

## Objective Justification

By Dr. Theodore E. Engelder<sup>1</sup>

The leading article in the May issue of *The Pastor's Monthly*, entitled *The Mediator of the New Testament*, which was originally delivered by Dr. R. Lenski in the form of an address on Seminary Day at Columbus, contains, besides much valuable material, these statements: "2 Cor. 5:18-20 is badly bungled by many, notably the Missourians. Preconceived notions violate the highly significant tenses. Paul speaks of himself and his assistants: God 'the One who did reconcile us (not only objectively, but also subjectively) to Himself through Christ and did give to us the ministration of this reconciliation (the service of preaching it)'—two aorists, past, historical. Then with ὡς ὅτι: 'that God was in Christ, engaged in reconciling the world, by not reckoning to them (individuals) their transgressions (two present, durative, iterative participles), and having deposited in our care the Word of this reconciliation.' This is again an aorist: He did give us the ministry of the reconciliation—He did place in our care the Word of this reconciliation, namely, for this our ministry. Thus as Christ's ambassador, Paul adds, we beg you, 'Be reconciled to God!' Paul writes, after bringing me and my assistants to personal reconciliation and giving us the ministry and means for bringing other men to personal reconciliation. God reaches out through us as His ambassadors thus to reconcile personally others in the world. He even explains that this personal reconciling = not reckoning their trespasses to them, which in other passages = forgiving the trespasses. The mediation of Christ is completed when those objectively reconciled on Calvary are subjectively, individually, reconciled by faith in the Word about this reconciliation. What has been made of this famous passage? This, that on Easter morning God forgave all sins to every individual sinner in the world, those then already damned in hell, those not yet born; and that this, an *actus simplex*, is the only justification there is!"

Dr. Lenski is here protesting, first, against the Missourian teaching on the objective justification in general and, secondly, against the Missourian interpretation of 2 Cor. 5:18-20 in particular.

As to the doctrine in general, he repudiates and ridicules the teaching that on Easter morning God forgave, really forgave, all the world all its sins, really and truly justified the world. He protests against making objective reconciliation, general justification, mean that God on Easter morning did actually pronounce the world, all individuals making up the world, really innocent of all sin and guilt. He is harking back to, and reenacting, the days of 1888 to 1905. Those were the days when the Missourians, for saying that "the righteousness, the obedience, of One is imputed to many, all; all men are now adjudged, in the forum of God, as righteous, obedient, (Rom. 5:18, 19)" (*Lehre und Wehre* ["*Doctrine and Defense*"],<sup>2</sup> 34.163), were charged with "attempting the life of the Lutheran doctrine of justification," with a "fundamental error," with "teachings that imperil the salvation of men." (See, for instance, *Lehre und Wehre* ["*Doctrine and Defense*"], 34, 161; 35, 73; 51, 385.) The Missourians did indeed teach that God, by pronouncing Christ, the world's Substitute, guilty of the sins of the world and condemning Him to death and then, in the resurrection, acquitting Him of all sin and guilt, thereby acquitted and absolved the world of its sin and guilt, (John 1:29; Rom. 4:25; 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:14,19,21; 1 John 2:2).<sup>3</sup> And they teach it to this day. They would close their theological seminaries if they

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<sup>1</sup> This article appeared in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, July, August, and September, 1933. I have translated the many German quotations in this paper. The errors are mine alone and not Dr. Engelder's. My aim was to assist the English reader in providing translations of German and Latin wherever practicable. In some cases I have provided English translations of German titles of publications in double quotation marks and square brackets.—David R. Boisclair.

<sup>2</sup> *Lehre und Where*, which means "doctrine and defense," was the German theological journal of the Missouri Synod's St. Louis seminary from 1855-1929. It was founded by C.F.W. Walther. From 1897-1929 it was the German journal, while the English journal was *The Theological Quarterly* (1897-1920) and its successor, *The Theological Monthly* (1920-1929). In 1930 *Lehre und Wehre* and *The Theological Monthly* were merged into *The Concordia Theological Monthly* (1930-1972), which was briefly known as *CTM* (January, 1973-January, 1974). *The Concordia Journal* (January, 1975- ) is the present day theological journal of the St. Louis seminary (cf. Erwin L. Lueker, ed., *Christian Cyclopedia*, St. Louis: CPH, 1975 under the entry for "Publication Houses, Lutheran," subtopic "Concordia Publishing House," paragraph 6).

<sup>3</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn. 1:29 *NKJ*); Jesus our Lord ... who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification (Rom. 4:24-25 *NKJ*); For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous (Rom.

were no longer permitted to teach the objective justification. For then they could no longer teach the article of justification by faith. If the justification of the world, of every individual sinner, is not an accomplished fact, we should have to go out and ask the sinner to accomplish it himself. We could not ask him to receive his pardon as already issued. We could not ask him to “believe,” to accept the pardon already granted and issued. Then there would be no justification “by faith.” We cannot give up the article that on Easter morning God forgave every single sinner his sin and guilt.

But why should the Missourians be specially referred to in this matter? We are certainly pleased to have it said that “notably the Missourians” teach thus. But why single out the Missourians? Luther said it long ago. “Here now cometh the Law and saith: I find Him a sinner and that such a one as hath taken upon Him the sins of all men, and I see no sins else than in Him; therefore let Him die upon the cross; and so He setteth upon Him and killeth Him. By this means the whole world is purged and cleansed from all sins and so delivered from death and all evils.” (*St. Louis ed.* 9,373. *Commentary on Galatians*, transl. by Middleton, p. 245. See *Report of Synodical Conference*, 1872, p. 33)<sup>4</sup> The Lutheran Confessions said the same long ago. “When the Lord Jesus Christ came, He forgave to all sin, which no one could avoid, and, by the shedding of His own blood, blotted out the handwriting which was against us. This is what he says Rom. 5:20: ‘The Law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded grace did much more abound.’ Because after the whole world became subject, He took away the sin of the whole world, as he [John] testified, saying, John 1:29: ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’” (*Apology; Triglotta*, p. 151.) “The righteousness which is imputed to faith or to the believer out of pure grace is the obedience, suffering, and resurrection of Christ, since He has made satisfaction for us to the Law and paid for [expiated] our sin. ... On account of this complete obedience, which He rendered His heavenly Father for us, by doing and suffering, in living and dying, God forgives our sins, regards us as godly and righteous, and eternally saves us.” (*Formula of Concord; Triglotta*, p. 919 f.) “It is a complete satisfaction and expiation for the human race, by which the eternal, immutable righteousness of God, revealed in the Law, has been satisfied and is thus our righteousness, which avails before God and is revealed in the Gospel and upon which faith relies before God” (*Formula of Concord; Triglotta*, p. 935). Again, if the Missourians are wrong, the fathers of the Ohio Synod are in the same condemnation. In an article which was translated and republished in *Lehre und Wehre* [“*Doctrine and Defense*”], 1871, p. 145 f., the *Lutheran Standard*, presumably of the same year, states: “The main spokesman of the Augustana pastors went so far as to say that in such passages as ‘God was in Christ and reconciled the world to Himself’ the word ‘world’ does not mean all *people*, but only the *believers*. This, as is well-known, is the Calvinistic theory, according to which God in Christ has only redeemed the elect and persevering believers, and all passages of the Scriptures, which teach the universal redemption of the world, are interpreted [to be] about the redemption and salvation of the elect.”<sup>5</sup> And then the *Lutheran Standard* quotes with approval such statements as these from the Norwegian *Maanedstidende* [“*Monthly Contender*”]: “As little as the fact that not all people are actually damned overturns the truth that, nonetheless, damnation has come upon all people, so little can the fact that not all people seize the righteousness of Christ and through faith in Him are personally justified overturn or revoke the truth that, nonetheless, justification of life has come upon all people. ... And as true as it is, that “if *one* died

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5:19 *NKJ*); For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died (2 Cor. 5:14 *NKJ*); that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19 *NKJ*); For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21 *NKJ*); And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world (1 Jn. 2:2 *NKJ*).

<sup>4</sup> 1833 edition, pages 215-216. *AE* 26, 280: Now the Law comes and says: “I find Him a sinner, who takes upon Himself the sins of all men. I do not see any other sins than those in Him. Therefore let Him die on the cross!” And so it attacks Him and kills Him. By this deed the whole world is purged and expiated from all sins, and thus it is set free from death and from every evil. *St. Louis ed.* 9,373.334-335.

<sup>5</sup> This is the English translation of the original German text Dr. Engelder quoted in the body of the text: „Der Hauptsprecher auf seiten der Augustana-Pastoren ging so weit, zu sagen dass in solchen Stellen wie ‚Gott war in Christo und versoehnte die Welt mit ihm selber‘ das Wort ‚Welt‘ nicht meine alle *Menschen*, sondern nur die *Glaebingen*. Dies ist, wie wohl bekannt, die calvinische Theorie, nach welcher Gott in Christo nur die Auserwaehlten und beharrlich Glaubenden erloest hat und all Stellen der Schrift, welche die allgemeine Erloesung der Welt lehren, nur auf die Erloesung und Seligmachung der Auserwaehlten gedeutet werden. ...“

for all, then they all died” (2 Cor. 5:14), it must be just as true that if one was justified for all, then they all are justified (1 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 5:19).<sup>6</sup> The quotations which are then given from “our orthodox old fathers” will serve to show that the Missourians do not speak a new language, but the ancient language of the Lutheran Church. For instance: “The words justification and reconciliation are used in a twofold sense: 1) with reference to the merit as gained [by Christ] and 2) with reference to the merit as appropriated [by the believer]. *All* are justified, and *some* are justified: all with reference to the merit gained, some with reference to the merit appropriated.” (John Quistorp on 2 Cor. 5:19). “Since Christ, the second Adam, took the place of the entire human race before the forum of God, it follows that in Him the whole human race also was justified and absolved from sin and the curse” (J.J. Rambach). It will not do to single out the Missourians. They are in the company of the fathers of the Ohio Synod. Prof. W.F. Lehmann, Prof. M. Loy, and twelve other delegates of the Ohio Synod were present at the first meeting of the Synodical Conference, in 1872, and agreed with the rest to such statements as these: “What does the resurrection of Christ mean? It was the act of God pronouncing Christ righteous. But Christ died, laden not with His own, but with the sins of the whole world and all its unrighteousness. ... But since Christ was condemned, not for His personal guilt, but for the sins of mankind, which He bore, it was not Christ, in His own person, who was justified in the resurrection, but the human race, for which He died and rose again. ... As sure as the Bible says: ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,’ so surely there can be no longer any wrath in the heart of God, in so far as He views the world through Christ. ... The world in itself is under the curse and damnation, but as redeemed by Christ, because of His satisfaction, God is reconciled with the world.” (*Proceedings*, pp. 31-37).

