

## JUSTIFICATION IS COMPLETE

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### Introduction

Thank God for this opportunity to talk about his grace. It always is a privilege to speak God's Word. I'll try to do the best, trusting totally in his grace. So, in his name, trusting in the complete forgiveness of sins performed by Christ in the cross, I begin this paper.

The first time I saw my assignment for this conference I thought, "Is it possible for someone in the CELC meeting to believe that his justification is not complete?" But, certainly there is a great diversity among Christians. Some are strong in their faith, while others are weak Christians. Some have an excellent knowledge of Christian doctrine; others are woefully deficient in this respect.

Speaking in general, George Gallup and George Barna, the famous pollsters, spend a lot of time looking for and studying trends in today's Christian churches. In a recent poll, George Barna found that 32 percent of all Americans believe that there are certain sins that God never forgives; 28 percent of Protestants believe this. The percentage of Catholics who believe this is roughly the same. And about 40 percent of unchurched Americans believe that there are sins that God cannot forgive. So, there is a great number of people who think that justification is incomplete.

But I want to think that all Christians, at least Lutheran Christians, here and now, are one in believing that God forgives their sins, completely and by grace, for Christ's sake, without any merit of their own. For us Lutherans a renewed consideration of the teaching of justification should be as natural as it is for us to breathe. Certainly this teaching is the characteristic doctrinal feature of our church. Webster's Dictionary, when defining the term "Lutheran," says, "The cardinal doctrine is that of justification by faith alone." Our justification is complete by faith alone.

Otherwise, to think about his sins as only partly forgiven, how is it possible to live under that condition? If God forgives half, then all the passages in the Bible speaking about the allsufficient redemption through the blood of Christ will be uncertain. If God forgives half, then we have a half redemption from Christ; that means Christ died half for us. But how about the other half? Unaware of the complete forgiveness of our sins, we are and remain without peace of heart. Not having this peace, it were better we had never been born.

### I. Justification Is Complete Because the Holy Scriptures Say So.

To live believing that Christ died half for us is to live under fears, doubts, uncertainties, and condemnation. Then faith loses its life-line and the Word of God its contents. For one thing is clear: it is the complete forgiveness of our sins as the Scriptures testify. But how do we understand what the Apostle says in Romans 8:1: "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"? Why does the Apostle say no condemnation? The reason is because justification is complete. On the other hand, Paul says to the Philippians: ". . . continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12b). At first these words might seem to have a strange ring to Christians. They might even lead us to wonder if Christians, after all, have to work to earn their own salvation for the reason that it is not complete yet. But that cannot be true. Paul uses the word "salvation" here in a broad sense. He refers not only to believers' coming to faith and receiving the gift of eternal life, but also to their continuing in faith until they enter into eternal life. The believers must continue to live in this sinful world while they await the completed salvation in eternity. It is to such waiting believers, who are still coping with all the challenges and temptations of life in the world, that Paul directs the encouragement, "Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Dr. Preuss says: "Of course, this does not exclude that one may fall from grace, that one may be cut out of the olive tree, if one does not, by watching and praying, continue in his goodness. . . . It follows indisputably from this text that as long as a man

abides in Christ Jesus through faith (Gal. 3:26)—so long, not longer, but surely so long—the word applies to him: ‘No condemnation to thee.’”<sup>1</sup>

In Paul’s epistles condemnation and justification are antitheses. If there is light, then there is no darkness and vice versa. So, where there is no condemnation at all, there is complete justification.<sup>2</sup> We learn that when Paul says, “Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life. . . .” (Romans 8:33,34).

A. In Scripture we never find half or partial justification.

1. We read that in Matthew 18:24-35.

Thank God the righteousness of Christ is just as indivisible and complete as the law of God; it is either entire and complete or not at all. God’s law says: “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all commandments” (Jas. 2:10). Therefore, to whom one sin is retained, all are retained. We have a lot of instances in the Holy Scriptures that speak of complete forgiveness: the king who takes account of a servant and finds that he owes him ten thousand talents (Mt. 18:24). That was the exact amount of his debt, not a penny less, not a penny more. The king, purely out of grace, forgives him, not one-half, not two-thirds; no, the king forgave all the debt, immense as it was. When one reads this parable, who dares to speak of incomplete forgiveness? And, then, when that servant demanded the twelve dollars of his fellow-servant, could his Lord then say: “Half of my gift shall be taken from you as punishment, the other half you may keep for the present?”—Of course not; God doesn’t work that way. Before his tribunal the sentence is either “damned” or “free.” But never half-damned, or half-free. Never half-forgiven.

