Background

The 1888 Message Study Committee in its meetings and publications has attempted to describe the theme of corporate justification. An example can be found in the publication *Ten Great Gospel Truths That Make the 1888 Message Unique*, where it was addressed under "Gospel Truth #2" in these words:

> If Christ had not died for the world, we would all have perished. The Father laid the trespasses of the world on Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19; Isaiah 53:5, 6). Thus, in a very real sense, Christ’s sacrifice has justified "all men" by giving them a legal "verdict of acquittal" in place of that "judgment" of "condemnation" "in Adam" (Romans 3:23, 24; 5:15-18, NEB).

The next sentence describes the intended next phase of justification.

> When the sinner hears and believes the truth, he experiences justification by faith (Romans 4:25; Ephesians 2:8-10).¹

This was followed by extracts from the writings of E. J. Waggoner, A. T. Jones, and Ellen White that addressed these two elements of justification.²

> This topic was addressed in the 2000 report of the Primacy of the Gospel Committee under the title of "Universal Legal Justification."³ We have subsequently examined it in the meetings of the Gospel Study Group (GSG; an informal follow-up to the Primacy of the Gospel Committee), addressing both the theme of corporate identity

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² Waggoner's original sources: *The Present Truth* (London), October 18, 1894, p. 659; October 25, 1894, p. 676. Jones: *General Conference Daily Bulletin*, February 24, 1893, pp. 379, 383; February 26, 1893, p. 401; *General Conference Bulletin*, February 21, 1895, pp. 268, 269. White: 1SM 343.2; ML 323.5; 1888 814.2; RH, May 23, 1899 par. 10; RH, March 12, 1901 par. 4; RH, July 24, 1888 par. 5. Other sources in these three writers could also be provided.

³ This report is available at https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/independent-ministries-and-others/primacy-gospel-committee-report (accessed 9 April 2013). This section of the report will be addressed later in this paper.
and that of justification. (Table is listed by these themes, and then chronologically, 2001-2012.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;You are There&quot; Motif</td>
<td>Davidson, Richard</td>
<td>3/30/01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Solidarity in W. W. Prescott's 1895 Sermons</td>
<td>Bischoff, Fred</td>
<td>12/3/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Solidarity in the Old Testament</td>
<td>Davidson, Richard</td>
<td>12/3/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought Paper: An Overview of &quot;In Christ&quot; as Considered From Three Christological Perspectives in Adam, Abraham and Israel</td>
<td>Finneman, Jerry</td>
<td>12/3/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;In Christ&quot; Motif</td>
<td>Finneman, Jerry</td>
<td>3/2/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The In-Christ Motif: The Two Adams in Romans 5</td>
<td>Peters, John</td>
<td>12/3/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Adamic Responses</td>
<td>Duncan, Mark</td>
<td>11/7/08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justification</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thought Paper on Justification and the Everlasting Covenant</td>
<td>Finneman, Jerry</td>
<td>2/27/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born &quot;Forgiven&quot;: The Unpardonable Sin in the Writings of Ellen G. White</td>
<td>Duncan, Mark</td>
<td>12/3/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification: Are There Three Phases?</td>
<td>Duncan, Mark</td>
<td>5/11/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification and the Faith of Jesus</td>
<td>Bischoff, Fred</td>
<td>10/19/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought Paper Concerning the Cross and Legal Justification</td>
<td>Finneman, Jerry</td>
<td>10/19/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification by Faith: An Adventist Understanding</td>
<td>Van Bemmelen, Peter</td>
<td>10/19/07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until the Accuser is Cast Down (Justification and Mediation: Two Complementary Functions)</td>
<td>Duncan, Mark</td>
<td>10/9/09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Justification&quot;: Is It a Valid Concept?</td>
<td>Duncan, Mark</td>
<td>4/23/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought Paper on Justification</td>
<td>Finneman, Jerry</td>
<td>4/15/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forensic and Transformational Aspects of Justification, by Erwin Gane</td>
<td>Gane, Roy</td>
<td>4/15/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification as a Whole Process</td>
<td>Gane, Roy</td>
<td>10/14/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness: Corporate and Personal</td>
<td>Duncan, Mark</td>
<td>11/4/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamics of Divinely Granted Corporate Amnesty</td>
<td>Gane, Roy</td>
<td>3/2/12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(This is not an exhaustive list.)
In recent years corporate justification was addressed by Woodrow Whidden in the BRI Newsletter April 2008 in an article entitled, "Universal Legal Justification in the Writings of E. J. Waggoner." This was a major theme in Whidden's biography published the same year on E. J. Waggoner. During the 2010 symposium "Arminianism and Adventism, Celebrating Our Soteriological Heritage," Joe Olstad presented a breakout session October 16 entitled, "Universal Legal Justification: A Failed Alternative Between Calvin and Arminius." The next month Angel Rodriguez presented "Legal Universal Justification: Brief Description and Evaluation" November 18 at the ATS "2010 Fall Symposium - Righteousness by Faith" (ATS at ETS). It appears that all of these presentations outside of the GSG were attempts to refute the concept, in part or in whole. Rodriguez did appear to give a friendly review, giving aspects he could see and agree with.

The GSG has endeavored to probe the evidences for "new light" on this and other points, while remaining firmly anchored on pre-existing light--the light of "present truth" in the context of the Advent movement and identity. We have not felt it beneficial, rather damaging and delaying to the mission, simply to defend pre-existing understandings. We are convinced that the evidence indicates that additional light, conceptual and experiential, is essential. What has guided our feeble endeavors have been glimpses of light from our past history, clustered around 1888 in a special manner. We have explored

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5 Woodrow Whidden, E.J. Waggoner : From the Physician of Good News to the Agent of Division (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Pub. Association, 2008)
6 The audio of this presentation is available at "http://www.atsjats.org/article/85/podcasting-2010-arminianism-symposium-andrews-university-mi" (accessed 9 April 2013).
7 The audio of this presentation is available at "http://www.atsjats.org/article/84/podcasting-2010-fall-symposium-righteousness-by-faith" (accessed 9 April 2013). A transcript of this presentation has been made. Elements of this overview and evaluation will be addressed throughout this paper.
why Ellen White addressed the events from that time in such a compelling fashion. We have pondered why the delay of the Advent mission explicitly addressed in the late 1800's has extended past another entire century.⁸

**Basic Concepts and Definitions**

There are two concepts that lie at the root of understanding corporate justification, which can be addressed by questions pertaining to each word in this phrase.

