

*A LIVELY LEGACY:  
ESSAYS IN HONOR OF  
ROBERT PREUS*

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The cover design is a reproduction of the Preus family coat of arms.

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# *Justification and Easter*

## *A Study in Subjective and Objective Justification in Lutheran Theology*

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"Resurrectio eius a mortuis est nostri justificatio per solam fidem."  
(WA 39:2, 237, 25)

### I.

Already some of the first writings where Luther presents his newly won insights in the doctrine of justification<sup>1</sup> contain a few, yet not elaborate, references to the relationship between justification and Easter. Although the *Acta Augustana* are silent on this point, merely stressing that justification is offered by the means of grace, and that we are not to make Christ a liar in His absolution,<sup>2</sup> the two following documents on justification, *Sermo de duplici iustitia* and *Sermo de triplici iustitia*, involve also Easter. In the *Sermo de duplici iustitia* of 1518,<sup>3</sup> Luther says that the "first righteousness"—contrary to the "second righteousness," identical with ethical sanctification—is "the one through which Christ is righteous and makes righteous through faith."<sup>4</sup> This righteousness of Christ is explained not only through a reference to 1 Corinthians 1:30: "Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption," but also through quoting John 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life." Our righteousness by faith is apparently identified with the righteousness that dwells in the resurrected Christ.

This Easter reference should be seen in its context, where the atoning work of Christ is exclusively described by pre-Easter events: "This belongs to me that the Lord Christ has lived, acted, spoken and suffered and finally died, just as if I had lived and suffered the same life, action, speech, suffering and death."<sup>5</sup> Christ's vicarious satisfaction is completed by His death, and the Easter Gospel, "I am the resurrection," must consequently be understood as the result and summary of these previous events. The risen Lord confers the fruits of His redemption, the righteousness dwelling in His person, through

the means of grace: "Therefore the same righteousness is given to men in baptism and whenever they are truly penitent so that man can with confidence glory in the Lord Christ and say: 'That belongs to me. . . .'"<sup>6</sup>

In the *Sermo de triplici iustitia* the Christian righteousness is also said to be the righteousness of Christ, a statement supported by a reference, *inter alia*, to Colossians 3:3: "Your life is hid with Christ in God," i.e., with the risen Christ of Colossians 3:1: "If ye be risen with Christ."<sup>7</sup> The salvation by faith is also said to be worked by the righteousness of Him, about whom it is written: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). This heavenly righteousness is expressly said to be a substitutionary one: "As Adam made all those guilty who are born of him, through his very own sin, which is quite alien to them, and gives them what he has, so Christ too through His righteousness makes all righteous and blessed who are born of Him. . . ."<sup>8</sup> In both cases sin and righteousness exist as realities prior to the individual lives affected by them. In both cases the status of the individuals is affected by an event that has taken place in another person, who becomes the source of their relationship to God: "Just as we are condemned by an alien sin, so we are redeemed through an alien righteousness."<sup>9</sup> It should be observed that the general implication of Romans 5:18 described above ("as Adam . . . so Christ") does not demand that the "all" in the second part of the Pauline parallel (showing the consequences of Christ's obedience) be taken to cover all men but is, in Luther's exposition, limited to those "who are born of Him." This limitation does not, however, affect the universality of Christ's righteousness, which is said to be "eternal" and thus without limits.<sup>10</sup> As such it is offered in the means of grace, to be believed without any sinful hesitation.<sup>11</sup>

A much more elaborate description of Easter as related to justification is found in a sermon of 1519, thus shortly after the two previous writings. The relationship between atonement and justification, between Good Friday and Easter Day is described in the following way: "You then cast your sins away on Christ when you firmly believe that His wounds and passion are your sins, that He carries them and pays for them" (Isaiah 53 follows).<sup>12</sup> The vicarious satisfaction is thus limited to the pre-resurrection events. Yet Luther goes on: "For on Christ they (i.e. the sins) might not remain; they are devoured by His resurrection, and you now see no wounds, no sufferings on Him, no hints of sins. So speaks St. Paul that Christ was

delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification; in His sufferings He makes known our sins and thus strangles them, but through His resurrection He makes us righteous and free of all sins, if we believe this."<sup>13</sup> The resurrection of Christ gives us a Savior, whose glorification is His righteousness, which does not suffer passion and death, signs of the sin that have forever been removed. This righteousness, obtained through the vicarious satisfaction, is a substitutionary one and is offered to faith, which alone makes it effective to the individual. The resurrection of Christ is, however, not only a *condition* for a later, individual justification. It is said to *justify* us, and faith is directed towards it as faith's justifying object, a righteousness for our sake to be embraced by faith as already existing, prior to faith.

The same distribution of atonement and justification is very vividly described in a sermon of 1531, included in the House Postil: "For before three days have passed, our dear Lord Christ brings another, beautiful, healthy, friendly, joyous picture with Him, in order that we might learn the consolation that not only are our sins destroyed and strangled through the passion of Christ, but that we should be made righteous and eternally blessed through His resurrection, as St. Paul says . . ." (Rom. 4:25 follows). A little later Luther continues: "For as we see in the first picture on Good Friday, how our sin, our curse and death are put upon Christ, so we see on Easter Day another picture, where there is no sin, no curse, no displeasure, no death but only life, grace, bliss and righteousness on Him. With such a picture we should establish our hearts. Then it is shown and given to us that we should receive Him in no other way than as if God has raised us today with Christ. For as little as you see sin, death and curse on Christ, you should so strongly believe that God wants to see as little (of sin) on you for the sake of Christ, if you accept this resurrection of Christ for your consolation."<sup>14</sup> The Christian righteousness is again identified with Christ's personal righteousness, acquired through His resurrection, and presented to faith. Faith alone makes this righteousness present in the individual, but it exists prior to faith, and individual in the resurrected Christ, whose righteousness is a substitutionary one, as His passion was too.

In 1533 Luther delivered his famous Torgau-sermons, to which later the Formula of Concord refers in its Article IX on "Christ's Descent into Hell."<sup>15</sup> In one of these sermons Luther makes statements on the vicarious, substitutionary character of the resurrection of Christ that well correspond to what has already been found.

Luther says that Christ rose from the dead “not for His own sake but for us, poor miserable people, who had to be imprisoned by death and the devil eternally. For He was as to His own person safe from death and all misery, so that He did not have to die or to descend to hell, but as He has hidden himself in our flesh and blood and put upon Himself all our sin, punishment and misery, so that He had to help us out of it, in that He became alive again and also corporeally and according to His human nature became a lord over death in order that we too in Him and through Him finally escape death and all misery.”<sup>16</sup> Luther declares this article of faith to be the central one, so that a Christian “should not see, hear, think of or know anything else than this article,”<sup>17</sup> and it is supported by texts such as “hath quickened us together with Christ and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:5 f.), “Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:2) and “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again” (Rom. 8:33 f.). Thus this central article of faith is nothing else than the article of justification, contained in the Easter message about Christ’s vicarious resurrection, in the proclamation of our righteousness in the Risen One. Luther does not speak about the future, physical resurrection of the Christians in this connection, a teaching that is given a lower rank: “For as true as Christ has risen from dead, we have already gained the best and most excellent part of the resurrection, so that the corporeal resurrection of the flesh from the grave, which still remains in the future, is to be considered insignificant compared to this.”<sup>18</sup> It is the spiritual resurrection, our justification in the justified Christ which is the meaning of the creed’s *resurrexit*, its “He rose again”: “If we now believe accordingly, we would have a good life and death. For such a faith would well teach us that He has not risen only for His own person, but our resurrection is so connected with His that it avails for us too, so that we may stand and be included in the *Resurrexit*; and because of that we too shall rise and live with Him eternally, so that already our resurrection and life have begun in Christ (as St. Paul also says); and this so certainly as if it had already happened, even though it is still hidden and not revealed.”<sup>19</sup>

As true as it is that the risen Christ without bleeding wounds and suffering is our justification, it remains equally true that all such statements concerning Christ’s victory are spoken as Gospel statements, having as their counterpart the Law, which knows of no

Christ or forgiveness: "But although hell *per se* remains hell and keeps the unbelievers imprisoned, as also do death, sin and all misery, so that they must remain there and perish; as hell terrifies and menaces us too according to the flesh and outward man, that we must fight and bite with it—yet that is all destroyed and pulled down in faith and spirit so that it cannot any longer hurt us, . . ." <sup>20</sup> Also the Christian must meet hell and the wrath of God as realities, to be overcome by a stronger reality, never as fictions to be overcome by better insights.

With the background now given, selected from different works by Luther's hand, it is not difficult to grasp the full meaning of the epigrammatic thesis 2 in the disputation theses of the 24th of April 1543: *Resurrectio eius a mortuis est nostri iustificatio per solam fidem*.<sup>21</sup>—"His resurrection from the dead is our justification by faith alone." This sentence is not a formulation made at random but a carefully worded summary of the central article of faith, where the relationship between Easter and justification gets a clear description, stressing both God's action in the Son and God's action in the believer.

## II.

The first doctrinal controversy within the Lutheran church concerning the relationship between Christ's universal righteousness and its bestowal on the believer is connected with the name of Samuel Huber (c. 1547-1624), a Swiss convert from Calvinism to Lutheranism, who got into conflict with leading Lutheran theologians on the universality of predestination and justification.<sup>22</sup> As this conflict always is brought into the picture, whenever general and individual justification is under discussion, it well deserves a fresh treatment on the basis of the pertinent documents, where our aim will be to see whether Huber or his opponents rightly can claim to continue the doctrinal succession from Luther.