The Lutheran theologian finds it extremely difficult, in presenting the doctrine of the redemption, the reconciliation wrought by Christ, to keep himself from saying that the objective reconciliation takes in every single individual. And since in Rom. 5 Paul describes this reconciliation as justification, the theologian finds it extremely difficult to keep himself from saying that on Easter morning God absolved all men from their sin and guilt. Dr. F.W. Stellhorn cannot keep himself from saying it. His notes on Rom. 5:18 read: “Thus, then, as the consequence of Adam’s fall was the condemnation to death for all men, so the consequence of the righteousness acquired by Christ is justification unto life for all men.”—“Εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους in both cases to be understood objectively: for all men there is condemnation and justification; the former in Adam and his transgression, the latter in Christ and His fulfilment of the Law. The subjective and final condition and lot of every man depends upon his relation to Christ; if he does not by faith recognize Christ as his Representative and Substitute, his relation to Adam, by natural descent, determines his eternal fate, brings upon him everlasting damnation as the ultimate result of the inevitable reaction of a holy and just God against sin; if by faith he appropriates what Christ has procured for all men, God imparts it to him personally and individually, regards and treats him as holy and righteous. By raising Christ from death, God publicly declared His atonement for all the sins of the human race complete and perfect; in other words, He justified Christ, pronounced Him free from all the sins that as the Representative and Substitute of all men He had taken upon Himself. But the justification of man’s Representative and Substitute is necessarily man’s own justification, provided he recognizes and embraces the Representative and Substitute as his own. The justification of all men in Christ may be called objective, or universal, or potential; it becomes subjective and personal, or actual, by faith only.” (*The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 89, 95.) Dr. Stellhorn cannot say other than this: “For all men there is justification.” “By raising Christ from death, God publicly declared His atonement for all the sins of the human race complete and perfect. But the justification of man’s Representative and Substitute is necessarily man’s own justification.” He does indeed add a restriction: “provided he recognizes and embraces the Representative and Substitute as his own”; but he cannot find this restriction in the text. The text does not say: By the righteousness of One the free gift came

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<sup>6</sup> So wenig der Umstand, dass nicht alle Menschen wirklich verdammt werden, die Wahrheit umstoesst, dass nichtsdestoweniger die Verdammnis ueber alle Menschen kommen ist, so wenig kann der Umstand, dass nicht alle Menschen die Gerechtigkeit Christi ergreifen und durch den Glauben an ihn persoendlich gerechtfertigt werden, die Wahrheit umstossen oder widerrufen, dass nichtsdestoweniger die Rechtfertigung des Lebens ueber alle Menschen kommen ist. ...Und so wahr es ist, dass, ,so *einer* fuer alle gestorben ist, so sind sie alle gestorben,‘ 2 Kor. 5,14, geradeso wahr muss auch dies sein, dass, so *einer* fuer alle gerechtfertigt wurde, so sind sie *alle* gerechtfertigt worden, 1 Tim. 3,16; Roem. 5,19.

upon all men unto justification of life, *provided they believe*. We have no quarrel with Dr. Stelhorn for mentioning in this connection that the subjective justification takes place by faith, for pointing out that the universal justification does not avail those who refuse to accept it. But we do say that his “provided” is a gloss, a perversion of the text. Nor has he a right to describe the objective justification as a “potential,” “not actual,” justification. He himself says, as Paul indeed says: “For all men there *is* justification.” “Is” expresses actuality, not potentiality. But our object in quoting Dr. Stelhorn is to show that, when one deals with such statements as Rom. 5:18, such thoughts as these clamor for utterance: On Easter morning, when God justified the world’s Representative, all men, *πάντες ἄνθρωποι*, every human being from Adam on to the last generation, were justified. Dr. Stelhorn has made use of the expression which is being castigated. He adds indeed a restriction which is not in the text. That shows that Paul has made use of the objectionable expression. How does Dr. M. Reu fare? “Justification is an act of God, which always occurs where the preaching of forgiveness in Christ for all the world has worked faith in an individual. ... This satisfying atonement of Christ by which the sins of the whole world are visited on Christ, its Substitute, (*satisfactio*) and covered before the eyes of God (*ἱλασμός expiatio*), with the world in and through Christ standing as in a peaceful and friendly relationship with God (*reconciliatio*) and ransomed (*redemptio*) from the power of sin, death, and the devil, is the real reason for the justification of the sinner, the external impulsive cause (*causa impulsiva externa*) or meritorious cause (*causa meritoria*). ... This righteousness of Christ in the justification of the individual sinner also becomes available and validly attributed to him. It is available for the whole world, and only in view of it can God see the sins of the world as covered; but in justification it is attributed to the individual.” (*Die Heilsordnung* [“Order of Salvation”], pp. 18, 26 f.)<sup>7</sup> Whatever else the statement: “But only to the believing sinner does God attribute the righteousness of Christ; only him does He subsume under the general verdict of justification and pronounce free” (p. 27)<sup>8</sup> may mean, Dr. Reu’s presentation of the matter shows that the Lutheran theologian cannot treat of it without giving expression to the thought that God, by raising Christ from the dead, forgave the sins of the world. “God sees the world sin as covered.” “Christ has borne and atoned for all our sin, that is, covered and taken them away from the sight of God” (p. 26).<sup>9</sup> And we choose to take these words at their full value. A sermon published in the *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* [“Ecclesiastical Magazine”], May, 1933, contains these statements: “Now is human debt paid and human righteousness gained; and Jesus rejoices over it on the cross and says, ‘It is finished!’ ... “It is revealed that the almighty arm of God is in the one, who as Man paid our debts, gained our righteousness, and won our victory. Amen”<sup>10</sup> (pp. 160, 192). That can only mean that Christ gained a perfect righteousness for all mankind. And that cannot mean anything else than that God on Easter morning forgave all sins to every individual sinner in the world; if God did not do that, He adjudged the “righteousness gained for mankind” as incomplete and insufficient. And how does Dr. Lenski himself fare? These words immediately precede the paragraphs under discussion: “Thus the objective reconciliation covers all men as enemies; and the subjective reconciliation, going a step farther, covers all believers. The one is *for* us, *outside* of us, the other *in* us.” The objective reconciliation covers all men as enemies! Does the objective reconciliation, covering all men, really mean anything as to them? Does it cover their sins? all of their sins? the

<sup>7</sup> Die Rechtfertigung ist eine Tat Gottes, die immer da eintritt, wo die Predigt von der in Christo fuer alle Welt vorhandenen Vergebung im einzelnen den Glauben gewirkt hat. ... Diese genueguende Suehne Christi, kraft welcher die Suende der ganzen Welt an Christus, ihrem Stellvertreter, gestraft (*satisfactio*) und vor Gottes Augen schon zugedeckt ist (*ἱλασμός expiatio*) und die Welt in und durch Christus als in Friedens- und Freund-schaftsverhaeltnis mit Gott stehend (*reconciliatio*) und von der Gewalt der Suende, des Todes und des Teufels losgekauft (*redemptio*) dasteht, ist der Realgrund fuer die Rechtfertigung des Suenders, die *causa impulsiva externa* oder *causa meritoria*. ... Diese Gerechtigkeit Christi wird in der Rechtfertigung dem einzelnen Suender als auch fuer ihn vorhanden und ihm gueltig zugerechnet. Sie ist fuer die ganze Welt vorhanden, und nur im Blick auf sie kann Gott der Welt Suende als bedeckt ansehen; aber in der Rechtfertigung wird sie dem einzelnen zugerechnet (*Die Heilsordnung*, pp. 18, 26 f.).

<sup>8</sup> Aber nur dem glaeubig gewordenen Suender rechnet Gott die Gerechtigkeit Christi zu, nur ihn subsumiert er unter das allgemeine Rechtfertigungsurteil und spricht ihn frei (p. 27)

<sup>9</sup> Gott sieht der Welt Suende als bedeckt an.“ „Christus hat alle unsere Suende getragen, gesuehnt, das ist, bedeckt und vor Gottes Angesicht hinweggetan. (P. 26.)

<sup>10</sup> Jetzt ist die Schuld der Menschen bezahlt und die Gerechtigkeit der Menschen erworben, und Jesus jubelt darueber am Kreuz und spricht: ‚Es ist vollbracht!‘ ... Der allmaechtige Gottesarm ist in dem, der als Mensch unsere Schuld bezahlte und unsere Gerechtigkeit erwarb und unseren Sieg gewann, offenbar geworden. Amen (pp. 160, 192).

sins of all men? If so, if reconciliation, as used 2 Cor. 5, means forgiving the trespasses,—and Dr. Lenski and we are agreed that it means that,—then God has forgiven the sins of all individuals.

But the Missourians go so far as to say that on Easter morning God, who forgave all men their sins, also forgave “those not yet born”! Well, Luther went just so far. “Not only my sins and thine, but also the sins of the whole world, *either past, present, or to come*, take hold upon Him, go about to condemn Him, and do indeed condemn Him. ... Therefore, in this combat, sin must needs be vanquished and killed, and righteousness must overcome, live, and reign. So in Christ all sin is vanished, killed, and buried, and righteousness remaineth a conqueror and reigneth forever” (*St. Louis ed.* 9, 373 f.; Middleton, p. 246). “Holy Scripture says that the sins of the world lie not on the world nor St. John’s sin on St. John nor St. Peter’s sin on St. Peter, for they cannot bear it, but on Christ, the Lamb of God, who steps up and becomes a common sinner, yes, sin itself (2 Cor. 5:21), as though He had committed all the world’s sin (*from the beginning of the world to the end*); that is the Lamb’s office and character” (*St. Louis ed.*, 7, 1723 f.). The thought that God, in absolving the world on Easter morning, had in mind also the unborn generations does not strike us as ridiculous. If the death and resurrection of Christ had anything to do with the sins of the world, whatever it had to do therewith applies to all generations of the human race. When the risen Lord sent His disciples to “preach remission of sins among all nations,” (Luke 24:47), to preach this “Gospel to every creature,” (Mark 16:15), “unto the end of the world,” (Matt. 28:20), He had also the unborn generations in mind. Remission of sins is to be preached unto them. They are to be told that on Easter morning their pardon was issued. The ambassadors for Christ are not instructed to inform the rebels that, if they believe, the Lord will write out their pardon. The ambassadors are instructed to call the rebels together and to read to them the pardon already issued and to pray them in Christ’s stead to come in under this pardon, to believe it, to accept it. We cheerfully admit that on Easter morning “those not yet born” were absolutely unable to believe. We cheerfully admit that the unborn generations were not subjectively justified on Easter morning. But we do insist that “the objective reconciliation covers all men.”

Nor do we draw the line at the damned. St. Peter does not. “Denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction,” (2 Pet. 2:1). Luther does not. “In the same manner he who does not believe that he is loosed and that his sins are forgiven will later on find that his sins had now certainly been forgiven; only he would not believe it” (*St. Louis ed.*, 19, 946). What is the ultimate cause of the damnation of the individual? Just this: he refused the pardon offered him, the forgiveness of sins proclaimed on Easter morning as pertaining to all. The paragraph under discussion would stamp as a monstrosity the thought that God on Easter morning actually forgave “those then already damned in hell.” (The *reductio ad absurdum* attempted here is a variation of the form formerly employed by the *Kirchenzeitung* [“*Church News*”], which summarized the Missourian teaching thus: “All the world, all the godless, believers as well as unbelievers, were justified a long time ago in Christ’s resurrection” [*Lehre und Wehre* [“*Doctrine and Defense*”], 51, p. 390]).<sup>11</sup> The implication is, if we follow the line of argument, that the Missourians of necessity must represent God as preaching the Gospel in hell. Everybody, of course, knows that the Missourians have not been, nor are, inclined to embrace the Hades theory. Nor do they tell the unbeliever: Be of good cheer; whether you believe or not, all is well with you. But this they do say: Those who “were then already damned in hell” are there for no other reason than for rejecting the forgiveness of their sins, which, because of the universally effective, also retroactive, character of the work wrought on Good Friday and Easter morning, had been brought to them, too, for instance by Noah’s preaching of the Gospel. We agree with Dr. Lenski that Christ on Easter morning did not descend to hell for the purpose of justifying, subjectively, the damned. But on this point we disagree: We say that at Christ’s descent into hell the spirits in prison, “which sometime were disobedient,” realized that they brought their doom upon themselves by rejecting the forgiveness of sins procured for them by Christ and offered to them in the Gospel (1 Pet. 3:19 f.). In other words: “The objective reconciliation covers all men as enemies” and the subjective reconciliation only the believers.

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<sup>11</sup> Alle Welt, alle Gottlosen, Glaeubige wie Unglaeubige, sind laengst gerechtfertigt in Christi Auferstehung“

Does Missouri teach “that this, an *actus simplex*,<sup>12</sup> is the only justification there is”? Yes and no. We do not teach that the objective justification of Easter morning is the only justification there is. We have been charged with that prior to 1933. Away back in 1905 the *Theologische Zeitblaetter*<sup>13</sup> [*Theological Newspaper*] accused Missouri of teaching that “the only justification there is exists prior to all faith” (*Lehre und Wehre* [“*Doctrine and Defense*”], 51, 564). Indeed, the charge was raised already in 1888. But most readers of the *Pastor’s Monthly* know that Missouri teaches that there is a) an objective justification and b) a subjective justification. Some of them have read § 148 of A.L. Graebner’s *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology*: “The chief benefit of Christ’s vicarious obedience is the perfect righteousness obtained by Christ for all mankind, the acquisition of which God accepted as a reconciliation of the world to Himself, imputing to mankind the merit of the Mediator—*general, or objective, justification*—; and inasmuch as faith is the actual acceptance of this imputation announced in the Gospel, or of the righteousness imputed and offered in the Gospel, it is justifying faith, and God in His judgment graciously and for Christ’s sake holds and pronounces the believer actually and by personal application fully absolved from all guilt and punishment while in the state of faith—*individual, or subjective, justification*.” Some of them have read the section in F. Pieper’s *Christliche Dogmatik* [“*Christian Dogmatics*”], II, 411, entitled “Objective and Subjective Reconciliation.” “According to Scripture there is an *objective* reconciliation, a reconciliation not waiting to be effected by man, but the reconciliation of all men with God effected by Christ 1900 years ago. ... And thus it comes about that now men are, on their part, or subjectively, reconciled to God in no other way than through faith (*sola fide*).”<sup>14</sup> And p. 611: “The necessary prerequisite of justification by faith, of the subjective justification, is what is known as the objective justification, the reconciliation of the whole world of men.” And this is not a recent “development” of our doctrine. Some of the readers of the *Pastor’s Monthly* may have read the references submitted by *Maanedstidende* [“*Monthly Contender*”], *Lutheran Standard*, and *Lehre und Wehre* [“*Doctrine and Defense*”], such as: “All are justified, and some are justified.” The very article which occasioned the former controversy devoted much space to the subjective justification. The article did not close with the statement: “All men are not accounted before God as just, obedient.” It added: “By faith, when we believe the Gospel, we personally appropriate the reconciliation, the justification, the righteousness, which is already adjudged to all sinners” (*Lehre und Wehre* [“*Doctrine and Defense*”], 1888, Vol. 34, p. 163 f.). Some may have read what *Lehre und Wehre* [“*Doctrine and Defense*”] replied to the charge that Missouri holds that “the only justification there is exists prior to all faith.” This was the answer: “We believe that God justifies, or offers and grants the forgiveness of sins, *as often* as the Gospel is preached, absolution is pronounced, and the Sacraments are administered, and that God, in every case where the Holy Ghost creates faith in the heart of a man, appropriates to that man, and puts him into possession of, the forgiveness, or the justification which was gained by Christ for all men and belongs to all men, so that he now holds and possesses it.” (51, 564). *Lehre und Wehre* [“*Doctrine and Defense*”] was ready to adduce “more than one thousand” statements from Missourian publications to the effect that only through faith man comes into possession of the forgiveness of sins (p. 387). By this time we are ready to raise the figure. We keep the concept of subjective justification distinct from that of objective justification. All the world knows that.

