Comparing the Christologies of Ellen White and Karl Barth, Establishing a new Method for Evaluating White's Writings

by

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Table of Contents

Page

Table of Contents i

Acknowledgements viii

Commitment to Avoid Plagiarism ix

Certificate of the Editor x

Clarification of Key Concepts and Terms xi

Keywords/Phrases (Indexing Terms) xiv

Abbreviations of Biblical Books..... xvii

Summary xviii

CHAPTER 1 Introduction to the Focal Point of this Thesis 20

1.1 Orientation 20

1.2 Approach and Relevance 22

1.3 Research Interests 52

1.4 Research Aims 52

1.5 Research Methodology 53

1.6 The Way Forward 53

CHAPTER 2 Current Methods Used to Evaluate White's Writings 56

2.1 Introduction 56

2.2 The *What?* and the *Why?* of White's Christology 61

2.3 Guidance for the Reader of White's Writings 63

2.4 The Method of Quoting White's Literature 67

2.4.1 Weber and Others Quoting White's Writings 69

2.4.2 MacCarty Quoting White's Writings 70

2.4.3 Webster Quoting White's Writings 70

2.4.4 Whidden Quoting White's Writings 72

2.4.5 Mansour Quoting White's Documents 72

2.5 Limitations of the Method Used to Quote White's Documents 73

2.5.1 Weber and Others Quoting White's Documents 74

2.5.2 MacCarty Quoting White's Literature 76

2.5.3 Webster Quoting White's Literature 77

Page

2.5.4 Whidden Quoting White's Writings 80

2.5.5 Mansour Quoting White's Documentation 80

2.5.6 The Limitations of the Method of Quoting White's Documents 82

2.6 The Method of Comparing White's Writings to those of specific Theologians 83

2.6.1 Jones comparing White's Views to those of Calvin 83

2.6.2 Oladini Comparing the Views and Approaches of White and Stott . 85

2.6.3 Lee Comparing the Views and Approaches of White and Ladd 87

2.6.4 Webster Comparing White's Views to those of Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas 88

2.7 Limitations of the Method of Comparing White's Work to those of Specific Theologians 89

2.7.1 Jones Comparing the Views of White and Calvin 89

2.7.2 Oladini Comparing the Views of White and Stott 92

2.7.3 Lee Comparing the Views of White and Ladd 94

2.7.4 Webster Comparing the Views of White to those of Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas 95

2.7.5 Limitations of Comparing White's Views to those of Specific Theologians 96

2.8 Deductive and Inductive Methods 96

2.8.1 Deductive Method 96

2.8.2 Deductive Methods in Evaluating White's Views 97

2.8.3 Inductive Method and the Discovery of *Why?* 100

2.9 Combining Deductive and Inductive Methods 101

2.10 Conclusion 103

CHAPTER 3 An Overview of Karl Barth's Christology 105

3.1 Introduction 105

3.2 Similarities and Dissimilarities with Von Harnack and Herrmann 107

3.3 Barth's Foundation 112

3.3.1 God for Us 112

3.3.2 Special Revelation as Non-Propositional 116

Page

3.3.3 Barth's Triune God 119
3.4 Christ as God's Revelation 123
3.4.1 Barth's Struggle 123
3.4.2 God's Revelation: Ensuring the Divinity of Christ 126
3.5 God's Revelation: Ensuring the Divinity of Christ 128
3.5.1 Formulation 128
3.5.2 Person or Humanity? 131
3.5.3 Christ's Sinful Human Nature 134
3.5.4 The Virgin Birth 140
3.5.4.1 The Value of the Virgin Birth for Barth 140
3.5.4.2 The Death of Christ 142
3.6 Divinity and Humanity 143
3.6.1 Christ's Humanity Post-Ascension 143
3.7 Discontinuity in the Humanity of Christ 146
3.7.1 The Problem of Genetics 146
3.7.2 Neglecting Human Time and Space 148
3.7.3 Transcendence and Immanence 150
3.7.4 Fear of Humanity 158
3.8 Conclusion 160

CHAPTER 4 An Overview of White's Christology 162
4.1 Introduction 162
4.2 The Process of White Developing her Christology 165
4.3 The Source of White's Christology 166
4.4 White's External Sources 168
4.5 White's Writing Style 170
4.6 The Incarnation of God the Son 173
4.6.1 Combining Various Themes 173
4.6.2 Relational Christology 175
4.6.3 Purpose of the Incarnation 178
4.6.4 Christ as Key to the Trinity 180
4.7 Divinity and Humanity 185

Page

4.7.1 Divinity of Christ 185
4.7.1.1 Challenge to White's View on the Divinity of Christ 187
4.7.2 Humanity of Christ 188
4.7.3 Uniting Divinity and Humanity 190
4.7.4 White's Christology Regarding Kenosis and Krip-
sis..... 193
4.8 Sinful and Sinless 195
4.8.1 The Argument 195
4.8.2 Criticising both Gage and Rand 198
4.8.3 Donkor's Critique on Gage and Rand 200
4.8.4 The Current View of the SDA Church 202
4.8.5 Christological and Practical Issues 203
4.8.6 Whidden and Larson on White's view on Christ's
Sinfulness/Sinlessness 204
4.9 Preliminary Critique on White's Christology 207
4.9.1 White's Childhood Fear 207
4.9.2 The Expression of the Issue in Sanctification 208
4.9.3 The Root of the Problem 210
4.10 Conclusion 212

CHAPTER 5 A Comparison between the Christology of White and Barth 214
5.1 Introduction 214
5.2 Methodology 215
5.2.1 Paradoxical and Dialectical Reasoning 215
5.2.2 Paradoxical and Dialectical Methods Found in
the Writings of White and Barth Respectively..... 216
5.2.3 Differences in Outcomes of Paradoxical and Dialectical Reasoning 220
5.3 A Summary of Basic Points 221
5.3.1 God for Us and God with Us 221
5.3.2 The Trinity 223
5.4 The Divinity of Christ 226
5.5 The Humanity of Christ 228

Page

5.5.1 *Anhypostasis/Enhypostasis* 228
5.5.2 The Virgin Birth 230
5.6 Plan of Incarnation 234
5.7 The Humanity of Christ related to Sin 235
5.8 Christ's Humanity Post Ascension 238
5.9 Christ as God's Revelation 240
5.10 Conclusion 242

CHAPTER 6 Reconstructing White's Christology 243
6.1 Introduction 243
6.2 Reconstructing White's Christological Framework 244
6.2.1 Inductive Methodology 244
6.2.2 Creating Constructs 245
6.3 Key Points in White's Christology 247
6.3.1 God the Creator as the First Cause 248
6.3.1.1 God as First Cause 248
6.3.1.2 Canale's Views on God Concerning Creation 250
6.4 Why the Son of God was Declared to be Divine 251
6.5 White's Combination of God's Transcendence and Immanence 252
6.5.1 Creator and Creation 252
6.5.2 Sabbath Construction and its Use in other Works of White 256
6.5.3 Concluding Remarks on the Sabbath 258
6.5.4 White and the Ten Commandments 259
6.6 Defining the Human Nature of Christ 262
6.7 An Alternative View on the Human Nature of Christ 263
6.7.1 Adam Before or After the Fall 263
6.7.2 Ladd and the Kingdom of God 263
6.7.3 Applying the Kingdom of God to White's Christology 265
6.7.3.1 Adam and the Current Age 265
6.7.3.2 The Extent of Sin 267
6.7.3.3 The Kingdom of God 270

Page

6.7.3.4 Christ's Nature, Pre- or Post-fall? 272

6.7.3.5 Combining Christ's Sinless and Sinful Qualities 275

6.8 Christ as Key to the Trinity 281

6.8.1 The Link between God and Quantum Physics 281

6.8.2 The Double Slit Experiment 281

6.8.3 God as both Particle and Wave 283

6.9 Death of Christ 291

6.9.1 Divinity did not Die; Humanity Died 292

6.9.2 White's View on Death 292

6.9.3 The Death of Christ 293

6.9.3.1 Divinity 293

6.9.3.2 Christ's Humanity Died 294

6.9.4 The Victory of the God-man 295

6.9.5 The Resurrection of Christ 296

6.9.6 Divine *Deditio* 296

6.10 The Purpose of the Incarnation 300

6.10.1 White's Purpose in Writing about Christ 300

6.11 Critique on White's Christology 302

6.12 Conclusion 304

CHAPTER 7 Critique and Evaluation 307

7.1 Introduction 307

7.2 Overview 307

7.3 Answers to Possible Questions this Method 314

7.3.1 Personal Subjectivity 315

7.3.2 The Question of Accuracy 317

7.4 Placing White in an Academic Arena 318

7.4.1 Beyond Critics and Proponents/Advocates 318

7.4.2 The Value of Falsifiability 318

7.5 Possible use of Evaluating White's Views 319

7.6 Why Bother? 319

7.7 Evaluation 320

Page

7.8 Conclusion 321

Bibliography 322

Appendix A 336

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Commitment to Avoid Plagiarism

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I hereby declare that this thesis, which is based on my research on *Comparing theChristologies of Ellen White and Karl Barth, establishing a new method for evaluating White's writings* is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I have committed myself to avoiding plagiarism on every level of my research and have fully cited, according to the Harvard Method, every source that I used, including books, articles, internet sources, and images.

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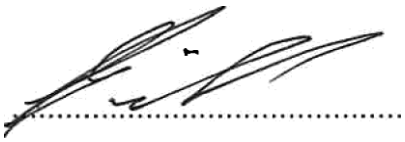

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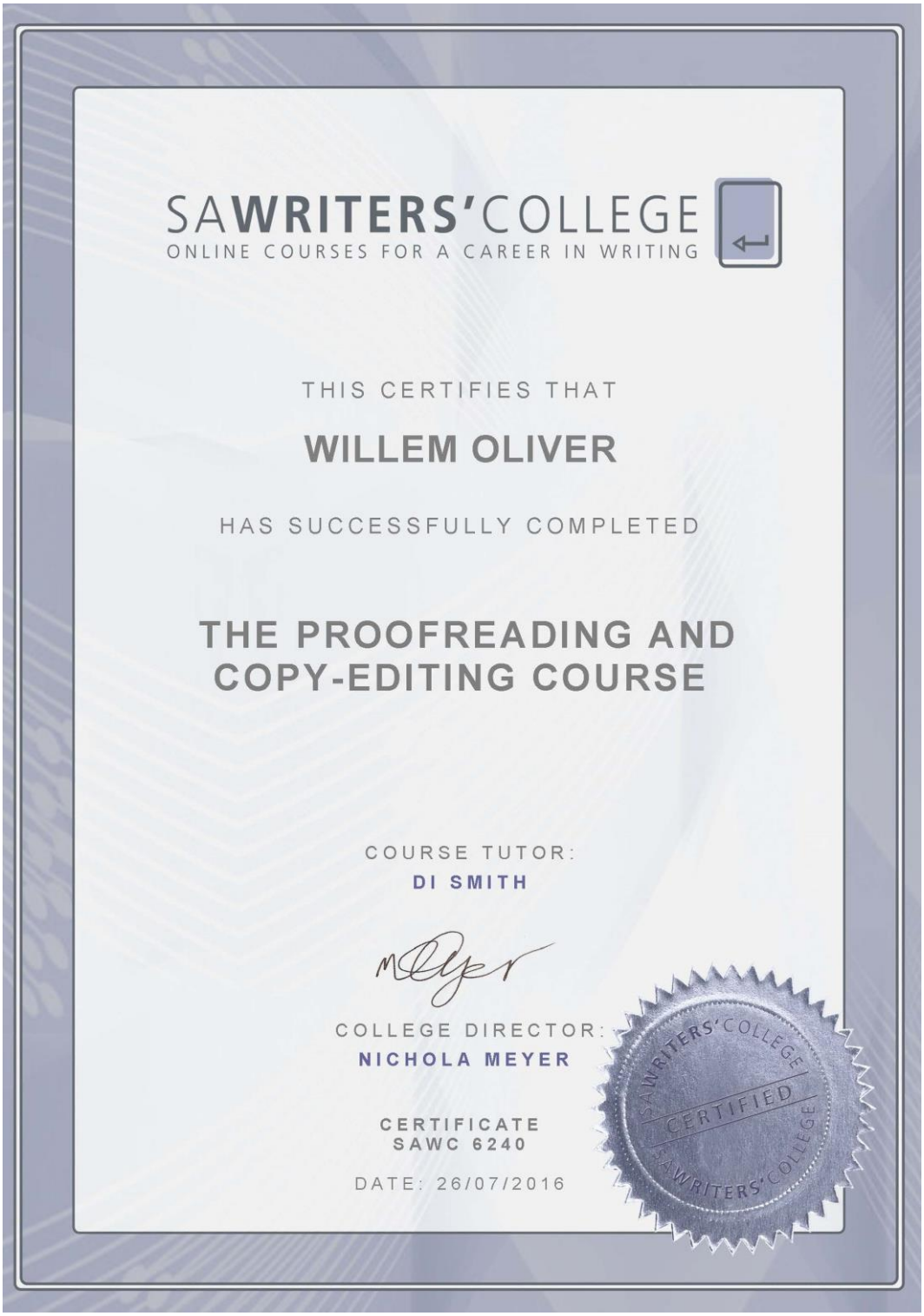

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Clarification of Key Concepts and Terms

TERM	SHORT DEFINITION
Adoptionism	The idea that God adopted the human, Jesus of Nazareth, as his Son.
Alexandrian Christology	The Logos assumes a general human nature (McGrath 1994:287, 288).
Anhypostasis	The first half of the dual formula intended to express the human nature of Jesus. The *anhypostasis* expresses the doctrine that the human nature of Jesus has no subsistence (an-hypostasis) apart from the union with the Logos (Haley 2015:9).
Antiochene Christology	The Logos assumes a specific human being (McGrath 1994:287, 288).
Christomonism	Christ viewed as the totality of God.
Divine *Deditio*	Christ surrendered the control of his divine abilities to the Father during his incarnation.
Dialectical	Debate between two extreme points, through thesis and antithesis, and concluding with a synthesis that combines both extreme points in a new conclusion, bigger than the sum of its parts.
Docetism	Christ's body was not real but an illusion, and his suffering was therefore also not real.
Ebionism	Jesus is the Son of God only by adoption.
Enhypostasis	The second half of the dual formula intended to express the human nature of Jesus. The *enhypostasis* expresses the doctrine that the human nature of Jesus has its being 'in' the subsistence (en-hypostasis) of the incarnate Son of God (Haley 2015:9).
Ethical Immutability	God's internal principles remain unchanged regardless of external circumstances.

TERM	SHORT DEFINITION
General Conference	Presents the worldwide expression of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and functions through local branches referred to as Divisions.
General Revelation	Revelation to be found in the natural word that gives evidence of God.
General Conference Session	A global meeting, every five years of Seventh-day Adventist representatives from around the world.
Immanent, immanence	God's closeness to the created order.
Immutability	The doctrine of divine immutability (DDI) asserts that God cannot undergo real or intrinsic change in any respect (Leftow 2002).
Kenosis	Emptying, laying down (Deist 1984:89).
Kripsis	Divine kripsis postulates that the divinity of Christ was fully functional during the incarnation but not accessible to the humanity of Christ (Crisp 2007:149, 150).
Mariology	The doctrine dealing with Mary the mother of Christ.
Modalism	God the Father is a revelation of certain qualities of God, likewise the Son and the Spirit reveal other unique qualities of God in their modes of revelation (McGrath 1994:256).
Monism	Humans are not to be considered in any way as composed of parts but as a unity.
Monophysitism	This concept removes the distinction between Christ's divine and human nature.
Nihilism	Rejecting values that the value society places on people, life, and objects.
Non-Propositional Truth	Revelation as revealing subjective information.
Ontic Immutability	God's being does not change, regardless of external circumstances.
Pre-Lapsarian	Christ possessed the unfallen nature of Adam before the fall.

TERM	SHORT DEFINITION
Post-Lapsarian	Christ possessed the fallen nature of Adam after the fall.
Propositional Truth	Revelation as objective communicated information.
Propensities	Leanings, bents, proclivities, and tendencies to sin (Whidden 2013:695).
Special Revelation	Revelation that proceeds from God, not to be found in the natural world.
Tensed Time	Events defined by a specific time such as 'now,' 'yesterday,' etc. A god outside of time could not be aware of the tense of the sentence expressing certain facts (Craig 2001b:98).
Transcendent, transcendence	God's complete otherness and distance from the created order.
Tritheism	Views each member of the Godhead as an individual with a divine nature (McGrath 1994:257).
What?	This term is utilised to reference the concrete position that a person expresses in their theology.
Why?	This term is utilised to reference the arguments that underlie the concrete positions that individuals express in their theology.

Keywords/Phrases (Indexing Terms)

Acts of the apostles, 41, 53, 241, 320
Alexandrian, xi, 30, 133, 196, 200, 217, 276, 334
Anhypostasis, xi, 29, 30, 31, 42, 54, 119, 128, 129, 130, 131, 133, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, 148, 150, 151, 160, 161, 217, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 239, 240, 242, 294, 306, 309, 316
Antiochene, xi, 30, 133, 135, 196, 200, 217, 276
CD, 28, 29, 53, 84, 105, 106, 114, 120, 121, 122, 125, 309
Christ, iii, iv, v, vi, viii, xi, xii, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 62, 68, 69, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 80, 84, 85, 87, 88, 90, 91, 95, 98, 107, 108, 110, 111, 113, 114, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 154, 156, 157, 159, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 177, 178, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 245, 246, 248, 250, 251, 252, 254, 255, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 283, 284, 285, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 316, 317, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 330, 332, 333, 334, 336, 337
Christology, i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, xi, xviii, 20, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 44, 45, 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 67, 70, 71, 73, 77, 78, 82, 83, 85, 88, 89, 90, 92, 95, 96, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 108, 111, 113, 121, 126, 129, 133, 134, 140, 142, 143, 144, 148, 150, 151, 160, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 181, 182, 184, 185, 187, 188, 193, 194, 195, 203, 204, 207, 209, 212, 213, 214, 215, 217, 223, 228, 230, 234, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 251, 252, 257, 258, 259, 260, 265, 280, 292, 299, 300, 302, 303, 304, 305, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 314, 316, 317, 319, 320, 321, 323, 327, 328, 334
Church Dogmatics, 28, 307, 323, 326, 327, 330
Deductive, xviii, 22, 27, 28, 52, 53, 54, 60, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 104, 177, 184, 212, 244, 257, 302, 304, 307, 309, 314, 316
Desire of ages, 41, 53, 69, 71, 79, 81, 167, 174, 178, 181, 222, 254, 277
Dialectical, 30, 112, 114, 119, 129, 130, 133, 134, 215, 216, 217, 220, 311
Divinity, xii, 29, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 46, 50, 53, 54, 55, 68, 71, 77, 81, 88, 95, 107, 111, 112, 119, 126, 128, 130, 132, 134, 137, 138, 139, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 160, 164, 166, 170, 171, 173, 174, 175, 177, 181, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 201, 211, 212, 217, 218, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 232, 233, 234, 236, 238, 241, 242, 251, 252, 262, 271, 275, 281, 286, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299,

300, 305, 306, 307, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 320
Ellen White, 1, ix, 25, 26, 59, 72, 78, 85, 90, 94, 176, 185, 322, 323, 324, 325, 328, 329, 332, 334
Enhypostasis, xi, 29, 30, 31, 42, 54, 119, 128, 129, 130, 131, 133, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, 148, 150, 151, 160, 161, 217, 226, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 239, 240, 242, 294, 306, 309, 316
God *for* us, 25, 28, 40, 79, 112, 114, 115, 122, 123, 127, 128, 131, 134, 160, 221, 224, 240, 242, 254, 309, 311
God *with* us, 25, 40, 78, 221, 241, 311
Great controversy, 41, 46, 53, 77, 86, 174, 175, 176, 177, 181, 191, 241, 252, 320
Humanity, xii, 25, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 54, 55, 57, 59, 69, 70, 71, 72, 75, 78, 80, 84, 88, 94, 95, 105, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 166, 167, 171, 172, 173, 175, 176, 179, 180, 181, 185, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 200, 201, 202, 204, 206, 207, 211, 212, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 246, 250, 251, 252, 253, 255, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 305, 306, 307, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 320, 336, 337
Immanence, xii, 33, 46, 47, 77, 150, 151, 152, 159, 161, 222, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 255, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 262, 267, 305, 313
Incarnation, xi, xii, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 44, 47, 49, 50, 54, 70, 78, 90, 95, 108, 111, 120, 128, 129, 130, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 151, 157, 166, 168, 171, 177, 178, 179, 180, 185, 188, 189, 190, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 199, 211, 212, 218, 222, 225, 226, 227, 229, 230, 232, 234, 235, 236, 238, 239, 242, 257, 260, 262, 264, 271, 276, 277, 279, 283, 288, 296, 299, 300, 301, 306, 309, 312, 313, 314
Inductive, xviii, 22, 45, 52, 53, 55, 60, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 104, 244, 245, 304, 307, 312, 314, 316
John 6
54, 168

Karl Barth, 1, ii, ix, xviii, xix, 105, 322, 323, 326, 327, 328, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334
Last Generation, 39, 202, 203, 204, 208, 259, 303, 304, 332
Liberal theology, 29, 31, 32, 40, 105, 106, 107, 116, 117, 121, 123, 124, 125, 128, 142, 158, 159, 214, 216, 220, 224, 226, 240, 309
Nein, 105, 106, 148, 158
Non-propositional, 116, 117, 118, 122, 123, 125, 139, 152, 160, 216
Pannenberg, 32, 126, 149, 150, 153, 154, 203, 256, 333
Paradox, 23, 35, 36, 37, 40, 50, 71, 88, 130, 171, 172, 173, 175, 178, 181, 212, 215, 218, 219, 235, 236, 300, 308, 310
Patriarchs and prophets, 41, 53, 170, 173, 175, 178, 179, 181, 241, 252, 320
Prophets and kings, 41, 53, 241, 320
Propositional, 116, 117, 118, 122, 123, 125, 152, 160, 324
Römerbrief, 158
Sabbath, v, 27, 46, 47, 55, 70, 94, 248, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 268, 295, 305, 312, 325, 332

Salvation, 24, 26, 34, 37, 40, 41, 43, 44, 47, 50, 53, 56, 69, 76, 84, 89, 91, 95, 127, 134, 135, 156, 164, 173, 174, 178, 180, 183, 184, 185, 186, 189, 191, 200, 202, 210, 211, 222, 227, 234, 235, 236, 254, 257, 259, 260, 261, 269, 271, 273, 275, 277, 278, 281, 291, 295, 299, 301, 305, 308, 312
Saviour, 42, 78, 162, 182, 186, 198, 221, 227, 255, 260, 261, 262, 284, 287, 290, 291, 292, 301
Schleiermacher, 30, 33, 41, 110, 116, 117, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 140, 142, 147, 150, 151, 152, 156, 157, 214, 220, 224, 230, 309, 326, 328, 333
SDA, iv, xviii, xix, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 34, 38, 39, 40, 44, 46, 47, 51, 56, 57, 58, 64, 68, 69, 70, 72, 73, 77, 85, 90, 91, 92, 95, 102, 163, 164, 165, 185, 187, 195, 200, 202, 203, 204, 210, 211, 212, 214, 224, 236, 237, 260, 263, 292, 303, 304, 308, 318, 319, 320
Seventh-day Adventist, xi, xii, xviii, 20, 58, 68, 92, 187, 237, 263, 324
Sinful, 25, 30, 37, 38, 39, 43, 47, 49, 53, 57, 58, 59, 71, 77, 78, 88, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 142, 178, 190, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 206, 207, 208, 209, 215, 219, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 263, 270, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 294, 305, 307, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 320, 336
Sinless, 25, 38, 39, 43, 47, 49, 53, 57, 59, 71, 77, 78, 80, 88, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 204, 205, 206, 215, 219, 231, 233, 236, 237, 238, 259, 262, 263, 266, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 294, 303, 305, 307, 311, 312, 313, 314, 320, 336
Tension, 23, 35, 36, 37, 40, 42, 50, 71, 80, 129, 171, 172, 173, 175, 177, 178, 181, 206, 212, 215, 218, 219, 220, 228, 234, 236, 275, 300, 308, 310
Transcendence, xiii, 33, 46, 47, 77, 116, 151, 159, 161, 249, 251, 252, 253, 255, 256, 258, 260, 261, 305, 313
Trinity, iii, iv, vi, 26, 28, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37, 41, 44, 47, 49, 68, 72, 81, 84, 89, 90, 91, 93, 111, 113, 114, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 127, 128, 131, 133, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 160, 164, 170, 175, 180, 181, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 194, 212, 216, 221, 223, 224, 225, 226, 236, 238, 239, 240, 242, 252, 262, 277, 281, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 291, 305, 306, 309, 310, 311, 313, 322, 323, 324, 327, 328, 331, 332, 334
Virgin birth, 30, 31, 42, 118, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147, 150, 161, 204, 229, 230, 231, 232, 240, 242, 271, 310, 312, 315

Abbreviations of Biblical Books

All the references to the Bible refer to the English Standard Version (ESV).

Book	Abbreviation	Book	Abbreviation
Genesis	Gn	**Nahum**	Nah
Exodus	Ex	**Habakkuk**	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	**Zephaniah**	Zeph
Numbers	Num	**Haggai**	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	**Zechariah**	Zech
Joshua	Jos	**Malachi**	Mal
Judges	Jdg	**Matthew**	Mt
Ruth	Ruth	**Mark**	Mk
1 Samuel	1 Sam	**Luke**	Lk
2 Samuel	2 Sam	**John**	Jn
1 Kings	1 Ki	**Acts**	Ac
2 Kings	2 Ki	**Romans**	Rm
1 Chronicles	1 Chr	**1 Corinthians**	1 Cor
2 Chronicles	2 Chr	**2 Corinthians**	2 Cor
Ezra	Ezra	**Galatians**	Gal
Nehemiah	Neh	**Ephesians**	Eph
Esther	Esther	**Philippians**	Php
Job	Job	**Colossians**	Col
Psalm	Ps	**1 Thessalonians**	1 Th
Proverbs	Pr	**2 Thessalonians**	2 Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	**1 Timothy**	1 Tim
Song of Songs	SS	**2 Timothy**	2 Tim
Isaiah	Is	**Titus**	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	**Philemon**	Phm
Lamentations	Lam	**Hebrews**	Heb
Ezekiel	Ez	**James**	Jas
Daniel	Dn	**1 Peter**	1 Pt
Hosea	Hos	**2 Peter**	2 Pt
Joel	Joel	**1 John**	1 Jn
Amos	Amos	**2 John**	2 Jn
Obadiah	Ob	**3 John**	3 Jn
Jonah	Jonah	**Jude**	Jude
Micah	Mi	**Revelation**	Rev

Summary

Ellen G White, one of the founding members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereafter SDA Church) has deeply influenced this church in her lifetime and continues to do so through her writings. Her writings span hundreds of thousands of pages, filling books, articles, letters, and compilations, focusing on pastoral and practical Christianity, being filled with theological statements. This thesis considers two methods of evaluating White's theology: The first is to use specific authors who are quoting White, while the second is to compare her to a theologian. The lack of structure in White's theological quotes allows for authors to impose their views or the view of another theologian on White's work. This situation is further complicated by authors mostly relying on a deductive method of argumentation. White's quotes or her comparison to a theologian becomes the premises that support a specific conclusion. My theory consists of observable phenomena, which I term *What?*, interrelations which I term *Why?*, and a method. The lack of structure to White's theological statements and the mainly deductive approach applied to her work result in indicating the observable phenomena or *What?*, but not the interrelations or *Why?* This thesis considers White's Christology and begins by deductively comparing White to Karl Barth. This comparison first allows for the identification of White's *What?* Second, following an inductive methodology, an attempt will be made to find the most likely interrelations or *Why?* that combine the *What?* At the conclusion, we will have a partial reconstruction of White's Christological framework as well as a new method that can produce the *What?*, the *Why?*, and a *How?* White's partial Christological framework can serve as foundation for a further extrapolation of her theological ideas as well as further evaluations.

Opsomming

Ellen G White was ’n stigterslid van die Sewende Dag Adventiste Kerk (hierna SDA Kerk). Alreeds in haar leeftyd het sy hierdie kerk beïnvloed en hou aan om so te doen deur haar geskrifte. Haar geskrifte strek oor honderde duisende bladsye wat boeke, artikels, briewe, en samestellings insluit en wat fokus op pastorale en praktiese Christenskap. Nietemin is haar geskrifte gevul met teologiese stellings. Hierdie proefskrif ondersoek twee metodes van evaluasie van White se teologie: Die eerste is outeurs wat haar aanhaal en die tweede is wanneer sy vergelyk word met ’n teoloog. Die afwesigheid van struktuur in White se teologiese stellings het tot gevolg dat outeurs hulle eie siening of die siening van ’n ander teoloog op haar teologie kan afdruk. Hierdie situasie word verder gekompliseer deur outeurs wat meestal op ’n deduktiewe metode van redenasie staatmaak. White se aanhalings of die vergelyking met teoloë word die voorwaarde wat tot die spesifieke gevolgtrekkings lei. ’n Teorie bestaan uit waarneembare verskynsels, waarna ek verwys as *Wat?*, onderlinge relasies, waarna ek verwys as *Hoekom?* en ’n metode. Die verlies aan struktuur van White se teologiese stellings en die hoofsaaklike deduktiewe toepassing op haar werk, openbaar die waarneembare verskynsels of *Wat?*, maar nie die onderlinge relasies of *Hoekom?* nie. Hierdie proefskrif ondersoek White se Christologie en vergelyk haar met Karl Barth op ’n deduktiewe wyse. Hierdie vergelyking maak dit moontlik om die *Wat?* te identifiseer. Tweedens word ’n induktiewe metodologie gevolg om die moontlike onderlinge verbande of *Hoekom?* wat die *Wat?* verbind, na te vors. Die gevolgtrekking gee ’n gedeeltelike rekonstruksie van White se Christologies raamwerk weer, sowel as ’n nuwe metode wat die *Wat?*, *Hoekom?* en *Hoe?* uitwys. White se gedeeltelike Christologiese raamwerk kan dien as basis vir ’n verdere ekstrapolasie van haar teologiese idees sowel as verdere beoordeling.

Chapter 1
Introduction to the Focal Point of this Thesis

1.1 Orientation

Ellen G White (hereafter White) was one of the founding members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (hereafter SDA Church). As spiritual author, she remains influential in the SDA Church. Through the circulation of her books and referencing of her works as authoritative, she remains influential in various areas within Adventism. The areas which White's documents continues to influence, include but are not limited to health, evangelism, and theology. This posthumous influence has granted her a great deal of authority, resulting in discussions where people are promoting or rejecting her authority.

It was the focal point of my Master's dissertation to evaluate how White's authority is treated by her critics and proponents. The pattern that arose was that generally, critics focus on the human and negative aspects to deny White's authority. Proponents focus on the positive and divine influences of White, to promote her authority (Van Niekerk 2019:11). This process prevents a fair evaluation of White's documents, as it allows only for a one-sided view thereof. Knight and Bradford have promoted a more balanced view, researching positive and divine aspects along with the human and negative ones (Knight 2000:17; Bradford 2006:13). The methods which I evaluated in my Master's form part of one method of evaluation. As I have considered this method there, I will not give more attention to it here.

There are, however, two other methods of evaluation that enjoy great prominence. The first method is simply where various quotes of White's writings on a particular topic are referenced. Webster employs this method in his evaluation of Christology in Adventism (Webster 1982:56-156; cf. also Whidden 1997; Weber 1994; Larson 1952). He criticises Douglas for a selective quoting of White's documents, but fails himself to recognise his own selective quoting of it. This is the most obvious flaw in this method. Due to the amount of work penned by White, it seems as if everybody who quotes her writings, is doing so selectively. Webster notes a discussion between two authors, Ganes and Thompson, contemplating whether White grew in her understanding of

theology or not (Webster 1982:143). Depending on which of these views one adopts, it will influence the quoting process that one employs. White did not write systematically, but across her works, spanning a lifetime, one finds statements that hold theological implications. This poses a problem for a researcher because, as I have mentioned, almost everybody who quotes White, is doing it selectively. It also begs the question of who decides on the order of the quotations. Without a framework of White's thinking on a topic, there are no criteria for ordering the quotes. Consequently, the process of evaluating White's documents, through sequencing her quotes, mostly falls prey to individual bias.

The second method is one which compares White's literature to those of theologians. This method is frequently employed by students for topics to attain a degree (Jones 2014; cf. also Oladini 2011; Lee 2010). Although it allows for greater clarity and better structure in evaluating White's documents, it does not develop her theological framework. White's views remain undefined when being compared to other authors and was, up till now, never researched independently. Comparing her to any theologian has value, as it clearly defines *what* she believed in. This method has never moved beyond to the *Why?* or the *What?* that she believed in.

