

A Summary Exposition of The Doctrine of Justification By Grace Through Faith

By: Walter A. Maier

In this paper Maier opposes the Synodical Conference view of objective justification. Many of Prof. Siegbert Becker's papers on objective justification were in part directed against Maier's views. Similar views were held by some members of the WELS congregation in Kokomo, Indiana, who objected to WELS position on this doctrine. The LCMS rejected Maier's position in their statement on justification, though they do not mention his name.

April 1983

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A Letter to the Pastors of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

Dear Pastor:

For a number of years some synodical officials have publicly stated that they have considered, and have had questions concerning, certain parts of the teaching of Dr. Walter A. Maier on the doctrine of justification by faith. Dr. Maier is a professor at our seminary in Fort Wayne and a vice-president of Synod. Certain curtailments of his teaching assignments on the seminary campus have been imposed; for example, he is not permitted to teach the epistle to the Romans, a book that has been his specialty for many years. There have also been a number of false rumors with regard to his stance on the entire doctrine of the Gospel that have been circulated in the Synod. Thus, although Dr. Maier continues to conduct an active, evangelical ministry in the church, and no one has ever brought doctrinal charges against him, the cloud placed over Dr. Maier and his service to the church has remained until the present time. This is to be deplored. The cloud must be removed. Dr. Maier's reputation must be safeguarded as the positive teaching of the 8th commandment requires.

Through the past years many students and pastors, and thousands of lay people in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have heard Dr. Maier preach and teach the doctrines of the Scriptures, including the doctrine of justification by faith. They have always found him to be a true servant of the Lord, a faithful proclaimer of the saving Gospel, a defender of the word of God, and one who continually upholds the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions. His many friends here in the Pacific Northwest, including us the undersigned, are among those who for these reasons have appreciated Dr. Maier's ministry.

Recently we contacted Dr. Maier with respect to the current status of his "case". From his responses to our questions we learned that to date the officials who have been involved in dealing with him in recent years have found him "not guilty" of false doctrine either in his oral statements to them, or in his written presentations, on the subject of justification. This is the verdict of the Seminary Board of Regents and also of the synodical president, who expressed such a judgment to the synodical Board of Directors and to the Council of Presidents at their meetings in St. Louis at the end of February of this year. It should be added, however, that those dealing with Dr. Maier have expressed concern about the difference in some of his statements regarding justification as compared. with some traditional formulations of this doctrine within the Synod.

The doctrine of justification by faith which Dr. Maier presents is the doctrine we learned in our childhood from the catechism and have held to ever since our confirmation. We personally heard Dr. Maier explain the Biblical teaching on justification not long ago at an open forum held in our church, a meeting attended by members of our congregation and other area Lutherans. Convinced that Dr. Maier's teaching on justification is clear and correct, we think it right and also high time that at least his clergy peers in the church,

the pastors of Synod, be given an opportunity to become directly acquainted with and knowledgeable of his explanation of this important truth. We therefore send you the enclosed copy of the essay titled “*Justification by Grace through Faith*”, which Dr. Maier presented to the Council of Presidents at their meeting in Bronxville, New York, in early November 1982. Our pastor at our request shared with us a copy of this paper, which he had earlier requested of Dr. Maier. We found it instructive, though we do not, of course, understand the references to the Greek.

It is our hope that you will have time to read this paper and find it an acceptable and helpful presentation of the doctrine of justification. This was the experience of several pastoral conferences before whom Dr. Maier was invited to make a presentation of its contents. A short summary of the essay, prepared by its author some time ago, is added at the end of the paper.

The distribution of this essay is done entirely on our own, without our having tried to obtain Dr. Maier’s consent.

In the Risen Christ,

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A Summary Exposition of the Doctrine of Justification by Grace through Faith

The Lutheran Confessions assert and demonstrate that the Biblical doctrine of justification by grace through faith is “the chief article of the entire Christian doctrine.”ⁱ Similarly, all those who adhere to the Scriptures in truth and maintain *quia* subscription to the Lutheran symbols find in the article of justification by faith “the apex of all Christian teaching”; indeed, they regard it as “the central, chief article by which Christian doctrine and the Christian church stands and falls (*articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesia*).”ⁱⁱ Apart from this article no poor sinner can obtain pardon for his transgressions, peace and fellowship with God, spiritual life and power to serve the Lord, and enjoy the prospect of a radiant eternity in heaven’s glory. This paper represents a humble effort to offer a short exposition of this central Biblical truth.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Summary Exposition

The doctrine of justification by grace through faith is referred to in scores of New Testament passages, especially many of those containing one of the words of the *dikaioun* family, *dikaios*, *dikaiooonee*, *dikaioun*, *dikaiooma*, *dikaioosis* (the Epistle of Romans, for example, uses all these terms). This doctrine constitutes the core of the Biblical Gospel, which is the great good news concerning all that the triune God has done and is doing to rescue men, who by nature and because of their transgressions are under the wrath and condemnation of God, from the awful guilt and from the tragic temporal and eternal consequences of their sins. Such consequences are punishments for transgressions in this life, physical death, and everlasting damnation in hell. The doctrine of justification specifically is this that, altogether apart from any works which a human being may perform but solely because of the grace, the undeserved kindness, of God, and on the basis of the completed redeeming, sin-atoning work of Christ, the Son of God, the sinner who believes in Jesus as his Savior is justified, that is, declared righteous by God for Christ’s sake (Rom. 3:28). He has Jesus’ merits charged to his account by the Father. Thus, accounted righteous by faith, he is immediately qualified for the gift of life and the other blessings of salvation, which God begins at once to bestow upon him.

St. Paul identifies being justified by faith with a believer’s obtaining “the righteousness of God,” the *dikaiooonee theou*, through faith. According to Romans 1:17 the Gospel is the power of God to save because

God in and through it reveals his righteousness to the sinner the moment faith is created in his heart, so that by the Holy Spirit's power his faith will grasp, and from thenceforth hang onto, the righteousness with relentless tenacity. This righteousness of God obtained through faith is not the divine, essential righteousness, the attribute of the deity; nor is it an indwelling moral quality or condition in man, either innate, or acquired through human exertion or of divine production. It is rather a righteousness from God (Phil. 3:9), originated and prepared by God through Christ. On the basis of New Testament teaching it should be thought of as the sum total of the merits of Christ. These merits consist in his perfect, substitutionary, active obedience (that is, his keeping of the whole of God's law in men's stead) and passive obedience (his suffering in men's place all the penalties for their transgressions). This "obedience-wrought righteousness," existing outside of the sinner, is available in Christ through the grace and according to the justice of God for imputation to sinful man, by way of the sinner's apprehension of Christ through faith. It is spoken of in the Gospel and offered to sinful man in the Gospel and the other means of grace. When a sinner by the Holy Spirit's miraculous operation through the Gospel comes to believe in Jesus, Christ brings and communicates to the sinner his saving merits, that is, his obedience-wrought righteousness as Mediator, so that the sinner "has" this righteousness as his own. This occurs according to the provision and by the divine imputing action of God. In grace and justice God charges Christ's righteousness to the account of the believer; that is, He accounts and declares the believer righteous for Christ's sake, forgives him all his sins. Thus forgiven and accounted righteous, the believer begins to enjoy the blessings of salvation won for him by Jesus.

The Biblical teaching concerning justification or obtaining the righteousness of God by faith is set forth clearly, powerfully, and in amplified manner in these words of the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article III:

Concerning the righteousness of faith before God we believe, teach, and confess unanimously . . . that a poor sinner is justified before God (that is, he is absolved and declared utterly free from all his sins, and from the verdict of well deserved damnation, and is adopted as a child of God and an heir of eternal life) without any merit or worthiness on our part, and without any preceding, present, or subsequent works, by sheer grace, solely through the merit of the total obedience, the bitter passion, the death, and the resurrection of Christ, our Lord, whose obedience is reckoned to us as righteousness. The Holy Spirit offers these treasures to us in the promise of the Gospel, and faith is the only means whereby we can apprehend, accept, apply them to ourselves, and make them our own. Faith is a gift of God whereby we rightly learn to know Christ as our redeemer in the Word of the Gospel and to trust in him, that solely for the sake of his obedience we have forgiveness of sins by grace, are accounted righteous and holy by God the Father, and are saved forever. Thus the following statements of St. Paul are to be considered and taken as synonymous: "We are justified by faith" (Rom. 3:28), or "faith is reckoned to us as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5), or when he says that we are justified by the obedience of Christ Rom. 5:19_7, our only mediator, or that "one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men" (Rom. 5:18). For faith does not justify because it is so good a work and so God-pleasing a virtue, but because it lays hold on and accepts the merit of Christ in the promise of the holy Gospel. This merit has to be applied to us and to be made our own through faith if we are to be justified thereby. Therefore the righteousness which by grace is reckoned to faith or to the believers is the obedience, the passion, and the resurrection of Christ when he satisfied the law for us and paid for our sin. Since Christ is not only man, but God and man in one undivided person, he was as little under the law—since he is the Lord of the law—as he was obligated to suffer and die for his person. Therefore his obedience consists not only in his suffering and dying, but also in his spontaneous subjection to the law in our stead and his keeping of the law in so perfect a fashion that, reckoning it to us as righteousness, God forgives us our sins, accounts us holy and righteous, and saves us forever on account of this entire obedience which, by doing and suffering, in life and in death, Christ rendered for us to his heavenly Father. This righteousness is offered to us by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and in the sacraments, and is applied, appropriated,

and accepted by faith, so that thus believers have reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, the grace of God, adoption, and the inheritance of eternal life.

Accordingly the word “justify” here means to declare righteous and free from sins and from the eternal punishment of these sins on account of the righteousness of Christ which God reckons to faith (Phil. 3:9). And this is the usual usage and meaning of the word in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments.^{iv}

Elements of This Doctrine of Justification Further Considered

It will be useful to note and emphasize various elements of the doctrine of justification by faith found in the Scriptures and expounded in the Lutheran Confessions, and as specifically referred to in the foregoing explanation from the Formula. (1) God is prompted in the justification of the believing sinner “by sheer grace,” that is, solely by his grace, by his unmerited favor, his undeserved kindness, for Christ’s sake, wholly apart from any worthiness or merit on the sinner’s part. The same divine grace that moved God to embark upon and execute the whole program of salvation (Eph. 1:6-12; 2:5-10; Tit. 2:11-14), as described and offered in the Gospel, is operative in justification. According to Rom. 3:24, those justified are “justified freely by his grace,” through Christ’s redemption. The purpose of our salvation, Paul writes (Tit. 3:7), is that “being justified by his /God’s/ grace,” we should come to be heirs of eternal life. In Eph. 1:7 we learn that we have the forgiveness of sins (=justification) “according to the riches of his grace.” Article IV of the Apology states:

The promise of the forgiveness of sins and justification was given because of Christ. He was given for us to make satisfaction for the sins of the world and has been appointed as the mediator and propitiator. This promise is not conditioned upon our merit but offers the forgiveness of sins and justification freely. As Paul says (Rom. 11:6), “If it is by works, it is no longer on the basis of grace.” Elsewhere he says, “Now, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from law” (Rom. 3:21), that is, the forgiveness of sins is offered freely.^v

The basis, or meritorious cause, of God’s justifying action in the case of the believing sinner is “the merit of the total obedience, the bitter passion, the death, and the resurrection of Christ Also . . . his spontaneous subjection to the law in our stead and his keeping of the law in . . . , perfect . . . fashion”—in other words, the “active” and “passive” obedience of Christ, as our dogmaticians have termed the two aspects of the Savior’s total obedience. Relative to the active obedience the New Testament informs us that the sinless Son of God (in. 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22) was “made under the (sic) law, to redeem them that were under the / sic / law,” Gal. 4:4-5 (compare Heb. 2:17). Relative to the passive obedience it states that Christ “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8; compare Heb. 5:7-9), and this so as “to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28; compare Col. 1:14; compare Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rom. 3:24-25). Thus, “by the /total/ obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

In the Formula, the Solid Declaration, with reference to the active obedience we read: “In justification before God faith trusts . . . solely in Christ and (in him) in his perfect obedience with which he fulfilled the law of God in our stead and which is reckoned to the believer as righteousness.”^{vi} Again, with reference to the passive obedience:

The content of the Gospel is this, that the Son of God, Christ our Lord, himself assumed and bore the curse of the law and expiated and paid for all our sins, that through him alone we re-enter the good graces of God, obtain forgiveness of sins through faith, are freed from death and all the punishments of sin, and are saved eternally.^{vii}

And, with reference to the entire obedience: “Therefore we believe, teach, and confess that the total obedience of Christ’s total person, which he rendered to his heavenly Father even to the most ignominious death of the cross, is reckoned to us as righteousness.”^{viii}

The effect or consequence and significance of the total obedience of Christ, on which God's justifying action is based, is that Jesus became sinful mankind's "Redeemer." It is this that in "the obedience, the passion, and the resurrection of Christ . . . he satisfied the law for us and laid for our sin." Both the New Testament and the Confessions describe the objective, accomplished, universally efficacious work of Christ, his substitutionary obedience, as achieving the redemption or ransoming of the sin-cursed human race, as making the payment or expiation for the world's sins, as effecting the buying of sinful men so that they belong to God now, not only by virtue of creation, but also by right of redemption. Implicit in these characterizations of the work of Christ is the understanding that the payment was made by Christ to God for the purpose of freeing men from the guilt, the power, and the punitive consequences of their sins. The payment price consisted not in money but in the substitutionary active and passive obedience of Christ. That payment was sufficient to satisfy the justice and holiness of God, so that God could in righteousness as well as love grant believing sinners forgiveness, life, and salvation. The Confessions also speak of Christ's redeeming work as his rendering satisfaction (to God) for human iniquity, as winning forgiveness of sins and eternal life for men, as reconciling God, and in other ways. That God is or has been reconciled by Christ means in most passages where this terminology appears in the Confessions that God because of Christ's substitutionary, meritorious life and death is able to act, and acts, in grace and mercy toward men and extend to them the blessings of salvation through faith.

Consider the following samplings of the considerable evidence in the New Testament and the Lutheran symbols. That Christ's meritorious obedience even unto death was rendered in behalf of all members of the sinful human race is plainly taught in passages like John 3:16; Romans 5:18, where, through the righteous act (*dikaiooma*) of One (Christ)—here his total obedience – a divine justifying leading to life is said to be "for," or available to, all men; 2 Cor. 5:14-15, which declares that "one (Christ) died for all" and "he died for all"; Heb. 2:9, where we learn that Jesus was prepared by God for the suffering of death "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man"; 1 Pet. 3:18, which asserts that Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust"; and similar verses.

