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Objective Justification

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Objective Justification.

(Concluded.)

Does 2 Cor. 5, 19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," treat of the objective justification or of the subjective justification or of both? We insist that these statements refer to the objective justification exclusively. The words *κόσμον* and *αὐτοῖς* (equivalent to *κόσμος*) absolutely preclude the reference to the subjective justification. That was our first proposition. We now come to our second proposition: There is nothing in the text that forbids the reference to the objective justification, that calls for the subjective justification. In discussing this second proposition, we are in a manner taking on an *opus supererogationis*. Our first proposition has settled the case once for all. The *κόσμον* — *αὐτοῖς* leaves no room here for the subjective justification. We are frank to say that we approach the second proposition with our mind made up, with a preconceived notion of the right sort. We know *a priori* that there is something wrong with the arguments presented by the proponents of the subjective-justification interpretation. Still, the discussion will not prove altogether profitless. Calling upon them to produce their arguments, we are putting them under the obligation of proving the apostle inept in the use of language. In arguing their case, they must needs accuse the apostle of having used the term *κόσμος* as the object of justification when he actually did not mean *the world*. Thus our second proposition will in the end serve as a strong support of our first proposition.

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

This is the argument: "2 Cor. 5, 18—20 is badly bungled by many, notably the Missourians. Preconceived notions violate the highly significant tenses. Paul speaks of himself and his assistants: God, the 'One who did reconcile us (not only objectively, but also subjectively) to Himself through Christ and did give to us the ministration of this reconciliation (the service of preaching it)'—two aorists, past, historical. Then with *ὡς εἶπεν*: 'that God was in Christ, engaged in reconciling the world, by not reckoning to them (individuals) their transgressions (two present, durative, iterative participles), and having deposited in our care the Word of this reconciliation.' This is again an aorist: He did give us the ministry of

this reconciliation — He did place in our care the Word of this reconciliation, namely, for this our ministry. Thus as Christ's ambassadors, Paul adds, we beg you: 'Be reconciled to God.' And because of these reasons the words "not reckoning to them their transgressions" must be understood as referring to the personal, subjective reconciliation, cannot be understood as stating that "on Easter morning God forgave all sins to every individual sinner in the world." (See entire passage as quoted on p. 507 f. of this magazine.)

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

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

Does our author take the position that *λογιζόμενος* has the force

of a verb in the present tense? The article under discussion does not say so explicitly, but the exposition of 2 Cor. 5, 14—21, in the same author's *Eisenach Epistle Selections*, uses this language: "μὴ λογιζόμενος, present participle, retaining its present force and not made an imperfect by ἦν" (p. 492). Others take the same position. *Commentary of Lange-Schaff*: "The words μὴ λογιζόμενος have the force of a verb in the present tense, for they assert that God is not reckoning unto men their trespasses. . . . It implies that God was applying the benefits of salvation by Christ to individuals (αὐτοῖς). This is set forth by means of a present participle, because the act was continuously to be repeated." *Meyer's Commentary*: "Since He does not reckon (*present*) to them their sins." Revised translation by Carl Weizsaecker, 1892: "Ja, so ist es: Gott war es, der in Christus die Welt mit sich selber versoehte, indem er ihnen ihre Suenden nicht anrechnet und unter uns aufrichtete das Wort von der Versoehnung." While not all of those who find in λογιζόμενος the force of a verb in the present tense accept the subjective-justification theory,—Meyer repudiates it absolutely,—the subjective-justification-theory men take the position that because a present participle is used in setting forth God's act of not imputing trespasses, this act of God cannot be an act of the past, but must be an act going on subsequently to the ἦν and that this cannot refer to anything else than the subjective justification. Lange-Schaff says explicitly that it cannot have the meaning: "God *did* not impute (imperfect) to men their trespasses."