*Corporate:* Does God in some respects deal with the entire human race as a whole? Does the human race exist as a corporate unit? How do we fit the numerous texts in Scripture, as well as statements in the writings of Ellen White, that speak of salvation in universal terms--the world, the human race--into the whole of salvation?

*Justification:* Is there a legal basis for God keeping the sinful race alive? Is the current existence or life of sinners justified? Is God just in not immediately imputing the full consequences of sinners' sins to them? Is there significance in the fact that the only two occurrences of *dikaiosis* ("justification") are in adjacent chapters in Romans, in passages whose context weaves together the universal dimension with the individual one?

These two above concepts are developed further in a later section of this paper.

Four additional key concepts have been repeatedly considered in the GSG as this theme has been addressed. The GSG has arrived at a consensus on these key perspectives.⁹

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⁸ The issue of the delay was addressed in the General Conference of SDA’s Annual Council Action, voted 10/11/2010, "God’s Promised Gift--An Urgent Appeal for Revival, Reformation, Discipleship, and Evangelism" in these words, "We acknowledge that the coming of Jesus has been delayed and that our Lord longed to come decades ago. We repent of our lukewarmness, our worldliness, and our limited passion for Christ and His mission."

⁹ This observation and the others that follow regarding the work of the GSG are from the author's perspective. This statement refers to those who have remained active in the GSG, and most of those who have withdrawn due to other duties.
(1) Salvation itself must be viewed as a process, not a point. The process has its necessary high points, but in general salvation terms have process meanings, in spite of their often being used to highlight specific parts of the process.

(2) Faith must be seen not primarily as a human response to God's initiative, but actually a divine dynamic driving the initiative. And the goal of this faith is to stimulate a similar and necessary response in mankind by imparting and thus restoring that very dynamic that was lost by sin. This is the faith that works by love, and which is described in Scripture by the terms the "faith of Jesus" and the "faith of God." God treats people in faith, and by that plants, preserves, and nurtures the seed in each heart.

(3) Since corporate justification describes something that God does in His initiation of the salvation process, and since His faith expressed through the faith of Jesus is the agape motive that Scripture describes that prevails in this process, all justification is of faith, initially the faith of Jesus (the corporate part), and if continued, the faith response and the faith endurance of the individual.

(4) Corporate justification has been called "legal justification" by many (and equated with "forensic justification"), but in some basic sense the phrase is redundant, since the word "justification" is a legal term in itself. This redundancy is not the strongest reason to consider avoiding the adjective "legal" when one observes the uniformly negative use of "legal" associated with "religion" in Ellen White's writings.10

Implications and Extrapolations

10 See especially 1888 229.2, 368.2, 375.2, 376.4. Sectarianism is connected to "legal religion" in 453.2. See also "legal obedience" in DA 523.1. Of interest is the opposite of "legal justification"--"legal condemnation" in DA 710.1. Perhaps the strongest negative is the "legal, casual faith" that embraces the universal dimension but does not personalize it--those seeing "Christ as the Saviour of the world" but with "no evidence in their hearts that he is their personal Saviour, that he has forgiven their sins, that they have a living connection with God, the source of all light." (ST, September 2, 1889 par. 3).
The importance of clarifying the corporate dimension of justification entails more than theological and conceptual minutiae. It is intensely practical. An example of this practicality is the story Dr. Whidden relates in his biography on Waggoner. Despite his antipathy to universal justification, Whidden acknowledges the reality of the dynamic on the divine level—-that there is a sense in which God forgives us before we repent and confess. He demonstrated this in an experience in which he had unknowingly offended a student of his. When he became aware of the offense, he went to the student, expressed repentance, and asked for forgiveness. The student's response was, "I've forgiven you of that long ago." Dr. Whidden acknowledged this aspect of forgiveness is the way it "must be with God." He then immediately insisted, "But this is not the biblical understanding of justification by faith." 

If key concepts #2 and #3 above were embraced, we would place this fact of justification by the faith of Jesus squarely where it belongs, as the foundation of the whole process, with the practical imperative that flows from it--"Go, and do thou likewise." The reality is more important that the labels, but why should we be hesitant to accept Biblical labels that are easily applied in a "new setting" consistent with the rest of Scripture? 

Since justification is a somewhat technical term for pardon or forgiveness, the divine example in corporate justification has the following practical implications:

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11 Whidden, *op. cit.*, pp. 73, 74
12 The "new setting" reference recalls this and similar statements: "In Minneapolis God gave precious gems of truth to His people in new settings." May we not be guilty of what the next sentence described: "This light from heaven by some was rejected with all the stubbornness the Jews manifested in rejecting Christ...." (1888 518.1). This "new setting" appears to have some allusion to William Miller's dream in which God gave him an overview of the Advent movement from the First Angel's Message through the Loud Cry (EW 81.2 ff.)
(1) *Bitterness and Alienation:* If I do not venture onto the forgiveness road through this door, I will foster a root of bitterness that may never be uprooted—at least not until the offender does his part to repent and confess first. The bitterness that accompanies the defilement defined by this self-focus replicates itself and causes much trouble.\(^{13}\) How much damage has been done by refusing to be transformed by this cornerstone of God's own example?