There are only two states for a person to stand before God, either justified or condemned. Whoever introduces a third state between justification or condemnation in this life must also invent one for the next. Purgatory is that third state for many persons. And this third factor is not taught in Scripture, nor by Christ and the apostles.

2. We read that in Luke 15:11-32.

Here, in the parable of the prodigal son, Jesus pictures the full grace of God in a wonderful manner as being ever ready to pardon completely the repentant sinner. As if he were constantly watching the road, the father sees the son while he is in the distance. Then, the father runs and falls upon his son’s neck, covers his face with kisses. The entire act displays the fact that the prodigal is already and completely pardoned before he utters a single word of confession. Here we can see the sinner’s complete absolution, the complete pardon, the complete justification, adoption (reception to sonship), the complete reconciliation, all rolled into one.

B. The Scriptures never mention either  a partial or conditional forgiveness.

We are speaking about justification, not sanctification. The Apostle Paul says to the Philippians: “. . . Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me” (Phil. 3:12). Paul, like us, was still living in a sinful world. He, like us, was still a sinner, still troubled by the weaknesses and failings of his sinful nature. Though he was a child of God by faith, he had not arrived at the point where he could perfectly serve God or enjoy the fullness of the blessings of God. But he, like us, was completely justified before God. Meanwhile, he lived this life as a Christian in a constant striving for holiness. As Spener says: “Concerning the question whether a man grows more righteous and holier, we, too, concede this in respect to the inherent righteousness, which, of course, grows and must grow, so that we become more and more perfect. . . . But this does not pertain to justification, but to sanctification. . . . Hence he who by imputation has received the righteousness of Christ by faith has it wholly; for it is indivisible, and he cannot have a more perfect righteousness of Christ after twenty or thirty years than he received in the first moment.”

Justification and forgiveness are the same thing. Justify means to absolve (Triglotta, 793), and forgiveness, in John 1:7, is described as perpetual, the words reading: "For the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth us from all sins." It cleanseth us perpetually because we perpetually have sins. And Paul begins Romans 4:7 with the words: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered," but then he proceeds, v. 8: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute (logivshtai) sin."

C. Our Lutherans Confessions explain what Scripture says.

Our Lutheran Confessions, speaking about the word justify, say: "Accordingly, the word justify means to declare righteous and free from sins, and to absolve one from eternal punishment for the sake of Christ's righteousness, which is imputed by God to faith, Phil. 3:9. For this use and understanding of this word is common in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament. Prov. 17:15; Is. 5:23; Rom. 8:33, 'It is God that justifieth,' that is, absolves from sins and acquits" (Concordia Triglotta, p. 921).

In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Art. IV (II) we read: "To attain the remission of sins is to be justified . . . Therefore, we are reconciled with the Father, and receive remission of sins when we are comforted with confidence in the mercy promised for Christ's sake" (Concordia Triglotta, p. 151). On the other hand, our complete justification, our full forgiveness, has a strong base in Christ, as The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, III Righteousness of Faith, says: "Our righteousness rests not upon one or the other nature, but upon the entire person of Christ, who as God and man is our Righteousness in his only, entire, and complete obedience. . . . It is the obedience not only of one nature, but of the entire person, it is a complete satisfaction and expiation for the human race, by which the eternal, immutable righteousness of God, revealed in the Law, has been satisfied, and is thus our righteousness, which avails before God and is revealed in the Gospel, and upon which faith relies before God (cf. Rom. 5:19; 1 John 1:7; Hab. 2:4). . . . Thus neither the divine nor the human nature of Christ by itself is imputed to us for righteousness, but only the obedience of the person who is at the same time God and man" (Concordia Triglotta, p. 935,937).

So, it is clear that our justification, the forgiveness of our sins, is complete because the work of Christ was complete. He is our righteousness not according to his divine nature alone, nor according to his human nature alone, but according to both natures; that therefore the righteousness of faith is the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, because the obedience of Christ is imputed for our righteousness.

D. Justification is complete. This the Lutherans fathers believed.

Luther said: "If only this article (Justification by Faith) remains pure on the battlefield, the Christian Church also remains pure, and in godly harmony without any sects; but if it does not remain pure, it is not possible that any error or fanatical spirit can be resisted."