Are there, then, two justifications? No. There is but one justification. If one wants to put it this way: “On Easter morning God forgave all sins to every individual sinner in the world, and this is the only justification there is,” we will, after having submitted the foregoing paragraph, unhesitatingly say: That is correct. We want to bring out thereby that the forgiveness of sins which is offered in the Gospel to all men is that identical forgiveness which was declared, issued, proclaimed, and sealed on Easter morning; that the forgiveness of sins which the individual sinner accepts and appropriates by faith is the one and same forgiveness which God

<sup>12</sup> “simple act”: the concept that the act of justifying is limited and completed by the one act of God justifying the world in the resurrection of Christ.—ed.

<sup>13</sup> “*Theological Time Leaves*”

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Engelder was the first to work on the English edition of Pieper’s *Dogmatics*. This is a preliminary translation of this quotation. The 1951 English edition of *Christian Dogmatics*, 2, 347, 349 has: “Scripture teaches the *objective reconciliation*. Nineteen hundred years ago Christ effected the reconciliation of all men with God. God does not wait for men to reconcile Him with themselves by means of any efforts of their own. ... and thus the *subjective* reconciliation takes place only by faith (*sola fide*).”

pronounced on Easter morning; that the forgiveness of sins which is in effect “prior to all faith” does not change its character by reason of faith; that God is not moved by the faith of the sinner to grant him a different kind of forgiveness; that faith does not achieve forgiveness or move God to forgive. In a word, we know of but one forgiveness, gained by Christ, deposited in the means of grace, and appropriated by faith. This is not new doctrine. At the first meeting of the Synodical Conference, attended by the fathers of the Ohio Synod, this statement was submitted and unanimously approved and is here again submitted for unanimous approval: “The justification of the human race took place indeed also with respect to its acquirement in a moment, in that moment when Christ rose and was thus justified; but with respect to the appropriation it goes on until the Last Day” (Quoted from J.J. Rambach, p. 45). “It goes on”—the objective justification of Easter morning. It is not replaced or modified in the case of the individual believer by a new sort of justification. The faith of the sinner does not effect an additional change in the disposition of the reconciled God. Not a new pardon is made out. What takes place is that the sinner comes in under the old pardon of Easter morning. There is but one pardon, one sentence of justification.

Is there still need to spend time and words on the *actus simplex*? This expression is quoted from an article by G. Stoeckhardt in *Lehre und Wehre* [“*Doctrine and Defense*”] (35, p. 218). It will be sufficient to quote his words: “We speak and think of this great, important matter according to our human mode of conception, thus: God forgives the sin again and again” (there you have an *actus multiplex*) “which He has forgiven long ago. But in reality that which we can conceive only as a composite act is the continued repetition of the same act, an *actus simplex*. That is in God one *continuum*, one thought, one view, which is not cut up and separated by time, that He adjudges us as holy and just in Christ. When we view man as he lives in time and his relation to God, we must indeed distinguish. When God in Christ reconciled the world unto Himself, He absolved us with the world from sin, justified us, before we came into being. As ideal persons, as it were, existing solely in God’s thoughts, we were justified. Then the single individual, looking at it *in concreto*, conceived and born in sin, becomes *actu* a child of God in that hour when he believes the Gospel.” Is this language objectionable? If one wants the *actus multiplex* in so many letters, he will find it in *Lehre und Wehre*, 51, 495: “We Missourians, too, believe that God richly and daily forgives us our sins (justifies) in the Gospel, in the Absolution, in Baptism, and the Lord’s Supper and also *per mutuum colloquium et consolationem fratrum*.<sup>15</sup> (Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article IV). In this sense the forgiveness, or justification, is *multiplex*. But this oft-repeated forgiveness and justification, continuing throughout life, is simply the application and exercise of the one forgiveness and justification which Christ has gained for us, which through the reconciliation is in effect for all times, and is dispensed in the means of grace. There are not two or more kinds of forgiveness of sins, each based on different grounds.”

An article appearing in the *Pastor’s Monthly* denies in general that the objective justification covers every single individual of the human race, and in particular, that 2 Cor. 5:19 makes such a statement. What does 2 Cor. 5:19 teach on this matter? For the convenience of the reader we quote again the paragraphs in question: “2 Cor. 5:18-20 is badly bungled by many, notably the Missourians. Preconceived notions violate the highly significant tenses. Paul speaks of himself and his assistants: God, ‘the One who did reconcile us [not only objectively, but also subjectively] to Himself through Christ and did give us the ministrations of this reconciliation [the service of preaching it]’—two aorists, past, historical. Then with ὡς ὅτι: ‘That God was in Christ, engaged in reconciling the world, by not reckoning to them [individuals] their transgressions [two present, durative, iterative participles] and having deposited in our care the Word of this reconciliation.’ This is again an aorist: He did give us the ministry of this reconciliation—He did place in our care the Word of this reconciliation, namely, for this our ministry. Thus as Christ’s ambassadors, Paul adds, we beg you: ‘Be reconciled to God!’ Paul writes, after bringing me and my assistants to personal reconciliation and giving us the ministry and means for bringing other men to personal reconciliation, God reaches out through us as His ambassadors thus to reconcile personally others in the world. He even explains that this personal reconciling = not reckoning their trespasses to them, which in other passages = forgiving the trespasses. The mediation of Christ is completed when those objectively reconciled on Calvary are subjectively, individually, reconciled by

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<sup>15</sup> through the mutual conversation and consolation of the brethren

faith in the Word about this reconciliation. What has been made of this famous passage? This, that on Easter morning God forgave all sins to every individual sinner in the world, those then already damned in hell, those not yet born; and that this an *actus simplex*, is the only justification there is.”

The Missourians admit that they are among those who understand 2 Cor. 5:19 to mean that on Easter morning God justified, objectively, the whole world, and that means, since the world is made up of individuals, every single individual. And if the “notably” means that the Missourians make very much of 2 Cor. 5:19 as a proof-text for the point in question, we readily admit that, too. We are indeed in the habit of quoting other texts also, for instance, Rom. 5:18,19; 4:25; 1 John 2:2, and others. But we do make much of 2 Cor. 5:19. It bulks large, for instance, in Dr. F. Pieper’s *Christliche Dogmatik* [“*Christian Dogmatics*”]. The objective justification bulks large in this as in every other truly Christian dogmatic, and Dr. Pieper likes to quote and enlarge on 2 Cor. 5:19 in this connection. He quotes it, if we are not mistaken in our count, thirty-three times. We may be permitted to set down here a few instances of the use he makes of 2 Cor. 5:19, for the purpose of proving Dr. Lenski’s assertion: “We have no right to modify and narrow the meaning either of κόσμος (2 Cor. 5:19) and πάντες ἄνθρωποι (Rom. 5:18) or of οὐ λογιζέσθαι τὰ παραπτώματα and δικαίωσις (*loco citato*<sup>16</sup>)” (II, 475). “2 Cor. 5:19: ‘God was in Christ, reconciling’ (*scil.*,<sup>17</sup> in those days when Christ lived on earth and died) ‘the world unto Himself.’ ... At that time, when Christ offered His propitiatory sacrifice, the wrath of God against mankind ceased. That is not a human, but the apostle’s own exegesis, who adds to the words: ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself’ this statement μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα, that is, that God then already, in His heart, forgave the whole world its sin, justified the whole world” (II, 411). “Since men are so prone to forget it, we must repeat *usque ad nauseam*<sup>18</sup> that the divine forgiveness of sins is something already fully brought about through Christ’s substitutionary work, an accomplished fact, a thing entirely independent of any quality in man, any moral change that is taking place (μὴ λογιζόμενος τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν, 2 Cor. 5:19), which situation is proclaimed by God to men in the Gospel (καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς) that they may believe it” (II, 526). Dr. A. Graebner makes the same use of our passage: “By the same judicial act by which He pronounced Him guilty who was the world’s Substitute, God acquitted and absolved the world whose sins and guilt He laid to the charge of the Mediator. ‘*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*’ (2 Cor. 5:19). That their trespasses were not imputed unto them left them that were sinners in themselves sinless and guiltless in the judgment of God. The imputation of the sins of the world to Christ was *eo ipso*<sup>19</sup> a justification of the world. And as the imputation of our sins to Christ was general and complete, all the sins, the iniquity of us all, being laid on the Lamb of God (Is. 53:6; John 1:29; 1 John 2:2), so the absolution and justification of sinners in the judgment of God indicated a complete reconciliation of the world unto Himself, inasmuch as our iniquities, which had separated between us and our God, our sins, which had hid His face from us (Is. 59:2), were imputed to, and atoned for by our Substitute. Hence, when *Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified* (Mark 16:6) was risen from the dead, *raised up by the glory of the Father* (Rom. 6:4), the resurrection of Christ was a promulgation of the justification of the world” (*Theological Quarterly*, 5, 194). Dr. Stoeckhardt: “St. Paul, by the way, teaches this same doctrine (Rom. 5:18, 19) in his other epistles, only in different words. We have shown above that justification with him is identical with the forgiveness of sins. And so he writes, for example, 2 Cor. 5:19: ‘*God was in Christ and reconciled the world to Himself, in that he did not reckon their transgressions to them.*’<sup>20</sup> God has therefore already forgiven the whole world all its sins in Christ” (*Epistle to the Romans*<sup>21</sup>). Dr. A. Hoenecke cannot see anything else in 2 Cor. 5:19. “The *καταλλάσσειν* on the part of God means that God no longer imputes sin and guilt to the world, as appears from the explanatory *μὴ λογιζόμενος* in v. 19 and from v. 21, which states that the imputation, which because of the justice of God absolutely cannot be put aside, has taken place, the sins having

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<sup>16</sup> “in the location cited”

<sup>17</sup> “*Scilicet*,” which means “namely”

<sup>18</sup> “all the way to a sickening degree”

<sup>19</sup> “by it itself”

<sup>20</sup> *Gott war in Christo und versoehnte die Welt mit ihm selber, indem er ihnen ihre Uebertretungen nicht zurechnete.*

<sup>21</sup> *Roemerbrief*, i.e. Stoeckhardt’s commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans.

been imputed to Christ. ... The *καταλλάσσειν* as the act of the reconciliation of God is in reality the objective, general absolution, or justification, of the whole world from sin and guilt in Christ, which must and does become a subjective, special one through faith" (*Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik* [*Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*"], III, 192). No, the Missourians cannot find anything else in 2 Cor. 5:19 than the objective justification with all that the concept means and implies.

