A LIVELY LEGACY: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF ROBERT PREUS

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Library of Congress Catalog Number 85-73168
ISBN# 0-9615927-0-2 (hardbound)
ISBN# 0-9615927-1-0 (paperback)

Printed by Graphic Publishing Co., Inc.
Lake Mills, Iowa 50450

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The Reformation Roots of "Objective Justification"

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The term "objective justification" has only recently come into standard Lutheran usage.[1] The reality, however, is part and parcel of Lutheranism's very vital center. The terminology grew out of the challenge posed by the attacks of Roman Catholicism on *grace alone*, of Calvinism on *universal grace*, and of both on the *means of grace*.

The heart of the Book of Concord is the Augsburg Confession, and the heart of the Augsburg Confession is the indissoluble unity of Articles III (Of the Son of God) and IV (Of Justification).[2] This "heart of hearts" of the Lutheran Confessions, with the closely allied Art. V (Of the Ministry), already contains what was later meant by the term "objective justification."

Keeping in mind that in the Lutheran understanding justification is quite the same thing as forgiveness of sins,[3] we may begin by noting a certain oddity in the wording of *AC* IV: "We receive forgiveness of sin . . . if we believe . . . that sin is forgiven us for His sake" (German), or: "They are justified . . . when they believe . . . sins to be forgiven for the sake of Christ" (Latin). Logically there is here at least the suggestion of a circle: On the one hand forgiveness is the result of faith, and thus comes after faith, and on the other hand it is the object of faith and therefore goes before faith.

One way of resolving the paradox would be to say that by forgiveness as object of faith here is meant not anything actually existing before faith, but simply the principle of how sin is or will be forgiven, namely by grace through faith. Forgiveness then would not in any sense exist before faith. It would occur as soon as faith accepted the principle that forgiveness occurs in this way. Thus, forgiveness as the object of faith would not be anything past or completed, but something essentially future or present. This line of reasoning, however, suggests another "feedback circuit": "I am forgiven when I believe that I am forgiven when I believe that I am forgiven, etc."

There is of course an important element of truth in this stress on the dependence of forgiveness on faith. For, as the final sentence of *AC* IV puts it, "This faith God will consider and impute for

righteousness before Him, as St. Paul says in Romans 3 and 4" (German). But this is not the whole truth. While forgiveness does, in a sense, depend on faith, in a deeper sense yet faith depends on forgiveness, according to the Augsburg Confession. Perhaps the most decisive statement here is that which describes faith as "born of the Gospel, or of absolution" (XII, 5, Latin) or as believing "the Gospel and absolution (namely, that sin has been forgiven and grace has been obtained through Christ)" (German).[4] It is very clear here that forgiveness, in the form of the absolution, exists before and independently of faith, and creates or gives birth to it. Forgiveness or absolution (that is, the Gospel itself) creates faith; faith merely receives or accepts forgiveness. Absolution can exist without faith (although its benefits of course go to waste unless faith receives them), but faith cannot exist without absolution.

One of the strongest statements in the central Reformation documents of the past, completed aspect of forgiveness is undoubtedly that of St. Ambrose cited in Art. IV of the Apology:

> . . . when the Lord Jesus came he forgave all men the sin that none could escape and by shedding his blood cancelled the bond that stood against us (Col. 2:14). This is what Paul says, "Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20) through Jesus. For after the whole world was subjected, he took away the sin of the whole world, as John testified when he said (John 1:29), "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" . . .[5]

Nor is this simply a perfunctory repetition of traditional material. The Apology adds this remarkable judgment: "If you pile up all the commentators on the *Sentences* with all their magnificent titles . . . they contribute less to an understanding of Paul than this one pronouncement from Ambrose."[6]

All this must be kept in mind when tracing the notion of "special faith"—as distinct from "general faith"—in Apology XII:

> For to believe in the Gospel is not to have the general faith that even the demons have (James 2:19), but, in the true sense, to believe that for Christ's sake the forgiveness of sins has been granted us; this is revealed in the Gospel. . . .
>
> When our opponents talk about faith and say that it precedes penitence, they do not mean justifying faith but the general faith which believes that God exists, that punishments hang over the wicked, etc. Beyond such "faith" we require everyone to believe that his sins are forgiven him. We are contending for this personal[7] faith. . . .[8]