Our investigation will be limited to the question concerning justification, leaving aside other aspects.<sup>23</sup> Huber's attempt to argue for the notion of a universal justification with reference to certain Scripture passages and to God's universal will to save all men was met by firm opposition from men such as Egidius Hunnius, Polycarp Leyser and Samuel Gesner. They referred to the fact that the Lutheran confessions did not know of any such concept.<sup>24</sup> When confronted with Huber's interpretation of Romans 5:19b, where he understands "all"

to include also unbelievers, his opponents introduce a distinction, saying that "condemnation as far as it concerns the debt belongs to all men but as far as concerns its execution ("ACTU") belongs only to impenitents and unbelievers. So the offer of God's grace and Christ's merit is universal but as far as it concerns its execution ("ACTU") it is limited to believers only, who are excluded from condemnation through the benefaction of Christ, grasped by faith."<sup>25</sup> Hunnius *et alii* thus do not reject the idea of a universally valid grace. Against Huber, however, they reject the idea that somehow this grace would already be conferred on the individuals through the universality of atonement, a notion that they think to be present in Huber's works. Huber rejects this accusation as a calumny, assuring that he has only "called universal justification that whereby God, considering the satisfaction of Christ, has because of this become propitiated toward all mankind, accepting it as if everyone had made satisfaction for himself."<sup>26</sup> He assures that every individual must partake of this gift by faith in the Word and the sacraments.<sup>27</sup> On the surface this seems to be an assuring convergence of views, which explains the temporary reconciliation between the parties.<sup>28</sup>

At length no reconciliation, however, was possible. The reason cannot, strictly speaking, be said to be the fact that Huber insisted on using the unusual term "universal justification" or on maintaining the idea that all mankind had been given, in some sense, part of Christ's universal, substitutionary righteousness. It is necessary to go more deeply into the confusingly rich material. According to our conviction the essential aberration in Huber's doctrine on justification was in the eyes of the faculty of Wittenberg—where the main struggle took place—its teaching a *unicam iustificationem*, only one justification, viz. the universal one, while *denying* the individual one as a *divine* action. The accusation is: "1) He affirms a universal justification, whereby all men are equally justified by God because of Christ's merit, regardless of faith. 2) He denies faith's or the believer's individual justification to be by God or a special action of God, whereby He justifies only believers. 3) He states faith's individual justification to be only men's action, whereby they apply to themselves by faith the righteousness of Christ."<sup>29</sup>

This is not a mere question of phraseology: "We do not deal only with terms but mainly with realities. . . . It is intolerable in the church of Christ that he, contrary to Scripture, states that there is only one justification common to all, equally and regardless of faith. . . . Also when he affirms universal remission of sin in his sense, . . . denying

the individual one by God."<sup>30</sup> Huber's opponents have discovered that the kind of individual justification that Huber confesses to be necessary for salvation—he never embraced universalism or the final salvation of all men—was a move from man toward God, whereby the individual applied to himself the benefits of the once-forever event. No real divine justification took place in this latter action. Huber's opponents think that the opinion "tastes of pelagianism."<sup>31</sup> They point to such Scripture passages as Romans 4, Psalm 32, and Acts 3:19, where the individual remission of sins is said to take place as a direct act of God. Against Huber's only one action by God they do not, however, teach a corresponding only one action taking place in the individual's justification. Rather, they teach a double set of actions, two acts by God, one in Christ and one in the believer. They stress that they "do not simply consider, approve and explain two different aspects (*nudos respectus*) but different acts of God. . . : one universal, viz. performed by Christ, another special one, consisting in an application, which is no less a work and an act of God than the former one."<sup>32</sup> "Here Huber anew denies the individual remission of sins against Scripture's express norm. But we teach a double remission of sins and distinct acts of God."<sup>33</sup> The universal act of God toward mankind that Huber's opponents want to maintain is described in the following way: "The benefit of redemption has been obtained and acquired for the entire world";<sup>34</sup> "the righteousness has been obtained for us."<sup>35</sup>

In order not to anticipate or weaken the individual's justification as a real, divine act, they regard the use of the word "confer" in this connection as misleading; Christ cannot be said to have "properly speaking conferred redemption on all mankind."<sup>36</sup> This expression is rejected, because "confer" in theological terminology is related to "apply" or to "accept" from the one upon whom something is conferred. Still they think that not even "confer" as such is impossible: "neither have we unconditionally rejected the expression 'confer,' even less censured it."<sup>37</sup> It is rejected only in so far as it can cover a false meaning, i.e., indicate that individual justification is no longer to be seen as a reality. This freedom of terminology permits the Wittenberg theologians to speak of double reconciliation, redemption and remission of sins,<sup>38</sup> one taking place in Christ, another one in the believer. The righteousness of Christ is equally present on two levels, as acquired and obtained for all mankind and as accepted by faith in the believer. Yet this does not permit the Wittenberg theologians to speak of a "double justification." This may be due to the fact that

Huber insists that certain Pauline statements expressly make use of a universal justification terminology, which his opponents deny: "Never does Paul teach universal justification. For as far as concerns 2 Corinthians 5, the words 'not imputing their trespasses unto them,' they are not to be understood universally about all men regardless of faith."<sup>39</sup> This exegetical conflict may have barred hypothetical recognition of a universal justification similar to that of the word "confer." A similar concession was also granted to orthodox theologians, who had spoken about a universal election, "the word taken in its broader signification."<sup>40</sup>

Huber does not conceal his disagreement with the Wittenberg theologians. Huber himself does not uphold his own difference between general and special justification: "Answer: they are not two."<sup>41</sup> How far he had gone in his thoughts concerning the uniqueness of general justification is possible to show through his words about the wrath of God as removed by Christ: "Truly that GENERAL REMISSION OF SINS, which has become ours through the blood of Christ, includes many, who are ungrateful toward God, and who dare to destroy and annihilate their heritage through impure lives. Therefore, although it is true that they have RECEIVED the remission of sins, nevertheless they are AGAIN condemned because of their negligence and are forced to pay for all their debts.";<sup>42</sup> Huber must reintroduce the Law through a new act of God, being the consequence of the rejection of the Gospel. His adversaries easily refuted this theological construction by pointing to John 3:36: "The wrath of God abideth on him," showing that those words imply that "the wrath of God had never, not even for a moment, been removed. Although the treasury of the expiation of sins has been obtained for them and has been offered in the Gospel, it has never been conferred upon them because of their unbelief, neither has it ever been received by them, as they lack faith, the only means to receive the forgiveness of sins."<sup>43</sup>

This denial of the co-existence of Law and Gospel is aptly illustrated by the kind of pastoral advice that Huber on one occasion gave in a conversation with his antagonists, reported by them: "And to make his opinion plain enough to us, he then asked us, how we would deal with people, if we came to a place, where nothing had been taught about Christ before. Then we answered him that we would start with the Law, make it clear to them that they were poor sinners and under the wrath of God, which they should recognize with penitent hearts. If they now were sorry for their sins, God offers through the Gospel His grace and remission of sins in Christ, wishing

to make them righteous and saved, as far as they would accept it in true faith. To this Dr. Huber responded: No, this would not be the true way to preach to the unbelievers, but he would begin by saying this: You have the grace of God, you have the righteousness of Christ, you have salvation."<sup>44</sup> The picture of God that Huber conveys is a God who has given up His wrath in the atonement, and who reassumes it only in the case of the rejection of the Gospel. Apparently the idea of general justification in Huber's theology is utterly destructive from the point of view of classical Lutheranism represented by Huber's adversaries.

Yet it is still possible to penetrate further into the thoughts of Huber. Behind all his arguments there is a conception that dominates his theology as a leading principle. That is the idea of the simplicity of God: the perfect God knows of no tensions between Law and Gospel. "THEREFORE THIS DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ACTS SHOULD BE UPHELD (WHICH I WANT TO BE OBSERVED MOST CAREFULLY): ONE WHICH IS CONSIDERED ONLY IN GOD HIMSELF, WHO IN HIMSELF ALWAYS REMAINS SIMPLE AND PERFECT; ANOTHER ONE WHICH COMES FROM MAN WHO APPLIES TO HIMSELF THROUGH FAITH THE USE AND EFFECT OF THAT DIVINE ACT."<sup>45</sup> Huber's contemporaries had already found this statement to reveal the basis for all his theology, also on other points: "In this distinction are the foundation and basis of all his nonsense on love, election, reconciliation, remission of sins, justification, sanctification, glorification, all of which things according to him are in and from GOD ONLY universals. The futility of this error can very well be seen from the foregoing."<sup>46</sup> In the midst of Huber's theology stands God in His naked, simple and perfect essence as propitiated.

Although Huber repeatedly refers to Luther for support of his theology, it is much too evident that he distorts what Luther says.<sup>47</sup> It is also striking that Christ's resurrection is not even mentioned. Certainly Huber presupposes Christ's atonement as the necessary condition of the universal justification, but faith is directed toward God "in Himself," not toward the deed of the Father in raising His Son. In by-passing Easter Huber by-passes salvation as an event turned to the world and consequently also the Gospel as the place where Easter works its effect on the believer. The Gospel in Huber's theology points to salvation and is no more the efficacious Word that justifies believers by the power of God. It also loses the Law as its counterpart, because it merely conveys the truth about the simple and

perfect God's universal justification. By defending the *two* acts of God, the Wittenberg theologians maintained the contradictory character of Law and Gospel and the efficacy of the means of grace. It can be regretted that they did not involve Easter texts in their treatment of justification, but it would in no way have changed the outcome of the controversy, and insofar there was no necessity to make statements on the relationship between justification and Easter.