And that is not an idiosyncrasy of the Missourians, due to some malformation of their organ of exegetics. They have, as our article puts it, many fellow-bunglers. We shall quote a few of them in the interest of a better and deeper understanding of the all-important doctrine of the objective justification. A. Calov, *Biblia Illustrata* [*The Bible Made Clear*]: "The apostle now defines more definitely the object of the reconciliation, which he had in v. 18 designated with the word *ἡμᾶς*. The object is not solely the apostle and his associates nor solely the believers or elect, but *κόσμος*, *mundus*, that is, the whole human race. ... The context names all men. It identifies those for whom Christ died, vv. 14, 15, and those who have been reconciled to God by Christ. However, not once, but three times it is stated that Christ died for all. ... Those whom God urges to be reconciled to Him through true repentance and conversion, those Christ reconciled to God, that is, for them He acquired and earned the reconciliation with God. Not only the elect, however, but all men are urged by God in His Word to be reconciled to Him through true repentance and conversion. *Ergo*. The major is based on v. 20. The illative particle *οὖν*, *igitur*, is used, which shows that the reconciliation brought about in Christ, which is the reconciliation of the propitiation and placation of the wrath of God, is the cause and basis of the exhortation looking to the reconciliation taking place in our repentance and conversion to God. ... The text (v. 19) does not treat of such a declaration" (in the Socinian sense) "nor of the grace exhibited and bestowed upon the converted, in conversion (*ipso facto*), but of the grace of redemption and reconciliation exhibited to the world, the grace in which God is so reconciled to all men that unto all is granted the non-imputation, or the remission, of sins. The text does not set forth how God makes us, His enemies, to be His friends, the sinner to become holy and just, the carnal spiritual, the disobedient obedient, but how He was reconciled to us by Christ, His wrath propitiated, no longer an enemy, but a friend, so that because of the reconciliation of Christ and the satisfaction of His death He can, without prejudice to His justice, non-impute to us sinners, condemned to death, our sins, that is, forgive them and receive us into grace, ... 'and hath committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation.' ... This refers to the word of the announcement of the Gospel, by which men are offered the reconciliation effected by Christ, although this announcement is made to the end that the reconciliation of Christ be received by faith and we actually obtain the benefit of grace." J.A. Bengel, *Gnomon* [*Interpreter*]: "V. 18, *ἡμᾶς*, us, world, as the following verse shows." (Whether *ἡμᾶς* refers to world or to the believers or the apostles need not be investigated here; we are chiefly concerned with the question whether v. 19 precludes the concept, the full concept, of objective justification). "*ἡμῖν*, us, the apostles. V. 19. *ἦν καταλλάσσων*, like *ἐπιποθῶν ἦν*, Phil. 2:26; the periphrastic form for emphasis. The time of the verb *ἦν* is given (v. 21). ... *κόσμον*, the world, therefore under wrath; *καταλλάσσων* ... *μὴ λογιζόμενος*, reconciling: not imputing. The same thing is expressed, for emphasis, both positively and negatively, as usual." Objective justification! O. von Gerlach, *Das Neue Testament*, etc., takes the same position: "God has reconciled us unto Himself (v. 19) in that He did not impute to us our sins, that He (v. 21) placed the punishment of our sins on Christ. 'God hath reconciled us unto Himself' therefore means: He again bestowed His grace upon us, He assumed a different relation to us, His wrath turned unto love; He showed this by not imputing to us our sins, which caused His wrath. ... After God had done this once for all, He gave men the word, the message, the office, of reconciliation. Now, having 'in Christ' bestowed His grace upon the world, He has the messengers of Christ proclaim: Be ye reconciled! Accept the offered grace and forgiveness." Here is the *Hirschberger Bibel* [*Hirschberg Bible*]: "God was in Christ as He who reconciled the (sinful) world unto Himself (that is, who Himself, through His Son, accomplished the work of redemption, by which we were reconciled to Him) and did not impute to them (but to their Substitute, Is. 53:6) their sins." Here is *Meyer's Commentary*: "V. 18. ... The reconciliation has taken place with reference to all humanity (hence *κόσμον*, v. 19); but Paul uses *ἡμᾶς* in the person of believers, as those who have

experienced the reconciliation of the world in its subjective realization; ... τοῦ καταλλάξαντος κτλ.<sup>22</sup>: who has reconciled us with Himself through Christ. For men were, by means of their uneffaced sin, burdened with God's holy wrath, ἐχθροὶ θεοῦ (Rom. 5:10, etc.), *Deo invidi*,<sup>23</sup> but through God's causing Christ to die as ἱλαστήριον He accomplished the effacing of their sins, and by this therefore God's wrath ceased. The same thought is contained in Rom. 5:10, only expressed in a passive form. ... The death of Jesus operated as ἱλαστήριον (Rom. 3:25; Gal. 3:13), consequently as effacing God's holy enmity (Rom. 11:28), the ὀργή θεοῦ, so that He now did not impute to men their sins (v. 19) and in this way, *actu forensi*,<sup>24</sup> reconciled them with Himself (v. 21), while faith is merely the subjective condition of appropriation on the part of man. The gratitude, the new courage, the holy life, etc., are only a consequence of the reconciliation appropriated by faith, not a part of it. ... V. 19. ... The ἦν καταλλάσσων should go together and is more emphatic than the simple imperfect. Paul writes, namely, to affirm of God, not simply what He *did* (κατήλλαξε), but in what activity He *was*; in the person and work of Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ) *God was in world-reconciling activity*. The imperfect receives from the context the definite temporal reference: *when Christ died the death of reconciliation*, with which took place that very καταλλάξαντος, v. 18. ... κόσμον: not a world, but *the* world, even without the article. It applies to the whole human race, not merely, say, to the elect. The reconciliation of *all men* took place objectively, through Christ's death, although the subjective appropriation of it is conditioned by the faith of the individual. — Μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς κτλ.: since he does not reckon (present) to them their sins, and has deposited (aorist) in us the Word of Reconciliation. The former is the altered judicial relation to the sins of men into which God has entered and in which He stands; the latter is the measure adopted by God by means of which the former is made known to man. From both it is evident that God in Christ reconciled the world with Himself; otherwise He would neither have left the sins of mankind without imputation, nor would He have imparted to the apostolic teachers the Word of Reconciliation that they might preach it." Here is the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown *Bible Commentary*: "V. 18. The manner of God reconciling the world to Himself is implied (v. 19), viz., by His 'not imputing their trespasses unto them.' God not merely, as subsequently, reconciles the world by inducing them to lay aside their enmity, but, in the first instance, does so by satisfying His own justice and righteous enmity against sin. ... The reconciling of *men to God* by their laying aside their enmity is the consequence of God's laying aside His just enmity against their sin and follows at v. 20. ... V. 19: *God was in Christ, reconciling*. 'Was reconciling' implies the time when the act of reconciliation was being carried into effect (v. 21), viz., when 'God made Jesus, who knew no sin, to be sin for us.' ... *The world*—all men (Col. 1:20; 1 John 2:2). The *manner* of the reconciling is by His 'not imputing to men their trespasses,' but imputing them to Christ, the Sin-bearer." Here is *The Lutheran Commentary*: "V. 19. God was in Christ, else the work of Christ would have been of no avail. Christ's incarnation was the condition without which the atonement could not have been made. The world was reconciled to God. For this He gave His only-begotten Son. — Thus we speak of an objective reconciliation by God, through Christ, an acquisition intended for man, and in like manner of an altered judicial relation, a changed relation of God to man, to the sins of men." Here is *The Expositor's Greek Testament*: "V. 18: '*who reconciled* [not the aorist] *us*, scil., all mankind, *to Himself*. ... V. 19: *that God was reconciling the world*, scil., the whole human race (note the absence of the article); ... ἦν goes with both καταλλάσσων and θέμενος, ἦν with a participle being more emphatic than a simple imperfect; cf. Luke 4:44. If we take ἦν with ἐν Χριστῷ, we should have to treat θέμενος κτλ. as a parallel clause to λογιζόμενος κτλ., which it is not.— Μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς κτλ., *not reckoning unto them their trespasses*, a parenthetical sentence explanatory of καταλλάσσων; cf. Rom 4:8. V. 20. Note that the appeal 'Be ye reconciled to God' is based on the fact (v. 18) that God has already 'reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ.' ... V. 21. ... 'Such we are in the sight of God the Father as is the very Son of God Himself. Let it be counted folly or frenzy or fury or whatsoever, it is our wisdom and our comfort; we care for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned and God hath suffered; that God

<sup>22</sup> "κτλ" means "et cetera"

<sup>23</sup> Greek: "enemy of God"; Latin: "enemy to God"

<sup>24</sup> "by a forensic [i.e. declarative] act"

hath made Himself the sin of men and that men are made the righteousness of God.’ (Hooker, *Serm.*, II, 6).” This does not exhaust the list of the so-called bunglers, but it exhausts the space at our disposal.

We have some space left for a few modern translations of our passage. F.E. Schlachter, *Miniaturbibel [Miniature Bible]*, 1905—1913: “Because it was God who, in Christ, reconciled the world to himself: He did not reckon their sins against them and has set up the word of reconciliation among us.”<sup>25</sup> H. Wiese, 1905—1924: “For God was in Christ and reconciled a world to himself, because he did not credit them with their transgressions and in us has laid the word of the reconciliation.”<sup>26</sup> H. Menge, 1926: “For God in Christ has reconciled the world with him, by not counting their transgressions and laying down in us the word of reconciliation.”<sup>27</sup> A. Schlatter, 1931: “Because God in Christ reconciled the world with Himself, because He did not charge them with their missteps and put in us the word of reconciliation.”<sup>28</sup> *The Twentieth Century New Testament*, 1904: “But all this is the work of God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the Ministry of Reconciliation—to proclaim that God in Christ was reconciling the world to Himself, not reckoning men’s offenses against them, and that he had entrusted us with the message of this reconciliation.” James Moffatt: “For in Christ God reconciled the world to Himself instead of counting men’s trespasses against them; and He entrusted me with the message of His reconciliation.” E.J. Goodspeed, 1923: “All this comes from God, who through Christ has reconciled me to Himself and has commissioned me to proclaim this reconciliation—how God through Christ reconciled the world to Himself, refusing to count men’s offenses against them, and entrusted me with the message of reconciliation.” Bunglers, all!

We do not stand alone. Nor, on the other hand, does Dr. Lenski stand alone. The *J.P. Lange-Ph. Schaff Commentary*, for instance, says: “On the whole, we think it best with Meyer to take ἦν ... καταλλάσσων together, but to regard the participial sentence as a more particular description of the way in which God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, ‘God was in Christ’ (a phrase equivalent to *by* (διὰ) *Jesus Christ* in v. 18, but with the understanding that Christ and what He has done are the only basis on which the reconciliation is founded), ‘bringing back the world to a state of friendship with Himself; *for* He imputed not men’s sins to them, and He has committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation.’ ‘Not imputing men’s trespasses to them’ is equivalent to the bestowal of forgiveness upon men and implies that God was applying the benefits of salvation by Christ to individuals (αὐτοῖς). This is set forth by means of a present participle (imperf., Winer, § 46) because the act was continuously to be repeated while the word describing the institution of the ministerial office (θέμενος) is an aorist participle, because the act was accomplished at a certain time. But the reconciliation, or the restoration of the happy relation, which was the consequence of this proceeding, is mentioned as a process commenced in Christ, but not as yet concluded (ἦν ... καταλλάσσων). As we do not think that this refers exclusively to the objective facts of the redeeming work of Christ, the objections which De Wette urges ... will not apply to us. ... God in Christ has truly entered upon a process by which He is reconciling the world. He makes believers perceive in their own experience that God has reconciled them to Himself by Jesus Christ. He brings them into the state of reconciliation which He has established with the world. The apostle now proceeds to describe further the method in which this was effected, so far as it relates to its general principles. Or, rather, he gives the reason for the assertion that the change mentioned in v. 17b, in which old things had passed away and all things had become new, was to be ascribed to God, who had reconciled believers to Himself through Christ.” According to this interpretation, the chief concept of v. 19 is the subjective justification.

According to a third group of exegetes the statement that God in Christ reconciled the world refers exclusively to the objective justification, while the statement concerning the non-imputation of the trespasses deals with the subjective justification. The *Glossa* of Flacius, it would seem, takes this position: “For in a

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<sup>25</sup> Weil ja Gott es war, der in Christus die Welt mit sich selbst versöhnete, indem er ihnen ihre Sünden nicht zurechnete und das Wort der Versöhnung unter uns aufrichtete.

<sup>26</sup> Denn Gott war ja in Christus und versöhnete eine Welt mit sich selbst, da er ihnen nicht anrechnete ihre Uebertretungen und in uns gelegt hat das Wort von der Versöhnung.

<sup>27</sup> Denn Gott hat ja in Christus die Welt mit sich versöhnt, indem er ihnen ihre Uebertretungen nicht anrechnete und in uns das Wort von der Versöhnung niedergelegt hat.