It was at this point of "special" (or personal) faith that the oppo-

nents of the Reformation sensed a fatal weakness and self-contradiction. How can you be forgiven by faith, they asked, if your "special faith" must believe that you already are forgiven? If you are already forgiven before faith, and if faith must believe this, then how can you be forgiven by faith? John Gerhard labored at length to answer this argument of Robert Bellarmine's.[9] But by the time of Abraham Calov (died 1688) Lutheran theology had evidently developed a simple and standard explanation of this difficulty. Calov wrote in his classic commentary on the Augsburg Confession:

> [Justification] is the *object* of faith in that it is offered by God in the Gospel; it is the *effect* [of faith], to put it thus, in so far as grace having been apprehended by faith, the forgiveness of sins happens to us by that very act.[10]

Carpzov's celebrated *Introduction to the Symbolic Books of the Lutheran Churches* explained the same distinction in greater detail:

> The forgiveness of sins is considered in a *twofold manner. First,* as it has been *acquired* by Christ and is *offered* as a benefit *promised* and intended by God for sinners, to be sought and had in the Word and Sacraments. *Afterwards* [forgiveness is considered] as it has already been *accepted* by faith, has been applied, and is possessed. . . . In the *first* manner the forgiveness of sins is the *object* of faith *insofar as it justifies.* . . .[11]

This "twofold manner" of considering the forgiveness of sins, first as object and then as "effect" of faith, is precisely what was later meant by the distinction between objective and subjective justification.[12] It remains to "color in" these sketchy outlines with concrete Reformation content. And if *objective justification* is forgiveness as it exists prior to faith, then its two elements, the *past* acquisition of forgiveness by Christ and its *present* proclamation and distribution in the means of grace, suggest a natural division of the material.

Objective Justification as PAST Event

It is a commonplace that for Luther justification was the most basic, central, and decisive article of the entire Christian faith. What may not be so obvious today is that for Luther this crucial truth of justification was essentially a matter not so much of the Third as of the Second Article of the Creed. It is of this Second Article that Luther writes in his Large Catechism: "Indeed, the entire Gospel that we preach depends on the proper understanding of this article. Upon it all our salvation and blessedness are based, and it is so rich and broad that we can never learn it fully."[13]

To be sure, faith, which is itself a divine gift, is always either ex-

pressly named or taken for granted as the only means by which the salvation gained by Christ can and must be received. Here we have the deep inner connection between the Second and Third Articles. Althaus therefore puts it like this:

> Thus in matters of justification, Christ and faith cannot be treated as two different things and set in opposition to each other. Christ is what he is for me in God's judgment only in that faith in which I "grasp" him; and faith is meaningful in God's judgment only because Christ is present with a man. Luther therefore means the same whether he says that we become righteous on account of Christ or that we become righteous on account of faith in Christ.[14]

It must be clear, however, that faith has a completely subsidiary, humble, passive function in justification. It neither creates nor enhances the gift, but merely receives it. Therefore the accent must always fall on the gift itself, on the work of Christ, not on faith as such. Luther's classic formulation in the Smalcald Articles is the great model here:

> The first and chief article is this, that Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, "was put to death for our trespasses and raised again for our justification [German: righteousness]" (Rom. 4:25). He alone is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "God has laid upon him the iniquities of us all" (Isa. 53:6). Moreover, "all have sinned," and "they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, by his blood" (Rom. 3:23–25).
>
> Inasmuch as this must be believed and cannot be obtained or apprehended by any work, law, or merit, it is clear and certain that such faith alone justifies us, as St. Paul says in Romans 3. . . .
>
> Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised, even if heaven and earth and things temporal should be destroyed. For as St. Peter says, "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "And with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5).
>
> On this article rests all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world. Therefore we must be quite certain and have no doubts about it. Otherwise all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all our adversaries will gain the victory.[15]

It is important to underscore the fact that Luther's justification doctrine is dominated from beginning to end by its Christological content. Modern pseudo-Lutheranism's notion that one can surrender the Christology of the Creeds and Confessions to historical criticism and still keep the Lutheran doctrine of justification[16] mistakes a bloodless ghost for Luther's actual teaching. Wilhelm Maurer has said it well:

> The Lutheran Church's doctrine of justification rests on the understanding of revelation as it is laid down in the great dogmas of the ancient church up to and including Augustine. If the doctrine of justification is severed from this foundation, if it is even made into a critical principle with the aid of which one wishes to destroy the foundation, then this doctrine itself withers in an abstract notionalism, then it loses its religious earnestness and the ability to produce the conviction of Christian faith.[17]