### III.

In the 19th century C. F. W. Walther (1811–1887), founder of the Missouri Synod, is especially connected with the theological issue under treatment in this article. Our investigation of Walther will be based on his Easter sermons (sermons on Easter Day, 2nd and 3rd Easter Day, 1st Sunday after Easter) and also on pertinent material in Walther's theological periodical, *Lehre und Wehre*, as well as other documents of relevance to our topic.

As a first observation it should be said that Walther's homiletic treatment of the relationship between Easter and justification shows no sign of a gradual development. Our material covers the period 1840–1886, and all the sermons seem to possess the same degree of dogmatic clarity. If there ever was a "young Walther" like the "young Luther" in his pre-Reformation time, he has left no traces. Already in the year 1840 we meet the sentence: "As we were co-punished in Christ's death, we are again co-absolved from our sins in His resurrection."<sup>48</sup> (The frame of such statements that abound during all of Walther's lifetime reveals a rhetoric of almost patristic type which stresses the excellency and importance that Easter enjoyed in Walther's eyes.)<sup>49</sup> In a sermon from 1843 on Romans 4:25 ("Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification") he makes this text the basis for the interpretation of Christ's resurrection as our absolution, a quotation that frequently recurs in succeeding sermons.<sup>50</sup> In 1844 we see an expression coined that was to become well known: "That the resurrection of Christ is the fully valid justification of all men."<sup>51</sup> It is also said: "In Him we are exalted, glorified, justified."<sup>52</sup> This kind of statement builds on the substitutionary character of Christ's resurrection, a substitution of no less importance than that of His death: "In the Crucified we were punished, in the Resurrected One we are thus redeemed."<sup>53</sup> It is even possible to say "that in the resurrection itself there is more consolation than in His death,"<sup>54</sup> which is based on Romans 8:34: "It is Christ that died, *yea rather*, that is risen again." In a sermon of 1855

we hear Walther make the following formulation, which aptly summarized his view of Good Friday and Easter Day in their relationship to each other: "What the *Son* had given to the *Father* on Calvary, the *Father* now in the garden of the tomb gave to the *world*."<sup>55</sup> In a sermon of 1856 the excellency of Easter is emphatically taught in words that may still cause a certain offense: "When the awakening sounds of Easter exultation have died away, it is even to most Christians not other than if they awoke from a sweetly intoxicating dream; they leave again the empty tomb of Christ and look anew for Mount Calvary under the shadows of the holy cross as their only refuge. Not a few regard the resurrection of Jesus Christ as no more than a beautiful addition, a brilliant decoration of the real salvatory acts of the Redeemer of the world, as a precious pearl in the crown of redemption, but not as that very crown itself. They do not know what to do with it, how to use it, how to make it useful for their faith, charity and hope. It is still an enigma to them why the blessed apostle writes: 'Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.'<sup>56</sup> How Walther can permit himself to use such surprising language that goes so far as to make Calvary appear less important than Easter and that contains a criticism of the pious concentration on the cross usually to be found among orthodox Christians, is understandable only by what follows: "Yet, my beloved, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the highest and final consolation of all men, because not until then is the consolation of the cross and death of Christ revealed and are both of them made consoling, but because it contains a consolation in itself which is not to be found in any other work of the redemption, not even in the passion and death of Christ. Consider only the following and you will soon agree with me. Whereas the passion and death properly speaking were acts of Christ, His resurrection was, on the contrary, properly speaking the act of His heavenly Father. . . . This is, however, of the highest and most consolatory importance. . . . Whereas the passion and death of Jesus Christ was the penitence and confession of the Son of God for the entire apostate humanity, His resurrection was, on the contrary, the heavenly Father's absolution, subsequently solemnly and factually delivered in Christ to all men, publicly before heaven and earth."<sup>57</sup> It should be observed that Walther is not satisfied by giving Easter a revelatory role, pointing to the true meaning of the cross. He insists on the role of Easter *per se* presenting itself to the world.

The concentration on Easter as an act toward the world is described in the following way in the same sermon: "First, He expiated

the sin of all men through giving His Son into suffering and death, and after this has been done, He does not wait until we come and ask for the obtained grace; He does not keep this grace in His heart, but in order that on the part of man nothing more is necessary than that he believes in a gift already given to him, He breaks forth, raises our Substitute from the dead and thereby speaks to all men: . . . I am again your Father. . . ."<sup>58</sup> "For now man should not first do something in order that his sins may be forgiven, but he is only to believe that it has already happened, that in the resurrection of Christ his sins have been forgiven unto him, that the grace of God and salvation have been assured to him. As often now as the Gospel is preached, baptism, absolution and the Lord's Supper are administered and the benediction pronounced over him in church, so often the preacher only repeats what God has already done to all men through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."<sup>59</sup> Easter as an act toward the world in general is thus continued, repeated, in the means of grace, the Gospel in all its forms, which effectively convey the gift of Easter to individuals.

Walther supports his presentation of the Easter gospel also with references to such passages in Holy Writ where Jesus is said to have been the Messiah. In a sermon of 1851 Walther says: "The resurrection of the Son of God . . . , was thus the fulfillment of the contractual obligation on the part of the Father, for which reason Peter at the first feast of Pentecost calls out to all his listeners: 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.'"<sup>60</sup> The exaltation of Christ makes Him the Savior; having expiated for sin, the Son is entitled to His resurrection as substitutionary act. In a sermon of 1886 Walther points to Matthew 28:18 f.: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . ."; he comments: "What does Christ say by all this, especially with the little word: 'Go ye *therefore*'? Apparently this, that He has brought forth remission of sins and thereby righteousness, life and salvation for all men from His tomb, which all the apostles by virtue of His resurrection shall distribute through the proclamation of the Gospel."<sup>61</sup> The power given to Christ is His exaltation, which is identical with His justification. This substitutionary righteousness is the reason for going all over the world with the means of grace, which effectively distribute to the individual the contents of the Easter events.

The picture given by Walther's sermons, of which a short survey has now been given, can be supported by other material. In 1860

Walther presided at the general synod of his church body. On this occasion a doctrinal discussion took place concerning several theses "On the Close Relationship Between the Doctrines of Absolution and Justification."<sup>62</sup> The published proceedings undoubtedly give a clear picture of the views that Walther wished to be maintained within the church entrusted to him. During the discussions a reference was made to the fact that within the Missouri Synod it had always been preached that: "*Through the resurrection from the dead God has absolved all the world, i. e., set it free from sin; if now the world already is absolved and set free from sin, what is then the absolution or preaching of the Gospel in the church? Is it, too, a setting free, or merely a proclamation of the setting free that has already occurred? Answer: . . . precisely through the Gospel occurs the conveying of what is in God's heart. . . . a proclamation that really brings and gives the forgiveness. . . . The absolution in the Gospel is nothing else than a repetition of the factual absolution which has already happened through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*"<sup>63</sup> It is also said: "*There should be no confusion between what Christ has done and what has happened to Christ. His passion, death and resurrection (Auferstehen) was no absolution but certainly His being raised (Auferweckung) from the dead. Our sermon and absolution are according to their moral effect nothing else than what God had done to Christ; the difference is only that God by raising His Son has absolved the entire world, but we, only individuals; e. g., preachers absolve only their parishes. . . . Our absolution is nothing else than the repetition of the act of God in His raising of Christ.*"<sup>64</sup> By stressing the passive character of the raising of the Son *by* the Father, the message character of the Easter events is underlined. This message character makes it also possible to maintain a moral identity between the visible or factual word of the raising of the Son and the audible word from the pulpit or in the confessional or in other means of grace. There is no less power in the Word and the sacraments than there was in the resurrection of the Lord.

The material quoted above was translated into Norwegian and caused conflicts within the Scandinavian Lutheran clergy in the United States, with the (mainly) Swedish pastors of the Augustana synod rejecting the contents. In 1871 Walther reprinted in his periodical *Lehre und Wehre* an article originally appearing in a Norwegian paper, where the Missourian theology on Easter and justification was defended, and the contents of the 1860 theses were upheld. We are certainly entitled to take the reprint to imply

Walther's full approval. It is said: "We do not say that one by necessity always has to use the expression: 'the world is justified in Christ' . . . for we know very well that this article of faith can be explained and represented completely and correctly by other words."<sup>65</sup> The aim of the article is a very moderate one, to discover "if it is true that ecclesiastical language does not permit one to speak of the justification of the world in Christ." The legitimization of such a terminology as at least possible is shown by quotations, *inter alios*, from Johann Gerhard: "absolved us in Him"; Gottfried Olearius: "with Him justified before God's tribunal"; and Johann Jakob Rambach: "that in His person all mankind was justified and absolved from sin and curse."<sup>66</sup> No objections can thus in principle be directed against the phraseology "the justification of the world in Christ." No other claim is made. Yet it is shown that Walther's theology and expression have their background in a doctrinal succession through the centuries within the Lutheran church. Neither formally nor materially is Walther an innovator. It is also interesting to note that the article repeats the interpretation of Romans 5:19 once used against Huber: "Both acts [Adam's and Christ's] have an equally general significance and validity. But as not all men are personally condemned, although the 'judgment came upon all men to condemnation,' so not all men are really and personally justified, although the justification has through Christ's act 'come upon all men.'"<sup>67</sup>