How does God forgive sins? The answer is: "Fully and perfectly." And Luther says: "Now we well know what forgiveness of sins means. If he forgives, he forgives everything altogether and leaves nothing unforgiven. Now, if I am rid of and free from sin, then I am also rid of death, devil, and hell and I am a son of God and a lord of heaven and earth" (St. Louis Ed., XX, 751). In another place he says: "For this reason it is called forgiveness of sins, because we are, before God, real sinners, and nothing but sin is to be found in us, although we may have all human righteousness. For where he speaks of sins, there must be real and great sins, there must be real and serious sins, just as also the forgiveness is not jest, but a real and serious matter. Therefore, if you look at this article, you have both facts: sins take away all your holiness, no matter how pious you may be on earth, and vice versa, forgiveness removes all sins and wrath, so that your sin cannot hurl you into hell, and your piety cannot lift you into heaven" (St. Louis Ed., XI, 1721). Luther teaches the same doctrine wherever he touches on this subject (St. Louis Ed., XIX, 995; II, 1457; XI, 1703 ff., 1933).

Martin Chemnitz, the second great Martin of the Lutheran Church, calls this article the citadel and main defense armament of the whole Christian doctrine and religion. If it is obscured or falsified, you cannot keep the other articles pure; if it is kept intact, then all idolatries and superstitions and whatever other adulterations in other articles may have occurred will disappear (Cf. *Loc. theol.* II, 200).

Balthasar Meisner calls it the center of true theology, to which everything tends, the sacred ocean where all the streams meet, the rock of faith which keeps everything safe and unharmed.

Others theologians as Henry P. Hamann, Jr., speaking about St. Paul and the redemption in Christ Jesus, in Rom. 3:21-26 says: "The decisive word in this passage is propitiation—*iJlasthvrión*—and without entering at this point further into detail of interpretation, it will be admitted that it is only because Christ has the character or power of being perfect and complete propitiation that there is revealed in him divine righteousness, the revelation of which is gospel for sinners. Hence to comprehend *iJlasthvrión* or propitiation as to who is comprehended in it, is to have the only key to this gospel."<sup>4</sup> The result is: Mankind, all men, are perfectly reconciled with God. No man need do or suffer anything additional in order to reconcile God, to obtain righteousness and salvation. And Holy Scripture testifies to this expressly; we read 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

## II. Justification Is Complete Because It Proceeds from God.

A. The Holy Scriptures affirm that.

1. We see that in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

Certainly all of us believe the whole earth has been forgiven since the death of Christ on the cross. It is possible to study many Bible passages in order to show this doctrine (Justification is complete). But it is also possible to present this doctrine by means of one single passage, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. This passage shows the close connection between the doctrine of redemption and the doctrine of complete, objective justification. As Professor Gerald Hoenecke said: ". . . without the doctrine of objective justification the gospel would cease to be gospel."

The Holy Spirit, writing by the Apostle Paul, said:

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

*Katallaghv* is one of the words which calls for our attention. According to the *Theological Dictionary of The New Testament*, of Gerhard Kittel, (vol. I p. 254 ff.): "In the New Testament it is only Paul who uses the word of the relation between God and man, and *katallavssein* is used only of God, *katallagh-nai* only of man. God reconciles us or the world to himself in 2 Cor. 5:18f. He is not reconciled. Nor does he reconcile himself to us or to the world. On the other hand, we are reconciled to God in Rom. 5:10, or reconcile ourselves to him in 2 Cor. 5:20. Thus God and man are not on equal terms in relation to reconciliation. Reconciliation is not reciprocal in the sense that both equally become friends where they were enemies. The supremacy of God over man is maintained in every respect. . . . We are reconciled by the death of Jesus. As he was made sin for us, we were made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5:21). To this extent reconciliation is parallel to justification. . . . The God who reconciles us to himself is always at the same time the God who judges us. For this reason reconciliation includes justification in 2 Cor. 5:21."

Luther rendered the word *katallavssw* and other derivatives of the verb *ajllavssein*, reconcile, in Matthew 5:24, "be reconciled (*diallavghqi*) to thy brothers"; Romans 5:10f., "For if, when we were

enemies, we were reconciled (kathllavghmen) to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled (katallagevnteı) we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also have joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation (katallaghvn).”

