

Objective Justification: Part I

By J.P.H. Meyer

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Since Dr. Lenski's *Interpretation of Romans* appeared in 1936, it was my intention to write a brief article on the Scripture basis for the doctrine of so-called objective justification. Since the publication of the *Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church* a restudy of this doctrine has become imperative. It is not my purpose to treat the matter exhaustively, but merely to state a few of the salient facts in order to stimulate further investigation.

The ALC *Declaration* mentions justification in "I. Universal Plan of Salvation etc." under A: God "also purposes to justify those who have come to faith." Justification, according to the wording of this statement, presupposes, temporally or logically, the inception of faith: first faith, then justification of the believer. Do these words mean what they seem to say ?

In order to evaluate them properly one must bear in mind the purpose for which they were written. The following words of the *Declaration* require no comment: "We also believe that in regard to the points touched upon in Sections I - IV the doctrines stated in the *Brief Statement* are correct. However, we were of the opinion that it would be well in part to supplement them in the manner stated above, in part also to emphasize those of its points which seemed essential to us" (VI, B, 4. - Q. S., July, 1938, p. 212). To this must be added the phrase of point 5 of the Sandusky resolutions which demands that the *Brief Statement* must be "viewed in the light of our *Declaration*" (Q. S., January, 1939, p. 51).

The *Brief Statement* contains also a confession concerning justification, which evidently did not quite satisfy the representatives of the ALC, nor did it later satisfy the ALC convention. According to the conviction of the ALC the *Brief Statement* either failed to enumerate all the essential parts of justification, and has to be supplemented, or at least it failed to stress properly some important point

What, then, is the confession of the *Brief Statement* on justification, which seemed so in need of supplementing and re-emphasizing according to the opinion of the ALC? The sum and substance of justification is stated very concisely thus: "Scripture teaches that God has already declared the whole world to be righteous in Christ, Rom. 5:19; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 4:25; that therefore not for the sake of their good works, but without the works of the Law, by grace, for Christ's sake, He justifies, that is, accounts as righteous, all those who believe in Christ, that is, believe, accept, and rely on, the fact that for Christ's sake their sins are forgiven." This is the statement that seems unsatisfactory to the ALC, which it is ready to accept only with certain reservations.

What does the ALC *Declaration* state when thus viewed as a proper interpretation, emendation, supplement to the *Brief Statement*? It presents justification as an act which God performs regarding such as "have come to faith." The deviation from the *Brief Statement* is twofold: justification is performed on individuals only, while the *Brief Statement* speaks of a justification of "the whole world"; and again, faith is in some way a prerequisite for justification, while the *Brief Statement* holds it to be merely the receiving organ which "accepts" forgiveness as an accomplished "fact".

In order to show as clearly as possible what the ALC means to say when they eliminate the justification of the world, commonly called objective justification, from the doctrine of justification, I here embody in full Dr. Lenski's presentation of the matter from his remarks on Rom. 1:17.

The great theme of Romans is the Sinner's *Personal* Justification by Faith. That the basis of this personal justification is Christ's blood and righteousness, effective for the whole world on the day that he died and rose again, Paul brings out in many places, beginning with 3:22, etc. Especially notable is 5:10-11, where we have Paul's own term for what Christ has done: *katallage* (*katallassein*) reconciliation (to reconcile). This reconciliation embraced the whole world of sinners and was thus 'without faith, prior to and apart from faith.' When Christ died on

the cross he cried: *Tetelesthai*, It has been finished! (i.e. and stands so forever). Then and there the whole world of men was reconciled to God by Christ. The resurrection of Christ only corroborated the tremendous fact of the world's reconciliation. The Scripture term for this is *katallage*, reconciliation, – the whole world of sinners was made completely other (*allos*; *kata* perfective). Christ's resurrection shows that God accepted Christ's sacrifice for the world, that Christ's blood had indeed reconciled the whole world to God. One may call God's raising up Christ God's *declaration* to this effect, and because it is such a declaration one may call it 'the universal justification of the whole world.' Yet to use the word 'justification' in this way is no gain, for it is liable to confuse the ordinary man; we are fully satisfied with the Scriptural word 'reconciliation.' Based on this *apolytrosis* (ransoming) or *katallage* (reconciliation), 3:24; 5:11, is the individual's *Personal* Justification in the instant the power of the Gospel brings a sinner to faith.

When thus correctly used we may speak of *allgemeine Rechtfertigung* and of *persönliche Rechtfertigung*. Since both are equally objective, both judicial declarations made by God in heaven, it should be seen that it is confusing to call the one 'objective justification' and the other 'subjective justification.' This terminology is inexact, to say no more. In these high and holy matters inexactness in terminology is certainly to be avoided.

The danger is that by 'subjective justification' we may lose the objective divine act of God by which he declares the individual sinner righteous *ek pisteos eis pistin*, in the instant faith (embracing Christ) is wrought in him, leaving only the one divine declaration regarding the whole world of sinners, calling this an *actus simplex*, the only forensic act of God, and expanding this to mean that God declared every sinner free from guilt when Christ was raised, so many millions even before they were born, irrespective of faith, apart from and without faith. Surely this wipes out 'justification by faith alone,' of which the Scriptures speak page after page. No sinner is declared righteous by God, save by faith alone. Only his faith is reckoned to him for righteousness. This righteousness is the theme of Romans, which so mightily emphasizes *ek pisteos eis pistin* and *dia pisteos*. Any confusion on this supreme matter is bound to entail the most serious consequences. (p. 86-88)

We note that Dr. Lenski's main objection to the term; objective and subjective justification springs from a fear of confusion. But this danger seems somewhat remote since the terms, even though perhaps not as exact in themselves as might be desired, yet have by usage acquired a clearly defined meaning. Also the terms he suggests, *allegemeine* and *persönliche Rechtfertigung* (universal and personal justification) might be misused to create false impressions.

We note furthermore that Dr. Lenski differentiates between (objective) justification and (objective) reconciliation, accepting the latter while rejecting the former, at least as a term. But Paul evidently uses both terms interchangeably as denoting the same thing, Rom. 5:9-11; and he defines reconciliation in terms of justification in 2 Cor. 5:19: God reconciled the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses.

The point Dr. Lenski makes when he says: "to use the word Justification in this way (for the declaration of God contained in the resurrection of Jesus) is no gain," is not decisive. If the Scriptures use the word justification to express what is technically known as objective justification, then this use is sufficiently motivated. In the closing words of the quotation Dr. Lenski comes dangerously close to denying the doctrine itself.