Another expression of considerable repute connected with Walther's theology on Easter and justification is "objective justification" versus "subjective justification." It has been investigated as to when this terminology was first used by Walther or men like him.<sup>68</sup> It seems, as far as the investigations for this article permit us to see, that the terms were made known to Walther through an article in a theological paper in Germany, printed in 1867. Walther reprinted it in his *Lehre und Wehre* in the same year, and it can be said to throw clarity on the original meaning of the words.<sup>69</sup> The article speaks of "justification of man before God both in objective and subjective meaning." Objective justification affects "humanity as a collective (*Gesamtheit*), in which the particular individuals are not separate entities but are inherent parts of a totality, as generally the independence and distinctiveness of the individuals are only a very relative one, and the individuals, at any rate, are included in the vital unity of the whole organism."<sup>70</sup> Mankind in this sense has been justified by the saving death of Christ. Easter is not mentioned in this connection, to which Walther may not have paid attention, as the

stress is not on Good Friday versus Easter but on redemption versus application. "Subjective justification" is described in the following way: "Without this fact [objective justification] no justification for the individual could exist; the former is the unshakeable foundation, through which the *subjective* justification is made possible and on which it depends. For the justification on the subject (*Die Rechtfertigung des Subjectes*) is the act of God through which He cancels the verdict which has been delivered upon man because of sin, and absolves man from sin, imparting to him the merits of Christ."<sup>71</sup> "Subjective justification" is thus from the beginning of the concept a notion which clearly avoids any "Huberianism." It signifies a real transition from the state of wrath to the state of grace through a divine act. "Objective justification" does not deprive "subjective justification" of its "objective" reality. It is possible that the terms can be abused in that direction, and the appropriateness of the terminology can always be discussed. Yet it seems safe to state that the realities behind the words are well founded in Biblical, Lutheran theology, and that the words originally were intended to convey those realities.

The essential differences between Walther's doctrine and Huber's concerning universal justification can be summarized in the following way: First of all, we do not meet the slightest hint in Walther's theology about God as being forced by His own essence to know of no contradictory tension between Law and Gospel. Walther at no place suggests that the unbeliever is no more under the wrath of God or that a second judgment is necessary to deprive the unbeliever of his first, universal justification. As early as 1846 Walther says in a sermon: "For that is indeed true: here everything depends on faith. He who does not apply to himself the victory of Christ in His resurrection through faith, upon him Law, sin, death and hell still have power. He experiences no power, no joy from this victory. For him Christ is still in His tomb."<sup>72</sup> So Walther upholds the truth of John 3:36: "The wrath of God abideth on him." Within this frame all Walther's statements on Easter and justification must be understood.

A second point of divergence is the fact that to Huber justification of the world is connected merely with a change within the Godhead, effected by the atonement, but to Walther with an external act of God, the Father raising His Son, turning it toward the world. To Huber atonement and universal justification are one; to Walther they are two different acts.

This leads us to the third point, where the previous ones are con-

cretely summarized: the attitude toward the means of grace. To Huber the means of grace do not effect a real justification but rather point to the only existing justification. To Walther absolution or the gospel is the very repetition of the Easter events, having the same power as the resurrection of Christ. The identity between God's act in Christ and the believer should in no way be thought to be equal to Huber's "one act."<sup>73</sup> Huber's one act emptied the means of grace; Walther's fills them with the power that entitles the confessor in the confessional to ask the penitent in the confessional the question found in Luther's small catechism: "Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?"<sup>74</sup>

Not unimportant is the fact that Walther was well aware of Huber's theology and its dangers. In his edition of Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, Walther inserted a page with very pertinent material concerning the Huberian controversy, dealing with the impossibility of saying that all mankind has received the remission of sins, pointing to John 3:36: "The wrath of God abideth on him." As a professor of dogmatics Walther thus has seriously warned his students against Huberian aberrations.<sup>75</sup> In his ministry as a preacher of the Word he has certainly led his parishioners on equally safe paths. Also for coming generations his presentation of the relationship between justification and Easter has a lasting value.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The much debated question about the year of Luther's new understanding of justification is not a merely church historical problem (like the one about the year of Luther's birth) but a dogmatical fight about the meaning of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith. If Luther's discovery is supposed to be more or less a variety of the Augustinian, medieval doctrine, it is natural to fix it at some early event in Luther's life (1513–1516). If, however, that discovery is admitted to be the doctrine of the Lutheran confessions, the new insight must be put later (1518/19). The present article is based on the conviction that E. Bizer: *Fides ex auditu*, Neukirchen 1958, is right when he fixes Luther's new doctrine of justification as first present in the *Acta Augustana* of 1518. U. Saarnivaara, *Luther Discovers the Gospel*, Saint Louis, 1951, traces the discovery to the somewhat later writing, *De triplici iustitia*, but in *Lutheran News*, Vol. 2, No. 22, November 2nd 1964, p. 11, Saarnivaara has accepted Bizer's date: "Bizer's result is obviously correct." No real difference exists dogmatically between Bizer and Saarnivaara.

<sup>2</sup>St. L. 15, 579 f.; WA 2, 13, 33 ff.; LW 31, 271: "Ideo si accedas ad sacramentum poenitentiae et non credideris firmiter te absolvendum in caelo, in iudicium accedis et damnationem, quia non crederis Christum vera dixisse: Quodcunque solveris etc et sic tua dubitatione Christum mendacem facis, quod est horrendum peccatum."

("Therefore, if you go to the sacrament and do not firmly believe that you are absolved in heaven, you go to judgment and condemnation, because you do not believe Christ to be right in saying 'whatsoever thou shalt loose,' and so you make Christ a liar through your doubts, which is a horrible sin.")

<sup>3</sup>When M. Brecht: *Martin Luther. Sein Weg zur Reformation*, Stuttgart 1981, p. 222, connects this sermon with Palmsunday 1518 (March 28th), he bases his date on the assumption that Luther could not deal with a Biblical passage outside its liturgical context within the church year. While accepting Brecht's general approach to the greater problem, the author of this article must maintain that Brecht's date is not only without necessary ground but also in plain contradiction to the fact that some texts later than March 1518, especially the Heidelberg disputation theses, contain an openly pre-Reformation theology. *Sermo de duplici iustitia* belongs apparently to the second part of the year 1518. WA gives through its editor (WA 2, 143) the conjecture Christmas 1518 as a possible date. Cfr. also W. v. Loewenich: *Duplex iustitia. Luthers Stellung zu einer Unionsformel des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für europäische Geschichte Mainz Band 68), Wiesbaden 1972, who leaves the problem open but dates *De duplici iustitia* earlier than *De triplici iustitia*, also a debated question, v. Walther, id., pp. 2, 12.

<sup>4</sup>St.L. 10, 1264; WA 2, 145, 7 ff.; LW 31, 297: "*Duplex est iustitia Christianorum, sicut et duplex peccatum hominum. Prima est aliena et ab extra infusa. Haec est qua Christus iustus est et iustificans per fidem, sicut I ad Corin: I. Qui factus est nobis a deo sapientia et iusticia et sanctificatio et redemptio. Siquidem et ipse, ut Ioan: XI. Ego sum resurrectio et vita: qui credit in me, non morietur in aeternum. Et iterum Ioan: XIII: Ego sum via, veritas et vita.*"

<sup>5</sup>St.L. 10, 1264, WA 2, 145, 16 ff.; LW 31, 297: "'meum est quod Christus vivit, egit, dixit, passus est, mortuus est, non secus quam si ego illa vixissem egissem, dixissem, passus essem et mortuus essem.'"

<sup>6</sup>St.L. 10, 1264; WA 2, 145, 14 ff.; LW 31, 297: "*Haec ergo iustitia datur hominibus in baptismo et omni tempore verae poenitentiae ita ut homo cum fiducia possit gloriari in Christo et dicere 'meum est. . . .'*"

<sup>7</sup>St.L. 10, 1258; WA 2, 44, 32 ff.: "*Justicia huic contraria est natalis, essentialis, originalis, aliena, quae est iusticia Christi. . . . Haec est qua nuper dixi, quod sit sors, capitale, fundamentum, petra nostra et tota substantia nostra, in qua gloriamur in aeternum, ut Apostolus ait, quod vita nostra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo. . . .'*"

<sup>8</sup>St.L. 10, 1259; WA 2, 45, 19 ff.: "*sicut Adam uno peccato omnes ex se natos facit, eodem suo peccato proprio, illis iam alieno, reos et dat quod habet, ita Christus sua iusticia omnes ex se natos facit, eodem sua iusticia, illis aliena et immerita, iustos et salvos. . . .'*"

<sup>9</sup>St.L. 10, 1259; WA 2, 45, 22: "*sicuti alieno peccato damnati sumus, ita aliena liberemur iusticia.*"

<sup>10</sup>St.L. 10, 1259; WA 2, 45, 25 f.: "*Solus Christus est aeternus: ideo iusticia eius quoque aeterna est, et tamen nostra.*" ("Only Christ is eternal, thus his righteousness is also eternal and yet it is ours.")