(2) *Unity and Latter Rain:* If I do not embrace what Calvary shows of the reality of this justification, I refuse the path the eleven disciples took that laid their glory in the dust, and did for them that which it was not in their power to do for themselves—brought them to see their nothingness, to embrace selflessness, to have eyes single to God's glory, to be open to a new paradigm of Scripture in which they saw Jesus in every book, to enter into the unity of unselfishness, and to have that sealed by an outpouring of God's Spirit.\(^{14}\) Who would deny that this is the path God's Advent movement must take before it can shed selfishness, individualism, and sectarianism, receive the promised Latter Rain, and thus be empowered to complete its mission?

(3) *Height Determined by Depth:* If I do not measure adequately the dimensions of the foundation that God laid in Jesus Christ, I will be limited in the height of my experience built upon that foundation. The extent to which the individual will sense the drawing of God's love, the constraint thereof, will determine the degree to which his life will be transformed by that re-creative power. How can each individual sense God's love reaches him if the corporate dimension is limited or neglected? How many who argue passionately, even vehemently, for end-time scenarios as varied as a pure-justification

\(^{13}\) Hebrews 12:15

\(^{14}\) These parallels are seen by comparing Luke 22-24 and Acts 1 and 2 with 20MR 117.3; 1888 26.4; RH, July 21, 1896 par. 2
salvation or a victorious final generation, continue to shoot themselves in the foot of any
genuine good they could do in their emphasis, by denying this dimension of the very
foundation of salvation?

A Suggested Parallel

If we were to overlay the legal perspective of salvation with the human
development view of it, we could see better, perhaps, that as essential as is the new birth,
followed by growth to maturity, conception always precedes birth. Thus as essential as is
justification by the faith response of the believer, followed by retaining justification by
faith endurance (manifested in a process of the victory of faith over all forms of
selfishness, which are labeled "sin"), justification by the faith of Jesus always precedes
justification by the faith response of any recipient of such "exceeding riches of His
grace."¹¹

The Primacy of the Gospel Committee Evaluation

Point #6 under "Areas With Disagreement" is worded thus:

Universal Legal Justification.

It is confusing to state that everyone is legally saved until they have "chosen
to resist the saving grace of God," and then turn around and say that one needs
faith in order to have saving (rather than legal) justification. For example, 1888
Re-Examined claims that "Christ's sacrifice is not merely provisional but effective
for the whole world, so that the only reason anybody can be lost is that he has
chosen to resist the saving grace of God"(p. vi). Interestingly Ellen White is quite
content to say that "the provisions of redemption are free to all; [but] the results of
redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions." (PP
208).

Let us examine briefly this point of objection. It is granted that the description in
the first sentence above is confusing. Without applying key concept #1 mentioned

¹¹ Ephesians 2:7; compare 1:7; 3:8. (Unless noted otherwise, the scripture is taken from the King
James Version.)
previously, one way in which a term such as justification can be confusing is when one assumes it describes a point rather than a process. The same applies to seeing "saved" as a point rather than a process. Let us apply this essential concept to the Ellen White passage quoted. On PP208 she describes what part of the process she is addressing, with the words, "As regards man's final salvation..." This clear reference to the end of the process alludes to its beginning. And she states explicitly the beginning, universal aspects of that process. "The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all." "The provisions of redemption are free to all..." The provisions are thus gifts given. They were given "through Christ." These began the process of salvation for all. The "free to all" does imply that all do not have them, at least in a full sense, because their response is necessary. But this is not to limit the whole of salvation, but simply to make it voluntary, not coerced. The whole is thus conditional on a love response defined by God Himself, by His very heart and character.

All benefit from the universal aspects of these provisions, but all have not received all the benefits. God has started something for all that, if not thwarted by a response of unbelief, will result in "final salvation." His love that extends to all will awaken love in all who do not resist. His love is salvation, and the reception of that love and transformation by it is eternal salvation. The mediation of all the benefits come alone through the Holy Spirit and Christ's continuing work in the heavenly sanctuary. The infinite benefits of the blood shed in the antitypical courtyard are being mediated in the antitypical holy place, and since 1844, in the antitypical Most Holy Place. Could it be

16 PP 207.4, just prior to the quoted parts from 208.1.
17 Ibid.
18 PP 208.1 (italics in original, in parallel with the italicized word "results")
19 The phrase "eternal salvation" is used in Hebrews 5:9 to describe the end of the whole process.
that this final work of mediation, in inviting all into this process by faith, might include an appreciation of the dimensions of the blood's benefits in a final sense?²⁰

God had a legal basis to justify the existence of sinners--the cross of Jesus. This is the point of how the noun "justification" is used in Romans 4:25 combined with 5:18.²¹ This is the very foundation of salvation, without which none would have a chance. Paul describes this just basis using the hilasterion (mercyseat) model in Romans 3:25, 26. He uses three words to describe the accomplishment of "His blood"--the cross.

*Justice (righteousness; noun from dikaiosune)*--God's righteousness was declared by the cross.

*Just (righteous; adjective from dikaios)*--God is just in what He accomplished through the cross.

*Justify (declare or treat righteous either because the recipient is righteous, or for the goal of making him righteous; participle from dikaioo)*--God can maintain His righteousness, and be just, and still justify based on faith--"the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."²²

This trio of words are of the same family as "justification" (noun from dikaiosis). The defining dynamic of this family of words is faith that works by love. Whose faith? When we see the faith through this passage (verses 22, 25, 26) as the faith of Jesus (the "them that believe" of verse 22 being the only phrase focused solely on the human response), we see that Paul is explicit that the faith of Jesus is what has demonstrated (phaneroo; verse 21), and what the Godhead used for the showing of (endeixis, verses 25, 26), God's righteousness/justice--that He is still "just." Verse 26 ends literally, "out of faith of

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²⁰ The "final sense" is only in reference to what is in God's plan before the close of probation and the final storm on earth, not in any eternal sense. We will be exploring the dimensions of the cross throughout eternity.

²¹ These two verses are evaluated later in the paper.