In the following illustration, my use of the terms *What?* and *Why?* will become clear. The *What?* refers to obvious statements of faith in which the SDA Church believes, e.g., that babies should not be baptised. This does not explain the underlying conceptual framework that supports that belief. When we turn to the *Why?*, we consider this conceptual framework which is expressed in the *What?* statements. The SDA Church believes that baptism follows conversion, and conversion is based on an intelligent decision. Babies or young children cannot yet make such a decision and thus only when this decision can be made intelligently, is baptism allowed. This is the *Why?* of the SDA belief in baptism that promotes the *What?*

Comparing White's writings to those of theologians, allows us to verify *what* she believed in, but it does not clarify the *Why?* which underlies her theological framework. The result is that White's thinking is never systematised into a theological framework. Her work can therefore only be evaluated by her theological framework, from individual

statements or comparisons. This brings us back to the problem of the need for a better method of evaluation in which White's documents can be evaluated.

Another problem with all the evaluation methods that I have mentioned, is that they rely solely on deductive reasoning. This method can lead to isolating the person from their historical background (Ponter, Armstrong, Kendall, Bell, Kennedy, & Clifford 2012:140). This is something which I also highlighted in my Master's dissertation, that White's work is often evaluated at the neglect of historical circumstances (Van Niekerk 2019:132). This suggests that there is a need to employ inductive reasoning when evaluating White's work. Considering what has been stated, it is understandable that deductive reasoning is effective to determine the *What?* of White's views. However, the deductive reasoning is not effective to determine the *Why?* of White's thinking. Inductive reasoning will become both important and effective in determining the *Why?* of the larger theological framework of White's thinking.

If one could develop a methodology whereby the theological framework of White's literature could be reconstructed, it would provide advantages in the academic field. First, it would establish White as a theologian in her own right. Second, the underlying framework to White's documents will guide authors to quote correctly from her work. Third, it would allow the academic world to study and evaluate her work as is done with other figures of interest. This latter point would open up a part of the SDA Church that has been segregated for most of SDA history. It would also motivate the SDA Church to reconsider many of their views on White.

This section has provided the basic orientation of this thesis. In the next section, I will outline the steps being taken to provide the foundation from which I wish to develop a new model with which to evaluate White and her work.

1.2 Approach and Relevance

Having outlined the problem of evaluating White's work as I see it, I will now explain the approach I will take and the relevance thereof. Chapter 2 starts by considering the nature of White's writings and the theological impact of her work. I also reflect on how her authority has fluctuated and what her theological impact on the SDA Church is. I define the term *What?*, referring to *What White believed*. Along with the first question,

the second term I define is *Why?*, referring to *Why White believed what she believed*. I demonstrate that in theology it is not only necessary to consider the *What?* of an individual's views, but also the *Why?* (McGrath 1994:271, 288). The *Why?* serves as an essential part to understand the larger framework which the individual is working with. There has been a great focus on the *What?* of White's writings, but little consideration was given to the *Why?*

In the next section, I consider Knight's 12 points intended to guide the reader of White's documents (Knight 2013c:900-903). I point out that these are general suggestions and do not constitute an academic or scientific process of evaluation. The challenge that one faces here is that these guidelines do not deal with human subjectivity (Knight 1999:Preface).

In investigating the process of quoting White's work, I consider her theological influence both past and present. I also consider how White's theological influence plays into the theology of individuals in their process of quoting her. Here I review individuals in conversation with Weber, such as Venden, Knight, Sequeira, Larson, and Maxwell (cf. Weber 1994:6, 9, 31-32, 48-49, 93, 113-114). I also investigate MacCarty's quoting of White's documents alongside other theologians. In his doctorate, Webster presents a partial construction of White's Christology, where he deals with the quotes of White in chronological order (Webster 1982:66). He does at times break the chronology in quoting White's work. What is significant, is that he does not strictly follow a chronological order (Webster 1982:67-71). He (Webster 1982:149, 150, 152) concludes with the following points to White's Christology:

1. White's favourite theme, which is interwoven throughout her work, is Christ.
2. Christ as a mediator is a particular focus in White's Christological undertones.
3. White presents a tension and paradox in her Christology.

In critiquing White's Christology, Webster points out that the very strength of her writings – tension and paradox – is also its weakness.

I also give attention to non-SDA individuals utilising White's work by means of quoting. Mansour attempts to use White's views to promote his anti-Trinitarian views (Mansour 2017, 2011). He quotes White extensively, using these quotes to promote his anti-

Trinitarian views (Mansour 2011). I also consider Canright in quoting White's views, specifically on her relation to Scripture, her inspiration, and her life (Canright 2019:9, 10, 13, 15 of 111). However, Canright subjectively looks for weaknesses in the life of White, in his attempt to prove that she was a false prophet.

I then proceed by considering the limitations of the process of quoting White's literature. Webster makes the statement that White's Christological quotes are scattered and that it is up to the individual to discover the dominant themes and tendencies in her thinking (Webster 1982:65). During her life, White was meticulous and responsible for the production of her books (Olsen 2013:663-664, 666). After her passing in 1915, her works were left to the trustees of the Ellen G White Estate (hereafter called EGW Estate).[1] The EGW Estate published several books containing her quotes on certain topics (Olsen 2013:667).

In the case of Mansour, it becomes evident that he uses selective quoting. He ignores statements made by White, and does not even bother to reinterpret them, just to suit his views. He also ignores the time of the quote or other issues such as purpose or context (Knight 2000:93).

In his book, *Who's got the truth* (Weber 1994), Weber reviews the soteriology of five authors namely Maxwell, Knight, Sequira, Larson, and Venden. Upon review, the way in which three of the five authors – Maxwell, Sequera, and Larson – use White's writings, we find similar patterns. Knight, for one, does not quote White to support his views, which he grounds on Scripture (Knight 1994:40). In contrast, Sequera quotes White to substantiate his personal views. What is of interest is that Sequera sometimes adds his own definition to White's words (Sequeira 1994:83). Larson takes up several pages to list the number of quotes that he uses from White, making specific statements in which he claims that White is supporting his view (Larson 1994:117-121). Venden's presentation contains only two references to White, particularly to present personal effects of salvation (Venden 1994:154, 155). It would appear that Venden, just like

[1] The Ellen G White estate was established after White's death and is to this day the owners and custodians of her original documents, both published and unpublished.

Knight understands the danger of quoting White's work, although he is not as strict as Knight in refraining from quoting White.

Douglas is an SDA theologian and editor of Adventist Review, which allows him to promote certain key Christological ideas. Some ideas relevant to Webster's study are 1) Christ's sinful human nature, and 2) flowing from the first is the idea that humanity has the ability to become sinless in their state of sin as Christ was (Webster 1984:367). In his overview and critique on Douglas' Christology, Webster states: 'For one who claims to use Ellen White as an authority for his Christology it should be expected that he would give equal treatment to her total output. However, it appears that Douglas is at times selective in his usage of Ellen White's Christological material' (Webster 1982:412). It would also appear that Douglas, in quoting White, aims to promote his interpretation of Brunner (Webster 1982:348).

Webster suggests that the centre of White's Christology is the concept of Christ as 'God with us.' He views the idea of 'God with us' as the same idea that White postulates of Christ as an eternal mediator (Webster 1982:151). It appears that Webster's focus on 'God with us' is a reworking of Barth's theology of 'God for us' (Webster 1982:454, 455). Contemplating this, I must conclude that Webster is similarly guilty of the very charges that he lays against Douglas. During her lifetime, White could oversee and, according to her understanding, organise material in her books. Posthumously we do not have access to her insight into these matters. Quoting White very often, results in a wilderness of quotes and counter quotes to prove theological views (Bradford 2006:188).

The limitations of quoting White's work therefore are:

- The correctness of quotes can too easily be judged by the bias of an individual's view.
- It suffers from selective quoting.
- Subjectivity is hidden in quoting White's documents as a source of authority.
- It focuses only on what White believed and neglects the *Why?* of what she believed.

Next, I consider the method of comparing White's documents to those of theologians. Jones states that in comparing White's writings to those of Calvin, it is possible to find divergent points of view as well as similar views (Jones 2014:ix). As such, this method presents a clearer picture, although partial, of White's Christology, than one would find by merely quoting White's work.

Oladini, in comparing Stott's concept of atonement with White's views, makes the following observation: 'Ellen White broadens the concept of atonement to include not only the cross, but also Christ's intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary' (Oladini 2011:13).

Comparing White's documents to those of theologians reveals that it will also show where White held unique viewpoints as well as proposing challenges to better understand these viewpoints.

When we turn to Lee's discussion in comparing White's views to Ladd's, we find the following points of interest: Both Ladd and White view the Kingdom of God as reign and realm. Both of them also hold to two kingdoms – one of God and one of Satan – in conflict with one another (Lee 2010:277). A big point of divergence that Lee points out is the starting point of the Kingdom of God. To Ladd, it is with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. For White, the Kingdom of God existed from eternity and was re-established at the cross on earth (Lee 2010:280).

Webster, after his initial process of outlining White's Christology through quoting her, also compares her Christology to Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas (Webster 1982:429). According to Webster, one of the key factors in White's Christology is that Christ is equal to the Father (Webster 1982:439).

After reviewing these scholars, I will consider the limitations of this view. Jones misses White's approach to the Trinity because the process of comparing White's views to any theologian, places White at a disadvantage. Jones, in comparing White's views to those of Calvin, made Calvin's dilemma White's dilemma. Jones elaborates on *what* White believed. He offers no position on *why* she made statements or *why* she

believed what she did. He postulates that she utilised a salvation-historical approach, but does not explain the reasons within that approach that give rise to what she believed.

Similarly, with Oladini we find several comparisons to the *What?* between the views of Stott and White. There is a distinct lack of explaining the *Why?* of White's views. Oladini also fails to appreciate White's tradition and the context in her writing (Oladini 2011:305; Knight 2000:31-36).

Lee explains the *What?* in White's writings on the Sabbath, but not the *Why?* of her view (Lee 2010:283). There is no attempt to understand how the Sabbath fits into the great paradigm of White's theological framework. Likewise, Lee presents the points as to *what* White writes, but not *why* the Sabbath is so important in White's theological framework.

Whereas the other scholars only conclude on the *What?* of White's Christology, Webster applies Barth's views to White's by neglecting key factors. This colours key components of White's Christology in light of Barth's Christology instead of her own (Webster 1982:152).

From this section, the limits are the following:

- White's theological framework is not developed.
- Because of White's absence of a theological framework, it is possible to impose issues of other theologians on her views and ignore her process in dealing with these issues.
- The use of White's theological statement mainly deals with the *What?* of her theology and not the *Why?*

I conclude the second chapter with a review of deductive methodology. I focus on the deductive argument which is an argument intended to be deductively true or false. The premises are intended to be true and if accepted, the conclusion cannot be denied (Anon 1995). The literature we have reviewed so far, utilises a deductive approach in dealing with White and her writings. The danger in the deductive method is formulated

by Ponter *et al.*: ‘Another problem with the deductivist approach is that it can fall into the trap of isolating a given author from his historical-theological context’ (Ponter *et al.* 2012:140).

This is a very common problem with regard to White (Bradford 2006:129-132). The deductive approach is not wrong or without value. We must recognise that, just like the previous methods being examined in this chapter, it is limited. What I conclude then, is that, together with the limitations of the methods we reviewed there, comes a limitation that applies to both methods of an over-reliance on a deductive approach. This leads to a dissection and selection of White’s ideas, but fails to reunite them into a cohesive whole.

In Chapter 3, I review the Christology of Barth. Barth was born on 10 May 1886 and would go on to study and become a pastor in Safenwill. It was in Safenwill that Barth wrote *The Epistle to the Romans*, which would become the cornerstone of his later theology (Barth 1933a; cf. Zellweger 1997). Because of this commentary, Barth was appointed as professor at the University of Göttingen despite his lack of a doctorate. As professor of systematic theology in Bonn (1930-1935) he began working on *Church Dogmatics* (hereafter referred to as *CD*). He was later employed as professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Basel where he stayed until his retirement in 1962. Barth died on 10 December 1968 (Zellweger 1997).

Next, I consider some foundational elements in Barth’s Christology. Barth’s theology in his own words is ‘God for us’ (Barth 1956:32, 45, 55; cf. 2016:225). First, God is free to reveal himself to us (Barth 1956:2). This entails that all God’s actions are to be considered as his revelation. As such, humanity cannot inquire, evaluate, or analyse – they can only receive God’s revelation for us (Barth 1949:4).

Barth utilises this process of revelation to place God not only as primary in action, but in fact as primary in all actions. Humankind’s response is not missing in the theology of Barth. The human response, however, is much further down the line of discussion (Barth 2016:225). Barth has this view because, according to him, God only reveals himself to someone who is passive (McGrath 1994:261, 262). Barth moves between modalism and tritheism in describing the Trinity (McGrath 1994:256, 257). He

maintains the unity of the Trinity by way of relationship while still maintaining the individuality of the three Persons (Gabriel 1995:45). For Barth, the incarnated Christ includes the entire Godhead, but through the second mode of God (Barth 1956:1). It appears that in the later *CD*, a discussion about the Trinity does not exist (Jones 2014:21). Barth assumes that the reader understands his point and that the point made remains even if not directly address. For Barth, Christ is the objective possibility of revelation and when Barth speaks of Christ, it includes the Trinity (Barth 1956:25, 28, 33; Haley 2015:149). In response to liberal theology and Humanism, Barth constructs his theology to deny humanity any action or reaching out to God (Barth 1956:3).

Next, I consider Christ as God's revelation. We find Barth's struggle of being a liberal theologian, supporting views that God was to be found through humanity (Newell 2017:51). Barth regards humanity as fallible (Barth 1949:80). He submits to Scripture which serves as a bridge from liberal to evangelical theology (Barth 1956:208). By basing his theology on the foundation of God's revelation, he denies humanity any positive role in interpretating God's revelation (Barth 1956:4; cf. McGrath 1994:262). Barth's view on revelation includes elements to ensure the divinity of Christ (Barth 1956:16). He gives God's revelation a dynamic quality (Barth 1949:1, 17, 67). This contrasts to liberal theology that places the dynamism on humanity (McGrath 1994:93).

After this, I discuss the way in which Barth comes to utilise the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* designations of Christ's humanity (Barth 1956:163). The genesis of these two terms is to be found in Barth's *Göttingen dogmatics* (Haley 2015:27): 'The *anhypostasis* expresses the doctrine that the human nature of Jesus has no subsistence (*anhypostasis*) apart from the union with the Logos' (Haley 2015:9; original emphasis).

To counterbalance this view, Barth postulates a second concept which is explained as follows: 'The *enhypostasis* expresses the doctrine that the human nature of Jesus has its being "in" the subsistence (en-hypostasis) of the incarnate Son of God' (Haley 2015:91).

Barth utilises these two formulations to ensure that the humanity of the Son of God does not exist before the incarnation or apart from the incarnation (Barth 1956:163).

This ensures first, that the divinity of the Son of God is not altered while being Jesus Christ (Haley 2015:70). Second, it creates a unique humanity in which *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis* do not apply to humanity.

In the following section, I consider whether Christ has adopted the image of a Person in the incarnation. The two views Barth deals with are:

- Alexandrian: The Logos assumed a general human nature (Barth 1956:149).
- Antiochene: The Logos assumed a specific human being (Barth 1956:185).

Roach notes that Barth alternates back and forth between the Alexandrian and Antiochene positions (Roach 2013:39, 40). He defines Barth's Christological view as neither Alexandrian nor Antiochian, but as dialectical Chalcedonianism (Roach 2013:44).

From this point, I discuss Christ's sinful human nature. As Barth needs to ensure that Christ became truly human, his solution is to propose that Jesus adopted a sinful human nature (Barth 1956:156; cf. Roach 2013:59). Barth argues that Christ was equal to our state of disobedience (Barth 1956:149, 151). Although Christ was sinful by nature, he did not sin (Barth 1956:155, 157, 159). Barth also states that in bearing our weaknesses, Christ truly suffered (Barth 1949:107; 1956:155, 158).

Another key aspect of Barth's Christology is the virgin birth of Jesus. This is connected to the dual concepts of *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis* (Barth 1956:194). Haley notes that Barth relates the incarnation as the divine assuming the human body, which is not a union of human and divine natures (Haley 2015:89). The virgin birth to Barth further stresses the humanity of Christ (Barth 1956:185). Barth couples this to the passion equalling the two events in importance (Barth 1956:182). The virgin birth allows the Creator to create a new beginning from humanity, as well as true divinity and true humanity in union (Barth 1949:97). In this way, both the Trinity and Christ reveal absolute union as well as perfect distinctiveness (Haley 2015:26).

After this, we investigate Barth's view on the suffering of Christ (Barth 1949:101). For Schleiermacher, the idea of the Trinity was the last topic to be discussed, whereas for Barth it is the first word that must be spoken before one can address revelation

(McGrath 1994:260-261). In doing so, Barth removes humanity from the exalted position granted by liberal theology.

Here we deliberate the issue of Christ's humanity at the ascension. To claim that Christ removed his humanity, would negate Christ as the God-man, albeit only in a short period in history. On the other hand, to claim that Christ retained his humanity, presents the problem of deifying humanity. Revelation proceeds from the Father, the Son fulfils it objectively, and the Holy Spirit fulfils it subjectively inside us (Barth 1956:1). How did God the Son return to the Trinity while still retaining his humanity? Although Christ's humanity is real humanity, it is united with divinity and therefore the humanity of Christ exists beyond the confines of every human creature (Haley 2015:201, 206). Malysz argues that Barth aims to establish the strict co-presence of the divine and human natures of Christ, but also that his humanity is our humanity (Malysz 2007:89). Humanity is therefore not deified, but only glorified. To achieve this, Barth rejects the ontic immutability for ethical immutability (Malysz 2007:90). God the Son had chosen from eternity to become a man at a specific point in time and to remain so for eternity (Barth 1949:70).

I also discuss the issue of genetics in Barth's conceptualisation of the virgin birth. He claims that there is no biological references to be found in Scripture or the creeds (Barth 1956:183). He does not remain true to his objection, since he relies on biological references to ensure that Jesus was truly human, as he was born of the body, flesh, and blood of his mother (Barth 1956:185). If half of the genetic material of Christ's human body originated from the Holy Spirit and half from Mary, it would be a problem. Whether the humanity of Christ existed five years or five seconds before the incarnation, would make no difference and it would still deny the basic premise of *anhypostasis*. It would also deny the *enhypostasis* component of the formula of the humanity of Christ. In whatever percentage it existed apart from the incarnation, the result is a denial of the *enhypostasis*. Barth, in his careful Christological construction seems to have created a logical problem. This presents one of the inconsistencies of Barth in his theology, which is linked to another issue that we find in his theology dealing with human time and space.

Barth's neglect of human time and space is also discussed. For him, there was no point of contact within humanity (Barth 1956:4). Any such point could only originate from divine revelation (McGrath 1994:161-162). This prompted Pannenberg to work out a theology of history, rather than a theology of the Word (Vanderplaat 1983:56, 57). Hutabarat claims that Barth is too determined to deny humanity any positive vantage point, making God transcendent (Hutabarat 2015:123). Barth succeeds to make the transcendent God the immanent God, as humanity can only receive God's revelation (Barth 1956:15).

I also consider similarities between Von Harnack and Herrmann in Barth's Christology. Von Harnack has guaranteed Barth that liberal theology would salvage the simple beauty of 'Jesus religion' (Rose 2014). Herman convinced him that liberal theology preserved the principal gospel faith insisting that Christ could be known personally (Rose 2014). Some of the points Barth shared with Von Harnack, are the following:

- Returning the gospel to its original purity (Barth 1949:86; cf. Rose 2014); and
- viewing Christ clear from human ideas (Barth 1956:4; cf. Rose 2014).

Some points that Herrmann and Barth share, are:

- The claims of Christianity are vastly different from those of science (Barth 1963:4-6).
- Christ is presented as a historical fact of God's self-revelation (Barth 1956:60).

The dissimilarities between Barth's views and those of Von Harnack and Herrmann are:

- Barth's focus on the incarnation as opposed to Von Harnack's denial of it (Barth 1956:172).
- Barth views true religion as originating from Christ, while Herrmann views it as principally moral (Barth 1956:353).

Barth denies the inherent questions in humanity about the meaning of existence and of God, claiming that it leads only to an idol. God can only be known by his self-revelation (Vanderplaat 1983:42). In doing this, Barth makes God transcendent, above humans or human endeavours, which divorces God from human's experience. Barth

develops a theology that denies any form of Cartesian certainty derived from self (Harper 2015:164).

Next, the transcendence and immanence of God is discussed. God's participation in humanity is the *a priori* existence of true humanity (Barth 1949:89, 97; cf. Vanderplaat 1983:51). Barth reasons from the view that, from eternity, God has intended that his Son would be incarnated into humanity (Barth 1956:1). If God has intended to be incarnated from eternity, it makes humanity a necessity for the incarnation (Barth 1956:36). The implication is that humanity had to be created for God to be revealed in the flesh. Gabriel cites Aung, Santmire, and Young as critiquing Barth for failing to make God immanent (Gabriel 1995:39), while Gabriel counter argues that Barth does make God immanent (Gabriel 1995:39, 40). Barth's description allows humanity value only in as far as God has elected to become human (Barth 1949:65). Where Schleiermacher is considered dangerous for showing pantheistic tendencies, Barth presents the danger of the 'absolute qualitative' difference between God and creation (Heron 2000:396).

Barth specifically rejects views that optimistically hold to human intellectual capacity and progression in society (Hutabarat 2015:128). He does not completely deny humankind their right to a living, but ascribe doxology to them (Vanderplaat 1983:36). For Bultmann, it is possible for humankind to speak about God in the current space and time. However, Barth wishes to disengage theology from any means of being a human endeavour (Eyeons 2010:52). He wishes to avoid a subjective humanity and finds safety in the humanity of God (Harper 2015:10). Having considered Barth's Christology, we will also consider White's Christology.

In Chapter 4, I have investigated elements of White's Christology. White grew up in an era that was marked by the second great awakening (Blue 2015:71). Due to an accident, she was left in such poor health that she could not proceed with her studies, being physically scarred for life (Moon & Kaiser 2013:21). While she was still young, in 1840, she heard Miller preach that Christ would return in 1843 (Knight 1996:14). Miller's final date for the return of Christ was given as 22 October 1844. White was one of the many who awaited the return of Christ. The failure of Miller's prediction

affected the whole of America (Van Niekerk 2019:59). Several groups broke off from the main group. White belonged to the group that would become the SDA Church.

Over 70 years of ministry, White was central in shaping the SDA Church. During the 1850s, she and her husband (James White) called for the organisation of the developing congregations. The Whites pushed for an organisation, based on the need for effective mission outreach as well as legality (Moon & Kaiser 2013:39). After more than a decade, on 20 May 1863, a general conference took place with representatives of all state conferences. At that meeting, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists became the unifying organisation and marked the official birth of the SDA Church (Moon & Kaiser 2013:40, 41). At a general conference session from 7 to 20 November 1883, White opened a discussion on SDA legalism. There had been a concern of many that they would not be saved. White motivated that faith and not works brought about assurance of salvation (Moon & Kaiser 2013:57). This theme of righteousness by faith would culminate in a conflict at the Minneapolis General Conference in 1888. Other topics of discussion at the 1888 meeting included the virgin birth, the full divinity of Christ, and the personhood of the Holy Spirit (Knight 2000:117). For the next two years, White travelled with Jones and Waggoner to promote the idea that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner as a free gift of God.

We also look at how White developed her Christology. Her theology has for the most part been dealt within the area of apologetics (Fortin 2013b:1035). *The Ellen G White encyclopedia* contains a passage on White's view of the divinity of Christ, mainly focusing on affirming that White believed in the full divinity of Christ (Adams 2013:691). In the same publication, the discussion of her view on the humanity of Christ concerns itself with sin affecting and not infecting Christ (Whidden 2013:695). Although these studies are helpful, they do not give a systematised theological presentation. We consider Webster's attempt to fully present White's Christology as the best (Webster 1982:66, 74, 78, 81, 82, 89).

This is followed by a discussion on the sources used by White for her Christology. Lee writes that one of White's primary sources is Scripture (Lee 2010:273). An early experience in White's childhood that left her with a marked impression of the 'benevolence and majesty' of Christ, appears to be a strong source of motivation for her (Moon &

Kaiser 2013:24). This theme in White's writings leaves an impression on its readers (White 1940:23; cf. also 158, 277, 425). She affords great value to Scripture (Fortin 2013b:241) and views it as the word of God (Damsteegt 2013:645). Her special interest is Jesus Christ, in relating forgiveness and applying his loving attributes to humankind in everyday life (Bradford 2006:98).

Other sources that are found in White's Christology, are also discussed. In her writings, she follows a similar pattern as the gospel writers in presenting a narrative which is interlaced with theological thoughts (Parseinos 2013:399). In using Scripture, she does not put forward new ideas, but simply explicates what is already said in Scripture, according to her understanding thereof (Knight 2013a:648).

White also uses external sources: One such example is Melville of which White borrows ideas and phrases from his articles and sermons (Graybill 1982:1 of 98). Other sources in White's writings are Conybeare and Howson's book, *The life and epistles of St Paul* (Conybeare & Howson 1855), as well as Stowe's book, *Origins and history of the books of the Bible* (Stowe 1867; cf. Fortin 2013a:1029, 1031, 1033). White's extensive reading compensated for her lack in education and contributed to the development of her unique style of writing (Webster 1982:64). Her books published post-1890 became a 'gold-mine' of Christological ideas (Webster 1982:74).

I also investigate White's writing methodology: Within her narrative and spiritual focus, she purposefully introduces theological statements. An important aspect of her writings is what Webster calls 'tension and paradox' (Webster 1982:154). She writes in extremes, specifically in opposites. She does not only apply this method to Christology, but in all her writings she employs this 'tension and paradox' methodology.[2] She presents two extremes as one concept, for example, the two natures of Christ which remain separate but are united in one Person (cf. Webster 1982:74, 78; Parseinos 2013:399). However, I also show that, in the case of Satan, she does not use tension and paradox, while at times using it to place right and wrong in conflict with one

[2] Examples are the humility of Christ and the glory of Christ (White 1958a:36), humanity as exalted by God and subject to God (White 1958a:45, 47), Christ's care for Mary, and Christ's distancing of Mary (White 1940:146, 147).

another. Missing this tension and paradox can lead the reader to extremes which were not meant by White (Knight 1997:71; cf. also Van Niekerk 2019:119).

In dealing with the incarnation of Christ, White links several themes into singular topics. She combines God's love, Christ's divinity, and several other themes in her narratives. As with the tension and paradox, readers may also miss some of the themes which are interwoven in her writing (Knight 1997:100, 103). Within these themes we find that at times White expresses the divine ideal and at other times the human reality (Knight 1997:92). This creates a further paradox between the divine ideal that serves as standard standing against the human reality of what is practically possible.

Next, I investigate the relational character of White's Christology. Since she does not write in systematic themes, but in a narrative style, it allows her to focus on the relational qualities between parties (White 1958a:33-34). In relating to Christ's declaration of divinity, she frames his divinity within the relationship between God the Father and Christ (White 1940:470). This factor provides a strong relational quality in her Christology, relating God to God, God to humankind, and God to creation. She does not rely on creedal or classic theological views of the Trinity (Jones 2014:95). All her theological ideas maintain its understanding of how God relates to God, to humanity, or to creation. This constitutes one of her key themes (Fortin 2013c:267; Douglas 2013a:853; Wallace 2013:680). I also pay attention to White's use of a metanarrative as opposed to postmodernity which moves away from metanarratives (Burnham 2011:299). I contend that this denial of postmodernity is not based on the lack of the existence of a metanarrative, but on human incapability to view the metanarrative (Bassham 2016:476). I also show that White fluctuates between theological concepts and their practical application (Fortin 2013c:275). Having considered the relational quality of her Christology and theology in general, we now turn to another aspect that develops from this one.

Subsequently, I discuss White's understanding of the purpose of the incarnation. Barth outright rejects the idea that sin could in any way cause God to act (Barth 1956:134). The question then is, 'Does White see sin as a necessity for the incarnation?' When the structure in her writing is considered, we observe that love and not sin was the

motivating factor for God to be incarnated (White 1958a:63). God's love response was, however, a response to the inevitable death of sinful humanity.

I further investigate how White develops her concept of the Trinity within her writings. From her writings it is clear that she believes in the Trinity (Moon 2013:844). She does not want to approach the Trinity in a classical way as found in creeds or most theological handbooks (cf. Jones 2014:21; Barth 1949:35, 65, 137; Erickson 1998:346). From the relational view of God, she equates God the Son with God the Father, a concept that she develops further in her writings (White 1940:19, 483, 591). To maintain balance, White employs her 'tension and paradox' methodology as she expresses the God-man relationship in extremes (Adams 2013:691; Whidden 2013:692). We also observe how she places Christ in key positions as God in the Old Testament. Having established Christ's divinity, she deals with the Holy Spirit. She introduces the Holy Spirit by means of the Scriptural narrative and equates the Spirit to Christ (White 1940:669, 671, 765). Likewise, she inserts the Holy Spirit into Old Testament passages (White 1958a).[3] Christ becomes the key that she utilises to establish the Trinity. As such, she also connects the Trinity to salvation and God's love (Fortin 2013c:265).

I then move on to considering how White relates the divinity and humanity of Christ to each other. She is very clear about Christ's divinity (Webster 1982:66, 67), as she regards Christ's divinity as based on life in himself, being fully equal to God (Moon 2013:844).

When we consider White on the humanity of Christ, we find a more difficult theme. Regarding the incarnation, she makes it clear that Christ did not exchange his divinity for humanity. She uses the term 'clothed' to describe Christ assuming his human nature. She is also very clear that Christ's humanity was 'perfectly identical with our nature' (Whidden 2013:692). In becoming human, however, there is a mysterious holding back of the powers of divinity (Webster 1982:84). The question could be asked, 'In

[3] See also Moses, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (White 1958a:251); God/Spirit resisted (White 1958a:278); grieving the Holy Spirit (White 1958a:294); people who are susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit (White 1917:102, 169); and God's children who are impelled by the Holy Spirit to do a special work (White 1917:174).

what way is the humanity of Christ equal to our own?' White argues that Christ did not resist temptation by way of his divinity, but by way of his humanity (Gulley 2013a:697).

We also investigate how White combined divinity and humanity in Christ. She speaks of the incarnation and the dual nature of Christ as a mystery (Webster 1982:78). It is clear that, in her writings, she omits the announcement of the angel to Mary about her impending birth (Lk 1:26-38). There is a single mention of this event (White 1940:81-82).[4] She views Christ as respecting and loving Mary as his mother, but she also shows the end of this motherhood at the crucifixion of Christ (White 1940:81, 90, 146, 752).

Following this, I discuss how White deals with the sinful and sinless components of Christ's humanity. During the 1950s, a book, *Questions on doctrine* was published by SDA members in response to questions on SDA beliefs and theology (Anon 1957:7). One of the points made in this book is that the SDA Church and White held that Christ had a sinless human nature (Anon 1957:61). Comparing two online articles, one by Gage, presenting the post-fall humanity of Christ, and the other by Rand, presenting the pre-fall humanity of Christ, both utilise White's work (Gage 1985; Rand 1985). Gage declares Christ's humanity as sinful, and sin as acts. Rand understands Christ's humanity as sinless, and sin as mainly relational.

Both Gage and Rand reference Barth, Gage in support, and Rand in contradiction (Gage 1985:7; Rand 1985). Ironically, while both authors are clear on Barth's view, both quote White to support their views. The difference between the two views can be simplified to Rand who focuses on Christ as substitute and Gage who focuses on Christ as example. In critiquing these two views, Donkor has published an article focusing on the soteriological aspects of Christ (Donkor 2005:2, 6 of 18).

According to the official SDA Church view, Christ took humanity in its fallen condition, but not the sin or sinfulness (cf. Dederen 2000:164-165). This view has been

[4] There is just a fleeting remark of the announcement of the angel, but only the event and not the content (White 1940:145).

developing since 1982 (Webster 1982:96, 99) and was most recently published in 2013 (Whidden 2013:696). Despite official publications, this discussion continues.

I also debate the theological and practical implications of this discussion about White. During the 1960s, Brinsmead has promoted perfectionism (Knight 2000:173). He bases his views on the writings of White, but is successfully countered when requested to prove his point from Scripture alone (Bradford 2006:189). The fact that he states that Christ had a sinful human nature, gave rise to the 'Last Generation Theology,' which promotes the idea that as Christ overcame sin, so human beings can and must overcome sin (Gage 1985:1; cf. also Dwyer 2019). Even though this theological view is not supported by current official SDA Church publications, the consequences are that it expected people to demonstrate that it is possible to live without sin (Knight 2000:181).