Our answer to this is, first of all: It must be shown that the present participle here *must be taken* as a verb in the present tense. It is not sufficient to show that it *can* be so taken. The assertion is made that it is a bungling of the text to make the statement "not imputing their trespasses unto them" refer to an act of the past. It must therefore be shown that the text forbids us to "make the μὴ λογιζόμενος an imperfect by the ἦν." The rules of the Greek grammar do not forbid it. The grammarians tell us that "as the aorist participle is *timeless* and punctiliar, so the present participle is *timeless* and durative" and "that the time comes from the principal verb." (A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 1115. 891.) According to this rule the λογιζόμενος is determined as to time by the ἦν. In speaking of God's not-imputing of trespasses, the apostle has an act of the past in mind. That is the common Greek usage. We are loath to adduce proofs for this. This is certainly an *opus supererogationis*. But we are forced to undertake it in order to show that our interpretation has the authority of the Greek grammar back of it. Take Rom. 5, 10: "If, when we were (ὄντες) enemies, we were reconciled to God," etc. The present participle, "being enemies," takes its time from the aorist: we were

reconciled; it denotes a past state, coincident with the principal verb. Rom. 5, 8 affords another illustration of this rule. Nearly every page of the New Testament presents similar examples. What would you make of Acts 5, 5? "Hearing these words"—did that take place after Ananias gave up the Ghost? So we are not breaking a rule of the Greek grammar if we let λογιζόμενος take its time from the principal verb, from the ἦν, seeing that it is nothing but a participle. If in 2 Cor. 5, 19b the participle "is not made an imperfect by the ἦν," we have a most remarkable exception to the rule. And strong reasons must be offered to justify an interpretation which goes against the common rule. The fact that aorist participles are used before and after the present participle λογιζόμενος proves absolutely nothing. They all fall under the same rule—they all (unless an exception can be established) take their time from the principal verb. What difference does it make as to the time that in Acts 5, 5 we have a present participle, ἀκούων, side by side with an aorist participle, πεσών? So we are going to keep on taking the λογιζόμενος as applying to an act of the past because of the ἦν. Whoever objects to that must point out some good reason why Paul here departed from the common rule. And let us remember that the rule is so well established that only reasons of the very strongest kind could justify the exception. (We shall, of course, always bear in mind that all attempts to change the objective justification into the subjective justification are predestined to come to grief on the rock κόσμος.)

Is it at all possible to give a present participle in connection with a verb of the past tense the force of a verb in the present tense? We need not devote much time to that question. One might appeal to the rule as given by Blass-Debrunner, § 339: "2. Das Part. Praes. kann auch eine relativ zukunfftige Handlung bezeichnen, und zwar in verschiedenen Nuanzen," or by Robertson, p. 892: "(h.) Past Action still in Progress. This may be represented by the pres. part. . . (i.) 'Subsequent' Action. . . ." But we are not now concerned with the question whether it is possible thus to take our present participle, but with the question whether it *must* be so taken. What are the reasons why Meyer, for instance, departs from the rule? (The article under discussion does not mention any reasons.) Meyer says: "If, as is *usually* done, the participial definition μὴ λογιζόμενος is taken in the imperfect sense as a more precise explanation of the *modus* of the reconciliation, there arises the insoluble difficulty that δέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν also would have to be so viewed and to be taken consequently as an element of the reconciliation, which is impossible, since it expresses what God has done *after* the work of reconciliation in order to *appropriate* it to men." We fail to see the insoluble difficulty. Certainly the establishment of the ministry of the reconciliation has nothing to do with effecting the objective justification. But why those who take

the *μὴ λογιζόμενος* as a more precise explanation of the *modus* of the reconciliation and are thus compelled to put it in the imperfect, past, would be thereby compelled to make the establishment of the ministry a factor in the reconciliation (objective), is not at all apparent. Putting both acts—the non-imputation and the institution of the means of grace—on the same plane as to time, both lying in the past, certainly does not compel us to put them on the same plane as to their relation to the reconciliation. If there are other reasons compelling the interpreter to assume that Paul here departed from the common rule requiring the participle to take its time from the principal verb, we are ready to discuss them. The reason given has created no doubt in us. “Darüber, dass *λογιζόμενος* in seiner Beziehung auf *ἢν καταλλάσσω* Partizipium des Imperfekts ist und nicht des Praesens (gegen Meyer), kann doch wohl kein Zweifel bestehen.” (V. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, II, I, p. 327.)