The impression is often given today that Luther concentrated on the "for me" of justification in a way which left to that doctrine only a superficial and perfunctory connection with the ancient Trinitarian-Christological dogma. Maurer argues convincingly that the opposite was the case. He shows that Luther's famous "*simul justus et peccator*" (at the same time saint and sinner) arose ultimately out of Christological considerations. Before Luther saw the "*simul*" in the person of the Christian, he saw it in the person of Christ: ". . . in Him were at the same time (*simul*) the highest joy and the highest sorrow,"[18] precisely because of His substitutionary role.

There is of course much more to Maurer's argument than can be indicated here with one or two references. His conclusion is noteworthy, however, that "the doctrine of justification is the fruit, not the root of Lutheran theology and churchliness."[19] The implication of this possibly startling sentence is simply this, that Luther's justification doctrine arose not out of the arbitrary, subjective speculations or wishful thinking of a sixteenth century monk desperately in search of forgiveness, but out of an earnest appropriation of the biblical teaching of what God has done for mankind in His Son. In this way, by going behind the dry, sterile abstractions of medieval scholasticism, to the living Trinitarian faith of the ancient church (e.g. St. Athanasius!), and by seeing this heritage again in the undimmed light of New Testament soteriology, Luther reappropriated the ancient Creeds in an extraordinarily vital and dynamic way which went far beyond any mere mechanical restorationism. It is Maurer's judgment that

> Luther's Reformational discovery thus appears as the summing up, crowning, and decisive continuation of the Christian history of dogma generally. The Lutheran Church thereby gains an immediate relation to the ancient church. She steps independently beside the two great Catholic churches of the East and the West, with the claim of possessing and administering the undivided heirloom of ancient Catholicism in its authentic understanding.[20]

Thus, as Maurer wrote elsewhere, Luther "made the ancient church's Christological dogma the ground of all theology."[21] More's the pity

that his modern followers prefer Erasmus: "The historical-critical relativism and scepticism of Erasmus have defeated [Luther] in his own church."[22]

Luther's Christology is far from being a neat and placid arrangement of pedantic formalities. Its whole thrust is towards the crowning scandal that Jesus was made "sin" (2 Cor. 5:21) and a "curse" (Gal. 3:13) for us. In this ultimate meaning of the Cross, so offensive to scholastic ears, Luther gloried.[23] In connection with this "happy exchange" Luther stated the vicarious or substitutionary satisfaction in the strongest possible terms:

> He sent His Son into the world, heaped all the sins of all men upon Him, and said to Him: "Be Peter the denier; Paul the persecutor, blasphemer, and assaulter; David the adulterer; the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; the thief on the cross. In short, be the person of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men. And see to it that You pay and make satisfaction for them." . . . By this deed the whole world is purged and expiated from all sins, and thus it is set free from death and from every evil.[24]

> Therefore He truly became accursed according to the Law, not for Himself, but, as St. Paul says, [for us]. . . . By this fortunate exchange with us He took upon Himself our sinful person and granted us His innocent and victorious Person. Clothed and dressed in this, we are freed from the curse of the Law. . . .[25]

It is difficult to see therefore how some scholars, like Gustaf Aulen, can deny that Luther taught the doctrine of the vicarious satisfaction.[26] In view of Luther's theological development, recently traced again in Lowell Green's most valuable book, *How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel*,[27] it is at least understandable that some confuse Luther's mature views on justification with his earlier views.[28] It should be clear, however, that for Luther's mature theology, which is reflected in the church's Confessions, justification is strictly forensic, since it is the same as forgiveness or acquittal.[29]

Luther is at pains to show that Christ's redemptive, justifying work was not any sort of partial, or incomplete payment, but was an intensively and extensively perfect satisfaction for all sins of all men, past, present, and future:

> If the sins of the entire world are on that one man, Jesus Christ, then they are not on the world. But if they are not on Him, then they are still on the world. . . . Not only my sins and yours, but the sins of the entire world, past, present, and future, attack Him, try to damn Him, and do in fact damn Him. . . . Thus in Christ all sin is conquered, killed, and buried; and righteousness remains the victor and the ruler eternally.[30]

If *all* sins of *all* men have been truly and successfully expiated by Christ, then forgiveness is more than a possibility. The world's sin has been decisively dealt with, and in that sense forgiveness is an accomplished fact. Luther therefore can have no hesitation in translating the participles in 2 Corinthians 5:19 as if they were finite verbs: "For God was in Christ, and reconciled the world with Himself, and did not impute to them their sins. . . ."