The *Brief Statement* cites two passages from Romans in which the word justification occurs, and the connection in which it cites them as proof texts shows that it understands them to speak of objective justification.

One is Rom. 4:25: Who (Jesus our Lord) was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

A few preliminary remarks.

On the “our” Dr. Lenski says: “Our transgressions, our being declared righteous, as in other similar expressions speak of the believers alone, because in them the purpose of Christ’s death and his resurrection is fully realized. What Christ died also for those who deny him and bring swift destruction on themselves (2 Pet. 2:1), does not need to be introduced here. The two “our” prevent us from making *dia ten dikaiosin hemon* signify the justification of the whole world, instead of ‘our’ justification, – ‘our’ referring to us believers (personal justification)” (p. 333).

Dr. Lenski may be right in restricting the “our” to the believers, as also Dr. Stoeckhardt agrees (*Römerbrief*, p. 213); but from that it does not follow that Paul is speaking of personal (subjective) justification.

On the relative pronoun Dr. Lenski remarks well: “*Hos* has demonstrative force; He it is who, etc.” Thereby the verse is set off from the rest; it is not a part of the argument, not a further development of the thought under consideration; it stands by itself as the solid foundation on which the entire argument securely rests.

As for the interpretation of the passage Dr. Lenski has this to say: “God delivered him up on account of our transgressions.... Here we have the sacrificial blood of Jesus our Lord, and all the passages of Scripture which speak of it constitute the commentary.... This atoning death is joined with the resurrection: ‘Was raised up on account of our being declared righteous’. *Dikaiosyne* is the quality *dikaiosis* the act which produces the quality, the latter like the English ‘justification,’ *als Handlung wie als Ergebnis*, always a forensic act with its result. One *dia* for the deliverance from our sins, another *dia* for the raising up for our justification. Both with the accusative – ‘on account of,’ ‘because or for the sake of.’ The deliverance and the justification (Here Dr. Lenski is guilty of a slight *quid pro quo*, as we shall see anon. – *M.*) are not two, but one thing with two sides, negative and positive, certainly aptly put together, but not as objective and subjective, for *hemon* is subjective for both alike, and ‘transgressions’ and ‘being declared righteous’ are equally objective. Nor are the transgressions made the *Realgrund* and our justification the *Zweckgrund*. There was as much purpose in regard to the transgressions as in regard to the justification, and the actuality and reality is the same in both. Why seek to detect a subtle difference?” (p. 332f.)

Dr. Lenski rightly rejects the distinction some exegetes try to make between *Realgrund* and *Zweckgrund*, but why interpret the preposition *dia* as expressing purpose? What though the preceding verses speak of a future justification: Now it was not written for his (sc. Abraham’s) sake alone that it was imputed to him (for righteousness); but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead? Must therefore the clause connected to it by a relative pronoun with its strong demonstrative force also refer to the same future personal justification? The clause is independent, and emphatically states the basis on which the entire foregoing argument – about justification – rests. And every interpretation of this independent statement must duly consider this relation between it and the foregoing. The verse consists of two members, forming a perfect parallel, with every term in one member having an exact counterpart in the other:

Who	was delivered	for our offences,
and (who)	was raised again	for our justification.

For, *dia*, as Dr. Lenski correctly states, means on account of, and points to a cause from which anything springs. Although in the Koine it was sometimes slightly tinged with a connotation of purpose, especially in the question *dia ti?* just as in our day we frequently ask *why?* in the sense of *to what purpose?* – yet the exegete meets with some rather awkward difficulties in an attempt to introduce the final idea into this verse. In the first member the real purpose would have to be supplied. The statement: Christ was delivered for the purpose of our offences, makes sense only if we supply: in order to atone for them. It is far simpler to retain the original meaning of cause: Since our sins were laid on Christ and He bore them for us, He was actually delivered into

death on account of our sins. Our sins are a fact from which as from a cause flows the deliverance of Christ into death. Then according to the second member our actual justification is the cause from which flowed the resurrection of Christ. Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* admits that this would be the simplest interpretation, yet labors very strenuously to establish a mixed meaning (cause and purpose) for our text.

The *Brief Statement* is evidently right in using this passage as a proof text for objective justification.

In the preceding verses, particularly 16-22, Paul pictures to his readers the nature of Abraham's faith. He does not do so in the manner of a dogmatist by naming the quasi parts of faith, knowledge, assent, and confidence; nor does he analyze the psychological processes involved. The act of believing itself does not seem to interest him very much. He is very much interested, however, in the object toward which faith reaches out. It is not a natural hope, it is against hope, v. 18; it is not his own dead body, nor the sterile and dead womb of Sarah, v. 19: it is rather the God who quickeneth the dead, v. 17; it is the promise of God, who is able also to perform, v. 20.21. In the very act of faith he gave all glory to God, v. 20. Thus it is the content of faith that is made prominent, not the act of believing. Though in other respects (sanctification) faith may be very active, yet in this respect (justification) it is not; not producing anything, not achieving anything, not even adjusting oneself, preparing oneself, getting oneself ready for something, not a worthy ethical disposition or quality: it is throughout entirely passive, receptive, letting God do all and enjoying the ready gifts of God whether seen or unseen.

Thus faith in itself is nothing, it is the content that gives to it its value. The value of faith depends entirely on the object it embraces: the object of faith either makes or breaks it. Because Abraham's faith held the proper object, the promise of God about the future salvation of the world by the seed of Abraham, Paul concludes: And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness, v. 22.

With his faith Abraham is the father of believers. There is not only a similarity between his faith and theirs, there is a causal relation. Abraham by the confession and example of his faith induces others to believe. For that reason Paul continues: Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him: but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, v. 23, 24a.

We are discussing justification, objective justification, subjective justification, the relation of faith to justification. In these verses Paul is plainly speaking of subjective justification. Abraham is an individual, so are we Christians all individuals, and to each one individually righteousness is imputed. Paul makes a distinction in time, when Abraham's justification was a past event, ours was still a matter of the future.

What is the relation of faith to this justification? In the case of Abraham it was very clear: by faith Abraham appropriated the promise of God. Our faith is an offshoot of Abraham's. Its relation to justification cannot be different from that of Abraham's. It is merely the receiving organ. It is not a quality in us to be developed before God will grant justification, it is not a condition to be fulfilled. God did not purpose to justify those who have come to faith, as though a certain something—call it faith—had to be achieved before He would grant justification. No, just as the blessing was offered to Abraham, not for him to merit or to show himself worthy of, but simply to grasp—ready-made—and to enjoy, so it is offered to us.

