

JESUS CHRIST

**A differentiated prism or the reductionist
Logos/Rhema of God's salvation**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that JESUS CHRIST – A DIFFERENTIATED PRISM OR THE REDUCTIONIST LOGOS/RHEMA OF GOD’S SALVATION – is solely my own work and the complete references are a means of acknowledging all the quoted and committed sources.

Signed.....
Patrick Patrese Jones [32789734]

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

It was at Caesar Philippi, a city located several miles north of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus posed one of the most perplexing questions of all time: ‘Who do you say I am?’ (Matt. 16:15). Not only did Christ continue asking others this question, but many posed the very same question back to Him: ‘Who are you? They asked’ (John 8:25). Even one of the greatest prophets ever born of a woman, found himself floundering as he asked Christ, ‘Are you the one or should we look for another?’ (Matt. 11:5). There is not only an ongoing quest to know who this mystifying, elusive person known by many as Jesus Christ is, but also a quest, especially, to know how Jesus manifests Himself in the lives of people today.

On the one hand, is Jesus Christ present as divine Logos or divine Rhema in the mystical sense, in an individual person or as divine doctrinal Logos, formulated by church counsels through the ages and in the doctrinal senses, thus present in the church as the body of Christ, or is Jesus Christ only as a human being present through what has been handed down, been told and retold by his followers through the ages, or is Jesus Christ present in our lives through His acts and deeds and the events at the cross and the resurrection through the Spirit of God and the becoming of God’s kingdom in people’s lives?

This multi-pronged question may sound simplistic and innocuous to some, while to others it may sound irrelevant, complex and confusing with a chasm and tension built into the first part between the divinity and the humanity of Jesus. The question ‘Who is Jesus?’ has taken on various forms that have kept many modern followers of Jesus Christ busy. Bible readers and theologians alike are actually straddled between whether Jesus Christ is present as a divine Logos or Rhema who stays and sits on the right hand of God or whether access to Jesus Christ is through the realization and the becoming of the cross and the resurrection in the experience of people through the Holy Spirit.

1.2 Stating of the problem

Jesus has, and continues to be, understood by many in terms of concepts, ideas and symbols within any social and cultural context, whether it is of a religious nature and therefore of a Christological nature or not. To some Jesus Christ is the divine or human 'Logos' and to others He is the divine and human 'Rhema' of people's individual and communal church experiences. The age-old struggle in churches and amongst many people, of whether Jesus is the divine human Logos and divine or human Rhema, has three broad effects:

Firstly, the acts, deeds and events of the cross and the resurrection have been nullified in many people's lives and the created ego-centre or self-hood of the human person has been replaced by the Divine Jesus acting through the human person. The immediate effect is that the responsibility and accountability of the human person as a steward before the countenance of God in everyday life has been pushed aside and supplanted by the Divine Jesus Christ in the driver seat of a person's actions, deeds, thoughts, beliefs and doings. In fideistic and pietistic circles the adage is: 'Not my human created 'I' or selfhood is in the stewardship seat reconciled, affirmed and liberated through the cross and the resurrection into the real state of the kingdom of God before God's countenance, but Jesus Christ in and through me is acting directly'. Any sinful and evil actions, deeds, thoughts, beliefs and doings through the human 'I' or selfhood is supplanted by the figure of Satan or the devil.

Secondly, disregarding the power and strength of the cross and the resurrection in the life of a human person with the subsequent replacement of the created human selfhood by the Divine Jesus Christ boils down to a disregard for the guidance of the Holy Spirit [who is the substitute of the risen Christ] as the most intimate friend of the selfhood of the human person and the communities of sons and daughters of God.

Thirdly, the character and nature of Jesus Christ as the differentiated prism of God, humanity and the cosmic world in God's creation and amongst people, has been reduced through history to Reductionist concepts, words, ideas and symbols which denote and fulfill certain one-sided roles of Jesus Christ – to some He is either king, priest, messiah, prophet, healer, servant, Son of God, Son of humanity [man], teacher, concept and Logos, the Word and Rhema or Friend. The Christological philosophy of people who worked with the idea of Jesus Christ as the differentiated prism of God, humanity and the cosmic world

can be denoted by the ‘both...and’ continuum. In the whole modernity, between 1 600 and 2 000 one-sided and Reductionist Christological philosophies, which are by far in the majority, can be summarized by the ‘either...or’ continuum.

In this regard, very few theologians, church planters and church leaders have worked, in a practical sense, with the experience of Jesus Christ as differentiated prism of God, humanity and the cosmic world through the cross and the resurrection. This dissertation investigates the Christology of John Calvin and Ellen G. White, two of the very few theologians who approximated the Christological philosophy of ‘both...and’.

The symbols and concepts mentioned above do not only fulfill roles in certain Christological cultures, but they also denote certain roles and functions of the God-Man known as Jesus, and by some as the Messiah. This leads to the question that has existed for more than twenty centuries and still exists today: Is Jesus divine or is He merely an idea or a symbol of divinity? Or is Jesus merely a ‘human person’ as portrayed by Piet Schoonenberg in his book entitled The Christ? (Schoonenberg 1972:74).

1.3 Definition of terms

The words ‘**Logos**’ and ‘**Rhema**’ encapsulates the antithesis that this dissertation seeks to resolve. The phrases ‘differentiated prism’ and ‘one-sided reductionisms’ embrace the problem field that this dissertation seeks to cover.

‘either...or’: A one-sided approach that is exclusive.

‘both...and’: An all-inclusive and encompassing approach.

Holistic approach: An approach that is well-balanced and all-encompassing.

Arian: Someone who embraces the teachings of Arias who denied the divinity of Christ.

Trinitarian: Someone who embraces a belief in the Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Atonement: Reconciliation or bringing together of two estranged parties.

Imputed righteousness: Through the *imputed* righteousness of Christ, all who receive Him by faith can show their loyalty by *keeping the law* (ST 4/07/1898).

Substitute and surety: As our substitute and surety, He might overcome the prince of darkness on our behalf, and *make us victors through His merits* (RH 9/27/1892).

Sinfulness: In Him was neither guile nor sinfulness...yet He took upon Him our sinful nature (ST 7/27/1902).

Intrinsic merits of Christ: We must lay hold of the *intrinsic merits of Christ* and cease to sin (RH 6/17/1890).

Mediator: Christ communing with the Father on behalf of the fallen sons of men (White 1958:63).

1.4 Limitations imposed

The limitations imposed in this dissertation do not diverge from the general overview of Christology which has been covered. The scope of the dissertation is primarily on the revelation of the person of Christ through His multi-titles and through His divinity and humanity. The limitations imposed allows for this dissertation to cover the basic spectrum of the plan of salvation. The limitations also allow for the intention to prove the following: whether the strength of the cross and the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the 'tools' of God for reconciliation in their affirmation by the Holy Spirit, as the locus and times of Holiness and renewal in the cosmic-world and the lives of the believer have a better purpose than the divine mystical Logos or Rhema, Jesus Christ, who is emphasized by the church counsels and pietistic and fideistic folk through the ages. Notwithstanding what has already been stated, the imposed limitations of this dissertation are intended to ascertain whether Jesus Christ is a differentiated prism of God, human beings and the cosmic-world or whether He is the one-sided divine or human Logos or Rhema. Formulated in another way: Do we have a direct encounter through Jesus Christ in the 'I'-

ness or selfhood of the human person or do we have an encounter with God, human beings and the cosmic-world through the locus of holiness, the Holy Spirit?

The resolve is to emphasize that Jesus is all-encompassing of God, humanity and the cosmic-world with regard to salvation and reconciliation. Hence through the phrases 'differentiated prism' and 'one-sided reductionisms', we set a holistic approach versus a one-sided Reductionist approach i.e., our antithesis is a Christ who is all the symbols such as 'Logos', 'Rhema' and others that will later be discussed, versus the Christ who is either one of these names and or symbols at the expense of others, or that discredits or disregards the importance of others. What this dissertation does not want to do is suggest a Christology 'from above', or a Christology 'from below', or a Christology from a 'salvific' perspective. Its intention is to resolve the antithesis of a 'holistic' approach as a 'both...and' philosophy and not of an 'either...or' approach.

1.5 Justification of the project

Intrinsic merit

It is out of Christ's divine prerogative that the writer of this dissertation (hereafter referred to as the writer) is prompted to investigate the thrusts of His (Christ's) divinity and humanity with the general overview of Christology as a base. From the beginning, Christ was a problem for Lucifer (Satan before he fell) in heaven. Christ's authority and hence, His nature, seemed to be questioned. In the desert where Jesus was tempted, Ellen White points out that the first challenge that the devil posed for Christ was for him to display His divinity in order to prove that He was the Messiah (White 1945:31). It is this challenge that moved the maddened mob at His crucifixion to cry out that He should save Himself if He is the Son of God!

For they said, '...if He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him...the rulers derided Him and said, if He be the Son of God let Him deliver Himself.' (White 1945:59-60).

Theologians, circular minds, religious leaders and politicians, find Him both controversial and fascinating. Christians of various churches are divided over who He is.

In our world today some of the most prolific writers, such as Barbara Thiering and Dan Brown, have released the most intriguing, exasperating and controversial materials that have baffled our world and made people enquire in new terms, as to who Jesus really is.

This quest, to know who He is and to ascribe His true position in the believer's life and in His universe, is the primary motive that prompts the writer to engage in this research.

1.6 Materials and sources

Some of the major sources consulted are as follows:

Books by Ellen G. White: The newly released volumes known as Spirit of Prophecy Library, Volumes 1, 2 and 3; five volumes of what is known as the conflict series which are Desire of Ages (1948); Patriarchs and Prophets (1958); Prophets and Kings (1943); The Acts of The Apostles (1911) and The Great Controversy (1990). Some have noticed a significant metamorphosis in White's writing style since her first works, namely Spiritual Gifts (1945) and Early Writings (1945) which were also consulted during this research.

Ellen G. White worked tediously in building a huge library of her own. She employed secretaries to copy, correct, check and compile her work. According to Webster (1992:63-65), White's writings are currently being investigated by various scholars and they continue to inspire and invite scholastic tides, particularly within the ranks of the Seventh-day Adventist movement.

Books on and by John Calvin: The Five Points of Calvinism (1980) – by Edwin H. Palmer; Calvin's Institutes (1989) – by Hugh T Kerr, the editor; Institutes of the Christian Religion (2001) – by John Calvin, and translated by Henry Beveridge; Calvin – A Biography (1995) – by Bernard Cottret; Calvin's Ecclesiastical Advice (1991) – by Calvin and translated by Mary Beaty & Benjamin W. Farley; and Calvinism (1940) – by A. Dakin

Calvin certainly did not always have easy access to good materials and libraries. To the writer it appears to be due to the instability of the religio-political climate in which Calvin found himself. He is believed by some to have not had a great volume of his personal books. While in Geneva, it is assumed by some that Calvin relied on his own collection of source materials (Lane 1999:5).

With an understanding of the above, the writer quoted most of the information relating to this dissertation from two books, namely: Calvin's Institutes by Hugh T Kerr as the editor; and Institutes of the Christian Religion written by John Calvin and later translated by Henry Beveridge. This huge volume comprises of 'book first', 'book second' and 'book third'. The other main source used with regard to Calvin, is Edwin H. Palmer's The Five Points of Calvinism. A wide range of materials as may be seen in the Works consulted chapter, have been consulted and employed in this dissertation. Hence, credit is given to the authors of those materials which have helped form this dissertation.

1.7 Structure of the dissertation

The introduction of this dissertation presents a brief summation of what other sources have ushered with regard to the question of who Jesus is. The problem we seek to resolve; the justification of this dissertation; the definition of some terminology and the main source materials employed, are presented in this chapter.

Since the problem statement is crucial for a good dissertation, chapter two will identify this problem from the grass roots level and will show us the turbulent tides it has encountered through the early centuries of the Christian church. The Aftermath of the early Christian church was a string of one Word Symbols, or titles for Jesus.

The problem of embracing only one Word title for Jesus is also explained in chapter three. In contrast to the One-sided Word Christologies described in chapter four, an example of some symbols of the Word that inclusively describe in part, who Jesus really is, is presented. Since this dissertation has a holistic approach, it is paramount for the investigation to consider a religious figure that embraces or represents a Christology that denotes holism. This is covered in chapter five.

It is in chapter five, where the writer, out of necessity, is prompted to devote a number of pages exploring White's Christological conviction. In this chapter the writer uncovers White's perception of the great conflict between good and evil. Retrospectively, the writer absorbs White's assumption and perception of the person of Christ. This chapter also looks at how Christ's role and function is perceived by White. During this research, the way she used the various Word symbols of Christ, who is the over-arching prism of the

Almighty God, was found to be of particular interest. White also provides practical, theoretical knowledge of how Christ occupies the believer's life, the world and God's universe.

As in chapter five, chapter six presents the exposition of the Christology of John Calvin. In chapter seven the Christology of White is compared to that of John Calvin. A table of data that illustrates how many different types of Word symbols and how many times those Word symbols are mentioned by both White and Calvin are presented. Chapter eight will present the conclusion of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2: THE PROBLEM OF TRADITIONAL CHRISTOLOGY

2.1 The person of Jesus Christ regarding His divinity and humanity

Since the beginning of Christianity, Jesus Christ has always been understood on the basis of the prevailing ideologies and symbols of the existing culture. The early Christians proclaimed the good news on the premise of the way that the Jewish people expected the Messiah to come. Pelikan is among those who believe that the Christian tradition and culture had precedence over the Holy Scriptures and actually moulded the early believers' perceptions about who Jesus was.

According to Pelikan, Jesus was Jewish. Therefore, any attempt of 'understanding and interpreting His message...' must be done with the understanding that those messages 'took place within the context of Judaism, and it is likewise there that any attempt to understand His place in the history of human culture must begin' (Pelikan 1999:11). Like Pelikan, Mark D Roberts goes back to the dim-mist of time into Judaism and unpacks Jesus' first name, which was given by the angel in the Gospel book of Matthew, and which in the Aramaic version, is Yeshua (Roberts 2002:14).

The angel had explained the significance of that name, for it meant, Saviour. Because of this name, Jesus was heralded as 'The Anointed', 'Saviour of Israel!'. The heathen writers recognized this mystifying figure and called Him 'a certain Christ' whose life was manifest in the time of the ruling of Tiberius, approximately from 14 AD to 47 AD (Warfield 1980:5).

Shortly thereafter, people of Hellenistic background, in order to acquire a name that could be accepted universally, used different connotations to refer to Jesus, rather than their Jewish name of Saviour (Little 1934:23). Through the journey of time, the name 'Jesus' assumed the role of a common name and Christ 'The Anointed' acquired the role of a second common name. The piling and stacking of names and titles onto each other such as the name 'Christ' onto that of 'Jesus', resulted in a process of addition of slightly new and different dimensions with regard to Jesus' role and function.

The writer's view is that there is, and there was, absolutely nothing wrong with the process, that continued unabatedly in later centuries, whereby names were piled and stacked onto the one of 'Jesus' because it was actually an expression of Jesus' role and function as the overarching prism of God's salvation. The real problem arose when people tended to set a name and title, directly in opposition to another name or title, thus departing from a 'both...and' experiential philosophy.

With the evolution of the Christian movement – or the church through the ages as it is called by the majority of theologians, leaders of churches and church bureaucrats – various individuals developed various concepts. Two main problems emerged time after time in the early history with regard to the 'Logos' concept. First, this concept was used differently by people of the Greek and Roman societies in the time of Jesus. It continued to be filled by and propped up with different philosophies that were contextually and episodically in use in the early years. Struggles as to how and in what sense, and even where and when, Jesus is divine and or human, emerged very early.

A little later, these controversies were somewhat 'quelled' by the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451, and for 'subsequent generations' remained 'normative' (Wong 1984:27). The immediate tool at people's disposal was the contextual and episodic reflection about the essence of the divinity and humanity of Jesus born out of and set in people's experience. One of the many clues and ideas to bring the relationship between the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and especially the struggle between the two, to a meaningful closure was found in the diversified use of the Logos concept. Through the centuries, the struggle about the relational essence [substance, natures, etc.] of the divine and human side of Jesus evolved into a struggle about which side has the actual initiative and thus which essence, substance or nature has the active priority.

Today the church remains divided by what is traditionally known as the 'Eastern' and 'Oriental'. The 'Eastern' can be classified as the Patriarchates of old, known as Alexandria, Constantinople, Jerusalem and Antioch. 'Oriental' refers to the big five Churches of old, namely Ethiopia, India, Syria, Armenia and Egypt. The breach between the two occurred during the fifth and the sixth centuries.

The cause of the breach was due to a disagreement between the Eastern and Western sides of the Church regarding the relationship between the divinity and humanity of the dual natures of Christ that transpired at the Council of Chalcedon (451) (Gregorios, Lazareth, Nissiotis 1981:viii-x). The church was divided over mainly the difference in the understanding of the term 'hypostatic'. Traditionally this term implied that there was only a single hypostasis, which was the closest term the church fathers could find nearest to our contemporary term 'person'. According to the church of old, the hypostasis was united with Jesus' humanity. The breach was embedded in the Church's failure to clearly and formally define the mode in which this unification occurred (Hanson 1982:2).

Secondly, different names and titles were used to describe Jesus' role and function after His life and work in Palestine came to an end through His cross, and a new continuation through His resurrection by God's Spirit, which developed through the centuries from a small and diversified Christian movement – traditionally called the Church – in the initial years – into a broad diversified Christian movement that finally covered the whole world. Theologians insist on naming and limiting the diversified global Christian movement to either the Church with a capital letter or the total number of churches designated by a small letter. The way in which we use the phrase 'broad and diversified Christian movement' implies that the so-called Church or totality of churches are but one minor part of God's kingdom which is as wide and deep as the sum-total of the universe.

Since its infancy, this movement has indicated that it cannot not be contained within the bounds of Judah nor within the forms, beliefs, tradition and culture of Judaism (Macquarrie 1991:28).

With the rolling of time and the evolution of the Christological quest, various views as to who Christ is have emerged. Conflicts that took the form of intellectual sword battles occurred from AD 320 until AD 451. Although not always directly over the person of Jesus, the conflict has always been Christological in nature.

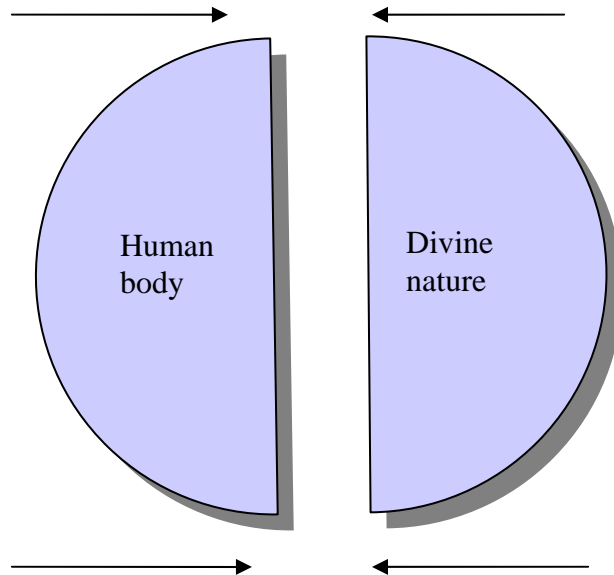
In Europe another conflict was caused by Aristotle's rediscovery. A later conflict was that of the Reformation (Hanson 1982:1). At this point, it is important that we recap some significant points:

- The first ‘major decisions’ to interpret the meaning of the Christology contained in the New Testament, happened in the early centuries.
- The New Testament emphasized Jesus’ Messiah-ship and that the ‘post-biblical generations’ or sub-apostolic followers and early Christians after the Apostles, reflected seriously on the aftermath of that emphasis - particularly on how the provider of Salvation was or is ‘related’ to the one who brought Salvation to them. The two-pronged question that disturbed the early Christians was: ‘Is Jesus Christ our Saviour, identical with God, or is He some kind of semi-god? And if Jesus Christ is divine, how is this divinity related to His humanity?’ (Schwarz 1998:137).

Three inadequate views regarding the Person of Jesus Christ led to the Council of Chalcedon in the year 451. These were: Apollinarianism, Nestorianism, and Monophysitism.

2.2 Apollinarianism

Apollinaris was a bishop in Laodicea in approximately AD 361. According to him, Christ’s one person was a composite of a human body but not a human mind or spirit. On the other hand, Grudem maintained that the spirit and mind of Jesus were from God’s divine nature (Grudem 1994:554). This view is represented in Figure 1.



(Grudem 994:554)

Figure 1. Apollinarianism

The leaders of the church at that time rejected Apollinaris' view. The former believed that it was the whole human being that needed salvation. They maintained that it was not just the human body but also the human spirit [or soul] and mind that needed salvation.

Furthermore, those church leaders reasoned that certainly Christ had to be fully human if He was the Saviour of the world. In substantiation they made reference to Hebrews 2:17.

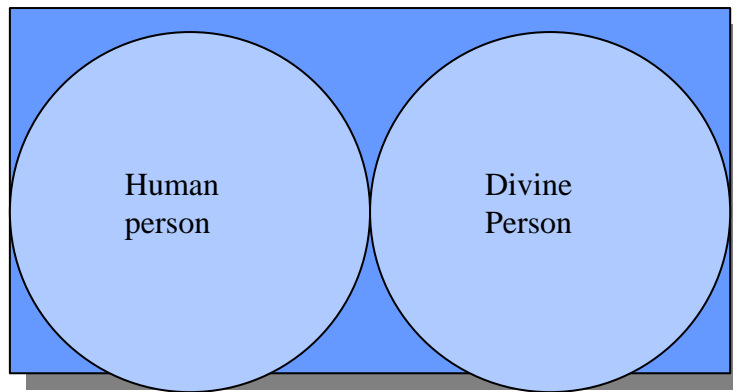
Various church councils debated over the divisive view of Apollinaris. From the Council of Alexandria in AD 362 to the Council of Constantinople in AD 381, the church rejected Apollinaris's theory of the divinity and humanity of Jesus.

2.3 Nestorianism

Unlike Apollinaris' view of the single-natured person, the doctrine known by some to be that of Nestorius taught that there were two separate persons in the one body of Christ.

There was the human person that co-existed with the divine person. The figure below illustrates what some believe to be Nestorius' concept of the person of Christ.

(Grudem 1994:555)



(Grudem 1994:555)

Figure 2: Nestorianism

Although not with absolute certainty, some believe that Nestorianism teachings were propounded by Nestorius, a famous preacher at Antioch. From AD 428 he was the Bishop of Constantinople. The idea of two persons, the divine and the human, in the one body of Jesus, did not find fertile ground in the minds of the majority of the main church leaders of that time. They could not conceptualize a plurality or a duality of individuals in the single human body of Christ. Hence Nestorius was condemned as a heretic and banished from his post of bishopric (Grudem 1944:555).

2.4 Monophysitism

The main teacher of this view was Eutyches [AD 378 – 454]. Eutyches lead a monastery at Constantinople. His view was the opposite of that taught by Nestorianism. The terminology Monophysitism is derived from the Greek word, *monos*, 'one', and *physis*, 'nature'. Eutyches was apposed to the premise of the doctrine that the two natures of Christ co-existed as fully human and fully divine. Instead Eutyches taught that Christ's human nature was taken up and absorbed by His divine nature, so that the end result was neither divine nor human, but rather some new mixture of a third kind. In an attempt to explain the meaning of this view, Grudem illustrates by saying: "Eutychianism can be seen if we put a drop of ink in a glass of water: the mixture resulting is neither pure ink nor pure water, but some kind of third substance, a mixture of the two in which both the ink and the water are changed."