In the New Testament terms like *lutron*, *antilutron*, *lutroosis*, *apolutroosis*, and *lutrousthai* -communicating the ideas of "ransom," the price paid for the release of a person from a slavery to, or ownership by, another; "redemption," the payment of the price for the buying back of a person from ownership and/or control by another, for ownership and/or control by the buyer; and "to ransom" or "to redeem" (the verbs), to pay the ransom price for the release of a person from another's ownership or control—are used to describe in one way how Christ's saving work affects either all men or the part of total mankind under consideration in a given Scriptural context. Words of the *lutron*-family occur in these verses:

1 Tim. 2:6: (Christ Jesus) gave himself a ransom (*antilutron*) for all /all men, according to verse 4/;

Matt. 20:28: The Son of man came . . . to give his life a ransom (*lutron*) for many (that is, all men); similarly Mk. 10:45;

Heb. 9:12: By his own blood he (Christ) entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption (*lutroosis*);

Heb. 9:15 He (Christ) is the mediator of the new testament . . . by means of death, for the redemption (*apolutroosis*) of the transgressions that were under the first testament;

Luke 1:68: The Lord God of Israel . . . hath visited and redeemed (*epoiesen lutroosis*) his people (here redeeming action is ascribed to the Father, because (in context) He sent Christ to carry out the redeeming work);

Luke 2:38: She (Anna) . . . spake of him (the Christ child) to all them that looked for redemption (*lutroosis*) in Jerusalem (or, of Jerusalem);

Luke 24:21: We (the Emmaus disciples) trusted that it had been he (Christ) which should have redeemed (*ho melloon lutrousthai*) Israel;

Tit. 2:14: (Christ) gave himself for us, that he might redeem (*lutrooseetai*) us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;

1 Pet. 1:18: Ye know that ye were not redeemed (*ou . . . elutrootheete*) with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation . . . but with the precious blood of Christ;

Rom. 3:24: (They, the believers, are) justified freely by his grace through the redemption (*apolutrooseos*) that is in Christ Jesus;

Eph. 1:7: In whom (Christ) we have redemption (*teen apolutroosin*) through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; similarly, Col. 1:14.

Similar in usage and significance to the words of the *lutron*-family are the verbs *agorazein* and *exagorazein* which are found in the New Testament:

2 Pet. 2:1: There shall be false teachers among you, who . . . even denying the Lord that bought (*agorasanta*) them . . . bring upon themselves swift destruction;

Gal. 4:4-5: God sent forth his Son . . . made under the law (better: under law), to redeem (*exagorasee*) them that were under the law (better: under law; thus all men are referred to);

Gal. 3:13: Christ hath redeemed (*exeegorasen*) us from the curse of the law;

1 Cor. 6:19-20: Ye are not your own . . . for ye are (better: were) bought (*eegorastheete*) with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's; similarly, 7:23;

Rev. 5:9: They (the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders) sung a new song, saying, Thou (the Lamb, Christ) art worthy to take the book . . . for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed (*eegorasas*) . . . to God by thy blood (some) out of every kindred, and tongue and people, and nation;

Rev. 14:3-4: They (the glorified saints) sung as it were a new song before the throne . . . the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed (*hoi eegorasmnoi*) from among men.

In Acts 20:28 the verb *peripoiein*, meaning to get for oneself, acquire, obtain, and also to purchase, is used in about the same sense as *agorazein*: here Paul bids the Ephesian elders "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased (*peripoieesato*) with his own blood."

The work Christ accomplished for all persons in all ages of human history, objectively (that is, whether or not individuals among mankind ever come to know, believe, and benefit from it in terms of personally obtained salvation) is also referred to in the New Testament by words of the *hilaskesthai*-family, *hilasmos*, *hilaskesthai*, and *hilasteerion*. The verb *hilaskesthai* may mean (1) to expiate or (2) to propitiate, appease, placate. Similarly the noun *hilasmos* may mean (1) expiation, means of appeasing, or (2) propitiation, means of propitiating. Some commentators loosely regard "to expiate" and "to propitiate" as synonymous, as they do "expiation" and "propitiation." But there is a distinction in the two renderings of the verb and in the two renderings of the noun, which the English dictionary makes clear (as well as these words' usage in the New Testament). To expiate means to endure the due and full penalty for a wrong, to atone for, make amends, or

reparation for, and this usually with a view to pacifying the individual or deity against whom injury has been done; expiation signifies the means by which the satisfaction is accomplished, the atonement is rendered. To propitiate means, on the basis of amends made, actually to appease and placate the anger of an injured party, whether man or God, and cause his wrath to cease; propitiation signifies the means by which the actual pacification is accomplished. To expiate (expiation) focuses attention upon the penalty paid and this as fully commensurate with the wrong perpetrated; upon the potentiality of the placation of wrath on the part of the one who has been injured. To propitiate (propitiation) points particularly to the purpose of the work of reparation, the placation of wrath, and to the accomplishment of this objective, the actual appeasement of anger in the case of the injured party. The immediate context and wider context of the New Testament (the analogy of faith) indicate which of the meanings for *hilaskesthai* and *hilasmos* are to be adopted at a given location.

There are two occurrences of the verb and two of the noun in the New Testament, as follows:

Heb. 2:17: Wherefore in all things it behooved him (Christ) to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for (*eis to hilaskesthai*; better rendered to make expiation for)^{ix} the sins of the people;

Luke 18:13: And the publican . . . smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful (*hilastheeti*; better rendered, be propitiated in regard)^x to me a sinner;

1 Jn. 2:2: And he (Christ) is the propitiation for (*hilasmos*; better rendered expiation regarding, since the sins of the entire world are here involved) our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;

1 Jn. 4:10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for (*hilasmon*; perhaps better rendered expiation, as a parallel to 2:2, although the translation propitiation could be employed here) our sins.

In Rom. 3:25 the term *hilasteerion* is applied to Christ, about whom Paul says that “God hath set (Him) forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his (God’s) righteousness . . .” The two phrases following *hilasteerion*, *dia pisteoos*, and *en too haimati*, make clear that *hilasteerion* could be rendered propitiation. However, since *hilasteerion* in its numerous occurrences throughout the Septuagint (the Roman Christians’ Bible) and in its only other New Testament occurrence, namely in Heb. 9:5, always refers to the lid of the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat—that is, the place from which forgiving divine mercy emanated for Israel as a result of the shedding of typical, sacrificial blood and its sprinkling upon the ark’s lid and upon the people on Yom Kippur, the Hebrew Day of atonement—it probably is better to regard *hilasteerion* as a technical term and render it mercy seat. Paul’s readers in Rome doubtless would have understood it in this way. (Compare Luther’s “*Welchen (Christus) Gott hat vorgestellt zu einem Gnadenstuhl, durch den Glauben in seinem Blut.*”)

The Lutheran Confessions speak of the significance of Christ’s vicarious, redemptive obedience in statements like these (in which the underlining, for emphasis’ sake, is ours):

The patriarchs knew the promise of the Christ, that for his sake God intended to forgive sins. As they understood that the Christ would be the price for our sins, they knew that our works could not pay so high a price.^{xi}

Since . . . it is the obedience of the entire person, therefore it is _a perfect satisfaction and reconciliation of the human race, since it satisfied the eternal and immutable righteousness of God revealed in the Law.^{xii}

We teach that the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross was sufficient for the sins of the whole world and that there is no need for additional sacrifices as though this were not sufficient for our sins. Men are not justified, therefore, because of any other sacrifices, but because of this one sacrifice of Christ if they believe that it has redeemed them.^{xiii}

Isaiah interprets the law to mean that the death of Christ is a real satisfaction or expiation for our sins, as the ceremonies of the law were not.^{xiv}

The entire Christ according to both natures is our righteousness solely in his obedience which as God and man he rendered to his heavenly Father into death itself. Thereby he won for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as it is written, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19).^{xv}

Faith is . . . the kind of gift of God by which in the Word of the Gospel we recognize Christ aright as our redeemer and trust in him.^{xvi}

But the Gospel, strictly speaking, is the kind of doctrine that teaches what a man who has not kept the law and is condemned by it should believe, namely, that Christ has satisfied and paid for all guilt and without man's merit has obtained and won for him forgiveness of sins the "righteousness that avails before God," and eternal life.^{xvii}

The content of the Gospel is this, that the Son of God, Christ our Lord, himself assumed and bore the curse of the law and expiated and paid for all our sins, that through him alone we re-enter the good graces of God, obtain forgiveness of sins, through faith, are freed from death and all the punishments of sin, and are saved eternally.^{xviii}

While the objective, meritorious work of Christ consists in redemption, satisfaction, expiation, payment for sin, God's buying of sinful mankind, a winning of forgiveness for men; for a sinner to receive personal, saving benefit from Christ's redemptive obedience he must believe in Jesus as Redeemer and that the Lord has made perfect payment for all his, as well as the world's sins. The believer's faith in Christ is the instrumental means of his justification and salvation. Faith is the "hand" which "grasps," the instrument which receives, the righteousness of God offered in the Gospel, Rom. 1:17. Once again pertinent words from the Formula's Solid Declaration, Article III:

The Holy Spirit offers these treasures (justification, adoption, eternal life) to us in the promise of the Gospel, and faith is the only means whereby we can apprehend, accept, apply them to ourselves, and make them our own. Faith is a gift of God whereby we rightly learn to know Christ as our redeemer in the Word of the Gospel and to trust in him, that solely for the sake of his obedience we have forgiveness of sins; by grace, are accounted righteous and holy by God the Father, and are saved forever. Thus the following statements of St. Paul are to be considered and taken as synonymous: "We are justified by faith" (Rom. 3:28), or "faith is reckoned to us as righteousness" (Rom. 4:5), or when he says that we are justified by the obedience of Christ, our only mediator, or that "one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men" (Rom. 5:18). For faith does not justify because it is so good a work and so God-pleasing a virtue, but because it lays hold on and accepts the merit of Christ in the promise of the holy Gospel. This merit has to be applied to us and to be made our own through faith if we are to be justified thereby Reckoning it (Christ's obedience) to us as righteousness, God forgives us our sins, accounts us holy and righteous, and saves us forever on account of this entire obedience which, by doing and suffering, in life and in death, Christ rendered for us to his heavenly Father. This righteousness is

offered to us by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and in the sacraments, and is applied, appropriated, and accepted by faith, so that thus believers have reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, the grace of God, adoption, and the inheritance of eternal life.^{xix}

When faith is present to lay hold on Christ's merits, the sinner's justification occurs; the forgiveness of sins is granted; God's condemning wrath against the sinner ceases; sinners have reconciliation with God, life, the other blessings of present salvation, and the eternal heavenly inheritance. Jn. 3:16-18, 36; Rom. 1:16-18; 3:21-22, 28; 4:3, 13-16; 5:1, 8-11; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:8-10 and so on. The Apology in Article IV on Justification states:

The faith that justifies, however, is no mere historical knowledge, but the firm acceptance of God's offer promising forgiveness of sins and justification. To avoid the impression that it is merely knowledge, we add that to have faith means to want and to accept the promised offer of forgiveness of sins and justification

Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessings. . . . It is by faith that God wants to be worshipped, namely, that we receive from him what he promises and offers.

Paul clearly shows that faith does not simply mean historical knowledge but is a firm acceptance of the promise (Rom. 4:16): "That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may be guaranteed." For he says that only faith can accept the promise. He therefore correlates and connects promise and faith.^{xx}

If forgiveness of sins and justification are offered and promised to sinners for their acceptance by faith, it is clear that sinners are not justified and do not have forgiveness of sins apart from faith, and they will not have these blessings unless and until faith is present in their hearts. According to the dictionary, a promise is an assurance given by one person to another that the former will or will not perform a specified act. God's promise to the sinner in his Word is that He will justify and save the sinner if and when the latter accepts Christ as his Redeemer from sin.

In numerous passages the Confessions specifically declare that the obtaining of justification, forgiveness, and the blessings of salvation is dependent upon the existence of faith in the sinner's heart. Some of these passages are the following:

The reconciled are accounted righteous and children of God not on account of their own purity but by mercy on account of Christ, if they grasp this mercy by faith. Thus the Scriptures testify that we are accounted righteous by faith.^{xxi}

The preaching of the Gospel must be added, that is, that the forgiveness of sins is granted to us if we believe that our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake.^{xxii}

Thus we are not accounted righteous because of the law but because of Christ whose merits are conferred on us if we believe in him.^{xxiii}

We teach that the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross was sufficient for the sins of the whole world and that there is no need for additional sacrifices as though this were not sufficient for our sins. Men are not justified, therefore, because of any other sacrifices, but because of this one sacrifice of Christ if they believe that it has redeemed them.^{xxiv}

With the removal of the law and of the traditions, he (Paul) therefore contends that the forgiveness of sins has been promised, not because of our works but freely because of Christ, provided that we accept it by faith; for only faith can accept a promise.^{xxv}

When we believe in him (Christ) we are accounted righteous by our trust in Christ's merits as though we had merits of our own.^{xxvi}

The proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Christ will once more comfort and strengthen them (those being brought to repentance) with the assurance that if they believe the Gospel God forgives them all their sins through Christ, accepts them for his sake as God's children, and out of pure grace, without any merit of their own, justifies and saves them.^{xxvii}

These expressions are, of course, eminently in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament. Compare the wording of Rom. 10:9b-10a: "If thou . . . shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him (Christ) from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness."^{xxviii}

The faith which is the instrumental means of justification and salvation is wholly a gift of God's grace to the one in whom it is wrought. It in no way serves as a meritorious cause of an individual's justification. Saving faith is monergistically created in the sinner's heart by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, which is operative exclusively in the means of grace, the Gospel and the sacrament of baptism (in the case of infants). Such Spirit wrought faith justifies not because it is a good work but solely because of Him, Jesus, whom faith embraces and his obedience-wrought righteousness which faith obtains by divine forensic declaration and imputation. 1 Cor. 12:3; Eph. 2:1-9; Rom. 3:21-22, 28; chapter 4; Gal. 3:1-18; Phil. 3:8-9. The Formula, Solid Declaration, asserts in Article III:

Faith is a gift of God whereby we rightly learn to know Christ as our redeemer in the Word of the Gospel and to trust in him, that solely for the sake of his obedience we have forgiveness of sins by grace, are accounted righteous and holy by God the Father, and are saved forever For faith does not justify because it is so good a work and so God-pleasing a virtue, but because it lays hold on and accepts the merit of Christ in the promise of the holy Gospel. This merit has to be applied to us and to be made our own through faith if we are to be justified thereby. Therefore the righteousness which by grace is reckoned to faith or to the believers is the obedience, the passion, and the resurrection of Christ when he satisfied the law for us and paid for our sin.^{xxix}

The justification which God grants the penitent sinner through faith is and remains wholly forensic, a gracious and just divine, judicial pronouncement of righteousness made upon the sinner for Christ's sake and not a change wrought within him; an imputation of Christ's obedience-wrought righteousness to the sinner, a charging of this righteousness to the sinner's account. Justification through faith is objective, in the sense that it is a decision on the part of God; a divine declaration is made with regard to the sinner which is rendered outside him, in the forum of God. To be justified does not mean to be made righteous in the sense of being transformed into a totally perfect, sinless being.^{xxx} True assurance of the fact of his justification by faith does not originate from inner feeling but from the external testimony of the Gospel-Word. Through this Gospel-Word the Holy Spirit works inner conviction of and trust in the truth of its testimony. After the justification by faith, a believer remains *simul Justus et peccator*, at one and the same time righteous and a sinner. To obtain justification by faith is the same as to receive the forgiveness of sins by faith. The same Bible passages listed under point (5) above may be adduced in support of the propositions set forth in (6); also Luke 11:4; Rom. 7:7-25; 1 Tim. 1:15; Jas. 3:2; 5:16; 1 Jn. 1:8-10; and many more. The forensic force of *dikaion* as notable in a Biblical context which does not speak of the sinner's salvation may be seen in the *dikaioothees* of Rom. 3:4, where Paul citing Psalm 51:4 refers to man's justifying God, accounting (not making) Him righteous. That justification, or the imputation of righteousness, is the equivalent of bestowing the forgiveness of sins is indicated in Rom. 4:6-7.