There is a slight difference, due to the difference in time: to Abraham there was held out a promise, still somewhat vague, of a future salvation; to us there is proclaimed in clear terms the achievement of this salvation. Paul says: We believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, v. 24b. That is the great fact on which our faith lays hold. It was prefigured to Abraham when he was demanded to sacrifice his son Isaac, and received him again unharmed. Our faith receives the fulfillment of that figure. Jesus actually did go down into death, but came back alive, unharmed, with eternal glory. That is the great content of our faith, that is what gives to our faith its justifying power.

The translation of our English Bible here is somewhat misleading. It reads: if we believe etc. The Greek has a participle with the definite article equivalent in English to: namely to us who believe; or as Dr. Lenski has it: "to those believing." There is no condition expressed or implied. God simply justifies the believers, those who in faith appropriate to themselves the great fact of Christ's resurrection.

For what does the resurrection of Christ mean, which the believer embraces? In the following verse, introduced by a relative pronoun having the force of a strong demonstrative, Paul explains: Christ as our substitute was delivered for our offences, which had been laid on Him, imputed to Him, and having by His death made full atonement for our sins, He was justified, declared righteous by His resurrection from the dead; again as our substitute, so that by His resurrection we stand justified. Gerhard: *Excitando Christum a mortuis absolvit eum Deus a peccatis nostris ipsi imputatis, ac proinde etiam nos in ipso absolvit. – In Christi resurrectione a peccatis nostris sumus absoluti, ut non amplius coram Dei iudicio nos condemnare possint.*

This is objective justification, the solid foundation of subjective justification. Whenever the Gospel is proclaimed to a sinner, objective justification is announced to him as an assured fact, and he in faith appropriates it as his own, thus making it subjective.

The fact of objective justification is mentioned by Paul in the following chapter of Romans (v. 9): Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. The participial phrase evidently summarizes the statement of the preceding verse: God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Before the death of Christ we were sinners. Then Christ died in the stead of all sinners, and now by His sacrificial death all sinners stand before God as justified.

Dr. Lenski again interprets this justification as subjective. “The death of Christ itself took place for our salvation. Paul implies that, when now with *oun* he draws his deduction from Christ’s vicarious death in regard to the justified. Christ died to save the ungodly from the wrath which their ungodliness merits. This object will be attained in us ungodly ones who now already are justified in connection with Christ’s blood – there is no doubt about it whatever. That it will be equally attained in all who will yet be justified, as we already have been, needs not to be said” (p. 353).

The brief interpretation given above seems more natural than Dr. Lenski’s. Paul is building up a case for our faith. He is marshalling the facts that may serve to strengthen it. Subjective justification is an experience of our faith. Paul might have referred to it as something holding out hope for the future; but instead of saying: being now *justified through faith*, he makes the matter as objective as possible by pointing to the objective basis of our justification: being now *justified by his blood*.

Dr. Stoeckhardt summarily calls the participle of v. 9 a “recapitulation” of the premise contained in v. 6-8. Then he continues: “*Der Inhalt dieses Partizipialsatzes deckt sich offenbar mit dem Inhalt der vorhergehenden Verse. Der Ausdruck en to haimati autou weist auf die Erwähnung des Totes Christi zurück, kennzeichnet denselben als einen gewaltsamen, blutigen Tod und lässt somit das Opfer der Liebe Gottes um so grösser erscheinen. Und dikaiothentes nyn erklärt, wiefern der Tod Christi uns zugute gekommen ist. Durch Christi Tod und Blut sind wir gerecht geworden. Das dikaiothentai gibt sich auch hier als der unmittelbare Effect des Totes Christi, der mit dem Tode Christi selbst schon gesetzt und gegeben war. Dies beweist ausser dem Zusammenhang unserer Stelle auch das dem dikaiothentes parallele and synonyme katallagentes V. 10. Christus ist für alle gottlosen Menschen gestorben, hat sie alle durch seinen Tod gerechtfertigt. Aber die gläubigen Christen sind es eben, welche diese Wohltat Christi sich zu eigen gemacht haben*” (Römerbrief, p. 227).

The truth Paul presented in v. 6-9 by using the term justification, he repeats in v. 10 by using the synonymous reconciliation: 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.

Note the close parallel between these two statements. In v. 8 Paul called us sinners. What sinners need is justification. In v. 10 he calls us enemies, but as enemies we need reconciliation. When we were sinners Christ died for us (v. 8), when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son (v.10). Then follows the next step. Being justified by His blood, as stated above, we shall be saved from wrath through Him (v. 9); and being reconciled, as stated in the first part of the sentence, we shall be saved by His life (v. 10). What is reconciliation? No better answer can be given than the one given by Dr. Lenski. He explains the verb etymologically: “In *katallassein* the *kata* is perfective, and the root of the verb is *allos*: to make thoroughly other” (p. 356). About the matter itself he says: “Reconciliation... signifies that *through Christ’s death God changed our status*. By our enmity, our sin, our ungodliness (all synonymous) we had gotten ourselves into the

desperate status that deserved nothing from God but wrath, penalty, damnation, and unless God did something to change this our status, it would compel him to treat us thus. By means of Christ's death (*dia*) God changed this into an utterly different status, one that despite our enmity, etc., enabled him to go on commending to us his love, this very love that changed our status, this love that impelled Christ to die for us hostile enemies of God.... A change had to take place on our case, and we could not make it ourselves, God had to make it. It took the sacrificial death of his Son to do it.... Being enemies we were reconciled to God. This is the objective act. It wrought a change with or upon these enemies, not within them. It as yet did not turn their enmity into friendship, did not make the world the kingdom. It changed the unredeemed into the redeemed world. The instant Christ died the whole world of sinners was changed completely. It was now a world for whose sin atonement had been made, no longer a world with sins unatoned" (p. 355ff.).

Dr. Lenski is right in stressing the objectiveness of reconciliation, which stands entirely independent of our personal, subjective appropriation of this blessing by faith. But if we bear in mind that Paul uses this term to illumine what he had said about justification, the conclusion becomes inescapable that just as reconciliation is objective so must justification be, otherwise the explanation would be misleading.

There is, of course, also a subjective reconciliation. Paul speaks of it in 2 Cor. 5:20. After telling us in v. 18 and 19 that God brought about a change in our status, a reconciliation, by Jesus Christ; that God also instituted a special service to administer this blessing of reconciliation; that He gave us the word, the message of reconciliation: he pleads as an ambassador for Christ, Be ye reconciled to God, i.e., accept in faith for your personal enjoyment the reconciliation objectively prepared by Christ and offered to you in the Word.