(Grudem 1994:556)

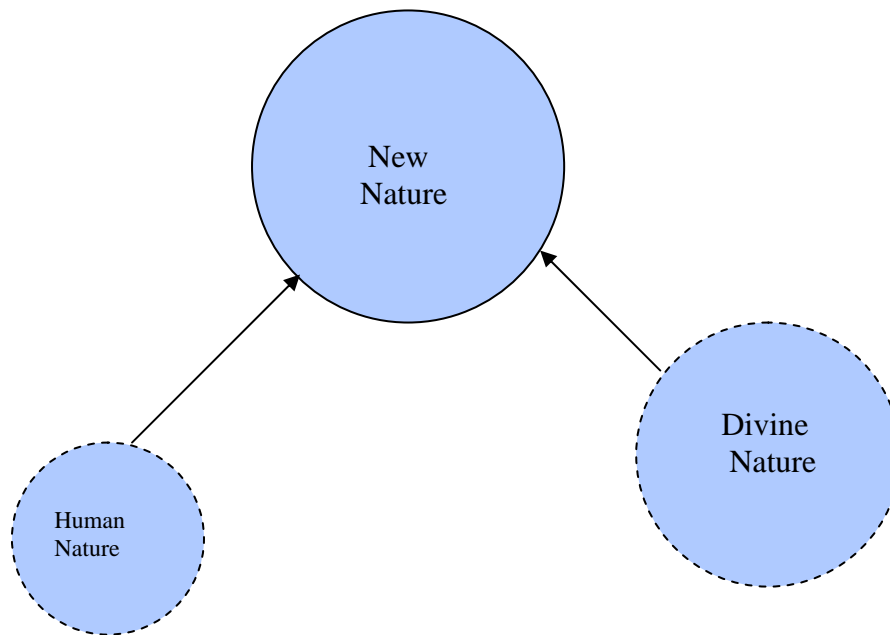


Figure 3: Eutychianism

2.5 The Chalcedonian decision

The resulting statement against Apollinarianism, Nestorianism and Eutychianism was the following:

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; *con-substantial [co-essential] with the Father according to the Godhead, and con-substantial with us according to the Manhood*; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only begotten, to be acknowledged in *two natures, in-confusedly, unchangeably, invisibly, inseparably*; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather *the property of each nature being preserved*, and concurring in *one Person* and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has been handed down to us.

(Grudem 1994:558)

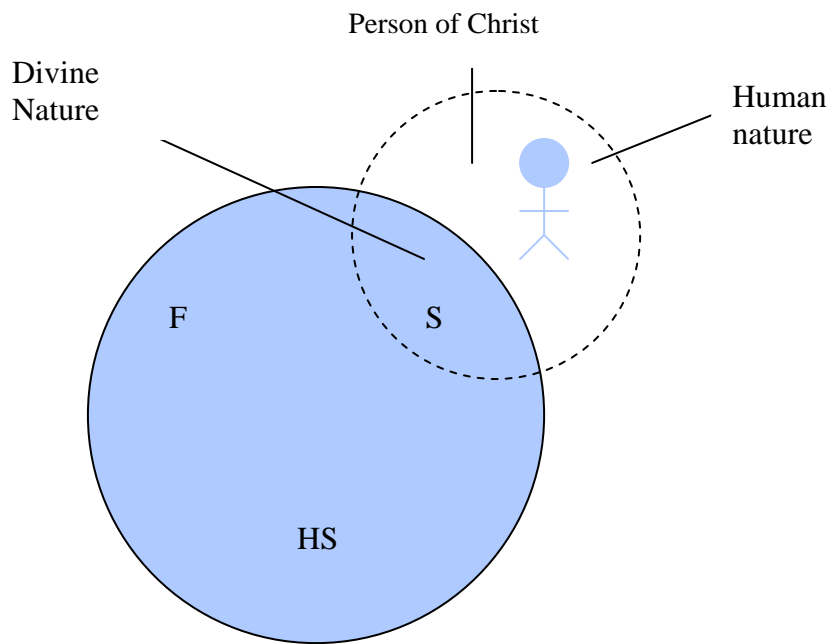


Figure 4: The Chalcedonian decision

2.6 The Chalcedonian problem

A general survey of materials encountered by the writer during this research, regarding the Chalcedonian Decision, may provide the student of Christology or an interested enquirer with a sense of a ‘breakthrough’ in the resolve of who the Person of Jesus is.

However, this dissertation concedes to the acknowledgement that the Chalcedonian Council’s decision was received and conceived, intellectually and spiritually different from one individual to another and from one bishop to another. In actual fact, there was even a difference in each individual’s reception of the traditional formula in relation to its implementation and proclamation (Grillmeier 1987:7).

In the recesses of various individual’s consciousness there resounded a sense of yet more questions, that seem to declare the ‘famous resolve’, [better known as the Chalcedonian Statement] to be insufficient in quenching the insatiable thirst of knowing and stating fully and adequately, without contradiction, who Jesus is.

This dissatisfaction, of not being able to exhaust the vast and endless depths of Christ's mysterious being, gave rise to one-sided word Christologies and other Ideologies with regard to who Jesus is. It is with regard to the aftermath of the Chalcedonian Statement, that the writer now looks at various one-sided word Christological titles that were used to refer to the Person of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 3: ONE-SIDED WORD CHRISTOLOGIES OF THE SYMBOL OF THE WORD

3.1 The word symbol in the Rhema Church

One of the most popular Pentecostal churches in our world is the Rhema Bible Church. This charismatic church, has organized itself on the fundamental teachings and doctrines of Kenneth Hagin. In addition, a significant amount of the teachings of Copeland are encapsulated. According to the latter and the former, 'The Logos of God becomes in the mouth of the believer the Rhema of God.' According to this teaching, the believer's utterances will have the result of whatever the believer confesses. When the believer confesses his/her faith, they actually take 'a hold' of the authority of God. This is called exercising the believer's rights (Clark 1983:1-5). Religious organizations such as the Rhema Church emphasize one word titles such as 'The Word' or 'Rhema' of God. Hence other Christological titles of Christ are rarely mentioned and the believers of this movement may often conceive Christ's person as mainly, if not entirely, 'The Word' of God.

Sometimes similar churches and other Christian organizations find themselves victims of a one word title of who Jesus Christ is. For our study we have considered just a few one-sided Word symbols to illustrate how those one word titles have been employed by other Christians and theologians at various points of time in our world.

3.2 Some one-sided Christologies

Jesus as prophet

In 1982 John Weis published his works entitled: 'Jesus' Proclamation of the Kingdom of God. In this publication Jesus is identified as a prophet of eschatology. This view continued to be purported by other Theologians such as Rudolf Bultman, Gunther Bornkam and Albert Schweitzer (Haight 2000:60-61).

Jesus the teacher

When one considers the amount of material that exists in the bible regarding Jesus' teachings, it is inevitable that one may naturally regard Him as a teacher. Even Crossan who does not identify Jesus in the framework of the traditional Hebrew Scriptures, is able to conclude through his social, secular and matrix of culture, that Jesus was a philosopher and an itinerant sage (Haight 2000:67).

Jesus as healer

Based on historicity and especially the biblical records, there is an enormous amount of evidence that attests to the evidence that Jesus Christ healed, exorcised demons and performed many great deeds that were extraordinary. According to Haight, Vermes portrays Jesus as an inerrant holy man or Hasid who exorcised, healed and taught. Haight also says that Schillebeeckx perceives as part of the Jesus substance, His 'miracle tradition' (Haight 2000:72-73).

Jesus as liberator or Saviour

According to Haight, Jesus as liberator or Saviour has had continual application on the basis of the experience during Easter. Haight further states that the notion of salvation is the underlying factor of the New Testament.

3.3 The problem with one-sided Christologies

A glance at the already stated one-sided Christologies does not necessarily pose a misrepresentation of who Jesus Christ is. Evidently, Christ's personhood is included in all those one word Christologies. As we have already stated in our introduction, the problem of one-sided Christologies becomes real and existent when one word symbol of Jesus Christ is emphasized in opposition to or in contradiction to the other so as to cause the inferiority or non-coexistence of the other. Another problem with one word Christologies is that they may create an incomplete perception of who Christ is to the individual believer and hence a Christ that is non-relevant and non-satisfactory may be embraced.

This tragedy has led to some of the greatest disappointments of seekers who seek for a Christ who has been proclaimed by many as the one that is able to fulfill all human needs. If an individual person is bound by the title of Jesus as for instance 'The Word of God'

only, that person may not easily conceive a Christ who is known as ‘Liberator or Saviour’, who is able to save to the uttermost, everyone that has become enslaved by sin and some of life’s captivities.

CHAPTER 4: THE HOLISTIC CHRISTOLOGIES OF THE SYMBOL OF THE WORD

Jesus is not only either of the one-sided word Christologies. To restrict Him to any one of the symbols or words is to rob Him of His non-static, dynamic nature! For it is in His multi-dimensional roles that Jesus fulfils and continues to occupy our lives and the universe. It is only in His multi-faceted spheres and dimensions that we discover His ever-flowing and all-encompassing meaning and function to all forms of life.

It is with the view of a holistic approach, the view of a Christ of all the titles above and those below, and all those ever mentioned and those never yet mentioned, that He may be conceptualized and internalized.

- To the sinner, He is the *Priest*;
- To the defenseless condemned sinner, Jesus is the perfect *Judge*;
- To the devoid, formless and without life, Christ is the *Creator*;
- To the lawless and confused, He is a Founder and *Law Giver*;
- To those who are enslaved and poverty-stricken Jesus is *King of Kings*;
- To hopeless dying sinners, Jesus is the *Messiah*;
- To those who want to know God, Jesus is *The Image of God*; and
- He is The Great *I AM*. The title *I AM* to the individual person may be as follows:

I AM He the Christ – meets our need for a Divine Saviour, who is also human (iv. 26);

I AM the Bread of Life – meets our soul-hunger (vi. 35);

I AM the Light of the World – meets our darkness (viii. 12);

I AM the Door of the Sheep – meets our homelessness. (x. 7);

I AM the Good Shepherd – meets our helplessness (x. 11);

I AM the Resurrection and the Life – meets our death (xi. 25);

I AM your Master and Lord – meets our dependence (xiii. 13);

I AM the Way, the truth, and the Life – meets our need for salvation (xiv. 6);

I AM the True Vine – meets our need for union with Himself (xv. 1)

I AM Jesus of Nazareth – meets our need for a human Saviour, Who is also Divine (xviii. 5);

I AM identified as Lord with the covenant name of Jehovah in the Old Testament' (Hodgkin 1907:228).

At this point we shall devote a great deal to the discovery of the ethos of Ellen G. White's Christology. For our study we will consider the subject of sin and the law, versus our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, His work on earth and in heaven and the culmination of His final return and restoration of planet Earth. As we expose White's basic Christological fundamentals, it is expedient that we observe her understanding of the nature of Christ before He came to our planet, after He had assumed our flesh and after the resurrection. Also of prime interest to our search to resolve the problem statement, should be the manner in which White deals with the subject of sin, the law and Christ's work in the life of the believer. The other vital point to be considered in an attempt to answer our multi-pronged problem statement is the manner and multiplied times White employs the symbol word titles of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Once we have studied White's Christology, we move on to chapter six and do a similar investigation of the Christology of John Calvin. After having investigated both Calvin's and White's Christologies, we will consider the problem statement again in an attempt to find an answer.

CHAPTER 5: ELLEN G. WHITE'S CHRISTOLOGY

Ellen White's Christology is mainly focused on the Christology from above. This concept has its foundations in the New Testament where the Hellenists propounded the concept of a divine pre-existent Logos, who is the Son of the Almighty God garbed in the flesh of humanity. This ideology was proclaimed by the Apologists of the second century and later in the third century by remarkable theologians of that time such as Tertullian, Irenaeus and Origen. These men put forth their arguments in order to assert that Christ was fully human and had a soul and spirit. Their views were basically founded on the common world perception of the Middle Platonist or Stoics, of that time. The Christology from above found its inauguration in the 'Logos-flesh' doctrine of Alexandria which had its origins with the Laodician man known as Apollinarius. In the fourth century the concept of a Christology from above received approval from Athanasius and in the fifth century by the Alexandrian, Cyril. It is the 'Logos-flesh Christology' with the personification of the humanity of Christ that renders the present day Catholic Church's base (Hodgson 1971: 61).

5.1 Sin and the law vs. Jesus Christ our redeemer

5.1.1 Origin of sin

Sin –Ellen White's starting point - from above

Sin, in White's perception, originated in heaven with 'one' that was second to Christ in honour. This spiritual being that she calls Lucifer, perverted the freedom which God had granted to all His creatures. This was, and continues to be, the freedom of choice in worshipping, obeying and doing God's biddings. While White finds no difficulty in locating the individual with whom sin originated, she finds it an impossibility to explain the origin of evil in a way as to justify why it exists (White 1990:492-493). What is certain for her, is that we know with whom sin originated – it was not God, nor was God responsible for the origin of sin.

White's definition of sin

White calls sin ‘an intruder’ and says that there is only one definition for sin. That definition is embodied in the words of scripture, ‘the transgression of the law’. She adds: ‘It is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the Divine government’ (White 1990: 493-493).

5.1.2 Sin and freedom of the will

Christ and the freedom of will

White states that God created us with the freedom to choose. She believes that it is logical that every individual may choose to exercise self-will or choose to yield into temptation (White 1990:493). One important question that can be asked is: was it possible for Christ to yield into temptation? Stated differently, was Christ a real potential sinner by virtue of Him having the ability to sin?

In response to these questions we discover that Ellen White believed that if Christ did not exercise self-control or will, to endure temptation, He [Christ] could have yielded to Satan’s snares. She states “He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation” (White 1948:117).

White makes a profound comparison of the state of Adam when he was tempted by Satan, versus that of Christ when He was tempted. According to White, Christ was to a certain extent, in a more disadvantaged position than Adam was when He [Christ] was severely tempted by Satan. White believed that Christ assumed the degenerated body and mental power which had been weakened by sin for a period of four thousand years. To White, Christ’s circumstances were harsher; for it was in a wilderness, where Christ was tempted. The first Adam was tempted in a paradise while the second Adam was tempted in a desert.

Talking about Adam before the fall, White states that he had no effects of sin; his full vitalities of his mind; body and spiritual attitude were intact. Furthermore, she believed that Adam’s surroundings were that of a paradise. White states: ‘He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings’ (White 1948:117).

It is an interesting observation that White makes, especially when one is faced with the question of whether Christ did or did not have a position of advantage over Adam, when

He [Christ] was tempted. This question is relevant to every individual and seeks to know if Christ was truly a human being. If He was then was He truly like us?

We could pose further questions such as:

- Did Christ really have exactly the same nature as that of Adam?
- Could He genuinely sin? If He could, that would make Him unequal to God, since scripture points out that it is impossible for God to be tempted by sin.

The same is true that, should Jesus not have been able to sin, then He could not have been truly human. White's position seems to indicate to us that it was possible for Christ to be able to sin, since He would not allow His divinity to resist the evil. Yet a careful look at her writings may reveal an un-accentuated premise, which seems to suggest, that it was indeed *impossible* for Christ to sin since His divinity was mysteriously blended with His human nature, into one person. The following statement seems to suggest just that, 'I saw that although Jesus had taken man's nature, a power and fortitude that was God-like sustained Him and he did not depart from the will of His FATHER in the least' (White 1945:57).

From the above, we notice that White, while she perceived Christ to be both human and divine, she acknowledges that He was not exactly like us. For He was still God and hence this mysterious combination of His dual natures, made it possible for Him not to err from the will of His Father.

So yes, because He was truly human, He was truly tempted and therefore could truly yield to temptation if He so chose. On the other hand it was impossible for Him to sin since He was truly divine and divinity cannot be tempted. It suffices for White, therefore that due to divinity co-existing with humanity in the one person of Jesus, it was possible for Jesus not to sin. With this mind-set, we may now say that White's perception about Jesus is truly a representative of a 'both ... and' experiential philosophy. Christ is both truly human and truly divine. It is with that understanding that she saw Christ as a being with many diversified, functional perspectives. She named Him with an overwhelming amount of Christological titles as we will see in the remainder of this dissertation. Some of the Christological titles that White named Jesus are that of 'Empowerer' and 'Exemplar.' How these relate to the statements above is that Jesus has become our example that we

may imitate in our strife towards overcoming sin. It is also through His divine characteristics that He is able to distribute His power that can enable us to resist sin.

Christ the Empowerer

Christ according to White is able to impute His righteousness. He is able to do so since He is also divine. According to Webster, one of White's perceptions is that one of the reasons Christ came, was to empower us to follow Him in His life of Christ-likeness (Webster 1992:109).

Christ as exemplar

White states that Christ came to be our example of how mankind ought to be in this sinful world. Jesus Christ as man depended on God for power to withstand the fiercest temptations. Hence, we are urged by White to imitate Christ as our Exemplar in resisting Satan's snares. As Christ delighted to do God's will, so are we to take joy in doing the will of our heavenly Father (White 1948:24).

At this point it is fitting that we consider the problem statement that we posed at the beginning of this dissertation. We do so by considering the findings we have established with regard to White's understanding of the divinity and humanity of Jesus thus far and the Christological titles that she has thus far employed in her concept of who Jesus is. The part of our question that we may pose is how does Christ feature in the life of the individual? Has the responsibility and accountability of being a steward been replaced by the Jesus who sits on the driver-seat of the individual? What is the sinner's ability and responsibility regarding his/her state of depravity? Are we able to do something towards our salvation? What was White's view with regard to the sinner's status of depravity?

Depravity

In relation to the subject of depravity, it is clear that White, in many of her writings points out the gravity of men's depravity. 'We can do nothing, absolutely nothing, to commend ourselves to the divine favor' she said. White was against the view that some hold, that we must depend partly on ourselves and partly on God for victory over sin. In fact, she went as far as saying that those who believe that they ought to depend on being watchful and

practice certain functions or ceremonies in order to be accepted were 'in continual bondage'. She maintained that the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified, is all that will commend us to God (White 1979:38-39). White did not teach that we could be saved while we continued to abrogate the law of God. To her, we are to be vigilant and accountable stewards who must keep the law of God.

5.1.3 The law of God vs. sin

The question of man's ability to obey

White perceived God as having created man with the ability to obey His laws. She understood that man has been granted the ability to understand God's just requirements and that He expects perfect allegiance (White 1958:52-53). Therefore, according to White, mankind may voluntarily obey God. To the question, 'is mankind able to keep God's law?' White believed obedience to God is possible. This possibility of being able to keep the law of God is manifested through the exemplary life of Christ. For a better understanding of how White conceptualized the law and man's requirements to obey God, we insert a sermon preached by Ellen. G. White entitled, 'The Giving of The Law'. We do so under the sub-heading 'The Holy Decalogue'.

The Holy Decalogue

THE GIVING OF THE LAW

[Nearly all of this Manuscript had been previously released. It appears for the first time in its entirety. Text: Exodus 20:1 – 17. Manuscript 126, 1901] (White 1994:180-189)

Adam was required to render perfect obedience to God, not only in his own behalf, but in behalf of his posterity. God promised him that if he would stand the test of temptation, preserving his allegiance to the Creator during the great trial to which he would be subjected; his obedience would ensure his acceptance and favor with God. He would then be forever established in holiness and happiness, and these blessings would extend to all his posterity.

But Adam failed to bear the test. And because he revolted against God's law, all his descendants have been sinners.

God's law had once been written in the hearts of men and women. But their cherished sins dimmed and nearly effaced that writing. The impressions made by sin gradually wore away the impressions of the law.

The Lord wrought wonderfully in delivering the Israelites from Egypt. He revealed Himself to them as the living God, the Lawgiver.

The tabernacle was the dwelling-place of God upon the earth. It was divided into two parts. A veil separated the holy place from the most holy place. Here after the fall God met with man. Here the voice of God was often heard.

The cloud that guided Israel stood over the tabernacle. The glory of the cloud emanated from Jesus Christ, who from the midst of the glory talked with Moses as He had talked with him from the burning bush. The brightness of God's presence was enshrouded in the darkness of the cloud which He made His pavilion that the people could endure to look upon the cloud, as seeing Him who is invisible. This was God's plan whereby He might approach man.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes” (Ex. 19:10). They were commanded to wash their clothes. Sanctification to God admits of no untidiness or uncleanness of the body or of the clothing. Concerning those who are engaged in the service of God it is written, “Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified” (Lev. 10:3). (Ex. 19:11-13, quoted.)

The Lord gave special direction to the Israelites regarding the preparation they were to make for this occasion when He was to talk to man. That He might fill the people with awe and lead them to realize the sacredness of the declaration He was about to give them, He expressly commanded them to take heed to themselves, and not to break through the barrier placed round about the mount.

If the mount where the Lord manifested His glory and majesty, and from the summit of which the glory of the Lord appeared, was so sacred that one who merely touched it would have been punished by death, how sacred must be the law which the Israelites prepared to hear proclaimed from Mount Sinai! How can anyone treat it indifferently! Shall it be trampled upon, scorned, and derided?

In connection with religious services and our worship of God, we should consider the directions that He gave to the Israelites. All those who come into His presence should give special attention to the body and the clothing. Heaven is a clean and holy place. God is pure and holy. All who come into His presence should take heed to His directions, and have the body and clothing in a pure, clean condition, thus showing respect to themselves and to Him. The heart must also be sanctified. Those who do this will not dishonor His sacred name by worshipping Him while their hearts are polluted and their apparel is untidy. He marks the heart-preparation, the thoughts, and the cleanliness in appearance, of those who worship Him.

The Ten Commandments were spoken from Mount Sinai. With awful grandeur the King of kings, the infinite God, declared His law and enjoined obedience to it. The commands, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," are plain and positive. He, who has given life and preserves life, has the right to command and control those who are dependent on Him for every breath they draw.

The first words that God spoke were, "I am the Lord your God." By this declaration He asserted His authority to present His claims before the people. He had freed them from their bondage, and they owed their service to Him.

The first commandment is a requirement that refers to man's worship.

The second commandment prohibits man from worshipping the true God through any creature or image. It forbids the making of any image which man might try to liken to the Creator. It forbids the making of an image of any creature to represent God or to be associated in any way with the worship of God. (Isaiah 49:18-28, quoted.)

The Lord urges His supremacy. But Satan well knows that the worship of the living God elevates, ennobles, and exalts a nation. He knows that idol-worship does not elevate, but that it degrades man's ideas, by associating with worship that which is base and corrupt. He is at work constantly to draw the mind away from the only true and living God. He leads men to give honour and glory to objects that human hands have made or to soulless creatures that God has created. The Egyptians and other heathen nations had many strange gods – creatures of their own fanciful imagination.

The Jews, after their long captivity, would not make any image. The image on the Roman ensign or banner, they called an abomination, especially when these emblems were placed in a prominent place for them to respect. Such respect they regarded as a violation of the second commandment. When the Roman ensign was set up in the holy place in the temple, they looked upon it as an abomination.

The use of images by the Roman Catholic Church is anti-Christian. Those who worship them are commandment-breakers. Image worship is contrary to God's commands. The second commandment is entirely opposed to such practices. But the popes have tampered with the commandments. In all the books of devotion given to the people the second commandment is omitted. The third they call the second, the fourth the third; and the tenth they have divided into two. Thus in the place of conforming their practices of God's commands, they have altered His commandments to harmonize with their practices. To suit their worship they have taken away from and added to God's Word.

By their treatment of His Word, the popes have exalted themselves above the God of heaven. This is the reason that in prophecy the papal power is specified as the "man of sin." Satan is the originator of sin. The power that he causes to alter any one of God's holy precepts is the man of sin. Under Satan's special direction the papal power has done this very work. Although those standing at the head of the papacy claim to have great love for God, He looks upon them as haters of Him. They have turned the truth of God into a lie. Tampering with God's commandments and placing in their stead human traditions, is the work of Satan, and will divorce the religious world from God; for He declares, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me." God will fulfill this word. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). Pharaoh sowed obstinacy, and reaped

obstinacy. He himself put the seed into the soil. There was no more need for God by some new power to interfere with its growth, than there is for Him to interfere with the growth of a grain of corn. All that is required is that a seed shall be left to germinate and spring up to bring forth fruit after its own kind. The harvest reveals the kind of seed that has been sown.

When light from God, strong and convincing, came to make known the great I AM, Pharaoh was compelled to yield. But as soon as the pressure was removed, his unbelief returned, and counteracted the great light which God had given. When he refused the evidence of the first miracle, he sowed the seed of infidelity, which left to its natural course produced a harvest after its own kind. Afterward the king would not be convinced by any working of God's power.

The monarch hardened his heart, and went on from one step to another of unbelief, until the firstborn, the pride of every household, had been laid low. After this he hurried with his army after Israel. He sought to bring back a people delivered by the arm of Omnipotence. But he was fighting against a Power greater than any human power, and with his host he perished in the waters of the Red Sea.