<sup>28</sup> Weil ja Gott in Christus die Welt mit sich versöhnete, da er ihnen ihre Fehlritte nicht anrechnete und in uns das Wort der Versöhnung legte.

threefold way our salvation is accomplished: by the Father as the Author and Lord; by the Son as the Mediator, meriting and acquiring it; and by the Holy Spirit as the Teacher. ... So also in a threefold manner the Father procures our salvation, first, by sending the Son, an act which lies in the past and is finished; secondly, by giving and sending the doctrine and the teachers, rendering their world efficacious; thirdly, by pardoning, or not imputing, sins, that is, by absolving us; and these two acts take place at all times.” So also the commentary of Lucas Osiander: “God, the true God, dwelling in the man Christ as in His most holy temple, through the suffering and death of that Mediator, reconciled the world unto Himself. And this reconciliation consists in this (*reconciliatio autem in eo sita est; solche Versoehnung aber bestehet darauf*),<sup>29</sup> that God no longer imputes, but forgives, sins to the penitent sinners who believe in Christ. And in order that we may obtain this benefit, this reconciliation, the ministry of the Word of God has been ordained and instituted that we may believe the Gospel, be justified, and saved.” H. Olshausen, *Biblischer Kommentar* [“*Biblical Commentary*”]: “V. 18.... Considered objectively, it should be added, the reconciliation is finished, once for all, therefore *καταλλάξαντος*, v. 19. ‘For God in Christ reconciled the world with Himself, did not attribute their transgressions to them, and set up among us the word of reconciliation.’<sup>30</sup> This verse simply repeats and confirms the thought of v. 18 ... ἦν καταλλάσων = κατήλλαξε; here again the reconciliation is, through the use of the past tense, described as finished, just as *θέμενος* presents the ministry of the reconciliation as fully established. The act of forgiving sins, however, expressed by *μὴ λογιζόμενος τὰ παραπτώματα*, is taken as enduring, extending through the entire history of mankind.... The Church has taught at all times that the reconciliation *actually* was effected on Golgotha, and only in this form the Gospel possesses the power to comfort and regenerate the heart.” (It may be that Olshausen refers to the objective justification throughout).

F. Bachmann, in Zahn’s *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* [“*Commentary on the New Testament*”], also refers 19a (“God was reconciling the world”) to the objective justification and, if we do not mistake his meaning, 19b (“not imputing their trespasses”) to the subjective justification. He says: “V. 18.... Others finally take also in [verse] 18 even the *καταλλάττειν* in the purely objective sense of the establishment of the peace relationship as the fundamental basis of the whole divine work of salvation which precedes conversion. On the assumption that [verse] 19 turns out to be the purely objective version of the reconciliation concept, we would hold it also for [verse] 18. ... V. 19. As an object it appears now, after the significantly limited *ἡμεῖς* in [verse] 18, as the unbounded *κόσμος*. The special saving fact of 18 is just one section of a very universal atonement. ... These comparisons outline clearly for the interpretation the peculiarity of this statement of the reconciliation: God effects it, for the world it comes about, namely to the totality of humanity (*αὐτοῖς!* in 19b), not to their spiritual state of mind, consequently to their state of life generally, while it is changed from the relationship of the objective separation from God to a relationship of peace. According to the connection between [verse] 19 and [verse] 15 Christ is the mediator of this reconciliation, if he dies; according to [verse] 19b it is the separation brought about by sin. ...; but the mode of that reconciliation is completely determined by 5:21. ... The removal of guilt means an albeit objective, yet completely real establishment of the fellowship of humanity with God. *The world is through the removal of guilt thereby the subject of the pouring forth without restraint of the divine fellowship of peace, and, thus, it is brought into a certainty of life of principal and deeply held newness* [Italics our own]. ... *Μὴ λογιζόμενος* could probably then in itself be understood as a ground or content of reconciliation (=because or in that, etc.). Only against both versions [it?] says [?]. ... We understand therefore also *μὴ λογιζόμενος* as a statement about it, as God being in Christ unfolds the accomplished work of reconciliation. Also (5:19): “how that God was in Christ as one, he who reconciled the world to himself, not [further] reckoning to them their transgressions and among us putting the word of reconciliation.” V. 20.... Really there is only one such understanding of *καταλλάγητε*, which assumes, that primarily *God* carried out reconciliation and that he *has* already accomplished it in Christ.”<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The Latin and German phrases are identical: “this reconciliation consists in this,” ed.

<sup>30</sup> Denn Gott in Christo versoehnte die Welt mit sich selbst, rechnete ihnen ihre Uebertretungen nicht zu und setzte unter uns das Wort der Versoehnung ein.

<sup>31</sup> Andere endlich nehmen auch in 18 schon das *καταλλάττειν* im rein objektiven Sinne von der Herstellung des Friedensverhaeltnisses als der der Bekehrung vorausliegenden prinzipiellen Grundlage des ganzen goettlichen Heilswerkes. Unter der Voraussetzung nun,

And now for the real business at hand: Does 2 Cor. 5:19a and b deal with the objective, universal justification (reconciliation) or with the subjective, personal justification (reconciliation)? We take our stand on—and shall unfold—these two propositions: 1) There is that in the text which absolutely excludes the reference to the subjective justification. 2) There is nothing in the text that forbids the reference to the objective justification.

Our first proposition is that the word *κόσμος* and the relation of the word *αὐτοῖς* to its antecedent vetoes the conception that the apostle is here describing the subjective justification. Since there is nothing in the text to indicate that the apostle wants to restrict, in some way or other, the meaning of *κόσμος*, the world of sinners, the statement that God reconciled the world cannot mean anything else than that all men, “the world, the whole human race” (*Expositor Greek Testament*), “the unbounded, *κόσμος*, the totality of humanity” (Bachmann),<sup>32</sup> has been reconciled, justified in the forum of God. There is as little reason for limiting the meaning of *world* here as in John 3:16. Calvinism is compelled to substitute a foreign meaning to our word. And we vehemently protest against such an abuse of language. So does the article in the *Pastor’s Monthly*. We read on page 260: “Incidentally we note Calvin’s statement that we ‘are subject to puerile hallucination’ in believing what Paul (1 Tim. 2:4) actually says, because ‘*apostolus simpliciter intelligit, nullum mundi vel populum vel ordinem a salute excludit*’<sup>33</sup>—the apostle understands only that no people, nor nation, and no order or class of the world is excluded from salvation.” And on page 264: “We note again Calvin’s arbitrary falsification, making ‘then all were dead’ (2 Cor. 5:14) mean the death of the old sinful nature in conversion. Since this occurs permanently only in the elect, Calvin reduces ‘all’ to ‘all the elect.’ Hodge follows. One asks how this sort of thing can be kept up.” *Κόσμος* must stand in its full force. If the apostle had had in mind, not the world in its totality, but only a part of the world, he would have known how to give expression to that thought. It will not do to establish a restriction of the *κόσμος* by interpreting our passage as saying that God was or is *aiming* at the reconciliation of the whole world indeed, but that His purpose is frustrated by a great part of the world. For the text does not speak of an attempted reconciliation, but of an accomplished reconciliation—God *was* reconciling, God *has* reconciled. And since the object of this work of God is the “world,” we dare not think of anything but the universal, the objective, reconciliation. Recall the definitions given on page 265 of the *Pastor’s Monthly*: “The objective reconciliation covers *all men* as enemies; and the subjective reconciliation, going a step farther, covers *all believers*.” One who accepts that cannot find the subjective reconciliation in 19a. The reconciliation there mentioned has for its object *all men*. This word *κόσμος* is of rather an obstinate nature. It refuses to do service for the subjective justification—except in that wonderful manner that it forms the basis and the heart of it, which belongs in another chapter or verse.

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dass sich zu 19 die rein objektive Fassung des Versoehnungs Begriffes herausstellt, moechten wir sie auch fuer 18 festhalten. ... V. 19. Als Objekt erscheint jetzt, nach dem noch deutlich begrenzten *ἡμεῖς* in 18, das Unbegrenzte, der *κόσμος*. Die spezielle Heilstatsache von 18 ist eben nur ein Ausschnitt aus einer ganz universalen Versoehnungstat. ... Diese Vergleichenungen umschreiben aber fuer die Auslegung deutlich die Eigentuemlichkeit dieses Satzes von der Versoehnung: Gott bewirkt sie, an der Welt geschieht sie, naemlich an der Gesamtheit der Menschheit (*αὐτοῖς!* In 19b), nicht an ihrer seelischen Verfassung, folglich an ihrem Lebensstand im allgemeinen Sinn, indem sie aus dem Verhaeltnis objektiver Geschiedenheit von Gott umgestellt wird in ein Verhaeltnis des Friedens. Nach dem Zusammenhang zwischen 19 und 15 ist Christus der Vermittler dieser Versoehnung, sofern er stirbt; nach 19b ist das die Geschiedenheit Bewirkende die Suende ...; den Modus jener Versoehnung aber wird 5:21 vollends bestimmen.... Die Aufhebung der Schuld bedeutet eine, wenn auch objektive, so doch vollkommen wirkliche Herstellung der Gemeinschaft der Menschheit mit Gott. *Die Welt ist durch die Aufhebung der Schuld hindurch Gegenstand der sich ungehemmt ergiessenden goettlichen Friedensgemeinschaft, und damit ist sie in eine Lebensbestimmtheit von prinzipieller und tiefstgreifender Neuheit verbracht.* (Italics our own). ... *Μὴ λογιζόμενος* koennte dann fuer sich allerdings wohl als Grund oder Inhalt der Versoehnung (=weil oder dadurch, dass usw.) verstanden werden. Allein gegen beide Fassungen spricht.... Wir verstehen darum auch *μὴ λογιζόμενος* als eine Aussage darueber, wie Gott sein in Christo getanes Versoehnungswerk entfaltet. Also (5:19): ‚Wie denn ja Gott in Christus war als einer, der die Welt mit sich versoehnte, nicht [weiter] anrechnend ihnen ihre Verfehlungen und in uns hineinlegend das Wort von der Versoehnung.‘ V. 20.... Richtig ist nur ein solches Verstaendnis des *καταλλάγητε*, welches davon ausgeht, dass primaer *Gott* die Versoehnung vollzieht und dass er sie in Christo bereits vollzogen *hat*.

<sup>32</sup> *das Unbegrenzte, der κόσμος, die Gesamtheit der Menschheit*

<sup>33</sup> “The apostle simply understands that not the world nor people nor order are excluded from salvation.”

In an equally obstinate manner 19b refuses to be taken as a description of the subjective justification. Here it is the word *αὐτοῖς* that protests with a loud voice against such a procedure. The antecedent of *αὐτοῖς* is *κόσμος*. “In 2 Cor. 5:19 *αὐτοῖς* refers to *κόσμον*.” (*Robertson’s Grammar*, p. 683). “God effects the reconciliation, it comes about for the world, namely for the totality of humanity (*αὐτοῖς!* in 19b)” (Bachmann).<sup>34</sup> We wonder if any writer has ever found a different antecedent for it here. So, then, you will have to put *κόσμος* also into 19b: “not imputing the world’s trespasses unto the world.” The reason why the apostle did not repeat the *κόσμος* or rather did not use the personal pronoun in the singular, but used the form *αὐτοῖς* need not concern us here. Very likely he is impressing upon us that the object of the reconciliation is not the world as a hazy abstract, but the world as made up of individuals. Every single individual should know that the objective reconciliation includes him. What we are concerned about here is to point out that by virtue of the *αὐτοῖς* in its relation to *κόσμος* 19b deals with the same matter as 19a. And since 19a cannot refer to anything else than the universal reconciliation, 19b cannot possibly be made to cover anything else. It could be made to do so only if the apostle had in some way limited the universality of the *κόσμος* in this clause. Those who find the subjective justification in these clauses do indeed insert such limiting terms. They substitute for *κόσμος ... αὐτοῖς* “others in the world,” or “the believers,” or other restrictions. Lange-Schaff obtains the needed restriction in this way: “Even Osiander concedes that ... *μὴ λογιζόμενος* describes a result which is intimately connected and nearly coincident with the reconciliation. This is the remission of guilt, a benefit which *individuals may receive through faith*” [Italics our own]. The further statement: *Κόσμος* signifies the human race, and as it is here without the article, *it means perhaps ‘a whole world,’*” is also, perhaps, meant as a restriction. J.L. von Mosheim deals very frankly in this matter. Having said: “The world here is as much as the human race,” he goes on: “ ‘and he does not reckon their sins to them.’ It is here the meaning of the word, which depends more on the meaning of the used words than on this word itself. It remains *αὐτοῖς*, as if *κόσμον* had been denoted beforehand as *τοὺς ἀνθρώπους*. [Correct, but—]. Not all people are understood here, but only those who believe in Christ.”<sup>35</sup> We certainly object to these, we had nearly said, interpolations. We insist that, if any restrictions are called for, the apostle must make them. If they were needed, he certainly had all the resources of the Greek language at his disposal. He knew the Greek equivalent for “some,” “many,” “a part of the world,” “the believers.” But he put in *αὐτοῖς* as the equivalent of *κόσμον*. He will introduce the believers later. He is going to speak of the subjective reconciliation in v. 20. Here in v. 19 he wants to address the whole world as objectively justified. There is the *ἦν*, too. That is a very good word to use when speaking of the death of Christ by which the objective reconciliation was effected. A verb in the past tense is called for. It is a very poor word to use in speaking of the subjective reconciliation, which has gone on since then and is going on till the end of the world. If the apostle had the subjective justification in mind, the use of *ἐστὶ* would seem to be indicated. It requires a great amount of words to explain why, the apostle, in describing the subjective justification either in 19a or 19b or in both clauses, failed to use the present tense.