Article III of the Formula, Solid Declaration, contains the words:

Concerning the righteousness of faith before God we believe, teach, and confess unanimously . . . that a poor sinner is justified before God (that is, he is absolved and declared utterly free from all his sins, and from the verdict of well deserved damnation, and is adopted as a child of God and an heir of eternal life) without any merit or worthiness on our part, and without any preceding, present, or subsequent works, by sheer grace, solely through the merit of the total obedience, the bitter passion, the death, and the resurrection of Christ, our Lord, whose obedience is reckoned to us as righteousness

Accordingly the word “justify” here means to declare righteous and free from sins and from the eternal punishment of these sins on account of the righteousness of Christ which God reckons to faith (Phil. 3:9). And this is the usual usage and meaning of the word in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments.

This indeed is the teaching of the Confessions throughout. The same passages from the symbols cited under point (2) above could be presented as amplifications of propositions set forth in point (6). Likewise these sample statements:

When we believe in him (Christ) we are accounted righteous by our trust in Christ’s merits as though we had merits of our own.^{xxxii}

We know that the merits of Christ are our only propitiation. Because of them we are accounted righteous when we believe in him.^{xxxiii}

Paul . . . says in Gal. 3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” That is, the law condemns all men, but by undergoing the punishment of sin and becoming a sacrifice for us, the sinless Christ took away the right of the law to accuse and condemn those who believe in him, because he himself is their propitiation, for whose sake they are now accounted righteous. But when they are accounted righteous, the law cannot accuse or condemn them, even though they have not really satisfied the law. He writes to the same effect in Col. 2:10, “You have come to fullness of life in him.” It is as though he were saying, “Though you are still far away from the perfection of the law, still the remnants of your sin do not condemn you, because for Christ’s sake we have a firm and sure reconciliation through faith, though sin still sticks to your flesh.”^{xxxiiii}

Part II: The Concept of “Objective” Justification

Within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (and several other Lutheran bodies) and especially among dogmatists past and present in the synod, it has been customary, besides referring to “subjective justification”—which is justification by faith, as explained above--, to employ the designation “objective justification” or “objective reconciliation” (as it also has been called), and this as denominative of the worldwide effect or consequence of Christ’s vicarious (substitutionary) obedience. While the terminology “objective justification” or “objective reconciliation” does not appear in the Scriptures or the Lutheran Confessions (the Confessions set forth the doctrine of justification by faith), if these expressions are understood as meaning the same thing as (objective) redemption, Christ’s having made payment or expiation for the world’s sins (see point (3) in Part I), this terminology may be used in theological discussion and instruction.^{xxxv} It appears, however, that some of the synodical fathers particularly in using and defining the expression “objective justification” (or “objective reconciliation”) have made certain overstatements which have created semantic difficulties and may in our day give rise to misunderstanding of New Testament teachings regarding justification, reconciliation, and related doctrines. A number of such statements will now be examined.

Dr. Francis Pieper, who has presented a veritable wealth of excellent, helpful doctrinal material in his *Christian Dogmatics* and who has been one of the most widely influential theologians within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, is representative of those scholars who have taught a doctrine of objective justification. He will be allowed to speak for himself, from his dogmatics text, in the paragraphs which immediately follow.

Dr. Pieper's Statements

Pieper's most lengthy statement on objective justification is found under the Dogmatics sub-section titled "Objective and Subjective Reconciliation," which occurs in his discussion of "The Sacerdotal Office of Christ," a sub division of the locus "The Doctrine of Christ" (Christologia). He writes:

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. He is already reconciled. The reconciliation is an accomplished fact, just like the creation of the world. Rom. 5:10: "We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." When Christ died, God became reconciled. As Christ's death lies in the past, so also our reconciliation is an accomplished fact. 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling" (namely, when Christ lived and died on earth) "the world unto Himself." The *katallassein* of Rom. 5:10 and 2 Cor. 5:19 does not refer—let this fact be noted—to any change that occurs in men, but describes an occurrence in the heart of God. It was God who laid His anger by on account of the ransom brought by Christ. It was God who at that time already had in His heart forgiven the sins of the whole world, for the statement: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" means—and that is not our, but the Apostle's own interpretation—that God did "not impute their trespasses unto them." And "not imputing trespasses" is, according to Scripture (Rom. 4:6-8), synonymous with "forgiving sins," "justifying" the sinner. The resurrection of Christ is, as Holy Writ teaches, the actual absolution of the whole world of sinners. Rom. 4:25: "Who was raised again for our justification." At that time we were objectively declared free from sin. (See the section "The Resurrection of Christ.")

The message of this finished reconciliation is brought to us by the Gospel ("the Word of Reconciliation," 2 Cor. 5:19), and thus the subjective reconciliation takes place only by faith (*solo fide*). In other words: only for this reason does faith reconcile us with God (subjectively) that reconciliation has already been effected through Christ's satisfaction and is proclaimed and proffered to us in the Gospel. "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20)—believe and accept the objective reconciliation procured by Christ and now offered you. "We have now" in coming to faith, in being justified, "received the at-one-went (reconciliation)," Rom. 5:11. This Scriptural truth that there is but one way of obtaining the subjective reconciliation, namely, by believing that Christ has already procured reconciliation and the forgiveness of sins, is the teaching of our Confessions. The Apology declares: "Faith, however, reconciles and justifies before God the moment we apprehend the promise by faith" (Trig 1. 213, Art. III). "Thus, therefore, we are reconciled to the Father and receive remission of sins when we are comforted with confidence in the mercy promised for Christ's sake." (Trigl. 143, Art. IV /II/, 81.) "Faith reconciles us to God . . . because it receives the remission of sins" (Trigl. 155, *ibid.*, 114; 171, Art. III, 61).^{xxxv}

Pieper is emphatic about the necessity of maintaining objective justification. He goes on to say:

The doctrine of the objective reconciliation is of vital importance to the entire Christian doctrine. Only by keeping this doctrine intact will the Christian doctrine remain intact. It will be irretrievably lost if this doctrine be abandoned. Maintain the teaching that mankind has been fully reconciled with God through Christ's obedience and suffering, and there will be no room left for the multiform error that man must himself effect his reconciliation with God in whole or in part. The religion of works, as taught by the

rationalists, the Romanists, the Arminians, and the Modernists, will have no ground left to stand on. Discard this doctrine, and you will have to teach that men must supply the deficiency in Christ's work. You will then only have to determine the quantity and the external pattern of the work-righteousness you may deem necessary. Only on the basis of the objective, Christ-wrought reconciliation will Gospel and faith retain their Scriptural meaning, the Gospel being nothing else than the proclamation and offer of the forgiveness of sins purchased by Christ, and saving faith nothing else than the simple acceptance of this forgiveness. Where the objective reconciliation is denied, the Gospel can no longer be "the Word of Reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19), "the Word of His grace" (Acts 20:32), but is turned into a handbook of instructions how men may fully gain the grace of God by works which are their own product; the Gospel has *eo ipso* become Law. And faith is no longer the simple acceptance of the reconciliation which Christ has consummated, but is turned into a human accomplishment by which man fatuously hopes to secure the favor of God. Deny objective reconciliation, and you support the age-old heresy that faith is a meritorious work.

Dogmatics, whose province it is to present the Christian doctrine in its Scriptural setting, must never fail to set forth the supreme importance of the objective, Christ-wrought, perfect reconciliation. It must guard this reconciliation against those who would in any way pervert it or tone it down. The doctrine loses its Christian character and becomes pagan work-righteousness as soon as the full reconciliation of all men by Christ's vicarious satisfaction is given up. And the practical result is that the entire doctrine becomes useless; no conscience, truly smitten by the Law of God, will find peace unless in faith it puts its sole reliance on the reconciliation which has been accomplished by Christ and is proclaimed in the Gospel.^{xxxvi}

The reader is referred above to the section "The Resurrection of Christ." This is found in Pieper's discussion of "The Doctrine of the States of Christ," under *Christologia*. The following paragraph is germane to the present study:

Now, then, if the Father raised Christ from the dead, He, by this glorious resurrection act, declared that the sins of the whole world are fully expiated, or atoned for, and that all mankind is now regarded as righteous before His divine tribunal. This gracious reconciliation and justification is clearly taught in Rom. 4:25: "Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." The term *dikaioosis* here means the act of divine justification executed through God's act of raising Christ from the dead, and it is for this reason called the objective justification of all mankind. This truth Dr. Walther stressed anew in America. He taught that the resurrection of Christ from the dead is the actual absolution pronounced upon all sinners. To refer the words: "Who was raised again for our justification," to the so-called subjective justification, which takes place by faith, not only weakens the force of the words, but also violates the context. Calov, following Gerhard, rightly points out the relation of Christ's resurrection to our justification as follows: "Christ's resurrection took place as an actual absolution from sin (*respectu actualis a peccato absolutionis*). As God punished our sins in Christ, upon whom He laid them and to whom He imputed them, as our Bondsman, so He also, by the very act of raising Him from the dead, absolved Him from our sins imputed to Him, and so He absolved also us in Him."^{xxxvii}

It should be noted that Pieper also speaks of subjective justification. This term he applies to the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith. Thus, in treating "Justification by Faith" under the locus "The Application of Salvation," he writes:

When the sinner comes to faith in Christ or in the Gospel, he is at once justified before God by his faith. Since the Gospel offers him the forgiveness of sins gained by Christ for the whole world (objective justification), the acceptance of this offer, by faith, is all that is needed to accomplish his subjective

justification Subjective justification is meant when Paul says Rom. 3:28: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith.”^{xxxviii}

The relationship of subjective to objective justification, according to Pieper, is further explained in these words:

An essential prerequisite of justification by faith, or of subjective justification, is the objective justification (the reconciliation) of all mankind. If God had not in His heart justified the whole world because of Christ’s vicarious satisfaction, and if this justification were not offered in the Gospel, there could not be a justification by faith. All those who deny the objective justification (the objective reconciliation) will, if they would be consistent, also deny that subjective justification is brought about by faith; they will have to regard faith as a complement of Christ’s merit—a human achievement. But objective reconciliation is the clear teaching of Scripture. Also our Lutheran Confessions base justification by faith on the fact that God is reconciled with the world and offers the forgiveness of sins as a gift (*res promissa*) in the Gospel. Apology: “When we believe that God, for Christ’s sake, is reconciled to us, we are justified freely by faith.” “Remission of sins is something promised for Christ’s sake. Therefore it cannot be received except by faith alone. For a promise cannot be received except by faith alone.” (Trigl. 147, Art. IV /II/, 87; 145, *ibid.*, 84.)^{xxxix}

One final statement:

Objective justification precedes faith, for it is the object of faith, and its proclamation creates faith (Rom. 10:17). Subjective justification, however, does not take place prior to faith nor later than faith. To assume *a prius* or *posterius* in time would abolish the “by faith” (*pistei*) and thus also the assurance of justification.^{xl}

Reaction to Dr. Pieper’s Statements

A number of comments may be offered with reference to what is said in the previous paragraphs and regarding Dr. Pieper’s views on objective justification.

(1) Some of Pieper’s statements clearly harmonize with Scriptural teaching and are therefore acceptable as they read. Some things he says appear to be overstatements (as will be discussed below); and in our day, when universalistic views are championed by many in external Christendom, we may find it useful to recast and clarify such assertions. For example, his paragraph on subjective justification is a succinct expression of the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith. However, the assertion in his first paragraph (in the above listing) concerning objective reconciliation, namely that “It was God who laid His anger by on account of the ransom brought by Christ,” and its elaboration, which appear to differ from the teaching of Scripture, ought to be expressed in other words. Again, it seems that a number of Pieper’s assertions could be improved if in them the word “redemption” were simply substituted for the term (objective) reconciliation.

(2) The New Testament passages—Rom. 4:25; 5:10; and 2 Cor. 5:19--which Pieper adduces in support of his thesis on objective justification do not, upon close examination, appear to substantiate his view; or, to put this in another way, these three passages are capable of an interpretation other than Pieper’s and one which seems to be more in harmony with the text and context in each case, and with the Analogy of Faith. Such alternate interpretations will be provided below.

(3) Pieper’s citations of passages from the Confessions appear to support only the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith and not the teaching of objective justification. This is doubtless due to the fact that, relative to justification, the Confessions teach only the doctrine of justification by faith.

(4) Pieper in effect sets up only two alternatives (*tertium non datur*, that is, there is no third possibility) relative to the matter of accepting his view of objective justification: either accept his understanding and preserve Scriptural truth; or do not accept his view and necessarily lose the Biblical doctrine of justification and

be plunged into multiform error and the heresy of seeking to gain righteousness and salvation by works. The reality is, however, that a third alternative exists (*tertium datur!*), involving the non-acceptance of his view and the strong embrace of clear New Testament teaching on justification and related doctrines. The third alternative is to see the objective work of Christ as (world) redemption; to understand its consequence as the universal offer of forgiveness, or justification, in the Gospel; and to regard the gift of divinely, miraculously wrought, intrinsically non meritorious faith as the God-appointed instrumental means—altogether apart from any supposedly meritorious human works—for receiving the forgiveness, for obtaining the (subjective) justification, offered in the Gospel. (Those who accept this alternative note that in the New Testament ,justifying faith is never conceived of as a good work meritoriously contributory to a person’s justification before God; that it is always presented as in antithesis to “works of law,” that is, works done in obedience to the divine law and presumed to merit the divine favor - compare Rom. 3:28.)

(5) According to Pieper’s doctrine of objective justification, God declared the whole world righteous at the time of Christ’s death and resurrection, and this involved the termination of the divine wrath against all mankind. Pieper says, “It was God who laid His anger by on account of the ransom brought by Christ.” This statement presents a problem, because the New Testament teaches the continuing existence and operation of God’s wrath among the world’s sinners.

Exactly what the venerable Lutheran father means by this assertion of the cessation of divine wrath is brought out in the footnote attached to the paragraph in which it occurs. In the note Meyer is quoted (with approval) on 2 Cor. 5:18-19 as follows:

Mankind was on account of its uncanceled sins under God’s holy wrath, *echthroi theou*, Rom. 5:10, *Deo invisibili*, the object of God’s hatred; but with the cancellation of their sins, effected by the death of Christ, God’s wrath came to an end. The reconciliation of all mankind took place objectively through the death of Christ.^{xli}

The same footnote also contains an elaborating quotation from the Proceedings of the Southern District, 1883. Of chief significance for our discussion here are the words:

Nineteen hundred years ago God reconciled the world unto Himself. We know what it means to be reconciled to someone. A person is reconciled to someone when he has dismissed from his heart all wrath against him. Now, just so God has for Christ’s sake dismissed from His heart all wrath against men, with whom He was angry because of their sins. God now feels toward men as though they had never offended Him by sinning, as though never a disagreement between God and men had occurred. Here, then, the so-called objective justification is clearly taught: If God is reconciled with men, if He no longer has anything against them, then He has evidently in His heart absolved them of their sins, then He regards them as righteous for Christ’s sake. Hence, according to Scripture, the reconciliation between God and men their justification, took place before they came to faith.^{xliii}

Now, if the wrath of God against men has been stilled by Christ’s atoning sacrifice, what is it, pray tell, that still damns unbelieving sinners? What shall be done with Paul’s statement about the day of wrath in Romans 2:5-12? Here he teaches that there will be a

day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds . . . unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, (there will be) indignation and wrath. (There will be) tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile . . . For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.