²² Hebrews 11:1
Jesus." Thus the dynamic behind this act is stated to be "the faith" we see expressed "in His blood," namely "the faith of Jesus."\(^{23}\)

Ellen White is clearly wholistic in her salvation perspective. To pit one aspect of salvation against the other is a dualistic view of salvation.\(^{24}\) In contending for the whole, one does not need to minimize the part, especially the beginning part.

More on Corporate

Corporate speaks of a body, a whole. Christ is head of the race as well as head of the church.\(^{25}\) Thus there are ways in which the Godhead views the race as a whole. These are the universal dimensions of God's heart. And they flow from His heart, crafting the unconditional (of necessity), initial components of the salvation process. They are the very foundations of His dealing with sin. Because of this, they are the least visible and appreciated, but the most essential and important.

As Paul deals with the corporate aspects of salvation, he develops the roles of both Adam and Christ.\(^{26}\) As the representative heads of the human race, in their own and historically distinct positions, we must in a valid sense see all humanity represented "in" each of them. If this is not understood, our grasp of the need and the solution to sin will be limited. In his more extensive writing on Christ's role, Paul describes the relationship

\(^{23}\) "Whom God did set forth a mercy seat, through the faith in his blood, for the shewing forth of His righteousness, because of the passing over of the bygone sins in the forbearance of God--for the shewing forth of His righteousness in the present time, for His being righteous, and declaring him righteous who is of the faith of Jesus." (Young's Literal Translation)

\(^{24}\) Some see a form of Greek dualism in the corporate concepts. This will be addressed briefly in the next section. An example of classic dualism and the only valid alternative of wholism is addressed in this Ellen White passage (though on another topic): "To talk of Christ without the Word leads to sentimentalism. And to receive the theory of the Word without accepting and appreciating the Author makes men legal formalists. But Christ and His precious Word are in perfect harmony. Received and obeyed, they open a sure path for the feet of all who are willing to walk in the light as Christ is in the light." (20MR 307.5; Letter 43, 1901, to Dr. and Mrs. J. H. Kellogg)

\(^{25}\) Colossians 2:10; 1 Cor. 15:22; 7BC 904.6; 9T 187.1; GCB. April 8, 1901 par. 12

\(^{26}\) 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45-49; Romans 5:12-19. The "in Christ" concepts have been addressed in multiple papers presented at the GSG. See under "Background."
of Christ to all, and especially to the believer. In a classic statement, that makes sense only in the process paradigm of salvation (and its cognate "Saviour"), he states both relationships.

The living God ... is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe. 27

These mystical connections and relationships are real but not fully explainable.

That is why the term "mystical" is appropriate. Here are some examples of how it is described, both the connection with all humanity, and with the believer.

Let us bear in mind that Christ is the great central heart from which the life-blood flows to every part of the great body of humanity. He is the head from which extend the nerves that reach even to the most minute and most remote parts of the body. When one member of the body with which Christ is so mystically connected, suffers, the throb of pain is felt by our Saviour. 28

Here Christ associates Himself, as the Son of man, with the mystic ladder. The angels of God are ascending and descending on the one even as they did on the other. By means of this ladder a constant communication is kept up between heaven and earth, and all the actions and affairs of this earth are known in heaven. The counsels of heaven are executed on earth, and the doings of men are judged in heaven. 29

There is a connection between earth and heaven through Christ, the mystic ladder that Jacob saw in his vision at Bethel. When we were separated from God, Christ came to reconcile us to the Father. In pitying love He placed His human arm about the fallen race, and with His divine arm He grasped the throne of the Infinite, thus connecting finite man with the infinite God; through the plan of salvation we are united with the agencies of heaven. Through the merits of a crucified and risen Redeemer, we may look up and see the glory of God shining from heaven to earth. We should be grateful to God for the plan of salvation. We have been blessed with many blessings, and in return we should give to God our undivided hearts. 30

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27 1 Timothy 4:10  
28 RH, October 16, 1894 par. 10  
29 19MR 338.2  
30 LHU 239.4; recall this related statement: "The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son." (SC 100.1)
We derive immortality from God by receiving the life of Christ, for in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. This life is the mystical union and cooperation of the divine with the human.\(^{31}\)

Christ's love for His children is as tender as it is strong. And it is stronger than death; for He died to purchase our salvation, and to make us one with Him, mystically and eternally one. So strong is His love that it controls all His powers, and employs the vast resources of heaven in doing His people good. It is without variableness or shadow of turning--the same yesterday, today, and forever. Although sin has existed for ages, trying to counteract this love and obstruct its flowing earthward, it still flows in rich currents to those for whom Christ died.\(^{32}\)

The universal and unconditional aspects of salvation, as broad and as essential as they are (beyond our full comprehension), are not all of salvation. God is love, and values love freely returned so highly that He at some point in the process awaits our individual response of love to His love, of faith to His faith. Scripture never describes what God has done in the unconditional realm, and places a period after it. Always there is a human response expected, desired, purposed, yearned for. Frequently there is the word "that" conjoining what God has done with what He intends it to accomplish in individuals. Note the following examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Unconditional, corporate</th>
<th>that</th>
<th>Individual response desired</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John 3:16</td>
<td>For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.</td>
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<td>Rom. 5:20, 21</td>
<td>Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.</td>
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<td>Rom. 8:3, 4</td>
<td>For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2Cor. 5: 21</td>
<td>For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin;</td>
<td>that</td>
<td>we might be made the righteousness of God in him.</td>
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\(^{31}\) Mar 302.6  
\(^{32}\) TM 519.1
The evidences for the corporate aspects of salvation are ubiquitous and compelling. The more one is open to them, the more one finds them. And the more one is transformed by them, the greater his evangelistic potential. Thus Peter was instructed in his vision, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This began to break down spiritual barriers in him that would hinder his evangelistic outreach. Thus shortly at his first Gentile encounter, he was able to confess, "God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." This was not the whole of salvation that was preached, but it was the foundation! Without it, Peter remained restricted in his attitude and outreach.