For Luther as for the New Testament (note the equation of "redemption" and "forgiveness" in Colossians 1:14 and the aorists and perfect in Colossians 2:13–15) forgiveness, that is, cancellation of sin, or the change from divine wrath to divine grace, "has happened" in a way in which it has not happened either for Roman Catholicism or for Calvinism. In the Roman view, as worked out at the Council of Trent,[31] redemption follows what may be called a benevolent father-in-law pattern: Christ earned for us the chance to earn salvation. Not the gift itself is given but the opportunity to merit it. Rome, then, denies that Christ's redemption was intensively perfect; Calvinism, with its limited atonement, denies that the redemption was extensively perfect. Luther takes with utmost seriousness the "it is finished" (completed, perfected) of St. John 19:30. And, like the ancient church, Luther does not divide the Cross and the Resurrection.[32]

However, in the midst of Luther's most fervent celebrations of the objective, accomplished nature of world-forgiveness, he never forgets that only faith can receive all this: "But where there is no faith in Christ, there sin remains."[33] If this seems paradoxical, one needs to remember Luther's deep understanding of the difference between the *acquisition* of forgiveness, and its *distribution*. To this distinction we must now turn.

Objective Justification as PRESENTLY Available Treasure

Since justification equals forgiveness, we may say that for Luther justification (forgiveness) has been acquired by Christ for the whole world. This world-forgiveness or what we now call "objective justification" is a past, completed event, achieved by Christ's perfect life, suffering, and death, and signalled by His resurrection. Saying no more than this, however, would be very misleading. For it would suggest that "objective justification," like the sun that shines on the good and the bad alike, is somehow generally and directly available and accessible to men, whether they believe it or not. Rather, for Luther this general world-forgiveness which Christ has obtained is

like a "chest full of gold and treasure buried or preserved in a certain place."[34] This poses a problem: "I might think myself to death and experience all desire, great passion, and ardor in such knowledge and remembrance of the treasure until I became ill. But what benefit would all this be to me if this treasure were not opened, given, and brought to me and placed in my keeping?"[35] Then Luther explains the crucial distinction:

> We treat of the forgiveness of sins in two ways. First, how it is achieved and won. Second, how it is distributed and given to us. Christ has achieved it on the cross, it is true. But he has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the supper or sacrament. There he has distributed and given it through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once for all on the cross. But the distribution takes place continuously, before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world.[36]

This means that to receive forgiveness we must run not to the cross but to the means of grace:

> If now I seek the forgiveness of sins, I do not run to the cross, for I will not find it given there. Nor must I hold to the suffering of Christ, as Dr. Karlstadt trifles, in knowledge or remembrance, for I will not find it there either. But I will find in the sacrament or gospel the word which distributes, presents, offers, and gives to me that forgiveness which was won on the cross.[37]

Here is the great watershed which divides evangelical faith and churchliness from all Reformed, spiritualizing styles of piety. Luther's reply to Karlstadt and the "heavenly prophets" is uncannily relevant to our modern revivalistic and "charismatic" frenzies. What does it mean, for instance, to be invited to "come to the Cross" or "to Calvary" if the final destination is not baptism, absolution, or the body and blood of the Lamb of God, as we sing, "I come, I come," but "trained counselors" and "decision cards"? Compare this with Luther's approach:

> Christ on the cross and all his suffering and his death do not avail, even if, as you teach, they are "acknowledged and meditated upon" with the utmost "passion, ardor, heartfeltness." Something else must always be there. What is it? The Word, the Word, the Word. Listen, lying spirit, the Word avails. Even if Christ were given for us and crucified a thousand times, it would all be in vain if the Word of God were absent and were not distributed and given to me with the bidding, this is for you, take what is yours.[38]

Dr. Karlstadt's spiritualizing, by contrast, is a "fantasy": The more touchingly he speaks of "experiencing" Christ, the more "he mocks us

and does not bring us any farther than showing the health-giving treasure in a glass or vessel. We may look and smell until we are satisfied, but as in a dream. He gives nothing, opens nothing, lets us have nothing."[39]