<sup>11</sup>Luther gives the same interpretation of "all" in Rom. 5:18b in other contexts: St.L. 11, 510; WA 17:2, 137, 21 ff. (1522): "*gleich, wie denen die sund und tod anhanget und folget erblich, die aus Adam geporn werden, Also hanget an und folget erblich leben und gerechtickeit, die aus Christo geporn werden*" ("then as sin and death adhere to and follow hereditarily those who are born out of Adam, so life and righteousness adhere to and follow hereditarily those who are born out of Christ"); St.L. 7, 1690; WA 46, 656, 35 ff. (1537); LW 22, 138: "'also' widerumb 'durch eines,' Jhesu Christi, 'gehorsam,' der der einige Mensch in gnaden war,

*werden viel gerecht.* Christus, will er sagen, ist allein heilig, gerecht, voller gnaden und warheit. der thet des Vaters willen, wie im 40. Psalm geschrieben . . . Dieses unsers HERREN gnade, warheit, heiligkeit und gerechtigkeit geniessen wir alle, er gibet uns sein Wort in den mund und den glauben in das hertz, das wir jm anhangen, wissen, das er uns 'reiniget durch das Wasserbad im Wort' . . . ("for 'by one man's,' *Jesus Christ's, 'obedience,' who was the only man in grace, shall many be made righteous.* Christ, he wants to say, is alone holy, righteous, full of grace and truth; He does His Father's will, as said in the 40th Psalm. . . . This Our Lord's grace, truth, holiness and righteousness we all enjoy; He gives us His Word in our mouth and the faith in our heart, that we adhere to Him, knowing that He cleanses us with the washing of water by the word"); St.L. 8, 1435; WA 2, 491, 12 ff. (1519); LW 27, 222: "Haec est iustitia liberalis, gratuita, solida, interna, aeterna, vera, coelestis, divina . . . Christi et Christiani iusticia sit una . . . Aquam, quam ego dabo, fiet in eo fons aquae vivae salientis in vitam aeternam. Ita fit, ut sicut alieno peccato omnes facti sunt peccatores, ita aliena iusticia omnes fiant iusti, ut Rho, V. dicit: Sicut per inobedientiam. . . ." ("This is a generous, free of charge, reliable, internal, eternal, true, heavenly, divine righteousness . . . Christ's and the Christian's righteousness is one thing. . . . The water that I will give will become in him a well of living water flowing to life eternal. So it will be that as all have become sinners through an alien sin, so all will become righteous through an alien righteousness"); commenting John 1:9, "the true Light, which lighteth every man" Luther refers to St. Augustine and says, St.L. 11, 186; WA 10:1, 221, 12 ff. (1522); LW 52, 71: "diesser lerer leret sie alle ynn der stadt, das ist: es ist keyn lerer ynn der stadt, denn der alleyn. Er hat alleyn alle iunger; damit wirt nit gesagt, das er alle menschen ynn der statt lere, ssondern das nur eyn lerer drynnen sey, niemant von eynem andern geleret werde.—und diessen vorstand weyss ich nit tzu uorwerffen, denn auf die weyss redt auch Paulus Ro. 5: Alss durch eyniss menschen sund ynn alle menschen die vordamnis ist komen, also durch eyniss menschen gerechtickeytt ynn alle menschen die rechtfertigung ist komen, sso doch nit alle menschen durch Christum gerenctfertigt werden, aber dennoch ist er alleyn der mensch, durch wilchen alle rechtfertigung kompt. Also auch hie; ob nit alle menschen erleuchtet werdenn, sso ist doch ditz das liecht, von wilchem alleyn alle erleuchtung kompt." ("This teacher teaches everybody in the town, i.e. there is no other teacher in the town except Him alone; He alone has all disciples. That is not to say that He teaches all people, but that there is no other teacher in the town, and nobody is taught by anyone else.—and I cannot reject this understanding, for in that way St. Paul speaks 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," although not all men are justified through Christ, but yet He is alone the man through whom all justification comes. So here too: although not all men are illuminated, this is still the light, from which alone all illumination comes.")

<sup>12</sup>St.L. 11, 380; WA 2, 140, 6 ff.; LW 42, 12: "Dan wirffestu deyn sunde von dir auff Christum, wan du festiglich gleubst, das seyne wunden und leyden seyn deyn sunde, das er sie trage and bezale. . . ."

<sup>13</sup>St.L. 11, 581; WA 2, 140 20 ff.; LW 42, 12 f.: "dan auff Christo mochten sie nit bleiben, sie seynd durch seyn auferstehend vorschlungen unnd sihest itzt keyne wunden, keyne schmerzen an yhm, das ist keyner sunde anzeygung. Also spricht S. Paulus, das Christus gestorben ist umb unser sund und auferstanden umb unsser gerechtickeytt. das ist, yn seinem leyden macht er unsser sund bekant und erwurget sie also, aber durch seyn auferstehen macht er unss gerecht unnd loss von allen sunden, sso wir anders dasselb glauben."

<sup>14</sup>St.L. 13a, 516; WA 52, 250, 36 ff.: "Denn gleich wie wir im ersten bild am

stillen Freytag sehen, wie unser sünd, unser fluch und todt auff Christo ligt, Also sehen wir am Ostertag ein ander bild, das kein sünd, kein fluch, kein ungnad, kein todt, Sonder eitel leben, gnad, seligkeyt und gerechtigkeit in Christo ist. Mit solchem bild sollen wir unsere hertzen auffrichten, Denn er ist uns für gestellet und geschenket, das wir uns sein anders nicht annemen sollen, denn alls hette uns selv Gott heut mit Christo aufferwecket. Denn alls wenig du sünd, tod und fluch an Christo sihest, Also solt du glauben, das Got so wenig an dir umb Christus willen auch sehen will, wenn du disser seiner Aufferstehung dich annimbst unnd tröstest."

<sup>15</sup>Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche, 3 Aufl., Göttingen 1956, 1049 ff.; *The Book of Concord*, ed. Tappert, Philadelphia 1959, p. 610 (SD IX, 1 f.).

<sup>16</sup>St.L. 10, 1132; WA 37, 15 ff.: "Aber nicht für sich selbs, sondern für uns arme elende leute, die des tods und Teuffels ewig gefangen sein musten, Denn er war vorhin für sich für tod und allem unglück wol sicher, das er nicht sterben noch jnn die helle faren muste. weil er sich aber jnn unser fleisch und blut gesteckt hat und all unser sund, straffe und ungluck auff sich genomen, so must er auch eraus helffen, also das er widder lebendig und auch leiblich und nach seiner menschlichen natur ein Herr des todes würde. auff das auch wir jm und durch in endlich aus dem tod und allem ungluck kemen."

<sup>17</sup>St.L. 10, 1133; WA 37, 67, 34 f.: "das er nichts anders sehe, höre, dencke noch wisse denn diesen Artikel."

<sup>18</sup>St.L. 10, 1133; WA 37, 68, 21 ff.: "Denn so das war ist, das Christus aufferstand ist vom tode, so haben wir schon das beste stück und fürnemeste teil hinweg von der aufferstehung, das die leibliche aufferstehung des fleisches aus dem grabe (die noch zu künnfftig ist) da gegen geringe zurechen ist."

<sup>19</sup>St.L. 10, 1133; WA 37, 68 6 ff.: "Wenn wir nun also gleubeten, so hetten wir gut leben und sterben; Denn solcher glaube würde us fein leren, das er nicht alleine für seine person sey auffstanden, sondern so an einander hengen, das es uns gelte, und auch wir jnn dem Resurrexit stehen und gefasset sind. Und umb oder durch dasselbe auch aufferstehen und mit jm ewiglich leben müssen. das schon unser aufferstehen und leben (wie Sanct Paulus auch sagt) jnn Christo angangen ist, und so gewis, als were es schon gar geschehen, on das es noch verborge und nicht offenbar ist, . . ."

<sup>20</sup>St.L. 10, 1130; WA 37, 66, 15 ff.: "Denn ob wol die Helle an sich selbs die Helle bleibt und die ungleubigen gefangen hellt, wie auch der tod, sunde und alle ungluck, das sie darinn bleiben und verderben müssen, Und uns auch selbs nach dem fleisch und eusserlichen menschen schreckt und drenget das wir uns da mit schlagen und beissen müssen, Doch ist solchs im glauben und geist alles zustört und zwissen, das es uns nichts mehr schaden kan."

<sup>21</sup>WA 39: 2, 237, 25.

<sup>22</sup>*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1977, entry Huber, wrongly uses the term "Huberianism" to cover the doctrine of unlimited atonement, advocated by Huber when breaking away from Calvinism. This use of the word is misleading, as Huber's name is mainly connected with the struggle about universal predestination and justification, both affirmed by Huber.

<sup>23</sup>For the predestination struggle see G. Adam: *Der Streit um die Prädestination im ausgehenden 16. Jahrhundert. Eine Untersuchung zu den Entwürfen von Samuel Huber und Aegidius Hunnius*, Neukirchen 1970; also R. Söderlund: *Ex praevisa fide. Zum Verständnis der Prädestinationslehre in der lutherischen Orthodoxie*, Hannover 1983, especially pp. 59–62.

<sup>24</sup>*Controversiae inter theologos wittenbergenses de regeneratione et electione*

*dilucida explicatio D.D. Egidii Hunnii, Polycarpi Leyseri, Salomonis Gesneri. . .*, s.l. 1594, fol. E 4 a.

<sup>25</sup>*Controversiae. . .*, fol. E 4 B: "condemnatio, quae REATU pertinebat ad omnes homines, ACTU tamen pertinet ad solos impenitentes ac infideles: Sic oblatio gratiae DEI & meriti Christi Universalis quidem est: ACTU tamen ad solos fideles restringitur. qui Christi per fidem apprehensi beneficio damnationi eximuntur." Those words in the work by the Wittenberg theologians are part of a letter from the faculty of Tübingen, the same text in *Actorum Huberianorum Pars Prior*, Tübingen 1597, p. 109. "ACTU" refers to the Last Judgment, *Actorum Huberianorum Pars Posterior*, Tübingen 1597, p. 124.

<sup>26</sup>Samuel Huberus: *Confutatio brevis, Libri, sub alieno nomine editi, de controversia in Theologos Wittebergenses, & Samuelem Huberum de ELECTIONE*, Mulhusij 1595, p. 50: ". . . qua DEUS intuens satisfactionem Christi propter illam toti generi humano factus est propitiuus, & sic acceptauit, perinde unusquisque pro seipso satisfecisset. . . ."