That reconciliation is essentially the same as justification Paul shows also by defining both in the same terms. Justification he defines by quoting from the 32nd Psalm: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Rom. 4:8). Justification is the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, or the non-imputation of sin. Reconciliation he defines in this way: God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (2 Cor. 5:19). Reconciliation, like justification, is the non-imputation of sin.

There is another passage in Romans, quoted by the *Brief Statement*, in which justification occurs in the sense of objective justification, but I must reserve a discussion of it to some future time.

Since the ALC *Declaration* deemed it necessary to speak of justification at all, but in terms differing from those used in the *Brief Statement*, their somewhat vague reference demands of us a close scrutiny: Do they assign to faith its proper function in justification; and do they perhaps altogether eliminate objective justification? We are not ready to have it eliminated or ignored, holding as we do with our sainted Dr. Hoenecke: "*Die Hervorhebung der allgemeinen Rechtfertigung ist nötig, um den realen Inhalt des Evangeliums zu bewahren*" (*Dogmatik*, IV, p. 355).

While against Dr. Lenski's Commentary we raise the charge of faulty exegesis, the ALC *Declaration*, purporting to be an explanatory and supplementary confession of doctrine, is guilty of indefinite and misleading expressions, whereby the whole subject matter is made doubtful.

Addendum

This essay was written and composed about a year ago. Since then the Missouri Committee on Lutheran Union submitted to the ALC Representatives the question "just when this justification takes place, whether immediately after man has come to faith or later. The answer was, of course, in the same moment in which man comes to faith."

This answer was accepted as satisfactory by the Missouri Committee. "The members of the Committee are convinced from oral and printed statements that the ALC commissioners teach objective, or universal, justification, the doctrine that God has already in Christ absolved all the world of its sins. While discussing this paragraph the ALC commissioners once more declared formally 'that we adhere to the doctrine of objective, or universal, justification'."

Reported by the Secretary of the Committee, F. H. Brunn, in the *C. M. T.* for December, 1939.

Objective Justification: Part II

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The first passage which the *Brief Statement* cites in support of its presentation of objective justification is 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. A more literal translation, bringing out the salient points of the text, would be: For as through the disobedience of the one man the many were established as sinners. so also through the obedience of the one the many will be established as righteous.

Before we begin to analyze the text we quote in full (with the exception of a few notes) the explanation offered by Dr. Lenski in his Commentary.

The very point of Paul’s adding his explanation with *gar* is to indicate on what the two contrasted verdicts rest, the *katakrima* and the *dikaionoma* of v. 18. And here again it is ‘even as... thus also.’ stressing only the likeness, not differences. Through the disobedience of the one man the many were constituted sinners, were ‘set down’ as sinners. The moment that one act of disobedience on Adam’s part was committed it placed the many, none of whom were as yet born in the position of sinners. Thus the universal result, the verdict of condemnation. The fact that the many, after they had been born. were sinners also because they themselves sinned many sins, is irrelevant here where the ultimate cause of the condemnatory verdict is presented. Note the emphasis in the Greek: ‘sinners were constituted the many.’

Usually we say that Adam’s sin was imputed to all men, even as Christ’s righteousness is imputed to the believers. This may serve with regard to Adam’s sin. Paul simply states the fact as a fact: ‘were constituted sinners,’ aorist. We have no further explanation. The evidence for the fact, however, is overwhelming – all men die, the verdict of condemnation rests on all.

The counterpart is: ‘through the obedience of the One the many shall be constituted righteous.’ The wording is almost an exact parallel, even the emphasis is the same: ‘righteous shall be constituted the many’....

In v. 18 there are no verbs. Commentators insert two aorists: ‘came.’ In v. 19 Paul has verbs: ‘were constituted’ and ‘shall be constituted.’ The former is the historical aorist; why not also the latter? Those who operate with two historical aorists in v. 18, need two such aorists in v. 19, for v. 19 explains (*gar*) v. 18. But Paul used the future! Straightway these commentators alter this tense, they make it a logical future, expressing what automatically followed Christ’s obedience. In this way this future is thrown back into the past. Constituting the many righteous *logically* followed Christ’s obedience, actually his act lies as historically in the past as does the act of constituting the many sinners. Was not that also logically future to Adam’s obedience? Then why in one instance the historical fact without logic, and in the other this peculiar ‘logical’ verb instead of the historical fact – and this when the likeness is stressed? There is no satisfactory answer.

This logical future is used especially by those who alter Paul’s words so as to mean that all men were justified, pardoned, forgiven 1900 years ago, so that no act of God’s justifying the individual believer in the instant of faith follows.... Here it alters the future tense, must do so in order at all to maintain itself. This future is to indicate the historical fact in its progress. The many ‘shall be constituted righteous’ all along as they receive the abundance of the grace and the gift of the righteousness, receive it (iterative present) when they are brought to faith.

Katastathesontai agrees with *lambanontes*, the iterative present that continues until the last

sinner receives the righteousness. ‘Shall be constituted righteous’ = shall receive the gift of righteousness = all that Paul had said on personal justification = in particular 3:24: *dikaïoumenoi*, ‘being declared righteous.’ Nowhere in the Bible is any man constituted or declared righteous ‘without faith, before faith,’ all asseverations and argumentations to the contrary notwithstanding. With this future tense, which must agree with the aorist that precedes, both being historical, agrees *dikaïosis* in v. 18 (4, 25), action, action that repeats itself for every believer, not a term expressing a result that states what is finished down to the complete effect.

But does not Paul twice use ‘the many,’ after he has twice used ‘all men’ in v. 18? Look closer. In v. 17 we read ‘those receiving’ (believers). In v. 18 we read: ‘for all men,’ not merely ‘all men.’ So here, as in v. 16, where *one* is pointedly used, *many* is placed in contrast with this one. What Christ obtained for all men, all men do not receive (v. 18). ‘The many’ with the aorist are determined by that aorist, ‘the many’ with the future tense by that tense. These tenses decide. Christ’s obedience will never constitute an unbeliever, who spurns this vicarious obedience, *dikaïos*, ‘righteous,’ declared so by the eternal judge. Some date the future tense at the last day, but no believer who receives the gift of righteousness needs to wait so long a time.”

We see that Dr. Lenski makes very much of the future tense, which Paul here employs. That is as it should be. Every form used by the holy writers was used for a definite purpose, to express in human terms as clearly and distinctly as possible the truth the Holy Spirit wished to convey. If here we find a future that future must stand.

It must also be admitted that the primary function of the future tense is to express futurity: the action stated in the future has not yet taken place but still lies in the bosom of tomorrow. All we have to do is to find a standpoint from which to reckon the future.