Etymologically iJlavskesqai and katallavssein both present reconciliation from differing viewpoints. iJlavskesqai is derived from i{lewi, “gracious,” and presents reconciliation as an act by which the grace of God is gained. An entirely different picture is presented by the word katallavssein which by way of the verb ajllavssein can be traced to a[lloi, “another.” In all the verbs derived from this word the idea of change is more or less emphasized. ajllavssw means “change” (cf. Ga. 4:20), “transform” (1 Cor. 15:51f.); “exchange” (Ro. 1:23); ajntallavssw, “give in exchange,” from which in the New Testament is derived ajntavllagma, “the ransom,” (Mt. 16:26). Since ajllavssw means “make different,” “change,” ajpallavssw because of the apo means: “to change by taking away or by separation”; Christ through taking away sins changed the relation to death of those who had been slaves of death, i.e., he freed them from the fear of death.

We read in 1 John 2:2: “kai; aujto;ı ijlasmovı ejstin peri; tw~n ajmartiw~n hJmw~n, “He is the atoning sacrifice (propitiation), for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” ijlasmovı used here and katallavssein used in 2 Cor. 5:18ff. are used in different ways to say the same word, “reconciliation.” katallavssein does not as iJlavskesqai point to the way in which reconciliation was brought about, and in what it actually consists. It says rather that the relationship between two parties has been fundamentally changed. God changed his relationship with the world. But, God didn’t change his mind, his holy will, when he spoke about the punishment and death for sins. He was serious, and he punished completely sins of all the world. Man didn’t change his evil nature and suddenly become good and holy. God changed the relationship between both of them by Christ. And from other passages we know what kind of relationship there was previously between the two: as children of wrath (Eph. 2:3) men were under the curse of the law (Ga. 3:13). God was offended by sin, was incensed against sinners with a wrath that burned to the deepest hell.

Actually verse 18 reads: God has reconciled us to himself, and the persons designated by “us” are every human being. So, what Paul says here he continues to explain in the next verse. Verse 19 speaks of the world, the kovsmon, of which it has never been true and never will be true, that it on its part is entirely reconciled with God. Certainly God has reconciled the world with himself. Thus forgiveness has been obtained completely for every human being.

We must underline that in katallavsswn the subject is always the offended party. Atonement designates a change in the relationship through which what we call reconciliation comes about. The world is unable to change the relationship existing between it and God, anymore than this is the case with a person who has offended another.<sup>5</sup> The world never was the party which initiated the reconciliation. This belongs to the offended one. He is therefore also in every case the one who reconciled the world with himself, the one in whom the reconciliation must become a reality. That is the reason why justification is a complete and perfect act of the grace of God.

What was the way and manner in which God made himself the reconciled one? According to 2 Cor. 5:19, the first part said: “That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting . . . mh; logizovmenoi . . .” If we now were to assume that logizovmenoi is to present the way and manner in which God made himself the reconciled one, the resultant thought would be: He changed his mind in that he overlooked the sins of the world. This, however, contradicts not only all clear conceptions of a reconciliation, in which the non-imputation of the guilt is conceivable only after appeasement of the offended one, but it at the same time poses the possibility that God has suppressed his holiness with its principal opposition against sin and his righteousness with its irrevocable demands for punishment.

Paul expressly teaches how this reconciliation of God came, through Christ. But when we speak of God’s grace, the foundation of our justification, we are speaking about something that exists from everlasting to everlasting. How did God’s grace carry out its benevolent design to provide for us the help we need? There we must remember two attributes of God which seem to be in

conflict. These attributes are the justice and the love or grace of God. This apparent conflict God resolved through the work of Christ. In Christ the divine justice is satisfied; and, behold, divine love triumphs too. Sins are paid for; God speaks the great word: The human race now is justified; it possesses righteousness; the sins of all men are forgiven.

2. We can see that in Romans 5:12-31

Professor Stoeckhardt comments that Rom. 5:12-31 is the locus classicus (the central point) of objective justification. Speaking about this section (Rom. 5:12-31), Professor Stoeckhardt says: "Christ by his death and blood not only earned the righteousness which avails before God, the forgiveness of sins, but established and presented it. The glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the solemn, public declaration of justification and absolution, which God has pronounced upon the sinful world, and through which he has sealed the effect of Christ's death. Yes, through Christ's righteousness the justification of life has passed upon all men. The many, all men, are presented as righteous through Christ's obedience. The obedience and righteousness of Christ, as the sin and disobedience of Adam, has been imputed to all men. God is the justifier of the ungodly. Therefore in Christ there is present for all men the righteousness which avails before God."<sup>6</sup>

The Holy Scriptures overflow with terminology that says "justification is complete for Christ's sake" and uses different words to say it. Iniquity forgiven, sin covered, sin not imputed; this means God forgave the sins of the world for Christ's sake.