The distributing Word which Luther urges is of course the Gospel or, to say it most pointedly, the absolution, whether in verbal or sacramental form. Since by God's own arrangement He has placed the whole of Christ's saving work into the Gospel for distribution, there is no other access to this saving work except in the Gospel. Hence Luther's vehemence: "We should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil."[40] Nor is it an accident that the 19th century U.S. Lutheran controversy about Objective Justification began with a dispute about the nature of absolution: Is it a real imparting of forgiveness, or only a wish or reminder?[41] A genuinely Lutheran treatment of Objective Justification simply cannot leave the subject hanging in air, as it were, without at once connecting it with the Gospel which alone mediates it—not the Law, nor reason, philosophy, experience or anything else. The Gospel in fact links Objective Justification, which it proclaims, offers, distributes and communicates, with Subjective Justification, where the miracle of faith, and thus of personal appropriation of the treasure, is "born of the Gospel or of absolution" (*AC* XII).

This Gospel or absolution offers "subjective" effects and benefits only because it carries "objective" content, value, and power. It is not a theory or report about how sins are forgiven. Rather, the Gospel is itself the actual communication of forgiveness, being "the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Neither Rome, with its "monster of uncertainty"[42] nor a Geneva always seeking to flutter beyond the ambiguous external Gospel and (in the name of "reason itself") "to climb higher and to examine into the secret energy of the Spirit"(!!)[43] knows an objective absolution in Luther's sense. Of course Luther, too, knows that faith is necessary to receive the Gospel's benefits. But he insists that the Gospel, as the life-giving treasure of Christ's grace, has its own power, validity, and dignity, before, apart from, and independently of faith or unbelief. Faith depends on the Gospel, not the Gospel on faith. Our subjective fluctuations, whether of faith or unbelief, cannot make God's Key doubtful or "wobbly":

> We are not talking here either about people's belief or disbelief regarding the efficacy of the keys. We realize that few believe. We are speaking of what the keys accomplish and give. He who does not accept what the keys give receives, of course, nothing. But this is not the keys' fault. Many do not believe the gospel, but this does not mean that the gospel is not true or effective. A king gives you a castle. If you do not accept it, then it is not the king's fault, nor is he guilty of a lie. But you have deceived yourself and the fault is yours. The king certainly gave it.[44]

What Luther says here about absolution is not restricted, in the manner of "priestcraft," to absolution as a formal ecclesiastical rite. It refers in principle to the Gospel—the essence of which is absolution —in its various forms. Thus Luther sees the individual Gospel narratives or pericopes not simply as histories, but as "sacraments," that is, as "sacred signs through which God works in believers whatever these histories describe." Christ's words "are to be mediated as symbols, through which that very righteousness, power, and salvation are given which these very words show forth."[45]

Without Luther's "lively" understanding of the means of grace, without his stress on the centrality of the concrete Gospel words and sacraments as sole purveyors of the treasures of Christ, Objective Justification can only be misunderstood and misrepresented. Our Lutheran forefathers never severed the acquistion of the treasure from its distribution in the Gospel.[46] But in our anti-sacramental age the theological doctrine of Objective Justification is easily twisted into a general popular optimism to the effect that there is no more wrath of God, and that what we need is not forgiveness itself, but only reminders and assurances from time to time of the general fact that everyone and everything is always forgiven anyhow. Luther himself was painfully aware that the Reformation was being distorted into "this rotten, pernicious, shameful, carnal liberty."[47] He and Melanchthon solemnly warned, in the Saxon Visitation Articles, against the smug, easy-going sort of caricature of the Gospel which simply takes forgiveness for granted:

> There neither is forgiveness of sins without repentance nor can forgiveness of sins be understood without repentance. It follows that if we preach the forgiveness of sins without repentance that the people imagine that they have already obtained the forgiveness of sins, becoming thereby secure and without compunction of conscience. This would be a greater error and sin than all the errors hitherto prevailing. Surely we need to be concerned lest, as Christ says in Matthew 12[:45], the last state become worse than the first.[48]

Luther was always deeply conscious of the wrath of God as a terrible, continuing reality.[49] He never suggested that this wrath had

simply evaporated into non-existence. No, "in Christ," and there alone, it was decisively overcome and reversed—yes, for all men. But outside of Christ and the Gospel, if one spurns the "in Christ" gift freely given in the Word, one remains under judgment and wrath. "For while the act has taken place, as long as I have not appropriated it, it is as if it had not taken place for me."[50] Therefore "outside the Christian church (that is, where the Gospel is not) there is no forgiveness. . . ."[51]