The despisers of God's law are practicing the same sin that Pharaoh practiced. They are hardening their hearts. The voice of God is rejected for human theories, for satanic suggestions and delusions. The Holy Spirit is resisted and set aside. The iniquities of the fathers are visited upon the children; the seeds that they sow by precept and example are reproduced in their children.

The Spirit of God keeps evil under the control of conscience. When man exalts himself above the influence of the Spirit, he reaps a harvest of iniquity. Over such a man the Spirit has less and less influence to restrain him from sowing seeds of disobedience. Warnings have less and less power over him. He gradually loses his fear of God. He sows to the flesh; he will reap corruption. The harvest of the seed that he himself has sown is ripening. He has contempt for God's holy commandments. His heart of flesh becomes a heart of stone. Resistance to truth confirms him in iniquity. It is because men sowed seeds of evil that lawlessness, crime, and violence prevailed in the antediluvian world.

All should be intelligent with regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against man. He does not make man spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable man to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force man to receive truth. He leaves him free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If man resists evidence that is sufficient to guide his judgment in the right direction, and chooses evil once, he will do this more readily the second time. The third time he will still more eagerly withdraw himself from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course he will continue until he is confirmed in evil, and believes the lie he has cherished as truth. His resistance has produced its harvest. By his example he leads others to follow the same course of resistance against God.

Those who transgress the law of God are teaching their children to show disrespect for this law and to rebel against the Lawgiver. They place their children in the enemy's ranks, where they are cut off from the blessings of God's covenant and are brought under His judgments. If parents die while they are transgressors of God's law, their children will be inclined to do as they have done. By precept and example children of ungodly parents receive an education in evil-doing. When their measure of disobedience and transgression is full, God reconciles with them. Both parents and children are held accountable for their idolatry. God bears long with perverse resistance, but He will surely punish iniquity.

God announces Himself as "showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments."

Those who obey these precepts, sow seed for a bountiful and glorious harvest; for the mercy of God is shown to their children and their children's children to the third and fourth generations. This principle is of as much force today as it was when God spoke the words from Mount Sinai. The Lord loves and honors obedience now just as much as when He gave His law.

All false worship is spiritual adultery. The second precept, which forbids false worship, is also a command to worship God and Him only serve. The Lord is a jealous God. He will not be trifled with. He has spoken concerning the manner in which He should be worshipped. He has a hatred of idolatry, for its influence is corrupting. It debases the mind, and leads to sensuality and all kinds of sin.

To make an image of God dishonors Him. No one should bring into service the power of imagination to worship that which belittles God in the mind and associates Him with common things. Those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. They must exercise living faith. Their worship will then be controlled not by the imagination, but by genuine faith.

Let men worship and serve the Lord God, and Him only. Let not selfish pride be lifted up and served as a god. Let not money be made a god. If sensuality is not kept under the control of the higher powers of the mind, base passion will rule the being. Anything that is made the subject of undue thought and admiration, absorbing the mind, is a god chosen before the Lord. God is a searcher of the heart. He distinguishes between true heart-service and idolatry.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain”. Those who are brought into a covenant relationship with God are pledged to speak of Him in the most respectful, reverential manner. Many refer to God and mention His name in their religious conversation much as they would mention a horse or any other common creature. This dishonors God. By precept and example parents should educate their children on this point, lest by irreverence they grieve away God’s Spirit from their hearts and the hearts of their children.

Ministers, by carelessly introducing the name of God into their conversation, may teach lessons of irreverence. By mingling His holy name with common matters, they show that they are not spiritually-minded; for they mingle the sacred and the common. They are not living up to their holy profession. While claiming to be worshippers of God, they walk contrary to His law.

Swearing and all words spoken in the form of an oath are dishonouring to God. The Lord sees, the Lord hears, and He will not hold the transgressor guiltless. He will not be mocked. Those who take the name of the Lord in vain will find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

In a special sense the first four commandments reveal the duty of man to his Maker. These four precepts were written on the first tablet of stone.

Man has a God who is the Author of his being – a God whom he must love and obey with heart, mind, soul, and strength.

The last six commandments, written on the second tablet of stone, point out man's duty to his fellow man. He who is true to his God, loving and obeying him, will be true to his neighbor. Those who keep the first four commandments will keep the last six.

After giving the Ten Commandments, the Lord more explicitly expanded upon them, laying down the principles that should be carried out in the practical life. These specifications are called judgments, or statutes, because the magistrates were to give judgments according to them. God did not speak them with an audible voice to the Israelites, but gave them to Moses, who communicated them to the people. In several instances difficult cases had arisen, upon which Moses felt incapable of rendering a decision. He had supplicated the Lord to decide them for him. The Lord now gave general statutes that would govern decisions in these particular cases.

The Lord desired to guard the interests of servants. He commanded the Israelites to be merciful, and to bear in mind that they themselves had been servants. They were directed to be mindful of the rights of their servants. In no case were they to abuse them. In dealing with them they were not to be exacting, as the Egyptian taskmasters had been with them. They were to exercise tenderness and compassion in the treatment of their servants. God desired them to put themselves in the place of the servants, and deal with them as they would wish others to deal with them under the same circumstances.

Because of poverty, some were sold into bondage by their parents. Others who were sentenced for crimes by the judges were sold for bondage. The Lord specified that even these were not to be held as bondservants for more than seven years. At the end of that time every servant was given freedom or, if he chose, he was allowed to remain with his master. Thus God guarded the interests of the lowly and the oppressed. Thus He enjoined a noble spirit of generosity, and encouraged all to cultivate a love for liberty, because the Lord had made them free. Anyone who refused liberty when it was his privilege to have it

was marked. This was not a badge of honour to him, but a mark of disgrace. Thus God encouraged the cultivation of a high and noble spirit, rather than a spirit of bondage and slavery.

God desires Christians to respect the liberty that He has in so marvelous a manner given them. In Christ is vested the ownership of every man. Man should not be another man's property. God has bought mankind. One man's mind, one man's power, should not rule and control another's conscience. In the sight of God, wealth and position do not exalt one man above another. Men are free to choose the service of God, to love the Lord, and to keep all His commandments.

How careful God protects the rights of men! He has attached a penalty to willful murder. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. 9:6). If one murderer were permitted to go unpunished, he would by his evil influence and cruel violence subvert others.

This would result in a condition of things similar to that which existed before the flood. God must punish murderers. He gives life, and He will take life if that life becomes a terror and a menace. Mercy shown to a willful murderer is cruelty to his fellow men. If a willful murderer thinks that he will find protection by fleeing to the altar of God, he may find that he will be forced from the altar and be slain. But if a man takes life unintentionally, then God declares that He will provide a place of refuge, to which he can flee.

"He that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death" (Ex. 21:17). Thus God expressed His mind with regard to rebellious children. He made it a capital crime for children to curse or to smite their parents. And He will punish the parents, if they do not govern and control their children. How many children are lost to all virtue! How many children abuse their parents!

It was Jesus Christ Himself who gave special direction to Israel. Do these specifications testify of a Christless dispensation? Is this code or these statutes of a lower order than the statutes which are given in this age? The Lord guards the interests of His people. He gives special directions concerning the poor. How impartial are His ways! How exalted are all His requirements.

The Lord gave many other statutes or judgments, which were to be strictly obeyed. These are recorded in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus.

The Lord also specified the conditions on which his people, the Israelites, would receive the promised blessings (Ex. 23:20-33, quoted).

These promises are given on the condition of obedience. God will bless and honour those who honour Him. The living God pledges Himself by promises to those whom He lays under obligations to Himself. His people must take Him as their Ruler. They must obey the law of His government. They must not refrain from worshipping all other gods, but overthrow them utterly, thus evidencing their great abhorrence of idolatry.

After God had given Moses various laws and ordinances, He directed him to go down to the people and acquaint them with these laws. Moses was instructed to read them to the people. While in the Mount he had written them just as they had been spoken by the Son of God. "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (Ex. 24:3).

Preparation was now made for the ratification of the covenant, according to God's direction (Ex. 24:4-8).

Here the people received the conditions of the covenant. They made a solemn covenant with God, typifying the covenant made between God and every believer in Jesus Christ. The conditions were plainly laid before the people. They were not left to misunderstand them.

When they were requested to decide whether they would agree to all the conditions given, they unanimously consented to obey every obligation. They had already consented to obey God's commandments. The principles of the law were now particularized, that they might know how much was involved in covenanting to obey the law; and they accepted the specifically-defined particulars of the law.

If the Israelites had obeyed God's requirements, they would have been practical Christians. They would have been happy; for they would have been keeping God's ways, and not following the inclinations of their own natural hearts. Moses did not leave them to misconstrue the words of the Lord or to misapply His requirements. He wrote all the words of the Lord in a book that they might be referred to afterwards. In the mount he had written them as Christ Himself dictated them.

Bravely did the Israelites speak the words promising obedience to the Lord, after hearing His covenant read in the audience of the people. They said, "All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient." Then the people were set apart and sealed to God. A sacrifice was offered to the Lord. A portion of the blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled upon the altar. This signified that the people had consecrated themselves – body, mind, and soul – to God. A portion was sprinkled upon the people. This signified that through the sprinkled blood of Christ, God graciously accepted them as His special treasure. Thus the Israelites entered into a solemn covenant with God.

As representative of the fallen race, Christ passed over the same ground on which Adam stumbled and fell. By a life of perfect obedience to God's law, Christ redeemed man from the penalty of Adam's disgraceful fall. Man has violated God's law. Only for those who return to their allegiance to God, only for those who obey the law that they have violated, will the blood of Christ avail. Christ will never become a party to sin. Bearing the penalty of the law, He gives the sinner another chance, a second trial. He opens a way whereby the sinner can be reinstated in God's favor. Christ bears the penalty of man's past transgression, and by imparting to man His righteousness, makes it possible for man to keep God's holy law – Manuscript 126, 1901 (MR 900.37).

Questions and answers

Question: Does White's sermon depict the power and strength of the cross and the resurrection in the life of the person being supplanted by the divine Jesus Christ in the driver-seat and hence a disregard for the Holy Spirit?

Answer: White's sermon clearly epitomizes the true profundity of the strength and undisputable power of the cross and the resurrection. However, there is no inference of

Jesus Christ being seated in the driver's seat of the individual person and hence a disregard of the Holy Ghost.

Question: The responsibility and accountability of the human person as a steward - has it been pushed aside in this sermon? Is the human created 'I' excused for the wrong he/she does? And have the deeds, thoughts and actions through the human 'I' or selfhood been supplanted by the devil?

Answer: The responsibility and accountability of the human person as a steward, in White's sermon, has not been set aside. The human created "I" is by no means excused for the wrong he/she does. Nor are the thoughts, deeds and actions of the human "I", supplanted by the devil.

Question: Does White's sermon denote Christ's roles to be reduced to the differentiated prism of God, humanity and the cosmic world to an 'either...or' continuum or is it denoted by the 'both...and' continuum?

Answer: On the first page of the abovementioned sermon, White makes a transition of Christ's titles. At first the title "God" is mentioned. The first symbolic conception, we may have in our minds, as we read this word, "God", may lead us to perceive a reference to God the Father. As we read further we notice that the title, "God" is followed by the title "Creator", and then the title "God" again. On the same page, a direct reference of Christ as God is made. In actual fact, White interprets the immediate person of the God-head that spoke to Moses on the Mount as being Jesus Christ. She also portrays Him [Christ] as the One that spoke to Moses in the burning bush. It is in this very same sermon that White depicts Christ by the word symbols such as humanity's 'Surety', 'substitute,' 'Intercessor' and 'Redeemer.' Another transition is made by White as she makes Christ a representative of the fallen human race, in this sermon. Now, certainly her use of Christ's titles in this sermon, is indicative of her 'both... and' continuum experiential philosophy.

Question: Does White provide a direct encounter through Jesus Christ in the 'I'-ness or do we have an encounter with God, human beings and the cosmic-world through the Holy Spirit?

Answer: White provides an encounter with God, human beings and the cosmic world through the Holy Spirit. It is quiet clear in this sermon that White perceived the individual as being capable of knowing God's will through the Word of God. The Holy Spirit would mould the conforming believer who obeys God's law. In order to better understand Ellen

White’s view in this regard, her other works listed under the Works consulted chapter at the end of this dissertation, must be read.

Question: What concepts of Christ’s offices are present? (e.g. Priest, Prophet, King)

Answer: The concept of Priest, Prophet and King are all present in this sermon. White mentions in the above sermon that Christ’s people “...must take Him as their Ruler.” That is in reference to Christ’s Christological title of being the “King”. Secondly, White’s statement in the last paragraph of her sermon implies that Christ provided Himself as a substitute and offering in order to redeem fallen humanity. The context of this paragraph portrays Christ as a priest as well, since it was the work of the priest in oriental times, to present before God the victim or sacrifice on behalf of the sinful congregation. Thirdly, the concept of Christ as a Prophet may be exegetically and contextually established through the genre of the sermon, through its inference of Moses, who is a Prophet that was a type of Christ. Again this may be better supported when one understands White’s view of Moses as indeed a type of Christ.

Question: What Christological titles are there?

Answer: The Christological titles present in White’s sermon entitled “The Holy Decalogue”, may be listed as indicated in the following illustrated table of data:

Christological titles and other titles	Number of times mentioned by White in the sermon above
Author	1
Our Lord	
A Good (School) Master	
Our Judge	
The Lord	31
The Lord Our Sovereign King	
King of Kings	1
The Word of God	2
The mouth of God	
The voice of God	2
Our Lord Jesus Christ	
Law Giver	2
Jesus Christ	11

God's Son or His Son	
Creator or Maker	3
Saviour	
The living image of God	
I AM	1
The Son	1
Arm of Omnipotence	1
The Holy Spirit or Spirit of God	3
Almighty	
Ruler	1
God the Father	
Father	
God	107

Question: How does White use these titles?

Answer: White uses the Christological titles inter-changeably. At certain intervals, there is an absence of a transition that enables her audience to distinguish which person of the God-head she is referring to. On the other hand, sometimes, she deliberately and spontaneously makes a specific reference to the intended person of the God-head she desires to mention. An example may be cited when she mentions in the sermon above, the Christological title, "The Son of God". When one reads the text on which this sermon is based, the concept of God the Father, may, naturally be conceptualized. Yet, through her homiletics and exegetical ingenuity, White brings her audience to the realization that Christ is the person of the God-head referred to in Exodus 20 and the other chapters that she makes reference to in the sermon.

Comments: In the above analysis and table of data, we observe an astonishing use of multi-titles that indeed have a multi-functional purpose as they refer to Jesus Christ. White seems to be flexible in her usage of these stacked, Christological titles. However, we should not overlook the fact that while White displays a differentiated prism of God through Christ's role titles to a 'both...and' continuum she still emphasizes certain titles over others. The table of data exhibits just that fact! With an understanding of the above it is imperative for us to probe the question of how White perceived the person of Christ in a more detailed, 'spiritual-scientific' manner. There are questions that we may have for

White, such as, ‘What is the age of Christ? Of what is He composed? Is He truly God or semi-god? How did Christ exist while on earth? Was He still God or had He relinquished His divinity?’ It is with this quest in mind, born from our problem statement, that we now turn to look at the person of Christ in the Christological mind-set of White.

5.1.4 Christ – the person

Ellen G. White’s Christology bares some similarity to that of John Calvin. While there are some differences between the former and the latter’s Christologies, it is believed by some that Calvin did not develop a fuller Christology as may be anticipated.

Although White is believed by many, particularly members of the Seventh-day Adventist Movement, not to be a systematic theologian, she is attributed to have developed a very well-balanced Christology. Unlike Calvin’s Christology which tends to start mostly from below, Ellen White’s Christology begins mainly from above and somewhat from below. Having said that, the writer, does not wish to convey the ideology that Calvin’s Christology is solely Anthropocentric. There are times when Calvin’s Christology is from above, from below and from a salvific perspective. The same is true of Ellen G. White. The latter delves deep into Christ’s pre-existence and gives reasons as to why Christ assumed a lowly position. White’s writings have a great deal of Christ’s holy and lofty position contrasted to His lowly position, which He voluntarily assumed.

Before we take a look at the more detailed aspects of White’s concept regarding Christ’s divinity and humanity lets give a brief summary of some important points with regard to Christ’s divine and human natures.

White makes it clear that Christ held a position second to His Father. The nature of Christ remains a mystery for her even though she claims to have seen Him in visions on several occasions. Some points are noteworthy of her Christology:

- According to White, Christ is not two separate persons but one person with two natures mysteriously combined;
- His divinity is clothed by the garb of His humanity;
- He could not come and accomplish His redemptive work in His form of divinity;
- He divested His form of God and assumed a human form;
- Having done this, He did not give up His divinity, for He was still God;

- While on earth He could immediately differentiate right from wrong; and
- When he was tempted, His divinity flashed through. It was this mysterious combination of His divinity and His humanity that made it possible for Him to withstand the fiercest temptations. As man He could suffer death but not as God. It was therefore His humanity that died, since it is impossible for deity to die. As human He could identify with suffering sinful humanity, as God He could lift humanity to God. When He calmed the storm at the Sea of Galilee, He did not do it as God. But as a human being, He exercised His faith in God leaving an example for us to follow. Christ assumed human nature and the liabilities thereof. He was tempted at all points and bore the sins of the world. He will always retain His humanity through ceaseless ages (White 1958:641).

Christ's pre-existence

According to Ellen White, Jesus Christ has been in existence from eternity as a distinct person, who is one with His Father. Writing about Christ's pre-existence White states, 'Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He, to whose voice the Jews were then listening, had been with God as one brought up with Him' (Signs of the Times, August 29th 1900).

When we attempt to know what part of, or how much of eternity White perceives Christ as occupying in His Pre-Existence, we discover the following: 'From all eternity Christ was united with the Father...' (White 1958:440). She also writes: 'The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father'. She continues: 'Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right' (Review & Herald; April 5th 1906).

The mediator

Christ is understood by White to have been man's Mediator immediately after his [mankind's] fall. He was the only one in the entire universe that could mediate between God and fallen humanity.

In breathtaking language White writes: 'Before the Father He pleaded on the sinner's behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of interest that words cannot express. Long continued was that mysterious communing – for the fallen sons of men' (White 1958:63). White also declares: 'from everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant, the one by whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed' (Review & Herald; April 5th 1906).

Christ's two natures

Divine nature

It is the ethos of White's true understanding and connection with Christ that springs forth from her certain, and inspiring writings on the divinity of Christ. In her book Patriarchs and Prophets (1958:36), White describes in picturesque language the incidents that transpired in heaven before Christ condescended to planet Earth. White, relating the incident in heaven, says that Lucifer left his position as a covering cherub. This led God to call for a meeting with all His created beings in heaven. The purpose of the meeting, according to White, was to 'set forth the true position of His Son'. It appears from this incident that Christ's 'nature' may have been in question, since God had to explain to the heavenly hosts the true position of His Son. In graphic language White relates:

'The Son of God shared the Father's throne, and the glory of the eternal, self-existent One encircled both...Before the assembled inhabitants of heaven the king declared that none but Christ, the Only Begotten of God...to Him, as well as to God, their homage and allegiance were due. Christ was still to exercise divine power, in the creation of the earth' (White 1958:36). From the passage above and earlier in the same book, it is clear to note the following:

- That the core reason for Lucifer's rebellion was due to his jealousy of Christ and his persistent unwillingness to retreat from this erroneous position.
- God acknowledged His Son as being divine and as having the authority of God.

- Christ shared the privilege of honour, glory and worship which is God's divine prerogative.
- Christ is regarded as Creator since he had already created the heavenly hosts and was about to still create Earth.

Christ's human nature

According to White, when mankind had sinned, divinity had already conceived a plan of redemption. Christ would come and be born of human flesh.

The points of Christ's humanity that are noteworthy are:

- Christ assumed a degenerated human nature, with its weaknesses.
- Human nature was sinless. It did not have sinful propensities. For Christ is the Second Adam. As the first Adam was taintless of any sin, so was Christ also without blemish (White 1958:447). It is an interesting and vital point that White points out regarding the human nature that Christ took upon himself. Our minds are challenged to think about the miraculous assumption of divine intervention that must have caused and directed the amazing effects of Christ assuming our human nature, with its weaknesses, in its state of degeneration, yet without the sins thereof so that the end-result was a spotless, sinless human being that though in a degenerated form, reassembled the Edenic Adam.

White says: 'I saw that, although Jesus had taken man's nature, a power and fortitude that was God-like sustained Him, and He did not depart from the will of His Father in the least' (White 1945:57).

In White's Christology there is a golden thread that may be seen by a discerning student of her works: The question of His Messiah-ship and divinity. In the desert while He was tempted, the first and second challenge from the devil was His divinity. There is a repetition of the words, 'if thou be the Son of God'.

According to White, the devil tempted Christ by challenging Him to prove His Messiah-ship, by displaying His power of divinity (White 1945:31). White makes a striking parallel between the devil, when he tempted Christ in the desert and the angry mob that partook in the crucifixion of Christ. This parallel is manifested in her words when she wrote: 'The devil spoke the same words to Christ in the wilderness: If thou be the Son of God. The

chief priests and elders and scribes mockingly said, He saved others, Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross and we will believe Him... the rulers derided Him, and said, If He be the Son of God, let Him deliver Himself' (White 1945:59-60).

Quiescent divinity versus active divinity

Some of the most nagging questions to the writer are: When did Jesus exercise His divine power? Why did He use His divine power? When did He function as human? One may go on asking, how did White know when Jesus operated in His Divine nature and when did He not? Some, particularly from the Seventh-day Adventist Movement, may answer the last question by saying that she knew the different modes of His functioning due to her special prophetic gift. Yet we may continue to ask, if Jesus did engage His divine power while on earth, did He use His divine power in order to glorify Himself? Did he at anytime use His divinity in order that He may alleviate His suffering humanity? This questioning is vital, since it seeks to establish if White's Christology portrays a divinized human nature that was at a better advantage than that of the first Adam's sinless nature.

Let us look at a portion of her narrative with regard to the storm on the Sea of Galilee which Jesus calmed, as an example:

'When Jesus was awakened to meet the storm, He was in perfect peace. There was no trace of fear in word or look, for no fear was in His heart. But He rested not in the possession of almighty power. It was not as the "*Master of earth and sky*" [italics mine] that He reposed in quiet. That power He laid down, and He says, "I can of mine own self do nothing" (White 1948:336).

Through this passage, White intended to illustrate that Christ did not calm the stormy tempest of Galilee through His divinity. He calmed the storm through His absolute dependence on His heavenly Father. The first question was: 'When did Jesus use His divine power?' It appears to the writer that White sometimes portrays Christ to be in a divine mode. What this means is that at certain times Christ's quiescent divinity tends to be an activated divinity. An example of Christ zooming into His divine mode may be noted in White's passage on Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem:

'The glorious destiny that might have blessed Jerusalem had she accepted her Redeemer rose before the Son of God: He saw that she might through Him have been healed of her grievous malady, liberated from bondage, and

established as the mighty metropolis of the earth...But the bright picture of what Jerusalem might have been fades from the Saviour's sight' (White 1948:577).

Although one may argue that prophets had the same visionary ability to see future events in panoramic vision, the fact that White states in this passage that Christ sees Himself as Israel's Redeemer and that this picture '...rose before the Son of God', seems to indicate His divine active mode. If it would be the same as that of other prophets then White might have said that: 'The glorious destiny of Jerusalem had she accepted her Redeemer rose before the Son of man'. Instead she calls Him Son of God.

With regard to the last supper, White highlights another example of Christ's active divinity. Talking about Judas, White says: 'By reading the secret purpose of the traitor's heart, Christ gave to Judas the final, convincing evidence of His divinity' (White 1948:655).

Christ's divinity may be seen as active in yet another passage by White, when she writes about the last supper. Talking about Christ she writes:

'Though He had humbled Himself of humanity, the Godhead was still His own. Christ alone could represent the Father to humanity, and this representation the disciples had been privileged to behold for over three years... Their faith might safely rest on the evidence given in Christ's works, works that no man, of himself, ever had done, or ever could do. Christ's work testified to His divinity... Christ was seeking to lead them from their low condition of faith to the experience they might receive if they truly realized what He was – God in human flesh'.

What is more remarkable about this passage is the words she writes next:

'As Christ was speaking these words, the glory of God was shining from His countenance, and all present felt a sacred awe as they listened with rapt attention to His words'.