The doctrine of justification, as Paul presents it, finally leads to the secret which we cannot resolve. For, on the one hand, the apostle testifies that justification of life has passed upon all men; on the other hand, that all the world is guilty before God and deserves eternal punishment. That is not contradictory. The one time the world is considered in Christ, and the other time outside of Christ. Outside of Christ God is angry with sinners; in Christ he looks at the sinful world with pleasure. The one is a judgment of the law, the other a judgment of the gospel upon sinners. The object of redemption and justification is the entire sinful humanity, considered apart from the relation of individuals to Christ and the gospel.

B. Justification is complete because it is not dependent on us.

Just think for a while how the justification of individual persons would be if it were dependent on their feelings, or their grade of faith. Half condemned one day, half absolved another day. And as little as a defendant in a human court of justice remains half in prison while the other half is set free, just so little does God justify half and condemn half.

What we have just now considered is called objective justification. The term signifies that apart from the attitude of individual human beings, in a very objective way God has declared that the world is justified, that sins are forgiven, that all mankind has been redeemed. Another term used for this great act of God is universal justification, a justification that extends to everybody. This doctrine, the doctrine of universal, so-called objective justification, sets forth that the Lord God by grace because of Christ's redemption actually forgave sins to all men, to the whole world. This is apart from the receiving or not receiving this justification by faith. It is not dependent on our attitude, not on our believing, nor on our conversion, nor on our emotions or feelings. Our Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross for all the world. Pieper says: "The objective reconciliation of all men to God through the work of Christ compels the proper understanding of the Gospel and of faith." The Gospel can be nothing else but the message and offer of the forgiveness of sins won by Christ, and faith can be nothing else but the mere acceptance of the forgiveness of sins won by Christ.

III. Objective Justification and Objective Reconciliation □ Are the Same Act of God in Christ

Though we distinguish between objective and subjective justification, it does not occur to us to separate them. To be justified completely, once and for all, in the cross and to be completely and personally justified, these two facts are not to be separated. Certainly, we don't speak of two justifications; objective and subjective justification refer to the same act of God.

Reconciliation is actualized as justification;<sup>7</sup> justification involves reconciliation. With reconciliation the actual absolution of the world's sins has taken place. When Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," this is followed immediately by "not imputing their trespasses unto them." A comparison with Rom. 4:6-8 makes it clear that this negative sentence, "not imputing sin," is equivalent to the positive sentence "imputing righteousness."

A. Complete justification happened 2,000 years ago.

That is, at that time, almost 2,000 years ago, when Christ fulfilled the law for men, God reconciled man to himself. Christ died on a certain day, at a certain hour in time. But this counts for all time: for the entire future time, for all the prior time. We must fix our eyes upon these simple, clear words of Scripture and let them work on us. God no longer imputes our sins to us. He has absolved us of our sins. He has forgiven us. He has justified us. We speak of objective justification as well as of objective reconciliation. Both terms refer to the same act of God in Christ. For Pieper, for instance, "objective reconciliation" and "objective justification" are practically interchangeable terms. The two terms correspond to each other and designate the same event. The term "justification" is taken from the sphere of law, the term "reconciliation" from the domain of personal relationships. Their material identity is clear from the fact that Paul at one time (2 Cor. 5:14-21), as we saw, can proceed from reconciliation to justification and at another time from justification to reconciliation.

1. The Complete Justification Happened on the Cross: "IT IS FINISHED" (John 19:30)  
TETELESTAI.

The perfect of a completed state (tetelestai) denotes an action brought to its termination. It's like a line that ends in a point. Jesus speaks this word to the Father who sent him, uttered it with a loud voice; it is also intended for all men to hear. What is it that is here brought to an end? The death of Jesus finishes his perfect and complete redemptive work, the work of reconciliation and atonement. His redemptive shedding of his blood, done perfectly, completely, and for all, is finished and stands as finished forever (Heb. 7:27; 9:12 and 26; Rom. 6:10).

2. Justification is complete in Christ.

The completeness and all-sufficiency of the work of Christ on the cross cannot be stated too strongly. The work of Christ is complete in itself and is extensive and complete for all the world. Actually, Christ suffered for the whole world, for all men. His work is intensively complete: by Christ's suffering and death the world was actually reconciled with God; that is, God's wrath against the world was actually done away with, was satisfied and removed. God no longer imputes to men their transgressions. And finally God has ratified the whole of this work, has declared it perfect and complete by raising Jesus from the dead. His raising was complete for our complete justification. In other words, "The account is closed." And not only for our complete justification, but for justification for all the world. The Scriptures shine with the "all," the universality of justification.