What about the apostle's words in Romans 1:18, "The wrath of God is (being) revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," and the apostle's whole argument in the first great section of Romans concerning the present revelation of the divine wrath and the punishments it brings on the unregenerate in the course of their lives on earth? What about the other (divine) wrath passages in Romans, 3:5; 4:15; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; and 13:4-5? What about the words of Jesus in John 3:36? Christ states: "He that believeth on the Son hath life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." The very condition of spiritual death in which the unregenerate of the world exist is a result and an evidence of the wrath of God which is constantly directed against them. Paul calls attention to the former state of his Christian addressees, when he writes in Ephesians 2:1-3:

And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to . . . the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh . . . and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

The sins which the wicked perpetrate in every New Testament generation evoke the divine wrath, as Paul also says in Ephesians (5:6; compare Col. 3:6): "For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Among the world's wicked in Paul's day were those who persecuted him and his assistants; about these opponents the apostle wrote the Thessalonian Christians (1 Thess. 2:15-16): "They please not God, and are contrary to all men: forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway; for the wrath is come (*ephthasen*, aorist) upon them to the uttermost." See also Luke 21:23 and Rev. 15:1, 7.

The following sample quotations show how the Confessions take for granted, on the basis of the Bible's teaching, that God directs his wrath against, unregenerate, unforgiven sinners and that it has not been laid aside with the completion of Christ's redeeming work on Calvary:

It was very foolish of our opponents to write that men who are under eternal wrath merit the forgiveness of sins by an elicited act of love, since it is impossible to love God unless faith has first accepted the forgiveness of sin. A heart that really feels God's wrath cannot love him unless it sees that he is reconciled.^{xliii}

Therefore men cannot keep the law by their own strength, and they are all under sin and subject to eternal wrath and death.^{xliiv}

In these terrors the conscience feels God's wrath against sin, unknown to men who walk in carnal security. It sees the foulness of sin and is genuinely sorry that it has sinned, at the same time it flees God's horrible wrath, for human nature cannot bear it unless it is sustained by the Word of God.^{xlv}

Therefore the Ten Commandments do not by themselves make us Christians, for God's wrath and displeasure still remain on us because we cannot fulfill his demands. But the Creed brings pure grace and makes us upright and pleasing to God.^{xlvi}

Strictly speaking, the law is a divine doctrine which reveals the righteousness and immutable will of God, shows how man ought to be disposed in his nature, thoughts, words, and deeds in order to be pleasing and acceptable to God, and threatens the transgressors of the law with God's wrath and temporal and eternal punishment.^{xlvii}

In fact (it may be parenthetically observed), in a lengthy section of Article XII (on Penitence) of the Apology, paragraphs 150-166,^{xlviii} the activity of God's wrath and judgment in inflicting temporal penalties on

the saints (who are through faith delivered indeed from the eternal divine condemning wrath and punishment), purificatory chastenings, is detailed, with ample references to the Scriptures. That the saints should-fear the wrath of God which will be directed against sins which they commit is taught in the well known words of Luther's Small Catechism at the close of the Ten Commandments, "God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments. Therefore we should fear his wrath and not act contrary to them" (*Synodical Catechism* rendering). Compare these words of the Apology: "Meanwhile they (the opponents) do not see the first table, which commands us to love God, to be sure that God is wrathful at our sin, to fear him truly, and to be sure that he hears us."^{xlix}

Relative to sinful, unregenerate, unforgiven men, much additional material from the Scriptures could be introduced to indicate that the wrath of God is a completely extant and a totally and continually operative factor in God's relationship with them; that wrath did not come to an end, nor was it laid aside, with the death and resurrection of Christ. Only believing Christians are delivered from the condemning divine wrath, present and future. They are, accordingly, granted the gift of spiritual and eternal life—and this because they have received the forgiveness of sins through faith. Paul writes: "We conclude that a man is justified," and therefore not subject to God's wrath, "by faith." There is something problematical with a doctrine of "objective justification" which posits the cessation of the wrath of God against unforgiven sinners, with the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ nineteen hundred years ago.

(6) Dr. Pieper's teaching concerning an "objective justification" and a "subjective justification," leads to the conclusion that there are two different acts or pronouncements of justification on God's part: one pronouncement made at the time of the death and resurrection of Christ with regard to the whole world of unregenerate men (world or objective justification), but which saves none of them; the other, at the time when a sinner comes to faith (subjective justification) and which puts him immediately into possession of the blessings of life and salvation. Thus, Edward Preuss, for example, distinguishes two justifications in separate sections of his *The Justification of the Sinner before God*:

We, then, are redeemed from the guilt of sin; the wrath of God is appeased; all creation is again under the bright rays of Mercy, as in the beginning; yea, in Christ we were justified before we were ever born . . . This is not the justification which we receive by faith, but the one which took place before all faith.¹

Then farther on he writes relative to the justification by faith:

This justification does not coincide with the atonement on the cross, but is rather its fruit. God justifies you . . . by truly and actually receiving you into the relation of grace and sonship.^{li}

Again:

This justification . . . is an act of God which takes place in time. And, mark you, for every man individually. The justification of Paul did not come to pass at the same time as that of Cornelius; but as often as a heathen forsakes his idols, or a Jew his Talmud, so often, and much more often does God justify^{lii}.

Yet Scripture teaches only one justification; namely, the one by faith in Christ, Romans 3:28.^{liii}

In view of this and of all the considerations in points (1) to (5) above, the best thing to do, it would appear, is simply to speak of the Biblical doctrine of justification by faith, which is the only doctrine of justification taught in the divine Word, and to refer to the universal effect of Christ's substitutionary obedience in terms of world redemption and the other designations the New Testament itself supplies (as discussed above).

Part III: Justification Through Faith—The Teaching of Reformation Era Lutheran Theologians

The Biblical doctrine of justification by grace through faith—as discussed in Part I of this paper—is prominently set forth in the Lutheran Confessions; in the many writings of Melancthon, Luther, Chemnitz, and other theologians of the Reformation era; and in the works of Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century generally. Numerous statements from the Confessions have been quoted previously. Part III of this paper now offers a few additional citations from the Symbols and from several writings of a number of the early Lutheran fathers which give sample indication as to how these Reformation era leaders referred to or explained the doctrine of justification. The comments are lucid. It will be noted that in them their authors did not employ the complicating “subjective justification” and “objective justification” terminology, or set forth a concept of objective justification such as is presented by Pieper.

Additional Quotations from the Confessions, and Citations from Writings of Lutheran Theologians of the Reformation Era

The first additional quotations from the Symbols are taken from the Augsburg Confession and the Apology:

We receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ’s sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us. For God will regard and reckon this faith as righteousness, as Paul says in Romans 3:21-26 and 4:5. Augsburg Confession, IV, 1-3 (German).^{liv}

In this passage (Romans 5:1) “justify” is used in a judicial way to mean “to absolve a guilty man and pronounce him righteous,” and to do so on account of someone else’s righteousness, namely, Christ’s which is communicated to us through faith. Apology, IV, 305.^{lv}

The Gospel offers justification freely because of Christ’s merits, not ours, and Christ’s merits are communicated to us by faith. Apology, IV, 367.^{lvi}

The next citations are from the Large Catechism:

All who are outside the Christian church, whether heathen, Turks, Jews, or false Christians and hypocrites, even though they believe in and worship only the one, true God, nevertheless do not know what his attitude is toward them. They cannot be confident of his love and blessing. Therefore they remain in eternal wrath and damnation, for they do not have the Lord Christ, and, besides, they are not illuminated and blessed by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Large Catechism, Creed, 66.^{lvii}

Although the work was accomplished and forgiveness of sins was acquired on the cross, yet it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word. How should we know that this has been accomplished and offered to us if it were not proclaimed by preaching, by the oral Word? Whence do they know of forgiveness, and how can they grasp and appropriate it, except by steadfastly believing the Scriptures and the Gospel? Large Catechism, Lord’s Supper, 31.^{lviii}

The following quotations are from the Formula of Concord, both the Epitome and the Solid Declaration. The statements in the first five paragraphs cited below belong together and are found at the beginning of Article III of the Epitome, which is titled “The Righteousness of Faith before God.”

It is the unanimous confession of our churches according to the Word of God and the content of the Augsburg Confession that we poor sinners are justified before God and saved solely by faith in Christ, so that Christ alone is our righteousness

One party has held that Christ is our righteousness only according to his Godhead. When he dwells in us by faith, over against this indwelling Godhead, the sins of all men are esteemed like a drop of water over against the immense ocean. Others, however, held that Christ is our righteousness before God only according to the human nature

. . . On the contrary, the entire Christ according to both natures is our righteousness solely in his obedience which as God and man he rendered to his heavenly Father unto death itself. Thereby he won for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as it is written, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:19).

. . . Accordingly, we believe, teach, and confess that our righteousness before God consists in this, that God forgives us our sins purely by his grace, without any preceding, present, or subsequent work, merit, or worthiness, and reckons to us the righteousness of Christ’s obedience, on account of which righteousness we are accepted by God into grace and are regarded as righteous.

. . . We believe, teach, and confess that faith is the only means and instrument whereby we accept Christ and in Christ obtain the “righteousness which avails before God,” and that for Christ’s sake such faith is reckoned for righteousness (Rom. 4:5). Epitome III, 1-5.^{lix}

But the Gospel, strictly speaking, is the kind of doctrine that teaches what a man who has not kept the law and is condemned by it should believe, namely, that Christ has satisfied and paid for all guilt and without man’s merit has obtained and won for him forgiveness of sins, the “righteousness that avails before God,” and eternal life. Epitome, V, 5.^{lx}

The only essential and necessary elements of justification are the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and faith which accepts these in the promise of the Gospel, whereby the righteousness of Christ is reckoned to us and by which we obtain the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, adoption, and the inheritance of eternal life. Solid Declaration, III, 25.^{lxi}

The proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Christ will once more comfort and strengthen them with the assurance that if they believe the Gospel God forgives them all their sins through Christ, accepts them for his sake as God’s children, and out of pure grace, without any merit of their own, justifies and saves them. Solid Declaration, V, 25.^{lxii}

Martin Luther’s teaching on justification by faith is well known to Lutherans, and many illuminating citations could be gathered from his writings. Suffice it to let these statements of Paul Althaus, internationally recognized Luther scholar, in his *The Theology of Martin Luther* summarize the Great Reformer’s position: for Luther, “The doctrine of justification is nothing else than faith in Christ;”^{lxiii} and,

The explanation of the second Article implicitly contains the entire doctrine of justification through faith in Christ alone this relationship between faith in Christ and justification indicated that Luther under no circumstances thought of separating justification from faith in Christ; we cannot therefore construe Luther’s doctrine a-christologically. Justification depends on faith in Christ, is constituted by it, and is only the form (although not the only form) of faith in Christ.^{lxiv}

The next in the series of quotations are from the writings of Martin Chemnitz, a principal author of the Formula of Concord. Provided first are citations from his *Enchiridion*:

The Gospel sets Christ before us, who by His obedience, passion, and death has purchased for us the true righteousness before God that is imputed and given to us freely, without our merit, solely for the sake of Christ and through faith. Ro 1:4; G1 3:24. Enchiridion, 144.^{lxv}

God imputes to us the righteousness of the obedience and death of Christ the Mediator and thus justifies us freely out of grace, without our works or merits, alone by faith that apprehends the grace of God the Father and the merit of Christ; that is, He forgives us (our) sins, receives (us) into grace, adopts (us) as (His) sons, and receives (us) to the inheritance of life eternal. Ro. 3:24-25, 28;6:5; 10:4; G1 3:24; Eph. 2:8-9; Tts 3:5-7. Enchiridion, 145.^{lxvi}

God Himself, rich in mercy, sets His Son before us in the Gospel as atonement. Ro 3:25. And those who through faith take recourse to that Son the Mediator, and apprehend Him by faith—those the Father justifies from the charge placed by the Law and from the sentence of condemnation; that is, He absolves (them) for the sake of Christ, and, by imputation of the obedience and death of Christ, declares (them) righteous and awards them life eternal. Ro 8:33-34. And this is the process or act of the justification of a sinner before the judgment seat of God Enchiridion, 146.^{lxvii}

The remaining quotations from Chemnitz are consecutive paragraphs from the discussion of justification in the Part I of his *Examination of the Council of Trent*.^{lxviii}

However, the Gospel reveals and declares this mystery, which was hidden for long ages, that since the human race could not make satisfaction to the Law and the Law could in no way be dissolved and destroyed, God made a transfer of the Law to another person (a matter which belongs to the article of justification) who should fulfill the Law both by satisfaction and obedience for the whole human race. And because that person is both God and man, therefore His satisfaction is the expiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2), and hence Christ is the end of the Law for the salvation of everyone who believes (Rom. 10:4). And Him God sets before us through the ministry, that through His redemption, by faith in His blood, we may be justified gratis by the grace of God. (Rom. 3:25)

. . . . Because therefore (1) by the council of the entire Trinity the Son of God was sent into the world, made of a woman, made under the Law, that He might redeem them that were under the Law, that we might thus receive the adoption; and because (2) the satisfaction and obedience of Christ, the Mediator, God and man, is of such a nature and so great that it can be the expiation for the sins of the whole world and suffice for righteousness to every one who believes; and because (3) in the ministry Christ is set before us by God in order that we may be justified through His redemption by faith; therefore, when faith, in true contrition lays hold of and applies to itself that satisfaction and obedience of Christ, then it possesses that which it can plead against the accusations of the Law in the judgment of God, and thus stand, that we may be justified.

The believers have, indeed, from the renewing by the Holy Ghost also an inherent righteousness; but because this is only begun, imperfect, and as a result of the flesh still defiled in this life, therefore we cannot by means of it stand in the judgment of God, nor does God justify us because of it, that is, absolve us from sins, receive us into grace, and accept us to life eternal, as has been shown above from Scripture. Indeed, the satisfaction and obedience of Christ, by which He fulfilled the Law for us, is that righteousness, which is both sufficient and worthy to be pronounced just in the judgment of God. And this is imputed through faith to the believers, so that through it and because of it they can stand in the judgment of God in no other way, yes, in a much better way, than if they themselves had by perfect obedience made satisfaction to the Law. For they have by imputation a righteousness which is both God's and man's. Therefore, on account of the satisfaction and obedience of Christ, imputed to us by

God through faith, the believers are justified, that is, they receive remission of sins, are absolved from the sentence of damnation, are received into grace, adopted as sons, and accepted to everlasting life .

. . . We do not, therefore, teach that believers are justified without righteousness, a justification of the ungodly which God pronounces an abomination in Prov. 17:15 and Is. 5:23, but we say that it is necessary that in justification a righteousness should come in and intervene, and indeed, not just any kind of righteousness but one which is sufficient and worthy in the judgment of God to be declared suitable for eternal life. However, our inherent righteousness, which is begun in the renewal through the Holy Spirit, is not such on account of the adhering imperfection and impurity of the flesh. Therefore a different righteousness is necessary, by which, when it enters in and intercedes, we may be justified before God to life eternal. This indeed is the satisfaction and obedience, that is, the righteousness of Christ, the Mediator, which is offered through the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments, is apprehended by faith, and is imputed by God to the believers, so that we can interpose it between the judgment of God and our sins, so that we are protected under it as under a shield from the divine wrath which we have deserved, so that “covered by it we may now boldly and securely stand before the divine tribunal and thus be pronounced righteous to life eternal.”

With respect to Christ, therefore, who makes satisfaction to the Law for us, it is redemption, merit, and righteousness; but with respect to us, it is grace or undeserved mercy, because the judgment of God does not find in us, even in the regenerate, in this life an inherent righteousness that is sufficient and worthy that we may be justified on account of it to life eternal. Rather, it finds in us, even in the regenerate, some, yes, many and varied, sins which we do not sufficiently know, on account of which, if He wanted to enter into judgment with us according to the severity of the Law, He could condemn us. Therefore it is by free grace that we unworthy and undeserving ones are justified. The obedience of Christ, indeed, is the merit on account of which we are justified.