In order to answer the question as to why He used His divinity, we may find it in the same answer to the question of why was His divinity united with humanity? For an answer let us look at her words: 'The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united with humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power.' (White 1948:664). We

can deduce from the passage above that Christ's active divinity was for the glorification of God. It was not for His own glory that Christ had Himself glorified through His divinity that was made manifest at random.

In order to discover more of Christ's active divinity while He was in His human body, and to answer the question: 'Did Christ have an advantage over the first Adam and did he use His divinity for show?' we shall look at more examples.

According to White, as a child Jesus did not engage His divinity in order to alleviate his chores. In fact, according to her, in all His stay in Nazareth, Jesus never made a show or display of His divinity (White 1948:74). However, writing about the time when Jesus' parents realized they had left Him at the temple, White writes: 'How is it that ye sought me, answered Jesus. "Wist ye not that I must be in My Fathers business?" And as they seemed not to understand His words, He pointed upwards! On His face was a light at which they wondered. Divinity was flashing through humanity' (White 1948:81).

It appears from the passage above and those that followed, that the divinity of Christ became active in order that Jesus' parents would better understand that they were privileged to be entrusted with the custody of the Son of the Highest God.

This seems to be intentional, to remind the human parents of Jesus, that even though it was natural for them to see and perceive them as their child and therefore, treat him like natural parents treat their children, Jesus was more than just an ordinary human-child; He was also a divine Son of the Most High God.

Something about Christ's person must have disturbed Pontius Pilate when we consider Ellen White's description of what happened at Pilate's court – White writes: 'In fear and self-condemnation Pilate looked upon the Saviour. In the vast sea of upturned faces, His alone was peaceful. About His head a soft light seemed to shine. Pilate said in his heart, He is God' (White 1948:739).

Another look at divinity being activated through Christ's humanity may be sighted at what is traditionally known by some as the Mount of Transfigurations. Jesus took with Him those three disciples that were to witness His agony at the Garden of Gethsemane. This is how White describes what transpired on that Mount:

‘While He is bowed in lowliness upon the stony ground, suddenly the heavens open, the golden gates of the city of God are thrown wide, and holy radiance descends upon the Mount, enshrouding the Saviour’s form. Divinity from within flashes through humanity, and meets the glory coming from above...Christ stands in Godlike majesty’ (White 1948:421).

When asking why Jesus’ divinity became active or was manifested in this instance, White answers: ‘Now the burden of His prayer is that they may be given a manifestation of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, that His kingdom may be revealed to human eyes and that they may witness a manifestation of His divinity that will comfort them in the hour of His supreme agony with the knowledge that He is of a surety the Son of God and that His shameful death is a part of the plan of redemption’ (White 1948:420-421).

It is clear from the above passage that Christ’s divinity was manifested for specific reasons. Jesus allowed for His divinity to manifest for the sake of the disciples, White, points out.

The disciples were to witness the revelation of God’s glory and to believe that He truly was divine and that He was truly the Son of God. White mentions that the manifestation of Christ’s divinity and the fact that His disciples witnessed the active divinity within Him had the following results:

- God and those with Him in heaven were cognizance of the sins of the Jews having rejected Jesus;
- Clear insight into the Redeemer’s work was displayed;
- Things beyond human comprehension were seen and heard;
- The disciples became eye-witnesses;
- The disciples realized the Messiah-ship of Christ; and
- At that point they knew that Jesus was acknowledged by the Universe and by heaven itself (White 1948:425).

From White’s writing we know of another incident where the quiescent divinity of Christ became active divinity – at the cleansing of the Temple. In visionary language, White described what transpired and says:

‘The confusion hushed. The sound of traffic and bargaining has ceased. The silence becomes painful. A sense of awe overpowers the assembly. It is as if

they were arraigned before “the tribunal of God” to answer for their deeds. Looking upon Christ they behold divinity flash through the garb of humanity. The Majesty of heaven stands as the Judge, will stand at the last day, - ... His form seems to rise above them in commanding dignity, and a divine light illuminates His countenance...’(White; 1948:158).

To the question as to why Christ manifested His divinity through His human body, or stated differently; why Christ’s quiescent divinity became active divinity, White’s reply is clear when she states ‘Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah’ (White 1948:161). White, in another instance where she comments on Christ’s temptation, mentions that Jesus was not to show or manifest His divinity for Himself. ‘Neither here nor at any subsequent time in His earthly life did He work a miracle on His own behalf’ (White 1948:119).

5.2 Christ’s work

5.2.1 Christ’s earthly ministry

With regard to His earthly ministry, White portrays a Messiah who cared and ministered to the needs of humanity. She points out that it was for this reason that Christ came to live amongst humans – to reveal God’s infinite love. She states that Christ described His earthly mission when He said, ‘The Lord hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised’ (White 1893:11).

If we look at the passage above, we can distinguish at least five Christological names of Christ:

- Christ the Preacher – ‘The Lord...to preach...’
- Christ the Healer – ‘...to heal the broken-hearted....’
- Christ the Liberator – ‘...to set at liberty them that are bruised...’
- Christ the Deliverer – ‘...to preach deliverance to the captives...’
- Christ the Revelator of God’s glory – ‘...and recovery of sight to the blind.’

According to White, Jesus fulfilled what He professed. He went about healing the sick and in fact some ‘whole villages’ were completely cleansed of diseases as Christ passed by them. He revealed mercy, love and compassion. His heart was of the greatest mercy and even children were attracted to Him. His work, White says, was evidence ‘of His divine anointing’ (White 1893:11).

People of all ranks were attracted to Him. He spoke in love and spoke truthfully. He never spoke carelessly and never ever was He rude. When He would speak out against hypocrisy and sin, there were tears in His voice. Even those who rejected Him were regarded with tender pity. His entire life was one of caring for others. He exercised self-denial. Everyone was special to Him. He saw every soul as His mission to save. According to White, all streams of love and compassion streamed from the Father's heart and were manifested in Jesus Christ and were ultimately passed on to the Sons and Daughters of Adam and Eve. It was for our sakes that Christ became a sorrower (White 1948:12-13).

5.2.2 The offices of Christ

Heavenly commander/king /mediator

To White, from eternity Christ has been with His Father. He is the thought of God made audible (White 1948:20). Writing about Christ's ministry she writes:

‘So in heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings; through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son, it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life’ (White 1948:20).

This is the picture of His work, even before He came to earth to be born of mankind. Christ was the only being that could enter into all the counsels of God. It was through Christ that God created all the heavenly beings (White 1990:494). It is clear from the above that Christ's work, even before sin entered heaven, was that of Mediator and Heaven's commander and the ‘Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father’ (White 1990:495). For this study it is important to notice the title names of Christ that we find in White's writings. In the passage above, it is clear to see that God's medium of creation is Christ. Hence we may see Christological titles of Christ as Mediator and that of King even though White does not call Him by such titles directly; the inference is there on this particular passage, as it is in others.

The divine teacher/prophet

White repeatedly makes mention that Christ came to manifest the glory of God to this world. He brought His glorious light to this dark sinful world. His dwelling with mankind was intended to reveal God to both angels and men. Jesus veiled Himself with the garb of

humanity in order that He may bring light to a dark world. His attempt to tabernacle with mankind, according to White, varied from the burning bush which Deity chose as a representation, to the cloudy pillar by day and a pillar of light by night in which God, in his humble way, could communicate His will to men. Hence through a humble human form Christ came to dwell with humanity in order to teach us about His divine character (White 1948:23).

Substitute and surety/victim

In many instances White writes of the substitutionary work of Christ. White believed that Christ's dual natures made Him qualify to be our substitute and surety. His possession of all the divine attributes and His perfect humanity guaranteed Him as our surety and substitute. The substitution and surety that White refers to is in reference to Christ's vicarious death. Jesus made 'a voluntary sacrifice' when He gave back the scepter into the Father's hand, and chose to condescend lower than the angelic host and lower than the royalties of humanity and allowing Himself to suffer a substitutionary, vicarious death (White 1948:22-23).

Priest

When Christ took on a human form, White writes: '...so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself a Priest, Himself the victim. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities...' (White 1948:25). 'Christ is bearing a double position of offer and offering', says White (White 1958:463).

White's perception of Christ's work as a Priest is that Christ is right now our intercessor in the heavenly Sanctuary. She mentions that Christ, through His sacrifice and work of mediation is both builder and the foundation of the church. Speaking about Christ she writes: 'He shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne: As a Priest, Christ is now set down with the Father in His throne' (White 1990:41).

5.2.3 The dying and death of Jesus

Our substitute

White eludes that Christ being our Substitute had to suffer outside the boundaries of Jerusalem (White 1948:742). Of importance for our study is the word 'Substitute'. The other aspect that is of importance is Christ's divinity and humanity of dying.

White points out that when Christ took on the responsibility of being our Substitute, He suffered immensely. 'From insult to renewed insult, from mockery to mockery, twice tortured by the scourge, all that night there had been scene after scene of a character to try the soul of man to the uttermost'. In spite of all His suffering, White says that Christ did not fail. He never uttered a word, save that which glorified God. His bodily suffering was so severe, that His human nature could no longer endure. 'Again the burden was laid upon Him, and again He fell fainting to the ground'. A noteworthy remark for this dissertation is that there is a stark eminence of Christ not calling upon His divine nature to relieve Him of His unbearable burden. We may see an indirect form of divine intervention through what we may in this dissertation call a Substitute for our Substitute. This is Simon of Cyrene who by coercion had to carry on him the cross of Christ. White picks up on the point that the writer wishes to make. That is, there was a divine intervention present, that helped Christ endure and that helped alleviate the burden of the cross. 'He could not carry the cross....,' she says, but then she says that Simon '...was ever after grateful for this providence' (White 1948:742).

However, it is important to note that although Christ received help through divine providence, He did not zoom into His divine nature. In His suffering, divinity was quiescent.

Divine prophetic mode

Jesus according to White, regardless of His sufferings, was still caring and compassionate about those around Him. There were women at the scene of Christ's crucifixion who cried for Christ out of human sympathy. 'Daughters of Jerusalem', He said: 'weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children'. From the scene before Him, Christ looked ahead to the time of Jerusalem's destruction. 'In that terrible scene, many of those who were weeping for Him were to perish with their children' (White 1948:743). In His divine-prophetic mode, Jesus was looking down the corridors of history. From the time that Jerusalem was to fall to the time of the judgment of the world. 'Then shall they begin to

say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' (White 1948:743).

Again, as in the chapter on Christ's 'quiescent nature' where we noticed Jesus being in a state of what we in this dissertation shall call His divine prophetic mode, we behold a divine manifestation here. Even though there is no apparent light glowing through Christ and no mention is being made by Ellen White that divinity was flashing through His humanity, there is a divine manifestation which is almost overlooked. That divine manifestation can be gleaned through the words of Christ when He said: '...for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' (White 1948:743). Christ's reference of the green tree, is a reference '...to Himself, the Innocent Redeemer' (White 1948:743).

The point we should not lose here is that no man can refer to himself as 'the innocent Redeemer', unless he blasphemes. Having said that we should concede that there must have been an activity within the dual natures of Christ at that point. Christ in His humanity was being moved by His divinity. Christ therefore spoke in what we shall call His divine prophetic mode. For He was not speaking as a mere prophet, since in this prophetic utterance, there is a personal recognition of Himself as an 'Innocent Redeemer'. This is the second Christological name of Christ we have picked up in White's Christology in relation to His death.

Christological titles while dying

The other Christological names that White mentions in her book 'The Desire of Ages' (1948) are in chapter 78 under the heading 'Calvary'. She makes mention of the titles 'Saviour, Son of God, Advocate of men, Jesus of Nazareth, King of Israel, the Lord Jesus, dying Saviour, Lamb of God, Conqueror, Sin bearer, Prophet, Priest; loving Savior, beloved, Master, a Ransom for the Race, the Prince of Sufferers; Insulted dying Author, The Image of God; Crucified Redeemer; Sin bearer; Signet of Heaven; Spotless Son of God; The Sun of Righteousness; the Light of the Word; our Substitute and Surety – was laid for the iniquity of us all' (White 1948:741-753).

Tension between divinity and humanity

Regarding His divine manifestation, White states that Christ bore testimony of His divinity in the way He died (White 1948:751). Yet there is a paradoxical statement that she makes regarding His divinity: ‘The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart...so great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt’ (White 1948:753).

There is a question that comes through in view of White’s description of the withdrawal of divinity. One may wonder, which part of divinity is White referring to? Is the divine withdrawal that of His Father who was with Him from Eternity, or is the divine withdrawal that of His quiescent divinity, which He still had with His human nature? At times it may appear as though she refers to the divine withdrawal of the Father. The ambiguity comes through a statement she makes a few lines later, that ‘...God and His holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His persona was not revealed.’ His agony is further explained in the following statement, ‘In the thick darkness, God veiled the last human agony of His Son’ (White 1948:754). In His dying moment, Christ after uttering the words ‘It is Finished...’, White says that Christ’s face shone with a glory as that of ‘the sun’ (White 1948:756).

Significance of the cross

With regard to the most victorious words by Christ on the cross, ‘It is finished’. White sites the following:

‘It was the hour of the evening sacrifice. The lamb representing Christ had been brought to be slain. Clothed in his significant and beautiful dress, the Priest stood with lifted knife, as did Abraham when he was about to slay his son. With intense interest the people were looking on. But the earth trembles and quakes; for the Lord Himself draws near. With a rending noise the inner veil of the temple is torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, throwing open to the gaze of the multitude a place once filled with the presence of God. In this place the Shekinah had dwelt... No one but the High Priest ever lifted the veil separating this apartment from the rest of the temple. He entered in once a year to make atonement for the sins of the people. But...the most holy place of the Sanctuary is no longer Sacred’.

In this breath-taking linguistic, White continues to describe how the lamb as a victim escaped from the priest’s presence. The most awaited time in Christian history had come – type met antitype through the vicarious death of Jesus, the Son of God!

From White's pen of inspiration the following points can be deduced with regard to the importance and implications of the death of Christ on the cross:

- The most prized sacrifice had been offered;
- Our access to God had been laid;
- A new dynamic way for the believer exists;
- There is direct access to God's forgiveness;
- Christ has earned the right to advocate on our behalf; and
- There is no longer a need to offer animal sacrifices, since Christ has offered Himself once and for always (White 1948:756-757).

5.2.4 Christ's resurrection

Ellen White almost sounds boastful regarding the resurrection. She says: 'He is not in Joseph's new tomb; He is risen from the dead and ascended on high as Substitute and Surety for every believing soul' (White 1979:107).

From this passage we experience a sense of power. This is an added dimension of Christ's mission. For in His death, we see that White emphasizes that Christ has completed His mission on earth. Had Christ failed, it seems that Christ may not have risen! But, having succeeded in accomplishing His work through perfect obedience to God, and persevering through the most painful, humiliating death, Christ conquered the power of death. He met its just requirements on behalf of the sinners of the world as the world's Substitute and Surety, now through His resurrection He would continue the next phase in the most Holy Place.

5.2.5 Christ's ascension

White's concept of the ascended Christ is that of one who is a divine conqueror. This is an interesting, adjusted Christological name that she has for Christ, as He was about to ascend into heaven. In addition to the title of divine conqueror she says that Christ had, by His resurrection, 'authenticated Himself as a living Saviour'. He could no longer be associated with death but rather with His glorification within the heavenly cosmos.

White portrays Christ ascending from Mount Olives, on which she states He shall return. Interestingly she has another Christological title for Him when He shall return: she calls Him the 'Triumphant King'. The Christ that ascended into heaven is to White 'in the form of humanity'. His return will be in a similar manner with some distinct differences. This difference is that He comes with His glory. For He be seated on His throne. With regard to

Christ's ascension, White points out the fact that Christ took with Him a host of redeemed people that He set free on the day of His resurrection. These represent 'the great multitude' that will be resurrected from their graves at Christ's Second Coming. White further points out that Christ's ascension was for us and 'He lives for us and intercedes before our Father and our God on our behalf'.

When He entered heaven, White states that Christ was welcomed by joyous choruses of angelic hosts and other representatives of God's unfallen worlds (White 1948:829-835). In clarifying this dissertation's problem statement we can say that Ellen White's view of the ascension is of a loving Redeemer who did not leave His followers hopeless. He promised to send them the Holy Spirit, who would be their comforter and Substitute of Christ. They could still communicate with Him through the person of the Holy Spirit. He is currently presenting His loved ones before God and does the intercessory work on their behalf.

Jesus' Messiah-ship; His Kingship; His Divine nature and glorified human body find its exclamation and exaltation in White's Christology. This glorification is epitomized in the musical language of White as she writes: 'As they ascended up to glory to the Holy City, the angels who escorted Jesus cried out, Light up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. With rapture the angels in the city, who awaited His coming, cried out, who is this King of glory? The escorting angels with triumph answered, The Lord strong and mighty! The Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates! Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Again the heavenly host cried out, who is this King of glory? The escorting angels in melodious strains answered, The Lord of hosts! He is the King of glory!' (White 1945:78).

5.3 Christ and Eschatology

5.3.1 Christ's sanctuary

White holds the view that the Scripture that is foremost the centre pillar of what Adventists believe, is found in Daniel 8:14: 'Unto two thousands and three hundred days; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed' (White 1990:409).

These words were cherished by the Advent Christians. They were believed to have a termination in autumn of 1844. White further states that Adventists at that time shared a world view that a certain part of the earth was the Bible sanctuary. What this implied was that at the termination of 1844, the earth would be cleansed by the final fires that will accompany Christ's Second Coming. The predicted time came, but Christ did not come.

Instead of joining the crowd that abruptly gave up the view that the prophetic prediction ended in 1844, some believers were confident that their calculations were correct. The starting period of the 2300 days prophesy was to be when Artaxerxes would command, to the rebuilding and restoring of Jerusalem, which took place at the autumn of 457BC.

White goes on to relate that the starting point coincided with the predicted events of Daniel 9:25-27 in which the sixty-nine weeks, are 'the first 483 of the 2300 years', which she says 'were to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One; and Christ's baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit, AD 27'. Exactly in the middle 'of the 70th week, the Messiah would be cut off'. Christ was to be baptized 'in the spring of AD 31'. Furthermore, she states that seventy weeks which equalled 490 years, were specifically intended for the Jewish Nation. The Jewish nation, she states, 'sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of (Christ's) disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, in AD 34'. So having the '490 years of the 2300' ended, there remained 1810 years. Hence, starting at AD 34, the remaining 1810 years would lead to the year 1844. The angel's words were that it was then that the sanctuary would be cleansed.

All of the 'preceding specifications of the prophesy were unquestionably fulfilled at the time appointed', says White. The only problem was that Christ did not come and therefore the sanctuary [which was believed to be a certain portion of the earth], had not been cleansed.

White further states that although many changed this view to their former calculations of that specific prophecy, others continued to be steadfast to the scriptures and to the Holy Ghost. These believers, she claims, saw their error, that there was no biblical support for the then popular world view of an existing earthly sanctuary. These believers discovered from their bibles a true understanding relating to the sanctuary mentioned in Daniel 8:14. They discovered truth relating to its location, its 'nature', and the testimony of the sacred writings. Quoting from Hebrews 9:1-5, White seeks to point out that in these portions of scripture, including Exodus 25:8, these earnest seekers after the truth were led by God through the Holy Spirit to see that the sanctuary which was constructed by Moses under God's instruction has been replaced by another, which is known by some as 'the temple of Solomon'. This sanctuary, though it was a permanent structure, resembled that of Moses' in its furnishings and apartments. Even that Temple, White points out, was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans. According to White those believers discovered that that was the

only sanctuary that existed, of which Paul says is ‘the sanctuary of the first covenant’ (White 1990:409-413).

Since there is a new covenant, the believers asked themselves the question: Has the new covenant no sanctuary? From the Epistles to the Hebrews, White states that the seekers for truth found that the existence of a second or new-covenant sanctuary, was implied in the words of Paul when he wrote, ‘Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary’ (White 1990:411).

By the word ‘also’ it was implied that Paul had previously mentioned ‘this sanctuary’. Going back into the past chapter they read Hebrew 8: 1-2: ‘Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man’ (White 1990:413).

White continues to state that the first Group of Adventists came to realize through this study of the Bible, that:

- The sanctuary of the first covenant was pitched by man;
- The sanctuary of the new covenant was pitched by God;
- In the first covenant earthly priests ministered. In the sanctuary of the new covenant, our Great High Priest, Christ, He ministers before the right hand of God for us (White 1990:409-413).

What White would further have her readers know, regarding Christ’s sanctuary is the following:

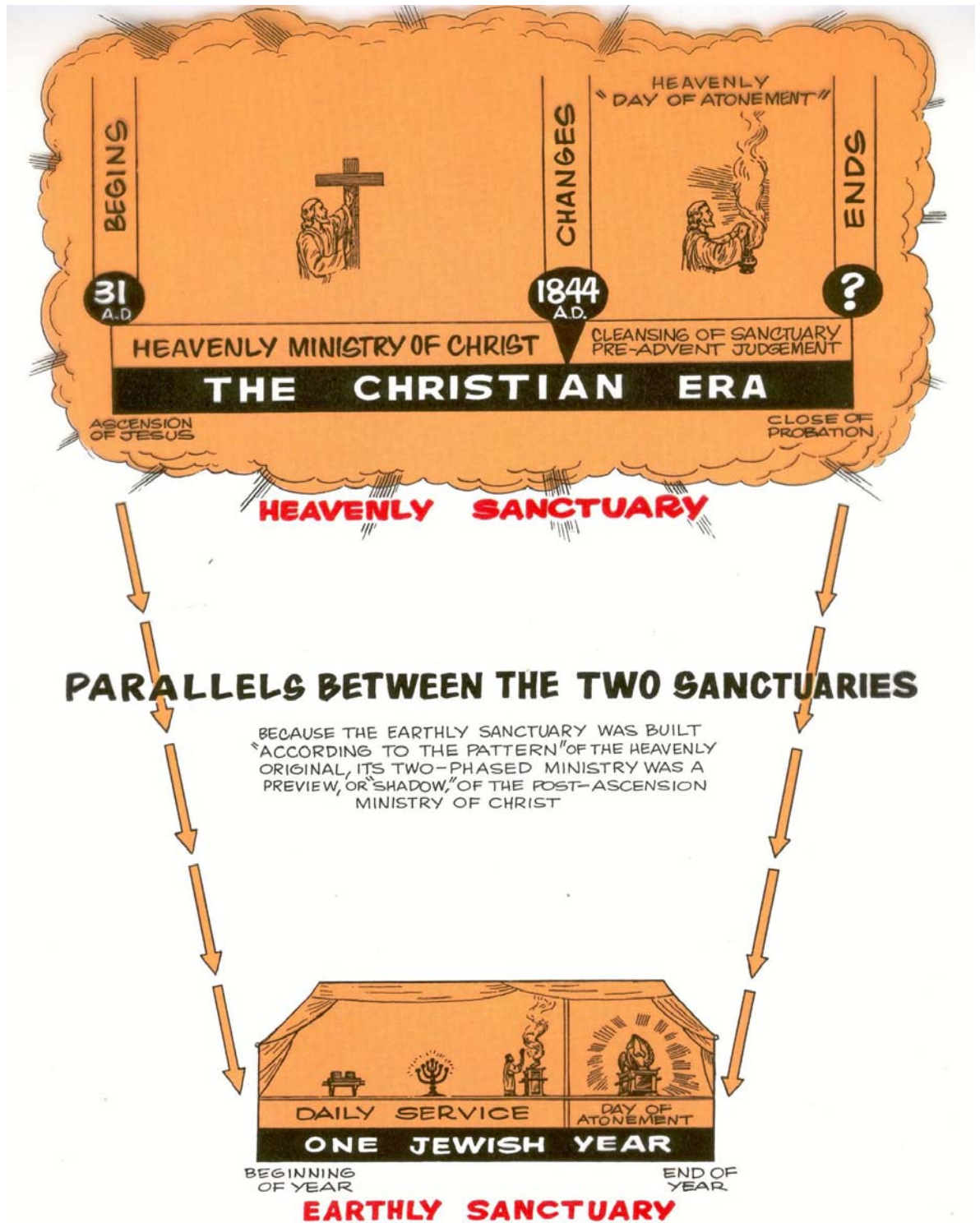
- The first Advent believers were to understand how the heavenly sanctuary relates to earthly individuals;
- That there were lessons to be learnt from the earthly sanctuary and its services, and they were to apply those lessons to that of the heavenly sanctuary; and
- While there are similarities between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries, there are also differences. This can be seen in her words when she states;
‘In the temple in heaven,...In the most holy place is His law...The ark that enshrines the tables of the law is covered with the mercy seat, before which Christ pleads His blood on the sinner’s behalf...’ (White 1948:415).