In this very thing Dr. Lenski fails his readers. In the last sentence of the quotation he rejects the idea that the last day will be the date intended by Paul: As by the sin of Adam all men were at once set down as sinners, so *on the last day* all men will lie set down as righteous. He says, no believer needs to wait so long a time. But he does not specify a time when this future is to begin. Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans in the year 58 A.D. If the future he uses is to be understood as a real future, then the justification he is speaking of must be considered as not having begun before 58, since then it was still a matter of the future. If anyone rejects this interpretation, he may have reasons to do so, but then he has clearly abandoned the literal sense of the future tense. He is no longer in a position to charge those who accept the future as logical with falsifying the tense. He himself is changing the tense by making it express something else than simple futurity.

While Dr. Lenski usually is quite easy to follow in his line of argumentation. what he has to say about “the many” is not so clear. He says: “*The many* with the aorist are determined by that aorist, *the many* with the future tense by that tense. These tenses decide.” How the tense of a verb call determine the meaning of a substantivated numeral in the subject is hard to grasp – especially so when the meaning of one of the tenses employed is itself in question.

Two statements are made concerning *the many*, the one in the aorist, the other in the future. The many were set down as sinners, *the many* will be set clown as righteous. The natural assumption is that *the many* refers to the same people in both instances, especially since they are so emphatically limited by the use of the definite article. The tense can never determine the meaning of the subject. There is only one possibility for justifying Dr. Lenski’s assumption that *the many* may indicate two different groups of people, and that would be if Paul in his previous remarks had clearly defined two such groups. Then he might be understood as saying the first group of many was set down as sinners and the second group of many will be set down as righteous; yet even so that would seem an idle comparison. But since Paul consistently contrasted *the one* (Adam on the one hand, Christ on the other) with *the many*, *the many* cannot well be understood of anything but the same entity.

In order to understand both *the many* and the future of v. 18, it is imperative to survey the entire passage beginning with v. 12. Paul links the passage introduced with this verse to the foregoing verses 1-11 with a *dia touto*, wherefore. This merely marks the transition, since the two parts of chap. 5 (v. 1-11 and v. 12-21) do not

stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect, or premise and conclusion; it “introduces the evidential and not the causative reason,” as Dr. Lenski phrases it.

Dr. Lenski translates v. 12 as follows: “Because of this, just as through one man the sin came into the world. and through the sin the death, **even so** the death went through to all men, since all did sin.”

The difference between this translation and the customary ones, including Luther’s, is indicated by bold face in the foregoing. Dr. Lenski offers a complete parallel, thus avoiding what many interpreters regard as “one of the most striking anacolutha in Paul’s Epistles, where the apodosis to the *hosper* clause is wanting.” Thus “perfect grammatical regularity” is preserved. Is it worth the price? To the undersigned it seems that Paul, by avoiding the Scylla of a grammatical anacoluthon, is made to fall into the Charybdis of a logical anacoluthon.

We grant that *kai houtos* can be translated with *even so*, although if that were the meaning intended by Paul an inverted word order should more likely be expected: *houtos kai*. Placing the *kai* first would tend to make it more emphatic; *exactly so* would then be a more accurate rendering.

What are the two thoughts of which the second corresponds so exactly to the first? In a comparison you expect both similar and dissimilar elements. If all are alike, identity would result; and if all are different, the parallel disappears. The first member opens emphatically with *through one man*, the second *to all men*, yet the different prepositions, *through* and *to*, indicate that they are used in altogether different relations. The verbs are different: *came into* (a rather weak translation for *eiselthen*; entered would be preferable) and *went through*. The one term that is alike in both members is the death. Yet while it holds a position of great stress in the prothesis (at the end), it is relegated to an altogether unaccented position in the apodosis. Thus we have throughout in the corresponding parts either altogether different concepts or, in the case of the one like concept, a different accentuation; which makes for a very poor parallel.

The thought is extremely limp; but it at once becomes filled with vitality if for Dr. Lenski’s parallel we substitute a progression as Luther conceived it: *Derhalben, wie durch einen Menschen die Sünde ist kommen in die Welt und der Tod durch die Sünde, und ist also der Tod zu allen Menschen durchgedrungen usw.* Paul is building up a great parallel between one man on the one hand and the destruction he caused, and another one man and his great work of reconstruction on the other. The very fact that Paul does not carry through his thought with grammatical regularity adds to its vigor. He begins by carrying the first thought to its full height: By one man sin entered into mankind, and death by sin, to which all men fell victim. At this dizzy height he holds the reader, in order to elucidate a certain statement and to point out some vital differences in his great parallel; then he finishes his thought smoothly in v. 18 and 19.

For the convenience of the reader I shall print out in full the verses to be discussed, using Dr. Lenski’s translation, although I do not consider it the best, nor always correct. Always compare Luther’s translation and the King James version.

V. 13 and 14. For till law, sin was in the world, though sin is not charged up while there is no law; nevertheless, death reigned from Adam till Moses even over those who did not sin after the similitude of the transgression of Adam – he who is type of the One to come.

Here Paul underscores the fact that Adam brought the misery ending in death upon mankind. Without law there is no sin, no sin can be charged. Yet the terrible tyranny which death wielded over man even till the time when the Law was promulgated by Moses shows uncontrovertibly that men were sinners even though they had not sinned in the similitude of Adam. Adam had transgressed a positive commandment of God. No further positive commandments were published till the time of Moses. Why, then, did people die between the time of Adam and the time of Moses? It was simply the result of Adam’s sin. That was visited in this terrible judgment upon all mankind. Thus Paul vividly underscores the statement of v. 12, in which Adam appears, not as an individual, but as the responsible head and representative of the human race, who in this position prefigures a second head who is to come.

Here Paul might complete his parallel. Yet that would result in an understatement concerning Christ. Paul is a preacher of the Gospel. It is his office to extol the grace of God, as he says at the end of the parallel:

Where sin abounded grace did much more abound (v. 20). He therefore now points out some vital differences between the first Adam and the one to come.

V. 15. But not as the fall, thus too the gracious gift. For if by the fall of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift in connection with the grace of the One Man Jesus Christ, abound for the many.

By the transgression of one man the many, the whole human race, became subject to death. Herein the stern justice of God revealed itself. No one could object to its strict enforcement. But then the grace of God intervened with an absolutely unmerited gift by the one man Christ upon the same many, the human race. What brightness, what lustre! At first nothing but gloom and despair: now the excessively bright splendor of God's grace.

V. 16. And not as through one having done a sin (so) the gift. For the judgment from one – a verdict of condemnation; but the gracious gift from many falls – a verdict of justification.