In comparing the views of Whidden and Larson on White, referring to Christ's humanity, we see how two views arise from different investigations on the same person. Larson claims that White states that Christ took upon himself a 'sinful' or 'fallen' human nature (Larson 1952:8). Whidden infers that Christ had to be like humanity to identify as a human, hence he used the term 'identity.' He also states that to redeem us, Christ had to be unique, hence the term 'uniqueness' (Whidden 1997:15, 16). To avoid simply comparing quotes, I will focus on a letter penned by White in early 1896 (Whidden 1997:59). In this letter, White denies that Christ had propensities to sin. Propensities refers to the nature of sinful beings to have leanings, bents, proclivities, and tendencies to sin (Whidden 2013:695). She furthermore refers to the first Adam as sinless, without a taint of sin and compared to Christ who took our human nature, but without the propensity to sin. In Larson's reaction to this letter, he claims that White was not a theologian or educated person and could not express her ideas correctly (Larson 1952:30). In referring to Christ as substitute, she speaks of him in terms of pre-fall. When dealing with sanctification, she speaks of Christ as post-fall (Whidden 1997:75).

I also present some critique on White's Christology. I look at her childhood fear of not being good enough (Moon & Kaiser 2013:24). As we have observed, some readers of White's documents are in danger of falling into the practice of seeking righteousness by works and human efforts (Toews 2013:1128-1129). We observe that White's view

on sanctification is clear enough in her writings and contend that the problem must lie elsewhere.

The danger of taking White's views to unhealthy extremes is ironically very prevalent when referring to her writings on health (Foster 2011). Despite the positive results in health emanating from her views, we find online articles warning against going to extremes, making health an issue of salvation (Manu 2005).

Within these themes, there are two other themes which can be termed 'Christ did it all' and 'Believer can do it all' (White 1940:25; 1911:71). The former should be the real and the latter the ideal. Very often, this is turned around due to a lack of indication in White's writings. This very often leads to her view of sanctification collapsing into justification.

In Chapter 5, I draw a comparison between White and Barth. I begin by noting that White wrote to establish the SDA Church, whereas Barth wrote to counter liberal theology and humanism. In his writings, Barth builds a construction for each level before moving on to the next. White writes by weaving different themes together in a narrative manner. Barth utilises Scripture as an exegete, while White uses it expository (Baxter 1981:78; Knight 2013a:648). Barth moves between two extremes to achieve balance, whereas White uses 'tension and paradox' in her writings to achieve balance.

Barth's theology has been summarised as 'God *for* us' because God acts on behalf of humankind in a dynamic way (Barth 2016:225). Only by his free will is God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Barth 1956:1). Barth's explanation of God's self-revelation is possible, only in the passivity of the human being (McGrath 1994:261, 262). If one has to summarise White's theology into three words, it would be best summarised as 'God *with* us' (Webster 1982:151). The preposition 'with' does not denote a position as much as a relationship between God and humankind, which is White's focus in her writings. She points out that the plan of salvation, not incarnation, was the eternal plan of God (White 1958a:63). Barth places the spotlight solely on God, whereas White's focus is on the redemptive interaction between God and humankind.

Both Barth and White utilise the Trinity. Barth makes the Trinity the foundation of his theology, even though, according to Jones, it is not strictly Scriptural (Jones 2014:93). In dealing with the Trinity, Barth is not relating to the ontological description, but rather the divine internal reality of God (Kantzer 1958:25). The Trinity underscores the revelation of Christ and is contained in it (Barth 1956:25, 28, 33). Whereas Schleiermacher left the Trinity for last, Barth posits it as the primary starting point (McGrath 1994:260, 261). White also originates her *The conflict of the ages* series[5] with a conception of the Trinity (Webster 1982:63). Her initial start is only partially developed and she continues to develop the concept by presenting two arguments, one for the deity of Christ and one for the deity and Person of the Holy Spirit (White 1940:19, 669, 671). White's approach to the Trinity is largely relational, which she utilises to demonstrate God's Person and also God's desire for humanity. Al-though White does not give a theological exposition of the Trinity, there are similarities between her view and that of Barth concerning the Trinity.

In comparing the views of Barth and White on the divinity of Christ, there is a similarity between them, as both view Christ as fully divine. Barth, from the starting point establishes Christ as divine by working from the foundation of the Trinity (Barth 1956:5). God reveals himself and such revelation can only be achieved by God. Barth views the incarnation as involving the whole Godhead while the Son as the second Person was specifically appropriated for the task of redemption (Kantzer 1958:25). Barth, in referring to the Synoptic Gospels, references the humanity of Jesus as the problem, while his divinity was the solution (Barth 1956:22). What Barth wants to point out, is that Christ could only be completely human if he was completely God. White is clear that Christ is equal to the Father in nature and essence (Webster 1982:66). Similar to Barth, she describes Christ as the fulness of the Godhead and in the highest sense as God (Adams 2013:691). The divinity of Christ was also essential for salvation to be effective (White 1940:25). In doing this, she removes Christ's humanity from his position of being Saviour. Barth and White view the divinity of Christ not simply as a fact of his being, but as an absolute necessity. Furthermore, neither Barth nor White considers that Christ's divinity was affected during the incarnation.

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[5] The series, *The conflict of the ages* comprises of the books, *Patriarchs and prophets* (White 1958a), *Prophets and kings* (White 1917), *The desire of ages* (White), *The Acts of the apostles* (White 1911), and *The great controversy* (White 1950).

When we compare the views of Barth and White on the humanity of Christ, we find several points of connection. Barth formulates the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* argument to establish the humanity of Christ as existing with the Logos but not apart from the Logos (Haley 2015:53). In this instance, White does not present a single argument of this nature. It is possible though to glean from her writings that she would agree with this argument in principle. Barth posits these two views as two opposite extremes. With this tension, he avoids adoptionism as well as monophysitism (Haley 2015:98).

White does not directly deal with this matter, nor does she consider the argument of *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis*. She does identify a specific point when God the Son assumed humanity (White 1940:23; cf. also 1905a:8), but does not present the humanity of Christ as pre-existent or humanity deified, although she does not specify how there could be a point in time when God the Son clothed his divinity with humanity.

I also compare the approaches of Barth and White to the virgin birth. Barth employs the virgin birth as a means of transferring human genetics to Christ (Barth 1956:185). The virgin birth signifies a definite beginning and the passion a definite end to this event of God's revelation (Barth 1949:127). In doing this, Barth must contend with the human agent, but in such a way that humanity does not gain vantage over God. Barth does so by setting aside the male in favour of the female who is an example of being open and ready for God (Lowery 1992:10). Barth does not view the virgin birth as *ex nihilo*, but within the human field (Barth 1949:97). As has been indicated, White omits the scene where the angel declared to Mary the conception of the Son of God (Lk 1:26-38). In contrast to Barth, she avoids the virgin birth. We could assume that she does so in order to remove Christ from being dependent on the transfer of genetic material.

White views true humanity as the original creation of God, with humans made in the image of God and capable to commune with God (White 1958a:45). Sin becomes a critical barrier that God bridges through redemption. Christ entered the world with true humanity, undefiled by sin, although he suffered the effects of sin. White describes Christ as the man of sorrows (White 1940:147). This forms part of her larger view of the innocent or sinless suffering on behalf of the guilty or sinful human race (White

1940:25). This confirms her relational theme in her theology as well as the concept of constant interaction between God and humankind. The key difference is that Barth views the innocent sinful qualities of Christ being derived from Mary's genetics, whereas White views the innocent sinful qualities deriving solely from God.

I subsequently review the purpose of the incarnation as viewed by both Barth and White. Barth postulates that the motivation for the incarnation is based on a divine decision where God has revealed himself as the God-man (Rose 2014). This divine decision would take place, simply because it was a divine decision and regardless of circumstances (Barth 2016:227). There is a subtle but precise prescription here that revelation and not humanity's sin is directly responsible for the incarnation. White views the incarnation also as a divine decision, but one that was mitigated by circumstances (White 1958a:63). She makes redemption the focus of the incarnation. To avoid sin being the motivation for the incarnation, she strongly motivates the 'God is love' theme. She views humankind as part of the equation. Humanity has sinned and doomed themselves. God had made room from eternity for human failure and instigated his plan of salvation (White 1958a:63).

The views of Barth and White on Christ's humanity concerning sin is also discussed. Barth views that the humanity of Christ has in mind that everything experienced by humankind from birth to death must be ascribed to Christ (Barth 1956:147). He then defines Christ's human nature as identical to our state of disobedience (Barth 1956:149, 151). According to him, Christ in his humanity was encumbered by the curse and punishment of sin (Barth 1956:155). He projects Christ, not as a superman, but a very real man, acquainted with suffering (Barth 1949:104). At the same time, Barth states that Christ had no awareness of sin, that unlike Adam he submitted to God and as such, bore his sinful nature innocently (Lowery 1992:7). White likewise places a high value on the humanity of Christ, for in her context it is essential in the plan of salvation. A discussion has arisen on White's view of Christ's humanity: One group of writers claims that she views Christ as post-fall, while the other claims that she views Christ's *humanity* as post-fall (Gage 1985:8; Rand 1985). There is no official SDA Church position about whether Christ is regarded as pre-fall or post-fall. Various publications affirm that Christ was affected by sin, but not infected (Dederen 2000:164-165; Whidden 2013:696). When investigating White's Christology, this issue requires

attention. Barth views Christ as being truly human and thus needed to share in the condition of the sin of humans (Barth 1956:147). White also regards the need for a balance in Christ being affected with sin while not suffering the infection of sin (Whidden 2013:694).

The way in which both Barth and White deal with Christ's post-ascension divinity, also forms part of the discussion. The incarnation of Christ is included in the Trinity (Barth 1956:33). Barth rejects ontic immutability in favour of ethical immutability (Malysz 2007:90). God remains the same, not in being static in his being, but in his ethical actions toward humanity. Thus, humanity is represented by Christ's humanity that he assumed from the Trinity without deifying humanity. White views Christ's incarnation and the limitations of his humanity as a wilful act on the part of Christ (White 1958a:63; 1940:22). It is from his wilful decision that God has adopted humanity and carried it to the 'highest heaven.' As such, Christ remains a link between God and humanity (White 1940:25). Barth and White both view Christ as becoming truly human and retaining his humanity into eternity. We now consider Christ as revelation.

Both Barth and White view Christ as God's revelation. Although they take different routes to this position, they arrive at similar conclusions. Barth's theology removes God from the field of human study and sciences (Eyeons 2010:38). This removal is not horizontal, but vertical. God is placed above everybody and everything, with Christ being the only source of his revelation (Kantzer 1958:27). Even in the interpretation of revelation, humanity is not active in any positive sense of the word (McGrath 1994:262). Barth regards theology not as a response to the human situation, but a response to the primary act of God's revelation (McGrath 1994:262). White, focusing on redemption, postulates that the revelation of Christ was to specifically reveal the character of the Father (Webster 1982:104). Whereas God could originally be regarded as being revealed in nature, humanity's mind had become clouded by sin (White 1950:v). Christ came to reveal what humankind could no longer see, namely God's love. White presents Christ's revelation as a continuing process (White 1940:148, 191), culminating in the cross as the ultimate revelation of God's love (White 1940:279, 762). Barth and White therefore both regard Christ as part of the process of revelation.

In Chapter 6, I partially reconstruct White's Christology. Working from the *What?* I have established, I consider the *Why?* Reconstructing White's Christological framework serves as a guide to utilising her quotes. This will achieve a second purpose: As useful as it is to compare White's documents to those of theologians, we must bring her into her own. With this, I mean that by reconstructing White's Christological framework, we will be able to view her Christology as an entity on its own.

I have placed the definite *What?* points of White's Christology that have been established in Chapters 4 and 5 in blocks, e.g.,

- Established *What?* point.

After my initial introduction to Chapter 6, I explain the nature of inductive arguments and methodology. An inductive argument is intended that if the premises were true, that it would be unlikely for the conclusion to be wrong (Anon 1995). I will not be using only inductive arguments, but my methodology will largely rely on inductive reasoning. This entails that what follows, will not be absolutely right or wrong, but rather looking for the most likely explanation of *why* White believed *what* she believed.

I also consider using constructs or creating constructs and applying them to the work of White. The idea initially develops in reading McGrath on Augustine, Luther, and Calvin (McGrath 1994:385-388). This leads to a construction that would better explain White's view on soteriology. This process will aid me to move beyond the *What?* to the *Why?*

- God is love.

I then discuss White's emphasis on the Sabbath. It would be easy to assume that she was simply promoting a commandment (White 1940:283, 774). Here I utilise Craig for his Kalaam Cosmological argument (Craig 2020) and also on his view of time. Craig regards God as being outside of time, but entering time to balance the transcendence and immanence of God (Craig 2001b:240). In response to other scholars, Craig's

criticism is often directed at the relational qualities[6] (Craig 2001b:68, 224). Canale shares the ideal of depicting God on both transcendent and immanent levels. He posits the key to this conundrum as revelation (Canale 2000:108) and describes God as unlimited by time, while at the same time, God is not alien to our time (Canale 2000:109).

- A declaration of God the Son's equality with the Father is made (Adams 2013:691).
- White's Christology relates God to God, God to humanity, and God to the world.
- Lucifer rebels against the declaration of Christ's divinity.
- This denial of God the Son's true nature begins the 'great controversy' theme that is found as the backdrop in White's Christology.
- As evidence of God the Son's divinity, this world is created.

Like Craig, White also holds the view of God as the first cause (White 1958a:33). She places all of creation, including time with God as first cause (White 1958a:44). Creation and the time of creation are bound as acts of God in which no created being, even a human concept, has any share. It is granted by God in a similitude of the created process that, as God worked six days and rested on the seventh day, so humanity is to follow the example (White 1958a:47). God's blessing of the Sabbath is to express his relation to humanity for whom he has created the Sabbath (Haynes & Krüger 2017:667). White views the Sabbath, made by Christ for humankind, as a Christological issue (White 1940:281). It is intended to contemplate the creator or transcendent God while he is immanent. She has achieved this ideal for the SDA Church, and has also taken the ideal which we find in Craig and Canale and made it possible to express it in human immanent ways while attaining to divine transcendence and immanence.

When we consider these points in light of White's other statements, we have a clearer picture of her overall Christological framework (White 1950:434). With this method, it becomes clear that the Sabbath is linked to Christ as creator God. The Sabbath in White's Christology cannot simply be answered by *What?* or simply quoting her, but

[6] 'Tensed time' refers to events defined by a specific time such as 'now,' 'yesterday,' etc. A god outside of time could not be aware of the tense of the sentence expressing certain facts (Craig 2001b:98).

requires the development of a Christological framework with which one can frame the *What?* with the *Why?*

- Satan tempted Adam and Eve and led them to sin.
- The fact that all humans would die, was caused by the sin of Adam and Eve.
- The plight of humanity evokes love in God as opposed to wrath.
- The plan of salvation which existed from eternity, is partially revealed and implemented.
- This requires that God the Son would become human to die for humanity to redeem them from sin.
- Although the Trinity is fully established in White's writings, it is already Christologically present at this point (White 1940:19, 669, 671).
- The Trinity, concerning revelation in White's writings, could be described as follows:
    - Revelation originates from the Father.
    - Revelation is achieved in the Son while being proclaimed in Scripture.
    - Revelation is appropriated through the guidance of the Spirit.
- Throughout the incarnation, Christ remains fully divine, but willingly does not utilise divine powers for his own benefit.

The discussion within the SDA Church regarding Christ's nature as being either sinful or sinless, has been stated in several publications as sinless. It all depends on whether Christ assumed a nature like Adam before the fall or after the fall. It all boils down to a fallen human nature (like Adam after the fall) or an unfallen human nature (like Adam before the fall) (Gage 1985:2; Rand 1985). To understand White's views better, I employ a theological construct used by Ladd (Lee 2010:318). The Greek term *Basileia*, which Christ used while keeping the Hebrew *Malkuth* in mind, signifies the kingly rule of God, not his Kingdom (Lee 2010:68). Ladd also states that the Kingdom of God is synonymous with the term 'age to come' (Ladd 1974:64). As such, we exist in the present aeon which constitutes the totality of unredeemed life, dominated by sin outside of Christ (Ridderbos 1975:91). This necessitates the need to be rescued from the current age, or as Ladd terms it 'the kingdom of Satan' (Ladd 1974:53).

White considers sin as anything done by humanity that deviates from God's will (Moskala 2013:1164). This includes the relationship between God and humanity, and acts of sin. Sin infects humanity's relationship with the world, others, oneself, and God. God's relationship with humankind is the core of humanity's being which affects all other sectors of living (White 1958a:44, 45). The beginning of sin can be regarded as starting with a deviation from the core relationship where humanity responds to God as God relates to them (Moskala 2013:1165). In dealing with our understanding of how White conceives of sin, one must avoid the mistake of those who promote the fallen nature of Christ or the post-Adam Christ (Larson 1952:27; Gage 1985:4). Those promoting the fallen nature of Christ, treat sin as something that relates to the external areas of humanity's value and identity. White's conception of sin extends beyond mere external elements. As such, when Adam and Eve violated their relationship with God at the core of humanity, it subjected all of creation to sin (Ridderbos 1975:99, 100).

White and Ladd agree that the mission of the Kingdom is for God to find and redeem the sinner (Ladd 1974:53). White does not regard Christ, simply not committing acts of sin, but not having an inward disposition to sin (Whidden 2013:693, 695).

I now return to the question of whether White views Christ as being like Adam in his nature before or after the fall. It should be noted that although she connects Christ to Adam, it is based on Christ coming in the place of Adam to succeed where Adam failed and to redeem humanity (Webster 1982:94; cf. also White 1940:114, 117, 143, 741). She does not view Christ as sharing in the sinfulness of Adam, but at the same time, she clearly makes a marked separation between Christ and Adam (White 1986:268). The plan was not pinpointed to Adam, but to the occurrence of sin. This entails that the humanity of Christ was not dependant on any created being (White 1958a:63). Therefore, what constitutes this humanity of Christ, belongs to the Kingdom of God.

Having established the previous point, I investigate how one can combine the sinful and sinless qualities of Christ, according to White. White's writings about justification present Christ as pre-fall, but on sanctification as post-fall (Whidden 1997:75). She therefore paradoxically moves between two positions and presents the sinlessness and sin-likeness of Christ with equal force. When we consider Christ's humanity, the inner core would require from Christ to be fully human, in order to relate to God

similarly as humans should. In this aspect, Christ was sinless (White 1940:19, 116, 325, 536). The other aspects would feel the full force of sin, but the inner core would remain untainted.

I also consider the particle-wave duality as a means of looking at Christ's divine-human nature. Here I specifically refer to other scholars who link theology and quantum physics (Richardson 2015:55-57). I specifically focus on the double-slit experiment which discovered that light photons could be both particles and waves (Gribbin 1991:9-10, 14-16). I then explain that the concept of something being both particle and wave can be related to God. God is often regarded as a Person (particle) (Erickson 1998:204) who is not incorrect but incomplete. God is also Spirit (wave) (Richardson 2015:40). When we consider the Trinity, we can perceive the Trinity as three separate waves with the same divine frequency. These separate waves may have unique currents that belong only to the individual, but is shared in the unity of the Trinity. At the incarnation, God the Son has assumed another wave of humanity. Although the divine wave of Christ was active, he chose not to utilise it for his benefit, but functioned in the human wave (White 1940:119). In Christ, the divine and human natures retained their uniqueness, but were united in him as one (Webster 1982:78).

- Christ died on the cross, achieving redemption.
- Satan is defeated at the cross, while God's character is revealed as one of love.

Having considered God as both particle and wave, I turn to a challenging statement of White: 'Humanity died; divinity did not die. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death. He declares that He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will' (White 1986:301).

I agree with White's view on death as sleep which is temporary, and the second death which is a permanent separation from God (White 1940:527; 1950:544). White views Christ as dying the second death on the cross. In Christ's death, his divine wave was isolated from the other divine waves, while his human wave ceased to function. The

divine wave brought life into death and thus abolished death. The death of his human wave achieved salvation for humanity (White 1940:761).

I go further and consider how this functions in the resurrection. As the divine wave assumed the human wave at the incarnation, it could do so again at the resurrection (White 1940:785). This is not a continuation of the old life, but in Christ the source of a new life (Anderson 2013:775).

- Christ ascended to heaven and will retain his humanity throughout eternity.

I next delve more deeply into the purpose of the incarnation. Barth views God as having decided to become a man from eternity (Barth 1949:68). Bockmuehl, for example, writing in 1985, declares that Barth's views removed God from a danger zone, but left an emptiness that removed God from time and space (Eyeons 2010:41).

When reading White's documents, it should be kept in mind that she was not a systematic theologian, therefore she did not write a systematic theology. As such, she writes spiritual material and is freer to use emotive language and imagery. One thing that is also evident in her Christology, is the realness with which she describes Christ. The ability to create 'tension and paradox' is not only a theological tool, but also a literary one. The key point I will touch on is that in using narratives, White avoids abstraction and allows God to meet us in the world and history (McGrath 1994:173). She did not regard herself as adding truth, but simply expressed truth that is already inherent in Scripture. This unwritten but underlying challenge for the individual to read Scripture for themselves, would be in line with her view on Scripture (Knight 2013a:648).

In the last part of Chapter 6, I discuss the value of White. My conclusions are that she has produced positive results as a woman and that she has presented unique and challenging ideas.

In Chapter 7, I critique and evaluate my methodology. I start by reflecting on my research aims and whether I have achieved them. I also review the various chapters and the steps that I took in my methodology. Chapter 2 has identified the problem. In Chapter 3, I reviewed Barth's Christology. Chapter 4 was a review of White's

Christology. Chapter 5 was a comparison between the views of Barth and White, while Chapter 6 was a reconstruction of White's Christology.

When considering my methodology, I admit that no system will ever be perfect. Although my personal views are present, the process of comparison to first establish the *What?* deductively and then the *Why?* inductively, curbs my individuality. In regard to how accurate my reconstruction is, I relate to a comparison between Webster's and Whidden's work. The similarity would suggest accuracy as well as the innovation of the new concept.

I reflect on my ideal to place White beyond the critic and promoter. She forms part of the history of the SDA Church – something that can never change. Her life was filled with both positive and negative, as well as divine and human elements. As vital as she has been and continues to be – whether positively or negatively – does not constitute the foundation of the SDA Church (Bradford 2006:228). In doing this, it will mean academic criticism, but this is necessary for growth within the SDA Church's understanding as well as outside the SDA Church. Placing White beyond the limits of Adventism into the larger theological area will be difficult, but if Adventism is to grow in its understanding of her work, it is essential.

One of the biggest challenges that I addressed in Chapter 2 is the use of White's quotes to prove personal positions. This process very often leads to opponents quoting her selectively in an attempt to win a theological argument (cf. Bradford 2006:188). The methodology I have utilised, allows for falsifiability. In other words, another individual can question, critique, and even disprove my conclusions. First, this forms part of the academic process, that any viewpoint may be questioned. Second, it avoids the process of simply quoting White randomly. Quoting her randomly can no longer function if that quote is not part of a greater study or fitted into a theological framework.

1.3 Research Interests

The focus of this thesis is based on the current methodology of evaluating White's documents. It is my personal feeling that these methods, although useful, are limited. The two commonly used methods are first, that there is a commonly used method of collecting quotes of White and ordering them as the individual sees fit (cf. Webster

1982:67-71; Canale 1983:151-159). Second, there is a method of comparing White with specific theologian (cf. Jones 2010b:13; Lee 2010:8). The first method falls prey to individual preferences and relies on selective quoting. The second method highlights what White believed in comparison to a specific theologian, but these methods do not move beyond what White resembles in comparison to that theologian.

I am proposing a new method which will circumvent these problems. To achieve this, I compare Barth and White with a particular focus on Christology, using a deductive methodology. Both Barth and White have similar motifs in their theology, but use different methods and approaches. The conclusion of this comparison will provide definite *What?* points of White's Christology. The second part will then be to extrapolate on these points to reconstruct the theological framework of her Christology. This part will create constructs, utilising constructs of specific theologians and an inductive methodology to establish the *Why?* of her Christology.

1.4 Research Aims

Having explained my research interests, I will now explain my research aims. These are twofold and are linked in the overall process:

1. To compare White's documents to those of Barth concerning Christology. Of particular interest is God's relationship with humanity, as well as the humanity and divinity of Christ, Christ's humanity as sinless or sinful, and lastly, humankind's response to God.
2. To elaborate on White's Christology, utilising both a deductive and inductive methodology.
3. To develop a partial Christological framework of White's writings.

The thesis cannot allow for a complete Christological framework. This partial Christological framework must be viewed as the beginning of a potential new method of evaluating White's documents. There is a third overall aim that extends beyond the scope of this thesis, which is to stimulate a theological discussion regarding White.

1.5 Research Methodology

To achieve my aims, I will utilise a qualitative method. My thesis requires document analysis and comparison. This process will reveal ideas which can then be utilised toward my aims in this research.

I will mainly rely on Barth's *CD* (Barth 1956), as it depicts the matureness of Barth's theological thought. I will also utilise other publications of Barth, such as *Dogmatics in outline* (Barth 1949) and *Evangelical theology* (Barth 1963). As secondary material, I will use studies and commentaries on Barth's work.

When discussing White, I will focus on *The conflict of the ages* series,[7] as these books follow a particular order and present her clearest Christological statements (Webster 1982:65). I will also utilise *Steps to Christ*. Although this book deals with salvation, it also supplies a clear references to Christ and is also written in a distinct order. As secondary material, I will utilise the documents of other scholars as reference and validation in this thesis. This will apply to both Barth and White.

1.6 The Way Forward

Having elaborated on the content of my thesis, I now present the individual chapters with the issues I will consider in each chapter. Chapter 1 presented the overall structure and methodology of this thesis. It highlighted the orientation and the approach that I will take and how it is relevant to the focus of this thesis. Furthermore, it explained the research interests, aims, and methodology.

Chapter 2 will give an overview of two commonly used methods used to evaluate and elaborate on the theology of White. The first method is a comparison between White and a specific theologian. I will illustrate how this method is limited to the *What?* of White's theology. I will also demonstrate that this method relies mainly on deductive reasoning. The second method is the compilation of White's quotes. This is necessitated by a lack of a systematised theological view by White. I will view both these

[7] These include the books *Patriarchs and prophets* (White 1958a), *Prophets and kings* (White 1917), *The desire of ages* (White 1940), *Acts of the apostles* (White 1911), and *The great controversy* (White 1950).

methods not as incorrect, but as limited in their evaluation of White. Here I will indicate the problems and deficiencies of these methods.

Chapter 3 will focus on the Christology of Barth. Barth depicts divine revelation as the foundation of his Christology. This raises several unique points. This chapter will look at the *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis* concept which Barth employs. I also consider how Barth deals with the divinity and humanity of Christ. On the humanity of Christ, we discuss how Barth explains the relation to sin. Lastly, Barth's dealing with humanity in his theology will be discussed.

Chapter 4 looks at the Christology of White, considering the process she followed in developing her Christology. The issue of how White views the divinity and humanity of Christ, is examined. It also investigates how White deals with sin concerning the humanity of Christ. Lastly, I contemplate if there is a development in the thoughts and arguments of White or not.

Chapter 5 will employ deductive reasoning in comparing the views of Barth and White. This chapter will compare how Barth and White regarded humanity in their relation to God. It will investigate how the two authors view the divinity of Christ, as well as humanity and their relation to one another. I also investigate the two authors' writings about the incarnation. Both Barth and White viewed Christ as the revelation of God and we compare their respective views. Following the revelation referred to by Barth, we consider how humanity's response to God is treated by Barth and White respectively. We also consider the focus on the key commandments by Barth and White.

Chapter 6 depicts my contribution where I utilise a more inductive reasoning approach, building on Chapter 5 to reconstruct White's theological framework. I focus in this chapter on *why* White believes (in) specific things and *what* she wants to achieve with that. I compare her with Craig, regarding God as the first cause and how it relates to White's view of the Sabbath. I further investigate an alternative to the ideas of Christ's human nature, being either pre- or post-lapsarian. I then propose Christ as a new order of being which is also the humanity that Christ has offered to his believers. I then discuss what happened to the humanity of God the Son past ascension. Furthermore I consider White's statement that at the crucifixion, Christ's humanity died, but his

divinity did not die. Linked to this, I utilise concepts from quantum physics, particularly the interchange between particles and waves.

Chapter 7 is the concluding chapter of this thesis where I critique my method. I question whether my method only reflects my personal views, as well as the accuracy of my method. I postulate that the strength of my method is the possibility of future questioning and evaluation. I finally consider how this method could be best utilised in promoting theological discussions.

Chapter 2
Current Methods Used to Evaluate White's Writings

2.1 Introduction

Having outlined my methodology in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 will consider two methods being used to extrapolate theological viewpoints, based on White's writings. These two methods do not exclusively apply to White's Christology. Nonetheless they are useful as examples of methods applied to survey White's documents. The first method finds an author taking quotes from White's writings and arranging them in a particular sequence. Examples of the first method can be found in the works of Venden, Knight, Sequeira, Larson, Maxwell, MacCarty, Whidden, Webster, and Mansour, being discussed below. The second method compares White's writings to those of theologians. Examples of the second method are found in the works of Jones, Oladini, Lee, and Webster, also being discussed below. The authors I have listed that serve as examples of one of the two methods are not intended for extensive investigation. They serve as examples, ranging widely in time, viewpoints, and variation.

It is common to find a group of people espousing the ideals of a founding member of their organisation. Founding members play an important part in establishing an organisation, but more importantly, founding the ideals and principles of an organisation (Knight 2000:184). As such, the theology of Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, and others are still widely studied. For the SDA Church, their founding figure is White. According to Jones, White's focus in writing intended to address current issues of her time by relating them to the salvation-historical timeline of Scripture (Jones 2010b:57).

As such, White played a role in shaping the SDA Church's thinking, specifically with reference to Christology, and continues to do so through her writings (Weber 1994:181; cf. also MacCarty 2007:79, 88; Anon 2005:210). Due to the following points, there are frequent debates about White and how her work should be understood (Bradford 2006:200):

- Using White as an authority in the SDA Church.
- White's fluctuating authority in the SDA Church.

- Limited methods for evaluating White and her work in the SDA Church (Van Niekerk 2019:123).

Discussions mainly focus on White's prophetic gift, viewed negatively by critics to deny her authority and viewed positively by proponents to assert her authority. Within the SDA Church there is also another debate regarding White, specifically concerning her Christology and linked to it, her views on soteriology. This debate reached its pinnacle between 1950 and 1960, with Andreason and Heppenstall promoting their respective understandings of this matter.

Andreason discusses the debate within the SDA Church about White's Christology. He was a prominent SDA theologian during the 1930s and 1940s, and author of 15 books. He was a student of Jones, a contemporary of White. Jones was a pastor of the SDA Church and also a lecturer in training pastors. He promoted, among others, two key points, namely:

1. The sinful human nature of Christ.
2. Christ had overcome sin in his sinful human nature and therefore opened the way for all believers to achieve a similar victory over sin (Jones 2010b:44; cf. also Knight 2000:117, 119).

What should be noted, is that his first (Christological) point has a direct impact on the second (soteriological) point. This is in part due to White's conception of the nature of Christ, linking it to soteriology (Whidden 2013:692, 693; cf. also Whidden 1997:11). Andreason promotes both the Christological and soteriological points in his theology, which he has inherited from Jones.

During the 1950s, the SDA Church aimed to prove that they are not a cult. The SDA Church then turned to Martin, a researcher of American cults and an associate of the editorial staff of *Eternity*. In response to 48 questions, the SDA Church published their position in *Questions on doctrine* (Anon 1957). Regarding these two points of interest, the official SDA Church view was presented as follows:

1. Christ was sinless in his humanity.
2. Salvation is by the grace of Christ alone (Anon 1957:52, 140).

The abovementioned book presents the official position of the SDA Church, which contradicts the views of Andreason. Just before the printing of the book, Andreason had retired. Heppenstall was one of the contributors (Knight 2000:162) who belonged to a new generation of pastors who worked in an era when the SDA Church moved toward professionalisation. The SDA Church had also instituted the *Biblical Research Fellowship*, which was a group of scholars who was tasked with investigating theological issues of the church. The *Biblical Research Fellowship* led to the establishment of the *Biblical Research Institute* as the official theological thinktank for the SDA Church. Between 1953 to 1957, the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary* was published (Nichol 1978:11), moving Adventism away from proof texting toward a more apologetic approach (Knight 2000:161, 162). Amidst this, Heppenstall was educated at Stanborough Park (now Newbold) College, Andrews University, and received his doctorate at the University of Southern California (Heppenstall 1977:dust cover). What is important to note is that Heppenstall received his doctorate from a non-SDA university. Like the SDA Church, Heppenstall was moving beyond the confines of Adventism. From 1920 to 1950, the SDA Church has made White's writings indispensable for themselves, which led to White's authority superseding Scriptural authority (Bradford 2006:167). Heppenstall's contributions mark a conscious movement back to the original SDA position of Scripture as unequalled in authority. Furthermore, Heppenstall was well aware that his contributions were promoting a different view to Andreason's, which were published in *Questions on doctrine.* When *Questions on doctrine* was published, Andreason claimed that the SDA Church had changed its position and had fallen into apostasy, and proceeded to published tracts to counter the position of the SDA Church in *Question on doctrine* (Bradford 2006:189, 190). Why this history is significant, is that White's quotes are used to support theological arguments, and for the interest of this thesis, Christological viewpoints (Bradford 2006:188). Another significant aspect is that the Christological view affects the soteriological view and requires that one either accepts or rejects one of the two views (Knight 2000:144).