Likewise Paul was transformed by a revelation of the love of God from the separatist, persecuting Pharisee into the dynamic preacher of the gospel, declaring, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh." What transformed him? It was an understanding of the universal dimension of the cross. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died." When one is truly constrained by the universal dimensions of God's agape, one sees people with spiritual eyes, not "after the flesh."

This is how Christ viewed all. And people sense that spirit, and are drawn powerfully by it. It creates hope. It is full of grace. This is how God views the race! Note this profound description of this dimension:

God looked upon humanity, not as vile and worthless; He looked upon it in Christ, saw it as it might become through redeeming love. He collected all the riches of the universe, and laid them down in order to buy the pearl.  

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33 Acts 10:15, 28  
34 2 Corinthians 5:16  
35 2 Corinthians 5:14. Latter in this paper this passage is evaluated at length.  
36 COL.118.2
So we see God's faith determines how He looks at all humans. He is the source of righteousness, the author of faith, and shows His righteousness by His faith. And since He is thus righteous by faith, His faith worked by love and expended the riches of the universe to purchase all and each. What wondrous love!

The interface between the corporate and the individual exists not only with the corporate being the foundation, with the individual response desired. The corporate is also the composite of all individuals. In this sense, how God deals with the whole human race is the combination of how He deals with each. Thus the corporate cannot exclude the individual. But likewise, the individual realities, though in many ways unique to each, do not exclude the corporate, nor degenerate into partiality in any form. Extremes in corporate or individual views, which will not be explored here, should not invalidate either in the Biblical sense. Certain societies and philosophies tend to emphasize the one or the other, but these human traditions must be laid at the feet of Jesus, and His pattern guide our understandings and choices on how to relate to both dimensions.

The concept of substitution is yet another dimension of the corporate. The limitation of using the adjective "vicarious" for this substitution should be well appreciated in seeing the fallacy of the concept, "Jesus died so I don't have to die." The survival of self (the "old man," ego), which can be easily deduced from such a statement, is eliminated when the picture Paul paints is allowed to describe this substitution (and even perhaps the word "vicarious"\(^\text{37}\)).

... We thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died.\(^\text{38}\)

\(^\text{37}\) Ellen White used "vicarious" once to describe the atonement (RH, November 1, 1892 par. 12).
\(^\text{38}\) 2 Corinthians 5:14 (literal)
Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.... Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin...  

More on Justification

The purpose of God's dealing with sinners, universally, is to restore them to His image. This is the root meaning in this word, justification. One has again the character of his Maker. But this is a process. And again of necessity the beginning of this beautiful plan had to be created unconditionally and universally.

The only two occurrences of the noun form of this concept, occurring in adjacent chapters in Romans, clearly speak of this universal truth.

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

As universal as the sacrifice on account of our sins, was the resurrection on account of our justification. A literal translation of this verse better captures the dynamic of the prepositions that connect the cross and the resurrection with what lay behind each.

Who was delivered up because of our offences, and was raised up because of our being declared righteous.

Our offences led to His being "delivered up." The parallel structure informs us therefore that "our justification" led to His being "raised up." The sequence of events are these: Humanity's offences stirred Him to give His life for us, an action that culminated on the cross, but also met the needs of all offences, counting them against Him in our

39 Romans 6:6, 11
40 Romans 4:25
41 Young's Literal Translation; "because of" appears a better translation of dia.
42 Again, the paraptoma that 2 Cor. 5:19 states God is "not imputing" to the world, here clearly imputed to Him.
43 Paradidomi is used repeatedly for what the Father did to the Son (Matt. 17:22; 20:18; 26:2; Luke 24:7; Rom. 8:32) and the Son did Himself (Eph. 5:2, 25), as seen in God's wrath against sin (Rom. 1:18, compared with 24, 26, 28).
place, "not imputing" offences to any apart from Him, and the success of this justification was shown in His resurrection.

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. 44

Paul describes here the events in salvation history in another parallel structure, this one of affirmative contrasts. However, he uses the same preposition of origin as in 4:25, but adds in both parallels two uses of a preposition of consequence. 45 Because of "the offence of one" head of the race, Adam, 46 the consequence led "into all men" and "into condemnation." 47 This half of the parallel is essential in realizing the need. It is not part of the gospel, but precisely that to which the gospel has brought solution. "So then as" 48 the need arose, "even so" God met it. Paul's summary of the gospel solution follows precisely the same structure of the human need. Because of "the righteousness of One" new Head of the race, the "man Jesus Christ," 49 the consequence led "into all men" and "into justification of life."

The foundation of the need could not be more clearly laid alongside of the foundation of the solution. The corporate results of each head (the body's involvement with its respective heads) are concise and comprehensive. Paul in essence is saying that because Adam's offence led into condemnation for all (with death the end result 50), God

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44 Romans 5:18
45 ἐν, as "into" a consequence; in the KJV the supplied phrases "judgment came" and "the free gift came" use nouns from the parallels in verse 16, where the KJV translates δικαιομα as "justification," the only time it renders this word such (the other nine occurrences translated as "righteousness," "ordinance," and "judgment").
46 Διὰ is again the preposition "by" in the verse. "Offence" is again παράπτωμα. Adam is explicitly identified in verse 14.
47 ἐν occurs with each noun.
48 ASV rendering of ἀρχὴν ὁσς ("therefore as" in KJV)
49 In verse 15 Paul has identified this other Head.
50 Verse 12 is explicit on this.
found a way because of Christ's righteousness (His obedience unto the corporate death) into justification of the life of all sinners. God has justified (and is just in/is justified in) keeping all sinners alive. If this cannot be seen to be the foundation of the solution, it is doubted that any other description from Scripture will suffice. But there are more examples of this principle.

The corporate headship of Christ means the race is in His hands, it is His, He is intimately connected to each member of it. What He has accomplished has reversed the condemnation that Adam brought, resulting in justification of life upon all, allowing each to stand free individually.