<sup>27</sup>*Id.*, p. 52: "nondum tamen ipsa participatione in status salutis & felicitatis aeternae adducit, nisi fide per verbum & sacramenta, hoc beneficium sibi applicet, atque eo modo participet." ("Does not yet through this participation [in universal atonement] bring man to the state of eternal salvation and blessedness, if he does not apply this benefit to himself through faith in the Word and the Sacraments and participates in that way.")

<sup>28</sup>A reconciliation took place on the 4th of February, 1594, in Wittenberg; cfr. Samuel Huber: *Historische Beschreibung Des gantzen Streits zwischen D. Humen und D. Hubern / von der Gnadenwahl*, s.l., 1597, fol. m 2 a. The concession of the Tübingen theologians in a letter to the colleagues of Wittenberg that the controversy was mainly terminological, "in phrasi tamen magis & modo loquendo quam reipsa," *Actorum. . . prior*, p. 37, belongs to this early phase and cannot be used to cover the conflict in general, which is suggested by the inclusion of those words in C. F. W. Walther's edition of J. W. Baier: *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, III, In Urbe Sancti Ludovici 1879, p. 287.

<sup>29</sup>*Actorum. . . posterior*, p. 10: "I. Iustificationem universalem asserit, qua Omnes homines ex aequo sint a Deo propter meritum Christi iustificati, absque respectu fidei. II. Negat, particularem Iustificationem fidei, seu credentium, ex Deo, Seu Dei actionem specialem esse, qua tantum credentes iustificet. III. Particularem Iustificationem fidei, statuit esse actum non nisi hominum, applicantium sibi per fidem Iustitiam Christi."

<sup>30</sup>*Id.*, p. 124: "Non tantum de phrasibus, sed praecipue de rebus nos agimus; . . . in ecclesia Christi intolerabilis esse diximus: Quod videlicet uncam iustificationem eamque omnibus hominibus absque respectu fidei ex aequo comunem, contra Scripturam statuit . . . Similiter dum universalem remissionem suo sensu asserit, . . . particularem ex Deo . . . negat." Cfr. *id.*, pp. 42, 129.

<sup>31</sup>*Id.*, p. 114: "quod Pelagianismum sapit."

<sup>32</sup>*Id.*, p. 117: "Nos non tantum nudos respectus, sed duos distinctos actus Dei . . . consideramus, approbamus & explicamus: Alterum universalem, ratione videlicet a Christo perfectum: alterum specialem, in applicatione consistentem, qui priore non minus opus & actus Dei est."

<sup>33</sup>*Id.* p. 122: "Hinc denuo Huberus particularem remissionem peccatorum ex Deo contra expressam Scripturae sacrae normam negat. Nos autem duplicem remissionem peccatorum & distinctos Dei actus esse."

<sup>34</sup>Aegidius Hunnius: *Articulus de Providentia Dei et Aeterna praedestinatione*, Frankfurti ad Moenum 1597, fol. h 4 b: "beneficium redemptionis esse PARTUM & ACQUISITUM universo mundo."

<sup>35</sup>*Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 42: "iustitia omnibus per Christum parta sit."

<sup>36</sup>Aegidius Hunnius, op. cit. ib.: "PROPRIE CONTULISSE redemptionem toti generi humano."

<sup>37</sup>*Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 127: "Neque nos vocabulum conferendi simpliciter improbauimus, multo minus exagitauius."

<sup>38</sup>Id., p. 114: "Reconciliatio ergo . . . , si universalis accipiatur. . . . Sed praeter hanc est alia particularis reconciliatio. . . ." ("Thus reconciliation, . . . if understood as universal . . . Besides this one there is a special reconciliation"); "redemptionis, quae universalis est" ("redemption which is universal"); cfr. also note 33: "duplicem remissionem."

<sup>39</sup>Id., p. 122: "Nusquam Paulus iustificationem universalem tradit. Nam quod ad locum 2 Cor. 5 attinet, verba illa: Non imputans illis peccata: non sunt universaliter accipienda de omnibus hominibus absque respectu fidei."

<sup>40</sup>Id., p. 118: "in latiore significatione sumpto vocabulo."

<sup>41</sup>Samuel Huber: *Antwort auff die Heydelbergische Artickel*, s.1., 1595, fol. E 2 b: "Antwort. Es sind nicht zweo."

<sup>42</sup>*Controversiae . . .*, fol. E 2 f., quoting Huber's thesis 270 in Tübingen: "Verum GENERALI illa REMISSIONE PECCATORUM, quae per sanguinem Christi nobis obuenit, comprehenduntur multi, qui Deo ingrati sunt, atque familiam pessundare & sternere conatur vitae suae improbitate. Quapropter licet ACCEPERINT remissionem peccatorum: propter suam negligentiam tamen ITERUM condemnantur, & ad exsolutionem omnium suorum debitorum adiguntur."

<sup>43</sup>Id., fol. E 3 b: "Qui non credit, inquit (sic) Iohannes Baptista, non videbit vitam, sed Ira Dei MANET super eum, Iohan. 3. Ergo qui nunquam crediderunt in filium Dei, ab iis etiamnumquam (ne ad momentum quidem) fuit ablata ira Dei. Quamvis thesaurus expiationis peccatorum fuerit eis partus, & in Euangelio oblatus, ipsis tamen per incredulitatem numquam COLLATUS, nec ab eis acceptus unquam, cum defuerit eis fides, unicum accipiendae remissionis peccatorum organon." Cfr. also *Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 125: "Quia tamen in infidelitate MANENT, meritum Christi illis nihil prodest, nec chirographum ipsis ratione USUS sublatus est: sed MANET illis legis accusatio, MANET ira Dei, MANET damnatio." ("As they still REMAIN faithless, the merit of Christ does not benefit them, nor is the handwriting blotted out as to its USE, but the accusation of the Law REMAINS against them, the wrath of God REMAINS, the damnation REMAINS.")

<sup>44</sup>*Concilia Theologica Witebergensia*, Frankfurt an Mayn 1664, p. 554: "Und damit wir seine Meinung deutlich gnug vernehmen möchten/ fraget er ims darauff/ wann wir an einen Ort kämen/ da zuvor von Christo nichts gelehret worden wäre/ wie wir mit denselben Leuten handeln wollten? Als ihme aber geantwortet/ wir wolten den Anfang vom Gesetz machen/ ihnen fürhalten/ sie wären arme Sünder/ und unter dem Zorn Gottes/ welches sie mit bussfertigem Herten erkennen solten: wenn sie nun ihnen ihre Sünde liessen leid seyn/ so biete Gott durchs Evangelium seine Gnade und Vergebung der Sünde in Christo an/ wolle sie gerecht und selig machen/ So fern sie es im wahren Glauben annehmen wolten: Darzu saget D. Huber Nein/ das were nicht der rechte Weg bey den Ungläubigen zu predigen/ sondern er wolte es also anfangen und sagen: Vos habetis GRATIAM DEI, HABETIS IUSTITIAM CHRISTI, habetis salutem."

<sup>45</sup>*Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 130: "VALET AUTEM HINC (QUOD VELIM STUDIO SUMMO OBSERVARI) DISTINCTIO ACTUUM: UNIUS, QUI CONSIDERATUR TANTUM IN IP SO DEO, QUI IN SESE SEMPER MANET SIMPLEX ET PERFECTUS: ET ALTERIUS, QUI ACCEDIT EX HOMINE APPLICANTE SIBI PER FIDEM USUM ET EFFECTUM ACTUS ILLIUS DIVINI."

<sup>46</sup>Id., p. 136: "In qua distinctione fundamentum & sedes est omnis ipsius Mataeologiae, de dilectione, electione, reconciliatione, remissione peccatorum, iustificatione, sanctificatione, glorificatione: quae omnia secundum ipsum in qua & ex DEO TANTUM sunt universalia. Cuius erroris vanitas ex praecedentibus clarissime patet."

<sup>47</sup>Samuel Huberus: *Confutatio brevis . . .*, p. 50; Aegidius Hunnius: *Articulus de Providentia . . .*, fol. i 4 b: *Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 121 f.

<sup>48</sup>C. F. W. Walther: *Festklänge*, Saint Louis 1892, p. 219 (Easterday 1840): "wie wir in Christi Tod mit gestraft wurde, so sind wir in seiner Auferstehung von unseren Sünden auch wieder mit losgesprochen."

<sup>49</sup>Walther draws heavily on the Ancient Church for all kinds of details which stress the importance of Easter, as they appear in liturgical customs, ecclesiastical expressions and sayings of the Church fathers; cfr. C. F. W. Walther: *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Epistel Postille . . .*, Dritte Auflage, Saint Louis 1882 (?), p. 194: "Wo ist die Zeit hin, in welcher man es für eine schwere Sünde achtete, das Osterfest in Trauer über seine Sünde hinzubringen?" ("Where is now the time, when it was considered a serious sin to celebrate Easter mourning one's sins?"), p. 205 ff.; *Festklänge*, p. 260: "Gregor von Nazians nennt das Osterfest das Fest aller Feste" ("Gregory of Nazianzus calls Easter the feast of feasts").

<sup>50</sup>*Festklänge*, p. 225.

<sup>51</sup>*Epistel Postille*, p. 211: "Dass die Auferstehung Christi die vollgültige Rechtfertigung aller Menschen sei."

<sup>52</sup>Id., p. 212: "in ihm sind wir erhöht, wir verherrlicht, wir gerechtfertigt."

<sup>53</sup>Ib.: "In dem Gekreuzigten waren wir gestraft, in dem Erstandenen sind daher auch wir erlöst. . . ."