Andreason's views were contradicted in the 1950s, but one finds that in the 1960s, Brinsmead again promoted his Christological and soteriological views:

1. Christ had a sinful human nature.

2. Christ had overcome sin in his sinful human nature and therefore opened the way for all believers to achieve a similar victory over sin (Knight 2000:117, 119).

As late as the 1990s, these two points remained under discussion. In a debate between Weber and Knight on these two issues, Knight claims that one of the 'most serious' problems in Adventism is that the reliance on White's documents for theology leads people away from Scripture, instead of to it (Weber 1994:40). Land claims the following:

> Christological discussion has revolved around whether Jesus had a pre-fall or post-fall nature and the implications of this issue for Christian living. While she asserted that Jesus was both fully God and fully human, Ellen G. White believed that in his humanity he had a post-fall nature. Nonetheless, she stated, Jesus was sinless and without corruption (Land 2005:60).

Whidden writes:

> With all due respect to the mystery inherent in the sinlessness of the humanity of Christ, it seems best to sum up the issue this way: according to Ellen White, Christ's humanity was *affected* enough by sin to identify sufficiently with sinful humans in their struggles with temptation, but without the *infection* of sin to the degree that His sinlessness of nature enabled Him to offer a fully effectual sacrifice of atonement for penitent 'true believers' and thus to function as fully effectual divine/human intercessor (Whidden 2013:696; emphasis added).

The continuing debate within Adventism regarding the nature of Christ and White's view on the matter – sinful or sinless – and the impact on soteriology suggest two possible conclusions:

1. The issue could be located within White's writing.
2. The methods used to evaluate White are insufficient.

Regarding the issue of White's writings, her work is organised along practical, pastoral, and spiritual themes. She nonetheless makes theological statements throughout her

writings, but they are scattered throughout her works. As such, her view on Christology must be gleaned from the entire corpus of her writings (Webster 1982:65).

The first point cannot be properly addressed without considering whether the current methods are sufficient. The methods of quoting White and comparing her writings to those of specific theologians, must be investigated to establish their respective limits. When one is aware of the limitations of the current methods, one can proceed with the overall methodology as described in Chapter 1. This will compare White's documents to those of Barth deductively, and from the deductive comparisons, I will combine the various statements of White's Christological framework by means of an inductive approach. Thus, in this chapter, we evaluate the two methods, first, of quoting White's writings, and second, of comparing her writings to those of specific theologians.

As already stated, my research aims are

1. to compare White's documents to those of Barth concerning Christology;
2. to elaborate on White's Christology, utilising both a deductive and inductive methodology; and
3. to develop a partial Christological framework of White's writings.

To partially reconstruct White's Christological framework, it is essential to consider the two indicated methods (first, quoting White's documentation, and second, comparing White's documents to those of specific theologians). The method of quoting White on Christology is found in several works that will be reviewed in this chapter. The second method of comparing her writings to those of specific theologians, are found in several academic documents. Specific attention will be given to the ability of both methodologies to deal with the *What?* and the *Why?* of White's Christology. Next, I will define these two terms.

2.2 The *What?* and the *Why?* of White's Christology

To clarify the limitations of the methods, I will define two terms, *What?* and *Why?* However, first we take a look at Mueller and Urbach, describing a theory as 'a system of statements targeted at describing, explaining, and predicting real world phenomena. To do so, a scientific theory is a system composed of two core constituents: 1)

Constructs or concepts, and 2) propositions as relations between those constructs' (Mueller & Urbach 2013:4 of 25).

Mueller and Urbach refer to real-world phenomena that are understood through constructs or concepts that define these phenomena, based on their interrelations. They also write that, for a theory to function, it must describe what the mental constructs are and how and why they are related (Mueller & Urbach 2013:5 of 25). Kivunja adds: 'The theoretical framework provides a structure for what to look for in the data, for how you think of what you see in the data fits together, and helps you to discuss your findings more clearly, in light of what existing theories say' (Kivunja 2018:47). He goes further in explaining this theoretical framework: 'It helps you to make connections between the abstract and concrete elements you observe in your data' (Kivunja 2018:47). As with Mueller and Urbach, we also find with Kivunja the idea of observable phenomena and the relations linking them.

Within the scope of this thesis, the term *What?* refers to observable phenomena. Specifically in this thesis, it refers to *what* White has stated in expressing her Christological views. The term *Why?* refers to the interrelations that creates a coherent chain of thought moving from *What? to Why? and to another What? statement.* The table below visually illustrates this concept:

What?	***Why?***
What White states…	
	Why does White see an interrelation between the two *What?* points?
What White states…	

To better understand White's views, one must oscillate between her statements (*What?*) and the possible interrelations (*Why?*) that unite the statements (*What?*). When we apply these terms to a theological discussion or description, we find that they are valuable with reference to the examples in the paragraph below.

McGrath, in discussing Kant's *Ding-an-sich* (*thing in itself*), differentiates between this concept of Kant as opposed to its perception. This is a clear statement of the *What?* McGrath continues by explaining that Kant believes that we cannot know things directly, but only by perceiving them – here he supplies the *Why?* He continues to state that Kant believes that Christ is not known directly, but only when one perceives his impact on the individual or world (McGrath 1994:271). McGrath presents a *What?* point followed by a *Why?* which links to the next *What?* point. Sometimes he also presents *why* a view is held, followed by the definition stated by the author (McGrath 1994:288). This method clarifies the understanding of the specific point of a doctrine as it relates to the larger theological paradigm. This method of stating *what* an individual believes and relating it to *why* they believe it, is also found in Erickson (1998:681, 685, 688, 689). In his discussion of Kähler's views, Erickson begins by stating *what* Kähler believes – that the quest for the historical Jesus had failed. He then states *why* the quest for the historical Jesus concealed the living Christ. Erickson follows up with the *What?* in describing Kähler's solution by creating a distinction between the 'Jesus of history' and the 'Christ of faith' (Erickson 1998:681). These examples demonstrate how the statement of the *What?* must be systematically linked to the *Why?* to present a complete Christological framework.

From these examples, we find the two threads that are essential for the construction of a sense-making method. The first is the stated beliefs or viewpoints, the observable and quotable statements of the theory, which I term as *What?* points, as they designate a definition *what* a person believes. Theological writing may begin with a definite *What?* of a person's view and proceed to the explanation, or may end with the *What?* after the explanation. The *What?* depicts the observable phenomena that make up the view of an individual. The second term that we find running through the various quotes, deals with the reasoning of *why* an individual links the observable phenomenon to each other. This is termed *Why?*, exploring its interrelations with the *What?* The *Why?* investigates the relation in its link with the observable *What?* of the individual that allows them to express their views. The *Why?* depicts the interrelations between the observable phenomena – the *What?* – to provide the interrelations in individuals' thinking patterns.

The term *What?* has been defined as the observable phenomena or statements of White's Christology. The term *Why?* has been defined as the interrelation that links several *What?* statements. Next, we consider guidelines to comprehend White's writings.

2.3 Guidance for the Reader of White's Writings

As the two terms *What?* and *Why?* are now defined, the next step is to consider 12 points to assist in the reading and understanding of White's documentation. These points attempt to provide guidelines to avoid potential problems when reading these documents. Knight (2013c:900-903) has listed these points:

1. Focus on the central issues.
2. Emphasise the most important issues.
3. Account for problems in communication.
4. Study all the available information on a topic.
5. Avoid extreme interpretations.
6. Take time and place into consideration.
7. Study each statement in its literary context.
8. Recognise White's understanding of the ideal and the real.
9. Use your common sense.
10. Discover the underlying principles.
11. Avoid making the counsel prove things which were never intended to be proven.
12. Make sure that White said it.[8]

The first point addresses the issue of focusing on White's central themes in her writings as opposed to exploring for supposedly 'new' or 'different' ideas. The notion is that focusing on the central issue will lead to an accurate understanding of White's views. The central issue will provide the larger framework from which one can interpret other aspects of White's writings. The second point is to focus on what is important, rather than focusing on trivial matters. The third point deals with a misunderstanding emanating from reading White's work. She was neither a systematic theologian, nor did she write systematic theology. As such, her wording does not follow the strict rules

[8] Several of these 12 points are also presented as aids for studying White by Burt (2015:75-91).

found in the academic world. Point 4 indicates that one should not rely on a single passage, but consider all White's writings on a specific topic. Point 5 aims to avoid people using White's writings to employ extreme views and practices. Point 6 emphasises the historical context in which White wrote. She should be viewed and read as a person within a specific historical context. Point 7, similarly to the previous point, also encourages the reader to always consider a passage of her writings as part of the larger context, at least of the chapter and book in which it is found. Point 8 identifies that White sometimes presents an ideal and at other times a reality. She sometimes writes what should be done under ideal circumstances, while at others what can be done with limited resources. Point 9 advises the reader to use common sense, that the advice of White should not be applied without reasoning intelligently. There is unfortunately no explanation of what constitutes common sense. Point 10 indicates that one must go beyond the initial advice given by White, and discover what principles she attempts to convey. This point wants to move the reader from a superficial reading of White's documents to the actual principles that guides her thinking and writing. Point 11 aims to prevent readers from using White's writings to prove their views regardless of whether she addressed it or not. Lastly, point 12 aims to ensure that a reader quotes White correctly, as many statements have been attributed to her that she has never made (Knight 2013c:900-903).

Knight's 12 points, although useful, cover no more than three pages of his chapter. They are general suggestions and do not constitute an academic or scientific method of evaluation. The first point requires one to focus on central issues, but who decides what is central or not? As we have seen in the case of Andreason and Brinsmead, their considerations of what constitutes central themes for White's Christology are at variance with Heppenstall and the SDA Church. It should be noted that these points deal with *what* these themes may be. It neglects to consider *why* these themes are interrelated and what connects these themes.

Regarding the second point, without the *Why?*, how could one determine the relation of one *What?* to another, and in turn its importance? Butterworth and Thwaites argue that one must exercise caution in what one reads *into* a passage and what is inferred *from* it (Butterworth & Thwaites 2013:129). White's Christological *What?* must be related to the *Why?*, so that one does not read too much into, or infer too much from a

single or a small sample of her statements. The third point requires a certain amount of study in 19th-century history and language. White wrote and interpreted Scripture as it related to her immediate circumstances. This may mean that some of her interpretations are incorrect and that one must take care to apply her writings by considering her circumstances. The challenge is that history is always interpreted subjectively, thereby interpreting White's documents to suit one's personal preference. For this thesis, this point is important with reference to her theological, specifically Christological statements. White utilises Scriptural terms and writes in the form of a running exposition, rather than utilising a method of historical/grammatical interpretation (Whidden 2013:692). Attempting to make theological or exegetical statements from White's writings, must account for the goals and limitations of her writings.

The fourth point makes a good suggestion, but does not define what is meant wit the term 'study.' In the proper sense of the word, a study requires gathering information, systematically presenting it, and having it critically evaluated. The method of quoting White's documents, has no such format. Comparing her writings to those of theologians within an academic context, is the only method used with critical evaluation. This point addresses studying all the available material of White on a given topic. This is another indication of discovering the *Why?* that connects to the *What?* in White's writings. That one cannot simply study the quotes or *What?* of White on Christology, means that one should discover the interrelation or *Why?* as well.

Point 5 suggests that there is a danger concerning the work of White to take a single or limited set of *What?* statements, while neglecting the *Why?* that connects them. This could lead the individual to employ their connections and make conclusion in extreme thought or action. Point 6 considers time and place which is useful, but once again requires in-depth knowledge of 19th-century events. This point also suggests the need to discover the historical *Why?* of White's statements. She wrote as a person of her time. This would entail that her *What?* must also be considered in regard to historical interrelations or *Why?*

The seventh point is very basic, as the method of quoting White's documents (cf. section 2.4) too often ignores the context of the quote. This point suggests that not only the *What?* of statements, but also the *Why?* of the context within White's writings must

be investigated. Point 8 refers to the fact that White has often adapted her writings to fit the needs of people within limited circumstances. This strongly suggests the need for identifying the *Why?* that links statements. It is irresponsible to take a *What?* statement of an ideal situation and connect it to a *What?* statement of the real situation. Without the connecting *Why?* to guide the process, it could confuse and result in extremes, as warned against under point 5.

As point 9 does not define 'common sense,' it could be argued from an academic viewpoint that this is the methodology which one should follow in the study and presentation of a document. The critical evaluation of any academic writing is to ensure that common sense prevails. These 12 points do not address this issue and leaves the door wide open for anyone to read and interpret White's literature without critical evaluation. Point 10, like the other points, indicates the need to not only consider the *What?* of White's writings, but also the *Why?* Point 11 indicates that there is a limit to the *What?* and *Why?* of White's writings and that there are specific topics that she fails to address. Point 12 requires that one should work with specific quotes rather than partial quotes from memory. This can also be taken to imply that one must be specific as to what exactly White's *What?* statements are and clarify whether the *Why?* originates with White or is supplied by the individual.

Knight has presented these 12 points with the intention to safeguard the use of White's writings. He also indicates that all people use interpretative principles whether they know it or not (Knight 2013c:900). The biggest challenge that a researcher faces here is therefore that these guidelines do not deal with human subjectivity. Every individual will read White's documents from their viewpoint and argue that their viewpoint is correct. Ironically, it was Knight who wrote *Myths in Adventism* to correct the 'myths' (what he regarded as myths) of individual interpretations of White's writings (Knight 1999:Preface).

Another question one may ask is, 'Are the views of Knight correct?' He presents insight and research into the topics he discusses but they remain his subjective views. Without critical evaluation from peers, human subjectivity and bias will remain problematic in dealing with White's Christology. The interpretative principles that individuals use

without the necessary cognisance, will inevitably lead to individual interpretations of White to suit individual theories.

This underscores the need for a critical and academic method with which to evaluate White's literature. Any method will be subject to human subjectivity, but if the human subjectivity is clearly stated, it allows for academic criticism of an individual viewpoint. Even if the method is not wholly academic, it does require a method of critical evaluation. This will allow for corrections and the development in understanding of White's Christology.

Another point that must also be clarified, is that the 12 statements as discussed above, are not concerned with the development of a theory. These are rather points to promote a correct understanding of White's writings. They deal with the observable phenomenon or *what* White wrote and believed. These points do not deal with discovering the *Why?*, except to hint at the need for research into the *Why?* that connects the various statements. These points at most merely touch on the possibility of the interrelation *Why?* between White's statements. None of these points gives any guidance as to how one would go about linking White's Christological statements to each other. These guidelines are at best a layman's guide to prevent misinterpretation of White. Having highlighted the need, I will now consider the first method of evaluation which is quoting White's literature.

2.4 The Method of Quoting White's Literature

In this section, we evaluate the first method used to evaluate White's theological views, namely by quoting her writings. We will investigate how authors have dealt with the *What?* and the *Why?* found in White's writings. In very simple terms, we will consider how they deal with White's quotes, how they consider the *What?* and how they relate it to the interrelation between the quotes, using *Why?* Webster points out that White's literary production consisted of over 100,000 pages, 24 books in current circulation, 4,600 periodical articles, 6,000 typewritten documents, and 2,000 handwritten documents, letters, journals, and diaries (Webster 1982:61). Currently, with compilations of White's work, the books number 130 (Anon 2021). The amount of such writings already illustrates the danger of the method of quoting White selectively to prove individual theories. It also suggests that one could easily quote White out of context or

even combine quotes to support personal theories. To further elaborate on this challenge, Webster also notes that White was not a systematic theologian and if one were to seek Christological statements, one must do so from the whole corpus of her writings (Webster 1982:65). This last point also implies that even a systematic method of quoting White would not be a simple task. Linking White's quotes into one chain, can fall apart if one of the quotes is taken in the wrong context or misinterpreted by an individual.

Considering that White was not a systematic theologian, one may ask, 'Why would one then desire to quote White on Christological matters?' Although she was not a systematic theologian, she did influence the Christological views of the SDA Church in her writings. In the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist theology*, the section on the *Doctrine of God* is ended with quotes from White to support various statements. One statement of White reads:

> There are three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ (Canale 2000:155).

Notably, this is an SDA theologian quoting White to support his views on the Trinity. What is more significant, is that this same quote is found in the 1970 edition of *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary* (Vol 7) which gives the original date as 1901 (Nichol 1970:442). The importance of this is that early SDA thinkers were not clear on the Trinity, with some even holding to a form of semi-Arianism. From the 1870s, several writers began promoting the full divinity of Christ which became part of the 1888 General Conference discussion and acceptance (Knight 2000:93, 110-114). Considering that the timing of the above quote is only a few years after the 1888 General Conference session, it becomes clear that White was motivating belief in the Trinity.[9] It is clear that she did make Christological statements here, not in strict theological

[9] Andreason visited White after the publication of her book, *The desire of ages* (White 1940) to ensure that she wrote it herself. He did this because many of the statements were Trinitarian and contrary to what many SDA members believed at the time (Knight 2000:116).

language, but with theological weight, intended to motivate certain Christological views. In motivating certain Christological views, she influenced the SDA Church in its Christological development and direction. The current quote of Canale, as with others, reveals that as a significant historical figure, her writings still continue to influence the Christological view of the SDA Church (cf. also Webster 1982:63; Jones 2014:3).

It therefore became a natural method for SDA theologians to quote White's writings as a Christological source of authority. This method is similar to any theological writer quoting another historical theologian, or even a non-theologian validating or supporting a point. The key difference being that and quoting a historical or even current theologian's work, is that their work is organised and expressed in some sense-making framework. The validity and accuracy of any quote can be evaluated from the larger context of the organised work of the theologian. White writes on matters of more practical, pastoral, and spiritual concern, with Christological statements strewn throughout her writings. The fact that her Christological quotes are not presented in an organised sense-making framework, should warrant caution from anyone quoting her work. In the next section, we discuss several works from different fields where authors rely on the method of quoting White's work.

2.4.1 Weber and Others Quoting White's Writings

Weber in his book, *Who's got the truth?* (Weber 1994) interviews and writes about several SDA theologians. The theologians whom Weber investigates are Venden, Knight, Sequeira, Larson, and Maxwell on their views of the nature of Christ, salvation, and what God requires of humanity. He allows each of these individuals to present their various views on these topics. What is significant is that he quotes White's literature as does most authors (Weber 1994:6, 9, 154; cf. Sequeira 1994:78; Larson 1994:114). Despite differing views, all contributors seem to believe that they present the correct views on White. What one finds in *Who's got the truth?* is that all the authors, including Weber, declare that they fully agree with White. Despite presenting different views and different quotes from White's documents to support their views, no author finds a single quote from White that is at variance with their personal view. Though this may be allowed in a pastoral context, this issue becomes problematic in an academic context. The failure of any disagreement with White suggests selective

quoting and an absence of critical evaluation. We next consider MacCarty's quoting of White's writings.

2.4.2 MacCarty Quoting White's Writings

MacCarty, in discussing old and new covenants, the gospel, and the Sabbath, also utilises the method of quoting White's writings. For example, he utilises phrases from her writings such as 'two dispensations' (MacCarty 2007:79, 88), and quotes her writings to demonstrate subjects and mechanisms of God's eternal covenant with humanity (MacCarty 2007:129, 142). He is weaving White's quotes into his work as he does with other theologians. In a section of his book, he discusses the standards of God and utilises a quote from White because it 'holds together the major issues and components of God's eternal covenant' (MacCarty 2007:129). On more than one occasion, he ends a section in his book with quotes from authors including White (MacCarty 2007:5, 28, 88, 112, 113, 126, 142, 223).

Even though White was not a theologian, by quoting her writings, SDA theologians have given theological authority to her work. Having taken the first step to quote her as a theological authority, requires a second step of dealing with her as with any other theologian. White cannot receive special consideration, for that would create a cultic bias within SDA theology. To remain fair by academic standards, she must be treated with the same critical inquiry as other theologians are treated. We now turn to Webster quoting White's writings.

2.4.3 Webster Quoting White's Writings

Webster attempts to reconstruct White's Christology by focusing on the incarnation. He deals with quotes from White's literature in chronological order (Webster 1982:66) and proceeds to construe White's quotes, elaborating on key points, but does not strictly follow a chronological order (Webster 1982:67-71). From his research in White's writings, he concludes the following points as valid to her Christology:

1. Her favourite theme, which is interwoven throughout her work, is Jesus Christ.
2. Christ as mediator is the particular focus in her Christological undertones.
3. She presents a tension and paradox in her Christology (Webster 1982:149, 150, 152).

In critiquing her Christology, Webster points out that the very strength of her writings – tension and paradox – is also her weakness. He explains that to those who do not have access to all her writings, it is easy to only observe one side of it with regards to tension and paradox (Webster 1982:154). She frequently employs this tension in her writings to maintain balance. She juxtaposes two concepts and expresses them in extremes. By doing so, she ensures that the strength of both points is maintained, while she also maintains the balance in a specific topic. Take the next example of Christ:

> But Christ reaches us where we are. He took our nature and overcame, that we through taking His nature might overcome. Made 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' (Romans 8:3), He lived a sinless life. Now by His divinity He lays hold upon the throne of heaven, while by His humanity He reaches us (White 1940:311).

Here are several contrasting points combined: Christ being in the 'likeness' of sinful flesh, but still being 'sinless' with the elements of his 'divinity' and 'humanity.' These themes frequently make an appearance in the book, *The desire of ages* (cf. White 1940:19, 24, 25, 49, 52, 63, 71, 72), sometimes combined and at other times discussed separately. In light of Webster's statements in the introductory part of this section (2.3) regarding the volume of White's writing, this latter statement highlights the danger of any limited reading and method of quoting her ideas on Christology. The following section will consider Whidden quoting White's writings.

2.4.4 Whidden Quoting White's Writings

Whidden, in his book, *Ellen White on the humanity of Christ*, presents perhaps the most meticulous method in quoting White. First, he deals with the quotes in chronological order, and second, he outlines the method in the following steps:

1. Searching through White's documents in person.
2. Investigating the works of Douglas, Larson, Wieland, Olson, Gulley, and *Questions on doctrine*.
3. Considering every compilation he could find.
4. Sending copies of his work to other theologians to supply statements that he could have missed or did not cite with enough context (Whidden 1997:5, 6).

Whidden has presented a methodology and subjected it to critical evaluation. He has also listed two appendixes of White's quotes (Whidden 1997:99-149). Despite his clearly outlined methodology with which he aims to shed additional light on the topic, he does not attempt a thorough or comprehensive study of the nature of Christ (Whidden 1997:5, 86, 87). His work is therefore just another step to clarifying the issue of White's concept of Christ's nature, but it is not a conclusive document. Lastly, we consider Mansour quoting White's documents.

2.4.5 Mansour Quoting White's Documents

Up to this point I have discussed SDA theologians quoting White's documents. To be fair, we must also consider non-SDA scholars who are quoting White. One such scholar is Mansour, who expresses anti-Trinitarian views on his website *Revelation 14:12* (Mansour 2011) and presents sermons on YouTube (Mansour 2011). One sermon that he has presented on YouTube, is called *The Trinity and Ellen White* in which he postulates that White did not hold to the Trinity (Mansour 2011). On his websites are several free PDF books, like *The living voice of the Lord's witnesses*, which references several historical SDA pioneers, including White. In this book he gives quotes of many SDA Church witnesses, including White (Mansour 2012:2-10 of 56). He extensively quotes White to promote his anti-Trinitarian views. We now turn our attention to the limitations of the method of quoting White by the authors we have reviewed.

2.5 Limitations of the Method Used to Quote White's Documents

The method of quoting White's writings, as I have indicated in the previous section is a widespread practice, both in time and by various authors. The methods used by authors to quote White, have different purposes, although all of them quote her as a theological authority. With the degree of variance in various views, it is striking that no author finds any disagreement with White. It is thus necessary to inspect the various authors concerning the *What?* and *Why?* in their quoting of White's documents. The *What?* and *Why?* given to White's Christological statements by various authors, serve as an indication whether this quoting method can arrive at a larger theory of White's Christology.

To further discuss the limitations of this method, I will review and postulate how White prepared her books for publication. Any selection regarding the wording, the

arrangement of materials, even illustrations, was the responsibility of White (Olsen 2013:663-664). She displayed a very meticulous nature in writing her books,[10] searching for material from other authors to better understand aspects such as chronology or historical events (Olsen 2013:666). Some of her books were compiled from documents she had previously written, advising the SDA Church in certain periods. She followed this method in writing and compiling books, beginning in 1855 and ending in 1909 (Olsen 2013:667). After her passing in 1915, White's works were left to the trustees of the EGW Estate. The trustees were reluctant to publish books containing selected quotes of White. As per her instruction in her will, it was decided to forego this position and publish books that were compilations of quotes. The intention was to combine the scattered quotes of White in one publication to demonstrate her view on certain matters (Olsen 2013:667; White 1958b:11).

From this bit of history, we observe that the method of quoting White is not incorrect, either as per her instruction or in any academic sense of the word. The problem is that the nature of White's writing methodology presents a big challenge. In the compilations for books that she has prepared from her paradigm regarding Christology or other theological matters, she combined various quotes on a topic into a single document, clarifying her sense-making paradigm on a matter. Later generations who continued this method would combine these quotes from their sense-making paradigms. The Board of Trustees of the EGW Estate explains in the book, *Selected messages* (Vol 1), the source of the quotes and short explanations of special circumstances to clarify the quotes (White 1958b:11, 12). In this publication, we find two quotes from White that contain the thought that God alone is infallible (White 1958b:37). Here we are presented with a clear *What?* concerning White's belief, but there is nothing to express *why* she held that view. At another point, White is quoted saying: 'The human family have all the help that Christ had in their conflicts with Satan' (White 1958b:95). As before, we find a *What?* but not the *Why?* The compilation of quotes is useful in combining diverse quotes on a single topic, but they only present the inherent focus and presentation of the *What?* and not the *Why?* in White's writing. This method, as we

[10] 'Meticulous' does not entail academic standards and merely indicates that White applied attention to detail in preparing her books.

have indicated, is utilised in other works which we will now consider regarding their limitations, taking examples from Weber's book *Who's got the truth?*

2.5.1 Weber and Others Quoting White's Documents

In Weber's book, *Who's got the truth*?, we will review five authors' methods of quoting White, namely Maxwell, Knight, Sequeira, Larson, and Vendon. Maxwell claims that God does not actively punish sinners, but lets them suffer the consequences of their actions (Weber 1994:16, 17). He quotes White to support his view:

> It is no arbitrary decree on the part of God that excludes the wicked from heaven; they are shut out by their own unfitness for its companionship. The glory of God would be to them a consuming fire. They would welcome destruction, that they might be hidden from the face of Him who died to redeem them (White 1892:18).

Opposing Maxwell, Gulley argues that, according to White, Christ had suffered God's judgement on the cross. Considering this judgement, God purposefully judges and destroys those who reject Christ. According to Gulley, in contrast with Maxwell, White connects this rejection to the rebellion of Satan (Gulley 2013b:910). Gulley also supports this view with quotes from White (1958a:40; 1940:114). Ironically, seemingly Maxwell quotes White on a key point in his theological view that he is unable to substantiate from Scripture. The section on Maxwell's views is filled with Scriptural references, except for this point noted above. It therefore becomes clear that White seems to become a backup for personal ideas that cannot be substantiated otherwise. Not only is White used to authorise Maxwell's view, but from the above comparison, Maxwell is concerned with *what* White wrote, but neglects the *Why?* of her thinking. The initial observable *What?* is presented as authorising his view, but it neglects the interrelation with the *What?* (White 1892:18) and the *Why?* However, it connects to other *What?* points in White's theological statements.

Knight writes to Weber and claims that he was led to a study on holiness by a zealous Adventist, quoting White (Knight 1994:38). As quoted earlier, Knight argues that authors sometimes quote White's documents to replace Scripture (Knight 1994:40). He therefore substantiates his views by relying only on Scripture. He does quote White,

but only to underscore her advice in proving all points from Scripture (Knight 1994:40, 41).

Sequeira states his argument without any initial reliance on White. Only after he has stated his view, he utilises quotes from White as further validation of the views he has presented. In the discussion between Weber and Sequeira, the latter quotes White to substantiate his views. What is noteworthy, is that in one quote of White, Sequeira adds his own definition to White's words (Sequeira 1994:83). By doing this, he assures that his Christological view is identical to White's. He claims that Christ's humanity was entirely derived from Mary (Sequeira 1994:83).[11] White, on the other hand, seems to have denied this position – a point which will receive full attention in Chapter 4. Sequeira, although limiting his quoting of White, quotes her when her arguments agree with his view that Christ united his nature with our nature, but ignores her when her views contradict his view with reference to the origin of Christ's humanity. He utilises the observable *What?* of White's statement on Christ, uniting his nature with our nature. However, he does not consider the *Why?*, but is content to state the *What?* of White's view, on condition that it agrees with his.

In Weber's interaction with Larson, the latter lists the number of Christological quotes of White, making specific statements – a method that takes up several pages. The conclusion that Larson reaches, is that one can and should have complete victory over sin in the present life. He adds that this is to be done through the power of Christ (Larson 1994:117-121). Although he has given an extensive number of Christological quotes on several topics by White, his conclusion is questionable. White states that sin will only be finally removed at the second coming of Christ (White 1950:645; cf. also Oladini 2011:276). Even though Larson has counted the number of quotes that support his Christological view, there is no consideration to the interrelations between these quotes or other Christological statements of White. He assumes that the *What?* by numerical listing is sufficient. Without the *Why?* to indicate the interrelation between White's Christological *What?* statements, the numerical value does not support the argument.

[11] Sequeira (1994:83) argues that Mary's genetics are essential to give meaning to the genealogy of Christ, but fails to explain how Mary provided the male chromosomes.

Venden's presentation contains only two references to White, particularly to present personal effects of salvation (Venden 1994:166). In response to Weber, he points to a quote of White, used in isolation, to support his theological point of view (Venden 1994:157). It would appear that Venden, just like Knight recognises the danger of making isolated quotes of White, although not as strict as Knight. As before, the focus here is only on the observable *What?* of White's statements, in this case, sanctification. There is no consideration to the *Why?*, the result being that disjointed quotes of White are found encapsulated in another author's writings. Next, we evaluate MacCarty's quoting of White's literature.

2.5.2 MacCarty Quoting White's Literature

MacCarty infrequently makes quotes from White's documents, focusing on the old and new covenant (MacCarty 2007:xi, xii). As such, he quotes her as he does other theologians, focusing on the *What?* as explanatory or support of his statements (MacCarty 2007:79). Before quoting White, MacCarty writes: 'Note the following statements that hold together the major issues and components of God's eternal covenant with humankind' (MacCarty 2007:129).

Preceding the statement of MacCarty, is an explanation of perfection, required by both the new and old covenant and derived from Christ. Here MacCarty has provided the *Why?* for his view and relies on White for the *What?* to express and confirm his conclusion. He also quotes White on a phrase that refers to 'the two dispensations' (MacCarty 2007:79). These phrases of White serve as an explanation of *what* White had written, while MacCarty provides the *Why?* In the next section, we consider Webster's quoting of White's documentation.

2.5.3 Webster Quoting White's Literature

In his doctoral thesis, Webster compares the Christology of White, Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas (Webster 1982:56-156, 157-247, 248-344, 347-426). His thesis presents a critical investigation of White's Christological views. As he has relied on both quoting White's documents and comparing these to other theologians, he will be considered under both methods of quoting and comparing White to other theologians.

Webster makes the statement that White's Christological quotes are scattered and that it is up to the individual to discover the dominant themes and tendencies in her thinking (Webster 1982:65). He recognises that White has made *What?* Christological statements, and states that the unobservable 'themes' and 'tendencies' – the *Why?* – are up to the researcher to discover. He also researches the *Why?* components of White's Christology to connect the *What?* statements. This has assisted him in pointing out that the 'great controversy' is a foundational theme of White's writings (Webster 1982:63).[12] He quotes White in stating that Christ possessed the attributes of God (Webster 1982:66). The initial *What?* statement is clarified by his explanation of the *Why?*, depicting Christ in an equality with God, possessing the attributes of God. Although he does venture to explain the *Why?*, he does so by limiting his *Why?* to White's limited Christological *What?* statements. More attention is therefore given to the *What?* of White's Christology than to the *Why?*

Webster does not venture into explaining how White considers the immanence and transcendence of God, the exact nature of Christ as sinful or sinless, or White's statements on Christ's divinity (cf. sections 6.2.1, 6.2.3.4, and 6.6). In describing White's view on the divine and human natures of Christ, he relies on her *What?* statements to show that the divine and human natures of Christ were united in one Person (Webster 1982:78). His explanation of the *Why?* in White's documents is limited when he shows that because of Christ's divine and human nature in one Person, he was the only one who could be humanity's Saviour (Webster 1982:80). In other instances, Webster fails to provide the *Why?*, describing White's *What?* as 'mysterious' (Webster 1982:84).