There is no "cheap grace" (Bonhoeffer) here. Although she glories in Objective Justification as none other can or does, the church of the Lutheran Reformation does not present this evangelical jewel as a pretext for not bothering about serious repentance. The Reformation did not abandon the awesomely realistic understanding of penitence from which it had sprung.[52] Nor did Luther reduce the Fifth Petition to an empty sham when he wrote: "Not that he does not forgive sin even without and before our prayer; and he gave us the Gospel, in which there is nothing but forgiveness, before we prayed or even thought of it."[53] For he added at once: "But the point here is for us to recognize and accept this forgiveness." What is needed is not a mere reminder of forgiveness, but the thing itself. It is precisely because our need for forgiveness is so radical and constant that it cannot be confined to times of conscious petitions for forgiveness: "Let no one think that he will ever in this life reach the point where he does not need this forgiveness. In short, unless God constantly forgives, we are lost."[54]

Far from being a mere reminder or "assurance"[55] of a forgiveness which we already have in some other way, the Gospel is God's actual —and only—means of granting forgiveness: "The keys truly forgive sin before him. . . . Therefore we must believe the voice of the one absolving no less than we would believe a voice coming from heaven."[56]

When these various elements are taken into account, it is very evident that "Objective Justification," far from being a pedantic technicality or a "Missourian" specialty, is in fact theological shorthand for that "thickest," most central region of the fabric of Lutheran theology, where its most precious and distinctive evangelical themes come together in an indissoluble, "triple-bonded" unity: grace alone, universal grace, and the means of grace.[57]

Endnotes

[1]The terminology "objective" and "subjective" here is not altogether happy since "subjective justification . . . is every whit as objective as objective justification" (Henry P. Hamann, *Justification By Faith In Modern Theology*, Graduate Study Number II [St. Louis: School for Graduate Studies, Concordia Seminary, 1957], p. 60). The older Missouri Synod literature, in German, often spoke of a "general (*allgemeine*) justification." On the other hand, C. F. W. Walther's edition of Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1879) cites the rejection by orthodox faculties of S. Huber's contention that justification was "universal" and that Christ's redemption had properly speaking and in actual fact been conferred on all men (III, V, 286–287). The rejection of Huber's language, however, was generally understood to be due to his other errors, principally about the election of grace. Further, it was always understood that in standard ecclesiastical usage "justification" meant subjective justification ("About the Doctrine of Justification," *Synodical Conference Proceedings*, 1872, p. 68. My translation of this essay is available from Concordia Theological Seminary Press under the title, *Justification: Objective and Subjective*).

[2]For an attempt to divide Art. III from Art. IV in order to scuttle the latter under historical-critical pressure, see John Reumann, "The Augsburg Confession In Light Of Biblical Interpretation," in *Confessio Augustana 1530–1980, Commemoration and Self-Examination, Lutheran World Report*, 9 (1980), 3–34.

[3]"Forgiveness of sins is the same as justification" (Apol. IV, 76, Theodore Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959], p. 117. This definition holds also in the much disputed Ap. IV, 72, since the "making righteous" is given the sense of receiving the forgiveness of sins). The biblical basis for this is Ps. 32:1 (cf. Rom. 4:1–8). Also, "We believe, teach, and confess that according to the usage of Scripture the word 'justify' means in this article 'absolve,' that is, pronounce free from sin" (Formula of Concord, Ep., III, 7; Tappert, p. 473).

[4]Tappert, pp. 34–35.

[5]Tappert, pp. 121–122. See also FC SD III, 4: "As God and man he has by his perfect obedience redeemed us from our sins, justified and saved us" (Tappert, p. 540).

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 122.

[7]Latin: *specialis*

[8]Apol. XII, 45. 60. Tappert, pp. 187–188, 190.

[9]Johann Gerhard, "De Objecto Fidei," *Loci Theologici* (Tuebingen: I. G. Cotta, 1768), Loc. XVII, cap. III, sec. IV, pp. 181–182.

[10]Abraham Calov, *Exegema Augustanae Confessionis* (Wittenberg: 1665), p. 4.

[11]Quoted in Walther-Baier, *Compendium*, III, 285. Italics in Walther-Baier.