The difference is that the earthly sanctuary is a copy of the original, i.e. the heavenly sanctuary is the original copy. While in the earthly sanctuary the blood of animals appeased, in the heavenly only the blood of Christ appeases. One significant difference is that there is a throne in the heavenly sanctuary and it is vast, and there are myriads of angels and seraphim that are before God that worship before Him (White 1948:414).

Perhaps the question we should now ask is, how does White define the sanctuary? The definition of the sanctuary to White is ‘the tabernacle built by Moses as a pattern of

heavenly things; and secondly, to the true tabernacle in heaven, to which the typical service ended. The true tabernacle in heaven is the sanctuary of the new covenant' (White 1948:417).

i. Christ's Sanctuary



The figure above, illustrates the parallels between the earthly sanctuary and the heavenly sanctuary. It also illustrates the understanding that Ellen White had regarding the two sanctuaries and Christ's ministration in the heavenly sanctuary.

5.3.2 Christ's atonement

To White the subject of Atonement today can be best understood by understanding what is meant by 'the cleansing of the sanctuary'. White purports that as there was a cleansing to be done to the earthly sanctuary, even so must the heavenly sanctuary be cleansed. The common denominator is that both sanctuaries are to be cleansed with blood. Since the earthly was to be cleansed with the blood of animals, the heavenly could only be cleansed by the 'precious blood of Christ'. White concurs with Paul that, 'without the shedding of blood, there is no remission'. According to White, 'Remission, or putting away of sin is the work to be accomplished'. With reference to the example of the earthly sanctuary and its ministration, White points out: 'the daily transfer of sins from the repented sinner, took place by the sinner laying his hands on the head of the innocent animal, and confessing his sins. The victim was then slain. Since the law of God demanded the life of the transgressor, the animal's life substituted that of the sinner. Through this ceremony, the sins of the sinner had been transferred to the life of the victim. Since these sins were transferred to the sanctuary, it was necessary for a special work to take place to remove these sins. Under God's command, atonement for each department of the sanctuary was to be made' (White 1948: 418).

While explaining the significance of Atonement and its requirements relating to the ceremonial practices that the Israelites and their Priests had to do in order to effect the Atonement, White points out the following:

- Two kids were brought to the door of the sanctuary;
- Lots were cast. To the one that the lot fell, it would be slain for the people of Israel;
- Its blood would be sprinkled within the veil; on the mercy seat and before it. This blood was sprinkled also before the veil and on the altar of incense;
- The priest would then lay his hands on the live goat, which would be led far away by a suitable man into the wilderness;
- That goat would bear all the sins of the repented sinners;
- The person who led the goat away was to wash his hands and clothes; and

- During that time, the people or the congregation of Israel were to put aside all business activities. They were to be in prayerful, solemn, earnest and heart-searching mode (White 1948:420).

White goes on to explain the precious, sobering truths of the atonement and says: ‘A Substitute was accepted in the sinner’s stead; but the sin was not cancelled by the blood of the victim’. This was merely a means of transferring the sin into the sanctuary, she says, in compliance with the law’s requirements. The sinner had merely acknowledged his sin and his desire to be forgiven. What remained was for the ‘Redeemer to come and make Atonement for his sin, which remained in the sanctuary’. In the earthly Day of Atonement service, only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service. White explains the vital implications of this act of ministration and points out that when Christ ascended into heaven, He pleaded the blood of sinners before the Father for 1810 years. During this period Christ’s work of pleading before the Father secured our pardon before God. The sins of the believer were forgiven but not removed from the record of heaven. As there was a special work required to remove these sins, so Christ, our High Priest, entered into the special work of atonement since 1844. This is, according to White’s understanding, the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of in Daniel 8:14 (White 1948: 421).

‘We are now living in the great day of atonement. In the typical service, while the high priest was making atonement for Israel, all were required to afflict their souls by repentance of sin and humiliation before the Lord, lest they be cut off from among the people. In like manner, all who would have their names retained in the book of life should now, in the few remaining days of their probation, afflict their souls before God by sorrow for sin and true repentance.

Though all nations are to pass in judgment before God, yet He will examine each individual with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth’ (White 1969a:126).

5.3.3 Judgment

Pre-advent judgment

According to White, before the cleansing of the sanctuary can be effected, there must be an investigation of the heavenly records. This, according to her, is to determine who is accounted to receive Christ's atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a distinct and separate work, and takes place at a later period. This investigation is part of the work of judgment that Christ is now engaged in prior to His Second Coming. According to White the early steadfast Adventists saw as she sees it, that:

- The sin offering pointed to Jesus;
- The High Priest represents the Mediator, Christ;
- The scapegoat represents the Devil, Satan who is the originator of sin;
- The repented sinner's sin will be placed on Satan after it has been removed from the heavenly sanctuary by Christ our Mediator; and
- As the scapegoat was to be removed from the congregation into the wilderness, even so will Satan be forever removed from the presence of the Almighty and His people, 'in the final destruction of sin and sinners' (White 1948:422).

Second Coming

White's baptism was after she had heard William Miller preach on the Second Coming of Christ. White was an ardent follower of the Millerite movement and went through the 'great disappointment' in the year 1844 on October 22 (Zurcher 1999:38).

Throughout her life, White taught, wrote and preached about the hope of Christ's Second Coming. She said that the communion service 'proves to Christ's Second Coming' (Dederen 2000:920). The manner of His Second Coming shall be preceded with signs in the heavens and the earth (White 1992:18).

First and special resurrection

In the book entitled Last day Events, a systematic chronology of White's view regarding the Eschaton and Christ is well-outlined for the earnest enquirer. According to White, when Christ returns there are two classes or groups of people that will be resurrected:

- Those who since Adam, till the very last Christian believer will partake in the first resurrection;
- Those who crucified Christ will also be resurrected in what we call the Special resurrection;
- Those who are faithful will have their bodies translated to immortal bodies and will be escorted with the believers that will have been resurrected;
- Those resurrected with the saints but that were participants in the crucifixion of Christ, will be destroyed by Christ together with the living wicked when He [Christ] comes back to earth for the second time. Concurrently, the living righteous and the righteous dead are immortalized (White 1992:274-280). These two parties, i.e. the righteous dead who will be resurrected at the Second Coming and the righteous living will be escorted by Christ and His holy angels into heaven. These saints will reign with Christ for 1000 years.

Third Coming

It is after the 1000 years of peaceful, joyous, unspeakable bliss and having experienced a truth and reconciliation satisfaction, regarding the justice of God and His past dealings with mankind and the fallen angels that the saints, together with their God and His Son, their Redeemer, will descend to the earth. This is the Third Coming of Christ (White 1992:281).

Final judgment

When the millennium transpires, Christ returns to earth and the whole wicked world stands arraigned at the bar of God. This is His Third Coming. ‘The book of records are opened and the wicked are conscious of every sin they have ever committed’.

- He will come with His angels;
- He will resurrect the wicked whose number is as the sand of the sea;
- The condition of the wicked is bad in comparison to those redeemed in the first resurrection;
- Christ’s coming will be visible and universal;
- The wicked will say: ‘Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord’. There will be no more probation or second chance for them;

- Christ will descend on Mount Olives and the city with the Saints;
- New Jerusalem will dazzle the sinners with its splendid glory;
- Satan convinces the millions of resurrected sinners to join him in the fiercest war preparation ever marshaled. As Satan and his confederacies come toward the Holy city;
- Christ orders that the gates of the city be closed;
- He pronounces the sentence of damnation upon the arch-rebel and his supporters, that are now surrounding the city; and
- As Christ opens the books of record, they will in panoramic view see their past lives and have renewed convictions of their sins, rebellion, stubbornness, indulgence, recalcitrant behavior and unwillingness to repent. The sins of all the wicked will be openly known, nothing will be hidden. They will have a full review of the origin of sin, its consequences over the years and the paternal love of God and His Son and the unswerving, tedious pursuit they have engaged in, in saving mankind. From Adam in Eden, to Christ at Gethsemane and to Golgotha, will be reviewed for the sin-sick soul to behold. The lost souls will be enraged at Satan and his ‘agents’ and there will be a world war of universal turmoil. God will then rain fire on the earth. There will be a degree of comparison in regard to the punishment of the wicked. Others are to suffer and be destroyed quickly while others will suffer for days and days. Satan will bare the penalty of the sins of the saints, since all their sins will have been transferred to him. It is logical to White that Satan will suffer the longest and experience the severest punishment since he is the originator and persistent facilitator of sins throughout the six thousand years of the earth’s history (White 1969b:450-454).

5.3.4 Justification by faith

White’s view is that when the sinner exercises his/her faith in believing in Christ, as his/her personal Saviour that person automatically receives the righteousness of Christ through a process of imputation. Christ’s righteousness is pure and undefiled. It is that ‘spotless’ righteousness as symbolized by a spotless robe in the Scriptures that the sinner receives from Christ. The sinner recognizes and perceives Christ’ as his/her only Saviour from the worst form of sin. In light of the atonement made on his/her behalf the sinner praises God as he/she realizes the great and marvelous work wrought on his/her behalf. As the sinner beholds glimpses of Christ’s glory, he/she is transformed by the Holy Spirit into the image of our Lord and Saviour. The matchless charms of our Lord are so impressive and attractive to the sinner that sin loses its luster. We are justified through the merits of Christ. The only plea that the sinner has and his only pledge is that Christ died on the cross for

him. Through humility, at the foot of the cross, we are to be made just with God and not through our own meritorious efforts (White 1979:106-107).

Salvation versus our Good Works

To revert for a while to the first two parts of our question at the beginning of this dissertation under the Sub-heading, 'Stating the problem':

Does White's justification exempt the believer from accountability to God as a steward? [i.e. does the strength of the cross and the resurrection in the life of the believer become supplanted by the divine Jesus on the driver's seat and hence release the Christian from his accountability towards God?]. White's answer is emphatically clear, for she says: 'But because we are thus represented before the Father, we are not to imagine that we are to presume upon His mercy and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not the minister of sin'. She adds, 'We are complete in Him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in Him by faith' (White 1979:107).

So we see that for White, good works are required and expected from the believer. There is a role to be played by the Christian. This leads us to our next subject.

5.3.5 Sanctification by Obedience

(a) Standard of True Sanctification

To White, a life of deliberate abrogation of the law of God and yet claiming to be holy and leading a sanctified life, is spurious. Such people are doing Satan's work, who is fighting the law of heaven. White adds, 'No commandment breaker can be permitted to enter heaven' (White 1979:29). To White, sanctification can only be wrought in the life of the individual believer who keeps the law of God. Before that law can be kept, there has to be repentance. White eludes that we ought to strive to keep the law. But if we do sin, we must remember that Christ is our Advocate. What is very clear is that man is called to be responsible in the plan of salvation. Jesus did not suffer and die shamefully in order that mankind may be released from his accountability as a steward before God.

In an attempt to clarify the issue of the importance of mankind's strife for perfection, White says that Christ died because there had been an offense already committed by him. So the debt which remained had to be paid, regardless of whether mankind was obedient in the future. She goes on to say that it is through the sophistry of the evil one that mankind is

lead to believe that Christ replaced His law with grace. This, to White, is not sanctification. She makes it clear that the standard of Sanctification is determined by the life we lead. 'Every transgressor of God's law is a sinner, and none can be sanctified while living in sin' (White 1979:30).

In light of the information gathered regarding White's concept of Sanctification we can conclude that her standard of Sanctification is one that calls for accountability, sensibility and workability.

(b) Sanctification by Good Works

White defines sanctification as 'obedience to the law of God' (White 1979:85). One may, through reading the passages above, get the impression of the importance for good works to be indispensable in White's salvific concept. Some of her views on sanctification are as follows:

Christ gave of His undefiled humanity and divinity and made a complete sacrifice for us. Hence, we should come to Him as though we are individually of utmost importance to Him. Sanctification is progressive and not instantaneous. Therefore we are to labour with perseverance, bearing in mind that as long as there is Satan and temptation, we will have to continue to battle in our strife for obedience. As we become obedient to the truth we know, we will overcome through the merits of Christ. With White, there is no delusion or misguided illusions about the believer being immune to sinning, since he is sanctified. She calls this a 'delusive snare' of Satan. She points us instead to Christ's reminder to watch and pray.

White renounces self-confidence and points the individual believer to Christ.

'Daily, is the individual urged to appropriate the merits of Christ's precious blood in order that we may be clean instruments for our Lord. As the believer relies on God, he or she shall not contend against His word. Instead the individual believer will find himself/herself taking the right stand. The daily study of the scripture is to be cultivated so that the tempted soul can distinguish between the voices of the True Shepherd and the false shepherd' (White 1979:85-86).

White's concept of sanctification is simply not allowing for the believer to be non-accountable. There is no such concept of Christ being in the driver's-seat, and therefore a 'once saved forever saved' ideology. The individual is called upon to be vigilant, alert, and on guard, constantly. There is diligence, self-control and sacrifice required in this act of sanctification.

CHAPTER 6: JOHN CALVIN'S CHRISTOLOGY

Although Calvin's Christology is mainly from below, like White's, he keeps a distinction of the two natures that are mysteriously combined into one person. Calvin purported the idea that, we are moved by the humility of Christ who being born in a stable allows us to see glimpses of His glory from His baptism up to His crucifixion and resurrection.

6.1 Sin and Jesus Christ our redeemer

6.1.1 Origin of sin

To Calvin, the attention of the first act of sin is directed towards the original human life – Adam and Eve. As it has already been mentioned that Calvin's starting point is not solely from below, his starting point here is mainly from below or anthropocentric. Calvin defines the origin of sin as 'a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all the parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and produces in us works which in Scripture are termed works of the flesh' (Irwin 1909: 43-44). Since we are fallen through Adam, Calvin insists that we ought to renounce all boasting and with humility and shamefulness we should also set aside our self-assurance, bearing in mind that we are utterly dependent on God. Calvin continues to see sin inside of mankind. 'I am quite aware how much more pleasing is the principle which invites us to weigh our good traits rather than to look upon our miserable want and dishonor which ought to overwhelm us with shame.' He continues to say that mankind naturally loves to be flattered. According to him, when mankind sees that his talents are admired he is prone to become too high-minded about them. This according to Calvin is the problem that has bewitched most men (Kerr 1989:55).

Calvin believed that sin entered the heart of men due to his desire to be raised to a loftier state than he was created to be. Therefore, Calvin perceives ambition as the cause for Adam's fall. Speaking on the nature of sin, Calvin concurs with Augustine who declared the words: 'pride was the beginning of all evils'. He admits that the beginning of Adam's fall was due to disobedience. Quoting Paul in Romans 5:19, 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by obedience of one shall many be made righteous', we deduce that this disobedience was actually unfaithfulness. He gives reason

for this effect, by pointing to its cause. He says that pride and ambition, combined ‘with ungratefulness’, sprang up due to Adam’s thriving for more than God had bestowed on him. God had created Adam to be perpetually tied to God through cords of unity. As a result of Adam’s estrangement, his soul died. According to Calvin, through Adam’s rebellion the whole order of creation was perverted. Adam’s original heavenly image was destroyed and even his garments became filthy. The whole human race was to suffer the consequences. Instead of the lofty qualities such as holiness, justice and truth, there came only impurity, vanity, impotence; ‘Filthy plagues’, and injustice. All of this corruption became the inheritance of Adam’s offspring, which the church fathers called ‘Original Sin’. This Calvin calls ‘sin’ and he adds ‘the depravation of a nature previously good and pure...’ (Kerr 1989:56-57). Calvin disagrees with Pelagius, who claimed that sin was transmitted via imitation and not propagation. Instead, Calvin concurs with Augustine, that sin was not transmitted through wickedness, but rather that we ‘are born infected with the contagion of sin’. In defining the original sin, Calvin states, ‘...a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, defused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God’s wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which scripture calls works of the flesh...’(Kerr 1989:56-57).

6.1.2 Sin and freedom of the will

The will a slave to sin

Calvin refutes the notion that if sin is necessary then it no longer remains sin and that sin may be avoided if it is voluntary. He says: ‘I deny, therefore, that sin ought to be the less imputed because it is necessary and, on the other hand, I deny the inference that sin may be avoided because it is voluntary’. He feels that the view that because man has a free will he can avoid sin, undermines the fundamentals of God’s words that teach: because of his ‘corruption of nature’, man cannot will, but continue to sin, since he through the corruption of his nature has been enslaved by sin. He argues that man does not readily sin because of Adam’s voluntary subjection to Satan. Rather, he says, man sins not because he voluntarily chooses but he sins because he is innately corrupt (Calvin 2001:273).

So then, we may wonder how Calvin sees the ‘I’-ness of the individual accountability. Does the individual person not have a choice, a will in doing good? Calvin’s response is affirmative. He says that ‘...will is not sufficient to enable man to do good works unless he

be helped by grace...special grace, which only the elect receive' (Kerr 1989:58). We may be left still with the question: 'What does Calvin think about man's free will?' To that, Calvin believes man may only be said to be free in decision-making. However, free choice is not equally so when it comes to doing good and evil. The reason, says Calvin, is embodied in the premise that man behaves or does evil not by compulsion, but '...because he acts wickedly by will' (Kerr 1989:58).

Total depravity

Calvin's view of sin is strongly influenced by biblical texts such as Psalms 14:1-3; 53:13; which says: 'No one is righteous, no one understands, no one seeks God. All have turned aside, together they have become unprofitable, no one does good, not even one'. Like an exegete, Calvin applies more texts such as Isaiah 59:7 and Romans 3:10-16,18; in order to teach man of his utter hopelessness and their need to repent and ask for God's mercy, who is the only one that can save him from the coming doom.

Calvin is careful, however, not to regard all zeal and aspirations of the unregenerated elect, to be absolutely depraved. He cleverly states that 'amid this corruption of nature there is some place for God's grace; not such grace as to cleanse it, but to restrain it inwardly'. He adds that God, through His divine providence has deemed it fit to harness 'porosity of nature that it may not break forth into action'; however, He does not get rid of it within man (Kerr 1989:60). So we can see that to Calvin, there is nothing good that mankind can do unless God has put it in him and enabled him to do.

Human good is due to the grace of God

With regards to the question in our dissertation as to responsibility and accountability of the human person as a steward: whether that responsibility has been pushed aside; and whether the human created 'I' is excused for doing wrong and that person is also discredited when he does good: Calvin's answer is almost a yes.

He perceived and believed the notion that human good is due to the grace of God. He strongly refused the idea that good works were due to man. But it is clear that when it

comes to bad acts, these are attributed to man since man is naturally corrupt. In a certain defence, related to this subject, Calvin said that if our good works are ours, then it should also be said that the bread we asked from our heavenly Father, should also be called ours. The difficulty that we may face in view of Calvin's premise that we can do no good, save that which is through the grace of God, may startle us and continue to baffle our keenest intellect. One of the problems is, what about the biblical admonition and appeals and even the commands that call upon us to do good? Why is the human person called to do good works, if he is utterly hopeless to do so?

Calvin's answer is that we may resolve this difficult question once we understand the ministration on which the Holy Ghost operates in the hearts of the righteous. He says that 'When God erects His kingdom in us; He through the modes and locus of the Holy Spirit harnesses our will so that it does not give sway to its naturally corrupt will'. Making reference to his mentor Augustine, Calvin says that we are not only acted upon, but we also act. God acts and man acts for a common good in the life of the individual. He further quotes Augustine's words and states: 'The Spirit of God who actuates you is your Helper in acting, and bears the name of helper, because you, too, do something' (Calvin 2001:286-287).

6.1.3 Sin and the law of God

Human inability to keep the law

Calvin's view with regard to keeping the law of God is the same on the subject of sin and the freedom of the will. To him the entire human race perished in the first man, Adam. Our perception and knowledge of God was almost completely destroyed, had it not been for faith which affords us the opportunity to know God through Jesus our Lord. It is through God's divine intervention, he claims, that we, through our consciences feel the adherence of sin and recognize God's rejection of us. He further states that we are weak, 'naked and empty-handed', we need His mercy and merit. Of ourselves there is no good that we can do, save that which God's hand above can do. As for us, says Calvin, we all lack 'perfect righteousness' (Kerr 1989:63-64).

Rhetoric and the law

The ability to communicate effectively was of great importance to Calvin. He employed figurative speech and said that 'it expresses with greater significance and elegance what, simply said and without figure, would have less force and address. Hence figures are called the eyes of speech, not because they explain the matter more correctly than simple, proper language, but because they win attention by their propriety, arouse the mind by their luster, and by their lively similitude [to] represent what is said that it enters more effectively into the heart' (Gamble 1992:87).

The following sermon illustrates how Calvin employed effective rhetorical skills in order to convey forcefully his intended message to his intended audience. As we read through this sermon, let us consider the question posed at the beginning of this dissertation and apply our minds to how Calvin's sermon relates to those questions.

The Ten Commandments

SERMON SIXTEEN OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

Friday, July 19, 1555

Text: Deuteronomy 6: 1 – 4

We have often seen in these sermons how Moses would speak to the people touching on the content of the law. Just yesterday we saw him do this and now again we witness the same in today's text. We must not regard this as useless repetition insofar as men immediately forget what they have learned from God unless their memory is refreshed. And we know that it takes practically nothing to divert us. For we are so inclined toward vanity that nothing is more difficult for us than to remain obedient to God; as soon as we have conceived some vain idea, we are carried away and no longer remember what God said to us. Moreover, insofar as his ambition is to win us to Himself, He is forced to uproot those spurious opinions which preoccupy us. For when a piece of ground has laid fallow, it requires a considerable amount of work to make it usable again. The same is true of us. And that is why Moses says anew *that here are the commandments, statutes, (and) ordinances which the Lord committed to him in order that he might give them to the people that they might be kept.*

Now by these words Moses means that God wills to hold the people in his obedience. (It's as if God were saying) "Poor people, what do you hope to gain by wandering so? Behold, I give you my law. When you possess that doctrine, you cannot err. It is the way of salvation. Therefore take it." Nevertheless, men are fickle, rushing this way and that, and God (has to) tighten the reins with force. Just as when a horse is difficult to manage, the rider can hardly control it with a single tug. It will only prance about and resist handling. The rider must steady it with persistent control. So likewise must God act towards His people. And thereby he shows that the human mind is full of rebellion, or, better yet, instability, as man cannot hold on to the Word of God which simultaneously provides his salvation and well-being. This being true, let us note that in the person of the people of Israel we are admonished that when God set his Word before us, it was not simply recorded for that day (alone), but must be put into practice by us every day of our life. And what we must ever keep before us is that *these are* the statutes, the ordinances, and the commandments (by which we were meant to live). It is not our prerogative to set up the rules and laws which govern our life, but that authority belongs to God.

Furthermore, he has also admonished us by showing us the right road; therefore let us follow it and stop inquiring as to what we ought to do. For once our Lord has spoken there is no longer any doubt. We must not allege, "Well, I don't know if that is good or if that is to my advantage." Let us be content with what God has shown. For He will always be a good (school) master to us, provided we do not become bad pupils. And for this reason the commandments, statutes, and ordinances are mentioned here anew, lest we think that God only partly intended to teach us.

Therefore a perfection of wisdom is to be found in his law. It only remains for us to obey it, for us to be so curious as to desire what God has not shown, for us not to harbor foolish ambitions that lure us this way and that, rather let us remember that God did not envy those whom he took under his charge, but above all he taught them what was useful. (Therefore) let us govern ourselves according to his will and apply all our energy to that end. And let His law be sufficient for us. And though the whole world should reject us, what do we care, we have our judge.

And even if the world should go astray in (its pursuit of) vain causes, and everyone decides for themselves what seems best, let us constantly remember that it is requisite for us to stand before our God's judicial seat, that it is to him that we shall have to render an account. For He has given us His law and will judge us according to it. For that reason let us forget what the world devises, knowing that it amounts to nothing but vanity and lies.

At the same time, Moses adds, with respect to his office, that he has contributed nothing of his own, but according to the charge which God laid on him, he has faithfully set forth His law. And his assertion is well worth noting. For we have to keep in mind what has thus far been discussed, that Moses was the most excellent prophet whom God ever brought into being.