B. Complete justification took place since  the foundation of the world.

There certainly was forgiveness of sins in the times of the Old Testament.<sup>8</sup> Now, when Hebrews 9:15 says: "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from sins committed under the first covenant," it clearly states that the death of Christ took place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament. Then vs. 26 continues explaining the text, Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. If justification wasn't complete, then the sacrifice of Christ must be repeated from time to time in order to atone for our sins; then this would have been necessary also several thousand times before the advent of Christ, yes, from the foundation of the world, because before the advent of Christ, too, there was sin and forgiveness of sin. But the complete and all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ has forgiven the sins of the fathers and the sins of the saints now and for ever.

Rev. 13:8, reads: "The Lamb," namely Christ, "was slain from the foundation of the world." What does it mean? Christ was not literally slain from the foundation of the world, but only once, under Pontius Pilate. The passage doesn't say: "before" but "from the foundation of the world." Consequently, the text is speaking of the fruit of the sufferings of Christ. Only in this sense can it be said that Christ died from the foundation of the world. From the foundation of the world there was in the mind of God the death of Christ for the complete justification of the world.

We are so blessed with this knowledge that we must continually thank the Lord for the blessings of his grace in our lives. The whole world of sinners has been completely and totally justified in Christ Jesus. That is the central teaching of Scripture. And the primary purpose of Scripture is to bring individual sinners to faith in Christ, so that they share in his perfect righteousness and inherit eternal life. If these truths are lost, there is no Christian faith left, and there is no salvation. We must say: "Thanks, Lord, for your grace in my life. Make me your instrument to bring this news to all the world."

#### End Notes

- 1 Theological Monthly. Vol. VIII. SEPTEMBER, 1928. No. 9. Full Forgiveness.
- 2 Justification is, above all, forgiveness of sins. AC IV 1,2; Ap IV 40,41,76; SA III 13; Ep III 4,7; SD III 9,10,17,62. If justification is the forgiveness of sins, then justification is a declaring righteous, a forensic act. The same conclusion is demanded by the identification in the confessions of justification with the imputation of Christ's righteousness, or of his merits, or of his obedience. Ap IV 305 f; XXI 19; SD III 56.
- 3 Ps. 32:1 "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven." This is by faith alone in Christ.
- 4 James Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* (London: Honder and Stoughton, 1917), p. 152
- 5 Cf. Zahn, *Komm. z. Roemrbr.*, p 258, note 23: Object of *katallassein* and its derivatives or subject of its passives is never the one who suffers the hatred or enmity, but the one who caused the break of peace, mankind which rebelled against God, which in the warfare between God and sin is on the side of the latter and wars against God (Rom. 6:13) as *theomachoi*; in other words, the entire rebellious world of men, 2 Cor 5:18-20; Col 1:20-22. So the wife who offended her husband by more or less willful desertion, 1 Cor 7:11; so also the man against whom a brother believes he has cause for complaint, through whom the brother feels himself wronged, Mt. 5:24
- 6 *Epistle To The Romans* Vol. 1 by Dr. George Stoeckhardt, p. 76f.
- 7 For Henry P. Hamann, Jr. "The term 'objective justification' is not a good one. 'Objective justification' is merely a mistake for 'objective reconciliation.'" (*Justification by Faith in Modern Theology. Concordia Theological Monthly, April 1958.*)
- 8 Ex. 34:7; Num 14:1.18-20; Ps. 32:1.5; 78.38; 85:3; 99:8; 103:3; Micah 7:18; Ps. 31:6; Is. 29:22; 43:1; 44:23.

#### Bibliography

- 1 "Justification of the Sinner before God" (A reprint of the Monograph as it appeared in *Theological Monthly*, February 1928 to September 1929 inclusive), by Dr. Edward Preuss. Concordia Theological Seminary Press, Fort Wayne, Indiana.
- 2 *Concordia Theological Monthly*, February, 1950. VOL XXI, No 2. "Reconciliation and Justification," by Martin H. Franzmann.
- 3 *The Abiding Word*, Volume II, Concordia, by Wm. Arndt.
- 4 *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, volume 72, number 4, October 1975. "Redemption and Universal Justification according to Second Corinthians 5:18-21."
- 5 *Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians*, by G. Stoeckhardt. Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1952.
- 6 *Concordia Triglotta*, The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church, January 1, 1955, The Mott Press Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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