Douglas promotes some ideas relevant to Webster's study: 1) Christ's sinful human nature, and 2) flowing from the first is the idea that humanity can become sinless in their state of sin, just as Christ was (Webster 1984:367). In his overview and critique on Douglas' Christology, Webster states that Douglas reveals pre-suppositions and a biased interpretation of Scripture (Webster 1982:389, 409). Regarding White, he makes the following statement about Douglas: 'For one who claims to use Ellen White as an authority for his Christology it should be expected that He would give equal

[12] 'The great controversy' is an SDA term referring to the conflict between Christ and Satan that started before creation was decided on the cross and will be finalised with the destruction of Satan, death, and sin.

treatment to her total output. However, it appears that Douglas is at times selective in his usage of Ellen White's Christological material' (Webster 1982:412).

Webster makes the following statement with reference to Douglas' Christology: 'In 1964 he obtained a Th.D. degree from this latter institution, submitting his doctoral dissertation entitled, "Encounter with Brunner: An Analysis of Emil Brunner's Proposed Transcendence of the Subjectivism-Objectivism Dichotomy"…This dissertation must be borne in mind when seeking to evaluate Douglass' own theological thinking' (Webster 1982:348).

This raises the following question as to Douglas' quoting of White's documents: 'Does Douglas aim to accurately portray White's Christology, or only to support his interpretation of Brunner?' The evidence presented by Webster does seem to indicate an affirmative to the latter part of the question. As I have not found a response of Douglas to Webster, I need to be fair in critiquing Webster's use of White's quotations.

Webster suggests that the concept of Christ as 'God with us' lies at the heart of White's Christology. He postulates that the various models which White utilises can be combined under the single concept of 'God with us' (Webster 1982:150-152, 448). He explains this view by means of the incarnation of Christ which forms part of an eternal plan, existing apart from sin. In other words, God the Son would have become a man, regardless of the existence of sin or the lack thereof (Webster 1982:135, 136). This assumption becomes problematic since, in *The desire of ages*, White mentions the plan of the incarnation only in the first chapter (White 1940:19, 26). She furthermore links the incarnation of Christ to sin and redemption (White 1940:25). Webster combines White's concept of 'God with us' with her idea that Christ was an eternal mediator (Webster 1982:151). Gane highlights that White views Christ after his ascension, as being inaugurated as High Priest (Gane 2013:700). Although White may have regarded Christ as an eternal mediator, we must realise that the role of Christ as incarnated redeemer, led to him being our mediator. Her linking of 'God with us' to redemption aspects would deny Webster's conclusion. Webster's bibliography contains references to Barth (Webster 1982:454, 455) which leaves the impression that his focus on 'God with us' is seemingly a re-working of Barth's theology of 'God for us.' Furthermore, the idea that God would have been incarnated regardless of sin, is also found

in Barth's argumentation (Barth 1956:134). In light of this, one may conclude that Webster is similarly guilty of the same charges he lays against Douglas, the difference being that Douglas relies on Brunner and Webster on Barth.

Webster describes his methodology as resorting in the fields of dogmatics and apologetics. He furthermore describes his method regarding the initial chronological evaluation of the four authors (White, Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas), followed by a thematic approach to their respective Christologies (Webster 1982:4, 5). Although he alludes to the *Why?* indications of the interrelation within the *What?* of White's Christological statements, it is not comprehensively done. He also fails to discern between the *What?* and *Why?* Therefore, when he elaborates on the *Why?*, he does not indicate if this is White's Christological view or his own explanation. This is another danger in neglecting the lack of White's demonstrable Christological theoretical framework. It is indeed possible that even in academic studies the individual author may present their *Why?* as the thoughts of White and not their own. Next, we investigate Whidden's quoting of White's writings.

2.5.4 Whidden Quoting White's Writings

Whidden's treatment of White's writings is quite extensive and strictly chronological. Although he shies away from the post-fall nature of Christ's position, he does not fully deny that position, or fully promotes the pre-fall position. His conclusion is:

> Jesus was sufficiently like us in nature (a deep *identity*) to be able to identify with our struggles in temptation and give us every victory needed to make it through to the kingdom and yet also is sufficiently unlike us (a profound *uniqueness*) to be sinless enough in nature and performance to be our satisfactory, sinless substitute (Whidden 1997:86; original emphasis).

Although Whidden's research brings him to this conclusion, it does not allow him to specify the exact *identity* or *uniqueness*. This is in part linked to his attempt to promote dialogue and reconciliation (Whidden 1997:85). It must also be regarded as a limit to the method of quoting White. In describing his method (cf. section 2.3.4), Whidden focuses on White's *What?* Christological statements. The above quoted conclusion presents a thorough investigation of White's *What?* statements on the nature of Christ

relating to sin. The above conclusion does leave one with two assertions found in the writings of White, but without any attempt as to the *Why?* to link the two viewpoints. The reader can then discern that there are two sets of *What?* statements, but with no *Why?* to link them. Lastly, we evaluate Mansour's quoting of White's documentation.

2.5.5 Mansour Quoting White's Documentation

There is a possibility to avoid the tension being discussed in the previous section. By quoting only one side of an argument, one would obviously present an incorrect view of White's intentions. Mansour, for instance, quotes White as follows:

> At the baptism of Christ, how many divine individuals were involved?...'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' The words of confirmation that Christ is the Son of God were given to inspire faith in those who witnessed the scene and to sustain the Son of God in his arduous work. Notwithstanding the Son of God was clothed with humanity, yet Jehovah (sic.), with his voice, assures him of his sonship with the Eternal. In this manifestation to his Son, God accepts humanity as exalted through the excellence of his beloved Son (Mansour 2017:16 of 56).

One may assume that Mansour has applied a cut and paste method in writing his online book. He uses the above quote, which refers only to God, to claim that 'God' refers exclusively to God the Father at the Baptism of Jesus (Mansour 2017:17 of 56). Mansour's selective quoting ignores that White includes the presence of the Holy Spirit. Without undue criticism, we must keep in mind that Mansour is not a theologian and follows no academic method or methodology in quoting White's documents. He also ignores that these very same words were copied into *The desire of ages* with subtle but significant changes.[13] It is clear that he specifically quotes from White's writings, the passage that does not focus on the Holy Spirit. He ignores another passage nearly identical that does include the Holy Spirit.

Mansour displays a selective quoting method. He furthermore shows no consideration for the respective timing of the different writings being penned in the *Review and*

[13] For a comparison between these two passages, see Appendix A.

Herald article in 1873, when the discussion on the Trinity had only begun to surface in Adventism (Knight 2000:93). In 1873, White was not yet attempting to give a Trinitarian view (cf. White 1873). Another aspect of Mansour's neglect is the style of writing that White employs. Jones states that White places the focus in her writings on redemption and not on the Trinity (Jones 2014:22). To take any singular argument of White as a fact about any Trinitarian aspect, would be making assumptions on partial evidence. Mansour also neglects other statements where White is clear on the divinity and persona of the Holy Spirit (White 1911:49; 1940:671). He is only concerned with her *What?* Christological statements, which are construed as motivating his point of view. Mansour has quoted the following passage from White: 'God is the great I AM, the source of being, the center of authority and power' (Mansour 2017:19 of 56), while neglecting other quotes that would disagree with his views:

> With solemn dignity Jesus answered, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM…Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, 'whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity, Micah 5:2, margin' (White 1940:469).

In quoting White, Mansour selectively considers the *What?* of White's Christological statement. He does not consider the *Why?* of her publications, but uses quotes to support his personal view. In the following section, we discuss the limitations of this method.

2.5.6 The Limitations of the Method of Quoting White's Documents

The various authors whom I have chosen as examples, have been chosen from a spectrum as wide as possible. This is to first demonstrate the different ways in which this method is used to quote White's literature. Second, the scholars who quote White's Christological statements, are not doing it from the perspective of one single method. Third, it demonstrates that as widely as it is used, this method's limitation lies in that it focuses mainly on the *What?* of White's Christology, giving little or no consideration to the *Why?*

If, for a moment I may go back to the compilation of White's books, we discover that during her lifetime, she was most probably personally responsible for these publications. After her death, quotations of White cannot be taken as accurate, unless individual quotes are reviewed in their original form and context. This is a lengthy method and requires the need to consider larger contexts and styles in White's writings. Bradford expresses that trying to use White's works to establish theological points, results in a 'wilderness of quotes and counter quotes' (Bradford 2006:188). In light of the limitations of this methodology, it becomes evident that the neglect of the *Why?* and relying mostly or exclusively on the *What?* of White's Christological statements, obstructs rather than aids theological discussion. This methodology, first, allows individual views to supplant the *Why?* of White's Christological framework, and second, gives false authority to individual Christological views while presenting them as White's Christological views. The variance of views which find no disagreement between authors and White support the conclusion that White's *What?* statements are organised by various authors, while also supplying the *Why?*

If we were to ask a scholar why they selected the quotes from White that they did, the only honest answer would most assuredly be, 'I wanted to select those quotes!' From a postmodern perspective, we observe how individual subjectivism severely limits the method of quoting White's literature as *What?* without the *Why?*, failing to arrive at her Christological theoretical framework. We have seen repeatedly how quoting White is subject to personal views. What we find in this matter, is that subjectivity is hidden and presented as White's view or an explanation of her view.

Having reviewed the method of quoting White's documentation, the following limitations are found:

- A focus on the *What?* at the expense of the *Why?*
- It suffers from selective quoting.
- Subjectivity is hidden in quoting White as a source of authority.
- It focuses only on what White believed and neglects the *Why?* and the *What?* which she believed.

The next section will consider the methodology of comparing White's writings to those of specific theologians.

2.6 The Method of Comparing White's Writings to those of specific Theologians

Below, the second method utilised for evaluating White's documents will be discussed. This method consists of comparing White's writings to those of specific theologians. For example, we look at comparisons between White and Calvin (Jones 2014), White and Stott (Oladini 2011), White and Ladd (Lee 2010), as well as White and Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas (Webster 1982:434-436). We will first discuss Jones who compares White's views to those of Calvin.

2.6.1 Jones comparing White's Views to those of Calvin

For his doctoral thesis, Jones has compared the Christology of White to that of Calvin (Jones 2010a). In his comparison between the two views, he concludes that

- White goes beyond Calvin;
- White is more dynamic; and
- White permeates every dispensation with God's love, revealed through Christ (Jones 2010b:64, 65).

Jones has published his thesis as a book in 2014, titled *Decoding Jesus* (Jones 2014). He states that, in comparing the views of White and Calvin, he has found divergent points of view as well as similar views (Jones 2014:ix). This is the reason why Jones is used in this thesis to compare the views of White to Calvin. First, it sifts the theological points made by White to other points such as pastoral and practical issues. Second, it allows one to better view where White's quotes belong in the overall view she takes. As such, Jones defines White's method of writing – being similar to that of Calvin – as a 'salvation-historical approach' (Jones 2014:1).[14] From this comparison, Jones defines White's method as follows: 'Advocators of such a view assert that they

[14] Within this thesis, the scope of the salvation-historical trajectory is denoted by the full range of the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation (redemption) through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's wholesome renewal method through the Spirit of Pentecost, and God's future-directed fulfilment in the new heaven and new earth. What is of importance here is that God, humanity, and the natural cosmic world are intrinsically part and parcel of each of God's grand acts (Jones 2010b:3).

refrain from moving outside the Bible into a speculative fantasising realm of reflecting on God separated from human beings and the natural cosmic world' (Jones 2010b:1).

From this method, Jones picks up trends which are prevalent in White's writings and which are similar to Calvin's views. Jones notes that Barth starts his *CD* with the concept of the Trinity, expressed in Christ as the centre of God's revelation. He adds that in Barth's later writings, the Trinity almost does not play any role. White, on the other hand, according to Jones, does not write with a main focus on the Trinity (Jones 2014:21-22). As such, there is no classical exposition on the Trinity in White's writings.[15]

In his method, Jones has identified certain of the themes that White utilises in her writings. One such theme is the wrath and anger of God, being continuously subsumed in God's dynamic love. Jones criticises a static Adventist reading of White that isolates statements, neglecting the continuity in her thought (Jones 2014:45). In comparing White's views to a theologian who wrote systematically, it would appear that one can arrange her Christological quotes alongside the compared theologian. It then becomes possible to pick up some general themes found in her writings. Similarly, Jones indicates what he considers as deficiencies in the SDA theology, compared to Calvinism. He claims that both Calvin and White underemphasise the grand act of the renewal of the Spirit. He further argues that this leads both Calvinistic and Adventist thinking to ignore the importance of the Holy Spirit, designating the Spirit as an unfathomable x factor (Jones 2010b:44).

Another theme that Jones notes, is that White views Christ as mediator, king, teacher, and prophet (Jones 2014:148). Although this could also be picked up with individual quoting, it is questionable if all points would be noted. The method of comparison provides a wider perspective on matters and is likely to highlight aspects that the individual may be unaware of in White's writings. Jones then demonstrates that these roles are used to describe the interactional identity of Christ (Jones 2014:150). By comparing the views of Calvin and White, he has used Calvin's theology as a sense-making

[15] Jones missed an article by White that does express the Trinity in a similar manner as the classical exposition (White 1906:145, 146). This article is dealt with in section 6.4.

network to highlight similar and dissimilar patterns in White's thinking. As such, this method presents a clearer picture, although only partially, of White's Christology, than one would find by merely quoting White's work.

This method of comparing the views of White to those of another theologian, not only highlights singular concepts, but several concepts and themes found in White's writings. Next, we turn to Oladini, comparing the views of White and Stott.

2.6.2 Oladini Comparing the Views and Approaches of White and Stott

Oladini compares the concept of atonement in the writings of Stott and White, and observes the following about White: 'Ellen White broadens the concept of atonement to include not only the cross, but also Christ's intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary' (Oladini 2011:13).

Comparing White's views to those of another theologian, shows where White held unique viewpoints, and proposes challenges to better understand these viewpoints. In line with this, Oladini describes White's view of original sin not in terms of Augustinian/Calvinistic overtones, but as a severed relationship with God. He describes White's concept of original sin as a human inability to facilitate any redemptive action on their part, but not as a total depravity. This severed relationship leaves the individual with guilt and parents pass the broken relationship on to their children (Oladini 2011:203-204).

Oladini also presents several key points that culminate in White's view of the crucifixion, which further explains what she believes. Points that White believes in:

- Divine mercy and truth are simultaneously revealed at the cross.
- The law and gospel are essential to the atonement (Oladini 2011:231).

Oladini makes an important remark about White's view of the atonement as it is linear rather than punctiliar (Oladini 2011:293). This point demonstrates one of the methods that White employs in her writings, which provides greater clarity in reading her documents. Like Jones, Oladini also notes similarities and differences between the work of Stott and White, particularly in the areas of method, presuppositions, and assumptions

(Oladini 2011:296). One such point which shares both a similarity and a difference, is the sources utilised by Stott and White. Both of them rely on Scripture as the main authority in their work. Stott differs from White as he admits that he also adds tradition and reason, but subjects them to the authority of Scripture. According to Oladini, White utilises Scripture alone (Oladini 2011:297). Like Jones, Oladini also refers to White's method, claiming that 'White utilizes the great controversy theme as the organizing concept' (Oladini 2011:228). In this instance, the method of comparison allows us to discover the *What?* of White's Christological views, and how these *What?* points are expressed in different themes.

Oladini has an academic process which, like Jones allows him to highlight several key concepts in White's writing. He has also managed to show similarities and dissimilarities between the views of Stott and White, referring to Stott's overall conceptual framework which in turn partially reveals White's conceptual framework. Next, we consider Lee comparing the views of White and Ladd.

2.6.3 Lee Comparing the Views and Approaches of White and Ladd

Lee presents the problem of his thesis, stating that a 'significant agreement or disagreement exists between evangelical eschatological views in regard to the Kingdom of God, as articulated in two representative proponents for these traditions, namely Ladd and White' (Lee 2010:7). The purpose of Lee's thesis is to compare the views of Ladd and White regarding the Kingdom of God (Lee 2010:8).

Lee's comparison between the views of White and Ladd presents us with the following points of interest: Both of them view the Kingdom of God as reign and realm. Lee arrives at this conclusion by referring to Ladd's use of the Hebrew and Greek terms, *malkuth* and *basileia*, in comparison to concepts used by White (Lee 2010:274). He has established that, although White did not know Greek, her understanding of certain concepts matches Greek phrases. A point of divergence between Ladd and White is that White puts more emphasis on the law of God than Ladd (Lee 2010:275). Both Ladd and White view two kingdoms, one of God and one of Satan, in conflict with each other (Lee 2010:277). A significant point of divergence that Lee points out is the starting point of the Kingdom of God. To Ladd, it is with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. For White, the Kingdom of God exists from eternity and is re-established at the

cross on earth (Lee 2010:280). This goes back to Oladini's point of White's linear view of God's acts as opposed to a punctiliar view (Oladini 2011:293). Lee also notes that both Ladd and White reject dispensationalism and view the church as a continuation of Israel (Lee 2010:292). He points out that Ladd fails to completely distance himself from a dispensationalist view, claiming that Israel remains a special people. White, on the other hand, argues that the blessing of Israel was completely passed on to the church and has replaced Israel as God's only people (Lee 2010:296, 297).

In this academic process, Lee also points out where there is a difference in the degree to which White and Ladd emphasise certain aspects. This is useful to determine the importance of White, being attached to certain concepts and ideas. Lee has also shown that in the method of comparison, it is possible to attach and extricate White from existing theological constructs. White agrees with the concept of the Kingdom of God, but not with dispensationalism. Next, we consider Webster's work in comparing White's views to those of Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas.

2.6.4 Webster Comparing White's Views to those of Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas

After his initial method of outlining White's Christology, Webster compares her Christology to Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas (Webster 1982:429). He discerns White's Christological concern as 'God's character' (Webster 1982:429). He also demonstrates that White places equal weight on Christ's deity and his humanity (Webster 1982:434). According to Webster, one of the key factors in White's Christology is that Christ is equal to the Father. This allows Christ to reveal the Father, vindicate the law of God, be the substitute for humanity, and make full atonement at the cross (Webster 1982:439). Webster believes that White's strong view of the divinity of Christ is what motivates her to uphold the sinless nature of Christ (Webster 1982:437). This stands in contrast to Douglas who denies any notion of original sin and claims that human beings have a sinless nature at birth. White and Heppenstall, on the other hand, promote that humanity is sinful by nature, but Christ is not (Webster 1982:436, 437).

Webster concludes that White presents a 'freedom' in her Christology, bringing together various metaphors, thought forms, and models. It is this very freedom that

exceeds work done by the theologians, Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas. He also indicates that this is as much a weakness as a strength, as a neglect of diversity can lead to a one-sided or even contradictory view (Webster 1982:442).

Webster has done extensive work and has been able to present several of the features found in White's writing. He notes the strengths in White's writing as

1. a richness without ambiguity because she does not become one-sided in her Christology;
2. a paradox without confusion, especially relating to the active use of Christ's divinity and complete function of his real humanity;
3. a participation without corruption regarding sin, as both an internal bias and a general condition; these points allow White to identify Christ with the sinner without Christ being corrupted with sin; and
4. Christocentric without objectivism, where White views all matters from a Christocentric perspective (Webster 1982:442, 443, 445).

Comparing White's views to those of specific theologians, have allowed Webster to demonstrate key strengths within the writings of White, which also assist in the overall understanding of her Christology. Having reviewed these comparisons of the views of White to those of the mentioned theologians, the next section will take a look at the limitations of this method.

2.7 Limitations of the Method of Comparing White's Work to those of Specific Theologians

This section discusses the limitations of the method of comparing White's work to those of specific theologians. When one author is compared to another author, the various quotes presenting the *What?* can be clarified with the *Why?* that links all the quotes referring to the *What?* This is possible because theologians present their theological work in an organised manner. The structure of each theologian's work ensures that the *What?* is presented, while the *Why?* clarifies these points. A researcher should then be able to compare *What?* to *What?*, and *Why?* to *Why?* of both of the authors. If the *Why?* of one author is not available, it would place the work of that author at a disadvantage. Without knowing the interrelations between the *Why?* and *What?*,

prevents one from seeing the entire theory. We next investigate this limitation in the work of Jones.

2.7.1 Jones Comparing the Views of White and Calvin

Jones focuses on White's *What?* with reference to her Christological statements, mostly neglecting the *Why?* of these statements (Jones 2014:192, 193). He touches on the *Why?* of White's overall methodology in that he states that, like Calvin, she utilises a salvation-historical approach (Jones 2010b:1). This becomes the *Why?* to all the *What?* parts of White. He states that 'White does not come close to Calvin's acceptance of the orthodox and scholastic notion of a Trinity, in fact it appears as if the Trinitarian notion of God more or less totally disappeared from her works' (Jones 2010b:11). This is a view that both Webster (1982:437, 448) and Oladini (2011:246) are opposing.

By imposing the salvation-historical approach of Calvin as the *Why?* to the *What?* of White's Christology, Jones imposes the challenges of Calvin on White. He pertinently denies what he terms as a current trend in Adventism, to view White's later statements as determinative of her view on the Trinity. He does not see in White's documents what he calls the 'classical speculative approach' in writing about the Trinity (Jones 2014:20). This statement, however, blinds him to other facts. Oladini states that most 19th-century SDA thinkers denied (implicitly or explicitly) Christ's atonement, coupled with the Arian and semi-Arian views led to incomplete conceptions of Christ's atonement (Oladini 2011:234).

White did not fall into the Arian or semi-Arain camps prominent in the SDA Church in the foundational years (1844-1888). In *The conflict of the ages* series, she claims that sin arose because Lucifer did not accept Christ, the Word, as being one in nature, character, and purpose with God (White 1958a:34). She also describes the incarnation as Christ who was one with the Father from eternity, the I AM who became a human being (White 1940:19, 24, 26). When she describes the Pentecost, she depicts it as the promise given by Christ that a personal and divine Person, the Holy Spirit, would be received by the believers (White 1911:17, 21, 22, 38, 39). White goes one step further by indicating that the Holy Spirit is currently still available to believers as a divine and personal comforter (White 1911:49, 50, 52, 54). As stated above,

Andreason has made a personal trip to White to affirm that she had written these words, as they were Trinitarian in nature. Jones himself notes: ‘Ellen White never used the term “trinity,” although she did refer to the “three living persons of the heavenly trio.” Her comments, as collected in (White 1906b:145, 146), suggest that she believed that the Scriptures taught the existence of three co-eternal divine persons’ (Jones 2010b:12).

Jones’ comparison between the views of Calvin and White seems to have placed White at a disadvantage, as Calvin’s Christology is organised, while White’s is not. However, he misses the point because he surveys White through the lens of Calvin. Without a systematic layout of her Christology, White is vulnerable to be compared to someone else without even truly establishing her views on Christology. Jones has compared her Christology to that of Calvin, arguing that Calvin’s Christology challenges her Christology. This highlights the first limitation of this method. Jones misses the argumentation that White follows to first equate Christ to God. Only when that point has been established, does she fully promote the need of the Holy Spirit as divine and personal necessity (cf. section 4.2.3).

Early members of the SDA Church rejected the doctrine of the Trinity on the following points:

1. They did not find Scriptural evidence for the Trinity.
2. They believed that the Trinity made the Father and the Son identical.
3. They believed that the doctrine of the Trinity teaches about three gods.
4. They thought that the doctrine of the Trinity would diminish the doctrine of atonement.
5. They believed that the term ‘Son of God’ pointed to Christ, having a beginning.
6. The Holy Spirit was not considered to be a Person (Jones 2014:81-82).

The focus of this thesis does not allow for an in-depth analysis of how White addresses these issues. Suffice it to say that in taking a salvation-historical approach, White establishes a clear view of atonement and the necessity of the Trinity. She responds to the six points of objection (cf. below) from a purely Scriptural foundation, which early SDA members could not deny. In summary, her response to the six points is:

1. There is Scriptural evidence for Christ's equality with the Father (White 1958a:34) and the personality of the Holy Spirit (White 1911:22).
2. The Father and the Son are separate (White 1940:21).
3. There is only one God (White 1911:223).
4. The Trinity affirms atonement (White 1940:822-824).
5. Christ had no beginning (White 1958a:36).
6. The Holy Spirit is a Person (White 1911:45-46).

There is a second reason why Jones misses these points. This will be discussed in the second limitation of his method, as it only discerns the *What?* of White's views.

In comparing White's views to those of Calvin, Jones refers to *what* White believes. He offers no position on the *Why?*, which would interrelate and connect the various *What?* points. He further postulates that she has utilised a salvation-historical approach, but does not explain the relations or *Why?* within that approach that gives rise to *what* she believes. Unwittingly, he imposes Calvin's paradigm on White. This is due to the lack of the *Why?* in White's paradigm, which leaves it incomplete, and in turn allows for the imposing of Calvin's paradigm on White's writings. The method of comparing the *What?* points of both Calvin's and White's Christology, allows the *Why?* of Calvin's Christology to fill the *Why?* gaps in White's Christology. Next, we consider the limitations of the method of comparing White's work to those of specific theologians by Oladini.

2.7.2 Oladini Comparing the Views of White and Stott

With Oladini (as is the case with Jones) there are several comparisons to the *What?* between the views of Stott and White. There is a distinct lack of explaining *why* White holds certain views. In the previous section, I referred to Oladini who claims that White has only relied on Scripture. However, Oladini contradicts this: 'Like Stott, White, in common with other contemporary Seventh-day Adventist leaders, assumed some hermeneutical principles which were carried over from their Protestant denominational heritage' (Oladini 2011:305).

The phrase 'White in common with other contemporaries' is a clear reference to traditions. Oladini adds, 'On her part, White rejects the Augustinian worldview of Calvinism

and instead embraces the Arminian worldview that she inherited from Methodism, but which is also shaped by theological discourse with fellow leaders within the Adventist church of her time' (Oladini 2011:383). Here Oladini admits that White has inherited certain views and shaped them with her contemporaries. By focusing only on the *What?*, Oladini ignores White's *Why?* as shaped by tradition and her critical thinking.

However, concerning the SDA Church culture and thinking, Knight has identified the following influences that established their culture and thinking:

1. Christian connexion.
2. Anti-Trinitarianism.
3. Methodism.
4. Deism.
5. Puritanism.
6. Baconianism (Knight 2000:31-36).

It would be incorrect to assume that White writes without any influence from tradition. Oladini also observes that White linearly views the acts of God as opposed to a punctiliar way (Oladini 2011:293). This observation implies that White relates themes as continuous arguments which she weaves into her writings. The example of dealing with the Trinity (discussed above) is one such example. There is, however, no attempt to discover *why* White employed a linear method in presenting her Christological *What?* statements.

Oladini presents a method by looking at the assumptions, presuppositions, and methodology of both Stott and White (Oladini 2011:17). This leads one to the conclusion that if he denies White's cultural influence, he is oblivious to her assumptions and presupposition. Furthermore, he claims that her method considers 'internal consistency (logical coherence) [and] external consistency (consonance with the Scriptural data and historical theology)' (Oladini 2011:17). The problem arises with the first point where Oladini's focus is on the *What?* of White's Christological statements: 'She argues that Divine mercy and Divine truth are revealed simultaneously on the cross…She argues that the cross presents the law and the gospel as being essential to the atonement' (Oladini 2011:231).

Between these two *What?* statements there is no *Why?* to demonstrate the internal relation between the two statements. Oladini compares the views of Stott and White, based only on the *What?*, at the expense of the *Why?* It would also appear that the method of comparing White's views with those of another author, may fall prey to a lack of a critical analysis of White. Jones criticises White to some extent, whereas Oladini does not. The method of comparing White's views to those of specific theologians, just as it may impose another theologian's challenges onto White, may also ignore the challenges within White's views. If a scholar favours White, the sole comparison of *What?* may be construed to avoid criticism of White. Where Jones imposes Calvin's challenges on White, Oladini has removed all challenges from White. Next, we consider Lee in comparing White's views to those of Ladd.

2.7.3 Lee Comparing the Views of White and Ladd

Lee presents a variation in his comparison between White and Ladd, as is clear in the following statement: 'For her, Satan made the Sabbath the target of his special attack because the observance of the Sabbath reminds humanity of God as Creator, and His Creatorship deserves our worship' (Lee 2010:283). Here it is obvious that Lee explains the *What?* in White's writings, while also considering the *Why?* of her view. He adds: 'Ellen White's writings strongly uphold all the basic presuppositions and specific guidelines for interpreting Scripture as advocated by the historico-grammatical (historical-Scriptural) method which was used by the Reformation interpreters of the sixteenth century' (Lee 2010:56).

Lee also observes certain methods that White employed in her writings. He therefore presents more focus on the *Why?*, stating in his thesis: 'This study also aimed to uncover the reasons why they have different concepts of the Kingdom of God and to make their respective views provide a firmer foundation of the Biblical concept of the Kingdom of God' (Lee 2010:318).

Lee does not merely observe the *What?* of White's views and compare statements, but he also does research on the interrelations or *why* White connects her *What?* statements to the Kingdom of God. Lee is also cognisant of the fact that White's theological background influenced her writings (Lee 2010:273). The thesis of Lee is intended to be a comparison between the views of Ladd and White. As such, he never

fully separates White's views to reconstruct them into a singular theory. He has explained the *Why?* of White's view on the Kingdom of God, but his explanations do not lead to a complete theoretical reconstruction of White's views. This is due to the goal of comparison in his thesis and not the construction of a theoretical framework. Since Lee's goal is a simple comparison, there is no focus on restructuring White's conceptual framework on the Kingdom of God. Lee therefore does not consider gaps and challenges in White's writings. The comparison between the views of Ladd and White produces a comprehensive understanding, providing both the *What?* and the *Why?* Lee is also willing to admit to challenges in areas where White does not provide clear explanations of concepts. He suggests that various explanations of Ladd may be applied to the challenging areas of White's writings, to illustrate and clarify issues that she has neglected (Lee 2010:320, 321). Next, we consider Webster comparing White's views to those of Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas.

2.7.4 Webster Comparing the Views of White to those of Waggoner, Heppenstall, and Douglas

Webster presents White's Christology in a strong comparative and academic way, in contrast with Jones and Oladini who mainly focus on the *What?* of White's Christology. However, a weakness exists in his initial way of quoting White's views where he applies Barth's views to those of White, neglecting certain key factors. This includes key components of White's Christology in light of Barth's Christology instead of her own (Webster 1982:152). Webster imposes Barth's view on White, stating that the incarnation was part of the eternal purpose of God and was intended apart from sin (cf. Barth 1956:134). This ignores clear statements made by White where she links the plan of salvation and incarnation in dealing with the issue of sin (White 1958a:63-65). As in the previous cases, the *Why?* of Barth's Christology is filling the gaps in White's Christology.

The strength in Webster's work is that he presents clear indications of White's Christology. The deficiency is found in that it does not combine White's Christological framework into a single unit. To be fair, we must admit that Webster's goal was one of comparison and not reconstructing White's Christological framework. As such, he clarifies certain points, but does not combine them in a single paradigm. In discussing White's concept of kenosis, he argues that she held that Christ did not lose his divinity, but

clothed it with humanity (Webster 1982:77). This *What?* point is established by simple quoting. Later in the thesis, Webster builds on this point to illustrate the strength in the SDA Christology of allowing for the full divinity and humanity of Christ (Webster 1982:442). There is, however, no explanation for the interrelation between the first *What?*, referring to the divinity of Christ with the second *What?* in reference to Christ's humanity. Thus, the *Why?* that should essentially connect the two *What?* statements, is not presented. Webster has greatly clarified the *What?*, but the same cannot be said for the *Why?* Next, we summarise the limitations of comparing White's views to those of specific theologians.

2.7.5 Limitations of Comparing White's Views to those of Specific Theologians

Having looked at four examples of comparing White's views to those of specific theologians, indicates that this method is not without value. However, it is necessary to recognise that this method also has its limits. My criticism of each individual is not so much on their conclusions, but the limits they encounter with this system of evaluating White's views. The identified limits are as follows:

- Comparing White's views to those of theologians, places her at a disadvantage, as her Christological framework is not fully discovered or reconstructed. It may be useful to compare her views with other authors, but it would not result in reconstructing her Christological framework.
- Because of a lack of framework for White's Christology, it is worthwhile to impose challenges by specific theologians on her views, without ignoring the way in which she deals with these issues. It is also possible to ignore challenges within her writings, specifically with reference to her Christology.
- This method mainly focuses on the *What?* of White's Christology and not the *Why?* We find *what* White believes, but there is less investigation into *why* she believes what she believes.

To conclude this chapter, I will consider deductive and inductive arguments, as well as the reasoning methodology used by the various authors in evaluating White.

2.8 Deductive and Inductive Methods

2.8.1 Deductive Method

Aristotle noticed that dependent on the intention of the individual, an argument could be deductive or inductive. In my review of deductive methodology, I focus on the deductive argument intended to be deductively true or false. If the premises are intended to be true and if accepted, the conclusion cannot be denied (Anon 1995). The literature we have reviewed so far, utilises a deductive approach in dealing with White's views. A deductive argument follows this structure:

- All A are B.
- X is an A.
- Therefore, X is a B.

It is often assumed that deductive arguments move from a general to a particular focal point, while inductive arguments move from a particular to a general focal point. It could happen that deductive arguments move from a specific to a general and inductive argument, and then from a general to a specific focal point (Anon 1995).