Citations from Writings of 17th Century Lutheran Theologians

Lutheran theologians of the period of orthodoxy (c. 1580-1715) wrote extensively on the doctrine of justification. Cited below are statements of three renowned scholars of this period; the first is by Balthasar Mentzer, the next two are by Johann Quenstedt, and the fourth is by Abraham Calov.^{lxix}

Justification is an act of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, an act which forgives the sinner all his sins, imputes to him the righteousness of Christ and receives him into everlasting life. It is an act of pure grace, love and mercy, performed because of the most holy obedience which our Mediator Christ rendered to the entire divine Law and because of the full satisfaction He made. The sinner is justified who through the ministry of the Gospel truly believes that Christ is the Redeemer of the whole world, and he is justified by grace without his own work or merits. (Mentzer)

According to the judgment of God the sinner who believes in Christ is absolved of sins and the righteousness of Christ is truly reckoned to him. True, this reckoning does not result in the righteousness of Christ existing inherently in the believer; but the imputation is not, nevertheless, thereby fictitious and imaginary, a mere opinion of a just person, without any actual effect, as the papists maliciously report us as teaching. No, this *imputatio* or imputation is earnest and real. It has its gracious foundation in Christ and its termination in us (*ad nos*). It consists in a gracious determination of God and in a real conferring and transferring of Christ's righteousness to the believer. And so when one believes, he is by this imputation made and accounted righteous in the judgment of God's mind. And this is a most real judgment of God which from the throne of His grace extends over the sinner who from the Gospel believes in Christ. (Quenstedt)

We must distinguish between the application of the remission of sins and its acquisition We submit that the former, namely the application of the remission of sins and their actual *removal (actualem oblationem)*, Christ, who is established at the right hand of God, brings about by making us partakers of the fruit and power of his offering and sacrifice. However, the acquisition of the forgiveness of sins has already been accomplished through the offering and sacrifice of Christ which took place on the cross. The question is therefore being asked: “Was the sacrificial offering of Christ whereby He made expiation for our sins and secured God’s own remission of sins and procured the right of forgiveness and remission of sins for us—was all this accomplished on the altar of the cross? Or does this only take place in heaven?” The former is our position; the Socinians affirm the latter. (Quenstedt)

Although Christ has gained for us the remission of sins, justification and sonship, God just the same does not justify us prior to our faith. Nor do we become God’s children in Christ in such a way that justification in the mind of God takes place before we believe. (Calov)

A final quotation, a summary of the understanding of the doctrine of justification on the part of representative 16th and 17th century Lutheran Theologians, as formulated by Heinrich Schmid in his *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, brings this listing of citations from the Confessions and the Lutheran fathers to a close:

The effect of faith is justification; (1) by which is to be understood that act of God by which He removes the sentence of condemnation, to which man is exposed in consequence of his sins, releases him from his guilt, and ascribes to him the merit of Christ. BR. (574): “Justification denotes that act by which the sinner, who is responsible for guilt and liable to punishment (*reus culpae et poenae*), but who believes in Christ, is pronounced just by God the judge.” (2) This act occurs at the instant in which the merit of Christ is appropriated by faith, (3) and can properly be designated a forensic or judicial act, since God in it, as if in a civil court, pronounces a judgment upon man, which assigns to him an entirely different position, and entirely different rights. (4) By justification we are, therefore, by no means to understand a moral condition existing in man, or a moral change which he has experienced, but only a judgment pronounced upon man, by which his relation to God is reversed, (5) and indeed in such a manner, that a man can now consider himself one whose sins are blotted out, who is no longer responsible for them before God, who, on the other hand, appears before God as accepted and righteous, in whom God finds nothing more to punish, with whom He has no longer any occasion to be displeased.^{lxx}

Part IV: Brief Exegetical Comments on Romans 4:25; 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Also Romans 5:18-19

As has been seen, Dr. Pieper in his *Dogmatics* treatment of “Objective and Subjective Reconciliation” (or, Justification) adduces and offers interpretation of three New Testament passages—Romans 4:25; 5:10; and 2 Corinthians 5:19--in which he asserts that objective justification is taught. It will be well at this point briefly to examine these verses and determine the instruction they provide. Elsewhere in his *Dogmatics* text he points to Romans 5:18-19 as teaching objective justification. An examination of these two verses additionally, therefore (after consideration of the other three), will also be of significance for the present study. In the course of the ensuing discussion the present writer will offer exegetical comments of his own, noting also the distinction between justification and reconciliation as the concepts are presented in the verses indicated above. The writer’s conclusion, given in advance, is that the Romans and 2 Corinthians passages support the doctrine of justification by faith and a doctrine of reconciliation which consists in the conversion of the sinner from unbelief to saving faith in, and accompanying love for, the true and triune God.

Romans 4:25

hos pardothee dia ta paratoomata heemoon kai eegerthee dia teen diakaiosin heemoon

KJV translation: who (Jesus) was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

It will be recalled that Pieper says: “The resurrection of Christ is, as Holy Writ teaches, the actual absolution of the whole world of sinners. Rom. 4:25: ‘who was raised again for our justification.’ At that time we were objectively declared free from sin.”^{lxxi}

Again:

This gracious reconciliation and justification is clearly taught in Rom. 4:25. . . . The term *dikaioosis* here means the act of divine justification executed through God’s act of raising Christ from the dead, and it is for this reason called the objective justification of all mankind.^{lxxii}

The writer of this paper, however, favors another interpretation. Romans 3:21-4:25 sets forth Paul’s great discussion on justification by faith; this justification, the one by faith, has been the subject of his remarks throughout. The fourth chapter has dealt with Abraham as the prime Old Testament exemplar of one justified by faith; verses 22-24 form the conclusion to the apostle’s presentation. He says: because Abraham believed God his faith was imputed to him as righteousness, was counted as righteousness in his case. What Abraham’s faith embraced was the Christ to come and the obedience-wrought righteousness inseparably connected with that Savior. Thus Christ’s righteousness could be and was charged by God to the patriarch’s account; and—to speak in the way the Scriptures put it (Gen. 15:16; Rom. 4:3, 9, 22; Gal. 3:6; Jas. 2:23)—the forefather’s faith was counted as righteousness by God. All that Paul has been saying about Abraham and his faith is found in the Old Testament record. It was recorded and preserved there not simply to provide information regarding Abraham but also for the benefit of the Roman Christians, Paul, and all New Testament believers—who are to realize that their faith will likewise be counted as righteousness in the sight of God, if they keep believing on Him (God) who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead, the Christ who was delivered (by his Father, into suffering and death) for their transgressions (so as to atone for these) and raised again for their justification (literally, “for the justifying of us”; *dikaioosin* refers to the act of justifying. Thought: so that we might be justified, through faith).

This interpretation of verse 25 is consistent with the immediate context^{lxxiii} of chapter four in which it is found; especially with verses 24-25 (and 5:1), a “we”—section referring exclusively to believers; with the subsequent verse, 5:1, which refers to subjective justification (as it begins with the words, “Therefore being justified by faith”); and with the wider context of Romans, the second major division of the letter (3:21-4:25), which elaborates justification by faith, the epistle’s theme. Thus, it does not introduce suddenly and without previous preparation a doctrine of objective justification, which would be a deviation from this theme. It sees the preposition *dai* of verse 25b as expressing purpose or goal (and not cause). It reflects the Father’s purpose in delivering his Son into death, namely that the Son might deal with the awful mass of human—here the believers’—sins and atone for them; and with the Father’s purpose in raising the Lord Jesus again from the dead, namely so that the believers—Paul and the Romans (and all New Testament Christians)—might be declared righteous through faith (initially at their conversion; and so accounted as righteous throughout their lives, as they retain the saving faith). A resurrected, living Christ is necessary for the justification of believers primarily as the object of justifying faith, and the Grantor of justification to the believing. Then such a living Christ is also necessary as a high priestly Intercessor at the throne of grace and as a Helper of his people through their lives, so as to be able to save them to the uttermost. It is to such a living Christ that believers are by faith joined in close, spiritual (the mystical) union, and from whom as a result they derive their spiritual life, power to overcome in their behavior the sins for which they have received God’s forgiveness, the strength to remain on the course of salvation (in the *ordo salutis*), and so on.

The Apology appears to support the interpretation that the resurrection of Christ lays the basis for justification of believers, when it states: “Christ suffered and died to reconcile the Father to us; and . . . he was raised to rule, justify, and sanctify the believers.”^{lxxiv}

Martin Luther sees believers (not all men) as referred to in Romans 4:25, as he writes:

He (Christ) casts those under himself, tramples them with his feet, and causes it to be cried out and proclaimed into all the world through his Gospel that all who are among his enemies and lie under the burden of Satan are to cling to him and believe in him; they shall be righteous, that is, loosed and freed from sin, from God's wrath, death, hell, and the devil, as St. Paul says Rom. 4:25: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification ."^{lxxv}

Again:

Thus St. Paul speaks in Rom. 4:25: that Christ died for our sins and rose for our justification, namely, in his suffering He makes our sins known and thus overcomes them; but through his resurrection He makes us righteous and free from all sins, if we of course believe the same.^{lxxvi}

Martin Chemnitz in his discourse on justification in the *Examination* knows of an imputation of righteousness only to (or a justification only of) believers. This is so also in passages where he refers to Romans 4:25, like the following:

But does God impute righteousness to believers without any basis whatever? Certainly He Himself says that this is an abomination (Prov. 17:15; Is. 5:23). And that basis is indeed not in us, for righteousness is imputed without works according to Rom. 4. And there, finally, Paul clearly shows what and where the basis of this imputation is. It is imputed, he says, "to us who believe in Him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification," that is, the satisfaction and obedience of Christ is the basis out of regard for which, and by reason and worthiness of which, God by grace imputes righteousness to the believers .

. . . And so we have the complete relation. The basis is the righteousness of Christ. The object is the believing person, to whom the imputation for righteousness and blessedness is made.^{lxxvii}

Romans 5:10

ei gar echthroi ontes kateellageemen too theo dia tou thanatou tou huiou autou, op polloo mallon katallagentes sootheesometha en tee zooe autou.

KJV translation: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

It will be recalled that Pieper says:

Nineteen hundred years ago Christ effected the reconciliation of all men with God The reconciliation is an accomplished fact, just like the creation of the world. Rom. 5:10: "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." When Christ died, God became reconciled. As Christ's death lies in the past, so also our reconciliation is an accomplished fact The *katallassein* of Rom. 5:10 and 2 Cor. 5:19 does not refer—let this fact be noted—to any change that occurs in men, but describes an occurrence in the heart of God. It was God who laid His anger by on account of the ransom brought by Christ. It was God who at that time already had in His heart forgiven the sins of the whole world.^{lxxviii}

The present writer, however, favors another interpretation. Paul is endeavoring (from 5:6 on) to show the Romans the greatness of the love of God for them, what this love has done for them in the past, what it bestows upon them in the present, what it will assuredly bring them in the future (ultimately salvation in heaven, *sootheesometha*), and all this, so that their peace and joy may be full. The apostle says that God commends his love to them in that, while the Romans and Paul ("we") were yet sinners, Christ died for them.

Will the Romans not reason with Paul that, if God did the great thing of giving his Son into death for them while they were still filthy, unregenerate, unforgiven sinners, He will surely save them from his death-dealing, damning wrath now that He has brought them to faith and justified them on the basis of the bloody sacrifice of Christ? (Through faith and forgiveness God has made them his sons!) This whole matter is so important that Paul explains further with a slightly altered approach and advances his thought. If while the Romans and Paul were still despicable enemies toward God—bitterly hostile toward Him—God in his love came to them; if He reconciled these enemies and made them friendly toward Himself (“reconcile,” according to Webster: “to make friendly again or win over to a friendly attitude”) in the miracle of conversion—this gracious action of God made possible by, based upon, mediated by the death of his Son—it is even more certain that the God who showed them such love even while they were hostile enemies will, indeed, now that they have become reconciled to Him, maintain a deep Fatherly interest in them and save them all the way through to a blessed eternity. He will do the latter by way of the Person and agency of the living Christ (via Christ’s living union with the believing Romans and Paul, via his living to intercede for and save them to the uttermost, and so on; compare also Hebrews 7:24-25 and Romans 4:25)! Not only will the Romans and Paul be saved! They may even now engage in boasting in God through Christ, through whom they have now received the reconciliation (which puts them into possession of all the blessings of salvation; verse 11)!

It will be useful at this point to say a few words about the Greek verb *katallassein*. The verb root is *allos*, “other” the *kata* coupled with it is intensifying or perfective. Thus the verb means essentially “to make thoroughly other,” “to change completely”; then, “to reconcile.” The English word “reconcile”—coming from the Latin *re*, “again,” and *conciliare*, “to make friendly,” “to unite”—means “to make friendly again” (one who has been hostile), “to win over to a friendly attitude.” The Greek word, as used in Romans 5:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, refers to a change brought about within an individual. A form of the verb *katallassein* appears six times in the New Testament, twice in the active and four times in the passive. Except for 1 Cor. 7:11, where Paul advises that a woman separated from her husband be reconciled and return to him, the agent effecting reconciliation is always God, and the objects of the reconciling action are always men, whom in their unregenerate state, Paul characterizes in Rom. 5:10 as *echthrois*, enemies, bitterly hostile to God. (*Echthros* is used in the active sense, probably without exception in the New Testament, designating people who have enmity toward God and not people to whom God is an enemy.) The passages in which a form of *katallassein* occurs, besides Rom. 5:10 (in which there is a double occurrence), are these:

1 Cor. 7:11: But and if she (a wife) depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled (*katallageetoo*) to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

2 Cor. 5:18-20: And all things are of God, who hath reconciled (*katallaxantos*) us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling (*katallassoon*) the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled (*katallageete*) to God.

None of the *katallassein* verses, it is interesting to note, say that God was reconciled, or reconciled Himself, by Christ with reference to men. God required no reconciling by Christ in the sense that the work of Jesus was necessary, so that God could generate his love toward sinful unregenerate mankind: “God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son” (Jn. 3:16). The situation rather is this: the Father’s eternally existing love conceived, and in Christ executed, the plan of redemption and salvation for the sinful human race, so that He could graciously extend salvation to believers. Unregenerate sinners, who are simultaneously the objects of God’s wrath and his love, desperately need Spirit-wrought reconciliation (the “being made thoroughly other” in conversion), so that, with justifying faith present in their hearts, God may remove his condemning wrath from them and give them the blessings of salvation. God in his grace does grant both reconciliation and justification, and He does so simultaneously the one gift is a change worked within sinners,

as He turns them from unbelief to faith in the Lord; the other, a pronouncement made upon them, as He declares them righteous through the faith implanted in them.^{lxxix}

It has been noted above that the Lutheran Confessions do speak of God being reconciled to men through Christ. They make clear their meaning, however, in so speaking, namely, that because of Christ's vicarious obedience God is able to be and is gracious and merciful to sinners; that He is able to and does grant forgiveness to the penitent.

Returning once again to the present writer's interpretation of Rom. 5:10, it should be noted that verse 10 is a part of a "we" section which begins back at 4:23 and continues through 5:11. Believing Christians (Paul and his addressees) are the subject of the apostle's discussion. Thus, the justification spoken of in verse 9, the reconciliation in verse 10, and the salvation referred to in both verses apply to Christians only. It is problematical to see how Pieper can use Rom. 5:10 in support of his doctrine of objective justification or reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:19

hoos hoti theos een en Christoo kosmon katallassoon heautoo, mee logizomenos autois ta paraptoomata autoon, kai themenos en heemin ton logon tees katallagees.