A second difference, again setting forth the great excess on the side of grace, is presented in v. 16. When in Adam the death sentence was pronounced on all mankind it was a natural process on a down grade, from *krima* to *katakrima*. Grace reverses the process from sin, the sins of many, to a state of righteousness. How powerful may grace be to accomplish so stupendous a task!

V. 17. For if by the fall of the one the death reigned through the one, how much more shall those receiving the abundance of the grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

In v. 14 Paul had spoken about death as a ruler holding absolute sway. By grace his tyranny is broken. But more than that. According to v. 17, those to whom the superabundant grace with its equally superabundant gift of righteousness is granted (*lambanontes*) are not merely set free from the rule of death; they themselves will be elevated to a glorious kingship in life.

Now Paul is ready to resume his great parallel without danger of belittling the superabundant grace of God. He indicates his intention by *ara oun* (v. 18).

Accordingly then, as through one's fall – for men a verdict of condemnation; so also through One's verdict of justification – for all men a declaring righteous to life.

There is no verb in v. 18. None is needed. Although our King James version supplies *came*, to make smoother reading, what Paul actually does is simply to enumerate the various factors he wishes to compare in his parallel. They are three:

One man's transgression – to all men – unto condemnation.

One man's righteousness – to all men – unto justification of life.

Note that one member in the chain is the same in both parts of the parallel: *to all men*. The difference is in the cause and effect in both parts: one man's transgression leading to condemnation and the second man's righteousness leading to justification of life. In one case a verdict of death, in the second a verdict of life. But the recipients in both cases remain the same. If this were not so, if the recipients were a different group of people in both instances the whole elaborately constructed comparison would collapse.

Now we are ready to investigate the crucial text of v. 19. Paul joins it to the foregoing with *gar*, as explanatory.

For as through the disobedience of the one man many were constituted sinners, thus also through the obedience of the One the many shall be constituted righteous.

There are again the two members of a parallel, but for some of the terms used in v. 18 Paul now substitutes synonymous expressions. For *transgression* and *righteousness* he now uses *disobedience* and *obedience*. This merely shifts the stress from the outward act to the underlying inward disposition; for transgression is an act of disobedience just as righteousness is an act of obedience. Instead of simply saying *all men*, Paul now stresses their great number, calling them *the many*. The vastness of their number he stresses also by giving to *the many* the emphatic position at the end of the sentence. Yes, the many, the same many, were affected in both instances. The results of Adam's disobedience reached the many, every one of them without exception; so also the work of Christ's obedience pertained no less to the same many, without exception. Woe to the world if it were not so.

The greatest change in v. 19 is the substitution of explanatory terms for *condemnation* and *justification of life*. These terms are elucidated by the use of the passive form of *kathistemi*, which our English Bible translates with the verb *to make*.

The exact meaning of this verb, which literally means *to set down, niedersetzen, hinstellen*, must be determined from the context. The case, as far as it refers to Adam, has been clearly set forth by Paul particularly in v. 12. Adam sinned. Through his one act of disobedience sin entered into the human race; through sin also death, the wages of sin. Thus death penetrated to all men since all were involved in the sin of Adam. Later on (v. 16) Paul calls this a *krima* and a *katakrima*. This entire transaction he now summarizes in the word *kathistemi*. It is an act of reputeding some one, of regarding some one, of counting some one in a certain class. It is an imputative, a judicial, declaratory act. In Adam the many were simply entered on the lists of sinners.

In Christ these same many will be entered in the lists of righteous.

When will that be?

That is a disturbing question for any one taking the future in the predictive sense, as has been briefly pointed out before. It is more vexing after a study of the entire parallel beginning with v. 12. Nowhere did the time element really enter as a factor into the argument. Adam's fall with its dire consequences was treated as an historical event, that it is; Christ was called he that was to come, from the standpoint of Adam, but never was this point stressed as having any bearing on the case. What was compared, contrasted, were the bare facts. It was one great truth that was set forth in bold relief: God's principle of substitution. Adam stood, in God's eyes, in the stead of the human race; Christ stood in the stead of the human race. Adam's shortcomings were imputed to the human race as represented by him; Christ's achievements were similarly imputed. When? That question never entered the discussion.

Now Paul suddenly introduces the future.

Before we attempt to assign a reason, we do well to look at the following verses to determine whether Paul makes any further use of the future idea. V. 20 in an historical aorist states the fact that the Law entered upon the scene for the purpose of reinforcing sin, and continues: Where sin abounded, grace *did much more abound*. The future seems to be forgotten; an aorist has unostentatiously taken its place in the corresponding member of the sentence. V. 21 speaks of God's plan in thus aggravating the situation through the Law by stating as His purpose: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign etc. All spoken from the time standpoint of the Law.

From all of this it appears that the time question is a foreign element in the entire argument of Paul.

What Paul stresses throughout is the certainty and superabundance of grace. It may well be assumed that the future serves the same purpose; in fact, any other assumption would seriously disturb the balance. What Paul wants to say, is this: As by the disobedience of the one man the many were entered on God's lists as sinners, so in the nature of the case by the obedience of the One the many will without doubt be listed as righteous – without any reference to time.

Is the *Brief Statement* right in citing Rom. 5:19 as its first proof text for objective justification? Most decidedly so.

Here some one might ask, why make so much of objective justification? Is it not sufficient to teach justification by faith? As long as we hold to the Scripture doctrine of justification by faith, then, whether we distinguish an objective and a subjective justification or whether we speak of only one justification, in the subjective sense, should make no difference.

In the previous installment we quoted Dr. Hoenecke on this point. His words bear repetition. “*Die Hervorhebung der allgemeinen Rechtfertigung ist nötig, um den realen Inhalt des Evangeliums zu bewahren.*” If the Gospel loses its essential content, we have nothing left of the Gospel but an empty form, mere husks without the sweet kernel, if we drop objective justification. In other words, the Gospel message and the proclamation of objective justification are identical for all practical purposes. You cannot have the one while rejecting the other.

That is the reason why so many were alarmed, and rightly so, when they read the casual remark in the ALC *Declaration* about God’s purpose to justify those who have come to faith. Nor is the added explanation, contained in the recent *Reply* of the ALC Commissioners, very reassuring. They say that justification takes place “of course, in the same moment in which man comes to faith.” This leaves the real problem untouched. The real question is: In what relation does faith stand to justification? Or more specifically: What is the function of faith in subjective justification?