Consider first what this reveals of the heart of God toward sinners. His attitude is that of forgiveness, not condemnation. He condemns sin (the cross shows that), but not the sinner. Forgiveness heals; condemnation destroys. Forgiveness was the first outreaching of the rejected Creator to Adam and Eve. And this was life for them. They had a Savior as soon as they sinned. 51 What He saved them from was not seen clearly until the cross.

Note this clear reference to how this reality should mold our attitude:

We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults. However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God we are to pardon all who have done evil to us. 52

He asks nothing of us that He does not first do.

51 IBC 1084.8
52 MB 113.3. Emphases supplied.
Justification spans the full dimensions of salvation, as does all other words used to describe this multifaceted reality of who God is towards sinners. When used with the word "corporate," justification refers to the initial dimensions of what the word means. These first aspects, being part of His initiative, the foundation He has laid in Jesus Christ, include the following accomplishments.

Through Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection, the race was encircled by His human arm and redeemed, the gulf between God and man was fully bridged, the penalty/consequence of sin was demonstrated and exhausted, humanity was manifested restored to God's image and His right hand, and sin and death were overcome. God can look at His Son sitting beside Him, and say, "Humanity has been restored to righteousness and life." This corporate statement is the justification to life.

The very life or continuing existence of the human race, though sinful, is justified in a way that is compatible with His unchanging justice. This should never be minimized. Never is such a gift called by inspired writers something that is "merely" provisional. The price to keep an unrepentant sinner alive for this life is identical to the price paid for the repentant sinner to spend eternity with God, the life of God Himself poured out in Jesus Christ. The word "provision" is used because it accurately describes what God did, He "saw beforehand" the need, and supplied the solution, from the foundation of the earth.

Faith is reckoned by God to be righteousness. Because of what Christ has done as the head of the human race, God can plant the seed of this reality in each heart, and then speak of the reality of what He has begun. It is not the end of the process, but it is the beginning. And it is real, not fiction. He knows that it is only by faith that faith is

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53 SBC 1078.1; PP 184.2; 1SM 340.1; 1SM 343.2 (These last two references are from Manuscript 50, 1900, "Christ Our High Priest.")
54 Ephesians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:8.
awakened, just as it is by love that love is awakened. So what He accomplished for all in Jesus Christ is justification to life. What He has begun for each sinner can only be thwarted by unbelief, the refusal to respond to what He has done and still does in reaching out to each. When the seed of faith sprouts, He can likewise call that righteousness.

What more is necessary on His part than to build a bridge to humanity in Himself, keep sinners alive justly, and enable each of them to respond to Him from the heart? Again, the evangelistic potential of this Bible truth is largely untapped. How many struggle with the doubt that God included them in His plan, in what He did in Jesus Christ. How many fail to respond to Him because they have an unconscious or partially conscious sense of their unworthiness disqualifying them from His favor. He has given us in the gospel the key to open this barrier. Each sinner can exclaim, "I was in His plan! He has a place for me! He poured out the treasures of heaven for me! Before I needed Him, He saw my need, and gave me Jesus. How can I refuse such love!"

Corporate Justification in 2 Corinthians 5

Paul in 2 Corinthians 5 speaks unequivocally of God's universal accomplishment "in Christ" in legal terms, wrapped in a relational context. From the constraining "love of Christ" (5:14), through the "reconciliation" He is achieving (5:18, 19), to the received "grace of God" (6:1), this is no purely legal act on His part. The law that defines it flows from His heart, describing who He is at His very core. Let's consider the extent of this

55 DA 22.1
56 Romans 4:3, 5, 9, 22
accomplishment in breadth (who all are included), in depth (what was accomplished), and in length (how far does this go).57

Paul uses universal terms to describe the breadth. From the double "all" in 5:14, repeated singly in 5:15, to the "no man" in 5:16, and "the world" of 5:19, Paul shows an inclusiveness in Christ's death and reconciliation that excludes no one, and therefore demands of all ("they which live") a new motivation of living--"not henceforth unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (5:15). If His love and grace are not universal, then the appeal and demand that flow out of His salvation act are likewise limited. Paul sees no limit to these foundational realities. He was empowered by the Spirit to convey to everyone he met that they were included. This was the heart of his evangelistic effectiveness.

Paul describes a similar expanse in the depth of what was accomplished. "All died" (5:14).58 This then was a corporate death, in a representative Head.59 More than taking simply our sins to the cross, He took us there. That is, He did something at the cross to the flesh that we all share that teaches us to view no man from that perspective (5:15).60 Paul's paradigm elsewhere consistently pits the Spirit against the flesh.61 Thus

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57 This is an attempt to measure more adequately "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height ... [of] the love of Christ" (Ephesians 3:18, 19). While these first three measurements are explored here, we can leave the height to this quote, which touches on both space and time dimensions: "The truth we have set before us for the past few years, is immense in its importance, reaching into heaven and compassing eternity." (PH002 25.2) [November 23, 1892; Letter 22, to O. A. Olsen, General Conference President]

58 ASV (Grammatical details in the Greek are taken from the Textus Receptus.) Using the same second aorist verb to describe the death of all that he used for the death of Christ, Paul leaves little room to see the universal death other than that in which all sin was dealt with, and thus all sinners. (See 1 John 2:2.)

59 That Christ is the head, not just of the church (those who acknowledge His headship), but of the entire human race, is shown by multiple evidences (1 Corinthians 11:3; 15:22, 45; Colossians 2:10; see also HP 13.3; UL 195.2).

60 Paul's view ("know" in this verse, using eido) echoes Jesus' words to Nicodemus. Only as we are born of the Spirit can we see (eido) these heavenly realities (John 3:3). Paul describes here and elsewhere the basis of the process leading to such birth. For example, Jesus "condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3), clearly the flesh of all humanity (8:2). This accomplishment severed sin and the flesh from "the world" (John 1:29), enabling a new identity.
"the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" began something for every human being in bringing freedom from "the law of sin and death"--those things which separate His creatures from Him.

