Mosher (= The fathers of the church, v.70), Washington D.C. 1982

Secondary literature:

Gerald Bonner, *St.Augustine of Hippo. Life and controversies*, London 1963 (quoted as Bonner, *Aug.*)

Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A biography*, London-Boston 1967 (quoted as Brown, *Augustine*)

Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei. v.I. From the beginnings to 1500*, Cambridge 1986 (quoted as McGrath, *Iustitia I*)

Luther:

Texts and translations:

D.Martin Luther's Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Weimar 1883- (quoted as WA)

Diui Pauli apostoli ad Romanos Epistola. Die Scholien. 1515-1516, in: WA LVI pp.161-528, Weimar 1938 (quoted as Luther, *Romani*)

Disputatio Heidelbergae habita. 1518, in: WA I pp. 350-374, Weimar 1883 (quoted as Luther, *Disputatio*)

In epistolam Pauli ad Galatas M. Lutheri commentarius. 1519, in: WA II pp. 436-618, Weimar 1884 (quoted as Luther, *Gal.19*)

Quaestio, utrum opera faciant ad iustificationem. 1520, in: WA VII pp. 230-232, Weimar 1897 (quoted as Luther, *Quaestio*)

Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X. novissimam damnatorum. 1520, in: WA VII pp. 91-151, Weimar 1897 (quoted as Luther, *Assertio*)

Von den guten Werken. 1520, hg. von Nicolaus Müller, Halle 1891 (quoted as Luther, *Werke*)

De servo arbitrio. 1525, in: WA XVIII pp. 551-787, Weimar 1908 (quoted as Luther, *Arbitrium*)

Die Zirkulardisputation de veste nuptiali. 15. Juni 1537, in: WA XXXIX.I pp. 264-333, Weimar 1926 (quoted as Luther, *De veste*)

Die Schmalkaldischen Artikel (1537/38), in: WA L pp. 160-254, Weimar 1914 (quoted as Luther, *Artikel*)

Die zweite Disputation gegen die Antinomer. 12. Januar 1538, in: WA XXXIX.I pp.418-485, Weimar 1926 (quoted as Luther, *2.Dis.*)

Vom unfreien Willen (1525), in: Hans von Campenhausen (Hg.), Martin Luther. Die Hauptschriften/ 2. Aufl. betreut von Kurt Aland, Berlin 1951, pp. 146-207

The bondage of the will, 1526 (= Luther's works v. 33, Career of the Reformer III), ed. by Philip S. Watson, Philadelphia 1972

Secondary litrature:

Paul Althaus, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers*, Gütersloh 1962 (quoted as Althaus, *Theologie*)

Peter Bläser, "Zwei Fragen zu Luthers Lehre von der Rechtfertigung des Sünders", in: Manns, *Erschließung*, pp.85-88 (quoted as Bläser, *Fragen*)

Gerhard Ebeling, "Luther II. Theologie", in: *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Bd.4, Sp.495-520, Tübingen 1960, 3rd ed. (quoted as Ebeling, *Luther*)

Erwin Iserloh, *Geschichte und Theologie der Reformation im Grundriß*, Paderborn 1982, 2nd ed. (quoted as Iserloh, *Grundriß*)

Hans-Joachim Iwand, *Glaubensgerechtigkeit nach Luthers Lehre*, München 1951, 2nd ed. (quoted as Iwand, *Luther*)

Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, Oxford 1985 (quoted as McGrath, *Cross*)

Otto Hermann Pesch OP, *Die Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin. Versuch eines systematisch-theologischen Dialogs*, Mainz 1967 (quoted as Pesch, *Rechtfertigung*)

Vinzenz Pfnür, "Die Verwerfungen der Confessio Augustana, der Apologie und der Schmalkaldischen Artikel hinsichtlich der Rechtfertigungslehre", in: Lehmann, *Lehrverurteilungen II*, pp.191-209 (quoted as Pfnür, *Verwerfungen*)

The Council of Trent:

Texts and translations:

Henrici Denzinger (Ed.), *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum. Quod emendavit, auxit, in linguam germanicam transtulit et adiuvante Helmuto Hoping edidit Petrus Hünermann. Editio XXXVII*, Freiburg-Basel-Wien-Rom MCMXCI (quoted as Denzinger (number of paragraph))

N.P. Tanner, S.J./G. Alberigo, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. v.II: Trent to Vatican II*, London-Washington D.C. 1990

Secondary literature:

Peter Brunner, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre des Konzils von Trient", in: *Pro Ecclesia. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur dogmatischen Theologie*. 2.Vol., Berlin-Hamburg 1966, pp. 141-169 (quoted as Brunner, *Lehre*)

Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*. Vol.II, Freiburg 1957 (quoted as Jedin, *Trient*)

Wilfried Joest, "Die tridentinische Rechtfertigungslehre", in: *Kerygma und Dogma 9.Jg.*, 1963, pp.41-69 (quoted as Joest, *Lehre*)

Otto Herrmann Pesch, "Die Canones des Trienter Rechtfertigungsdekretes: Wen trafen sie? Wen reffen sie heute?", in: Lehmann, *Lehrverurteilungen II* (quoted as Pesch, *Canones)*