To illustrate the far-reaching consequences of a man’s attitude over against this question, it may be permitted to quote from a recent article in the *Journal of Religion*. The author, Erwin R. Goodenough of Yale University, in the course of his essay touches also on the question *cur alii prae aliis*. Here are some of his remarks: “This difference can be a matter only of the *response which the one gives* but the other does not, that is something inherent in the individual who is saved” (Jan. 1940, p. 5). And again: “The man who is saved is not completely worthless, but has a duality which makes him desirable, namely *the power to respond to God’s Agape*” (p. 6). This idea is underscored when he continues immediately: “Again we must choose between predestination, by which God arbitrarily puts this quality into some but not into others, irrespective of their inherent worth, or we must recognize that God is seeking in man an inherent worth, *the power of response.*”

What would it mean if justification by faith were taught in the sense here indicated?

At first sight it may seem a far cry from predestination, looking for an “inherent worth” in man, to justification by faith; yet the undersigned not so very infrequently heard arguments in support of the *intuitus* theory something like this: faith dare not be excluded from the doctrine of election seeing it plays such an important part in other doctrines, specifically in the doctrine of justification.

The lengthy quotation from Dr. Lenski’s *Commentary on Romans*, printed above, contains expressions like the following: “This logical future is used especially by those who alter Paul’s words so as to mean that all men were justified, pardoned, forgiven 1900 years ago, so *that no act of God’s justifying the individual believer in the instant of faith follows.*” And again: “Nowhere in the Bible is any man constituted or *declared righteous without faith, before faith*, all asseverations and argumentations to the contrary notwithstanding.” Recall also what Dr. Lenski said in connection with chap. 1:17, where he remarks on objective justification whereby “God declared every sinner free from guilt when Christ was raised, so many millions even before they, were born, *irrespective of faith*, apart from and without faith. *Surely this wipes out ‘justification by faith alone,’* of which the Scriptures speak page after page. No sinner is declared righteous by God save by faith alone. Only his faith is reckoned to him for righteousness.” All of these words, although a harmless interpretation may be found, leave a peculiar after-taste, as though in them a function were ascribed to faith which it does not have. In our former installment we put a very charitable construction on them, yet it seems necessary to call attention to the danger that may lurk in them.

The question will have to be faced squarely: What is the function of faith in subjective justification?

To be more specific. The function assigned to faith in the New Testament dispensation of grace is that of an *organon leptikon*, just that and nothing more. God proclaims to us the glad tidings of the Gospel; faith is the response. God offers us His grace, His Son. His redemption: through faith we receive it. We are saved *pistei, dia pisteos, ek pisteos* – but never *dia pistin*. God, and God alone, prepares salvation, all of salvation, for us – and through faith we appropriate the ready-made blessing.

Apply this to justification. Is justification a ready-made blessing, proclaimed and offered to us in the Gospel? Does faith do more than just reach out for it – ready-made as it is – appropriate it, enjoy it? In other words: Is subjective justification precisely this that faith, as the receiving organ, appropriates objective justification?

Or is faith a prerequisite of subjective justification? Is it a condition to be met, either to be furnished by man himself, or to be graciously supplied by God, nevertheless a condition of some kind? Are there two component parts to subjective justification: God's pronouncement and man's faith, from a combination of which justification will result? Does God time His part of the transaction so precisely that in the very first moment of faith subjective justification takes place?

If in subjective justification to faith is assigned the function of *organon leptikon* all of those questions lose their point. In Christ God declared the world, every individual sinner in the world, to be righteous in His sight. When He, since Calvary, looks at the world through Christ He detects not the slightest spot or blemish. The world appears to Him through Christ in its original beauty of righteousness. These findings He proclaims to the world in the Gospel. A sinner accepts this verdict of God in faith and possesses subjective justification.

Here faith is not a prerequisite of justification, justification stands complete irrespective of faith. Faith is not a condition to be met, it is not another factor in the act of justification. It merely receives.

In passing we call attention to the far-reaching consequences a denial of objective justification will have on the doctrine of the means of grace. By announcing the full grace of God in every conceivable form they encourage the despairing sinner to take new hope, they incite faith in the blessings they announce. They draw the attention of the sinner entirely away from his own misery and teach him to fix it firmly on the promise of God, and on the promise of God alone.

Now assume that the Gospel promise were made in this way: *The moment you believe*, God will forgive your sins. Where shall the poor sinner turn for assurance? To the means of grace? These means, by their very announcement, direct his attention to himself. What, if he cannot believe? What, if in spite of his most strenuous efforts he cannot detect the slightest traces of faith in his heart? Any Christian who has any experience in the battles of life will agree that our greatest difficulty is to believe that we believe. The Gospel announcement together with the double seal of the sacraments is at times barely sufficient to overcome our doubts, our hesitation, and to give us such assurance. If instead of fixing our attention solely on the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation we are led to gaze into our own heart, that deceitful and desperately wicked thing, we are doomed.

The danger lurking in the clause: "God purposes to justify those who have come to faith," even in its modified form: "In the same moment in which man comes to faith," is a very real one. We hope it may not be an imminent one. Yet history warns us to be on our guard. Let us illustrate by something that happened within the last 35 years.

In spring of 1903 the large open intersynodical conferences began in Watertown, Wis. They were continued in Milwaukee, Detroit, Ft. Wayne. Then the sainted Pastor Zorn published a series of articles in the *Lutheraner* on the forgiveness of sins. These gave occasion to men of the former Ohio Synod to launch a furious attack on the doctrine of objective justification, the echoes of which are heard in our own *Quartalschrift* as late as 1910 in an article by the sainted Prof. J. Schaller (*Die Erlösung und die allgemeine Rechtfertigung nach 2 Kor. 5, 18-21*), and another by the sainted Pastor Herman Gieschen (*Das Verhältnis der allgemeinen zur persönlichen Rechtfertigung*). It will not harm to remind ourselves of the arguments of that controversy. They clearly show where the danger lies if the doctrine of objective justification is not kept unsullied. We shall here limit ourselves to quotations found in a report on the controversy by Prof. A. Pieper, *Quartalschrift* for April, 1906.

Pastor Zorn rejected the idea that justification is made up of two mutually complementary factors, that faith is to be considered as a condition to be fulfilled; rather, he maintained, that justification is offered to the sinner as a ready-made blessing for him to appropriate in faith. The redemptive work of Christ did not merely pave the way for future justification of the individual sinner, but when it stood complete the justification of the world was complete, ready to be announced to sin-lost men in the Gospel.