The reconciliation of the world reached its defining act at the cross, because "God was in Christ" (5:19), and there He "made Him to be sin for us" (5:21). His success in being "obedient unto death" assured He was dying for our sins, not His. But this condemnation that resulted in His (our) death was not the only thing that happened. He also revealed faith and love (the heart of being "obedient") that effectively manifested the righteousness (justice) of God that showed Him to be both righteous (just) and the justifier of the sinner. Thus Paul could affirm that in this act of reconciling the world, God also is "not imputing their trespasses unto them" (5:19). The resurrection affirmed His success in taking our condemnation and nailing it to the cross in Himself. He not only "died for all"--He "rose again" for all (5:15).

Paul weaves into this description of the gospel its intent--the length to which its accomplishments reach--and the implied limits the human response can place upon it, in regards to that individual's experience of it. God's goal in giving to the extent described is

61 See for example Romans 8:4-6, 9, 13; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 3:3; 4:29; 5:16, 17; 6:8; Philippians 3:3. He follows Jesus in this (Matthew 26:41; John 3:6; 6:63).
62 Romans 8:2, 3. This universal freedom is not at the level of the new birth, but is akin to conception, the origin point where a new existence/identity begins unconditionally, totally without the will of the individual. We are probing both the legal terms that describe this, and the historical event that accomplished it. One description of this foundation, expressed in freedom terms, is the third sentence of DA 466.4. "Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve." The verb "made free" (eleutheroo) in Romans 8:2 is used in its seven New Testament occurrences to describe the entire process of being freed from sin, the flesh, and death.
63 The participle "reconciling" in 5:19 is present tense. In that process the cross stands as an accomplished act ("made" in 5:21 is aorist). Paul describes elsewhere Christ's being made sin as when He "condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3; aorist), and was "made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13; aorist).
64 Philippians 2:8.
65 Romans 3:21-26
66 Present tense.
67 This is a core meaning of Colossians 2:14.
to draw sinners into similar selfless giving, living "not henceforth ... unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (5:15).

- The process has begun for each (thus they "live"), but what happens if one does not want to move along with it, to build on the foundation God has laid in Christ, the foundation on which one's very existence currently rests?

- The gospel teaches us to see all others through the eyes of the Spirit, not "after the flesh" (5:16). What if one refuses to receive that perspective, and/or keep it to the end?

- Those who grasp the reconciling act of Jesus are thereby commissioned to share the news of what they have received, "the ministry," "the word of reconciliation" as "ambassadors for Christ" (5:18-20). What happens if one does not give what he was given?

- The destiny of the plan is this--once again being "made the righteousness of God in Him" (5:21). What if one resists the process to that goal, intensely practical in its workings?

- Perhaps the all-inclusive picture--true in its seed form, revolutionary in its birth, but awesome in its fullness--is that "in Christ" each is a "new creature"--"all things are become new" (5:17). What if one still loves the old, and finds some aspect of the new unacceptable to him?

Paul's warning is clear--Christ and he ("workers together") "beseech" each and all to "receive not the grace of God in vain" (6:1).

In the heart of our passage, wrapped in explicit words of reconciling, we find the strong negative affirmation of the negative--of how God is not handling our negative
condition—"not imputing their trespasses unto them." Here two negatives indeed make a positive. "The world" is "dead in trespasses," because of the first Adam, as the cross alone could reveal. But God "in Christ" is "not imputing their trespasses unto them." Consider the verb (logizomai) and the noun (paraptoma). Christ was "numbered with the transgressors" so that we would not be counted such without Him. He was "delivered for our offences" so that they would not be counted to us without Him.

The salvation dynamic shows how, with Jesus' being reckoned one of us, a stream is flowing from the heart of God to humanity that is described also in the positive equivalent of "not imputing ... trespasses." This positive word is "justification." This describes our being "numbered" with "the Just One." Can we see the reconciliation inherent in being thus numbered? This marvelous word "justification" occurs twice in the entire New Testament, both in adjacent chapters of Romans. The breadth, depth, and length are explicit in both locations.

Closing Observations

If what we have seen is an accurate reflection of the foundation of salvation, it must be a function of "faith which worketh by love." Paul asserts that this is the only thing that has power to overcome in this situation in which justifying grace is needed. In

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68 Compare Ephesians 2:1, 5 with the cost of "trespasses"/"sins" (trace the word paraptoma through these texts), revealed "through His blood," thus the "redemption," equated with "the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7).
69 Mark 15:28; "numbered" is logizomai.
70 Romans 4:25; "offences" is paraptoma.
71 Dikaiosis (from the same large family of words noted in Rom. 3:26, having the dik root).
73 These two verses were explored earlier in the paper. While the verb form (dikaioo, used 40 times, mostly by Paul) addresses the spectrum of the process, this noun's focused and restricted use speaks most strongly of the beginning of the process, totally in the hands of God, due to the condemned, hopeless state of all humanity. This beginning establishes the framework for the whole. That God would do this for all at the root level shows His intent for all for the entirety of their existence.
74 Galatians 5:6; see also 4, 5. Paul is explicitly excluding one's circumcised state as the solution, but extends this exclusion to "law" in general. The law as such defines the problem but does not solve it.
some fundamental sense of atonement that we must come to appreciate better, "love covereth all sins."^75 Careful observation reveals the simplicity of God's plan. He did not have to invent some new thing to solve sin. He simply had to reveal more of Himself. Faith was expressed to rekindle faith, and love for love. They will find a response in the hearts of "a great multitude."^76 They will be seen to be sufficient to solve the cosmic crisis.

God's faith,^77 revealed in the faith of Jesus,^78 is responsible for the foundational dimension of justification. When responsive human faith appears in answer to creative divine faith, another dimension of justification is realized, with broader and deeper implications for that individual. The final judgment declaration in Revelation addresses the final goal in the process. "... He that is just, let him be justified still...."^79

Let's close by asking a few probing questions about a series of Bible passages, questions that may shine a light on more of this dynamic, a justification by the faith of Jesus.

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^75 Proverbs 10:12. This clearly is for the saving of sinners, not the excusing of sin. The cross condemns sin while justifying sinners.