The attempt to put the subjective justification into the *μὴ-λογιζόμενος* clause breaks down by force of the *αὐτοῖς ... κόσμον*. To put it there requires a process of muddled thought in the mind of the interpreter and of course in the mind of the apostle. Take the case of Lange-Schaff. Our clause “implies that God was applying the benefits of salvation by Christ to individuals (*αὐτοῖς*),” to the believers. But the apostle had just said that God reconciled the world! Well, the two thoughts must be thus harmonized: “The reconciliation ... is mentioned as a process commenced in Christ, but not as yet concluded (*ἦν ... καταλλάσσω*).” That means, it seems, that the apostle is speaking of the reconciliation of some as the reconciliation of the world because the subjective reconciliation is based on the objective reconciliation. Briefly, the apostle is being given the privilege of

<sup>34</sup> Gott bewirkt die Versöhnung, an der Welt geschieht sie, naemlich an der Gesamtheit der Menschheit (*αὐτοῖς!* In 19b).

<sup>35</sup> Die Welt ist hier so viel als das menschliche Geschlecht, he goes on: ‘Und rechnete ihnen ihre Sünde nicht zu.’ Es ist hier eine Wortfügung, die sich mehr nach dem Sinn der gebrauchten Worte als nach diesen selbst richtet. Es steht *αὐτοῖς*, als wenn vorhero statt *κόσμον* waere *τοὺς ἀνθρώπους* gesetzt worden. (Correct, but—). Es werden hier nicht alle Menschen verstanden, sondern nur diejenigen, welche an Christum glauben.

describing a process by which actually only some are reconciled in terms of a universal reconciliation. Lange-Schaff actually ascribes such a process of thought to the apostle, as appears from this statement: “ ‘God was in Christ,’ ... bringing back the world to a state of friendship with Himself; *for* He imputed not men’s sins to them.” Note the italicized “*for*.” Because God applies the forgiveness of sins to some, He may be said to be bringing back the world to a state of friendship with Himself. As Lange-Schaff does not stand for the doctrine of the false Universalism, this statement means that you may describe the reconciliation of some as the reconciliation of the world!

Take the case of Dr. Lenski. “ ‘Ὡς ὅτι: ‘that God was in Christ, engaged in reconciling the world, by not reckoning to them [individuals] their transgressions. ...’ Paul writes, after bringing me and my assistants to personal reconciliation and giving us the ministry and means for bringing other men to personal reconciliation, God reaches out through us as His ambassadors thus to reconcile personally others in the world.” God engaged in reconciling the *world*, by reconciling *some*! The apostle certainly was not able to think such a thought.

In passing, we would direct attention to the statement: “The mediation of Christ is completed when those objectively reconciled on Calvary are subjectively, individually, reconciled by faith in the Word about this reconciliation.” One can and must say that those subjectively reconciled were objectively reconciled on Calvary. But one cannot say that the number of those objectively reconciled is coextensive with the number of those subjectively reconciled. “The objective reconciliation covers all men, ... the subjective all believers”! The author evidently means to say that the mediation of Christ is completed with the conversion, justification, and final salvation of those who by the grace of God accept by faith the objective reconciliation gained for them and all the rest of the world on Calvary.

In concluding the first part of our argument, we should like to call attention to the exegetics of old Geo. Mich. Laurentii (1711). He knew, in a way, how to keep the subjective justification out of 19a and b. “God reconciled the world to Himself. The world, thus then is understood as the evil [people] and the pious [people] (John 3:16). ... God does not reckon to them their sins. This non-reckoning is twofold: ( $\alpha\alpha$ ) that all people come in, because God does not deal with the human race on merit, but He allows grace to come before justice and sends His Son, who bears the sins of the whole world and, before, did sufficient [merit]; ( $\beta\beta$ ) that it comes in and happens for the believers alone if the person in true repentance and faith applies himself to Christ and through him comes in such a stance, that God looks on him as if he had done no sin. ... Shines here in this place” (?) “notably” (?) “having the first meaning, that God ordains to deal with the human race not according to his justice but according to his mercy regardless of all sins and His Son to be the Savior of the whole world.”<sup>36</sup>

Does 2 Cor. 5:19: “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them,” treat of the objective justification or of the subjective justification or of both? We insist that these statements refer to the objective justification exclusively. The words *κόσμον* and *αὐτοῖς* (equivalent to *κόσμος*) absolutely preclude the reference to the subjective justification. That was our first proposition. We now come to our second proposition: There is nothing in the text that forbids the reference to the objective justification, that calls for the subjective justification. In discussing this second proposition, we are in a manner taking on an *opus supererogationis*.<sup>37</sup> Our first proposition has settled the case once for all. The *κόσμον* — *αὐτοῖς* leaves no room here for the subjective justification. We are frank to say that we approach the second proposition with our mind

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<sup>36</sup> „Gott versoehnete die Welt mit ihm selber. Die Welt, so denn in sich begreifet Boese und Fromme, Joh. 3:16. ... Gott rechnete ihnen ihre Suede nicht zu. Dies Nichtzurechnen ist zweierlei: ( $\alpha\alpha$ ) das alle Menschen angehet, da Gott mit dem menschlichen Geschlecht nicht nach Verdienst verfahren, sondern Gnade lassen vor Recht gehen und seinen Sohn gesendet, welcher die Sueden der ganzen Welt tragen und davor genug tun sollen; ( $\beta\beta$ ) das den Glaebigen allein angehet und geschiehet, wenn der Mensch in wahrer Busse und Glauben sich an Christum wendet und durch denselben in solchen Stand kommet, dass Gott ihn ansiehet, als haette er keine Suede getan. ... Allhier an diesem Ort scheint“ (?) „insonderheit“ (?) „die erste Bedeutung stattzuhaben, da Gott mit dem menschlichen Geschlechte nicht nach seiner Gerechtigkeit, sondern nach seiner Barmherzigkeit verfahren und aller Sueden ungeachtet seinen Sohn zum Heiland aller Welt verordnet.“

<sup>37</sup> “deed done in addition [to what is required]” a Roman Catholic theological concept: a work or deed that a saint performs beyond what is required in moral or canonical law in order to earn everlasting life. Dr. Engelder here is humorously saying that objective justification is undeniably in the text (2 Cor. 5:19), so one would not need to go beyond that by refuting contentions that it cannot be in the text. He proposes to do just that by such a “work of supererogation.”—ed.

made up, with a preconceived notion of the right sort. We know *a priori* that there is something wrong with the arguments presented by the proponents of the subjective-justification interpretation. Still, the discussion will not prove altogether profitless. Calling upon them to produce their arguments, we are putting them under the obligation of proving the apostle inept in the use of language. In arguing their case, they must needs accuse the apostle of having used the term *κόσμος* as the object of justification when he actually did not mean *the world*. Thus our second proposition will in the end serve as a strong support of our first proposition.

To put it another way, it will, in the light of our first proposition, require arguments of the strongest possible force to establish the subjective justification as the subject of the apostolic discourse. They will have to show us something in the text which forces the conclusion: The apostle could not have had the objective justification in mind, though he did unfortunately use the misleading term *world*. On what ground, then, do they base their proposition that the apostle is here presenting the subjective justification?

This is the argument: “2 Cor. 5:18—20 is badly bungled by many, notably the Missourians. Preconceived notions violate the highly significant tenses. Paul speaks of himself and his assistants: God, the ‘One who did reconcile us (not only objectively, but also subjectively) to Himself through Christ and did give to us the ministration of this reconciliation (the service of preaching it)’ — two aorists, past, historical. Then with *ὡς ὅτι*: ‘that God was in Christ, engaged in reconciling the world, by not reckoning to them (individuals) their transgressions (two present, durative, iterative participles), and having deposited in our care the Word of this reconciliation.’ This is again an aorist: He did give us the ministry of this reconciliation—He did place in our care the Word of this reconciliation, namely, for this our ministry. Thus as Christ’s ambassadors, Paul adds, we beg you: ‘Be reconciled to God.’” And because of these reasons the words “not reckoning to them their transgressions” must be understood as referring to the personal, subjective reconciliation, cannot be understood as stating that on Easter morning God forgave all sins to every individual sinner in the world.” (See entire passage as quoted on p. 507 f. of this magazine).<sup>38</sup>

The argument is thus based on the fact that the present participle is employed in 2 Cor. 5:19a and b, while vv. 18 and 19c the aorist participle is used. The author does not state in so many words *why and how* this fact calls for the subjective-justification interpretation. He leaves it to us to formulate his argument. As far as we can see, his argument is based on one of two considerations, either on the alleged fact that the apostle is using the present participles of v. 19 as equivalent to verbs in the present tense or on the use of the Greek present participle as expressing linear, durative, iterative action.

The argument in the first form would run thus: The fact that in 19a and b the present tense is used precludes the concept of the objective justification, which deals with a fact finished and completed in the past. In other words: If the apostle had the objective justification in mind, he would have had to use the aorist participle, the past tense, not the present participle, the present tense. — Before we go on, we shall have to ask leave to limit the discussion to *one* present participle. There are two present participles in v. 19, *καταλλάσσω* and *λογιζόμενος*. But *καταλλάσσω* cannot possibly come into consideration here. It cannot possibly indicate the present tense. The phrase *ἣν καταλλάσσω* is either the periphrastic imperfect (most exegetes taking it thus), and then it describes a past action, in no way pointing to the present time, as little as *ἣν διδάσκων* (Mark 1:22) or *ἣν προσευχόμενον* (Luke 1:10) permits the notion of subsequent, present action. Or *θεὸς ἣν ἐν Χριστῷ* may be taken as a sentence by itself (thus Luther and others), the *καταλλάσσω* serving as a simple participle. But in that case also it cannot be made to indicate present time. For what would be the sense of the statement: God *was* in Christ, reconciling, *at the present time*, the world? We do not know whether any man has ever offered such an interpretation. So we need not waste time in showing its impossibility. We have merely adverted to it in order to cover all “possible” cases. — The number of possible participles indicating present time being now reduced to *one*, the argument runs thus: Because *λογιζόμενος*, a present participle, has the force of a verb in the present tense, Paul cannot be speaking of the objective justification; he must be speaking of a justification that is still going on, and that can be only the subjective justification.

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<sup>38</sup> See page 1 for the full quotation of Lenski.

Does our author take the position that λογίζομενος has the force of a verb in the present tense? The article under discussion does not say so explicitly, but the exposition of 2 Cor. 5:14-21, in the same author's *Eisenach Epistle Selections*, uses this language: “μὴ λογίζομενος, present participle, retaining its present force and not made an imperfect by ἦν” (p. 492). Others take the same position. *Commentary of Lange-Schaff*: “The words μὴ λογίζομενος have the force of a verb in the present tense, for they assert that God is not reckoning unto men their trespasses. ... It implies that God was applying the benefits of salvation by Christ to individuals (αὐτοῖς). This is set forth by means of a present participle, because the act was continuously to be repeated.” *Meyer's Commentary*: “‘Since He does not reckon (*present*) to them their sins.’ ” Revised translation by Carl Weizsaecker, 1892: “Yes, that is how it is: It was God that reconciled the world to Himself in Christ in that He did not count their sins against them and among us set up the word of reconciliation.”<sup>39</sup> While not all of those who find in λογίζομενος the force of a verb in the present tense accept the subjective-justification theory,—Meyer repudiates it absolutely,—the subjective-justification-theory men take the position that because a present participle is used in setting forth God's act of not imputing trespasses, this act of God cannot be an act of the past, but must be an act going on subsequently to the ἦν and that this cannot refer to anything else than the subjective justification. Lange-Schaff says explicitly that it cannot have the meaning: “God *did* not impute (imperfect) to men their trespasses.”