2.8.2 Deductive Methods in Evaluating White's Views

The repeated use of a deductive approach in dealing with White's views in her writings allows for 'a correctly formed deductive argument…whose form is such that the conclusion follows necessarily from its premises' (Damer 2009:20).

The first method of quoting White's views gives quotes and explanations as premises that lead to a conclusion. The method does not follow a strict deductive argumentative formulation, but the general method deducts key points from White's statements with a specific conclusion. As we have indicated, the problem with this method is that it depends on which quotes are utilised to determine the outcome of the conclusion.

The second method that compares White's views to those of other authors, utilises the agreements and disagreements as premises that lead to a specific conclusion. The various writers may not apply a strict deductive argumentative formulation, but their method is still deductive. The method of comparing White's views to those of another author, considers key points of that author, and White's commentary on those key

points. This method utilises a meaningful network, but remains a deductive method for all intents and purposes.

Ponter presents the following criticism on the deductive method: ‘This top-down method is sometimes described as a deductivist approach that normally begins with a set of a priories and then attempts to posit them or identify them within the respective primary source texts’ (Ponter *et al.* 2012:139).

Some of the authors we have reviewed, start with a primary view in mind and in either quoting or comparing it to White’s views, establish their primary point. Even if an initial statement is not made, the research would be done before the writing of the material, which suggests that the initial statement does exist. The problem of the deductive research method is that it searches for definite premises. In quoting or comparing White’s writings, sections are chosen from the viewpoint of a deductive method of thinking. In other words, although White employs a linear view on Christ, by selecting certain quotes as premises, I am likely to eclipse that linear view. Even in comparing, I subject White’s linear view to the theological framework of another author.

Another danger is that the ‘deductivist approach…can fall into the trap of isolating a given author from his (sic.) historical-theological context’ (Ponter *et al.* 2012:140). This is a very common problem regarding the documents of White (Bradford 2006:129-132). The deductive method is not wrong or without value. However, as is the case with the previous methods, its worth is limited. Deductive preaching methodology assumes authority from the start as opposed to inductive preaching that guides listeners to the truth (Nelson 1986:27-28).

Although Nelson discusses preaching methodology, his argument has worth for our discussion. A deductive argument can prove specific points which are already accepted, as opposed to an inductive argument that provides a general conclusion based on general indicators. The use of a deductive method also requires the researcher to arrive at a specific conclusion. This may result in selecting and misquoting White’s literature, especially when the researcher wants to promote their views with White’s authority. The deductive approach prevents the author from venturing into finding

patterns or ‘most likely’ conclusions when considering White’s views. When applying the deductive approach on White’s views, a simplified argument would look as follows:

- White says…1.
- White says…2.
- White says…3.
- Thus, I conclude that White states 123.

This is not incorrect, but it is incomplete, as I have not listed what White says on points 4, 5, and 6. In comparing her views to those of other authors, we find a similar trend:

- X says…1 White says…1.
- X says…2 White says…4.
- X says…3 White says…3+5.
- X and White agree on 1, disagree on 2 and 4, and agree on 3, although White adds 5.

In both examples, we find a dissection and selection of White’s work. This in itself is not the problem, but this dissection and selection are not restructured into a large picture of White’s linear themes. We find aspects of White’s Christology dissected and analysed, but never brought to a whole. As such, the synergy of White’s Christology remains undefined.

The key weakness in the deductive approach is that it starts with a proposition that is already present in the conclusion, while the various premises, quotes, or comparisons only serve to establish the original proposition (Schadewitz & Jachna 2007:5 of 19). The deductive method thus focuses on singular concepts and the actual premise to establish a single concept. The interrelations or the *Why?* become secondary considerations in the overall method.

Deductive arguments function on the clear evidence or observable phenomena. What is observed, what is clearly stated, or what is shown to be true, serves as the premises for the argument and leads to the conclusion. This corresponds to our definition of *What?* as the observable phenomena and specifically White’s statements of belief. When deductive methods are used, either in quoting White’s documents or comparing

her views to those of other authors, the focus inevitably will fall on the *What?* rather than the *Why?* This suggests that one must consider the value and use of inductive argumentative methods to discover the *Why?* of White's Christology.

2.8.3 Inductive Method and the Discovery of *Why?*

An inductive argument is utilised when there is no clear evidence, but only general indicators of patterns. Schadewitz writes that the inductive method uses data to generate ideas (Schadewitz & Jachna 2007:5 of 19). Janzen elaborates on the topic: 'The bulk of the survey questions [is]…directly corresponding to the internal relationship, action, and faith outcomes found in the program logic model' (Janzen 2015:45).

What should be noted is that with an inductive argument, there is correspondence to the internal relation between phenomena. This corresponds to our definition of *Why?* An inductive argument is also described as '[o]ne in which the premises are supposed to provide some evidence for the truth of the conclusion' (Damer 2009:21). What this entails is that the conclusion is not without question, but presents the most likely explanation of the indicators that are observed. An inductive argument would look like this:

- Indicator #1…
- Indicator #2…
- Indicator #3…
- Most likely conclusion: 123.

Because in this thesis, this method of argumentation cannot rely on observable phenomena, the direct quotes from White's writings must consider the quotes and the potential interrelations between them. It will also remove the confusion of whether a possible *Why?* can be directly linked to White's ideas or to another author's.

Lee is unique in that he provides not only the *What?* but also the *Why?* perspective of White's views. The key to his uniqueness lies in his inductive rather than deductive approach (cf. Lee 2010:12). Moving from the specific to the general, his methodology allows viewing both the *What?* and the *Why?* of White's views on the Kingdom of God. He therefore presents White's views in the following example: 'In other words, White's

attention seems to be focused on whether or not the rules of God are exercised. If this is the case, White seems to emphasize God's laws more than Ladd does' (Lee 2010:275).

Lee demonstrates with the *Why?* that White's attention is focused on the exercise of God's rules and that explains the *What?* where White places greater emphasis on the law of God.

Webster does not indicate whether he intends to use a deductive or inductive reasoning. However, from the context of his thesis, it appears that he uses a deductive reasoning (Webster 1982:435, 439). Thus, although he moves to a description of *why* White held certain views, the *What?* remains dominant. This pattern is repeated by Jones and Oladini, as well as the method of quoting White. The focus, however, remains on *what* White states to reach a specific conclusion. The same pattern is observed in the method of quoting White's documents, where quotes of her *What?* are arranged according to an author's preference to reach and confirm their conclusion.

The 12 points presented by Knight (section 2.2) are becoming general guidelines for reading White's literature. They are, however, based on a general reading of her work. Thus, although they are pointing in the right direction, their starting point has a weakness. These are general principles that are specifically set in place for White's work. The advantage of the inductive methodology is that it generates several concepts (Schadewitz & Jachna 2007:5 of 19). Thus, one can move from isolated quotes of White's Christology to her total Christological framework. The wider view will direct one to the interrelation between premises, in an attempt to arrive at the *Why?* Utilising the inductive methodology to investigate White's work would reveal several patterns and motifs in her writings. Once these motifs and patterns are clear, evaluating White's views will be simpler and clearer. This will, in turn aid in establishing White's theoretical Christological framework and guide the reader with principles which are inherent to White's writings, rather than external (more subjective) principles.

2.9 Combining Deductive and Inductive Methods

Schadewitz and Jachna have pointed out that there are benefits in combining deductive and inductive methods (Schadewitz & Jachna 2007:17 of 19). Deductive methods

can articulate patterns, while the inductive methods are necessary to identify the patterns and particularly their interrelations. In this thesis, one could use the deductive method of both quoting White and comparing her views to those of theologians. This could lead one to establish key *What?* points in her Christology. By utilising an inductive method investigating the most likely structure and interrelations that connect the *What?* points, one could arrive at likely *Why?* points. When the *What?* and the *Why?* are combined, it would allow one to reconstruct White's Christological framework.

In stating this, one must realise that it is no simple or easy task. Nonetheless, even a partial reconstruction of White's Christological framework will provide a foundation for

- developing White's Christology in its own right;
- guiding the ordering of White's Christological quotes; and
- similar and further developments in other areas of White's theology.

Bradford recounts the words of Heppenstall in an interview, where Heppenstall stated '*Let her* [White's] *writings be our guide not our jailer, our shield but not our straight-jacket*' (Bradford 2006:177; original emphasis).

Presenting White's partially reconstructed Christology will bring her views into her own right as a theological thinker. This will also allow an appreciation of White in an academic field outside of Adventism. When thoughts, however, are combined in a system, the results are the following: 'It is the fate of every theological system to be dismembered and have its fragments bandied about in an ongoing debate' (Jenson 1997:18).

The inverse is also true: Bradford's point opens White's views for scrutiny and criticism by a wider academic field outside of Adventism. Adventism has isolated this major source of SDA theology for too long from the outside world. As White's Christological thoughts have remained scattered, it has kept her work safe from scrutiny and criticism from the wider academic field outside of Adventism. At the same time, it has also prevented the full value of her work from being appreciated by both academic thinkers in and outside of Adventism. In presenting her partially reconstructed Christological framework, it exposes many of her challenges and therefore also challenges within

SDA Theology. From the evidence of how individuals are using her documents, it is evident that this has become a necessity within SDA theology.

2.10 Conclusion

We began this chapter by reviewing the discussion within Adventism regarding Christology and its impact on soteriology. We have also reviewed how White's Christology is integral in these discussions. We have defined the term *What?* as referring to the observable phenomena of White's definite statements expressing her Christology. We have also defined the *Why?* as the interrelation between the observable phenomena. Having considered the 12 points of Knight (section 2.2), we must take cognisance of the fact that these points are not random. These points are rather intended to address 12 common problems (cf. Knight 1997:14). As noted in our discussion on these points, they are vulnerable to individual subjectivity. Furthermore, these points indicate that the *What?* must be supported by the *Why?*

We have also considered the method of quoting White's views by Venden, Knight, Sequeira, Larson, Maxwell, MacCarty, Whidden, Webster, and Mansour. We noted that there are no expression of differing views with White. We also found that their focus is based on the *What?* and that the *Why?* is neglected.

While comparing White's views to those of specific theologians, we have investigated the works of Jones, Oladini, Lee, and Webster. Except for Lee, the focus was mainly on the *What?* of White's Christology, neglecting the *Why?* Lee has presented a more balanced view of both the *What?* and the *Why?* Having reviewed the methods of quoting Whites' documents and comparing them to those of other authors, we detected that there are limitations to these methods. This affirms my earlier premise that a new method of evaluation is required, the reason being that there is no clear paradigm of White's Christological framework. The methods of quoting White's views or comparing them to those of other theologians, do not necessarily lead to a combined Christological framework. In turn, it is very easy to subjectively read into White's literature what one wants to. All current methods are encumbered, not by the method itself, but by the lack of a method that would be able to discover the *What?* and the *Why?* and to reconstruct White's Christological framework.

We then discussed both the deductive and inductive methods and found that the deductive method utilised by most scholars except Lee, only promotes the *What?* of White's Christology. This method functions with observable phenomena such as White's Christological quotes and produces *what* White's Christology states. The inductive method focuses on the interrelations between phenomena and thus lends itself to the discovery of the *Why?* that connects White's *What?* Lee uses an inductive method and is therefore able to present both the *What?* and the *Why?* aspects of White's writings.

I concluded with the idea to utilise both the deductive and inductive methods to discover the *What?* and the *Why?* of White's Christological framework. This will allow the researcher to reconstruct White's Christological framework and also open White's views for scrutiny and criticism. This has become a necessity for Adventist theology. In the next chapter, we will give an overview of Barth's Christology.

Chapter 3
An Overview of Karl Barth's Christology

3.1 Introduction

Barth was born on 10 May 1886, as the eldest son of Fritz Barth and Anna Katharina (Sartorius) Barth. His father was a professor in New Testament and early Christian theology in Bern. In his later years, Barth would take up theological studies at the university in Bern. He continued his studies at the universities of Berlin, namely Tübingen and Marburg. He also served as a pastor in Geneva (1900-1911) and Safenwill (1911-1921). In 1913, he married Nelly Hoffman with whom he had five children.

In his earlier years, Barth followed the liberal theology, but in Safenwill, there would be a major change to his views. It was when 93 German intellectuals signed a manifesto that supported Kaiser Wilhelm II's war policy, which included almost all of Barth's teachers (Newell 2017:45). The liberal theologians believed that God would accomplish his will through Kaiser Wilhelm II's war policy. It was after this event that Barth wrote his book, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Barth 1933a), which would become the cornerstone of his later theology. He wrote this commentary in response to the Enlightenment and its resulting liberal theology (Zellweger 1997). He opposed what he viewed as the arrogant absolutism of modernity and the belief in omnipotent human powers (Eyeons 2010:16). This liberal theological view of revelation, according to Barth, had made them indiscriminate to historical events (Erickson 1998:188).

This caused a break in Barth's thinking of liberal theology and prompted his commentary. He could not conceive that any theology should be linked to a political agenda and thus broke with his liberal contemporaries and theology (Newell 2017:45, 46). The change in Barth that affected the change in his theology, would start to influence his theology, starting with *The Epistle to the Romans* and culminating in his *CD*. In writing *The Epistle to the Romans*, Barth follows Von Balthazar in declaring a divine "Nein!" (*No*) of condemnation against humanity, as conceived in liberal theological thinking (Harper 2015:17-18).

Because of his *Epistle to the Romans*, Barth was employed as a professor at the University of Göttingen, despite his lack of a doctorate. Both Barth and Bultmann championed for God as the object in the study of theology, in opposition to the anthropocentric nature of liberal theology (Eyeons 2010:17). Barth served as a professor of Dogmatics and New Testament exegesis in Münster from 1925 to 1930, and from 1930 to 1935, as professor of Systematic Theology in Bonn. It was during his time at Bonn that Barth began his work on his *CD*, and despite the 13 volumes, it remains his unfinished Magnus Opus. Some consider the *CD* as potentially the most significant theological achievement in the 20th century (McGrath 1994:98). Liberal theologians no longer viewed Scripture as a supernatural production of God through the Holy Spirit, but as a primitive man's grasping after God (Knight 2000:129). Barth views this modern trend of not being concerned with God in theology, as critical and damning (Eyeons 2010:17).

Liberal theologians were under the assumption that theology, especially liberal theology had progressed. Barth, in opposition to the popular liberal trend viewed that theology had acquiesced to a change in society and culture, while in the process losing essential elements (Eyeons 2010:18). From these descriptions, it becomes evident how the support of the 93 German intellectuals of the Kaiser's war manifesto had affected Barth. One could define Barth's theology as human-centred before the previously mentioned event, and as God-centred afterwards. Not only did Barth change his view, but in pronouncing the divine "Nein" against liberal theology, one can relate this to a theological conversion.

Barth was a strong opposer of Hitler and the Nazi ideology, even before 1933 when Hitler took power. He published a tract in 1933, *Theological existence today* (Barth 1933b) which was a wake-up call, in opposition to governing politics. He is considered to be the chief architect in writing the *Barmen Declaration* (Burgess 1997:63) which repudiated Fascism (Newell 2017:45). In 1935, he was exiled from Germany for failing to swear allegiance to Hitler. He was then appointed professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Basel where he remained till his retirement in 1962. Barth continued to champion the cause of all oppressed people and even opposed the nuclear arms race, hoping to end the cold war. He died on 10 December 1968 (Zellweger 1997).

Havin introduced Barth shortly, we will now discuss his similarities and dissimilarities with two of his theological teachers, namely Von Harnack and Herrmann.

3.2 Similarities and Dissimilarities with Von Harnack and Herrmann

In light of the history of Barth, this section will investigate how he deviated from Von Harnack and Herrmann. Both these individuals were prominent theologians in their own right and Barth's teachers. The comparison allows us to understand how Barth changed his theological thinking and approach when he transitioned from liberal theology to a God-centred evangelical theology. Barth's starting point is indicated by Harper: 'All words that are truly said about humanity are first said in Christ and it is for this reason that Barth's anthropology is solely rooted in the eternal divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ' (Harper 2015:173). As such, humanity is expressed most clearly and truly in Christ (Barth 1956:182).

This point of Barth's theology denies humanity any value of itself, as true humanity is found in Christ (Barth 1961:123). This leads to one of two conclusions: First, that humanity shares the same values as Christ, which Barth would disqualify as a deification of humanity; second, the alternative is that humanity's values are only found in their connection to Christ and it possesses no value of itself. This view by Von Harnack and Herrmann, in contrast to what Barth had taught, demonstrates a 180-degree turn in Barth's thinking.

Von Harnack has assured Barth that liberal theology recovers the unsophisticated beauty of Jesus' religion. Herman convinced him that liberal theology retains the vital gospel faith claiming that Jesus could be known personally. Liberal theology aimed to utilise the reasoning process imposed by the Enlightenment, while claiming it would be beneficial. Liberalism claimed to move theology from addressing the order of nature to individual concerns such as private faith and the moral good in society (Rose 2014). One can understand how this idealism appealed to a young Barth. It also suggests that his idealism was shattered when liberal theologians supported the Kaiser, which he viewed as a moral failure. Von Harnack, one of the most prominent academics in Wilhelmine Germany, had invested scholars with a vast authority in the historical-critical method. He believed that the teachings of Jesus were warped by Greek philosophy, compelling the Reformation with the enduring task to return Christianity to its

essential fundamentals. One of the elements that Von Harnack particularly focused on and claimed as warped through Greek philosophy, was the incarnation (McGrath 1994:214). To promote this, Von Harnack utilised the critical-historical method (Rose 2014). He claimed that Jesus himself was Christianity. He also made the following three points:

1. Jesus' message is not Christology, as it is not a self-proclamation.
2. In Christian thought, the focus with Christology was chronologically and conceptually ulterior to soteriology.
3. The concern of Christology arose from Greek metaphysics (McGrath 1994:293, 294).

These points are indicative of similarities and dissimilarities in Barth's thinking. Concerning the similarities, Barth wants to

1. return Christianity to the primitive essentials as a continuation of the Reformation (Barth 1963:5, 39);
2. promote Jesus as Christianity (Barth 1949:86); and
3. make Christ the primary point of departure, both chronologically and conceptually (Barth 1956:25).

Regarding Von Harnack, Barth presents two points of contention:

- First and most basic, is Barth's statement that the event of incarnation is the focal point of God's revelation as a reality. This furthermore implies that Barth is interested, not in the historical Jesus, but the revealed Christ.
- A second significance of Christ in Barth's view is the fact that at the cross of Christ, the primary difference between God and humanity is articulated and maintained. Here Christology avoids any amalgamation between God's Word and human culture (Te Velde 2013:318).

The difference in these goals can be better understood when one considers the foundational views which were respectively held by Barth and Von Harnack.

Barth's change, not only of theological standpoints, but the method of doing theology, elicited criticism, particularly from Von Harnack. Von Harnack indicates that the

academic propriety of theology resides in viewing it as a historical discipline. Barth, on the other hand, holds that it resides in its theological character (Schwöbel 2006:23). Where a science is determined by its subject matter, theology differs, as according to Barth's, theology speaks to the revelation of God. This revelation is not one of harmony where God and the world coincide. The Christological nature of Barth's theology ensures that God and the world do not coincide, but clash at the cross (Schwöbel 2006:24).

Von Harnack accuses Barth of confusing the lectern of the lecture hall with the pulpit of the church. Barth criticises historical-critical theology for placing too much weight on the normative character of its method, in that it has lost sight of the subject matter. Von Harnack claims that Barth's concept of revelation is unintelligible. Barth responds that revelation is not discoverable by human endeavour, but is the result of God acting outside of the humanly possible in reality (Barth 1956:29). This description highlights, among other things the different foundations that each individual started from – something that directed their focus.

Von Harnack's foundation is based on the human ability to rediscover the true Jesus by negating Greek metaphysics through the historical-critical approach. His approach places a great deal of emphasis on human error, corrected by human thinking, utilising the correct procedure. As such, he is beholden, not only to his humanity, but to all human thinking and scientific methods. For Von Harnack to be successful, emphasis must be placed upon the method used in theology.

Barth, in contrast, views God and the world as clashing, or perhaps more accurately, that God crashes into the world. As such, man cannot study God as something that is to be dissected, categorised, or qualified. For Barth, to speak of God, the character of theology has to become the focal point. God is characteristically revealed by God and humankind can only respond in character to that revelation. Von Harnack wants to make God accessible to humanity, whereas Barth aims to make humanity receptive to God. Von Harnack, as a result cannot comprehend the foundational character of Barth's theology, namely revelation. Barth, on the other hand, does not attempt to clarify his view, but places revelation in the realm beyond human reasoning. It should be noted that much is said about Barth's starting point of divine revelation, but there

seems to be very little written on how Barth himself conceives revelation to function (cf. section 3.6.3).

Each respective viewpoint requires the researcher to investigate the directions of thinking. Von Harnack views theology as sub-par compared to other sciences and places it on the same level by means of a scientific method. Barth, on the other hand, views theology, based on the subject matter, as standing above other sciences and wants to subject all sciences to theology (Barth 1963:3, 11). Where Von Harnack is beholden to humanity, Barth denies humanity any foothold. As such, their different foundations and directions led them to separate paradigms.

Another influence in Barth's early life was his favourite teacher, Herrmann who sided with Kant in avoiding unresolvable metaphysical questions (Te Velde 2013:270). Herrmann presents religion principally as moral, and makes truth claims fundamentally different from those of science. He regards the uniqueness of Christianity as a matter of personal experience, not knowledge. He also postulates that the 'impression of Jesus' gives rise to the certainty of faith. In his essay, *The historical Christ as the ground of our faith* (McGrath 1994:297), he expounds how the historical Jesus functions as an epistemological foundation. He differentiates between the 'historical fact of the person of Jesus' and the 'fact of the personal life of Jesus' – the latter representing the psychological influence of Christ on the reader of the Gospels (McGrath 1994:297). Herrmann is not so much concerned with the historical facts of the life and teachings of Christ, as with the religious consciousness of the inner life of Christ. In this instance, He deviates from the Ritschl school of thinking, as he was part of the awareness religion of Schleiermacher (Te Velde 2013:270). From this point, Herrmann postulates that Christian life is communing with God's Spirit through moral persuasions, exercised by Christ's life on human history (Rose 2014). Again, we pick up similarities and dissimilarities with Barth.

The similarities are:

- Just like Herrmann, Barth claims that Christianity is vastly different from science (Barth 1963:4-6).
- Barth also presents Christ as a historical fact of God's self-revelation (Barth 1956:60).

Regarding Barth's critique on Herrmann, he points 'to his teacher's defective doctrines of Trinity and Christology' (Te Velde 2013:317). He notices a shift in Herrmann's later work, where the latter relates that religion should begin and end with God to whom humankind humbly bows. According to Te Velde, Barth holds that Herrmann's Trinitarian approach should direct him to another path where

- religions begin with revelation, not human commonality;
- one has to make the object of religion transcendent to humanity, to avoid criticism of religion by human sciences;
- he should focus less on the coming of humanity to God, and more on the grace of God, making revelation possible;
- his Christology would not be flawed in repudiating the true divinity of Christ; and
- he should defend human freedom by placing more emphasis on the authority of the divine Word and the doctrine of the church (Te Velde 2013:272).

Barth has retained some of Herrmann's ideas, such as the self-authenticating and irreducible character of faith and revelation as God's self-revelation.

The dissimilarities between Barth and Von Harnack and Herrmann are found in the following points:

- Barth focuses on the incarnation, as opposed to Von Harnack's denial of it (Barth 1956:172).
- Barth treats Christology as Scriptural, as opposed to Von Harnack who treats it as Greek metaphysics (Barth 1956:10).
- Barth views true religion as originating from Christ, while Herrmann views it as principally human morality (Barth 1956:353).
- Barth regards God's communing with humankind as the revelatory work of Christ, and not humankind communing with God through moral influences, as Herrmann suggests (Barth 1949:69).

The obvious dissimilarity is that Barth, although sharing similar goals, denies human reasoning any primary place. To grant humanity any foundational point, would be to place ourselves midway between God and humanity. In turn, we create an illusion of

defining what God can and must do (Barth 1956:3). Barth denies the inherent questions in humanity about the meaning of God's existence, claiming that it leads only to an idol. God can only be known by his self-revelation (Barth 1956:7; Vanderplaat 1983:42). It could be argued that both Von Harnack and Herrmann place God at the mercy of humanity, while Barth, in response places humanity at the mercy of God. Even when God reveals himself to the individual in faith, it is only to the individual to whom God has granted faith (Hutabarat 2015:123). Next, we refer to Barth's concept of 'God for us' as the foundation of his theology.

3.3 Barth's Foundation

3.3.1 God for Us

Barth's theology can be summarised as 'God for us' (Barth 2016:225). He repeats this phrase in various ways:

- God willed to become a man for our good; he became man for our good and remains man for our good (Barth 1949:65).
- God's freedom for us (Barth 1956:31).
- God is free for us (Barth 1956:25, 31).

This is seemingly simple enough, but it underlies more complex thought. Barth's theology is well thought out and argued with detailed dialectical arguments. To grasp Barth's theology, it is important to understand the abovementioned starting point. The starting point is that 'for us' denotes a direction, prompting the question, 'Direction of what?' Barth explains this movement as divine spontaneity over human receptivity. First, God is free to reveal himself to us without parting with his divinity (Barth 1956:2). This is essential in the thinking of Barth, as it speaks to God's spontaneity. God is not compelled or motivated by any other factor other than his will. The will of God is to be 'for us,' first and foremost as revelation, from which all else follows. Barth posits this as a question, 'How far is God free for us in his revelation?' which is followed by a second question, 'How far is God free in us in his revelation?' (Barth 1956:2). The first question is answered by the second question, that God is completely free *for* us as much as he is completely free *in* us. This entails that everything that God does, must be considered as revelation.

When Barth speaks of revelation, it is not simply revealing knowledge or information. Revelation to Barth is redemptive in nature, to know God – to enjoy correct knowledge of God is to be interrelated to him in a salvific experience (Erickson 1998:188). Barth presents Christology as the revelation of God in Christ, which is also reconciliation (Barth 1961:38). As such, humankind cannot question, assess, or examine, they can only receive God's revelation for us. The moment that humankind accepts this, God is free in his revelation because he has been freed 'from' and 'in' human thinking. God is not limited, but remains free in revealing himself 'for us' and 'in us.' Christ is the reality of this revelation and as such is the freedom of God 'for' and 'in' humanity. Barth highlights a fallacy that, prescribing the conditions for revelation, leads to affirming a well-founded conviction and not a revelation (Barth 1956:4). He maintains that revelation remains God-centred and God-directed in motion. The salvific element in his view on revelation entails that both the source and direction are related to grace. Thus, for humanity to achieve knowledge apart from God's revelation, would negate the principle of 'grace alone' (Erickson 1998:188, 189).

Barth describes God's activity as one of revelation, specifically that it flows from the Father to us. The Son fulfils the revelation for us and the Spirit fulfils it subjectively in us (Barth 1956:1). This revelation is posited as a divine objective fact, as opposed to a human subjective feeling (Barth 1956:4). Interestingly, the Trinity did not historically always occupy a central place in Western theology. Barth and Rahner, through their respective theologies, claimed that the Trinity should become central and a principle structure in theology (Phan 2011a:11). This motion of God, deciding to act for humanity, must not be regarded as one which makes humanity a requirement for God. Humanity is not a necessity or a partner to God. God as Trinity is self-sufficient and needs nobody and nothing.

Barth and Rahner both bemoan the marginalisation of the Trinity in theology (Phan 2011b:13). Barth, as a result of this marginalisation, makes the Trinity foundational, as God as a Trinity for us is free to reveal himself 'for' and 'in' humankind. God, in his total freedom, desires, not without or against humankind, but to be God for humankind (Barth 2016:236). The very fact that God has revealed himself is a revelation of the Trinitarian self-willed determination of his existence. Barth, in combining soteriology, the Trinity, and revelation, ensures that revelation is always Triune and by grace alone

in nature (Heltzel & Collins 2011:173). God is revealed to us in Christ. As such, humankind is not to inquire, evaluate, or analyse Christ, but to receive the revelation of Christ. Upon such reception, the Holy Spirit can be the revelation of God in us. Barth points out that this remains the work of one God and not three Gods (Barth 1956:2).

In constructing revelation in this way, Barth must face the challenge of the existence of a general revelation. Passages in Scripture such as Psalm 19 and Romans 1 have traditionally been cited in support of general revelation. In dealing with these passages, Barth presents three options:

1. Re-examine the special revelation to find out if it can be interpreted to allow for the general revelation.
2. Consider both as legitimate, but paradoxical.
3. Interpret the general revelation in such a manner as to not contradict the special revelation.

Barth has summarily rejected the first option. Contrary to his dialectical methodology, he also rejects option two. He rather opts for the third choice, interpreting Psalm 19 and Romans 1 to allow humanity to have some knowledge of God, but he would not allow for this apart from the divine revelation of the gospel (Erickson 1998:189, 190). In his *CD*, Barth would slightly alter his view to allow nature as lesser lights that display God's glory, but not to the extent that they can be considered revelation (Erickson 1998:190). Having combined soteriology and the Trinity in revelation, Barth has also limited himself. By allowing for revelation in nature as something that humanity is able to discover, would negate the act of revelation by grace alone. Thus, Barth must maintain special revelation as primary, both in position and necessity, to retain revelation by grace alone. This goes back to the initial concept of 'God for us,' denoting the direction of God, moving to humanity and never humanity moving to God. Even in Barth's allowance for some divine aspects in general revelation, the primary movement is from God through his special revelation.

The motion that God directs to us through his revelation, is labelled by Barth as becoming and being, which are determinative of God's existence (Barth 1956:1). Christ is God becoming a man, a self-willed choice from eternity (Barth 1949:63). Thus, God's freedom in becoming revelation and becoming a man is the same. His being as

revelation involves several aspects. First, Christ, assuming humanity in himself and ascending to the Father, has exalted humanity, but did not deify them (Barth 1949:125). This leads to the second point that revelation is subjectively fulfilled in us, not as a continuation of Christ's revelation, but a likeness of it (Barth 1949:127). This process of God's being, regarded as revelation in the subjective context, is personified in the Holy Spirit, coming from the Father and the Son, making humankind free.

Barth utilises this process of revelation to place God not only primarily in his revealing action, but primarily in all actions. Humanity's response is not missing in the theology of Barth. The human response, however, is not second either, but much further down the line of discussion. In short,

> it states that God 'from the beginning' is oriented toward man, assigning the pro-human character of the Divine being and acting. We need to stress, however, that the efforts of the thinker from Basel are not driven by a desire to adorn theology with trinkets, but to elucidate the Divine being and history (Barth 2016:225).

Barth makes it clear that God is not only the first and last word, but also every word in between. God acts and these acts are revelations proceeding from the Father, fulfilled in the Son as an objective reality, and fulfilled through the Holy Spirit as a subjective reality in us (Barth 1956:1). Barth has effectively given context to the term 'God' to contain and mean the entire process of revelation. Thus, to speak of 'God' entails 'God for us,' freely so, as the entire process of revelation where humanity can only be truly free when this has been accepted, and become a subjective reality through the final indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Barth does not allow humankind to be active in the process of revelation. Humankind has no positive role to contribute to revelation other than being the recipient of revelation. Barth therefore presents a God who loves freedom and who alone can provide humanity with freedom (Chun 2011:147). The inverse would also imply, that human-centred thinking would provide captivity within the constructs of humanity. Barth argues that only when humanity is passive, will God reveal himself to them (Barth 1956:191). For God's action to be free in revelation 'for us' and 'in us,' it must remain a sole divine activity of which humanity can only be recipients.

In the next section, we consider Barth's positing special revelation as non-propositional.

3.3.2 Special Revelation as Non-Propositional

Special revelation can be depicted as the revelation of objectively communicated information or propositional truth. Alternatively, special revelation can be regarded as the communication of God himself in a personal subjective sense or non-propositional truth (Erickson 1998:216). Objective or propositional truth refers to God, revealing propositions that serve as objective statements of faith. Alternatively, revelation can be regarded as revealing subjective information or non-propositional truth which cannot make objective claims regarding faith. Schleiermacher shifts from objective to subjective and from revelation to religion. Although he retains revelation, he diminishes it to humanity's deeper spiritual insight, which comes to him through diligent searching (Berkhof 1988:38). Schleiermacher's theology, with his focus on humanity's feelings of absolute dependence, subjective and religion-focused, supports this subjective focus. By means of an investigation of religion, humanity can discover God within the feeling of absolute dependence. As such, the transcendence of God is 'soft-pedalled,' bringing God down to the level of the world and placing God within the timeframe of humanity. God becomes more comprehensible, although he remains veiled in mystery (Berkhof 1988:30).