KJV translation: To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

It will be recalled that Pieper writes:

Scripture teaches the objective reconciliation. Nineteen hundred years ago Christ effected the reconciliation of all men with God When Christ died, God became reconciled. As Christ's death lies in the past, so also our reconciliation is an accomplished fact. 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling" (namely, when Christ lived and died on earth) "the world unto Himself." The *katallassein* of Rom. 5:10 and 2 Cor. 5:19 does not refer—let this fact be noted—to any change that occurs in men, but describes an occurrence in the heart of God. It was God who laid His anger by on account of the ransom brought by Christ. It was God who at that time already had in His heart forgiven the sins of the whole world, for the statement: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" means—and that is not our, but the Apostle's own interpretation—that God did "not impute their trespasses unto them." And "not imputing trespasses" is, according to Scripture (Rom. 4:6-8), synonymous with "forgiving sins," "justifying" the sinner.^{lxxx}

The present writer, however, favors an explanation which sees in *katallassoo* and *katallagee* signification of a change in men (their conversion). In the immediate context of verse 19 Paul says that God reconciled (aorist; a past and finished occurrence is referred to) "us" (Paul and his assistants in the ministry) to Himself. That is, God brought them to faith through Christ. He also gave (aorist; another past occurrence) "us" the ministry of this reconciliation. The genitive in the last phrase may possibly be regarded as objective, the idea then being: God put "us" into the service of this reconciliation, so as to bring it to many more people, and this, by speaking to them the Word concerning this reconciliation. It is perhaps better, however, to take the genitive as a genitive of quality, as describing the nature of the ministry Paul and his assistants received, namely one dealing with reconciliation; one proclaiming God's reconciling activity because of Christ, and through the Spirit operative in the Gospel; one instrumentally bringing about the reconciliation of many to whom the reconciling Word is presented.

And what did the apostle and his assistants in conducting their ministry of reconciliation tell the as yet unconverted? -- At this point two satisfactory interpretations of verse 19 have been offered by scholars, either of which is acceptable and, in the present writer's opinion, preferable to Pieper's. These interpretations will be presented sequentially on the following pages.

Interpretation #1

Verse 19 and those following give a sample of the Gospel message brought by Paul and his assistants. They proclaim that: God was in Christ (when the latter rendered his vicarious obedience on earth) in order to be reconciling the world to Himself (bringing men to faith. in Christ and his redemption—one after another throughout the New Testament era); in order not (as men then come to faith through the presentation of the Gospel and the power of the Spirit) to be imputing their trespasses to them (that is, in order to be forgiving their sins, and thus be putting men into possession of the blessings of salvation). As far as Paul and his assistants are concerned, God also, when He called them into his professional service, entrusted “us” with (or, deposited in our charge) the Word (or, proclamation) of (concerning; objective or qualitative genitive) this reconciliation. Paul and the others are acting as Christ’s and God’s ambassadors, as, in behalf of Christ, they keep begging (men everywhere): Be reconciled to God (accept Christ as Savior, believe on the Lord Jesus). Then follows in verse 21 a powerful expression of the heart of the Gospel of redemption and justification.^{lxxxix}

This interpretation of verse 19 (1) sees in the first portion of the passage (“God was in Christ”) a reference to Christ’s active and passive obedience in the state of humiliation. (2) It allows for a proper translation of the Greek present participles which in their present tense express continued or repeated action. If the reconciliation, or justification and absolution, of the world took place on Easter when Christ rose from the dead, as Pieper holds, aorist forms expressing past and finished occurrence should have been employed. A statement could have been made like the following: “God in Christ reconciled (aorist) the world . . . and He did not impute (aorist). . . .” This interpretation harmonizes with the rest of the Scripture’s teaching concerning justification (that justification is by faith) and with Paul’s use of *katallasso* and *katallagee* (in salvation contexts) in his letters to signify God’s conversion of men from unbelief to faith. It does not here introduce a doctrine of objective reconciliation, or of objective justification, which includes the idea of the cessation of God’s wrath against the unbelieving world at the time of Christ’s resurrection. (4) It provides for an appropriate rendering of the aorist participle: the committal of the word of reconciliation to Paul and to his assistants was in each case a past and finished punctiliar act of God; the aorist, however, may be considered constative, as summing up a number of past punctiliar actions.

A further word regarding the translation of the present participles is in order. The rendering indicates that these are taken as final, expressing purpose. This is justifiable grammatically. Compare Blass-Debrunner-Funk 418(4). In discussing “The conjunctive participle as the equivalent of an adverbial clause” this grammar says: “(4) Final: in classical the future participle is used, but in the NT . . . , more commonly the present participle is used” Luke 7:6 is cited as an example of this construction, and the reader is directed to locus 339(2c) for additional information.^{lxxxii} 339(2c) states that “The present participle can also denote a relatively future action. . . instead of a future participle of purpose” and gives as examples Acts 15:27 and 21:16.^{lxxxiii} A.T. Robertson’s grammar also speaks of Greek participles expressing purpose. In this work’s treatment of final clauses, under “The Participle” it is stated:

The future participle, so common in this construction in the Attic Greek, has nearly vanished from the N.T. as from the rest of the *koinee* . . . the present participle occasionally occurs where purpose is implied. Thus *apestalkamen apaggellontas* (Acts 15:27) Cf. also Mk. 3:31. A good example is Acts 3:26, *apesteilen auton eulogounta*.^{lxxxiv}

Further on Robertson writes:

There are . . . undoubted instances of the present participle to express the notion of purpose, futuristic in conception, though present in form. Add to the instances already given the following: Mk. 3:31 *exoo steekontes apesteilan kalountes*. Here the first participle is only noticeable as the usual linear action (with aorist indicative). The second participle, however, is practically purpose. ‘They sent to him calling him.’ ‘They sent to call him.’ So also Lu. 13:6 *eelthen zeetoon* (13:7) *erchomai zeetoon*. It is not strictly

true that here the present participle means future or subsequent time. It is only that the purpose goes on coincident with the verb and beyond. This prospective present part. (cf. present indicative) appears in Ac. 21:3 *een apophortizomenon ton gomom*. ‘The ship was appointed to unload her cargo.’^{lxxxv}

Scholars preferring Interpretation #1 hold that a periphrastic rendering of *een* with the present participle *katallassoon* is unlikely here. They point out that *een* and *katallassoon* are separated by *en christoo* and *kosmon*; and they hold that the prepositional phrase modifies the verb, while the noun serves as object of the participle. Among grammarians, neither Blass-Debrunner (Funk) nor Robertson^{lxxxvi} indicate that they find periphrasis in the *een* and *katallassoon* of 2 Cor. 5:19.

Interpretation #2

Verse 19 and those following give a sample of the Gospel message brought by Paul and his assistants. They proclaim that God in connection with Christ (whose redemption paved the way for God’s saving activity; and through union with whom individual sinners who were to be saved received faith, forgiveness, life, and salvation from God) was engaged in reconciling (was engaged in this ever since the time of Christ’s public ministry and the completion of his redeeming work on Calvary, and during the years subsequent to his resurrection up to the time Paul writes) the world to Himself (that is, those people in the world in whom God through the Holy Spirit and in connection with Christ worked effectively to accomplish their regeneration), not imputing their trespasses to them (that is, forgiving their sins as they were brought to faith). As far as Paul and his assistants are concerned, God also, when He called them into his professional service, entrusted “us” with (or, deposited in our charge) the Word (or, proclamation) of (or, concerning; objective or qualitative genitive) this reconciliation.—From here on the explanation of verses 20 and 21 is the same as that given in Interpretation #1.

Interpretation #2 (1) sees in *een . . . katallassoon* a periphrastic imperfect, describing continuing action in the past, and in the *mee logizomenos* corresponding continuing action in the past. (2) It allows for a proper translation of the Greek present participles, which express continuing (and in this case, past) action. If the reconciliation, or justification and absolution, of the world took place instantaneously on Easter when Christ rose from the dead, as Pieper holds, aorist forms expressing past and finished occurrence should have been employed. A statement could have been made like the following: “God in Christ reconciled (aorist) the world . . . and He did not impute (aorist) . . .” —Here the arguments in points (3) and (4) under Interpretation #1 above may be added.

(A possible practical benefit attaching to the adoption of Interpretation #2 is that the traditional rendering of verse 19 is retained. Interpretation #1 requires a different translation of this verse.)

A New Testament passage with wording similar to that in 2 Corinthians 5:19 and which sheds light on the meaning of the concept of God’s reconciling the world, as presented in 2 Corinthians 5:19, is Romans 11:15 and its surrounding context. In 11:15 Paul reveals that the casting away of the Jews because of their unbelieving rejection of Christ and his righteousness has in the plan of God brought about world reconciliation, *katallagee kosmou*. It will be noted that the significance of the latter concept, in the Romans 11 context, is this that, since the casting away of the Jews, Gentiles in the world have been and are now being (on a large scale) granted the gifts of faith and salvation through the reconciling activity of God.

Chemnitz understood God’s reconciling of the world, as spoken of in 2 Corinthians 5:19, to mean God’s converting of hosts within the world to saving faith. In the Lutheran scholar’s perception, it was to these believing persons then that God did not impute their sins. He writes: “God the Father reconciles the world to Himself, accepts the believers, not imputing their sins to them.”^{lxxxvii}

Romans 5:18-19

Ara oun hoos di’ henos paraptoomatos eis pantas anthroopous eis katakrima, houtoos kai di’ henos dikaioomatos eis pantas anthroopous eis dikaiosin zoees; hoosper gar dia tees parakoees tou henos

anthroopou hamartooloi katestatheesan hoi op polloi, houtoos kai dia tees hupakoees tou henos dikaiou katestatheesontai hoi olloi.

KJV translation: Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

In a few places in his *Dogmatics* where Dr. Pieper refers to Romans 5:18 and 19 he clearly infers that these verses set forth the doctrine of objective justification. Two passages are cited below. When treating "The Vicarious Satisfaction" (of Christ), he states:

. . . The term vicarious satisfaction reproduces the teaching of the Scripture that through Christ's substitutional obedience and death God's wrath against men was appeased, in other words, His judgment of condemnation was set aside. Rom. 5:18: "By the righteousness (v. 19: obedience) of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." And Rom. 5:10: "When we were enemies (*echthroi*, passive: *Deo invidi*), we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." Luthardt: "A change of attitude on the part of God is meant." 2 Cor. 5:19 furnished additional proof that by the objective reconciliation which Christ has effected a change of heart took place, not in man, but in God And this reconciliation took place not by a fiat of His power, but through the intervention of Christ as Mediator . . . through the interposition of His obedience and suffering ("by the righteousness of One," "by the obedience of One," "by the death of His Son," "One died for all").^{lxxxviii}

Under the section "Objections Raised Against the Vicarious Satisfaction" Pieper includes the comment:

God proceeded in a purely juridical manner. It is juridical throughout to exact the penalty from Christ, who had not deserved punishment, but suffered it, "the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. 3:18). It is juridical throughout, a pure *actus forensis*, when God no longer charges men with their sins ("not imputing their trespasses unto them," 2 Cor. 5:19), but on account of Christ's righteousness pronounces all men justified (Rom. 5:18).^{lxxxix}

The present writer, however, favors an interpretation which sees Paul speaking of justification by faith in both verses 18 and 19 of Romans 5. In 5:14 the apostle had stated that Adam was a type of Christ. This is so, as the explanation following verse 14 shows, because the act of either man affected the entire human race, albeit differently. Adam's one act of sin plunged the race into death and ruin; Christ's one sustained act of obedience (that is, his entire career of vicarious obedience, active and passive elements thereof considered together) provided a righteousness for, atoned for the sins of, and opened the way of life and salvation to, all men. As Adam was head of all sinful humanity connected to him by physical descent, so Christ came to be Head of a new, regenerated humanity connected to Him, through spiritual rebirth and faith, in spiritual union.

Paul writes specifically, according to a careful rendering of verses 15 and 17: "But not as the transgression (literally, fall), so also the gracious gift (the divine gift of justifying righteousness, or this plus life and salvation). For if by the transgression of the one man the many (all men) died, much more the grace of God and the gift in connection with the grace of the one Man Jesus Christ was present (or, available) in abundance for the many." Verse 17: "For if by the transgression of the one man death reigned through the one man, much more those receiving (by faith) the abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one Man Jesus Christ.

With *Ara oun* of verse 18 Paul begins to sum up or recapitulate what he has been saying since verse 12. He states (literally): "As through one man's transgression /or, fall/ there was for all men condemnation (the second *eis* is a sign of the predicate nominative), so also through one Man's righteous act there was for all men

a justifying (act) of (or, that brings) life.” The condemnation mentioned in the first clause was actually meted out to all men descended from Adam. The divine act of justifying which brings with it eternal life as a simultaneous blessing is spoken of in the Gospel, which also invites all men to obtain this justification; but this great justifying act occurs in the case of, and immediately bestows life upon, believers only.

The post-positive *gar* at the beginning of verse 19 indicates that what Paul next says is added in explication of what verse 18 has stated. The apostle writes (literally): “For as through the disobedience of the one man the many (all) were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the one Man the many will be constituted righteous.” “The many” in the second clause are the many among the world of sinners who all along in the New Testament era will be brought to faith by the Holy Spirit and through this faith be constituted righteous, or justified. Believers are referred to. They also comprise a great number, in contrast with the one man who plunged the entire race into sin and death.

This interpretation of verses 18 and 19 notes that, in Paul’s use of the words, “all men” includes “the many,” but “the many” does not necessarily include “all men”; that “the many” in the first clause are not identical with “the many” referred to in the second clause of verse 19: that the apostle, while not indeed indicating that the number of those who are justified is the same as the number of those who are condemned, is interested in making clear the parallel that does exist between the way of justification and the way of condemnation—the action of one man being involved as a cause in either case.