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

Let us now examine the argument in the second form, which is built up on the fact that the Greek present participle denotes durative, linear action and the aorist participle punctiliar action. The argument is, as far as we can see: Since the *λογιζόμενος* clause uses a present participle, while the *θέμενος* clause and the other clauses use the aorist

participle, the *λογιζόμενος* clause cannot, like the other clauses, refer to a past, accomplished act; the apostle would have had to change the *λογιζόμενος* into the aorist if he had had an accomplished act in mind. "Two aorists, past, historical. — God was in Christ, engaged in reconciling the world, by not reckoning to them (individuals) their transgressions (two present, durative, iterative participles) and having deposited in our care the Word of this reconciliation. This is again an aorist." First of all, we move to strike out the "iterative." Simply for this reason: While the present participle expresses durative action, it does not always express iterative action. The iterative action would fit in very well with the subjective-justification theory. No doubt about that. Lange-Schaff: "This is set forth by means of a present participle, because the act was continuously to be repeated." But since the argument is that the present participle compels the subjective-justification sense, it would have to be shown that the present participle invariably denotes iteration. That cannot be shown. Mark 14, 54, for instance, protests against such a rule: "*ἦν συνεκαθήμενος*" — Peter was sitting. That does not denote iterative action. Again: "In *τοὺς σωζομένους* (Acts 2, 47) the idea is probably iterative, but the descriptive durative is certainly all that is true of *τοὺς ἀγιαζομένους* in Heb. 10, 14." (Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 891.) So let us drop the "iterative" and confine ourselves to the "durative." If the subjective-justification theory cannot be proved with the "durative," the "iterative" can in no way help out.

This, this, is the question: Does the fact that the present participle denotes durative action prove that the apostle could not have had the objective justification in mind? Or more precisely: Since he uses the aorist (*θίμενος*) in predicating the institution of the preaching of the Word of Reconciliation, which is an act that is finished and concluded, does his employment of the present participle (*λογιζόμενος*), in describing the non-imputation of sins, justification, prove that he could not have been speaking of an act which is finished and concluded, such as the objective justification is? Our answer is: You can prove durative action here, but you cannot prove durative action in the form of the subjective justification. You cannot prove that the durative concept gives no sense when applied to the objective justification. If we can show that it gives good sense, we have, we will not say, gained our point, — for our first proposition, insisting on the *αὐτοῖς* = *κόσμον*, did that once for all, — but we have shown the futility of the argument based on the "durative." We readily admit that, if the apostle wanted to describe the subjective justification here, the present participle would fit in very well (though, of course, some other word would have had to be substituted for the *αὐτοῖς*). But we do not at all admit that it could not be used in describing the act of God whereby He objectively justified the world. The apostle might have

used the aorist participle. But does his use of the present participle inject a strange, monstrous, unscriptural notion into the matter? "God was in Christ, reconciling the world." God reconciled the world through the vicarious birth, circumcision, life, suffering, and death of Jesus. The reconciliation was effected by the life and death, and sealed and proclaimed by the resurrection, of Christ — and all of this made up the objective reconciliation, the universal justification. Every act in the life of Christ had to do with it. When Christ was circumcised, and when He was crucified, God was viewing all human beings as paying the penalty of their sins. When Christ was crucified, God said: The sins of the world are no longer imputed to them. When He raised Christ, He declared: All men may know that their sins are no longer imputed to them. "Was aber den Unterschied der Zeitform betrifft, in welcher die beiden mit *ἦν* verbundenen Partizipien stehen, so will ja das eine derselben ein andauerndes, in der ganzen Geschichte Christi sich vollbringendes Tun — denn an die noch fortdauernde Zueignung der Versöhnung laesst ja das *ἦν* nicht denken —, das andere dagegen eine mit der Bestellung des Amts sofort geschehene Tat Gottes bezeichnen." (V. Hofmann, *Der Schriftbeweis*, II, I, p. 328.) We shall not be dogmatic about this. Some may know of a better interpretation. But we do say that the interpretation given violates no law of Greek grammar and no teaching of Scripture. It agrees with grammar and Scripture. It is a possible interpretation, and that is all we need in order to establish our present case. We are combating the argument that the use of the present participle cannot possibly yield a good sense if the objective justification is meant.

We have something more to say on this point. Even if we could not *demonstrate* that the present participle is most aptly used here, the fact that the apostle used it instead of the aorist participle would not be decisive. And that for two reasons. 1) It cannot in all cases be shown why the Greek writers chose the present participle instead of the aorist, and *vice versa*. In many cases it seems to have been more or less a matter of chance. At any rate, we are not always able to assign the exact reason for the choice. No man can blame us for saying that we do not know the reason. And we would have the right to say it in the case of v. 19. We do say it in the case of Acts 5, 5. Why did the writer use the present participle in the case of the *ἀκούων* and the aorist in the case of the *πιστών*? We say it in the case of 1 Pet. 2, 17. Why the aorist *τιμῆσθε* side by side with the other imperatives in the present tense? 2) It is well to bear in mind the rule: "But usually the present participle is merely descriptive." (Robertson, *Grammar*, p. 891.) It may be used for the purpose of *describing* an act without emphasizing the duration. The grammarians call it the "*descriptive durative*." You must not stress the

"durative" too much. If it is apparent in 2 Cor. 5, 19b, well and good. If not, let the "descriptive" suffice. And that is certainly a most fitting description and definition of the objective justification: not imputing their trespasses unto the world.