Yet in this text he does not take the liberty to teach what his own judgment dictates, for he knows that he is a mortal man, subject to the law like other men. That is why he maintains that what he reports he received from God; he only passes it on from (God's) hand to (our) hand. Since Moses (only) does that, who will dare to say that it is lawful for him to convey more? And yet we have seen that very thing come to pass. For in all the papacy, is it a matter of listening to what God might say in order to distinguish that from men's teachings? Rather they have their holy mother church, as they call it, their own decisions and statutes, and this pretext of the church seems quite sufficient to them. In the meanwhile they strip God of his authority in order to reinvest it in men who are nothing but putrefaction. What an insufferable sacrilege! For God ceases to be a lawgiver who guides his people and holds them under his yoke. Instead men usurp that authority.

So much the more must we keep what is contained here, namely, that Moses, although he was a heavenly angel and God had exalted him above all men, and although he was on the mountain for forty days without eating or drinking, clearly showing that he was no longer of the same status as others; nevertheless, when he returned from the celestial glory as on the company of angels, he still humbles himself and declares that he interjects nothing of his own, that he has no desire to fantasize, but is content to have heard what God proclaimed and to report it as a good servant who adds nothing, refusing to falsify the commission which God has been given. Again that is what we want to stress in this passage.

There is next an exhortation which adds in effect *that the people ought to become engaged in doing the Law*, as if he were saying that it isn't given in order for people to affirm that all its contents are good, righteous, and equitable, but in order for men to demonstrate whether they will be obedient to God or not.

It is for this reason that he says: *That you may fear the Lord your God and keep his commandments and statutes*. By this word *fear* He means that God in declaring his law wanted to show that it was up to us to choose whether to serve Him or not. For should we be able to do all the commandments in such a way as to leave nothing else to be said to men, nevertheless if the fear of God is not rooted in our hearts and we do not bear him the reverence of wanting to be His own, then our entire life is nothing but a wasted pomp. For we must not suppose that God is pleased with appearance. They might be praised by men, but they are only so much smoke in God's eyes.

Accordingly, if we want to keep the law correctly and want our life to be acceptable to God, then we must begin in this way: by showing His reverence and by wanting nothing but to be under his hand and guidance, rendering him homage as our sovereign King and honoring him as our Father. When that can become our desire, then that is the beginning of all the law and of all righteousness. That is why it is said that the fear of God is true wisdom. Thus when we want to know if we have gained anything from God's law, we must always test and sound whether we entertain the desire and zeal for God to be honored and glorified by us.

For if we do not possess such a fear in our hearts, the result will be seen in (the works of) our hands and feet, that it is all our own members, as God also decreed this when he proclaimed his law. And if those who boast of their fear of God lead debauched lives, they contradict themselves with their own mouth and reveal how shameless they are for boasting of fearing God. Thus this passage in which Moses explains that, first of all, in order to serve God properly, our hearts must be surrendered to Him, as it is insufficient to suppose that an external appearance can contain all the virtues which can be conceived; rather affection must precede (everything else), is well worth keeping.

Furthermore, the fear of God is not something hidden or idle. For although it might be enclosed in our hearts, it is imperative for it to be apparent in our life; for it is our heart which governs both our hands and our feet and everything else. Consequently let us learn to manifest, in word and deed, that we fear God by submitting our life to His will.

This being the case we can ever assert that God rejects everything men attempt once they have turned aside from the Word of God. Take for example the papists who are always engaged in “the service of God” as they call it. Yet what do they do? They keep busy, but to no avail, inasmuch as their effort centers on human inventions. To serve God (for them means) to babble, or bow down, before images and idols, to run from altar to altar, to sing masses, to tramp about on pilgrimages, to celebrate different saints on different days, (or) not to eat meat on Fridays and Saturdays. In brief, it’s an abyss of nonsense which they cherish under the guise and title of “the service of God.” But will you ever find that God has uttered a single word or syllable like that? No! For everything they say has been invented by men.

Now on the basis of our text let us ask whether God will accept such “service” as lawful and good. On the contrary he says, “May you fear the Lord your God and keep all his commandments and statutes.” Therefore we can conclude that when men turn aside from such a path and pursue their own imaginations and whatsoever they have forged, they clearly reveal their absence of any fear of God. For otherwise they would offer to him that sacrifice which above all prefers, which is that obedience mentioned in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Samuel. For if we do not listen to the voice of God in order to submit ourselves to it, but instead follow what someone has invented on his own or what (other) men have established, then that is an (act of) idolatry as heinous as sorcery which God detests. That is how the Holy Spirit judges us, even though mortal men may conclude the reverse. Consequently we see that Moses has explained here that when we willingly fear God we should also grant him the privilege of governing us according to his will, that we should not grant that freedom to men to guide us as they best see fit. Rather when God speaks, let every mouth keep closed, and let us keep our ears open to hear and receive everything that God says to us. Yet it is still insufficient for each (of us) to serve God (in self content), rather we must set about to the best of our ability to see

that he is worshipped by everyone. Indeed, we must even strive to see that his service endures after our death, after we have been taken from this world, and that the name of God is not destroyed with our passing, but abides forever.

That is why Moses says (that), “Your children and your posterity after you should continue to serve God and observe His Law.” We should carefully note here then that Moses does not simply exhort everyone to serve God, conforming his life to the law which He has given us, but he wills for fathers to take the effort to teach their children, and for us to leave as much seed behind us as we possibly can, to such an extent that God can be worshipped by our race and his name be continually invoked properly. Thus by this means those who are our descendants will be blessed and God’s covenant, which constitutes our salvation, will endure forever and never perish in spite of our morality.

Now instead of fulfilling this doctrine, we see that fathers provide such examples for their children as to suggest that they have conspired to annihilate altogether any fear of God and any observation of his law. Therefore we should not be surprised if God withdraws from us and if it seems that he wants to curtail those benefits he has bestowed on us, for we are unworthy of his continual kindness insofar as we are indifferent about his service surviving in its entirety. In any event, we must not treat what is said here lightly. Therefore let us endeavor so to teach those who come after us that God shall surely be worshipped forever and people know Him as everyone’s Father and Saviour, everyone fully surrender to him.

Now at the same time Moses adds what he has previously said, *that this is in order that their days may be prolonged and God may cause them to prosper in accordance with his promise to their fathers to give them a land flowing with milk and honey*. Now we have already explained what Moses meant by this text, namely that although God could compel us in a (single) word to serve Him, He nevertheless uses a more amicable approach with us, that is, He promises us a reward when we serve him, not because our works merit anything, or because He is obligated to us, but (because) when he bestows his favor on us in this way it serves to move us more effectively and result in our serving him with a far more ardent heart.

Now it is not an (act of) shameless ingratitude when we hear that God willingly obligates himself to us and will provide a reward, are we not being shameless and ungrateful (I say), if we do not totally commit ourselves to his service? We are his and everything we are able to do we owe him, as our Lord Jesus Christ says. “Who are you (He says)? I ask you, if a man has a servant, indeed a slave, whom he works like an ox or a horse, who performs a service for him in turn? Hardly. For anything a man does while a servant he owes his superior. Likewise you owe everything to God (says Jesus Christ), and he owes you nothing.” But it is on the basis of a free act God promises us that if we serve Him we shall be generously compensated, and then our effort is not in vain.

What (then) is his reason for doing this? In order to break our heart(s) for as I have already said, we are entirely too shameless if we are not wholly inspired to serve God, seeing that out of the bounty of his pure goodness it pleases him to grant us a reward which we do not merit.

Furthermore, let us also note that although God should make a thousand contracts to remunerate our works, we still could not claim that he owes us anything; rather He would be justified in cursing and detesting us. For who among us keeps the law as it ought to be kept? Even if we keep one article, we default in a hundred (others). And when we resolve to do what God has commanded us in his law, we (still) drag our feet. There remains so much imperfection that we shall never be able to run as we ought. Thus we are cursed and damned if God should want to judge us strictly. Therefore, it is entirely inappropriate for men to boast here of obtaining any renewal which they have earned, or of glorifying in their works. Rather let them realize that all of God’s promises in his law are conditional. Consequently, since no one can fulfill his obligation, they are useless unless God should receive and support us out of his pure goodness.

Think for a moment of the mania that exists among the papists to glorify in their works. They give the impression that they have made a contract with God and heartily enter into it with a diabolical imprudence, convinced that God is obligated to them. And on what basis? On the basis of their satisfactions, their works and their merits. And where will you find these? “O we have done this and that (they reply). It’s simply a matter of working it out with God”. But on the contrary, God

requires us to serve Him in everything that we undertake. It involves that we cannot do, as we have previously seen, and as so many other passages bring out.

Let everyone examine himself to see if there is any who has fulfilled the law. We are so far from it that you will not find one who can affirm that he has fulfilled a hundredth part of it. Rather it is appropriate for all to confess that they are cursed. Besides, whatever small portion men can fulfill, the fact remains that there will always linger some amount of vice and stain. Thus God would still be justified in rejecting all (of us) and holding us in disgust.

Therefore let men remain confused in their shame and let them confess that they are all guilty in God's sight. And for that reason let us note that this promise could be fulfilled apart from God's support of us and the fact that He overlooks so many of our weaknesses and vices, covering them over with His considering love. Therefore God received our works, not really considering their substance, but accepting them as good and holy because of the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. And although they may always contain some stain and spots, and would even be found to be stinking were it not for the fact that the blood of Jesus Christ has effaced that, it still remains only by this means and none other that He accepts us.

Therefore let us learn to glorify in God's pure mercy (alone) and not boast of any merits. And at the same time let us not fail to be intensely more encouraged to serve Him, seeing that he wants to attract us to himself on this way, mastering us by such gentle kindness.

Even Moses shows that everything that God promises his people, provided they keep His law, comes from such a source rather than from any (kind of) obligation. The fact is he says as much: *As God promised to your fathers.* (For) it's as if he were saying: "My friends serve God and he will be a good master to you. And don't consider the time you spend in keeping his law wasted, for an ample reward has been prepared for you. Only remember its source. For that fountain's reality (he says) lies in the fact that before you were born into this world God promised to lead your fathers into a land flowing with milk and honey." Thus in this manner Moses reminded the people of the promise which had been made to the patriarchs, readily showing that God was promising nothing new but only ratifying his earlier pledge.

And why? Was it because he was obligated to those who had yet been born in the world? Hardly. Rather it was because He had loved their fathers, as he has already said. Of course it is true now that Moses shows that the people were participants in such a promise, provided they kept God's law. But what? We must always keep in mind that men are above all lost. (For) if they resolve to oppose God, citing some (basis of) dignity (of their own), they will forever abide in their condemnation and all be found to be cursed. It is imperative then for them to stake their entire refuge on God's loving kindness, understanding that when they are compelled to walk according to the law, that God owes them nothing, but at all events he will not fail to accomplish what He promised them, acting purely out of his sheer gratuitous kindness. That is how this passage should be understood.

Now since the land promised to the Jews is mentioned here, let us note that today we ought to be far more inspired to serve God inasmuch as He has dedicated the whole earth to himself and wills for his name to be entreated everywhere, for the blood which our Lord Jesus shed has sanctified the whole earth which was formerly corrupt. For we know (that at that time) this was the only land which God had reserved for himself and over which he willed to rule the coming of his Son. But when our Lord Jesus Christ appeared, then he acquired possession of the whole world and his kingdom was extended from one end of it to the other, especially with the proclamation of the gospel. Therefore, in light of that, we should carefully observe that today we are far more tightly bound to serve God (than previously), especially since he has consecrated the entire earth through the precious blood of his Son to the end that we may inhabit it and live under his reign. And inasmuch as we (equally) desire his protection and safekeeping, let us also be admonished to surrender ourselves to him.

But (as we already said) since men are so constantly fidgety as to make it impossible to restrain them adequately, Moses affirms all the doctrines which he has just enunciated in saying: *Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one God.* He has already formerly said, "Listen: be on your guard." He has (even) reiterated the necessity of keeping the law. But here he far more clearly affirms his entire thought when in particular he explains that Israel's God is one God. Now herein he wishes to exclude all those gods conjured up by the world and wants to show that it is unlawful to

conceive of anything unless we hold to the Word of God. Therefore when Israel's God is called one God, it's as much as if Moses wanted to make a comparison between the God who published his law, and who had earlier revealed himself to his servant Abraham and to the other patriarchs, and all those gods in whom the world believed.

For since the beginning of time God has been invoked. His name was known to the pagans. But (to) what (end)? The pagans went amiss, each one claiming to worship God. And how? Through dreams and imaginations. For when men attempt to worship God without knowing him, they undoubtedly worship idols. (For example) the Turks today maintain that they worship God, the creator of heaven and earth; but it is only an idol that they worship. And how (is that)? They call him creator of heaven and earth; they (likewise) repudiate images. That is true. Nevertheless, insofar as they refuse to accept our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the living image of God, his Father, they are (still) only worshipping an idol instead of God. We (also) know what Saint Paul says, that whoever denies the Son denies the Father. Therefore they are not worshipping God but an idol.

The same is true of the Jews. The Jews happily boast of possessing the law and of worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But what? They are apostate. They renounce God's law when they rejected Jesus Christ who is the law's soul. It is he in whom God the Father wills to make himself known to us; it is in him that he wishes to be worshipped. He also says: "Kiss the Son whom I send you." And next, "Whoever does not honour the Son, does not honour the Father who sent him."

Let us note carefully then that Moses wanted to make a comparison between the God who is revealed through his Word and all the gods who are eulogized by the whole world; for they amount to nothing but monkey business and lies. And why? For we cannot correctly worship God unless we first of all know Him. We must always come back to what Jesus Christ said to the Samaritan woman: "You do not know what you worship."

When Jesus Christ uses this word, it's the same as if he were spitting on all those services which the world has since instituted. There hasn't been a nation which has

not boasted of serving God. (But) Jesus Christ comes to reject everything which was thought to be good and holy. “You do not know (he says) what you worship.” In that statement he shows that enlightenment is needed, as it is unfitting for us to go about (worshipping God) in a haphazard manner, rather we need to be reassured of the God we are serving.

Now since it is necessary for us to know God before we can truly worship and serve him, from whence does that knowledge come? Does it come from our garden, as people say? Is it the result of our own effort? Are we free to think of whatever seems best to us and say, “I know God”? No, no! Rather God must himself draw near to us and reveal himself. Thus the only means for adequately knowing God is for us to be taught by his Word.

That is why he says: *The Lord your God*. For the people had received the law and God had (already) made his covenant with their fathers, separating this flock from the entire rest of the world. Thus it is not without cause that Moses reminds the people here of the knowledge of God in order that they may lay aside all the pagans’ superstitions, having nothing in common with unbelievers, and instead realize that since God has revealed himself to them in such an intimate way, they possess one sure and infallible truth.

Now if that was true during the time of the law, we possess that truth even today. For although God may have given a sufficient admonition to the Jews to prevent them from becoming involved in the pagans’ pollutions and idolatries, today we possess a far brighter light since our Lord Jesus Christ has appeared, who is the living image of God the Father (as we have said). And we can readily concur with what is written in the first chapter of Saint John: “None has ever seen God, but the Son who has always been in the Father’s bosom has revealed him to us.” The ancient Fathers might have had (some) knowledge, as we have said, but that knowledge is considered invalid in comparison with what we possess today in the gospel. For since the sun of righteousness illuminates us, God has been intimately revealed to us.

That is why the prophet Isaiah (says) in particular, when referring to the redemption which was to be made in the person of God’s Son: “Behold, behold our God (he

says).” The prophet exclaims: “It is he, it is he, our God.” He is not content to say in a single phrase: “Here is our God.” Rather he speaks as if God were present and revealing himself to him. And what is that? Wasn’t God (already) present in the midst of his people? For he often said: “I shall dwell in the midst of you.” And again, “Behold my rest, Zion is the place of my habitat.” He even affirms anew that he will never depart from them, (and) that the people are his temple and a royal priesthood. What then is the purpose of the prophet Isaiah’s cry: “Behold, behold our God! It is he, it is he!” when our Lord Jesus Christ had yet to come into the world? Its purpose is that God has revealed himself to us even more perfectly.

Therefore we have even less excuse today if we wander about failing to hold to the pure truth, each person turning aside after his own reveries, saying, “It seems this way to me” or “That is what I find good.” We must understand that that is nothing and our obligation is to come to this certainty which our Lord Jesus Christ has brought.

Now the world was so far from knowing this, that it appears that everyone willfully despised God and tried to turn their back against him, rejecting all submission, in order to have the freedom of living in their own shocking way without having their shamefulness detected. The Jews are inexcusable, for we know that the prophets reproach them for having knowingly abandoned God and that they cannot absolve themselves as poor pagans (do), saying that they have not heard anything, for God solemnly affirms that he did not speak in vain.

Now today when God fully speaks to us and we possess so perfect a revelation in the gospel, is it not an insufferable shame for men to err as they do? In fact have there ever been as many blatant and stupid superstitions as that that exists in the papacy today? True, the Jews engaged in pagan superstitions (and) frequently were attracted by their filth and corruption, but when all of that is carefully examined you will discover that the papists have far outdistanced them. For today the Word of God is buried in the papacy. When they deal with faith, their articles are drawn from human forges; the Holy Scriptures are held in about as much respect by them as if it were dead and in total ruin. That is how they proceed.

And when you speak to them about worshipping God, they go after their inventions. “Indeed, our intentions are good,” they say. And they suppose that God is willing to be treated like a small child (and) that he will not undertake an examination of all the papacy’s doctrine. Next, if you mention faith, and ask if it is important to consider God’s free promises (their answer is), No! For they attribute everything to themselves. If you want to deal with Jesus Christ’s office, they vitiate the force of his passion and death as much as they possibly can. When it comes to discussing their salvation, they begin with free will and mention their merits and satisfactions first.

On the contrary, we have to begin with the Holy Spirit’s sheer grace, acknowledging that we are in bondage to sin unless liberated by God’s loving kindness. And that is the source for what the Scripture calls the remission of sins (and) our righteousness. It has even been appropriate to begin here knowing that if we have erred we cannot offer any other payment than what we receive through the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. But nothing like that exists in the papacy. Whenever it’s a matter of calling upon God, they make their circuits of the saints, both male and female. In the meanwhile Jesus Christ is neither known as he truly is nor reinvested in his office which God the Father gave him; instead the papists degrade him, as their sacrileges and forgeries attempt both to bury and rob him of all his glory which God the Father has given him. This is true of everything they do. For we know that their sacraments are contaminated from end to end. Instead of the Holy Communion of our Lord Jesus Christ, we find this infernal abomination of the Mass in which they claim Jesus Christ is sacrificed, as if he had done nothing or as if he had not been designated the unique and perpetual priest by God the Father. Thus we see how the papists laugh at the Word of God in which he has revealed himself; it seems that they have deliberately intended to efface the knowledge which the gospel contains. All the more then must we pay heed to this phrase: *that the Lord is God, indeed one sole God.*

Now whenever this word (*God*) is called to our attention, let us realize that its purpose is to illuminate whatever our own minds might think, or men invent, which we have not been taught by the Holy Scripture. For God wants to be esteemed by us to the extent that we might not be engulfed in the fantasies and mistakes of idolaters. In fact, we cannot have the true God unless we have him alone, that is,

unless we do not (attempt) to add a companion to him, for as soon as we begin introducing little gods, we renounce the living God. And why (is that)? Because he wills to be the only God. As the prophet Isaiah declares in another passage: “I am (the) living (God) (says the Lord); I will not give my glory to another.” For we have seen earlier how he called himself a jealous God. Why? In order to save us from every corruption as Saint Paul speaks of in II Corinthians. For as soon as we have turned aside from the simplicity of God’s Word, it’s the same as when a woman listens to a pimp who has come to whisper in her ear. We are that corrupt. And thus we shamelessly play the whore against God whenever we foreswear the faith which we promised him at baptism; we reject his law, (and) all religion is profaned by us whenever we refuse, however slightly, to accept his Word as pure doctrine. Therefore let us especially retain this word *God* whenever it is called to our attention, for God alone can be God.

Consequently, whenever we incorporate any created thing along with him, he abandons us as if we were apostates and were people who are unworthy of having anything in common with him, seeing that we have not willed to ascribe him the honour which he deserves, that is, that he is the Lord. For we profane that name whenever we associate him with created things or our dreams.

Now at the same time let us note that it is not enough to reserve a single-word title (“the only God”) to the living God, but it is important for everything that belongs to him to abide in him fully. How is that? He means not only to be called God, but to be acknowledged (as the) Almighty, as our Father and Saviour, as the one who has the authority to govern us, the one in whom we ought to place our trust and call upon. Those are the principle points on which we ought to meditate when we are told to honour one sole God.

It is true that the papists will frequently insist that Saint Michael and Saint William are not their gods, nevertheless they worship them; even their grotesque figures. They think they are going to escape (any condemnation) through the subterfuge that these images are not the saints to whom they pray, but only their reminders which represent them; in any event, this is contrary to God’s express prohibition. We even see that they do not know how to determine, in any way whatsoever, how God wants to be worshipped, since they mingle as they do among their idols of stone

and wood which they believe represent their saints. True enough they attempt to justify their actions through the use of *Dulia* and *Latria*, terms which they do not understand, when they say that they are “serving” their images and rendering “honour” to God, for that is the meaning they attribute to these words. But they have truly compromised God when they explain that they render “honour” to God alone, whereas they (merely) “serve” their idols. Isn’t it a (more) sacred thing to call upon God (than it is to call upon saints)? For that is the true “service” which God wants as brought out in the fiftieth Psalm. Thus we see that the world mocks God with insufferable impudence when it so shamelessly corrupts all his service and that it is more than a detestable act for men to be misled this way, seeing that the gospel contains such a clear and gaping revelation. Thus so much ought we to cling to this doctrine, knowing that our Lord wills for us to be wholly attached to him and that an inviolable union might exist between him and us. This will be accomplished when we are simply confined between the boundaries of his Word, when we permit no access to human inventions, (and) when we forbid our minds to stray. It will come to pass only after we listened to what the Holy Scripture contains, promptly saying amen, not simply with our mouths, but when our faith has fully relied upon what has proceeded from the mouth of our God.

Questions and answers

Question: Does John Calvin’s sermon depict the power and strength of the cross and the resurrection in the life of the person as been supplanted by the divine Jesus Christ in the driver-seat and hence disregard for the Holy Spirit?

Answer: Calvin’s sermon unequivocally depicts the strength of the cross and Christ’s resurrection. There is no trace of a notion that Jesus Christ is seated in the driver-seat of the individual’s life. Furthermore, there is no disregard for the Holy Spirit in the individual’s life. Instead, Calvin teaches that God holds the individual person responsible for absolute obedience towards Him (God). Calvin wished to convey through his sermon that when Jesus was resurrected, He assumed authority of the entire world. The individual is expected by Calvin to make a complete ‘surrender’ to Jesus who has ‘consecrated’ the world with His precious, holy blood. As far as the question of the Holy Spirit, Calvin, made it clear in this sermon that we are to begin with the ‘Holy Spirit’s sheer grace’.

Observation: When we consider the statements made by Calvin in the sermon above, with regard to Christ having ‘acquired possession of the whole world...’ we may find it somewhat inconsistent with Calvin’s overall view of ‘Pre-Election’ and predestination.

Question: The responsibility and accountability of the human person as a steward: Has it been pushed aside in this sermon? Is the human created ‘I’ excused for the wrong he/she does? And deeds, thoughts and actions through the human ‘I’ or selfhood supplanted by the devil?

Answer: Calvin, in no terms, sets aside the responsibility and accountability of the human person as a steward. Instead, from the first page of this sermon, Calvin points out that though mankind is naturally inclined to deviate from the Almighty’s law, God, through His word seeks to harness and to constrain the sinner from perversity. The individual person is a steward of God that must be held accountable to God. Calvin clarifies this principle, of stewardship to God, by mentioning in the sermon that we are to keep the Lord’s commandments in order to ‘demonstrate’ our faithfulness to God.

Question: Does Calvin’s sermon denote Christ’s roles to be reduced to the differentiated prism of God, humanity and the cosmic world to an ‘either...or’ continuum or is it denoted by the ‘both...and’ continuum?

Answer: Calvin’s sermon denotes Christ’s roles to be reduced to the differentiated prism of God, humanity and the cosmic world to a ‘both... and’ continuum! Calvin employs a myriad of Christological titles.