The present writer’s interpretation also sees with reference to the declaration in verse 19b “the many shall be constituted righteous,” *dikaioi katastathesontai hoi polloi*, (1) that the tense of the verb *katastathesontai* is the ordinary future, and not the (contrived) so-called “logical” future, as those hold who find objective justification taught in this passage (for this interpretation to be sustained an aorist form of *kathisteemi* would be required); and (2) that those constituted *dikaioi* can refer in a context like Romans 5 only to those so constituted by faith. With reference to the latter point compare this observation by Gottlob Schrenk in Kittel-Friedrich’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, namely, that according to Pauline usage a fallen sinner can become a *dikaios* only “by receiving in faith the revealed *dikaioisunee theou* (righteousness of God) as *dunamis theou* (power of God) and *sooteeria* (salvation). . . . The *dikaios*, then, is that one who is justified by faith, elsewhere called *dikaiootheis* (literally, one having been accounted righteous) by Paul.”^{xc} According to the Formula of Concord, Epitome and Solid Declaration, the apostle Paul is speaking of justification by faith in both verses 18 and 19 of Romans 5. The Solid Declaration, Article III, states, for example:

Faith is a gift of God whereby we rightly learn to know Christ as our redeemer in the Word of the Gospel and to trust in Him, that solely for the sake of his obedience we have forgiveness of sins by grace, are accounted righteous and holy by God the Father, and are saved forever. Thus the following statements of St. Paul are to be considered and taken as synonymous: “We are justified by faith” (Rom. 3:28), or “faith is reckoned to us as righteousness” (Rom. 4:5), or when he says that we are justified by the obedience of Christ (Rom. 5:19), our only mediator, or that “one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men” (Rom. 5:18).^{xc1}

Martin Luther’s view is the same as that expressed by the confessors in the Formula. He writes:

And this understanding I do not know how to reject; for Paul speaks also in this manner, Rom. 5:18: “As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” Thus, though not all men are justified through Christ, nevertheless He alone is the Man through whom all justification comes. So also here: Although all men are not enlightened, nevertheless He is the Light from which all enlightenment comes. And this manner of speaking the Evangelist has used freely, not avoided, although some might take offense at it that he mentions all men; he thought he wanted to advise such offense since he had explained it both before and afterward and say: The darkness comprehended it not; His own didn’t

accept Him. Such expressions should indeed be strong enough so that no one may say He wanted all men to be enlightened; but that He alone is the Light that lightens every man, and without Him no one will be enlightened. (This is in reference to John 1:5 and 9.)^{xcii}

Again, with regard to Rom. 5:18 he states:

For such comparisons (*Gleichnisse*) were not spoken in order that every item is therefore to be held. For Paul compares, Rom. 5:18, Adam and Christ and says Adam has become a type of Christ, although Adam has caused sin and death to come upon us by inheritance, while Christ, life and righteousness. But the comparison does not lie in the heir but in the results following the heir. For just as sin and death cling to and follow by inheritance all those who are born of Adam, so life and righteousness cling to and follow by inheritance all who are born of Christ. Just as a person might present an unchaste woman who adorns herself before the world out of love for sin as an example of a Christian soul that adorns itself before God, but not for sin as the former.^{xciii}

With reference to Rom. 5:19 he comments:

Furthermore, St. Paul says, Rom. 5:19: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," namely, the one Man who was in grace. He wants to say, Christ alone is holy, righteous, full of grace and truth; He did the will of God, as is written of Him in Ps. 40:9: (8) "I delight to do thy will, O my God," and He was obedient unto the death on the cross (Phil. 2:8). This grace, truth, holiness and righteousness of our Lord we all enjoy; He gives us His word into our mouth and faith into the heart so that we may cling to Him and know that He cleanses us through the washing of water in the word and also shares with us the grace and righteousness which is His. So just as Adam is the main fount of all sin, misery and death, all of which we inherit so that it is called "sin for sin," so also Christ has become the main fount of all grace, truth and life from which we receive the fullness of grace, life, and truth. That's "grace for grace," that we now for Christ's sake also please the Father and that we through Christ receive the Holy Ghost and become righteous."^{xciv}

Martin Chemnitz writes:

But we do not ourselves devise this teaching, that Christ the Mediator has fulfilled the Law for us by the fullest satisfaction of the punishments and by the most perfect obedience and that this righteousness of the Mediator is imputed to the believers, that by it they may be justified before God to life eternal. But this is the specific and perpetual doctrine of the Gospel, of which we shall note down only a few clear statements.

(Here follows the citation of numerous Bible passages including the following)

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). But how? Paul answers in Rom. 4:5: "Because faith is reckoned as righteousness." Not because faith is in itself such a virtue but because it lays hold of, accepts, embraces, and possesses Christ, who is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For this is the righteousness which God imputes without our works to those who are made blessed."^{xcv}

Let a final quotation from Dr. Martin Franzmann's Romans Commentary in the *Concordia Commentary* series bring this discussion of Romans 5:18-19 to a close. In his remarks on verse 19 Franzmann states:

And so Paul states once more the sin of Adam and the righteous act of Christ in terms of their personal relationship to God, in terms of disobedience and obedience. He places side by side the man who grasped at equality with God, disobeyed, and thus brought guilt and death upon his race, and the Son of God who “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . . and became obedient” (Phil. 2:6-8). Through His obedience, which took Him down into a criminal’s death for all, “many will be made righteous.” They shall believe in Him, be baptized in His name, and stand all clothed in Him before their Judge.^{xvii}

Concluding Note

The position of the present writer, that the foregoing New Testament passages teach or refer only to justification by faith, or to reconciliation which consists in the sinner’s conversion, is one that has been taken on the grounds of careful grammatical and hermeneutical considerations and therefore represents, in his judgment, tenable exegesis. He regards his conclusions relative to the Biblical doctrine of justification as in accord with the analogy of faith and in harmony with exegetical understandings of the confessors, early Reformation period fathers, and other teachers in the Lutheran Church. In specific, he deems his determination that words of the *dikaioo*-family as used in “salvation” contexts in Romans and other Pauline epistles refer exclusively to justification by faith is clearly defensible and therefore worthy of consideration in the church; indeed, that this determination is more readily demonstrable as valid than that which sees these words as teaching or referring to so-called objective justification.

Let the Biblical doctrine of justification by grace through faith—the great Lutheran rediscovery at the time of the Reformation—and its related truths continue to be taught and proclaimed in their clarity, purity, and power within the church of the Reformation!

ⁱ *The Book of Concord*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, III, 6, page 540. These words are a part of the Formula’s citation of the German version of the Apology, IV, 2-3. All quotations of the Lutheran Confessions in this paper are taken from Tappert’s work.

ⁱⁱ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), II, 512-513.

ⁱⁱⁱ New Testament passages (only New Testament verses are quoted) in this paper are cited in the English from the King James Version. The transliterations of the Greek and those of the Greek are from Nestle’s text: Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, and Kurt Aland, editors. *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Twenty-Fifth Edition; Stuttgart: Wuerttembergische Bibelanstalt, 1963).

^{iv} Paragraphs 9-17, Tappert 540-541. Cf. also the first five “Affirmative Theses” concerning the “Righteousness of Faith Before God,” Epitome III, 3-7. Ibid, 473.

^v Par. 40-41, *ibid.* 112-113.

^{vi} III, 30, *ibid.* 544.

^{vii} V, 20, *ibid.* 561.

^{viii} III, 56, *ibid.* 549.

^{ix} The action in *hilaskesthai* is with reference to (1) the sins of the people and (2) the sins of the people (whether subsequently believing or unbelieving), and therefore rendering “make expiation for” is preferable to “make reconciliation for,” or “make propitiation for.” The concept of reconciliation, furthermore, is expressed by other Greek words; it will be discussed later.

^x The believing publican is asking God in effect that on the basis of the sacrifices he ordained for sin in the Old Covenant—which sacrifices typify the final sacrifice of Christ—He grants the publican, who places his reliance upon these sacrifices and the Messiah to whom they point, forgiveness (or justification; compare *dedikaioomenos* in verse 14) and not direct his condemning wrath against him.

^{xi} Apol. IV, 57, Tappert, 114.

^{xii} F.C., S.D., III, 57, *ibid.* 549.

^{xiii} Apol. XIII, 8-9, *ibid.* 212.

^{xiv} Apol. XXIV, 23, *ibid.* 253.

^{xv} F.C. Ep., III, 3, *ibid.* 473.

^{xvi} F.C. Ep., III, 6 *ibid.*

^{xvii} F.C. Ep., VI, 5, *ibid.* p. 478.

^{xviii} F.C., S.D., V, 20, *ibid.* 561.

^{xix} Similarly illuminating is the following statement: “Faith’s sole office and property is to serve as the only and exclusive means and instrument with and through which we receive, grasp, accept, and apply to ourselves and appropriate the grace and the merit of Christ in the promise of the Gospel.” F.C. S.D., III, 38, *ibid.* cf. F.C., Ep. III, 5, *ibid.* 473.

^{xx} Par. 48-50, *ibid.* 114. Cf. also: “Paul contends that we are not justified by the law; to the law he opposes the promise of the forgiveness of sins by faith, freely for Christ’s sake. Paul calls us away from the law to this promise...only faith accepts the promise. Therefore it is necessary for the contrite by faith to take hold of the promise of the forgiveness of sins granted for Christ’s sake, and to be sure that freely for Christ’s sake they have a gracious Father. This is what Paul means when he says in Romans 4:16, “That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed;” and in Galatians 3:22, “The Scripture consigned all things to sin, that what was promised to faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.” Apol. XII, 79-81, *ibid.* 193-194. Again: “With the removal of the law and of the traditions, he (Paul) contends that the forgiveness of sins has been promised, not because of our works but freely because of Christ, provided that we accept it by faith; for only faith can accept a promise. Since it is by faith that we accept the forgiveness of sins and by faith that we have a gracious God for Christ’s sake, it is an ungodly error to maintain that we merit the forgiveness of sins by these observances.” Apol. XV, 10-11, *ibid.* 216. Cf. also Apol. IV, 179, *ibid.* 131; XII, 80-80, *ibid.*, 194; XIII, 19-22, *ibid.* 213-214.

^{xxi} Apol. IV, 86, *ibid.* 119.

^{xxii} Apol. IV, 260, *ibid.* 145.

^{xxiii} Apol. IV, 296, *ibid.* 152.

^{xxiv} Apol. XIII, 8-9, *ibid.* 212.

^{xxv} Apol. XV, 10, *ibid.* 216.

^{xxvi} Apol. XXI, 19, *ibid.* 231.

^{xxvii} F.C., S.D., V, 25, *ibid.* 563.

^{xxviii} Is it correct to state simply that faith is a condition of salvation? Yes, indeed. Some in the Synod today are reticent to answer in the affirmative. Note, however, Dr. Walther’s response to a question similar to this: “The question whether the expression ‘we are justified or blessed under the condition that we have faith’ has no foundation, was answered. If one is speaking of the necessity of faith one might use this expression, but not without previously having forestalled any misunderstanding. When Romans 10:9 says “If you believe in your heart...you will be saved,” it is, in its form, a conditional manner having forestalled any misunderstanding. When Romans 10:9 says “If you believe in your heart you will be saved,” it is, in its form, a conditional manner of speaking; but since faith itself is a gift of God which He gives to man, He Himself also satisfies the condition, and only the willful resistance whereby the offered faith is rejected hinders man’s salvation. It is, of course, true that if a person does not believe he cannot be saved.

“Gerhard speaks to this point: “The little word, “if” is either etiological or syllogistic. That is, it indicates either the cause or the result. In the pronouncement of the Law: “If you do this, you shall live,” the little word ‘if’ is etiological, since obedience is the reason because of which eternal life is given to those who keep the law; but in the evangelical promise “If you believe, you will be saved,” the word is syllogistic, for with it the way and means of bestowal determined by God is indicated, which alone befits faith.”

This quotation is from an essay C.F.W. Walther delivered to the Western District Convention held at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Concordia, Missouri, June 2-8, 1875. The essay appears in the volume *Convention Essays*, translated from the German by August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981). The quotation is found on pages 108-109 of *Essays*.

^{xxix} Statements throughout the Confessions set forth the truths summarized in point (5) above. See, e.g., Article II on Free Will, F.C., S.D., *ibid.* 519-539; Apol. IV, 56, *ibid.* 114, and 86, p. 119.

Faith does not as a meritorious human contribution assist in a believer’s justification and salvation. This is so for, indeed, three reasons: first, faith is solely a gift of God the Holy Spirit and not generated by human effort, 1 Corinthians 12:3; Ephesians 2:8,9. Secondly, in the New Testament justification and salvation contexts, faith is not regarded as a meritorious work, as a work done in obedience to God’s law so as to earn his justifying verdict (work-righteousness); rather it is separated from all such works, as in Romans 3:28. Thirdly, faith’s function in justification, according to the New Testament, is wholly instrumental; it is presented as justifying only by virtue of its object. Johann Quenstedt offers this clarifying observation:

“When the hand of a starving man seizes the bread which is offered to it, it is not this taking of the bread which satisfies the man, for he could seize a piece of mud or a stone or something else which could not satisfy him, but his being satisfied depends on the object which he takes to himself and on his eating it; i.e. it depends upon the bread. When the lips of a thirsty man drink water which has been drawn with a bucket from some well, it is not the drinking as such that quenches his thirst, for you can also draw sand or blood with a bucket. No, if his thirst is to be satisfied, the drink which he consumes must have the power to quench thirst. Thus he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness receives it through faith, as the begging hand which receives the bread coming down from heaven (John 6:50, 51) and as the vessel of the thirsting soul draws the water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:14); but it is not this receiving and drinking as such which drives away the spiritual hunger and quenches the thirst. Man does not possess anything of such a nature as can accomplish this, such as his own merits, his own pretended autonomy, satisfactions of which are the invention of the Synagogue of Rome. No, the whole strength of man’s receiving depends on the thing received through faith, the redemption and blood of Jesus Christ.”

These words of Quenstedt are quoted in footnote 30 of Robert Preus’ article titled “The Doctrine of Justification in the Theology of Classical Lutheran Orthodoxy,” which appeared in the Spring, 1965 issue of *The Springfielder*. The latter gives the location of the quotation as *Systema*, P.III, C.8, S.1, Th. 11 (III, 519).

^{xxx} At times the Confessions speak (loosely) of justifying faith as making a man righteous; cf. e.g., Apol. IV, 72, *ibid.* 117: “We want to show first that faith alone makes a righteous man out of an unrighteous one, that is, that it received the forgiveness of sins.” See also par. 78.

^{xxxii} Apol. XXI, 19-20, *ibid.* 231-232.

^{xxxiii} Apol. XXI, 31, *ibid.* 233.

^{xxxiv} Apol. IV, 179-180, *ibid.* 131-132. Cf. F.C., Ep., III, 3-10, *ibid.* 473-474.

^{xxxv} The present writer is convinced on the basis of conversations in recent years with numerous members of the Missouri Synod that many of our more knowledgeable laymen, even pastors, associate in their minds the theological construct “objective justification” with the Scripturally revealed effect of the objectively accomplished and universally efficacious work of Christ, which may be precisely designated as world redemption or ransoming, Jesus’ payment in full for the sins of all men, or his satisfaction of the Father’s justice which demanded payment for human transgression (Matt. 20:28, Gal. 4:4-5; 1 Tim. 2:6; 2 Pet. 2:1). Some of our theological literature is indicative of this and doubtless contributory to such an association of concepts in the church. Consider this paragraph in Ewald Plass’ *What Luther Says* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), II, page 705. It is titled “2203 Objective Justification” and reads, “Christ did indeed suffer for the whole world; but how many are there who believe and cherish this fact? Therefore, although the work of redemption itself has been accomplished, it still cannot help and benefit a man unless he believes it and experiences its saving power in his heart.” Or, note these words of Dr. Francis Pieper, who in treating the topic of “Justification By Faith,” in the locus “The Application of Salvation,” in the second volume of his *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), page 503, writes “When the sinner comes to faith in Christ or in the Gospel, he is at once justified before God by his faith. Since the Gospel offers him the forgiveness of sins gained by Christ for the whole world (objective justification), the acceptance of this offer, by faith, is all that is needed to accomplish his subjective justification. . . . Subjective justification is meant when Paul says (Rom. 3:28): ‘Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith.’”

For reasons to be set forth in Part II, the writer of this paper thinks it best, however, when explaining or referring to the Biblical doctrine of justification in the church today to speak of justification by faith—period—as the Scriptures and also the Lutheran Confessions do. This also would be most closely to follow Paul’s instruction to Timothy, “Hold fast to the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me (2 Tim. 1:13).”

^{xxxvi} Pieper, II, 347-349

^{xxxvii} *Ibid.* 349-351.

^{xxxviii} *Ibid.* 321. The statement of Calov is from his *Bibl. Illust.*, ad. Rom. 4:25

^{xxxix} *Ibid.* 503.

^{xl} *Ibid.* 508.

^{xli} *Ibid.* 552.

^{xlii} *Ibid.* 348.