Contrary to this view, Barth argues that God remains completely free in his revelation for us. To consider conditions for God's revelation, would be to place humanity as a barrier between God and themselves, obscuring God's revelation. Furthermore, presenting conditions for revelation, would make God an object for human study (Barth 1956:2-4). It becomes clear that Barth's description of the problem is a 'not so subtle' railing against Schleiermacher and liberal theology. He conceives that in searching for objective truth, a propositional form appears to define an item. This will inevitably limit the item, making it finite (Barth 1956:5; cf. Erickson 1998:218). Barth counters Schleiermacher and liberal theology by making humankind passive and God the centre of theology. Barth, however, cannot make revelation objective and propositional. First, as stated above, it will limit God to an object of human study. Second, a problem that arises is that objective revelation of propositional truths can be discovered by human investigation. According to Barth, in the study of all other sciences, humans place

themselves above the object of study, but in theology, they are the recipient of God's revelation (Berkhof 1988:34). To keep humankind as the recipient of revelation, Barth makes revelation a personal action of God, with subjective and non-propositional truth.

In his theology, Barth conceives of revelation not as presenting objective or propositional facts, but by revealing himself in a personal or subjective and non-propositional way. At the same time, Barth avoids the conception of revelation as subjective knowledge. Faith is defined as *Fiducia* (trust), as *Notitia* (knowledge), and also as *Assensus* (assent) (Erickson 1998:218). These definitions of faith must be considered as proceeding from God to humankind and not through humankind, achieving these definitions by reasoning. Barth has also stipulated that God is always free in his self-revelation and does not present propositional truth which humanity can utilise for instruction (Barth 1956:25). Scripture in turn is not God's self-revelation, but only a token of God's self-revelation (Berkhof 1988:39). Despite Barth viewing God's revelation as non-propositional, it does not prevent him from deriving propositional truths from this non-propositional encounter (Erickson 1998:221). He keeps God at the centre of theology and yet out of the grasp of theologians. To counter Schleiermacher and liberal theology, he posits propositional truths. The reason for this is:

> Classical theism's doctrine of Divine aseity faces its most significant challenge in the form of platonism, the view that there are uncreated, indeed, uncreatable, abstract objects, such as mathematical objects, properties, and propositions. Absent the formulation of a defensible form of absolute creationism, which has not to date been forthcoming, the orthodox theist will want to rid his ontology of such abstract objects (Craig n.d.).

The above quote of Craig highlights the challenge of theology, avoiding making God or other aspects the equivalent of abstract concepts. In positing revelation as subjective and non-propositional, Barth does not rid his theology of abstract objects, but posits the truth of revelation as an 'uncreated, indeed uncreatable,' revelation. Whatever abstractions may exist, they cannot be discovered by humanity, but only be revealed by God. If one were to accept Barth's reasoning, any abstract concept must be credited to revelation and not human reasoning. As such, Barth's theology is safeguarded from abstract concepts and making God abstract.

The former aspect results in Barth's view of revelation, leaving one with moments of revelation coming to individuals, of which only those individuals can have complete confidence and a fallible witness of Scripture to attest to that revelation (Berkhof 1988:39). Viewing Scripture as a witness to revelation and not revelation itself, allows for historical criticism to be applied without denying divine revelation. The problem that arises, is not that revelation cannot be both propositional and non-propositional, but that the connection is not made clear in Barth's thinking (Erickson 1998:221).

Barth and Brunner argued about issues such as the nature and status of the image of God in humans, as well as the virgin birth and the empty tomb (Erickson 1998:220). These issues ironically originate from Scripture's testimony of God's revelation. Since Scripture is not revelation, these questions may therefore to some extent be assigned to God's revelation and to some extent to Barth and Brunner's subjective reasoning. In making revelation subjective and non-propositional, it does not explain how one arrives at objective and propositional truths. By avoiding making God the object of revelation as well as human subjectivism, there is a lack of middle ground on which to base propositional truths. In making revelation subjective or non-propositional, it places abstract concepts, and not human reasoning, in revelation. What is left for humanity is concrete actions and concepts. Barth's only recourse is to settle doctrinal issues by quoting Scripture as a fundamentalist would do (Erickson 1998:221).

Barth has positioned revelation as subjective or non-propositional to keep abstraction out of the hands of human reasoning, but part of God's revelation. From this point, Barth leaps to the concrete, offering Scripture, as the witness to revelation, as presenting objective and propositional truths. With this, Barth prevents God from becoming the property of the theologian. At the same time he quotes Scripture as making demands on the theologian in the form of objective and propositional truths. Barth has utilised the positive aspects of revelation as subjective or non-propositional truth. At the same time, he has also utilised the positive aspects of Scripture as objective or propositional truth. What is missing, is Barth's dialectical process that would explain the bridge that connects these two aspects. We will now discuss how Barth conceives of the Triune God.

3.3.3 Barth's Triune God

Barth's concept of the Trinity is centrally expressed in Christ as the clearest revelation of God (Jones 2014:21). McGrath makes the following observation regarding critics of Barth: Some would criticise Barth as being a modalist while others claim that he promotes tritheism (McGrath 1994:262). This criticism derives from a failure to view the two extreme positions in Barth's dialectical reasoning.

Barth's theology moves between extreme positions.[16] On the one hand, he speaks of God as the Father from whom revelation proceeds, the Son who objectively fulfils revelation and the Holy Spirit who fulfils it subjectively in humanity (Barth 1956:1). Modalism suggests that Christ's divinity and the Holy Spirit is best understood as different modes of God's self-revelation (McGrath 1994:256). However, Barth's view of God's revelation including Father, Son and Holy Spirit contradicts modalism. His view of God's revelation claims revelation as being God's self-revelation regardless of the mode of Father, Son, or Spirit (Barth 1956:1). Concurrently, Barth is avoiding tritheism which views each member of the Godhead as an individual with a divine nature (McGrath 1994:257). This process can be regarded as a direct answer to Schleiermacher's challenge. Schleiermacher notes that the doctrine of the Trinity vacillates between the one-ness and three-ness of God. Schleiermacher believed that the doctrine of the Trinity should be reformulated (Schüssler Fiorenza 2005:173). Barth utilises modalism's concept of the modes of one God, specifically in the process of revelation, to confirm the view that one God is revealing God. In other words, the Father does not reveal the Father, and neither is this the case with the Son and the Spirit. Consequently, Barth explains Jesus' divine mode of existence as one of equality with the Father, against the view of modalism (Barth 1956:16). In his *Dogmatics in outline*, Barth does not reference the modes of God. There he argues that Christ is with God (Barth 1949:125). He adds that the Spirit cannot be separated from Christ (Barth 1949:139). Kantzer remarks that Barth is therefore not relating an ontological reality, but a divine internal reality, one indicating that the process of revelation is not disconnected between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Kantzer 1958:25). In approaching the Trinity within 'the context of creation, Barth speaks of the role of the Holy

[16] Barth avoids both Ebionism and Docetism in his discussion of the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* discussion (Barth 1956:163). At the same time, he also finds a bridge between Lutheran and Reformed theology (Barth 1956:163; cf. also Kantzer 1958:26, 27).

Spirit in terms of the relation of the Father and the Son, where the Trinity is the essential foundation for creation (Barth 1958a:45, 46).

Barth maintains the unity of the Trinity by way of relationship. Even when he refers to creation, relating the Father and the Son in a binary form, it should not be understood as an exclusion the Holy Spirit (Gabriel 1995:47). The Spirit is conceived as the unity between the Father and the Son and is thus automatically included by a divine internal relational reality. This relational reality is expressed outside of God as revelation (Hart 2006:49). The Trinity is revealed through Christ as the objective agent of that revelation. Barth utilises this formulation to place focus on Christ as God's revelation, opposed to human reasoning (Barth 1956:4, 33). When Barth addresses or references either revelation or Christ, it is to be understood in a relational reality to the Trinity, expressed toward humanity.

Furthermore, Barth utilises the concept of modes of being and action concerning revelation. He does not view God's revelation as a segregated process of three beings. God reveals himself and this is manifested in the procession from the Father, the objective fulfilment of the Son, and the subjective fulfilment of the Spirit. Barth's construction is to ensure that the idea of one God is not lost while at the same time ensuring the entire Trinity as actively part of revelation. In this way, he strikes a dynamic balance between the one-ness and three-ness of God and links it to revelation. In his formulation of the Trinity, he can be understood as answering Schleiermacher's challenge.

The incarnated Christ reveals the entire Godhead, but through the incarnation of the second mode of God, to whom belongs the duty of redemption (Barth 1956:1, 18). In the later *CD*, Barth did not discuss the Trinity again (Jones 2014:21). He successively describes in detail specific aspects in his theology, and when done, he moves to the next. His assumption is seemingly that the reader understands his point (specifically with reference to the Trinity) and that the point remains the same, even if not directly referenced. For Barth, Christ is the objective possibility of God's revelation. Therefore, when Barth refers to Christ, he conceives of the entire Trinity, revealed in the second person of the Trinity (Barth 1956:25, 28, 33; Haley 2015:149). Despite this, one could still question why Barth does not refer to the Trinity again. His focus on Christ is of such intensity that some scholars have accused him of Christomonism, making Christ

the totality of God (Burgess 2017:9). Obviously, Christology is the dominant theme in his *CD* (Barth 1956:123). Barth's entire theology utilises Christ as a key to God's revelation. This entails that every topic under discussion begins with Christ as the point of reference. As such, the Trinity is conceived, not in the strict sense of theology, but through God's revelation in Christ. Chan indicates that Barth's theology is a Christocentric theology, where Christ is the rule and not simply a principle (Chan 1999:27, 28). Barth does not lose sight of the Tri-unity of God, but all doctrines are cast in the shadow of Christ. Christ is the God-man, in contrast to the 'man' of liberal theology. Therefore, Barth's thinking destroys the 'man' of liberal theology.

This Christocentric theology of Barth is key to achieve the following: 'Christology has to consider and to state who Jesus Christ is, who in revelation exercises God's power over man (sic.). But it must avoid doing so in such a way as to presuppose that man (sic.) may now exercise a power over God (Barth 1956:125).

In a response to liberal theology and humanism, Barth constructs his theology to deny humanity any way or reaching out to God (Eyeons 2010:25, 26). Schleiermacher posits the attributes of God throughout the whole of the *Christian faith* (Schleiermacher 2016). He concludes with the Trinity, explicating the specific Christian consciousness of God (Schüssler Fiorenza 2005:176). It should be noted that he has placed the focus of his theology on humankind, depicting the Trinity as something that a human can discover if they come to understand the attributes of God. In contrast, Barth places the Trinity as the introduction to his *CD* by way of God's revelation through Christ. Only after the revelation of the Trinity, will humanity have any understanding of the attributes of God.

The Trinity is essential for Barth, for in creation, God does not act out of inner necessity, but out of his complete free will. As a Trinity, God is self-sufficient and does not need anything or anyone (Barth 1958a:5). He is God for the very reason that he alone condescends and reveals himself to humanity (Barth 1949:37). To understand any other doctrine, such as the doctrines of God, ethics, or humanity, the beginning is always Christ. The Godly revelation found in Christ is to ensure that humanity does not gain any intellectual leverage over God. Regardless of the doctrine that Barth approaches, this principle does not waver.

As Barth begins his *CD* with the Trinity, he acknowledges that the Trinity is not fully expressed in Scripture (Barth 1956:13; Jones 2014:93). This makes the Trinity a subjective and non-propositional truth, as opposed to an objective and propositional truth found in Scripture. The Trinity serves as the essential starting point to ensure that

1. God remains the focal point in revealing the Trinity;
2. humanity does not ascend to God; and
3. humanity is the recipient and not the discoverer of God's revelation.

Barth continues with his dominantly Christological *CD*, finding impetus from his exegesis of Scripture (Haley 2015:72). As such, 'Barth "posits" God's revelation as the ultimate datum or fact and takes this "as the basis of all his arguments, without considering what grounds he has for such an assumption"' (Vanderplaat 1983:75).

Barth maintains this methodology as it drives home the idea that God's determination and revelation remain the criterion of what is appropriate to God and salutary for human beings (Barth 1956:5). The summary of Barth's theology as 'God for us' is loaded, in that it presupposes God's action over humanity's action. Everything that humanity knows is because of God's action for us. This action and motion of God for us is a subjective or non-propositional revelation. God is revealed 'for us,' God is incarnated 'for us,' and whatever else we can list, is God acting first and foremost 'for us' because '[*t*]*he heart of the object of Christian faith is the word of act in which God from all eternity willed to become man in Jesus Christ for our good, did become man in time for our good, and will be and remain man in eternity for our good*' (Barth 1949:65; emphasis added).

This quote signifies that God is a revealing God, specifically for human beings and for our good. The ultimate of this revelation is the act of God becoming a man in Christ Jesus. This event is of such magnitude that it remains so for eternity for the good of humanity. There is a subtle argument that underlies this: Barth posits 'God for us' as part of God's self-revelation. He utilises this to ensure that God is supreme and not to be inquired, evaluated, or analysed by human thinking. Schleiermacher considers the Trinity as the last word in theology, where Barth places it as the first word (McGrath 1994:260, 261). In doing this and connecting the Trinity to Gods' revelation, it directs

any dialogue to begin with God and not another topic. From this point, as we have indicated, Barth leaps to quoting Scripture as objective or propositional truth, making demands on humanity (cf. section 3.1.2). He therefore views other sciences, philosophies, and ideology as theologies, even godless ones (Barth 1963:3, 4, 12).

The truth of God's revelation is only possible to be truth and can only be known as truth, through Christ as revealed by the Triune God. As God's revelation is a self-revelation of the Triune God, revealing subjective and non-propositional truth, it then argues that Scripture as a witness to God's self-revelation is objective and propositional in its truth claims. Everything that can be claimed about 'God for us,' is to be found in Christ, testified by Scripture, but not equated to God's revelation. The foundation of Barth's theology is the Trinity who apparently disappears, as any foundation is covered up by further construction. We must grasp that as Christ is the inner circle from whom other concentric circles expand, the Trinity is not lost, but still to be found in Christ's revelation (Chan 1999:28). Having discussed Barth's view of the Trinity, we will now converse revelation in Barth's theology.

3.4 Christ as God's Revelation

3.4.1 Barth's Struggle

As noted in the introduction, Barth makes a remarkable change away from his original position of pro-liberal theology. One of the reasons for this, which would also support his theology and his attitude toward Schleiermacher, is:

> Pietism was not the only stream flowing into the swelling river of German war theology. Barth was never shy about naming the other. He declared that the theology exposed in Kaiser Wilhelm's war manifesto was 'grounded, determined and influenced decisively' by Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher, the father of liberal theology, was the crucial figure in moving theology from a study of Christian doctrine to the study of 'conceptions of states of mind of Christian piety: That is, doctrines derived from an inner state of experience' (Newell 2017:51).

Although Schleiermacher was a pro-liberal theologian, Barth praised him as a theologian who combined the best insights of the Reformation with the contemporary needs

of the modern world. Barth, however, would change this view, as he claimed that he could no longer 'trust' Schleiermacher, and by May 1921, Barth was ready to 'attack' Schleiermacher (Gockel 2006:5, 6). The fact that Barth, at a certain stage in his life, supported liberal theological thinking and then made such a drastic change, requires further investigation. In making the revelation of God foundational in his theology, he actively denies any human action toward God. His support for liberal theology was betrayed and as such, he is first and foremost denying his humanity and in turn all humanity. Therefore, '[t]his conception of humanity's fallibility, in opposition to God's infallibility, as depicted in his "Wholly Other" description, can be seen against the backdrop of the destructive path that Barth's mentors followed in their endorsement of Kaiser Wilhelm II's "blank cheque" against Serbia' (Harper 2015:19).

When Barth regards humanity as fallible, it includes his own. He mentions that in 1910, he believed that one could discard Jesus and retain Christ as a triumph of strong faith (Barth 1956:17). This sentence portrays his earlier thinking in line with liberal theology. He views himself as capable of deciding what really belongs to God's revelation and considers himself capable enough to dissect God's revelation according to his views. As we have already mentioned, the change in Barth would deny this view not only for liberal theologians, but also for Barth, the former liberal theologian himself (cf. section 3.1.1). God's revelation is not simply what Barth conceived as a theological foundation. God's revelation was what Barth discovered in reading the book of Romans, which led to the writing of *The Epistle to the Romans*. It is the very process of exegesis of Scripture that marks his transition from liberal to evangelical theology. He would later state: 'In this respect also, we must realise the adequacy of Holy Scriptures as the source of our knowledge. We must submit our bondage to Scripture' (Barth 1956:208).

For Barth to grant humanity, particularly his own, any determinative action, would be to return to liberal theology and Schleiermacher. This process of using exegesis as a foundation, continued and provided the foundation for *CD*. Barth does not only oppose Schleiermacher, but also the process of the historical-critical methods to dictate how he should think or how far he should go with exegesis (Baxter 1981:78). In his exegetical process, he gives little or no consideration to extra-Scriptural evidence (Baxter 1981:131). His theology removes God from the field of history, science, philosophy, or any other human-centred system of thought (Barth 1949:55, 56). In doing so, Barth is

also removing God from his self-centred thinking. He denies that God's revelation is able to make objective and propositional truths, but relies on Scripture for objective and propositional truths against views that would give humanity a grip on God (cf. section 3.1.2). He utilises Scripture as a witness to revelation and objective (or non-propositional) testimony against human-centred theology. We find such a strong focus on Christ in *CD*, since all knowledge is only attainable through Christ (Kantzer 1958:25). Revelation, particularly Christ as God's revelation for us becomes a necessity. No longer does the world judge God, but he is once again judging the world (Eyeons 2010:39).

By basing his theology on the foundation of God's revelation, Barth denies humanity any positive role of interpretation or revelation (McGrath 1994:262). Therefore, for Barth the revelation of God denies that God can be discovered by humanity (Barth 1949:36). For him, theology is meant to keep the church true to its foundation in Christ. Theology is not a response to the human situation or questions, but a response to the word of God (McGrath 1994:99). It is this very assertion on the revelation of God and the response to his revelation that provides strength to Barth's theology. Here we find a complete turnaround for Barth from liberal theology to evangelical theology. His life and work have become intertwined, in that the two should be read as two complementary parts (Webster 2000:1).

Barth was questioned by many students in his classes who were not Christians. He responded that it did not matter to him and that Christianity should not separate people (Barth 1949:93). This was put subtly, posing the problem that Barth was in fact ignoring the individual. He failed to recognise that some students had a foundation of Christology and Christianity, while others did not. By positing God's revelation beyond human thinking, revelation was also expected to overcome human thinking. It is on this very point that Pannenberg comments that

> Barth may be convinced that there is a God, but many of our contemporaries do not share this conviction, and under these circumstances the statement that we can only speak of God on the basis of the Word of God must appear as meaningless from a nonbeliever's point of view (Vanderplaat 1983:73).

Barth assumes that the revelation of God will suffice to overcome humanity and therefore neglects the humanity in others. To him, Christ is the ultimate revelation of God that conquers or replaces human history and thinking (Barth 1956:151). This conquest is so complete that it conquers even human individuality. Next, we turn to God's revelation in Christ.

3.4.2 God's Revelation: Ensuring the Divinity of Christ

Barth is very meticulous in discussing the revelation of God, being incarnated as a man. In this section, we will discuss the divinity of Christ. We begin by considering how Barth ensures the divinity of Christ.

Barth emphatically states that if the divinity of Christ is determined by humanity, as far as their conception of God allows them to do so, it would make God an object for them (Barth 1956:16). Let us consider the use of the term 'object' (as a negative aspect), as opposed to the terms 'for us' and 'revelation' as the positive aspects. 'Object' from man's perspective has in it a static component, e.g., applied to God as an object, which denotes to Barth a static and unreal entity (Barth 1956:16). This might just as well remove the divinity from Christ, as it would endow it on him (Barth 1956:17). In contrast, the terms 'for us' and 'revelation' have a dynamic quality in them. This dynamic quality is what underscores Barth's Christocentric theology. He infuses this dynamism into his Christology, as it particularly becomes prominent when he applies his Christology to reconciliation. He argues:

> The actual event which is an event of revelation in virtue of the enlightening work of the Holy Spirit, and as such sets in motion the conversion of man, is the Christ event…If the conversion of man is the movement which is initiated and maintained from the point where this is primarily and comprehensively real, this is only to say that it has its basis and origin in this climax, in Jesus Christ (Barth 1961:581, 582).

This links to the utilisation of his reference to 'modes' in referring to the Trinity, not as ontological, but in describing the dynamic process of revelation. Revelation is 'God for us,' it is movement. Revelation comes from the Father, being fulfilled in Christ, and internalised through the Holy Spirit (Barth 1956:1). It is this very movement that is

found in Christ, God's son or the Word who became the man, Jesus of Nazareth (Barth 1956:23). Revelation is therefore God's dynamic presence (Barth 1949:67). To the concept of movement, Barth ties another concept, that of history. Christ is the history of revelation which allows us the following: 'In Jesus' history, we can see not only the eternal will and counsel of God but also the history of the covenant and salvation and revelation inaugurated by God' (Chan 1999:40).

History includes time and space. Revelation is therefore an event within time and space. It is this revealed time that is real-time as opposed to human time (Barth 1956:47). One could also argue that space, where God's revelation is manifested, is real space as opposed to human space. This dynamic quality of God's revelation stands opposed to the static quality of human reasoning, which prevents humanity from knowing God. In very simple terms, Barth views humanity as stuck within its thinking and reasoning. As such, God can neither be known by means of a general truth of our existence, nor by the history of religion (Barth 1949:66).

Liberal theology regards humanity as ascending upwards into new spheres of evolution (McGrath 1994:93). In light of this, Ritschl argues that history was in the process of being divinely guided toward perfection, while civilisation was evolving (McGrath 1994:94). In his turn, Tillich regards theology as a dialogue between human culture and the Christian faith (McGrath 1994:94). What these descriptions reveal, is the concept of dynamic qualities being placed on humanity and human history. Fact is that there was an evolution, like the concept found in the evolution of humanity, culture, and science. In contrast, Barth denies this dynamic growth as a delusion of humanity. He allows only for dynamic growth in God's self-revelation. Thus, all that constitutes God's self-revelation is described in dynamic terms. Christ, 'God for us,' and the Trinity, to name a few, are dynamic aspects of God's self-revelation.

Heisenberg's uncertainty principle states that one cannot measure the momentum and position of an electron at the same time (Gribbin 1991:156, 157). When considering the disparity between the dynamism of revelation and the static nature of humanity, it is conceivable that Barth has created a similar conundrum. Where liberal theology asserts dynamism in humanity, and God as static, Barth asserts both dynamism in God and humanity as static. This creates a condition where it is impossible to refer to

God apart from his revelation, nor can revelation be found apart from God. As such, making his theology Christocentric, is not only preferential, it becomes essential. Any other doctrine can only be conceived of as dynamic if it is included in Christ as God's revelation.

As divinity is the source of revelation, it entails that divinity becomes a necessary precursor to everything. For instance, human nature is only real human nature if it is preceded by the divine (Chan 1999:85). Similarly, Barth conceives of all sciences as studying some deity, and therefore he labels all sciences as theologies (Barth 1963:4). The consequence of this approach to divinity is that it does not simply assume all of humanity into itself, but it consumes humanity. This poses a challenge to establishing Christ's humanity in Barth's theology, which we will consider in the next section as to how he deals with this issue. We will specifically look at the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* arguments that Barth employs.

3.5 God's Revelation: Ensuring the Divinity of Christ

3.5.1 Formulation

In his discussion of the humanity of Christ, Barth borrows the two terms *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis* to ensure that the humanity of Christ is linked to his divinity and incarnation. The council of Chalcedon tried to describe Christ as being one Person with two natures. The challenge was that the reality of Christ's humanity existed with the Logos, but also that the reality of his humanity did not exist apart from his union with the Logos (Haley 2015:53). Discussions on this point led to the development of the terms *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis*. Barth's adoption of these terms is not only unique to his Christology, but moulds the ontological basis of his Christology (Barth 1956:164, 165).

The origin of the two terms is to be found in Barth's *Göttingen dogmatics* (Haley 2015:27). He describes *anhypostasis* as follows: 'The *anhypostasis* expresses the doctrine that the human nature of Jesus has no subsistence (an-hypostasis) apart from the union with the Logos' (Haley 2015:9).

Christ was a true man because the Son of God has adopted and exalted humanity into his being (Haley 2015:194). This entails that the humanity of Christ was not equal to

the humanity of any single human being. In his humanity, Christ has incorporated every human being (Barth 1949:91). To counterbalance this view, Barth postulates a second concept, namely *enhypostasis*, which he describes as follows: 'The enhypostasis expresses the doctrine that the human nature of Jesus has its being "in" the subsistence (en-hypostasis) of the incarnate Son of God' (Haley 2015:91). The divine-human nature of Christ has the human nature existing as true humanity in its union with the eternal Son of God (Haley 2015:194).

Barth defines *anhypostasis* as asserting the negative (Barth 1956:163). The humanity of Christ did not exist before the incarnation and was therefore non-subsistent. Barth employs *enhypostasis* positively as a counterbalance. Christ's humanity found its subsistence only in the Logos (Barth 1956:163). In this, he breaks with the original intention of the *anhypostasis* as it was not intended negatively, but simply to deny any prior existence of Christ's human nature. He creates this theological tension by making *anhypostasis* negative, and *enhypostasis* positive, therefore two extremes. The labelling of the positive *enhypostasis* and negative *anhypostasis* allows Barth to employ his dialectical reasoning process. Thus, he covers a wide field and with this avoids adoptionism and monophysitism (Haley 2015:98).

A second reason for the labelling of *anhypostasis* as negative and *enhypostasis* as positive may be found in the theology of Bonaventure. It is noted that Barth acknowledged the contribution of Bonaventure (Osborne 2011:122). In discussing the naming of God the Father, Bonaventure postulates two terms as synonyms, namely *innascibilitas* (state of being unable to be born) and *paternitas* (descent of one father). Bonaventure differentiates between the two terms, stating that *innascibilitas* looks backwards and asserts something negative – there is no beginning. He then presents *paternitas* as looking forward and affirming something positive (Osborne 2011:117). Barth has followed a similar trend. *Anhypostasis* states something negative as it looks backwards. The humanity of Christ did not exist in the past, hence negative, except in the eternal will of God, and was revealed in the incarnation. *Enhypostasis* looks forward, hence positive, as the humanity of Christ remains forever as part of the incarnation. Barth utilises this formulation to express the following:

> The miracle of the incarnation, of the union hypostatica, is seen from this angle when we realize that the Word of God descended from the freedom, majesty and glory of His divinity, that without becoming unlike Himself He assumed His likeness to us, and that now He is to be sought and found of us here, namely, in His human being (Barth 1956:165).

Barth utilises these two formulations (*anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis*) to ensure that the Son of God's humanity neither existed before the incarnation, nor apart from the incarnation. This is to avoid any concept of the humanity of Christ being a glorified human being such as Ebionism. Barth also employs this dual formula to avoid the idea that the Son of God only appeared human such as the idea of Docetism. The humanity of Christ had, therefore, no autonomous existence apart from the incarnation, but only in the incarnation (Barth 1956:163). In the quote above, Barth argues from the paradox, through a dialectical process, for the real humanity of Christ. In linking the humanity of Christ (only) to the incarnation, it denies that Christ was a glorified human being while at the same time ensuring that Christ was truly human. Furthermore, Barth denies that the use of *anhypostasis* denies the personality of Christ (Barth 1956:164, 165). Barth does this to ensure the following:

- First, that the divinity of the Son of God is not altered to Christ (Barth 1956:163).
- Second, it creates a unique humanity in which *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis* do not apply to humanity as a whole, but only to Christ's humanity (Barth 1956:163).
- Third, Barth does this with the purpose to ensure that it is only in the revelation of the God-man that humanity can first come to a true revelation of itself (Harper 2015:94). This would be employed for all human sciences or endeavours. Any knowledge that can be obtained can only be obtained in the revelation of Christ.
- Fourth, it strikes humanity with its (humanity's) utter failure. Consequently, the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* as per Barth's construction as a dual argument, is further utilised to negate human ability apart from God (Barth 1956:61).

Another key component is that the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* formula as a Christological formula also becomes a component of atonement. Barth emphasises three factors:

1. The atonement is based on Christ as very God.
2. The atonement is based on Christ as very human.
3. The atonement is manifested in the union of the previous two points (Harper 2015:197-198).

This builds on the foundation of 'God for us' and the Trinity, denying human beings a hold on God (Barth 1956:135). God is completely free to act on behalf of humanity and does so, for this is God's being. This action is an event in time, not to be confused with time in general; it is rather time that God creates. Human time is problematic and improper, but through the *anhypostasis/enhypostasis* formula, God is also creating his time which takes the place of our time (Barth 1956:55). This formula is a revelation of God's freedom and through atonement can become man's freedom. Having looked at how Barth constructs the human nature of Christ, we now move to a more specific area: Whether Christ has assumed a human Person or general human nature.

3.5.2 Person or Humanity?

To continue our investigation into the study of how Barth conceives of Christ's humanity, we will now discuss Waldrop's comparison of the views of McIntyre and Welch in their respective arguments on Barth's view of revelation. McIntyre denies revelation as a theophany, and argues that God reveals himself through a medium. If the medium and the revelation are the same, revelation would disappear. Christ is the medium that reveals God. McIntyre views the human nature of Christ as the medium that reveals God. He concludes that Barth's view on revelation fails, as he does not find a distinction between Christ's humanity and divinity in Barth's works. Welch, on the other hand, denotes the 'oneness' of God with personality whereas the 'threeness' denotes only modes of God. Christ is then both God and man. God is revealed through Christ's humanity, but this humanity is not a separate Person. Welch believes that if God is revealed to humanity, he must be present to humanity:

1. If in his presence to humanity, he is God, then he must be of the same essence as the God who is the presupposition of revelation.
2. If God is present and known to humanity as truly God, then he must be the second mode of revelation.
3. This God is God the Son, and God the Son is the same essence as God the Father (Waldrop 1984:14).

McIntyre argues that Barth is viewing Christ as different from God and therefore as a separate human being. Welch regards Barth as viewing Christ as identical to the Son of God. For Welch, Jesus is the God who reveals not just the mode of revelation, but God himself (Waldrop 1984:14). Several key points arise here:

- McIntyre views Christ as a union of two Persons – one divine and one human. Welch views the humanity of Christ not as a separate Person.
- This fundamental difference leads to different conclusions on Barth's doctrine of revelation.
- The humanity of Christ is fundamental in Barth's theology.

This, in turn, affects their respective views on the divinity of Christ. McIntyre argues that Barth's attributing divinity to the human Christ is the medium of revelation. Welch, on the other hand, refers to Barth as claiming that the human Christ is divine, as he is also the second Person of the Godhead (Waldrop 1984:14, 15). McIntyre and Welch display a narrowness in their thinking by claiming single aspects of Barth's complex writing at the expense of other aspects. When we consider the views of other authors on Barth, we find a more complete view.

Waldrop assesses these two views about Barth as presenting Alexandrian and Antiochene Christology. The Alexandrian school had a soteriological focus and held that the second Person of the Trinity assumed a human nature. They avoided claiming that the Logos had assumed a human nature in its totality, lest it negated the sinlessness of Christ (McGrath 1994:287, 288). The Antiochene school had a moral concern. They claimed that humanity has fallen into sin and only by becoming human could God make a way to re-establish an obedient people of God. The Alexandrians viewed the Antiochene position as creating dual Persons in Christ. The Antiochene school of thought viewed the Alexandrian view as confusing the human and the divine natures. A basic summary:

- Alexandrian: The Logos assumed a general human nature.
- Antiochene: The Logos assumed a specific human being (McGrath 1994:289, 290).

Roach illustrates that Barth has utilised a dialectical approach in his theology, creating a thesis and an antithesis. According to him, Barth alternates back and forth between Alexandrian and Antiochene positions (Roach 2013:39, 40). He defines Barth's Christological position where 'an interpreter would be warranted to claim that Barth was neither an Alexandrian nor an Antiochian, but adhered unto some form of a dialectical Chalcedonianism' (Roach 2013:44).

Barth utilises the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* formula to maintain Christ as fully divine and fully human, two separate natures united in Christ, similar to the Chalcedon Creed (Anon 2013). In his dialectical manner, he does this by taking the best of the Alexandrian thought and at the same time the best of the Antiochene thought. He can therefore speak of 'Jesus of Nazareth' as God's Son by his God-manhood, in line with the Alexandrian thinking (Barth 1956:15), while also referring to 'the man Jesus of Nazareth' as God's Son, by showing himself to be a man, in line with the Antiochene thinking (Barth 1956:23). In doing so, 'Barth affirmed both of them, even in what may seem to be a formal contradiction, because it furthered the necessary movement in the dialectic' (Roach 2013:51).

It would be best to view the reality of the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* concept as describing human nature with reference to its unity with Christ, but with Christ as a Person in maintaining the separation between his divine and human natures. The conclusion is therefore that the Son of God and Christ are one and the same Person, that the Son of God did not alter his essential being in becoming human. One can also derive that Christ can be distinguished from God in that he is the incarnated Jesus of Nazareth. Barth's dialectical approach allows scholars to retain both contradictory views combined in his Christology. From this point, we will next discuss Christ's sinful human nature.