Question: Does Calvin provide a direct encounter through Jesus Christ in the ‘I’-ness or do we have an encounter with God, human beings and the cosmic-world through the Holy Spirit?

Answer: Calvin does not provide a direct encounter through Jesus Christ in the ‘I’-ness. We mentioned in the first question above that Calvin recognized the sinner’s dire necessity to plead for the undeserved mercies of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, God reveals Himself to the individual person through His Word. This revelation is possible through God’s Holy Spirit.

Question: What concept of Christ’s offices if any, are denoted in this sermon (e.g. Priest, Prophet, King)?

Answer: The three offices are all present in this sermon. The Office of Priest is mentioned by Calvin’s statement in the sermon when he says that Christ has been ‘designate’ to be a “...perpetual priest...” of God. On the other hand the office of prophet is present through Moses who is the prophet of God, but also a type of Christ in biblical context. Calvin does not say that Moses is a type of Christ, but it is assumed by the present writer that Calvin must have shared the same view. Thirdly, the office of King is denoted in the sermon above through Calvin’s reference to the title “Lord”, as he refers to Christ.

Question: What Christological titles are there?

Answer: The Christological titles of Christ may be listed as cited in the following table of data:

Christological Titles and Other Titles	Amount of times mentioned by Calvin
Author	
Our Lord	2
A Good (School) Master	1
Our Judge	1
The Lord	8
The Lord Our Sovereign King	1
King of Kings	
The Word of God	9
The mouth of God	1
The voice of God	1
Our Lord Jesus Christ	9
Law Giver	
Jesus Christ	9
God’s Son or His Son	3
Creator or Maker	1
Saviour	1
The living image of God	1
I AM	

The Son	4
Arm of Omnipotence	
The Holy Spirit or Spirit of God	2
Almighty	1
Ruler	
God the Father	4
Father	4
God	

Question: How

Answer: Calvin

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(Jones, P P 2005. Interview with Professor of Systematic Theology, Geneva.)

6.1.4 The person of Christ

The mediator

Bearing in mind that sin had separated us from the presence of God, according to Calvin, it necessitated only one that ‘belonged to God’ to serve as our intermediary. For there was none, from the sons and daughters of Adam, that could reach out to God. It required the

Son of God to become 'Emmanuel, God with us'. Calvin adds that the mediator was to accomplish the following task:

- To restore us to the grace of our God;
- To make us children of God; and
- To save us from hell to Heaven.

According to him there had to be an exchange or buffering between us and Christ.

- He had to become Son of man in order that we could become children of God. If we had to ask Calvin 'in which nature did He destroy death and sin?' he would say 'in His [Christ's] human nature!' That is how He could appease the Father's righteous indignation, says Calvin. Christ came primarily and most importantly to be our Mediator.
- 'A sacrifice to appease the Father on our behalf' (Kerr 1989:72-72).

The two natures of Christ

Let us consider the two natures of Christ according to Calvin's thinking. While we do so let us bear in mind our observations of traditional Christologies and see what role they have, whether negative or positive in the mind of Calvin. We should also seek to see in clear terms what Calvin truly envisaged of the natures of Christ.

Calvin taught that when we look at John 1:14, we should not look at the words 'the word was made flesh' in a way to imply that the Word changed to be flesh, nor are we to think that there was a confusion or mingling between the flesh and the Word. In essence, for Calvin there was no 'confusion of substance but a unity of person'. He affirmed the two distinct natures that were united to form one person.

Calvin saw the existence of man to be the best example through which he could explain what he admittedly perceived as a 'very great mystery'. That illustration is of the two substances of man. A man has a body and soul, he maintained. Yet these two distinct substances were unconfusably a composite of one person (Kerr 1989:73).

The divine nature of Christ

Let's begin this subject by asking, what did Calvin believe about Christ's pre-existence? Christ, according to Calvin, is eternal. Speaking about Christ, Calvin says Christ was the

‘Eternal Word before He was clothed with flesh’ (Calvin 2001:419). The next question that we could pose, is, what happened to the divinity of Christ when it was mysteriously combined into the one person of Christ? Was His divinity captured into His human body? Or did His divine nature envelop or shroud His human body?

Calvin’s response to our question may be seen in his words when he wrote: ‘For although the boundless essence of the Word was united with human nature into one person, we have no idea of any enclosing’. So then how does he justify Christ’s divinity united with His humanity? His answer, ‘The Son of God descended miraculously from heaven, yet without abandoning heaven; was conceived miraculously in the Virgin’s womb, to live on the earth and hang upon the cross, and yet always filled the world as from the beginning’ (Calvin 2001:414).

The humanity of Christ

Christ’s act of veiling Himself, with human flesh, is, according to Calvin, a fulfillment of His office as Mediator. Calvin defended the humanity of Christ against ideologies of old such as the Marcionites and Manichees, who purported the view that Christ was a phantom, and did not have a human body. He continued pointing to the Scriptures, maintaining that, ‘The blessing is not promised in a heavenly seed or the mask of a man, but the seed of Abraham and Jacob; nor is the everlasting throne promised to an aerial man but to the Son of David’. Calvin further stated that Christ was not satisfied with what man called Him. He said that that is why Jesus called Himself the Son of man – It was in order to emphasize that He was truly human (Calvin 2001:409).

The questions that should interest us are: What did Calvin think and perceive, regarding Christ’s humanity? Was Christ immune to pain, hunger and thirst and illnesses, etc.? Did Christ have a humanity that was advantageous over that of the first Adam?

Calvin’s view regarding the humanity of Christ is that Christ’s humanity was subject to illness, infirmities, thirst, hunger and other human frailties. He substantiates his position by quoting Galatians 4:4: ‘But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law’; Hebrews 2:14,16,17: ‘Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.

Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people'; Hebrews 4:15: 'For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin'; Romans 8:3: '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'; and John 17:19: 'And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth'.

In quoting the above texts Calvin also seeks to prove that Christ took on human flesh in order that He might vanquish sin and death on behalf of the whole human race, which He seemingly could not accomplish without assuming His human nature. One interesting point that Calvin brings out in his defence against the Manichees is that, the 'Hebrew idiom' for the title 'Son of man' means 'true man' (Calvin 2001:410-411). This 'true man' is a vital definition, since it further epitomizes the true humanity of Christ.

So now that we understand Calvin's view on what type of nature Christ vanquished, the other question we should pose is, did Christ have a tainted body? How does He see the incarnation in relation to the sin's transmittance into Christ's body?

As far as Calvin is concerned Christ was 'uncontaminated' and was 'exempted from the common corruption' (Calvin 2001:414).

The tension between Calvin's two natures

One of the questions we posed in the previous chapters, is how does Calvin perceive the unity of the two natures?

The best illustration Calvin could use, as mentioned previously, was the formation of mankind. To Calvin, as the body and soul could exist in one person, 'without confusion of substance', so was it possible for the two natures of Christ to co-exist in unity in one person. Calvin advocately spoke out against an 'either...or' continuum regarding the two natures. He said some 'frantic and furious spirits fasten on the attributes of humanity to destroy His divinity; and on the other hand, on those of His divinity to destroy His humanity' (Calvin 2001:418).

Calvin condemned Nestorius whom he felt ‘dissected rather than distinguished between the two natures’. He also condemned Eutyches and Michael Servetus of his time. Calvin was particularly against Servetus for denying that Christ was the Son of God, since he [Servetus] believed that Christ could not be a Son of God since He was begotten ‘in the womb of the Virgin’. Calvin went on to defend the traditional stance of Chalcedon of the hypostatic union which was a term used by people of old to refer to a person who was a composite of two natures.

Arguably, we could say to Calvin that there is a real tension between the two natures. We could ask Calvin, how does he see the text, which implicitly acknowledges Christ’s subordination to God the Father? Interestingly, Calvin sees no difficulty in the subordination of the humanity of Christ, as expressed in the various biblical texts, nor where Christ speaks of His eternal divinity. What he sees is expressed in what he calls ‘a figure of speech’ used by people of old, ‘a communication of properties’. What this means is that it is congruous to speak of Christ and for Christ to speak of Himself, of His human weakness, His limited knowledge as well as we can interchangeably speak of His divine attributes. Examples of these can be seen in John 8:58; when Christ said: ‘Before Abraham was I AM’.

He could also say He does not know when the last day will be; and where the scripture says: He increased in wisdom and in stature. Since divinity, which He still was while on earth, cannot be prone to these human weakness and limitations, yet as human as He was, He could rightly, interchangeably be called either way. In fact, Calvin moves on to point out an interesting point – that is, there are texts that refer to both His dual attributes simultaneously. These, Calvin states, we find especially in the Gospel book of John (Calvin 2001:416-417).

Some examples that Calvin implies are found in the following texts: 1Corinthians 2:8, where it is mentioned that the Jews crucified the Lord. Another text used is Acts 20:28, which says ‘that God purchased the Church with His blood’. Through these texts Calvin demonstrates what he called ‘a communication of properties’(Calvin 2001:416).

One nagging question that keeps prodding the mind is, since Calvin perceives that the miraculous condescension of Christ did not mean that He ‘abandoned’ heaven, for He was still Omnipresent, what are the implications regarding His Son-ship that He [Christ] has

engaged Himself in? What happens to the aspect of His voluntary subordination and rightfully so, His humanity? Will Christ retain His subordination forever? Or is there a cessation of His subordination to His Father later, some time in the future? These are relevant questions especially when we consider what the scriptures say. In 1 Corinthians 15:24, where we read that at the end Christ will deliver the kingdom of God, and Philippians 2:8, where we read that Christ gave the scepter of royalty and was obedient to the Father, and subjected Himself to the lowest point possible and was then glorified by the Father. What will happen to Christ's act of subordination? Calvin responds by saying that this act of Christ's subordination to the Father 'is only for a time, until we enjoy the immediate presence of His God-head' (Calvin 2001: 417).

The answer as to what happens to Christ's humanity and subordination to God the Father is perhaps best seen from Calvin's perspective in his following words:

'Let us, therefore, regard it as the key of true interpretation, that those things which refer to the office of Mediator are not spoken of the divine or human nature simply. Christ therefore shall reign until He appears to judge the world, in as much as, according to the measure of our feeble capacity, He now connects us with the Father...then Christ, having accomplished the office of Mediator, shall cease to be the vicegerent of the Father, and will be content with the glory which He possessed before the world was'.

Calvin further states that 'God will then cease to be the head of Christ, and Christ's own God-head will then shine forth of itself, whereas it is now in a manner veiled' (Calvin 2001: 418). So we may observe from Calvin's thrust of Christ's office as temporarily that of a Mediator. This leads us to our next subject, which deals with the offices of Christ.

6.2 THE WORK OF CHRIST

6.2.1 The Munus Triplex of Christ

The contextual traditional formula during Calvin's immediate time was a two-fold one: priest-king. Calvin moved on to develop a triple formula of priest-king and prophet.

Although the first reformer to suggest a three-fold office before Calvin is Osiander, Calvin is attributed to be the first proponent of the triple offices. It is probably more appropriate to

say that the traditional formula owes its wide acclamation to Calvin. Notwithstanding the theological currents of criticism from Ritschl (1870) and Ernesti (1773), Calvin's triple offices formula found its way into the convictions of theologians such as Brummer, Schleiermacher, Gerhard, Bavinck, Neurman and transcended even into the ranks of Anglican, Lutheran and Catholic theology.

There were two types of criticisms of the triple office formula. One was represented by those who like Ernesti wanted a reform to Luther's priest-king formula; the other, like Ritschl, who objected to the concept of 'office', but rather preferred a concept of love over a concept of law (Jansen 1956:16-36).

It is probably fair at this stage to say that the triple office doctrine formula represents more of the 'both...and' continuum, while Ernesti and Ritschl represent the 'either...or' continuum. It should not be surprising that orthodoxy, through its embrace of the triple office, would experience an abundance of exegetical illuminations and amazing biblical analogies that transcends the limited realms of our Christological 'either...or' continuum. Jansen said it well when he said: 'The Jesus of Ritschl and Harnack was clad in prophetic garments but was stripped of his Kingly and Priestly vestments' (Jansen 1956:20).

Having said this, it is perhaps suitable to admit that even though the triplex priest, king and prophet formula is a more wholesome form of Christ's work and person, it still does not fully describe the complete person of Christ. The contribution it has made in theological schools, churches and other institutions and for persons of religious faith, is that it laid a foundation for the various titles which spring forth as the attributes of Christ's person and work. This does not mean that there were no other titles of the work of Christ that were being propagated at the time but a better understanding of the nature of man and the work of Christ was achieved through the triple offices formula.

Examples of such were that man was created in three spheres – A heart that loves God, a hand that rules in His stead, a mind that knows Him. When man sinned, he lost his triune dignity. Hence the Messiah condescended and became the Second Adam, who ensured our Salvation. It is through His unfaltering obedience as priest-king and prophet that man's lost Edenic status was procured and restored. Not only did this triple doctrine seek to permeate the study of man's salvation, but it sought to explore the avenues of the Triune God. For it

stated that Christ obtained the kingdom from His Father through the Holy Ghost. He functioned as prophet (Jansen 1956:17).

Prophet and king

The name Christ, according to Calvin refers to those three offices, since priests, prophets and kings were anointed with holy oil. Furthermore, Calvin states that the Messianic name was attributed to the Mediator, who was named in his office of kingship. This person, says Calvin, was anointed for the purpose of witnessing and proclaiming God's grace in a way different from those in a similar office. Calvin gets a little involved and says that this anointing which He received to become a 'teacher' is not for His own interest, but for the entire body. When He would come He would put an end to all prophecies, says Calvin.

With regard to His kingship, Calvin would have his readers understand that Christ's kingship is for our benefit. But this benefit is far superior to the benefits that can be enjoyed in the earthly life – for they are spiritual (Calvin 2001:429). According to Calvin the function of Christ is mainly to His office of kingship. This kingship, being of a spiritual dimension, has benefits for the individual believer:

- Through it we are raised to eternal life;
- We are enriched with salvation;
- We are conquerors against evil forces;
- We are taught endurance;
- We are inspired and triumphant; and
- We are fortified and loved; (Calvin 2001:427-431).

Priest

The purpose and use of Christ's Priestly office is that of 'a pure stainless Mediator. He is by His holiness to reconcile us to God'. God's righteousness prevents us from having direct access to Him, says Calvin. He goes as far as portraying a grim picture of an angry judge, who is angry with us. Hence, Christ the Priest, knowing that a ransom ought to be sacrificed in order to appease the wrath of God, fills that office, says Calvin. But how we ask? Through His vicarious sacrifice - His death. We ourselves become priests in Christ and have access to God in His sanctuary with our sacrifices, prayers and praises. So we can glean the following: That through Christ's priesthood, we

- Are reconciled to God;
- We have a ransom in Christ; and
- We have access to God as priests before Him (Kerr 1989:75-77). Calvin's view about Christ being our mediator is that even though the sinner's condition may have been without stain, he/she would still be unworthy and incapable of aspiring to the presence of God (Porter and Greengrass 1983:26).

6.2.2 The death of Christ

Calvin first highlights God's amazing love that embraces us to Him before we could be rightfully reconciled to Him through our only possible link and bridge to God – even Christ our Lord.

It is astonishing how Calvin moves on to show the strangest paradox, of how the unrighteous and corrupt and detestable sinner can be loved by a pure, holy, righteous God, who cannot bear the sight of corruption, which we are to Him. In the most yearning and heart-rending language, Calvin portrays the amazing love of an amazing God for an amazing sinner. God, says Calvin, anticipates our 'reconciliation in Christ'. To the question, 'How has Christ vanquished sin and bridged the gulf between us and God?' Calvin says this was accomplished through Christ's perfect 'obedience', i.e. through His death. Calvin upholds that through death, and not just any death, but a voluntary death stemming from obedience, Christ met the requirements of our punishment. He further states that our guilt was transferred on to 'the head of the Son of God – Isaiah 53:12' (Kerr 1989:77-78).

6.2.3 Resurrection of Christ

Calvin points out that through the cross, death and tomb there is a sense of 'weakness'. Calvin believed that while we have been purchased, our sins paid for and reconciled to God through Christ's death, we are 'newborns' through Christ's resurrection. Our hope and victory, says Calvin, is secured through Christ's resurrection (Kerr 1989:78-79).

6.2.4 Ascension of Christ

Calvin purports that Christ ‘truly inaugurated His kingdom only at His ascension’.

Therefore, what Calvin perceives in the ascension is Christ who ascends not for Himself, but for us. He is seen by Calvin as the following titles when He has ascended:

- Ruler – who will rule with us; as our
- Head – who will gather us; as our
- Advocate – who will defend us; as our
- Intercessor – who intercedes for us; as our
- Redeemer – who redeems us; as our
- Promise – who promises eternal Salvation; and as our
- Judge – who will judge us.

Hence we see in Calvin a glorious victory and reign and assurance and eternal life, with Christ being the ultimate essence of it all (Kerr 1989:79-80).

When Christ ascended, according to Calvin:

- Jesus Christ ‘was installed in the government of heaven and earth, and formally admitted to possession of the administration committed to Him, and ...to continue until He descends to judgment’;
- He is presiding on the judgment-seat of heaven;
- He has opened the entrance into heaven that was closed up by our first parents, Adam and Eve;
- He appears constantly as our intercessor and advocate before our Father in heaven and;
- He entered heaven ‘in our flesh’. This is a vital point that Calvin makes. It is a unique assertion to the Christological world. To Calvin, the ascension and entrance of Christ into heaven in our human flesh, is that which enables us to enter heaven and makes our representation real there (Calvin 2001:449-450). In harmony with the abovementioned statements Calvin also said: ‘Likewise, we believe that as He was manifested in the flesh, He sits at the right hand of the Father. This means that He has been constituted and declared king, judge, and Lord over all’ (Ganoczy 1966: 191).

6.3 THE ESCHATON

6.3.1 Limited atonement

What is meant by Calvin's limited atonement is very well illustrated by Edwin Palmer in his book entitled 'The Five Points of Calvinism', (1980:41-42). What Palmer does, is contrast the Arminian's stance of 'universal atonement' against that of Calvin's 'limited atonement'. With reference to the Arminian's, Calvin says, that they propagate that Christ died for the entire world with Judas and Esau included. This belief, Palmer eludes, makes a 'disjunction between what Christ did [He died for all] and what Christ accomplished [all are not saved].' He goes on to say that, for the Arminians, salvation is a 'grab-bag', i.e. there is a package for all, however some will grab one and some will not.

He moves on to say that they believe that Christ did not just shed His blood, but that He spilled it also. For, adds Calvin, the Arminians believe that Christ intended to sincerely save all yet in reality only 'some will be saved.'

Hence some of His blood 'was wasted' – for it spilled. Palmer also elaborates by another example, that the Arminian's are like a man who more than a century ago was sentenced to be hanged, but who [that man] received the president's pardon, only to refuse it.

In essence what Palmer seeks to prove through this example is that the Arminian view holds that while Christ's death may offer forgiveness, the sinner may reject that forgiveness. On the other hand, Palmer states the Calvinist's case of limited atonement; and he says: Calvinists believe that Christ intended that He atone only for the ones His Father has given to Him and the text they hold to is John 6:37-40. Palmer continues to say that, Calvin argued that if everyone's sins were paid for, then everyone would go to heaven. The reality is that not all people will be saved.

According to Palmer, the texts that Calvin used to justify his view that only a limited number of people receive Christ's atonement are Matthew 1:21, which speak about 'His people'; John 10:15 and John 10:26 which refer to 'His friends'; John 15:13 'His sheep', and Ephesians 5:25, that speak about 'the bride'. In order that clarity be made, Palmer cites that some have preferred the terms 'definite or particular', instead of the term 'limited' atonement. However, Palmer adds, "These stress that the atonement which is unlimited in its power, is limited to a definite, particular number of people, namely the believers (Palmer 2005:41-42).

We must mention that in spite of the above statement, we should be aware of the theological debate on whether Calvin fully believed in his teaching of limited atonement. Paul van Buren's doctoral dissertation, entitled *Christ in Our Place*, indicates Calvin's failure to acknowledge the universal atonement where it seemed obvious for him to do so. He simply did this so that he did not contradict his basic premise of limited atonement (Gamble 1992:201).

6.3.2 The Judgment-seat of God

In Calvin's third book entitled Institutes of the Christian Religion (1989:60), chapter six; he directs us to the type of righteousness that the individual believer should consider. He says that it is 'a heavenly tribunal'. With that in mind, Calvin goes on to warn us of applying our inferior standards in order to measure God's perfect justice. Calling our attention to the judgment-seat of God, Calvin admonished us to have self-introspection. He says the great question that we should ask ourselves is, 'How shall we answer the heavenly judge when He calls us to account?' Calvin further calls upon the individual believer to conceive a judge of the scripture, not one of our own devising.

In solemn language Calvin portrays an awesome, glorious God of inconceivable purity and holiness. In descriptive language he points to a God who is brighter than the stars, the sun, whose holiness out-shines that of angels. He says that God does not need to be appeased by good works. Even if the believer's good works matched the requirements of the law that would not change us in order to meet His righteousness.

Calvin repeatedly condemns man's boastful self-righteous arrogance. He also continuously warns against any form of pride from the individual believer before the judgment-seat of God. According to Calvin, there is absolutely nothing that can commend us to God. Not an iota of our being or merit can be accounted or credited towards the righteousness of God. Even that perfect righteousness of God, we cannot apply it on ourselves. It is God that does that!

The question that we ought to ask Calvin is: 'Seeing that there is nothing from our side that we can do to earn the righteousness of God, what is the role of the individual 'I'?' Does the human steward of God have any part to play? This is a real and very relevant question that

we pose to Calvin and to ourselves. Calvin answers our question when he quotes Augustine saying: 'Of all prior men groaning under the burden of corruptible flesh and the infirmities of this life, the only hope is, that we have one Mediator, Jesus Christ the righteous, and that He intercedes for our sins' (Calvin 2001:62).

So we see that in the presence of an offended, un-approachable Judge, the individual believer's only hope is his Mediator Jesus Christ. Calvin also points the hopeless, defiled sinner to 'the wounds of the Saviour.' It is of paramount importance that we take note of the Christological titles that Calvin employs and refers to Christ, with regard to the judgment. At the most highly revered tribunal in the entire universe, the believer is commended to rely on 'a firm rock'. If the believer is haunted by the sins and has a troubled conscience, Calvin points that person to yet another Christological title – the 'Lord's wounds' (Calvin 2001:62-63).

Now Calvin's view of the judgment-seat of God involves the devil. Calvin must have been referring to Zachariah 3, when he wrote about the devil who is portrayed as appearing before God to accuse us before God. What will work or be of benefit for the believer during the judgment, according to Calvin, is 'the true intent of the will'. Hypocrisy which leads to 'ostentatious display', according to Calvin will be condemned by God.

Perhaps at this stage we could ask the question, 'seeing that our merits do not count, and seeing that the will's intent or rather our motives will be considered in the judgment and that our only hope is our Mediator and Saviour and Lord; how can we know if we are righteous? To state it differently, how can we know if someone is a righteous person? It appears from Calvin that we can know that we are on the wrong track if we have a flattery, self-loving spirit that is boastful and if we feel that we are in some way or another righteous. The judgment itself is very strict and accurate, Calvin suggests. One danger that we as believers face, is the issue of pride and self-righteousness. To Calvin we should be empty of all such corruption, if we are to be accounted righteous before the judgment-seat of God.

Without sounding repetitive, there seems to be a continuous question burning in the back of our minds, and that is, what does God require of us? In Calvin's view, the believer is to be humble before God and man. We need to have contrite hearts. We should have

wounded hearts and hope in our Lord and Saviour and Mediator whose merits only are righteous to God (Calvin 2001:63-65).

6.3.3 The Resurrection and Immortality

As far as the subject of the Eschaton, Calvin is perceived by Gamble, as having a somewhat 'moderate, non-speculative, middle-of-the road position' (Gamble 1992:113). A student of Kerr on the other hand, may not fully concur with Gamble since Calvin has also said the following: That there is a perpetual punishment for the froward and an eternal blessedness for the 'elect'. In essence, Calvin believed in the immortality of the soul. To him there was a resurrection of the flesh. The strange part of Calvin's 'resurrected flesh' is the following statement:

'Besides if we are to be provided with new bodies how will head and members match? Christ arose; was it by fashioning a new body for himself? No, as he had foretold: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (John 2:19). He received again the mortal body which He had previously borne. And it would not have profited us much if the body which had been offered as an atoning sacrifice had been destroyed and replaced by a new one' (Kerr 1989:124).