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

In conclusion we should like to, first, direct attention to a rather fine presentation of the doctrine of the objective justification given by Dr. Lenski on the basis of 2 Cor. 5, 14—21 and then add a few general remarks. We read in *The Eisenach Epistle Selections*, p. 489 f.: "(V. 18.) 'Who has reconciled us to Himself through Christ.' . . . The pronoun *us* in no way restricts this reconciliation; for this embraces 'the world' (19); but Paul here speaks of himself and his fellow-laborers, explaining how both their work and the motives with which they carry it on are 'of God.' . . . V. 19. 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.' . . . This embraced *the world*, every human being; note the 'all' in v. 14. The attempt of Hodge to reduce also this word to mean only 'the class of beings towards whom God was manifesting Himself as propitious' (*Commentary*, 144) shows how Calvinists must violate the plain words of Scripture to make room for their limited atonement. They thus take away the one all-sufficient comfort of poor sinners that they, every one without an exception, are embraced in 'the world' which God reconciled unto Himself.—The next two participles, *λογιζόμενος* and *θεμενος*, are evidently parallel; but the latter is an aorist, and at the same time it states something that cannot be viewed as a part of the reconciling act itself. The two participles must therefore be taken as pointing out two important facts connected with the reconciling act of God: God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, and so He is now *not reckoning unto them their trespasses* (*μὴ λογιζόμενος*, present participle, retaining its present force, and not made an imperfect by *ἦν*), and *having committed unto us the Word of Reconciliation* (*καὶ θεμενος*, in a past definite act, but one following the reconciling act itself). God reckoned the trespasses of the world

to Christ when Christ died and paid the world's penalty on the cross, and so ever after God does not reckon these trespasses to the world, does not treat the world with wrath and condemnation, casting it from Him forever, but, looking to Christ and His atoning merit, He turns all His love and grace to the world and offers it the pardon and salvation Christ has prepared, v. 20. The *αὐτοῖς*, *unto them*, points to the individual sinners which make up the sum total called 'world' and in *παρὰ τῶμα* likewise their guilt is viewed as a multitude of trespasses, not as one single mass of sin. So we may say, every single sin of every single sinner was laid on Christ, and so is not now charged against the sinner by a reconciled God; if one single sin were so charged against you or me, our hope of salvation would be shut out from the start. The universal non-imputation here spoken of as the direct result of God's reconciling act and as embracing every sinner as included already in the 'world' must be clearly distinguished from the personal non-imputation of sin which takes place only for those sinners who personally accept Christ and the reconciliation effected in him. The latter is based on the former and is always connected with faith; and it is the latter which is called 'justification,' or 'justification by faith,' in the constant language of Scripture, of our Confessions, and of our preaching and teaching generally (Rom. 3, 28; 4, 7, 8; etc.). We here find ourselves in substantial agreement with Dr. Lenski. We do not accept his view on the force of the present participle *λογιζόμενος*. We do not accept his statement that "justification" denotes only the subjective justification in the constant language of Scripture (see Rom. 5, 18, 19; 4, 25) and of our Confessions (see p. 509 of this magazine); but on the main point we are in hearty agreement. We agree with him that 2 Cor. 5, 19 speaks of the universal non-imputation of trespasses as embracing every sinner as included already in the "world"; and he cannot but agree with us that on Easter morning God non-imputed, forgave, all sins to every individual sinner in the world.