<sup>54</sup>Ib.: "dass in der Auferstehung selbst noch ein grösserer Trost liegt, als in seinem Tode. . . ."

<sup>55</sup>*Festklänge*, p. 248: "Was der Sohn auf Golgatha dem Vater gegeben hatte, das gab nun der Vater im Grabesgarten der Welt."

<sup>56</sup>Ib., p. 251: "Sind die erweckenden Klänge des Osterjubels verklungen, so ist es selbst den meisten Christen nicht anders, als ob sie aus einem süß berausenden Traume erwachten; sie verlassen wieder das leere Grab und suchen wieder ihre einzige Zuflucht auf dem Berge Golgatha unter dem Schatten des heiligen Kreuzes. Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi achten nicht wenige für nichts mehr, als für eine schöne Zugabe, für einem glanzvollen Schmuck der eigentlichen Heilsthats des Erlösers der Welt, für eine köstliche Perle in der Krone des Erlösungswerkes, nicht aber für diese Krone selbst. Sie wissen nicht, was sie damit anfangen, wie sie dieselbe gebrauchen und zu ihrem Glauben, Lieben und Hoffen anwenden sollen. Warum der heilige Apostel schreibt: 'Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ, der auferstanden ist von den Toten.' das ist ihnen noch ein Räthsel."

<sup>57</sup>Id., p. 255 f.: "Doch meine Lieben, die Auferstehung Jesu Christi ist nicht nur darum aller Menschen höchster und letzter Trost, weil erst die den in Christi Kreuz und Tod liegenden Trost geöffnet hat und so beides tröstlich gemacht hat, sondern weil sie auch selbst einen Trost in sich enthält, der in keinem andern Werk der Erlösung, selbst in Christi Leiden und Sterben nicht zu finden ist. Bedenket nur Folgendes, und ihr werdet mir bald Recht geben. Während das Leiden und Sterben recht eigentlich Christi Werk war, so war hingegen seine Auferstehung eigentlich seines himmlischen Vaters Werk. . . . Das ist aber von der höchsten und tröstlichsten Wichtigkeit. . . . Während das Leiden und Sterben Jesu Christi die Busse und Beichte des Sohnes Gottes war für die ganze abgefallene Menschheit, so war hingegen seine Auferstehung des himmlischen Vaters darauf allen Menschen in Christo nun öffentlich vor Himmel und Erde feierlich und thatsächlich erteilte Absolution."

<sup>58</sup>Id., p. 256 f.: "Erst tilgt er durch die Hingabe seines Sohnes in Leiden und Tod aller Menschen Sünde, und nachdem dies geschehen ist, so wartet er nun nicht, bis wir kommen und um die erworbene Gnade bitten, behält nun diese Gnade nicht in seinem Herzen, sondern, damit von Seiten des Menschen nichts nötig sei, als dass er an eine ihm schon geschenkte Gnade glaube, bricht er nun heraus, erweckt unseren Stellvertreter von den Toten und spricht damit zu allen Menschen: . . . ich bin wieder euer Vater. . . ."

<sup>59</sup>Id., p. 258: "Denn nun soll der Mensch nicht erst machen, dass etwas geschehe, dass ihm nämlich seine Sünden vergeben werden, sondern glauben, dass das schon geschehen ist, dass ihm nämlich in der Auferweckung Christi schon seine Sünde vergeben, die Gnade Gottes und die Seligmachung zugesprochen sind. So oft nun einem Menschen das Evangelium gepredigt, die Taufe, die Absolution und das heilige Abendmahl erteilt und der Segen in der Kirche über ihn gesprochen wird, so oft wiederholt nun der Prediger, was Gott schon durch die Auferstehung Jesu Christi an allen Menschen, also auch an ihm, gethan hat."

<sup>60</sup>Id., p. 265: "Die Auferweckung des Sohnes Gottes, . . . war daher die Erfüllung der Vertragsverbindung von Seiten des Vaters, daher denn Petrus am ersten Pfingstfest allen seinen Zuhörern zuruft: 'So wisse nun das ganze Haus Israel gewiss, dass Gott diesen Jesum, den ihr gekreuziget habt, zu einem Herrn und Christ gemacht hat.'"

<sup>61</sup>C. F. W. Walther: *Licht des Lebens. Ein Jahrgang von Evangelien-Predigten aus dem Nachlass des seligen D. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther*, St. Louis 1905, p. 306: "Was zeigt nun aber Christus mit diesem allen an, insonderheit mit dem Wörtlein: 'Darum gehet hin? Offenbar dieses, dass er aus seinem Grabe für alle Menschen Vergebung der Sünden und damit Gerechtigkeit, Leben und Seligkeit hervorgebracht habe, welches alles die Apostel nun kraft seiner Auferstehung durch die Verkündigung des Evangeliums unter alle Menschen austheilen sollten."

<sup>62</sup>"UEber den innigen Zusammenhang der Lehre von der Absolution mit der von der Rechtfertigung" in "Zehnter Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen Deutschen Evang.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u.a. Staaten vom Jahre 1860," St. Louis, Mo., 1861, p. 34 ff. The author of the theses is said to have been Rev. Th. J. Brohm; cfr. *Grace for Grace. A Brief History of the Norwegian Synod*, Mankato, Minn., 1943, p. 156.

<sup>63</sup>Id., p. 42: "Durch die Auferweckung von den Todten hat Gott die ganze Welt absolviert, d. h., von Sunden losgemacht; wenn hiernach die Welt bereits längst absolviert und von Sunden losgemacht ist, was ist denn die Absolution oder Predigt des Evangeliums in der Kirche? Ist sie auch ein Losmachen, oder bloss eine Verkündigung der schon geschehenen Losmachung? Antwort: . . . eben durch das Evangelium geschieht das Bringen dessen, was in Gottes Herzen ist. . . . eine solche Verkündigung, die die Vergebung wirklich bringt und giebt . . . die Absolution im Evangelio ist nichts anderes, als eine Wiederholung der thatsächlichen Absolution, die bereits geschehen ist durch die Auferweckung Jesu Christi von den Todten."

<sup>64</sup>Id., p. 46: "Es darf nicht verwechselt werden, was Christus gethan hat, und was an Christo geschehen ist. Sein Leiden, Sterben und Auferstehen war keine Absolution wohl aber seine Auferweckung von den Todten. Unsere Predigt und Absolution ist der moralischen Wirkung nach nichts anderes, als was Gott an Christo gethan hat; der Unterschied besteht nur darin, dass Gott durch die Auferweckung seines Sohnes die ganze Welt absolviert hat, wir aber nur Einzelne, Prediger z.B. nur ihre Gemeinden absolvieren . . . Unsere Absolution ist nichts anderes als eine Wiederholung des Actes Gottes in der Auferweckung Christi."

<sup>65</sup>"Ein Streit unter Lutheranern über Rechtfertigung und Absolution. (UEber-

setzt aus dem *Lutheran Standard* von C.)" in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1871, p. 147 f.: "Wir sagen nicht, dass einer notwendiger Weise immer den Ausdruck brauchen müsse: 'die Welt ist in Christo gerechtfertigt' . . . denn wir wissen sehr wohl, dass dieser Artikel des Glaubens auch mit anderen Worten vollständig und korrekt erklärt und vorgetragen werden kann." Walther thus translates from an English translation of the original Norwegian article. A second print appears in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1905, p. 390 ff.

<sup>66</sup>Id., p. 150: "ob es wahr ist, dass die Kirchensprache nicht erlaubt, von der Rechtfertigung der Welt in Christo zu sprechen."; p. 149 f.: "Joh. Gerhard . . . in ihm auch uns absolvirt"; "Gottfried Olearius . . . samt ihm im Gerichte Gottes gerechtfertigt"; "Joh. Jac. Rambach . . . dass in seiner Person auch das ganze menschliche Geschlecht gerechtfertigt und von der Sünde und dem Fluch absolvirt wurde."

<sup>67</sup>Id., p. 148: "Beide Werk [Adams bzw. Christi] hat eine gleich allgemeine Bedeutung und Geltung. Aber wie nicht alle Menschen persönlich verdammt werden, obgleich die 'Verdamnis über alle Menschen gekommen ist,' so werden auch nicht alle wirklich und persönlich gerechtfertigt, obgleich die Rechtfertigung durch Christi Werk 'über alle gekommen ist.' . . ."

<sup>68</sup>E. Reim: "A History of the Term 'Objective Justification'" in *Quartalschrift, Theological Quarterly*, April 1955, p. 83 f., draws attention to an occurrence in 1880, when Walther made use of the terms: "This is as far back as I have been able to trace the use of our term." Reim admits, however, that at that time the expressions were already "familiar and accepted terms." Walther on this occasion referred to the words as "the language of scholars ('wie die Gelehrten reden')."

<sup>69</sup>H. Messerschmidt: "Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung vor Gott in ihrer hohen Bedeutung für das sittliche Leben" in *Zeitschrift für die gesammte lutherische Theologie und Kirche, begründet durch Dr. A. G. Rudelbach und Dr. H. E. F. Guericke, fortgeführt von Dr. Fr. Delitzsch und Dr. H. E. F. Guericke*, Erstes Quartalheft 1867, pp. 63-76. It is reprinted as "Die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung" in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1867, pp. 76-86. Walther omits—apparently for space reasons—the first page of Messerschmidt's article, which is introduced with the following appreciative words: "Wir theilen diesen Aufsatz von H. Messerschmidt aus dem ersten Quartalheft der Guerickschen 'Zeitschrift' 1867, mit, weil er gewiss von jedem wahren Lutheraner mit Freuden gelesen werden wird," id., p. 76. ("We communicate this essay . . . as every true Lutheran will read it with joy.")