The above statement could leave one baffled and confused regarding Calvin's state on the view of the resurrected body, especially on the part where he says that Christ 'received again the mortal body which He had previously borne.' He seems to have moved from that position when he said the following:

'First, we must hold, as I have indicated that as to substance we shall be raised again in the same flesh we now bear, but that the quality will be different. So it was that, when the same flesh of Christ which had been offered as a sacrifice was raised up, it yet excelled in other gifts as if it had become utterly different' (Kerr 1989:125).

6.3.4 The Second Coming

Calvin believed in the Second Coming of Christ. He said to the Christians that they should not 'hesitate, ardently desiring the day of Christ's coming as of all events most auspicious'. He also said that 'the whole family of the faithful will keep in view that day' (Dederen 2000:924).

6.3.5 The unbeliever's destiny

Calvin perceived the unbeliever's lot as one that is most wretched and fierce. The unbeliever will have to bare the pernicious, unbearable anguish that is beyond human language.

He did not understand the biblical texts such as Matt. 8:12; Matt. 23:13 regarding the 'gnashing of teeth' and 'weeping' and 'darkness', etc. to refer to a physical description. Instead, Calvin believed that such texts as 'unquenchable fire' as in Matt. 13:12; Isa. 66:24 and others, were a figurative expression to portray the 'degree' and misery that the wicked have to contend with as a result of their complete and absolute expulsion from the presence of God (Kerr 1989:126).

6.3.6 Justification by faith

Definition of justification by faith

To Calvin the subject Justification by Faith is 'the main hinge on which religion turns.' He defines justification by faith as: man justified in the sight of God, and he is justified by either faith or works. A proper understanding of Calvin's justification can be seen in the following way:

- Since we cannot be righteous through our good works, we cannot be accounted to be just before God or righteous before Him.
- Secondly righteousness can only be imparted by God out of His free generous grace.
- Thirdly if there is any righteousness that we may have it is not through the good works that obtain it, but rather it affirms the righteousness accounted and imputed to us by God.
- There is no such thing as faith and works. Here there is no 'both...and' continuum that makes us righteous before God.
- It is either faith or works.
- So since works cannot make us just before God, works is a mere affirmation of the righteousness that we receive from the grace of God through Christ.

To Calvin the problem with 'work-righteousness' is that it gives room for boasting and once there is self to attribute to the righteousness, it is no longer faith-righteousness, which comes free from God through the merits of Christ (Kerr 1989:100-101).

So far Calvin's reasoning sounds plausible and very thorough and expresses the ethos of the Holy Scriptures.

However, there still remains a problem which may slip by unnoticed. That is: Do we merely through faith appropriate or have this righteousness imputed through Christ and the Holy Spirit without playing a role? What part does the individual 'I'-ness have? Is the individual's role as a steward, who is accountable before God, replaced by the Christ in the driver's seat? According to Calvin the individual 'I'-ness role is for that individual to acknowledge 'that he has been reconciled to God: that with Christ's righteousness interceding and forgiveness of sins accomplished he is justified. And although regenerated by the Spirit of God, he ponders the everlasting righteousness laid up for him not in the good works to which he induces but in the sole righteousness of Christ' (Kerr 1989:102).

Salvation versus our own righteousness

In this regard, Calvin makes a powerful illustration in order to drive his point home. He says that man has the following righteousness that is possible to him:

- Soaked in idolatry without a knowledge of the Almighty God;
- Lip-serving legalist in sacraments and ceremonies but void of God in their actions; or
- They are hypocritical and empty pretenders and wicked in their hearts; or
- They are generated by the Holy Spirit and are cumbered with true holiness.

When they are to face judgment, says Calvin, none will be, according to his natural gifts; found with an iota of good.

Yet with certainty, we can argue with Calvin and say, 'there are so many people who are not Christians or do not practice any religious ceremony, yet these do good works that even the professing believers do not.' Calvin's response may be cited in his words when he said: 'I do not deny that all the notable endowments that manifest themselves among unbelievers are gifts of God...since nothing is in any way praiseworthy that does not come from Him' (Kerr 1989:104).

CHAPTER 7: A COMPARISON AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CHRISTOLOGIES OF JOHN CALVIN AND ELLEN G. WHITE

The Bible states that it is impossible for God to be tempted. It may become slightly clearer for us to conceive that due to the fact that Christ was not only human but also God, it was virtually impossible for Him to sin since divinity cannot be tempted. While it is true that His humanity was tempted in the severest manner that He could endure, it would be very difficult for His human nature to sin since that nature was united to His divine nature. Ellen White seems to have acknowledged this by stating: ‘...but humanity by being united to divinity, withstood the fiercest test - temptation in the wilderness’. She also says that when Christ was ‘urged by His companions to do wrong, divinity flashed through humanity, and He refused decidedly’ (White 1958:445).

It suffices therefore to say that, while Christ did not engage His divine nature to vanquish Satan, His human nature being united with His divine nature made it possible for Him to vanquish. There seems to be a mysterious mechanism that occurred inside the person of Christ when He was tempted, which is unfathomable – for she says that when He was tempted ‘...divinity flashed through humanity...In a moment He distinguished between right and wrong...’ (White 1958:445).

7.1 Sin and freedom of the will

White and Calvin seem to differ on the view of sin and the will. White’s overriding view in most of her writings comes across as though mankind has the power of choice to obey or disobey. While White insists and repeats the enabling power of Christ that is needed to resist evil, she also stresses the importance of man’s responsibility in the process of salvation. ‘God has given men faculties and capabilities,’ she writes, ‘God works and co-operates with the gifts He imparted to man, and man by being a partaker of the divine nature and doing the work of Christ, may be an overcomer and win eternal life’ (White 1979:26).

Calvin on the other hand sees a complete hopelessness in man that only Christ can save. He does not even see a will in man that can lean toward doing good, since man's will is corrupt (Kerr 1989:56-57). Calvin concurs with White on the issue of man's total depravity. Like White he believed that there is absolutely no good in us that could commend us to God.

One of the biggest questions asked by Christians, theologians and scholars is 'Could Jesus sin?' The issue here is that should we assume He was able to sin that would imply that He was a perfect human being without sin just as Adam was, who though was perfect, would yield to temptation and sin. On the other hand should we assume that He could not sin, then we could say that He had an advantage over Adam and Eve. We could also surmise that by not being able to sin, it meant that He depended on His divinity in order to resist the sophistry of the evil foe.

White says that it was possible for Christ to '...have sinned; He could have fallen...' (White 1958:447). The problem we face is the Christological concept of White, regarding her statement that it was possible for Christ to have sinned. Our finite minds find it difficult to comprehend a unity of two natures in one person, and to conceive the concept 'God-man'. In fact, it is difficult for us to conceive either way. By this it is meant that it is as difficult to conceive that Christ could sin as much as it is difficult for us to conceive that it was impossible for Christ to sin. Especially if we accept that He was perfectly human, like any of us. White states that 'Christ vanquished the evil one in His human nature, [as that which Adam had], and not having depended on His divinity but rather on God as we are dependent on God' (White 1958:445).

So what are we to say? Was Christ's temptation as real as ours is? Could Christ really yield to temptation? Did God really take a risk, by sending His only begotten Son into this world of sin? After all, White says that God took a risk in sending His Son to this Earth.

7.2 Sin and the law vs. Jesus Christ our redeemer

From the onset Calvin points sin to the first man, Adam. Unlike White, who points the origin of sin to firstly Satan, Calvin's approach is from below. This is significant since his

Christology is sometimes from below, while White’s Christology is mainly from above. There is perhaps an important point that is almost overlooked in these two contrasting approaches: By attributing the origin of sin beginning from the first man, could imply an important aspect which this dissertation seeks to resolve. That is, sin comes from self, as apposed to blaming the devil for our sinful behavior, if we are to follow Calvin literally and dogmatically. The opposite is true. Some may point to heaven, where sin originated, instead of blaming themselves for sin that they commit.

7.3 A comparison of Christological titles and other titles of the God-head between Ellen G. White and John Calvin’s sermons, on the law

Christological Titles and Other Titles	Amount of times mentioned by White	Amount of times mentioned by Calvin
Author	1	
Our Lord		2
A Good (School) Master		1
Our Judge		1
The Lord	31	8
The Lord Our Sovereign King		1
King of Kings	1	
The Word of God	2	9
The mouth of God		1
The voice of God	2	1
Our Lord Jesus Christ		9
Law Giver	2	
Jesus Christ	11	9
God’s Son or His Son		3
Creator or Maker	3	1
Savior		1
The living image of God		1
I AM	1	

The Son	1	4
Arm of Omnipotence	1	
The Holy Spirit or Spirit of God	3	2
Almighty		1
Ruler	1	
God the Father		4
Father		4
God	107	117

7.4 The person of Christ

Both Calvin and White acknowledge that Christ is the only person that could mediate on behalf of fallen humanity. While Calvin's approach to the mediator is viewed via an indirect reference to our first parents, White's approach is directly from above. She mentions in the most alluring language, how Christ Mediated before our heavenly Father on behalf of humanity. As far as Christ's two natures are concerned, White and Calvin agree that when we look at the text in John 1:14 that says, 'the Word was made flesh', we are not to think that the Word changed to flesh. Calvin and White agree on the mysterious unity of the divine and human natures in the one person – Christ.

They also agree on the pre-existence and eternity of Christ. As far as the incarnation [even though we don't deal directly with it in this dissertation], Calvin and White also agree that there was no sin in Christ, and both infer that divinity interposed with the weakness, and inclination to sickness, hunger, thirst, that He was pure, and uncorrupted by sin. Furthermore Calvin and White concur on the point that Christ vanquished Satan in His human nature.

Both Calvin and White's emphasis with regard to Christ's divinity and humanity, in spite of the unity of the two natures is the separation of the two natures. One difference we note between White's and Calvin's view of Christ's dual natures, may be seen [as we have earlier indicated] in White's repeated statements of the divinity of Christ flashing through His humanity. They hold in common the view that which Calvin calls the 'communication'

of properties (Calvin 2001:417). They both interchangeably used attributes of the divine to the human, and that of the human nature of Christ in reference to His divine nature.

The problem of White and Calvin's Christologies here is:

- What do we mean when together with Calvin and White we say that Christ condescended? ;
- Secondly, what do we mean when we say He set aside or temporarily 'relinquished the glories of the form of God...'? (White 1958:446).

The problem that Calvin faces with regard to Christ's 'descending from heaven miraculously...' is similar to that in White's statement regarding Christ's death on the cross.

Before we elaborate on White's problem, let us look at Calvin's statement on the mechanical description of what actually happens when Christ descended to earth, to be born of a Virgin. Calvin writes: 'The Son of God descended miraculously from heaven yet without abandoning heaven, was pleased to be conceived miraculously in the Virgin's womb, to live on the earth and hang on the cross, and yet always filled the world as from the beginning' (Calvin 2001:414).

The problem we face is multifaceted and can be seen in the following questions:

- How could Christ descend while He still filled the world?
- How could He have left heaven without abandoning it?

The same is true of White's description of Christ while He was dying on Calvary. She says that God was present at the cross. But He hid Himself in 'thick darkness'. She continues to say that He was at the cross with His angels, near the cross. He was with His Son, she says. The tension is felt when she says 'And in that dreadful hour Christ was not comforted with the Father's presence' (White 1948:754).

We are certainly confronted here with what we for our study may call 'mechanical logistics'. How could God be there with all His angels, and yet Christ does not feel His Father's presence? This agonizing quest is further intensified by White's statement: 'The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart...' (White 1948:753).

Calvin seems to answer in White's defence [even though he wrote and lived almost two and a half centuries before White] when he wrote, 'the divine power of the spirit veiled itself for a moment, and that it must give place to the infirmity of the flesh...' (Calvin 2001:446).

The problem that we face in both White's and Calvin's concept of the mysterious co-existence or unity of the two natures or to use the word of the ancient people, 'hypostasis', is that which exists in the bible, with the gospel writings. We are left to wonder, seeing that Christ's divine nature did not die, what happened to it? Was it conversing with the other divine persons - the Father and Holy Spirit? Or did His divine nature merely watch and suffer in silence? What happened to Christ's divinity while He lay in the grave?

The other point that White and Calvin agree on, is that Christ will in the end assume the glory He had with the Father before. Their departure point seems to be on the humanity of Christ. White maintains that Christ will retain His humanity forever (White 1958:456). Calvin's view seems to elude that this subservient role of Christ to God is transitory. In the final consummation, Christ will assume His equal role with God. White also views Christ glorified in the same glory as He had with the Father before. Hence Calvin and White share the unique view of Christ retaining His human body perpetually.

7.5 The offices of Christ

Both Calvin and White embrace the traditional formulas of Priest, King and Prophet. Calvin perceived the triplex munus as Christ's work by and through which He functions on behalf of fallen humanity. White concurs with Calvin on the double position that Christ fulfills as Priest and the offering.

Although White's sermon in chapter five indicates a stronger emphasis of Christ's office of Kingship (through the amount of Christological titles), there appears to be a stronger emphasis in White's overall writings on the Priestly function of Christ.

This can be seen by the voluminous amount of writings that White has on Christ's heavenly ministry. In chapter five and six, we dealt with Christ's heavenly ministry. White's emphasis is that the individual believer takes cognizance of the ongoing work in the heavenly sanctuary, since Christ our High Priest is our Mediator before God. Since this is the current ongoing work that Christ is engaged in, as our Advocate, and since an investigation of our names is going on, this seems to justify White's stronger emphasis of Christ's Priestly office than the other offices of Prophet and King.

Calvin on the other hand concurs with White on the issue of Christ's Priestly office as that of Mediator, as was discussed in chapter six. Although Calvin is known as the architect of the triplex munus – the priest, prophet, and king – he places a stronger emphasis on the kingship of Christ. This again can be seen by how much he has written on each of these offices. Calvin elaborates a great deal with regard to Christ's kingship. Although his concept is that of a kingship that is far and beyond the earthly realms, Calvin generally concurs with the basic ethos of White's perception of Christ's kingship.

7.6 The death of Christ

White mentions Christ as our substitute. To White, Christ is everything to our salvation. She has different titles for Him while He was going through His death period. There is no contradiction in relation to Christ's death with that of Calvin and White. In fact, they both are on the same platform when it comes to the question of whether Christ went to hell when He died. Calvin explains that the bible passage that says Christ descended to hell simply means that He felt 'the weight of divine vengeance'.

He adds, 'Whence also it was necessary that He should engage, as it were, at close quarters with the powers of hell and the horrors of eternal death' (Calvin 2001:443).

7.7 Resurrection of Christ

Calvin and White do not differ here. White sees Christ as having ascended as substitute and surety, while Calvin says we are victors of hope, because of the resurrection. White and Calvin are the two who propounded the ideology of Christ resurrecting in the same human body, in that it will have become immortalized. This resurrected body is the ascended body.

7.8 Ascension of Christ

White's view of the ascended Christ is that of a divine Conqueror. Again we see similarities between Calvin and White. Calvin says that Christ inaugurated His kingdom at the ascension (Kerr 1989:79-80). White says that Christ authenticated Himself as a 'living Saviour' (White 1948:829-835). The only slight difference is on their Christological titles that are emphasized, as we noted earlier, on the death of Christ. White has many Christological titles for the dying Christ. On the ascension, it is Calvin who has more Christological titles on Christ. This does not in the least imply that White does not mention all these titles on Christ after His ascension. On the contrary she does as she moves on towards His work in the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ assumes His second phase of work as Priest.

When Christ ascended, according to Calvin:

- 'He' was installed in the government of heaven and earth, and formally admitted to possession of the administration committed to Him, and...to continue until He ascends to judgment;
- He is presiding on the judgment-seat of heaven;
- He opened the entrance into heaven that was closed up by our first parents, Adam and Eve;
- He appears constantly as our intercessor and Advocate before our Father in heaven; and
- He entered heaven 'in our flesh' (Calvin 2001:449-450).

7.9 The atonement

While a general glance may not reveal a direct emphasis of the term 'Limited Atonement', in White's writings, a careful study may yet surprise White's students. The concept of atonement in White's Christology is encapsulated in the heavenly ministration that Christ

our High Priest is currently engaged in cleansing the sins of the individual 'I' in the heavenly sanctuary. Ultimately, the individual 'I'-ness has a moral stewardship responsibility before God, of reconciling himself/herself with his/her fellowmen and with God. According to White then, the centrality of the atonement relates to the putting away of sin as opposed to Calvin's limited atonement. However the concept of atonement in Calvin's Christology is not as descriptive in nature as in White's writings. Her writings are graphic in details. She directs her readers to the structures and activities that transpire in the two sanctuaries, namely the heavenly sanctuary and the earthly sanctuary.

Calvin merely speaks of atonement with reference to salvific significance. He deals with it in relation to the divine, predestined election. Hence, Calvin taught about limited atonement. White, as already alluded above, views atonement in relation to the ongoing heavenly works of Christ. She draws parallels between the two sanctuaries to teach the significant lessons of the science involved.

We should hasten to say that this dissertation's view with regard to White's concept of atonement is that she seemed to have conveyed the teaching similar to that of the Arminians' view of a 'universal atonement' at face value. The Arminians' 'universal atonement' basically taught that Christ sincerely died for the entire world yet in reality only a few people will accept His free salvation offered to them. This is true of White's concept of atonement. We see this being the case in her book, The Desire of Ages, (1958:293-294).

In this book, White makes clear the point that Judas was not chosen to be one of Jesus' disciples, but Judas had urged himself to be one of Christ's disciples. What is of relevance to us at this point is that Christ did not 'repulse' Judas. Even though Christ had seen into the heart of Judas and had seen what his true motives were, Jesus afforded Judas with a place as a minister with the other disciples.

If we would ask White, 'Why does Jesus do that?' we would hear her say, 'in connecting this man with Himself, He placed him [Judas] where he [Judas] might, day by day, be brought in contact with the out-flowing of His own unselfish love'. White continues to say that, if Judas would open his heart he would become a candidate for heaven. So Christ offered Judas the same opportunity as the other disciples. But strangely, Judas would not allow for the molding of the Spirit of grace (White 1948:294).

It is clear therefore that Christ's Atonement is universal to White. There is, however, a flavor of limited atonement in White's concept of Christ's atonement. For this, we divert our attention to her statement regarding the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. She says that 'the actual cleansing of the heavenly [sanctuary] is to be accomplished by the removal...of sin which are there recorded. But before this can be accomplished, there must be an examination of books of record to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement'. So then since His benefits of atonement are to be pre-determined by the investigative judgment, it suffices to say that the atonement is 'limited atonement', in the sense that not all receive the benefits of His atonement. We should underline the word 'benefits' used in the above with regard to Christ's atonement. Furthermore, White's concept of atonement may also be regarded as conditional, in the sense that there exists a pre-requisite, i.e. the sinner ought to repent before he or she may be entitled to have Christ's blood atone for their sins. White's concept of the atonement could be well illustrated in the case of Judas Iscariot in the New Testament. Christ's blood did not atone for Judas since he [Judas] would not make a complete and real surrender of his life to Christ. In that sense it can be regarded as limited atonement or conditional atonement.

7.10 The judgment

Both Calvin and White perceived the individual's trial to transpire in a heavenly court. They both agree on the fact that only Christ can serve as Mediator before an offended God. Perhaps the overriding difference we can note between Calvin and White are the voluminous amounts of writing and details that White has contributed, regarding the judgment. White places a very strong emphasis on the priestly aspect of Christ's work.

7.11 The Second Coming

For Calvin and White, the Second Coming of Christ is a real, literal, visible, universal, tangible manifestation. This should not be surprising since we noticed earlier that both Calvin and White concur on the premise of a resurrected Messiah that is currently in heaven, in human flesh (Barth 1995:175). This is a unique Christological insight by Calvin and White as we have not seen it elsewhere before.

7.12 The unbeliever's destiny

There are more details of slight complexity in White's panorama of the sequence of events that lead to the destiny of the unbeliever. However, both Calvin and White, have one common denominator regarding the sinner's lot. That is, hell will be the mental and physical anguish of the banishment from the presence of the Almighty. White alludes to more details that are not easily followed. An example of this can be found under the earlier heading 'Final Judgment' where she says some will burn for days, while others will immediately disintegrate. It is not easy for one to grasp what she meant. Notwithstanding this complexity, White's point has been made - there will be a degree comparison as far as the punishment of every unbeliever. For not all sinners deserve the same judgment. One major difference between White and Calvin regarding this subject is their concept of the soul. Calvin believed in the immortality of the soul, while White believed that the wicked soul will perish.

7.13 Justification by faith

Calvin and White both perceive the sinner's need to acknowledge the righteous purity of Christ. There is nothing that the individual 'I' can do to make himself just before God. White alludes that the only plea that the sinner has, is his pledge in the death of Christ. On this particular subject, White and Calvin compliment each other in their expositions. While White delves into the practical scientific explanation of how one becomes just before God, Calvin spells out in detail the utter hopelessness of man's good works as opposed to God's perfect righteousness.

7.14 Salvation vs. our own righteousness

Calvin and White do agree that there is nothing good that the believer can do in order to commend him/herself to God, except for the free righteousness of Christ which the sinner

receives graciously from God. The only departure point that may be noticed in our early discussions under this heading is that Calvin is very emphatic on the point of man's depravity. He portrays a righteousness that is imputed in the life of the believer by grace through Christ. The only problem that Calvin's view may pose to us is that there is almost an impression that there is nothing that the individual person, as a steward before God, has to do (Even though we saw earlier that Calvin insists that we keep the commandment). This is the point that White contributes by saying '...we are not to imagine that we are thus represented before the Father...and become careless, indifferent, and self-indulgent. Christ is not a minister of sin' (White 1979:107).

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

After having traveled for so long on this well-worn road in our attempt to know who Jesus is, we conclude that: Jesus is not present as a divine Logos, in a mystical sense, nor is He present in the mystical sense as handed down by church councils. Instead, Jesus is present in our lives through His deeds and through the Holy Spirit. He is present in the individual's life, directly and indirectly. He manifests Himself in animate and inanimate objects, in forces seen and unseen.

Secondly, we concur in our resolve with both Ellen White and John Calvin, that the human 'I' is not replaced by either Christ or the devil in the present Christian life. The Christian is a steward of God, who is a cognizant being, with the ability to exercise his/her will either in harmony with God or to refuse God's biddings.

Thirdly, we resolve that the Reductionist concepts, ideas, words and symbols which emphasize one-sided roles of Christ as either king, Messiah, Priest, servant healer, etc. are inadequate connotations which do not, in isolation of themselves, denote the Almighty and infinite Christ.

An enormous problem subsists when various individuals, whether they are Christians or other theological, or religious clergy, emphasize the one-sided Christological title in a disadvantaged point of view of all the multi-faceted titles that are merely an attempt to describe Him, who will be the theme and subject throughout ceaseless ages.

Finally Calvin and White have contributed well to our view of a 'both...and' continuum. We concur with Calvin that Nestorius was off-target when he taught that although Christ dwelt in human flesh, He was not a real human being (Calvin 2001:419). Our resolve on the view of the two natures of Christ is in congruence with both White and Calvin, i.e. the two natures of Christ co-existed in the one person, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ, we believe, is indeed a differentiated Prism of God, with multi-faceted titles that should be used to denote certain functions of His offices. None of the titles should be set aside or placed against each other.

Furthermore, although Calvin represents a ‘both...and’ continuum, he emphasized Christ’s kingly office more than the other two offices of Christ. Although in her sermon regarding the law, White seems to have done exactly as Calvin, by adding more emphasis on the Kingly office of Christ. Some of her material in chapter five, under the sub-heading ‘Priest’, indicates that she placed a stronger emphasis on the Priestly office of Christ. We affirm that this can be wrong if White did it in a way that implied that Christ was either a Priest only or just a King. Based on the manner in which White used these titles it is clear that she did not hold that ideology. We can therefore conclude that Christ is all those titles that both White and Calvin have called Him. But as well-gifted and overly-inspired as these two pioneers of Christ may have been, their portrayal of that indescribable Prism of the Almighty has merely just begun to proclaim *who Jesus really is!*

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