It will do no harm to give the rest of Dr. Lenski's statement. He proceeds: "If we use 'justification' also for the former act, we must guard carefully against confusing the two, the more as some have failed grievously in this respect." A footnote here states: "The mistake here referred to consists of making the justification of the world, which took place at the death of Christ, the only justifying act of God, thus leaving no room for the act by which God pronounces each individual sinner free from guilt the moment he comes to faith. This error is aided by the faulty terminology: 'objective justification' and 'subjective justification.' Usually the former is taken to mean God's justifying sentence regarding the whole world. The best name for this, if one wishes to speak of it as a justification, is *universal*

justification. By the second they who use the term generally mean the appropriation of 'objective justification' through faith. It is apparent at a glance that 'subjective justification' in this sense is no act of God at all, but merely a change that takes place in us. Here the faultiness of these terms appears. When God pronounces a poor sinner who believes in Christ free from guilt, this is altogether an objective act of God, one that takes place outside of us, in heaven above. The name for this is *personal justification*. . . . The "mistake" here referred to deals with a myth, which has been sufficiently dealt with in the July number of this magazine. As to the "faulty terminology," we need not discuss that matter now. The author himself, in the *Pastor's Monthly*, uses similar terms: "*objective reconciliation*," "*subjective reconciliation*." We have not the least aversion to the terms universal justification, personal justification. We shall not quarrel about terms, seeing that we are agreed on the main matter involved.

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

2) The chief purpose, however, is to keep this article before the people for its own sake. It cannot be presented and studied too often. Its vital relation to the subjective, personal justification, justification by faith, cannot be stressed too strongly. It forms the basis of the justification by faith and keeps this article free from the leaven of Pelagianism. Unless the sinner knows that his justification is already an accomplished fact in the forum of God, he will imagine that it is his faith, his good conduct, which moves God to forgive

him his sins. And unless he knows that God had him personally in mind in issuing the general pardon on Easter morning, he will have no assurance of his justification. There can be no assurance under the doctrine that God justified the world, indeed, the world as a vague abstract and hazy generality, but not every single individual in the world. In the words of Dr. Stoeckhardt: "The entire Pauline doctrine of justification and particularly the entire comfort of justification stands and falls with the special article of the general justification. This establishes it beyond peradventure that justification is entirely independent of the conduct of man. And only in this way the individual can have the assurance of his justification. For it is an incontrovertible conclusion: Since God has already justified all men in Christ and forgiven them their sins, I, too, have a gracious God in Christ and forgiveness of all my sins." (*Commentary on Romans*, p. 264.)

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

3) One other point needs to be brought out. Are we ready to say that the sins of all men, the sins *also of the unbelievers*, are for-

given them? That is exactly what objective, universal, justification means. And one who refuses to take the objective justification to mean exactly that, cannot, if he knows the meaning of the terms, teach a justification by faith. Here there are but two alternatives. The first is: Man is justified by faith, by accepting the pardon issued to all in the Gospel, by relying on the objective justification, the forgiveness of sins obtained for him before he believed. The second is: There is no objective justification; the only justification there is takes place when a sinner believes; on account of, or on the condition, of his faith God forgives him his sins. What does justification "by faith" mean in this second alternative? What does the sinner believe? This, that God has already forgiven him his sins for Christ's sake? No, for there is no objective justification. What, then, is the function of faith? It cannot be the apprehending medium; for there is nothing offered, Christ has not gained the forgiveness that might be offered. So it is "faith" that effects the change in God's heart; God forgives sin because of faith as a human achievement or the fulfilment of a condition imposed by God. Thus justification by "faith" is no longer a justification by faith, a justification as a free gift, but a justification by works, in consequence of man's right conduct. Justification by "faith" has become a Pelagianistic, synergistic affair. Are we ready to say that God has already forgiven the sins of all men, of the unbelievers? Dr. Pieper characterizes the theology of those who abhor this thought in these words: "Ihmels vacillates also in the matter of justification. In *Zentralfragen* (p. 119) he seems to accept an *objective* justification, but in *R. E.*³, XVI, 506, he denies it definitively; for he refuses to recognize this as 'the content' of faith: *Deum placatum ESSE*, and quotes from the *Corp. Ref.*, VIII, 580, the words attributed to Melancthon: "*Horribilis impietas est dicere omnibus hominibus, etiam non credentibus, remissa esse peccata.*" This statement, in the first place, directly contradicts Scripture (2 Cor. 5, 19: *μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν*), and in the second place, if this statement were true, it would no longer be possible to teach that man is justified *by faith*. It is, by the way, in doubt whether Melancthon is the author of the document containing this statement. . . . For that matter, the denial of the objective justification fits the position of Melancthon in so far as his *theological* mind was dominated by synergism. He was thus disposed in 1530 and 1536 to surrender the *sola fide* and actually did it in the Leipzig Interim (G. Plitt, *R. E.*², VI, 777). Synergism involves the denial of the *objective* reconciliation and of the *sola fide*." (*Chr. Dogmatik*, II, 672.)

TH. ENGELDER.