<sup>70</sup>*Lehre und Wehre*, 1867, p. 77 (= *Zeitschrift* . . . , p. 65): "eine Rechtfertigung des Menschen vor Gott sowohl im objectiven als im subjectiven Sinne"; "Das menschliche Geschlecht als eine Gesammtheit, in welcher die einzelnen Individuen nicht für sich stehende, sondern der Totalität inhärierende Theile sind, wie denn überhaupt die Selbständigkeit und Abgeschlossenheit der Individuen nur eine sehr relative ist, und die Einzelnen jedenfalls in der Lebenseinheit des ganzen Organismus mitbefasst werden."

<sup>71</sup>Id., p. 78 (*Zeitschrift* . . . , p. 66): "Ohne dieses Faktum könnte es für den Einzelnen gar keine Rechtfertigung geben; dasselbe ist der unumstössliche Grund, auf welchem die *subjective* Rechtfertigung möglich ist und beruht. Die Rechtfertigung des Subjectes ist nämlich derjenige Act Gottes, durch welchen er das Straftheil, welches über den Menschen um seiner Sünde willen verhängt ist, aufhebt und den Menschen von seiner Sünde losspricht, indem er ihm Christi Verdienst zuspricht."

<sup>72</sup>C. F. W. Walther: *Predigtentwürfe und nicht ganz ausgeführte Predigten und Casualreden von Dr. C. F. W. Walther. Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlass gesammelt*, St. Louis, Mo., 1891, p. 93: "Denn das ist freilich wahr: am Glauben liegt

hierbei alles. Wer sich den Sieg Christi in seiner Auferstehung nicht im Glauben zueignet, über den hat noch Gesetz, Sünde, Tod und Hölle Macht; der empfindet auch von diesem Sieg keine Kraft, keine Freude, für den liegt Christus noch im Grabe."

<sup>73</sup>In 1889, after Walther's death, G. Stöckhardt in an article "Noch ein Wort über die Rechtfertigung" in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1889, p. 201 ff., made use of the notion "actus simplex" but in a way that upholds and by no means denies the efficacy of the means of grace: "Aber in Wahrheit ist das, was wir uns nur als einen zusammengesetzten Act vorstellen können, als beständige Wiederholung derselben Hundlung, ein *actus simplex*. Das ist in Gott Ein *continuum*, Ein Gedanke, Eine Anschauung, welche durch die Zeit nicht zerstückt und getheilt wird, dass er uns in Christo für fromm und gerecht hält. Wenn wir auf dem Menschen sehen, der in der Zeit lebt, die Stellung des Menschen zu Gott müssen wir freilich einen Unterschied machen. Da Gott in Christo die Welt mit sich selbst versöhnte, hat er uns sammt der Welt von Sünden losgesprochen, hat er uns gerechtfertigt, ehe wir waren und lebten. Gleichsam als ideelle Personen, die nur in Gottes Gedanken existieren, waren wir da gerechtfertigt. In *concreto* wird dann der einzelne Mensch, der auf Erden lebt, da er dem Evangelium glaubt, *actu* ein Kind Gottes." ("Properly speaking, what we can picture to ourselves only as a composite act, as a continuous repetition of the same act, is really an *actus simplex*. In God it is one continuum, one thought, one view, which cannot be broken up and divided by time, that He regards us as pious and righteous in Christ. Looking at man living in time, at the position of man towards God, we admittedly must make a difference. As God reconciled the world unto Himself, He has absolved us with the world from sin, He has justified us, before we existed and lived. As ideal persons, existing only in the thoughts of God, we were justified there. In *concreto* the individual man, living on earth, becomes *actu* a child of God, when he believes the Gospel." Walther himself also defended during his lifetime the "one act"; cfr. Reim, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>74</sup>BS 519, 16 f.: "Gläubst Du auch, dass meine Vergebung Gottes Vergebung sei?"; *The Book of Concord*, ed. Tappert, p. 351.

<sup>75</sup>J. G. Baier: *Compendium* . . . , p. 286. The question concerning Walther's relation to Huber has been treated by R. Söderlund in his article "Läran om den universella rättfärdiggörelsen i teologihistorisk belysning" ("The doctrine of universal justification in the light of the history of theology") in *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift*, 1979, pp. 114-129. Söderlund differentiates between universal justification which leaves room for an individual justification as a real act of God and which is legitimate within orthodox Lutheran theology, and another type of universal justification which permits no such act and is accordingly illegitimate. According to Söderlund the latter type is found with Huber, Zinzendorff, the Swedish Moravian 18th century theologian Rutström and also in Missourian theology. Missourian theology has, according to Söderlund, succumbed to Herrnhutism on this point through two channels: one through Stephan, the other through Swedish neo-evangelicalism, which is thought to have influenced Missourian theology, a statement based on *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3. Aufl., Leipzig 1896-1913, 3:328, entry "Bornholmer, die." The former, acceptable type of universal justification is, according to Söderlund, found with the Swedish Pietistic 18th century court preacher A. Norborg, who taught that Christ is justified as the representative head of mankind and that insofar the world was justified in Him. Yet Norborg regards individual justification as a real act of God; Söderlund, op. cit., p. 126. The material presented in our article, however, has given full proof for stating that Walther rather sides with Norborg and that his theology cannot be regarded as

the offspring of Moravianism. It should be pointed out that Norborg was not unknown to the Missourian tradition. As early as 1872, during the lifetime of Walther, the Synodical Conference, the joint representation of the synods of Missouri, Wisconsin, the Norwegians, Illinois, Minnesota and Ohio, in its dealings about universal justification approvingly referred to Norborg (mistakenly called "Rohrberg"), quoting exactly the same passages as Söderlund, where Christ is regarded as the representative of mankind in His resurrection, and where "the right middleway" is proclaimed, leaving room for an individual justification as a real act of God; cfr. "Die neue und die alte Lehre der Ohio-Synode von der allgemeinen Rechtfertigung" in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1905, p. 492 f., where the document of 1872 is reprinted. This does, of course, not mean that Walther and the men of this school were dependent on some Swedish source, neoevangelical or pietistic (as Norborg), but merely that the doctrine of Christ's resurrection as the absolution of mankind was a traditional Lutheran conviction, which Söderlund does not see, due to faulty interpretation of the classical orthodox "nos in ipso absolvit" (He absolved us in Him"); Söderlund, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

Yet Söderlund's general observation concerning different interpretations can claim theological validity in spite of historical inaccuracies. His article is from its first lines expressly directed against the doctrine of justification proclaimed in Sweden by an American theologian, Dr. Siegbert W. Becker, whose theology Söderlund somewhat too easily—although understandably—identifies with classical Missourianism. According to our conviction Söderlund is in principle right in his charges against the kind of universal justification that is taught by Becker and his followers, e.g., when he draws attention to the description of individual justification as a "confirmation" of universal justification; Söderlund, *op. cit.*, p. 129. If Söderlund had penetrated deeper into the material and into the systematical questions involved, he could, as we see it, have substantiated his charges more carefully by pointing to three points, where Becker and the circle around him show an apparent theological weakness: 1) Universal justification is identified with what happens in God's heart at the atonement on Good Friday, not with the justification of Christ in His resurrection as an external act of God, directed towards the world. S. Becker: *Skriften och saligheten*, Landskrona 1972, p. 55 (tr. from Swedish): "We do not differ sharply between the expressions 'universal atonement' and 'universal justification'"; S. Erlandsson: "Den rättfärdighet som gäller inför Gud," *Biblicum* 4/1974, p. 16: (tr. from Swedish): "Here in Rom. 4:25 it is stressed that if 'our justification' had not taken place, Our Lord Jesus would not have left His grave. For as certain as our sins were the cause of Jesus' being delivered to death (v. 25a), equally certain our justification was the cause of Jesus' being raised from the dead (v. 25b). The Greek original text uses the same preposition *dia* in order to indicate the cause in both cases." Universal justification thus takes place prior to Easter and is the cause of resurrection, not its result. 2) Absolution and the means of grace are downgraded to means of communication and deprived of their efficacy. S. Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 55, interprets John 20:23: "they are remitted unto them" as a reference to what has already happened at Calvary, p. 56: "The meaning is this: 'They have been forgiven completely in the past, and they still are forgiven now. This means that when we preach the message of the Gospel, we do not effect the remission of sins through our sermon.'" (tr. from Swedish). 3) Universal justification is said to be the contents of the sermon to be delivered to the heathen without any previous reference to the Law. This striking similarity to Huber's pastoral advice to the Wittenberg theologians, quoted above in our article, is found in Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 56 f. (tr. from Swedish): "In America it is very common that Reformed missionaries tell a man whom they try to gain: 'Are you saved?' . . . It is,

however, not likely that a Lutheran missionary would ask: 'Are you saved?', as the experience of conversion is not so important from his theological point of view. As he believes in universal redemption and in universal justification it is more likely that he changes the order of the words and says: 'You are saved,' 'Your sins are forgiven unto you.' He can say so to everyone, as he knows that it is true about everyone." Through the centuries Huber's missionary sermon: "Habetis gratiam Dei" resounds in the 20th century. Undoubtedly Söderlund's fears concerning the theology introduced through Becker into Sweden seem reasonably justified.

\*Editorial Note:

Respect for the author's theological integrity forbids any substantive modification by others of his text. One of the editors, however, feels duty-bound to record his conviction that at least some of the difficulties with the short citations from the late Dr. Siegbert Becker are basically terminological, and should not be taken to reflect on his theology as a whole.

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