Carl J. Peter, "The decree on justification in the Council of Trent", in: Burgess, *Justification*, pp.218-230 (quoted as Peter, *Decree*)

***Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend?*:**

Texts and translation:

K.Lehmann/W.Pannenberg (Hg.), *Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend? I. Rechtfertigung, Sakramente und Amt im Zeitalter der Reformation und heute*, Freiburg-Göttingen 1986 (quoted as Lehmann/Pannenberg, *Lehrverurteilungen*)

K.Lehmann/W.Pannenberg (Ed.), *The condemnations of the reformation era - Do they still divide?* (transl. by Margaret Kohl), Minneapolis 1990

Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, Göttingen 1930 (7.Aufl. 1976) (quoted as *BSLK*)

Secondary literature:

James Atkinson, Review of "Lehmann/Pannenberg: The Condemnations of the Reformation Era. Do they still divide?", in: *Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol.44 1991, No.3, pp. 408-410 (quoted as Atkinson, Lehm./Pann.)

Stephen J. Duffy, Review of "Lehmann/Pannenberg: The Condemnations of the Reformation Era. Do they still divide?", in: *Religious Study Review*, vol.17 1991, No.1, pp.76/77 (quoted as Duffy, *Lehm./Pann.*)

Jörg Baur, *Einig in Sachen Rechtfertigung?*, Tübingen 1989 (quoted as Baur, *Einig?*)

Friedrich Beißer, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre der Konkordienformel: Wieweit treffen ihre Verwerfungen die römisch-katholische Kirche?", in: Lehmann, *Lehrverrurteilungen II*, pp.210-223 (quoted as Beißer, *Konkordienformel*)

Peter Brunner, "Trennt die Rechtfertigungslehre die Konfessionen?. Katholisches Dogma, lutherisches Bekenntnis und Karl Barth", in: *Pro Ecclesia, Gesammelte Aufsätze zur dogmatischen Theologie, 2.Bd.*, Berlin-Hamburg 1966, pp. 89-112 (quoted as Brunner, *Rechtfertigungslehre*)

Erwin Iserloh, "Luther und die Kirchenspaltung - Ist das Reformatorische kirchentrennend?", in: Hans-Friedrich Geißer (u.a.), *Weder Ketzer noch Heiliger. Luthers Bedeutung für den ökumenischen Dialog*, Regensburg 1982, pp. 73-91 (quoted as Iserloh, *Kirchenspaltung*)

Justification by Faith, Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII, ed. H.G.Anderson, T.A.Murphy and J.A.Burgess, Minneapolis 1985 (quoted as Burgess, *Justification*)

Hans Küng, *Rechtfertigung. Die Lehre Karl Barths und eine katholische Besinnung*, Einsiedeln 1957 (quoted as Küng, *Rechtfertigung*)

Karl Lehmann (Hg.), *Lehrverurteilungen-kirchentrennend? II. Materialien zu den Lehrverurteilungen und zur Theologie der Rechtfertigung*, Freiburg-Göttingen 1989 (quoted as Lehmann, *Lehrverurteilungen II*)

Peter Manns/Harding Meyer (Hg.), *Ökumenische Erschließung Martin Luther's. Referate und Ergebnisse einer internationalen Theologenkonsultation*, Paderborn - Frankfurt a.M. 1983 (quoted as Manns, *Erschließung*)

G.W.P. McFarlane, Review of "Lehmann/Pannenberg: The Condemnations of the Reformation Era. Do they still divide?", in: *The Expository Times*, vol.102 1991, No.4., pp.124-125 (quoted as McFarlane, *Lehm./Pann.*)

Alister E. McGrath, "Justification: Barth, Trent, and Küng", in: *Scottish Journal of Theology*, vol.34 1981, pp.517-529 (quoted as McGrath, *Justification*)

Harding Meyer, "Stand, Methode und ökumenische Relevanz der katholischen Lutherforschung", in: Manns, *Erschließung*, pp.89-93 (quoted as Meyer, *Lutherforschung*)

Harding Meyer, "Der Text "Die Rechtfertigung des Sünders" im Kontext bisheriger ökumenischer Dialogdokumente zur Rechtfertigung", in: Lehmann, *Lehrverurteilungen II*, pp.296-325 (quoted as Meyer, *Dialogdokumente*)

Wolfhart Pannenberg, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre im ökumenischen Gespräch", in: *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, vol.88 1991, No.2, pp.232-246 (quoted as Pannenberg, *Gespräch*)

Reinhard Slenczka, "Gerecht vor Gott durch den Glauben an Jesus Christus", in: *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, vol.29 1987, No.3, pp.294-316 (quoted as Slenczka, *Gerecht*)

George H. Tavard, Review of "Lehmann/Pannenberg: Lehrverurteilungen - kirchentrennend? I. Rechtfertigung, Sakramente und Amt im Zeitalter der Reformation und heute", in: *Journal of ecumenical studies*, vol.25 1988, No.2, pp.300-301 (quoted as Tavard, *Lehm./Pann.*)