[12] Note the crucial Thesis 3 of the 1872 essay (Note 1 above): "In the pure doctrine of justification, as our Lutheran church has presented it again from God's Word and placed it on the lamp-stand, it is above all a matter of three points: 1. Of the doctrine of the general, perfect redemption of the world through Christ. 2. Of the doctrine of the power and efficacy of the means of grace, and 3. Of the doctrine of faith."

[13]Large Catechism, Creed, 33, Tappert, p. 415.

[14]Paul Althaus, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), trans. Robert C. Schultz, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 231. However, Althaus' approval of Prenter's claim that "the 'subjective appropriation' of reconciliation is not something which follows an 'objective' work of God . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 213) is mistaken.

[15]Smalcald Articles, II, I, Tappert, p. 292.

[16]See John Reumann's essay, cited in Note 2 above. Luther: "Here you see how necessary it is to believe and confess the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. When Arius denied this, it was necessary also for him to deny the doctrine of redemption. . . . Hence those who deny the divinity of Christ lose all Christianity and become [pagans] and Turks through and through" (*Lectures on Galatians* in *Luther's Works* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963], vol. 26, pp. 282–283).

[17]Wilhelm Maurer, "Die Anfaenge von Luthers Theologie," in his *Kirche und Geschichte*, edited by Ernst-Wilhelm Kohls and Gerhard Muller (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970), vol. 1, p. 32.

[18]*Ibid.*, p. 29.

[19]*Ibid.*, p. 32.

[20]*Ibid.*, p. 26.

[21]Maurer, "Die Einheit der Theologie Luthers, "*op. cit.*, p. 20.

[22]*Ibid.*

[23]*Luther's Works*, vol. 26, pp. 276–291.

[24]*Ibid.*, p. 280.

[25]*Ibid.*, p. 284.

[26]Note Althaus' refutation of Aulen in *op. cit.*, pp. 218–223.

[27]Lowell C. Green, *How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel* (Fallbrook, Calif.: Verdict Publications, 1980).

[28]Althaus seems to grant too much to Karl Holl here, *op. cit.*, pp. 226–228, 234–242.

[29]Lowell Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 201ff,

[30]*LW* 26, 280–281.

[31]Note the theological experts' "hard line" on merit at Trent, against Seripando's attempt to steer a more Augustinian course (Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent* [London: Thomas Nelson, 1961], pp. 249–260).

[32]Althaus, *op. cit.*, pp. 210–211.

[33]*LW* 26, 286.

[34]"Against the Heavenly Prophets," *LW* 40, 213.

[35]*Ibid.*

[36]*Ibid.*, p. 213–214.

[37]*Ibid.*, p. 214.

[38]*Ibid.*, p. 212–213.

[39]*Ibid.*, p. 213.

[40]Smalcald Articles, III, VIII, 10, Tappert, p. 313.

[41]George O. Lillegard, ed., *Faith of Our Fathers 1853–1953* (Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1953), pp. 101–104. Cf. Justification essay, Synodical Conference *Proceedings*, 1872, pp. 20, 45, 57–64.

[42]*LW* 26, 386–387.

[43]John T. McNeill, ed., *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion I*, in The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), vol. XX, p. 537.

[44]"The Keys," *LW* 40, 367.

[45]*WA* 9, 440.

[46]See references 10, 11, and 12 above.

[47]Large Catechism, Preface, Tappert, pp. 358–359.

[48]*LW* 40, 274.

[49]Wilhelm Maurer, "Suende, Schuld, Strafe. Bemerkungen zu Luthers Theologie," in Maurer, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–185.

[50]*LW* 40, 215.

[51]Large Catechism, Creed, 56, Tappert, p. 418.

[52]See Apol., XII, Penitence, esp. par. 28–60, Tappert, pp. 185–190.

[53]Large Catechism, Lord's Prayer, Tappert, p. 432.

[54]*Ibid.*

[55]See Calvin's discussion in John T. McNeill, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 636–637, 638–639, 644–645, 648–649, and passim.

[56]Apol. XII, 39. 40, Tappert, p. 187.

[57]See the splendid discussion in F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, v. II, pp. 15ff., quoting Melanchthon's statement: "Grace is nothing else than the condonation or remission of sin." Also Luther's judgment that the Papacy and the Anabaptists both "separate forgiveness of sins from the Word."