^{xliii} *Ibid.*

^{xliiii} Apol. IV, 36, Tappert 112.

^{xliv} Apol. IV, 40, *ibid.*

^{xlv} Apol. XII, 32, *ibid.* 186.

^{xlvi} Large Cat., Creed, 68, *ibid.* 420.

^{xlvii} F.C., S.D., 17, *ibid.* 561. It may be noted here that the Lutheran Confessions do speak of Christ’s sacrifice as propitiating God’s wrath and of reconciling the Father to sinful humanity. See, e.g., Article III of the Augsburg Confession and Article XXIV, paragraph 19 of the Apology. In using this terminology they communicate basic Biblical truth, indeed, but express themselves in a manner other than do the Scriptures. For example, Paul, in whose writings words of the *katallassoo* family are found, nowhere uses the word “reconcile” (*katallassoo*) to state that Christ reconciled the Father to the world, or for that matter that God reconciled himself through Christ to the world of sinners. The apostle always speaks of God’s reconciling men to himself in Christ. This matter will be further treated in Part IV of this paper.

In years gone by the present writer had many discussions with the now sainted (Springfield-Fort Wayne) seminary professor Harry Huth, who was a recognized specialist and expert in the Lutheran Confessions, concerning the Symbol’s use of language to the effect that through Christ’s sacrifice God’s wrath was appeased and He was reconciled to men. It was his considered judgement, which he also voiced in the classroom, that with expressions of this kind the confessors meant to indicate that on account of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ and the satisfaction of the divine justice God is able to act, and He acts, in saving grace and mercy toward men, calling them by the gospel and granting them the gifts of faith, forgiveness, life and salvation. Because of Christ’s sacrifice God’s wrath, it may be observed, did not, and does not, compel him to sweep the whole human race at once to its destruction in hell, but He was able to give men time to be brought to repentance and eternal life. “Propitiate” or “appease” or “placate” or “reconcile”, thus conceived, would then mean temporarily to allay, mitigate, or reduce the intensity of the divine wrath against the world of sinners, to restrain its full “flashing forth” against the unregenerate (as this will occur on judgement day and through eternity). These are the ideas, the present writer believes, the confessors wished to communicate—also in the passages from Augustana III and the Apology XXIV referred to above.

The German text of Augustana III, translated by Tappert “to propitiate God’s wrath,” and the Latin text, translated “that he might reconcile the Father to us,” point to the satisfaction accomplished by Christ, who is “the sacrifice not only for the original guilt

but also for the actual sins of all men” (according to the Latin), as the result of which he is enabled in his reign from heaven and through the Holy Spirit to “sanctify, purify, strengthen, and comfort all who believe in him,” and to “bestow on them life and every grace and blessing” (according to the German).

Apology XXIV, designates Christ’s propitiatory sacrifice as “a work of satisfaction for guilt and punishment” that accomplishes the reconciliation of God and the placation of his wrath—both of which results are explanatorily equated with the meriting of the forgiveness of sins for others. According to Isaiah, in Paragraph 23, “the death of Christ is a real satisfaction or expiation for our sins” (German: *Bezahlung fuer die Suenden*); Christ is the “victim” who “was to come to reconcile God and (what is the same thing) make satisfaction for our sins.” These passages from the Augsburg Confession and the Apology indicate that, what is said to be Christ’s reconciliation of the Father to men and his propitiation of the Father’s wrath, signify the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice of his Son as a sufficient payment for the sins of the world to satisfy the divine justice and thus make it possible for Him to save men via the bestowal of his Holy Spirit and the conversion of sinners.

Numerous statements in the Symbols, like those which follow, appear to be corroboratory of this interpretation. “So this propitiator (Christ) benefits us when by faith we receive the mercy promised in him and set it against the wrath and judgment of God.” Apology IV, 82, Tappert page 118. “It is therefore taught that grace cannot be earned, God cannot be reconciled, and sin cannot be atoned for by observing the said human traditions.” Augsburg Confession XXVI, 21, Tappert page 67. “It is an insult to the Gospel to maintain that without faith, *ex opere operato*, a ceremony is a sacrifice that reconciles God and makes satisfaction for sins.” Apology XXIV, 89, Tappert page 266.

Note also the illuminating use of the theological terms in question by Martin Chemnitz: “Such a propitiating and reconciling satisfaction for sins that it would merit remission of sins and do away with eternal death no sinful man could offer for himself, neither could any creature offer it for him...” “And this (redemption), and no other, is the one and only propitiating, reconciling satisfaction for sins, meriting forgiveness of sins and abolishing eternal death. I John 2:2: ‘He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.’ I Tim. 2:5-6: ‘There is one Mediator between God and man...who gave Himself as a ransom for all.’” *Examination of the Council of Trent*, translated by Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), vol. II, pp. 631-632. “God...planned and determined, and made a decree, to send His Son into the flesh, who was not to abolish or destroy the law, so that fulfillment would no longer be necessary for us, but who, made under the law and subject (to it), would in our place perfectly render and discharge his fulfillment and satisfaction for our sins—indeed required of us by the unchangeable judgement of God, but impossible for us—and thus, since the law would plainly be fulfilled for us, merit and obtain (this) that because of His obedience and satisfaction God would deign to be merciful and compassionate toward penitent sinners.” *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments, an Enchiridion*, edited and translated by Luther Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), p. 71.

^{xlviii} Ibid. 206-208.

^{xlix} Apol., IV, 34, *ibid.* 112.

ⁱ Edward Preuss, *The Justification of the Sinner Before God*, translated from the second German edition by Julius A. Friedrich, published in the *Theological Monthly* February 1928 to September 1929 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 15.

ⁱⁱ Ibid, p. 17.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, p. 21.

ⁱⁱⁱⁱ In this connection, attention may be called to the fact that there are proponents of the doctrine of objective justification in Lutheran circles today who state the the Bible teaches only one justification, but that the concepts of objective and subjective justification refer to two sides or aspects of this one justification’ that the objective justification becomes the individual’s own by faith, and thus he is subjectively justified. Romans 3:28, the New Testament *locus classicus* on justification, however, does not speak of the believer’s receiving to himself personally, by faith, a previously existing pronouncement of justification, but of a justificatory verdict that is pronounced at the moment faith is created in the heart; he is justified *pistei*, by means of faith (in verse 30, *ek pisteos*, as the result of faith’ and *dia tees pisteos*, through faith). It should be noted that wherever words of the *dikaioo* family appear in Gospel contexts in Romans and Galatians (the great “justification” epistles) and other Pauline letters which indicate that the apostle is speaking of the sinner’s justification before God, the reference is alone to a divine justifying verdict pronounced upon, or a righteousness imputed to, a person (or persons) who has (have) become a believer (believers). This justifying verdict continues to rest upon each Christian as long as he remains in faith.

^{liv} Tappert, page 30.

^{lv} Ibid. 154.

^{lvi} Ibid. 163.

^{lvii} Ibid. 419.

^{lviii} Ibid. 450.

^{lix} Ibid. 472-473.

^{lx} Ibid. 478.

^{lxi} Ibid. 543.

^{lxii} Ibid. 563

^{lxiii} Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, translated by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, c. 1966), p. 225.

^{lxiv} Ibid. 226.

^{lxv} This citation is from *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments, An Enchiridion*, edited and translated by Luther Poellot, page 72. Chemnitz excellently elucidates the Biblical doctrine of justification in his *Enchiridion* sections subtitled “The Gospel,” “Justification,” and “Faith,” pages 68-84.

^{lxvi} *Ibid.* 72-73.

^{lxvii} *Ibid.* 73.

^{lxviii} *Examination of the Council of Trent*, translated by Fred Kramer, vol. I, pages 499-501. Chemnitz’ entire discussion of justification and faith in volume I of his *Examination*, pages 455-611, clearly unfolds the Biblical teaching with regard to these central Christian doctrines and, like the presentation in his *Enchiridion*, may be studied with profit.

^{lxix} These statements are quoted in essays written by Robert D. Preus, the first two in the essay on justification which appeared in the Spring 1965 issue of *The Springfielder*, the last two in a paper entitled “Justification as Taught by Post-Reformation Lutheran Theologians,” which was presented to a meeting of the Synod’s two seminary faculties held at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, March 26, 1982. In these essays the locations of the four quotations are given, respectively, as follows: (1) Mentzer, B. *Exegesis Augustanae Confessionis. (Opera Latina, Francofurti 1669. I, 60.)* (2) Quenstedt, *Systema*, P. III, C.7, P.1, Th. 19 (III, 525). (3) Quenstedt, *Systema*, Par. III, C. III, S. II, q. 5, Dist. 4/1715 ed. II, 409. (4) Calov, *Apodixis Articularum fidei*, Lueneberg, 1684, p. 249.

Early in the paper given before the joint faculties Preus observed: “The term justification is never used (by the post-Reformation Lutheran fathers) as taking place prior to faith except in a few passing statements or by implication in the exegesis of certain passages. Rather it is said that justification was procured, obtained, acquired, and brought about as a result of Christ’s work.

^{lxx} Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, translated in 1899 from the German and Latin of the third revised edition by Charles Hay and Henry Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 424-425.

^{lxxi} Piper, 348.

^{lxxii} *Ibid.* 321.

^{lxxiii} Verses 23-25 are a “we” section (*heemas, tois pisteuousin, heemon, heemon, heemon*). It would appear to be improper to extract a general proposition concerning objective, universal justification from a verse (25) in this context.

^{lxxiv} *Apol.*, III, I, Tappert, 107. It may be noted also that in *F.C., S.D.*, V, 22, Tappert, 562, Romans 4:25 with its “our justification” reference is cited in a parallel with two other “we” passages, both of which signify believers in Christ. The obvious implication is that “our” in the quoted Rom. 4:25 signifies believers also (and not the entire world including the unregenerate) in the view of the authors of the Formula.

Albrecht Oepke writes under *dia* in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, II*, edited and translated from the German by Godfrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c. 1964), p. 70: “In R. 4:25 the final connection between the resurrection of Christ and justification can be emphasized because in the preceding verse justifying faith is characterized as *pistis epi ton egeiranta Ieesoun*.”

^{lxxv} *Luthers Werke*, edited by Johann G. Walch (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1880-1910), III, 656. This English translation was prepared by Vernon H. Harley, pastor of Saint Paul’s Lutheran Church in Fairmont, Minnesota. Harley has prepared helpful English translations for a number of other comments of Luther on passages from Romans to which Pieper refers in presenting the doctrine of objective justification, but which Luther sees as teaching justification by faith. The remaining quotations from *Luthers Werke* which appear in the present paper are translations by Harley.

^{lxxvi} *Ibid.* XI, 581. See also XII, 147-148.

^{lxxvii} *Examination*, I, 533. See also I, 503-504 and I, 530.

^{lxxviii} Pieper, 347-348.

^{lxxixlxxix} Friedrich Buechsel writes under the heading “*Katallassein* in the NT” in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, I*, edited and translated from the German by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c. 1964), p. 255. “a. In the NT it is only Paul who uses the word of the relation between God and man, and *katalassein* is used only of God, *katallageenai* only of man. God reconciles us or the world to Himself in 2 C. 5:18 f. He is not reconciled. Nor does he reconcile Himself to us or to the world. On the other hand, we are reconciled to God in R. 5:10, or reconciled ourselves to Him in 2 C. 5:20. Thus God and man are not on equal terms in relation to reconciliation. Reconciliation is not reciprocal in the sense that both equally become friends when they were enemies. The supremacy of God over man is maintained in every respect.

“*katallassein* denotes a transformation or renewal of the state between God and man, and therewith of man’s own state. In 2 C. 5:18 it is introduced as the basis of the most comprehensive renewal possible for man, namely, that he has become a new creature, that old things have passed away and that all things have become new. In R. 5:10, too, it denotes an incisive change. We are no longer *echthroï, asebeis, astheneis*, (v.6) *hamartooloi* (v.8), but the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts (v.5). There is a change, not merely in the disposition of man or his legal relationship to God, but in the total state of his life. On the other hand, it cannot be maintained that there has been any change of mind on the part of God, since His gracious will had been revealed long before in the O.T.”

With regard to the concept of reconciliation in the New Testament Chemnitz points out: “For when it is said in Scripture that one is reconciled to another, this is properly understood not of the innocent party, but that the party which offended is reconciled to the other, as is shown in Rom. 5:10: ‘While we were enemies we were reconciled to God.’ Matt. 5:23-24: ‘If your brother has anything against you, go and be reconciled to your brother.’”

^{lxxx} Pieper, 347-348.

^{lxxxii} Cf. Buechsel in *TDNT* under *katallassoo*, I, 257. "The ministry of the divine messengers through whose work there is accomplished the renewal of the individuals who constitute the world, is the ongoing execution of reconciliation. 'Our' reconciliation is concluded, and Paul can speak of it in the aorist (R. 5:9, 10, 11; 2 C. 5:18). But this is not so with the reconciliation of the world. The phrase *een katallassoon* in 2 C. 5:19 does not denote a concluded work: 'He was present to reconcile the world to himself'; when and where this work will be concluded is not brought under consideration in 2 C. 5:19-20."

^{lxxxii} Blass and A. DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (ninth-tenth German edition revised and translated by Robert W. Funk; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, c. 1961), pp. 215-216.

^{lxxxiii} *Ibid.* 175.

^{lxxxiv} A.T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Second Edition, New York: George H. Doran Company, 1915), p. 991.

^{lxxxv} *Ibid.* 1115-1116.

^{lxxxvi} Robertson states that Paul uses only three periphrastic imperfects; the examples are Gal. 1:22 and 23; and Phil. 2:26. *Ibid.* 888.

^{lxxxvii} *Examination* II, 72.

^{lxxxviii} Pieper, 346.

^{lxxxix} *Ibid.* 354-355. Cf. also 398-399.

^{xc} II, 191. Leon Morris in his *Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, second edition (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), p. 246, makes the same point. He comments with reference to Rom. 5:19: "It hardly needs to be pointed out that faith on the part of the recipient of the divine gift is implied here, just as the activity of Christ is implied in the passages we have just been considering where salvation is linked with faith." Then he adds: in its definitive Christian significance "*dikaïos* is characteristically used (in the New Testament) to denote those accepted with God, and...that men are accepted with Him, i.e. are righteous, only on the grounds of their faith and of the work of Christ." –Cf. Albrecht Oepke's similar conclusion in his article on *kathisteemi* where he deals with Rom. 5:19, *TDNT*. OOO. 445-446.

^{xcii} III, 11-12, Tappert, 541. See also III, 57, pp. 549-550; and Epitome, III, 1-3, pp. 472-473.

^{xciii} *Luthers Werke*, XI, 186. This translation and the two which follow are those of Vernon Harley.

^{xciii} *Ibid.* 510, par. 3. Cf. also XII, 850, par. 32. in his preface to Paul's Epistle to the Romans Luther offers among his introductory remarks to the fifth chapter these statements: "After this he (Paul) digresses and makes a pleasant excursion, telling whence come sin and righteousness, death and life, and comparing Adam and Christ. He means to say that Christ had come as a second Adam bequeathing his righteousness to us through a new spiritual birth in faith, just as the first Adam bequeathed sin to us through the old fleshly birth." *Luthers Works*, vol. 35 titled *Word and Sacrament, I*, edited by Theodore Bachmann and Helmut Lehmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 375.

^{xciv} *Luthers Werke*, VII, 1690.

^{xcv} *Examination*, I, 502-503.

^{xcvi} Martin Franzmann, *Concordia Commentary, Romans* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1969), p. 103.