Our answer to this is, first of all: It must be shown that the present participle here *must be taken* as a verb in the present tense. It is not sufficient to show that it *can* be so taken. The assertion is made that it is a bungling of the text to make the statement “not imputing their trespasses unto them” refer to an act of the past. It must therefore be shown that the text forbids us to “make the μὴ λογίζομενος an imperfect by the ἦν.” The rules of the Greek grammar do not forbid it. The grammarians tell us that “as the aorist participle is *timeless* and punctiliar, so the present participle is *timeless* and durative” and “that the time comes from the principal verb” (A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 1115, 891). According to this rule the λογίζομενος is determined as to time by the ἦν. In speaking of God's not-imputing of trespasses, the apostle has an act of the past in mind. That is the common Greek usage. We are loath to adduce proofs for this. This is certainly an *opus supererogationis*.<sup>40</sup> But we are forced to undertake it in order to show that our interpretation has the authority of the Greek grammar back of it. Take Rom. 5:10: “If, when we were (ὄντες) enemies, we were reconciled to God,” etc. The present participle, “being enemies,” takes its time from the aorist: we were reconciled; it denotes a past state, coincident with the principal verb. Rom. 5:8 affords another illustration of this rule. Nearly every page of the New Testament presents similar examples. What would you make of Acts 5:5? “Hearing these words”—did that take place after Ananias gave up the Ghost? So we are not breaking a rule of the Greek grammar if we let λογίζομενος take its time from the principal verb, from the ἦν, seeing that it is nothing but a participle. If in 2 Cor. 5:19b the participle “is not made an imperfect by the ἦν,” we have a most remarkable exception to the rule. And strong reasons must be offered to justify an interpretation which goes against the common rule. The fact that aorist participles are used before and after the present participle λογίζομενος proves absolutely nothing. They all fall under the same rule—they all (unless an exception can be established) take their time from the principal verb. What difference does it make as to the time that in Acts 5:5 we have a present participle, ἀκούων, side by side with an aorist participle, πεσών? So we are going to keep on taking the λογίζομενος as applying to an act of the past because of the ἦν. Whoever objects to that must point out some good reason why Paul here departed from the common rule. And let us remember that the rule is so well established that only reasons of the very strongest kind could justify the exception. (We shall, of course, always bear in mind that all attempts to change the objective justification into the subjective justification are predestined to come to grief on the rock κόσμος.)

Is it at all possible to give a present participle in connection with a verb of the past tense the force of a verb in the present tense? We need not devote much time to that question. One might appeal to the rule as given

<sup>39</sup> Ja, so ist es: Gott war es, der in Christus die Welt mit sich selber versoehte, indem er ihnen ihre Sunden nicht anrechnet und unter uns aufrichtete das Wort von der Versoehnung.

<sup>40</sup> See above, footnote 37—ed.

by Blass-Debrunner, § 339: “(2) The present participle can also denote a relatively future action with various nuances,”<sup>41</sup> or by Robertson, p. 892: “(h.) Past Action still in Progress. This may be represented by the pres. part. ... (i.) ‘Subsequent’ Action. ...” But we are not now concerned with the question whether it is possible thus to take our present participle, but with the question whether it *must* be so taken. What are the reasons why Meyer, for instance, departs from the rule? (The article under discussion does not mention any reasons.) Meyer says: “If, as is *usually* done, the participial definition *μὴ λογιζόμενος* is taken in the imperfect sense as a more precise explanation of the *modus* of the reconciliation, there arises the insoluble difficulty that *θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν* also would have to be so viewed and to be taken consequently as an element of the reconciliation, which is impossible, since it expresses what God has done *after* the work of reconciliation in order to *appropriate* it to men.” We fail to see the insoluble difficulty. Certainly the establishment of the ministry of the reconciliation has nothing to do with effecting the objective justification. But why those who take the *μὴ λογιζόμενος* as a more precise explanation of the *modus* of the reconciliation and are thus compelled to put it in the imperfect, past, would be thereby compelled to make the establishment of the ministry a factor in the reconciliation (objective), is not at all apparent. Putting both acts—the non-imputation and the institution of the means of grace—on the same plane as to time, both lying in the past, certainly does not compel us to put them on the same plane as to their relation to the reconciliation. If there are other reasons compelling the interpreter to assume that Paul here departed from the common rule requiring the participle to take its time from the principal verb, we are ready to discuss them. The reason given has created no doubt in us. “Certainly there can be no doubt about the fact that *λογιζόμενος* in its relationship to *ἤν καταλλάσσω* is a participle of the imperfect and not of the present (contra Meyer)” (von Hofmann, *Scripture Proof*, II, I, p. 327).<sup>42</sup>

So much for the first part of our answer: ‘No reason can be assigned why Paul should have given, contrary to the established usage, the present participle the force of a verb in the present tense. But we have another answer to give. This: Even if it could be shown that *λογιζόμενος* has the force of a verb in the present tense, that would not militate against the objective justification. Meyer takes it as referring to the present and still finds it descriptive of the objective justification: “‘*Since He does not reckon (present) to them their sins and has deposited (aorist) in us the Word of Reconciliation.*’ The former is the altered judicial relation into which God has entered and in which He stands to the sins of men; the latter is the measure adopted by God by means of which the former is made known to men.” We have no objection to this interpretation on dogmatical grounds. The objective justification is in force today. That means, exactly as Meyer puts it, that the sins of the world *were* forgiven on Easter Day, objectively, and *are* forgiven today, objectively. The judgment pronounced *then* is the judgment of *today*. The apostle, however, has not chosen to describe this phase of the objective justification in 2 Cor. 5:19b. If he had chosen to do so, if he had used a verb in the present tense, we should certainly not stamp that as strange doctrine. But he has not chosen to do so here. —It will not be amiss to point out here that, while Meyer agrees with J.P. Lange and others in the treatment of the present participle, he does not side with them in the treatment of the *κόσμος*. He leaves it inviolate, while the others do violence to it.

Let us now examine the argument in the second form, which is built up on the fact that the Greek present participle denotes durative, linear action and the aorist participle punctiliar action. The argument is, as far as we can see: Since the *λογιζόμενος* clause uses a present participle, while the *θέμενος* clause and the other clauses use the aorist participle, the *λογιζόμενος* clause cannot, like the other clauses, refer to a past, accomplished act; the apostle would have had to change the *λογιζόμενος* into the aorist if he had had an accomplished act in mind: “Two aorists, past, historical.—God was in Christ, engaged in reconciling the world, by not reckoning to them (individuals) their transgressions (two present, durative, iterative participles) and having deposited in our care the Word of this reconciliation. This is again an aorist.” First of all, we move to strike out the “iterative.” Simply for this reason: While the present participle expresses durative action, it does

<sup>41</sup> „2. Das Part. Praes. kann auch eine relativ zukuenftige Handlung bezeichnen, und zwar in verschiedenen Nuanzen.“ The translation of these words are from the English edition of Blass-Debrunner, p. 175.

<sup>42</sup> Darueber, dass *λογιζόμενος* in seiner Beziehung auf *ἤν καταλλάσσω* Partizipium des Imperfektums ist und nicht des Praesens (genen Meyer), kann doch wohl kein Zweifel bestehen.“ (V. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, II, I, p. 327).

not always express iterative action. The iterative action would fit in very well with the subjective-justification theory. No doubt about that. Lange-Schaff: “This is set forth by means of a present participle, because the act was continuously to be repeated.” But since the argument is that the present participle compels the subjective-justification sense, it would have to be shown that the present participle invariably denotes iteration. That cannot be shown. Mark 14:54, for instance, protests against such a rule: “ἦν συγκαθήμενος”—Peter was sitting. That does not denote iterative action. Again: “In τοὺς σφζομένους (Acts 2:47) the idea is probably iterative, but the descriptive durative is certainly all that is true of τοὺς ἀγιαζομένους in Heb. 10:14.” (Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 891). So let us drop the “iterative” and confine ourselves to the “durative.” If the subjective-justification theory cannot be proved with the “durative,” the “iterative” can in no way help out.

This, this, is the question: Does the fact that the present participle denotes durative action prove that the apostle could not have had the objective justification in mind? Or more precisely: Since he uses the aorist (θέμενος) in predicating the institution of the preaching of the Word of Reconciliation, which is an act that is finished and concluded, does his employment of the present participle (λογιζόμενος), in describing the non-imputation of sins, justification, prove that he could not have been speaking of an act which is finished and concluded, such as the objective justification is? Our answer is: You can prove durative action here, but you cannot prove durative action *in the form of the subjective justification*. You cannot prove that the durative concept gives no sense when applied to the objective justification. If we can show that it gives good sense, we have, we will not say, gained our point,—for our first proposition, insisting on the αὐτοῖς = κόσμον, did that once for all,—but we have shown the futility of the argument based on the “durative.” We readily admit that, if the apostle wanted to describe the subjective justification here, the present participle would fit in very well (though, of course, some other word would have had to be substituted for the αὐτοῖς). But we do not at all admit that it could not be used in describing the act of God whereby He objectively justified the world. The apostle might have used the aorist participle. But does his use of the present participle inject a strange, monstrous, unscriptural notion into the matter? “God was in Christ, reconciling the world.” God reconciled the world through the vicarious birth, circumcision, life, suffering, and death of Jesus. The reconciliation was effected by the life and death, and sealed and proclaimed by the resurrection, of Christ—and all of this made up the objective reconciliation, the universal justification. Every act in the life of Christ had to do with it. When Christ was circumcised, and when He was crucified, God was viewing all human beings as paying the penalty of their sins. When Christ was crucified, God said: The sins of the world are no longer imputed to them. When He raised Christ, He declared: All men may know that their sins are no longer imputed to them. “However, for the difference of the tense of the two participles associated with ἦν,—one of them ongoing—carried out in the whole history of Christ, the ongoing appropriation of the reconciliation does not allow the ἦν to be understood with the other, an act of God immediately done with the appointment of the office,” (V. Hofmann, *Scripture Proof*, II, I, p. 328).<sup>43</sup> We shall not be dogmatic about this. Some may know of a better interpretation. But we do say that the interpretation given violates no law of Greek grammar and no teaching of Scripture. It agrees with grammar and Scripture. It is a possible interpretation, and that is all we need in order to establish our present case. We are combating the argument that the use of the present participle cannot possibly yield a good sense if the objective justification is meant.

We have something more to say on this point. Even if we could not *demonstrate* that the present participle is most aptly used here, the fact that the apostle used it instead of the aorist participle would not be decisive. And that for two reasons. 1) It cannot in all cases be shown why the Greek writers chose the present participle instead of the aorist, and *vice versa*. In many cases it seems to have been more or less a matter of chance. At any rate, we are not always able to assign the exact reason for the choice. No man can blame us for saying that we do not know the reason. And we would have the right to say it in the case of v. 19. We do say it

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<sup>43</sup> Was aber den Unterschied der Zeitform betrifft, in welcher die beiden mit ἦν verbundenen Partizipien stehen, so will ja das eine derselben ein andauerndes, in der ganzen Geschichte Christi sich vollbringendes Tun—denn an die noch fortdauernde Zueignung der Versöhnung laesst ja das ἦν nicht denken—, das andere dagegen eine mit der Bestellung des Amts sofort geschehene Tat Gottes bezeichnen. (V. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, II, I, p. 328).

in the case of Acts 5:5. Why did the writer use the present participle in the case of the ἀκούων and the aorist in the case of the πεσών? We say it in the case of 1 Pet. 2:17. Why the aorist τιμήσατε side by side with the other imperatives in the present tense? 2) It is well to bear in mind the rule: “But usually the present participle is merely descriptive.” (Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 891). It may be used for the purpose of *describing* an act without emphasizing the duration. The grammarians call it the “*descriptive durative*.” You must not stress the “durative” too much. If it is apparent in 2 Cor. 5:19b, well and good. If not, let the “descriptive” suffice. And that is certainly a most fitting description and definition of the objective justification: not imputing their trespasses unto the world.

To sum up: The use of the present participle does not require the subjective-justification interpretation; and the use of the κόσμον ... αὐτοῖς forbids it. And say what you will on the matter of the use of the present participle in connection with the aorist participle,—confess your inability to account for it if need be,—but say not one word in favor of having the non-imputation of their trespasses cover only the believers. *The Text—αὐτοῖς = κόσμος—is too powerful!*<sup>44</sup> “The connection of the words ‘not reckoning unto them their trespasses and having committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation’ is rather difficult.” But “the very universality of the expression—reconciling a world to Himself—is consistent only with an objective reconciliation” (W.R. Nicoll, *The Expositor’s Bible*).