^76 Revelation 7:9. The freedom carried by this faith/love demands that, though all be included in the beginning of this process, not all be forced to its end (the context of Revelation 7). The failure of God to have all justified and reconciled at the end does not prevent the great controversy from being ended. His faith and love will be effective to bring it to a successful conclusion, the root of which is His righteousness, not that of all of His creatures (Romans 3:3, 4).

^77 This faith is addressed in Romans 3:3; Mark 11:22, and Habakkuk 2:4 LXX. Based on these and other evidences of faith being a divine dynamic (such as 1 Corinthians 13:7, Galatians 5:22), one must not assume each time faith is mentioned that it refers to the human response solely.

^78 Such passages as Romans 3:22, 26; Galatians 2:16; 3:22; Philippians 3:9; and Revelation 14:12 address this faith, if πιστεύειν Ιησούς is seen in the subjective genitive.

^79 Revelation 22:11 Douay Rheims Version
• Can we see in the fig-tree experience a clear reference to a justification by faith that is not at all a consequence of man's faith, but has that as its goal? "Have God's faith." 80

• Does God forgive just as He asks us to? "When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any." 81

• Does Christ's forgiveness at the cross provide us an example? "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." 82 Is this forgiveness a function of the faith described in this statement: "Christ would never have given His life for the human race if He had not faith in the souls for whom He died." 83

• Who carried the debt in the parable of the king, until the time came to "take account of his servants"? 84 Who carried the debt later in the story, and what was it called, in relation to the servant who had no sense to repent or to ask for mercy? 85 What did the king call the servant's insistence on his own ability to pay, and how could the king have such a view? 86 Did this servant ever manifest faith? Did he ever stop trusting in creature merit? Did the King's forgiveness of him last forever, and if not, what determined the loss of its eternal quality? 87 Do the positive implications of the negative conclusion show a King whose plan, from

80 Mark 11:22. Compare 11:25; Bible in Basic English. Compare other translations for this use of the subjective genitive (Douay Rheims Version, Emphatic Diaglott, Green's Literal Translation, Young's Literal Translation).
81 Mark 11:25. See MB 113.3 quoted earlier.
83 LHU 221.4. This passage acknowledges that not all will respond. But faith does not withhold because of a fear of incomplete response. His love was not stifled because of the risk of being unrequited. See DA 393.2, 830.1; 4T 188.3.
84 Matthew 18:23
85 Matthew 18:26, 27
86 Matthew 18:32
87 Matthew 18:33-35
His desire, is to forgive from His heart every one of His servants all their debts for eternity.\(^{88}\)

- Can we clearly see the opposite of justification? Can we see how "neither do I condemn thee" is justification? Is this how the individual application of the corporate "not imputing" looks?\(^{89}\) Can the act of not imputing trespasses be shown to equal justifying sinners?\(^{90}\)

- Can we find a dimension of justification that leads to repentance rather than follows it? Does forbearance and longsuffering precede or follow repentance and confession?\(^{91}\) Can one have forgiveness without forbearance, or forbearance without forgiveness?

- The faith that reveals righteousness, grace, and redemption, is intended to lead to what human response?\(^{92}\)

- What was in Jesus' look at Peter while the curses, oaths, and denials were fresh on his lips, that led to his remembering and weeping bitterly?\(^{93}\)

- If there is a corporate justification (that reaches all individuals), whose eternal justification is the inevitable result of it?\(^{94}\)

- Can we see the process paradigm in each of the "if" statements of 1 John 1:6-10? Could it be that just as in each of the "if we" statements of verses 6, 7, 8, and 10 where the "if we" action shows a following action or reality that already is in existence (rather than leading to it), so the "if we" of verse 9 is simply an evidence

\(^{88}\) Matthew 18:35  
\(^{89}\) John 8:11; Romans 5:16, 18  
\(^{90}\) 2 Corinthians 5:19; compare Romans 4:7, 8)  
\(^{91}\) Romans 2:4  
\(^{92}\) Romans 3:3, 22-24  
\(^{93}\) Luke 22:61; 2 Peter 3:9; see DA713.1  
\(^{94}\) Romans 3:3, 4; compare Revelation 15:3; 16:5,7; 19:2, Strong's #1342
of the following realities already functioning at some basic level? For sure our confession does not lead to His being faithful and just. Was He not that all along? Could the subjunctive mood of both "forgive" and "cleanse" in verse 9 simply imply that the process has not yet been finished, and its continuance is contingent upon our positive, confessing agreement? If not, what does the indicative mood of "cleanseth" in verse 7 indicate? Can cleansing by Jesus' blood occur without forgiveness/justification?

The reality of the first dimension, in the midst of the necessity of the following dimensions, can be seen in these closing statements:

While the soldiers were doing their fearful work, Jesus prayed for His enemies, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." His mind passed from His own suffering to the sin of His persecutors, and the terrible retribution that would be theirs.... Christ pitied them in their ignorance and guilt. He breathed only a plea for their forgiveness,"for they know not what they do."

Had they known that they were putting to torture One who had come to save the sinful race from eternal ruin, they would have been seized with remorse and horror. But their ignorance did not remove their guilt; for it was their privilege to know and accept Jesus as their Saviour. Some of them would yet see their sin, and repent, and be converted. Some by their impenitence would make it an impossibility for the prayer of Christ to be answered for them. Yet, just the same, God's purpose was reaching its fulfillment. Jesus was earning the right to become the advocate of men in the Father's presence.

That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that had lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God. To all, forgiveness is freely offered. "Whosoever will" may have peace with God, and inherit eternal life.95

Will you not, if any one has done you a wrong, and is too proud and stubborn to say to you, "I repent," go to the offender and say, "I love you for Christ's sake, and I forgive you the injury you have done me"? Jesus will witness and approved of this deed of love; and as you do to others, it shall be done again to you.96

95 DA 744.2 to 745.1. Emphases supplied.
96 SD 153.4