Wrote Pastor Zorn: “Ja, durch das Wort, durch das Wort vom Glauben, durch das Evangelium wird uns die durch Christum für die ganze Welt erwirkte Vergebung der Sünden and Rechtfertigung **offenbart und gegeben**, frei and ohne alle Bedingung gegeben. Es ist also nicht wahr, dass Gott uns durch das Evangelium die durch Christum geschehene Versöhnung anzeigt und zugleich sagt, welche Bedingung wir erfüllen müssen, damit er uns nun wirklich die Sünden vergebe und uns rechtfertige – dass wir nämlich zuvor **glauben müssen**. Ehe vom Glauben die Rede sein konnte, hat Gott ja die ganze Welt und uns gerechtfertigt, und uns die Rechtfertigung durch das Evangelium offenbart und gegeben. Und doch müssen wir **glauben**, um in den Besitz und Geniess der Vergebung der Sünden und der Rechtfertigung zu kommen.”

Add to this the following, taken from various installments of Zorn’s article: “Gott hat der ganzen Welt durch Christum die Sünden vergeben, die ganze Welt durch Christum gerechtfertigt; diese Vergebung der Sünden und Rechtfertigung offenbart und gibt er uns durch das Evangelium; er selbst überredet uns das anzunehmen, er selbst wirkt den Glauben in uns; wir glauben und nehmen an und besitzen und geniessen nun Vergebung der Sünden.” – “Wer kommt also in den Besitz der Vergebung der Sünden und der Rechtfertigung? Wer sie nicht mit seinen Werken zuwebringen will, sondern wer Gott **glaubt** und vertraut. **Zu einem solchen Menschen spricht Gott:** Du kannst durch deine Werke vor mir nicht gerechtfertigt werden? Du glaubst und vertraust aber meinem Worte, dass ich aus Gnaden durch Christum die Gottlosen gerecht mache? Wohl, ich sage mein Amen dazu. Auch du bist vor mir gerecht. Deinen Glauben, das was du glaubst, das rechne ich dir zur Gerechtigkeit. So kommen wir durch den Glauben in den Besitz der Vergebung der Sünden and der Rechtfertigung.” – “Die Vergebung der Sünden, die Rechtfertigung, die für uns längst da ist and die uns durch das Evangelium geoffenbart and gegeben wird, müssen wir annehmen, auf sie vertrauen, uns auf sie verlassen, sie **glauben** . . . Nehmen wir . . . sie . . . nicht an, misstrauen wir dem göttlichen Schriftwort. . . , werfen wir die uns die Vergebung . . . zuschreibende Schenkungsurkunde als ungültig weg – nun, so kommen wir nicht in den Besitz und Geniess der Vergebung . . . Wer da glaubt und getauft wird. . . , der wird selig werden; wer aber nicht glaubt, der wird verdammt werden, weil er die im Evangelium gegebene Vergebung der Sünden wegwirft, Marc. 16, 15. 16. So müssen wir allerdings glauben, um in den Besitz und Geniess der Vergebung der Sünden und der Rechtfertigung zu kommen.”

This splendid presentation aroused the ire of Pastor Lenski, then editor of the *Kirchenzeitung*. Summarizing his charges he wrote: “Wir heben an der falschen missiourischen Darstellung folgendes hervor: 1. Es werden in derselben Versöhnung und persönliche Rechtfertigung zusammengeworfen, so dass von einer Rechtfertigung des einzelnen durch den Glauben nichts mehr übrig bleibt. . . . So wird die Grund- und Hauptlehre der Schrift und der lutherischen Kirche vernichtet. 2. Nach der neuen Lehre sind ‘jedem,’ allen Menschen, die Sünden bereits vergeben, als Christus die Versöhnung vollbrachte, ‘gleichviel viel ob er glaubt oder nicht’ So vernichtet Missouri die Bibellehre von der Rechtfertigung **durch den Glauben**. 3. Es soll nicht mehr wahr sein, dass Gott in dem Augenblick rechtfertigt, in dem der arme Sünder an Christum glaubt.”

In his attack he was seconded by Pastor Klindworth, who objected particularly to Zorn’s statement: “Diese durch Christum geschehene Versöhnung der ganzen Welt ist die Rechtfertigung der ganzen Welt.” He wrote: “**Hier wird eine Rechtfertigung ohne den Glauben gelehrt**. Die Schrift weiss nur von einer Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben; sie lehrt uns: erst muss der Mensch glauben, dann wird er gerechtfertigt, dann empfängt er Vergebung der Sünden. Anders hat Luther auch nicht gelehrt; hier ist aber eine andere Lehre, die weder mit der Schrift noch mit dem kirchlichen Bekenntnis übereinstimmt. . . **bevor wir glauben** ist die Rechtfertigung schon geschehen! Ist das nicht eine Rechtfertigung ohne den Glauben?”

Both, Pastor Lenski and Pastor Klindworth, took exception to Zorn’s presentation because they thought that it violated the dignity of faith. Faith must mean more than a mere receiving organ for an offered blessing. Just this, which is the very heart of the doctrine, they branded as the greatest monstrosity of Zorn’s articles. Pastor Lenski wrote: “Vor Jahrhunderten eine Rechtfertigung aller Welt – nun glaube es!” “Die längst fertige Rechtfertigung soll der Mensch jetzt nur glauben.” “Der Glauben hinkt hinterdrein.”

Pastor Zorn replied to these attacks. Here is his presentation of subjective justification: “Und durch dies einfache Annehmen, durch diesen dem Gnadenurteil Gottes, das längst gefällt ist, folgenden und ‘nachhinkenden’ Glauben ist nun der Gläubige vor Gott gerecht. Gott spricht zu ihm: **Du bist vor mir gerecht**.”

Dem armen Sünder wird sein Glaube gerechnet zur Gerechtigkeit. Welche Gnade, welcher Trost! Wir sind Sünder. Aber Gott spricht die Sünder, die Gottlosen, gerecht. Wir hören das. Wir glauben das. Und Gott sagt: Ihr seid nun vor mir gerecht; dass ihr mein Urteil annehmt und glaubt, das rechne ich euch zur Gerechtigkeit, damit könnt ihr vor mir bestehen, Röm. 4, 5.

From the foregoing it should be clear that the church does well to guard vigilantly the article of objective justification. If the church loses its sensitiveness, if it in the least becomes callous on this score, it stands in danger of losing the Gospel. We conclude with a word with which Prof. Pieper concluded his report in the *Quartalschrift*. “*Man kann gegen keine Wahrheit des göttlichen Worts ungestraft kämpfen . . . ein Irrtum stürzt in den andern. . . Wer aber die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung antastet, der durchsticht dem Evangelium das Herz und ist auf dem Wege, die christliche Lehre und den persönlichen Glauben ganz zu verlieren und dem Heidentum in die Arme zu fallen, wenn er auch noch so sehr die Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben betont.*”