In conclusion we should like to, first, direct attention to a rather fine presentation of the doctrine of the objective justification given by Dr. Lenski on the basis of 2 Cor. 5:14-21 and then add a few general remarks. We read in *The Eisenach Epistle Selections*, p. 489 f.: “(V. 18). ‘Who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ.’ ... The pronoun *us* in no way restricts this reconciliation; for this embraces ‘the world’ (19); but Paul here speaks of himself and his fellow-laborers, explaining how both their work and the motives with which they carry it on are ‘of God.’ ... V. 19. ‘God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.’ ... This embraced *the world*, every human being; note the ‘all’ in v. 14. The attempt of Hodge to reduce also this word to mean only ‘the class of beings towards whom God was manifesting Himself as propitious’ (*Commentary*, 144) shows how Calvinists must violate the plain words of Scripture to make room for their limited atonement. They thus take away the one all-sufficient comfort of poor sinners that they, every one without an exception, are embraced in ‘the world’ which God reconciled unto Himself.—The next two participles, λογιζόμενος and θέμενος, are evidently parallel; but the latter is an aorist, and at the same time it states something that cannot be viewed as a part of the reconciling act itself. The two participles must therefore be taken as pointing out two important facts connected with the reconciling act of God: God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, and so He is now *not reckoning unto them their trespasses* (μὴ λογιζόμενος, present participle, retaining its present force, and not made an imperfect by ἦν), and *having committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation* (καὶ θέμενος, in a past definite act, but one following the reconciling act itself). God reckoned the trespasses of the world to Christ when Christ died and paid the world’s penalty on the cross, and so ever after God does not reckon these trespasses to the world, does not treat the world with wrath and condemnation, casting it from Him forever, but, looking to Christ and His atoning merit, He turns all His love and grace to the world and offers it the pardon and salvation Christ has prepared, v. 20. The αὐτοῖς, *unto them*, points to the individual sinners which make up the sum total called ‘world’ and in παραπτώματα likewise their guilt is viewed as a multitude of trespasses, not as one single mass of sin. So we may say, every single sin of every single sinner was laid on Christ, and so is not now charged against the sinner by a reconciled God; if one single sin were so charged against you or me, our hope of salvation would be shut out from the start. The universal non-imputation here spoken of as the direct result of God’s reconciling act and as embracing every sinner as included already in the ‘world’ must be clearly distinguished from the personal non-imputation of sin which takes place only for those sinners who personally accept Christ and the reconciliation effected in him. The latter is based on the former and is always connected with faith; and it is the latter which is called ‘justification,’ or ‘justification by faith,’ in the constant language of Scripture, of our Confessions, and of our preaching and teaching generally (Rom. 3:28; 4:7, 8; etc.).” We here find ourselves in substantial agreement with Dr. Lenski. We do not accept his view on the force of the present

<sup>44</sup> *Der Text—αὐτοῖς = κόσμος—steht zu gewaltig da!*

participle λογιζόμενος. We do not accept his statement that “justification” denotes only the subjective justification in the constant language of Scripture (see Rom. 5:18, 19; 4:25) and of our Confessions (see p. 509 of this magazine);<sup>45</sup> but on the main point we are in hearty agreement. We agree with him that 2 Cor. 5:19 speaks of the universal non-imputation of trespasses as embracing every sinner as included already in the “world”; and he cannot but agree with us that on Easter morning God non-imputed, forgave, all sins to every individual sinner in the world.

It will do no harm to give the rest of Dr. Lenski’s statement. He proceeds: “If we use ‘justification’ also for the former act, we must guard carefully against confusing the two, the more as some have failed grievously in this respect.” A footnote here states: “The mistake here referred to consists of making the justification of the world, which took place at the death of Christ, the only justifying act of God, thus leaving no room for the act by which God pronounces each individual sinner free from guilt the moment he comes to faith. This error is aided by the faulty terminology: ‘objective justification’ and ‘subjective justification.’ Usually the former is taken to mean God’s justifying sentence regarding the whole world. The best name for this, if one wishes to speak of it as a justification, is *universal justification*. By the second they who use the term generally mean the appropriation of ‘objective justification’ through faith. It is apparent at a glance that ‘subjective justification’ in this sense is no act of God at all, but merely a change that takes place in us. Here the faultiness of these terms appears. When God pronounces a poor sinner who believes in Christ free from guilt, this is altogether an objective act of God, one that takes place outside of us, in heaven above. The name for this is *personal justification*. ...” The “mistake” here referred to deals with a myth, which has been sufficiently dealt with in the July number of this magazine.<sup>46</sup> As to the “faulty terminology,” we need not discuss that matter now. The author himself, in the *Pastor’s Monthly*, uses similar terms: “*objective reconciliation*,” “*subjective reconciliation*.” We have not the least aversion to the terms universal justification, personal justification. We shall not quarrel about terms, seeing that we are agreed on the main matter involved.

Which leads up to the first of the general remarks we are now to make. 1) It would be a sad thing if the readers of the *Pastor’s Monthly* should get the impression that the Missourians teach a strange doctrine with regard to the objective justification, a doctrine jeopardizing the article of justification by faith. There was a time when there was disagreement on this matter. Later there seemed to be general agreement. When the Intersynodical Theses were drawn up, the weighty differences between the synods were thoroughly discussed, but the representatives of the Ohio and Iowa synods did not find that the Missourians were in error on the subject of the objective (universal) justification in its relation to the subjective (personal) justification. Nor did the Missourians raise such a charge against the others. In the light of statements like the one quoted from *The Eisenach Epistle Selections* there was no need of it. So the Intersynodical Theses did not take up the matter. Why should it be brought up now? Do not drive the synods farther apart than they are now! One of the purposes of the present articles is to forestall the spread of any misconception of the position of the Missourians in this matter.

2) The chief purpose, however, is to keep this article before the people for its own sake. It cannot be presented and studied too often. Its vital relation to the subjective, personal justification, justification by faith, cannot be stressed too strongly. It forms the basis of the justification by faith and keeps this article free from the leaven of Pelagianism. Unless the sinner knows that his justification is already an accomplished fact in the forum of God, he will imagine that it is his faith, his good conduct, which moves God to forgive him his sins. And unless he knows that God had him personally in mind in issuing the general pardon on Easter morning, he will have no assurance of his justification. There can be no assurance under the doctrine that God justified the world, indeed, the world as a vague abstract and hazy generality, but not every single individual in the world. In the words of Dr. Stoeckhardt: “The entire Pauline doctrine of justification and particularly the entire comfort of justification stands and falls with the special article of the general justification. This establishes it beyond peradventure that justification is entirely independent of the conduct of man. And only in this way the individual can have the assurance of his justification. For it is an incontrovertible conclusion: Since God has

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<sup>45</sup> See page 2 above.—ed.

<sup>46</sup> See pages 1-7 above.—ed.

already justified all men in Christ and forgiven them their sins, I, too, have a gracious God in Christ and forgiveness of all my sins” (*Commentary on Romans*, p. 264).

The sinner must know that God had him personally in mind on Easter Day and all along when Christ lived and suffered and died for the world. “Personally”—that word belongs there. Unless that word (or a similar one) is used in presenting the doctrine of the objective justification, the comfort of justification by faith cannot be brought home to the individual. We have no objection to Dr. Lenski’s proposal to characterize the subjective justification as *personal* justification. We know what he means. But we do not accept that proposal in the sense that the objective justification is not of a personal nature. Indeed it is. J. Schaller puts it in this emphatic way: “The universality of salvation must not be thought of or preached in such a manner as to deny or cloud its *individual* application. Christ did not die for the world, or mankind, *in the abstract*, but He lived, suffered, and died for each one of those individuals whom we comprehend under the abstract concepts of the world, or mankind. His work is the salvation of the world because in Him every human being fulfilled the Law and died for his guilt. The sinner does not make a general salvation applicable to himself by faith; if that were true, salvation would not be complete before man performs the act of faith. On the contrary, by faith the individual accepts the salvation, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption procured for him *personally* by Christ. Hence this salvation is just as perfect and complete for those who are finally lost. This is the only reason, but a sufficient one, why he that believeth not is damned. Unbelief is the rejection of life and salvation achieved and personally intended for every unbeliever” (*Biblical Christology*, p. 135). And you know what we mean by *personal* in this connection.

3) One other point needs to be brought out. Are we ready to say that the sins of all men, the sins *also of the unbelievers*, are forgiven them? That is exactly what objective, universal, justification means. And one who refuses to take the objective justification to mean exactly that, cannot, if he knows the meaning of the terms, teach a justification by faith. Here there are but two alternatives. The first is: Man is justified by faith, by accepting the pardon issued to all in the Gospel, by relying on the objective justification, the forgiveness of sins obtained for him before he believed. The second is: There is no objective justification; the only justification there is takes place when a sinner believes; on account of, or on the condition, of his faith God forgives him his sins. What does justification “by faith” mean in this second alternative? What does the sinner believe? This, that God has already forgiven him his sins for Christ’s sake? No, for there is no objective justification. What, then, is the function of faith? It cannot be the apprehending medium; for there is nothing offered, Christ has not gained the forgiveness that might be offered. So it is “faith” that effects the change in God’s heart; God forgives sin because of faith as a human achievement or the fulfilment of a condition imposed by God. Thus justification by “faith” is no longer a justification by faith, a justification as a free gift, but a justification by works, in consequence of man’s right conduct. Justification by “faith” has become a Pelagianistic, synergistic affair. Are we ready to say that God has already forgiven the sins of all men, of the unbelievers? Dr. Pieper characterizes the theology of those who abhor this thought in these words: “Ihmels vacillates also in the matter of justification. In *Central Questions*<sup>47</sup> (p. 119) he seems to accept an *objective* justification, but in *R.E.*<sup>3</sup>, XVI, 506, he denies it definitively; for he refuses to recognize this as ‘the content’ of faith: “that God is **reconciled**”<sup>48</sup> and quotes from the *Corpus Reformatorum*,<sup>49</sup> VIII, 580, the words attributed to Melanchthon: “It is horrible and impious to say to all men, even to those who do not believe, that sins are forgiven.”<sup>50</sup> This statement, in the first place, *directly* contradicts Scripture (2 Cor. 5:19: *μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν*), and in the second place, if this statement were true, it would no longer be possible to teach that man is justified *by faith*. It is, by the way, in doubt whether Melanchthon is the author of the document containing this statement. ... For that matter, the denial of the objective justification fits the position of Melanchthon in so far as his *theological* mind was dominated by synergism. He was thus disposed in 1530 and 1536 to surrender the *sola fide* and

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<sup>47</sup> *Zentralfragen*

<sup>48</sup> *Deum placatum ESSE*

<sup>49</sup> Literally: *Body of the Reformers*. This was Bretschneider’s compendium of the writings of Melanchthon and Zwingli.

<sup>50</sup> “*Horribilis impietas est dicere omnibus hominibus, etiam non credentibus, remissa esse peccata.*”

actually did it in the Leipzig Interim (G. Plitt, *R.E.*<sup>2</sup>, VI, 777). Synergism involves the denial of the *objective* reconciliation and of the *sola fide*” (*Christliche Dogmatik* [“*Christian Dogmatics*”], II, 672, [footnote 1578]).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See English translation, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2:556, footnote 108: “Ihmels, who seems to uphold objective justification in *Zentralfragen* (p. 119), definitely denies it in *R.E.*, 3d ed., XVI, p. 506; he refuses to make this “the content” of faith: “*Deum placatum esse*,” and he quotes in his favor the words ascribed to Melanchthon: “It is a horrible impiety to say that the sins of all men, also of the unbelievers, are forgiven” (*Corp Ref.*, VIII, p. 580). This declaration, for one thing, directly contradicts Scripture: “Not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor. 5:19). Moreover, it would make justification by faith impossible. — By the way, it is not certain that Melanchthon is the author of the work from which this statement is taken. Cp. The introductory remark of the editor (*loc. cit.*, p. 579) and the note affixed to the signature Phil. Mel.: “*Haec subscription non legitur in codice [this subscription is not found in the codex, i.e. book, cf. CR, VIII, col. 587].*” I do not believe that Melanchthon is the author, because the style is simpler, more direct, and less rhetorical than that of Melanchthon. However, the denial of the objective justification would be in line with Melanchthon’s synergism. He was inclined to sacrifice the *sola fide* in 1530 and 1536, and he did sacrifice it in the Leipzig Interim (G. Plitt, *R.E.*, 2d ed., VI, p. 777). Synergism involves the denial of the objective reconciliation and the *sola fide*.”