3.5.3 Christ's Sinful Human Nature

With a strong emphasis on the divinity of Christ and the unique humanity of Christ, the question is, 'How real was the humanity of Christ?' Barth wants to ensure that Christ became truly human, for God's revelation to maintain its full power. Barth's solution is to propose that Christ took on a sinful human nature. Barth furthermore asserts that Christology and soteriology belong together (Barth 1958b:10). As with all Barth's

theology, he maintains Christ as the *a priori* origin of all doctrines, being only knowable by divine revelation. Not only is Christ the beginning of the doctrine, but also the initiator of the action. Whereas Preuss in arguing for the priority of Christ as 'God for us,' Barth points out that sin is not the prerequisite for justification, but that justification is the prerequisite for sin (Preuss 1960:237). Christ as God's revelation is equated with Christ as God's salvation. Barth regards Christ as God's revelation who reveals all other things. Only through God's revelation can one grasp what sin truly is. Christian orthodoxy claims that Christ could not have sinned in his divine nature, but that he could sin in his human nature, although he chose not to sin. In contrast, German liberalism maintain that Christ took his sinful human nature and lived like the rest of humanity (Roach 2013:59). Barth presents a third position in an attempt to synthesize the two positions.

Barth understands sin by means of the following three descriptions of sin,

1. 'in its first form as pride as opposed to humility in regard to Christ condescension to us' (Barth 1958b:4);
2. 'in its second form as sloth, opposed to the exaltation of Christ' (Barth 1958b:20); and
3. 'in its third form as a falsehood, opposed to the fact of God's revelation in Christ with regards to the fact of atonement' (Barth 1956:3, 4; cf. Lowery 1992:12, 13).

What should be noted is that all three forms of sin contrast what Christ did on earth in comparison to what humanity did and still does. Christ, in revealing God, reveals actions that are the opposite of human actions. Barth's link between revelation and salvation holds that both revelation and salvation belong to Christ and are wholly different from any human action or response (Barth 1956:158). Revelation and reconciliation/atonement are two sides of the same coin, referring to what takes place and what must take place for man to come close to God (Hart 2006:42). Christ as a man (from an Antiochene point of view) does not do what humanity does, but what they should do, thus testifying that Christ was human, but did not have the limited humanity of human beings (cf. section 3.3.2). Sin and salvation are not here understood in the classical sense, but interpreted through the concept of revelation. Barth refers to evil as nothingness, not meaning that it does not exist, but that its existence is solely negative in its relation to God (Barth 1961:178). When he claims that Christ has assumed

a sinful human nature, it must also be understood that Jesus as the God-man entered into the existence of nothingness.

As Mangina points out, there are four noteworthy and comprehendible reasons why Barth distances himself from the standard modern concept of sin:

> First, if the quasi-foundational role it assigns to 'the' human condition, a dubious notion in any case...[second] from Barth's perspective, the 'God' arrived at through an analysis of the consciousness of sin and guilt could never be the God of Jesus Christ…[third] that privileging a certain kind of existential analysis has the effect of conveniently screening out the sin we are most reluctant to have exposed, e.g. economic and social sins. Finally, the Christological consideration that is decisive…what finally defeats all 'systematic' attempts to master the concept of sin is the fact that only Jesus Christ himself, present by his Spirit, is in a position to tell us the truth about ourselves (Mangina 2001:93, 94).

It should also be noted that Barth does not define sin as something in itself, but in relation to Christ's actions. He views sin as the rejection of God's grace, which is manifested in the breaking of all commandments (Barth 1949:105). Sin is defined as, what humanity does in contrast to what is omitted in Christ and likewise what humanity omits which in contrast Christ does (Barth 1956:155). This concept, considering the previous sections, would suggest then that everything outside of the revelation of Christ is sin. It would be possible to postulate that Barth, although he does not express it, views sin as humanity's attempt to take the place of God's revelation. This is why Barth also contrasts Christ with Adam, stating:

> Unlike Adam, as the 'second Adam' He does not wish to be as God but in Adam's nature acknowledges before God an Adamic being, the state and position of fallen man, and bears the wrath of God which must fall upon this man, not as a fate but as a righteous necessary wrath (Barth 1956:157).

According to Lowery, Barth thinks of sin as a relational reality, not an ontological one (Lowery 1992:11). This is important because of the following two reasons:

- First, when comparing Christ to Adam in the above quote, it must be considered relationally. There is a relational quality between the Father and Christ and also between Christ and sin. Christ is the humble man before God, as opposed to Adam, the proud man before God. The relationship between the Father and Christ required from Christ to accept his humanity, not as fate, but as necessary wrath as part of the punishment of humanity.
- Second, sin as a whole can be considered in Barth's view as being outside of the relationship that Christ maintained with the Father. Barth's concept of sin builds on the initial dilemma of speaking of God – that humanity cannot speak of God, only that God reveals himself. This intellectual condition is expressed in sin as humanity's state of separation from God, which is called 'sin,' being expressed in human actions (Schwöbel 2006:22).

Barth further argues that Christ is not only equated to us as a human individual, but also equated to our state of sin (Barth 1956:149, 151). By claiming that Jesus Christ was a sinful human being, Barth argues that he could not sin. Reflecting on the previous statement, it is the rejection of God's grace that constitutes sin, being expressed in acts of sin. Barth postulates that Jesus, as the eternal Word of God is impervious to temptation and he was bound to win this struggle since he was God. He could therefore not reject God in any way (Barth 1956:158). Even though Christ existed in the state of nothingness – negatively over against God – it was the Son of God that willingly entered this state. The divinity of Christ, however, cannot be conceived of as 'nothingness,' but stands positively in its relationship with the Father as true reality. Evil as the impossible possibility is the impotence of evil over against God. Furthermore, evil is conceived of as a radical distinction apart from God which is negated and rejected by God (Barth 1961:178). Christ, who is God the Son, entered into the existence of sinful humanity, accepting the nothingness, impossibility, and impotence of evil. Christ did not succumb to this evil, for he is God and is therefore the fulness over against the nothingness, the possibility over against the impossibility, and the potency over against the impotence of evil. As such, Christ did receive the divine 'No,' but also the divine 'Yes' for humanity. This position raises two questions:

- First, how could it be considered a struggle if the only outcome was victory?

- Second, how could Jesus Christ have a personality of his own, if his divinity allowed him only to choose not to sin?

Barth answers the first question as follows: True humanity is not defined by sin; this relates to the creation and the fall (Barth 1956:156). One should therefore consider that Christ's humanity as true humanity could not be defined by sin. Orthodox Christianity held that 'Christ's humanity was like ours in that he could be tempted, and lived his life as part of a fallen world of frailty and exposed to vast pressures. But he did not sin, and there was no moral and spiritual corruption in him' (Roach 2013:60).

By claiming that Christ assumed humanity's unholy existence, Barth defines it as the curse and punishment of sinful humanity (Barth 1956:155, 156). Barth makes the distinction that, unlike Adam, Christ in Adam's nature does not wish to be God, but a man who is to receive the wrath of God (Barth 1956:157). Barth makes a third statement, that Christ had no awareness of sin (Barth 1956:159). Sin was not something inherent to the identity of Christ's humanity, but was a condition that Christ fully and freely accepted while remaining innocent. Christ bore his sinful nature innocently, as he neither lived up to this condition, nor committed sin (Lowery 1992:7). Barth views Christ as overcoming his human nature's sinfulness (Barth 1956158). Christ did not naturally avoid sin, but had to struggle with his sinfulness. In light of this we read: 'His activity in the obedience to the Father is just as original and divine as the activity of the Father, the Beginning to whom He hands over everything' (Barth 2016:230).

The first question as to how it could be considered a struggle if the only outcome was a victory, is therefore answered here. Barth relies on the New Testament to portray the struggle as a real struggle to obey due to the real temptation of sin (Barth 1956:158). One can list the points of the struggle as follows:

- Christ suffered (Barth 1949:107).
- He bore the body of weakness (Barth 1956:155).
- He was tempted (Barth 1956:158).

The struggle of Christ was therefore very real. In connecting sin with what is outside of Christ being God's self-revelation, Barth avoids prescribing sin to Christ. Everything

that Christ did, was based upon the will of God. The sinfulness of Jesus over against the sinful condition of humanity (Haley 2015:215) can be harmonised with another quote of Barth

> that God Himself in the man Jesus does not avoid taking the place of sinful man and being (He hath made Him to be sin, who knew no sin) that which man is, a rebel, and bearing the suffering of such a one, to be Himself the entire guilt and the entire reconciliation! (Barth 1949:107).

In contrast, the divine mind of Christ was free from corruption, without awareness of sin, not prone to sin, and therefore predisposed to win in the struggle of sin. Barth points out that this was a genuine struggle within the humanity of Christ (Barth 1956:158). Christ was not automated, but his mind, having no awareness of sin, was pressed to reject the grace of God and like Adam, assume his own divinity. Barth explains: 'In this consists the rebellion of sin, in which daily and hourly man repeats the ancient rebellion of Adam' (Barth 1956:157).

Barth refers to human beings, connecting their sins to the sin of Adam. However, when speaking of Christ, he relates, 'By the Word becoming Adam the continuity of this Adamic existence is broken and the continuity of a new Adamic existence is opened up' (Barth 1956:157).

The latter quote is preceded by Barth's claim that Christ corrected Adam's mistake by bowing to the control of God and relying solely upon him. Here we see a differentiation between the sinfulness of humanity and the sinlessness of Christ. Human beings were bound by Adam's mistake, repeating it because of Adam's mistake. Adam's sin was not transferred to human beings through a hereditary notion. Humanity has been declared sinners, based on Adam's sin, but not by participation in it (Lowery 1992:7). Christ did not repeat the mistake of Adam. Barth further states that Christ had no awareness of sin, meaning that Christ knew of the reality of sin, experienced the effects, but did not participate in sin (Barth 1956:159). Christ identified with humanity by taking their sinful place but not their actual sin. As such, it can be stated that Christ was a revelation *for* humanity and also *of* humanity (Lowery 1992:2).

The second question is, ‘How could Jesus Christ have a personality of his own if the divinity allowed him only to choose not to sin?’ The humanity of Christ is not the assuming of a human being, but of a *humanum* (*man, people, humane*). It is in Christ, becoming the *humanum* that God has incorporated all of the essential humanity into himself (Haley 2015:193). Christ therefore bore sin on the behalf of all humanity and was elected on behalf of all humanity to do so (Barth 1949:91). He became a sinner and debtor, therefore innocently bearing the sins and debts on behalf of humanity (Lowery 1992:8). It was the very divinity of the Son of God that had chosen to assume humanity and live in the sinful condition of a man. With the same argument, it can also be stated that it was the Son of God who chose not to sin due to his divine personality. The relational quality of sin is demarcated to revelation as an abstract concept, presented as a subjective or non-propositional truth. Thus, Christ revealed to humankind that there was a relationship between the Son and the Father, which was not broken by sin. The concrete action of sin is confined to what man does or does not do, in comparison to what Christ did or did not do. Therefore, Christ has struggled against concrete acts of sin, but remained victorious through his unbroken unity to the Father. Having reviewed how Barth has structured the sinful nature of Christ, we now turn to his concept of the virgin birth.

3.5.4 The Virgin Birth

Another element connected to the dual concepts of *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis* is the idea of the virgin birth (Barth 1956:194). According to Lowery, Barth’s focus on the virgin birth has elicited criticism from theologians such as Schleiermacher, Seeberg, Brunner, and Althaus (Lowery 1992:9, 10). This is the reason why we have to investigate why this aspect is so important in Barth’s Christology.

3.5.4.1 The Value of the Virgin Birth for Barth

The virgin birth of Christ forms an inherent component of Barth’s Christology. To Barth, the virgin birth is indisputable and presents an argument against Schleiermacher. Barth explains Schleiermacher’s conception of the virgin birth as the final evolution of humanity. According to Barth, Schleiermacher claims that the virgin birth is not something new, but a union between the divine and human (Barth 1956:180). Barth refers to the incarnation and hence the virgin birth as the divine assuming the human as opposed to a union of human and divine natures (Barth 1956:156). Here again we

note the dynamism that Barth attributes to the divine activity, as opposed to the static nature of the human condition. From Barth's perspective, Schleiermacher had only deified humanity. Where Schleiermacher places the dynamism on the human component, Barth interprets this as a deifying of humanity and thus unacceptable. Barth interprets the virgin birth as God taking the initiative, and develops the idea to connect to the passion of Christ, because '[h]e thought that the purpose of the virgin birth was not to account for Jesus' sinlessness, nor even to explain the deity. Instead, it was a sign to stress his humanity' (Roach 2013:59).

In doing so, Barth demarcates an area for the *anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis* of the humanity of Christ. God the Son assumed the human flesh in an *anhypostasis* way, meaning that Christ's humanity did not exist before the virgin birth. God the Son also assumed human flesh in an *enhypostasis* way, in that Christ's humanity existed only in the unity of the virgin birth. This presents a very definite beginning for the Son of God to assume humanity. Barth links this to the passion: Uniting the virgin birth to the passion, equalling the two events, as a beginning and an end in importance (Barth 1956:182). Between these points, the Son of God was truly human in the single Person of Christ. This allows Barth to present the revelation in Christ as an event with a definite beginning and ending (Barth 1949:127). Furthermore, the virgin birth by itself is another point of proof that Christ's life was 'marked off' from the rest of human life (Barth 1956:182). The incarnation thus stands as the revelation of God, with Christ as the ultimate agent, which is dynamic against the static human condition.

This mystery, based on a revelatory miracle, is linked to God as the creator and as an act of divinity. The male human is set aside and the female human serves as an example, open and ready for God (Lowery 1992:10). Barth can thus argue that the creator creates from humanity a new beginning – true divinity and true humanity in union (Barth 1949:97). At the same time, Barth set aside the male who is the responsible one for human history. He does not understand the virgin birth as an *ex nihilo* creation but a creation within the human field (Barth 1949:97). This is to ensure that the humanity of Christ is identical to that of humanity. Consequently, the difference of Christ is maintained by the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* and the uniqueness of the virgin birth. This construction allows Barth to maintain the divinity of the Son of God, to define him as truly human, but without giving humanity any vantage to exercise power over God.

It also puts the humanity of Christ on the razor's edge where all aspects have to be considered with care. At this point, we detect how Barth relates the incarnation with the Trinity:

> One in fact can argue that Barth understands the ontological essence of Jesus Christ as he understands the ontological essence of the triune God; that is, just as the Son exists in perfect union with the Father and the Holy Spirit as one God, so too the divine nature of Christ exists in perfect union with His human nature as one person. In this way both ontological formulations of 1) the triune God and 2) Jesus Christ manifest perfect union together with perfect distinctiveness in their being (Haley 2015:26).

Thus, by adopting the theology of the virgin birth, Barth balances the various aspects of divinity and humanity with each other. He furthermore denies liberal theology the arguments that would seem to deify humanity, or diminish the virgin birth to a biological event (Barth 1956:183). Having considered the humanity of Christ, I now turn to how Barth includes Christ's suffering into his Christology.

3.5.4.2 The Death of Christ

Barth covers a second area to strengthen his argument that Christ was truly human, based on God the Son assuming an *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* sinful humanity. It was in this real humanity that God the Son as Christ suffered (Barth 1949:101). Christ died, which Barth defines as an end, not as a continuation in another form of the current life (Barth 1949:117). The end of life coupled with the miraculous beginning of the virgin birth signifies the humanity of Christ as a temporal revealed, but real event. God the Son assumed humanity as a vessel and laid hold of our humanity in the process (Barth 1956:169). To Barth, the incarnation is a completed act and accomplished event (Barth 1956:167). For him, the particular 'virtue of the virgin birth is that it stresses clearly that man himself does not cooperate in the work of redemption carried on by the second mode of the Godhead' (Kantzer 1958:25).

The value that Barth therefore observes in the virgin birth, is to make the beginning of incarnation exempt from human connection. God the Son, as part of the Trinity, was incarnated into real humanity and was truly human from the virgin birth to his death on

the cross. During this time, neither the divinity of God, nor the divinity of God the Son was altered in any way.

To Barth, this is not only an answer to a potential problem of Christ's humanity post-ascension (cf. section 3.6.1), but it becomes the sole way of approaching theology. This central theme becomes a magnet that draws all other issues to it. Every other topic under discussion or consideration is fitted into this one theme or considered in light of this one theme. There is an overall purpose in this process in Barth's reasoning. Over against Schleiermacher, where the idea of the Trinity is the last topic to be discussed, for Barth it is the first word that must be spoken before one can address revelation (McGrath 1994:260-261). With this, Barth removes humanity from the exalted position granted by liberal theology. His Christology promotes as its impetus the very object that it studies: God, and a very particular picture of a Triune God, is the starting point of his Christology (Barth 1949:16). Without the Word – the Son of God – there can be no theology at all (Barth 1949:18).

We have considered how Barth viewed God the Son assuming human flesh in the most literal and real sense possible. To substantiate this point, Barth utilises the concepts of *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis*. He goes further to consider the virgin birth as the beginning and the passion as the end of the revelation event. Next, we will consider Barth's view on Christ, retaining his humanity through eternity.

3.6 Divinity and Humanity

3.6.1 Christ's Humanity Post-Ascension

Barth's challenge is not with the divinity, but relating the humanity of Christ as real and also separate from humanity. It is not evident in the Christology of Barth, but once it is realised, one observes how Barth pre-empts a potential challenge. Were Christ to retain his humanity post-ascension, one would have to define how the God-man's humanity is related to the Trinity without defying humanity. Barth's view of the incarnation of Christ is explained as follows: 'The incarnation of Christ is an incarnation of the whole Godhead but by means of an incarnation of the second mode of God to whom has been peculiarly appropriated the task of redemption' (Kantzer 1958:25).

Barth very strictly motivates the Trinity, moving between modalism and tritheism to present a balanced view thereof. When one considers Calvin's dealing with the God-man's humanity post-ascension, Calvin 'supported only divine persons in the Trinity, but on the other hand linked the Son of God so close to the humanity of Jesus Christ, that the Son of God ascended with his humanity. God the Son is on the right hand of the Father having retained his humanity' (Jones 2010b:12). Burgess explains that Barth also held to Christ ascending with his human nature (Burgess 2017:25, 26).

The problem with this view is, 'How does one relate the God-man's humanity regarding the Trinity?' To argue that Christ retained his divinity and simply stepped into his original position, fails to explain how his humanity remained outside the equation. Failing to do so, would imply a deification of his humanity. Calvin overcomes this problem by claiming that in the far future, Christ would relinquish his humanity and return to his original position (Jones 2010b:16). At some point, Christ will cease to be human and once again assume his full position, as God the Son, in the Trinity.

Barth, I believe, foresees this problem and thus ensues several arguments that promote the glorification of humanity and avoid the deification of humanity in the Son of God. With this in mind, it is obvious that, in making revelation the action of the Trinity, Barth is laying the foundation for an answer. Revelation flows from the Father, the Son fulfils it objectively, and the Holy Spirit fulfils it subjectively in us (Barth 1956:1). The incarnation as the ultimate revelation of God is explained within this Trinitarian framework:

> As Father, Son and Holy Spirit He is in His nature the one God completely and not partially. The statement that it is the Word or the Son of God who became man therefore asserts without reserve that in spite of His distinction as Son from the Father and Holy Spirit, God in His entire divinity became man (Barth 1956:33).

Having established the Trinity as starting point, Barth maintains the humanity of Christ into eternity: 'Barth sees here the eternal Word invading time and space and claiming it as His own. In the Word of God becoming flesh, and therefore time, in every moment of His temporal existence, and every point before or after His temporal existence in

which He manifested Himself as true' (Haley 2015:201). God the Son is also Jesus Christ the man, the full divinity of the Son of God became fully human and Barth's Chalcedonian Christology does not allow for confusion nor breaching of the human and divine (Burgess 2017:30). As such the ascension of God the Son is the ascension of Jesus Christ the man. The ascension of the Son of God as Jesus Christ the man allows the God-man to continually intercede for us (Burgess 2017:33).

This leaves the question as to how the God-man's humanity is related to the Trinity, without deifying humanity? Barth considers the reality of Christ's uniting divinity and humanity to be taken seriously. Although Christ's humanity is real humanity, it is united with divinity. The humanity of Christ therefore exists beyond the confines of every human creature (Haley 2015:206). It is in view of the Chalcedon Creed that Barth is arguing his point:

- First, he agrees with the Creed that the divine and human nature of Christ were distinct but united in one Person.
- Second, the being of Christ is to be understood as an event of the union of the divine with the human.

Barth differs from Chalcedon in that he moves away from their static view to a more fluid understanding (Haley 2015:215-216). However, he also avoids the Eutychian argument which claims that Chalcedon made Christ into two Persons. At the same time, he avoids the Nestorian argument that Chalcedon united the two natures of Christ (Haley 2015:15). He therefore establishes the strict co-presence of the divine and human natures, but also that Christ's humanity is our humanity (Malysz 2007:89).

Just as Christ's humanity only had its beginning at the incarnation (*anhypostasis* and *enhypostasis*), his humanity is unlike our humanity. This may seem to contradict the point made in the previous paragraph. It is, however, explained by Barth's emphasis on the concepts of *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis*, the virgin birth, and Christ's true suffering and death (cf. sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.4). The divinity of Christ can assume humanity and exalt it without deifying humanity (Barth 1949:125), for although Christ became human as human beings are human, it remains a unique humanity as part of the virgin birth, suffering, and death of Christ. By maintaining the separation of the divine

and human within one being, Christ acted as the Son of God while still retaining his humanity. To achieve this, Barth rejects ontic immutability for ethical immutability (Malysz 2007:90). The act of the incarnation is based on the freedom of God's immutable love; it in turn, affirm the glory and majesty of God. The humanity of Christ was assumed by the divinity and shared in the glory and majesty of God, without being deified. Humanity is therefore not deified, only glorified.

By the dual presentation of the virgin birth and the suffering of Christ, Barth presents Christ as a real human being. From virgin birth to crucifixion, Christ lived encumbered with sin, facing the struggle of temptation, but being victorious. Christ suffered as humankind does, from his virgin birth to the crucifixion. Barth follows the reasoning that from the virgin birth to the ascension there is an integrated process containing distinguishable moments (Walton 2013:60). However, the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* of the humanity of Christ remained different from our humanity. This other humanity is the real humanity that was assumed by divinity. As such, revelation is Jesus Christ who, from eternity, chose to be a man and will remain so for our good (Barth 1949:70). With this argument, Barth returns Christ to his place in the Trinity without deifying humanity.

Barth also employs this understanding regarding the church. Christ's incarnation event can be reflected as a likeness of the incarnation through the church as people who belong to Christ (Barth 1949:127, 141). There is an inherent danger in Barth's view that humanity may become only an instrument in the hands of God (Malysz 2007:91). According to him, our body is already in heaven in Christ, even though belonging to Christ entails living actively on earth (Barth 1949:152, 155). It is in this very link through the Holy Spirit that revelation becomes a subjective reality as Christ's humanity is linked to our humanity (Barth 1956:242). If humanity serves only as a vessel, it would not need retention by God the Son. Humanity rather remains an essential attribute to ensure that the subjective revelation remains a likeness of Christ.

We have now discussed the way in which Barth employs *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* to restore God the Son to the Trinity, while still maintaining his humanity. We now must consider a point that arises from the virgin birth and affects the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* formula: The discontinuity in the humanity of Christ.

3.7 Discontinuity in the Humanity of Christ

3.7.1 The Problem of Genetics

One of the ideas that Barth received criticism for, was his view on the doctrine of the virgin birth (Lowery 1992:9). He described the virgin birth of Christ as follows: 'By its *natus ex Maria* it states that the person Jesus Christ is the real son of a real mother, the son born of the body, flesh and blood of his mother, both of them as real as all the other sons of mothers' (Barth 1956:185).

Barth only accepts that the miracle took place and denounces Brunner for trying to explain the *How?* As the resurrection is proof of Christ's divinity, the virgin birth is proof of his humanity (Barth 1949:97, 121; cf. Lowery 1992:9). In response to Schleiermacher and Brunner, Barth denies the biology of the virgin birth and claims that there is no biology to be found in Scripture or in the creeds (Barth 1956:183). However, Barth does not remain true to his objection, since he relies on biology to ensure that Christ was truly human as he was born 'of the body,' 'flesh,' and 'blood' of his 'mother' (Barth 1956:185). These four terms that Barth uses to describe the virgin birth, are biological. We observe here that he utilises biology to ensure the real biology of Christ, but he denies it otherwise (Barth 1956:185). In another publication, Barth speaks of the virgin birth as an 'unusual procreation' and 'unusual birth' (Barth 1949:98). The term 'unusual' may refer to a miracle, but 'procreation' and birth are 'biological' terms.

If, however, we consider the *How?*, which Barth avoids, we are left with three options:

1. The genetic material could be from mother and father, which would mean that there was no incarnation miracle. Schleiermacher held this position, but it was rejected by Barth (Lowery 1992:9). This would be a purely biological birth and this would include humanity in the conception, which Barth denies (cf. section 3.4.2.1).
2. The genetic material of Jesus' humanity could be completely created anew by God through the Holy Spirit. This would deny the *natus ex Maria* from the above quote of Barth. It would be a complete miracle, entirely without humanity other than Mary, serving as a vessel for the foetus of Christ.
3. The last option is that half of the genetic material of Christ's human body originated from the Holy Spirit and half from Maria. This choice appears to be best in line with Barth's view. This conclusion does, however, run into biology once

again. As much as Barth denies the biological factor in favour of a miracle, by his admission and by simple logic he cannot do so.

This creates a subtle problem in Barth's theology. If a part of Christ's humanity existed before the incarnation, it would mean that a part of Christ denied the *anhypostasis* argument. *Anhypostasis* asserts that the human nature of Christ did not exist prior to the incarnation. Whether the humanity of Christ existed five years or five seconds before the incarnation, would make no difference and would deny the basic premise of this argument.

It would also deny the *enhypostasis* component of the formula. *Enhypostasis* asserts that the humanity of Christ only exists in connection to the Word. Once again, if the humanity of Christ by any length of time existed apart from the incarnation, it would deny this argument.

If Christ's birth was biological, of flesh and blood, how can his humanity be uniquely described as *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis*? It seems if Barth has created a logical problem in this careful Christological construction of his. This raises the question of the validity of the humanity he ascribes to Christ. This reveals an inherent challenge in Barth's view that humanity may become only an instrument for God (Malysz 2007:91). When biology is introduced, it highlights the incomplete *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* argument of including biology in Barth's Christology. This, in turn, plays to the point that Malysz is making. This only becomes obvious when we deny original sin. It plays in Barth's favour, as he would then not have to explain how Mary's sin was not passed on to Christ (Preuss 1960:239). This presents one of the inconsistencies of Barth in his theology. It is also linked to another issue that we find in Barth's theology, dealing with human time and space.

3.7.2 Neglecting Human Time and Space

Barth's theology depicts Christ as the ultimate revelation of God, an event that unites his true divinity to his true humanity. At the same time, there is a neglect of the human situation. Barth denies any anthropological assertion before or above God. He views Christ as the true man and from this true man, anthropology must develop (Haley 2015:177). In another instance, in the conflict between Brunner and Barth about

Brunner's published work *Nature and grace*, Brunner argues that human nature was created in such a way that it possessed a ready-made link to God. Barth's declares a divine *Nein* to these views of Brunner (Harper 2015:17, 18; Heron 2000:398). For Barth, there was no connection within humanity. Any such point could only originate from divine revelation (McGrath 1994:161-162). In comparison to these two views and considering the humanity of Christ, we further gain clarity to the challenge. Christ's united but unique divinity and humanity make him the possibility of divine-human interaction. This, however, is something that the rest of humanity does not share. The revelation of God, God the Son as Jesus Christ, remains constantly something outside of humanity. Barth argues: 'The subjective reality of revelation consists in the fact that we have our being through Christ and in the Church, that we are the recipients of the divine testimonies, and, as the real recipients of them the children of God' (Barth 1956:242).

The problem arises that in the dynamic nature that Barth ascribes to revelation and to God who reveals himself, humanity is left behind. Humanity is subjected to static impotence with no value, although this is not the intention of Barth, but rather to establish Christ as the revelation of God as central to all truth. This results in, what Vanderplaat describes as follows: 'We have already noted that the early Barth spoke of God's revelation as touching our world without touching it' (Vanderplaat 1983:52).

Pannenberg, a student of Barth, participating in an interdisciplinary discussion group, came to the following determination with his fellow students, stating that Barth 'proposed to work out a theology of history, rather than a theology of the Word' (Vanderplaat 1983:56, 57).

In attempting to make God supreme and humanity subject to God, Barth attempts to fill the void between the two with the incarnate Word. However, he does not achieve this, as he is too intent to deny humanity any positive vantage point. Barth makes his proposed transcendent God (cf. Hutabarat 2015:123) immanent, but in the process, robs humanity of any value to their lives. Significantly, it was in response to Barth that Pannenberg has developed a theology that would give credibility to human history. In contrast to Barth's approach, Pannenberg follows the following methodology when he initiates 'his dialogue with atheism by attempting to demonstrate that man's experience

of himself and his world refers him to something that does not belong to the realm of the finite things, i.e., to a mysterious entity that both supports him and causes him to inquire beyond any given situation' (Vanderplaat 1983:131).

Pannenberg is willing to grant humanity a positive role in the process of the interpretation of God's revelation, something Barth would not allow (cf. McGrath 1994:262). Another significant point is that man's experience of himself and the world has value. This is another element missing in Barth's Christology as he postulates that Christ is everything and humanity is nothing.

Barth protects God and at the same time encloses him from humanity. He uses Christ as the only bridge and to do this, he uses humanity without giving it due credit. Mary's flesh and blood constitute a tool to make the humanity of Jesus real, but it does not make Mary real. The genetics of Mary is lost in the uniqueness of the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* of Barth's Christology. He lumps all sciences under the umbrella of theology and regards all philosophy as theology (Barth 1963:1). He does this with a lack of concern for other sciences and scientists in that God transcends all the other undertakings of humankind (Barth 1963:6). Pannenberg agrees with Barth that God's revelation is necessary to know God, but he is also willing to take human history seriously (Vanderplaat 1983:65). We therefore find a key challenge in Barth's theology that, by introducing the virgin birth, he unwittingly introduces genetics. On the one hand Barth promotes the virgin birth as proof of Christ's humanity. At the same time, he ignores genetics even though introducing genetics via biological wording. This unresolved aspect of genetics in the virgin birth impacts Barth's *anhypostasis/enhypostasis* argument (cf. section 3.7.1). With these challenges, coupled with the static nature that Barth ascribes to humanity, the only positive connection for humanity to God is being recipients of God's revelation. Next, we consider Barth's view of a transcendent God, participating in human immanence.

3.7.3 Transcendence and Immanence

The question arises as to how Barth's transcendent God reaches humanity as an imminent reality. It seems obvious, since Barth argues that God is known by his self-revelation to find humanity, and not *vice versa* (Vanderplaat 1983:42). Barth therefore views 'Schleiermacher as the genial advocate of an approach which in effect reduced

theology to anthropology and aimed to set against that approach his own "counter-achievement"' (Heron 2000:395).

Barth therefore grounds anthropology, like everything else, on Christology, as opposed to Schleiermacher who grounds it in humanity. According to Barth, Christ first participated in humanity and therefore we are able to participate in humanity (Vanderplaat 1983:51; cf. Hasel 1991:210), as we have pointed out that the humanity of Jesus poses a problem to the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* nature of Christ's humanity. Because Christ's only true connection is with the flesh and blood of Mary, the former is denied by the latter. To strengthen his argument, Barth makes a bold assertion that from eternity God has intended that his Son would be incarnated into humanity (Rose 2014; Barth 1956:1). Making the incarnation an eternal decree, implies that the creation of humanity must also become an eternal decree, for the first decree becomes dependent on the second. If God has intended to be incarnated from eternity, it makes humanity a necessity for the incarnation (Barth 1956:36). The implication is that humanity had to be created for God to be revealed in the flesh. Barth writes: 'Israel is nothing apart from Jesus Christ; but we also have to say that Jesus Christ would not be Jesus apart from Israel' (Barth 1949:74).

Barth views humanity as dependent upon the revealing God who was revealed in Christ. Barth is willing to admit that this also entails that Christ could only be, as he was connected to Israel. Not only does this link Christ and Israel, but Christ and humanity through all time.

Barth's argument would seemingly unite the transcendence of God with the immanence of humanity, since Jesus Christ, as the incarnated Son of God, as the only true man, presents the only true humanity. Can human beings enjoy true humanity? The reason for the question is that humanity's experience of reality 'is dependent, it is believed, on the will and plans of a personal God. A God who is purely transcendental cannot interact with immanent beings, confined by the limitations of time and space' (Bentley 2018:3 of 5).

There is another part to this, namely that immanent human beings with no access to transcendence cannot interact with a purely transcendental God. Bentley (2018:3 of

5) explains: ‘There is an inherent need for God to be more than the immanent, but conversely not to be confined to the transcendent.’

Aung, Santmire, and Young criticise Barth for failing to make God immanent (Gabriel 1995:39). Gabriel, however, claims that Barth does make God immanent, due to the following arguments:

- Barth presents God in close relation to our created sphere.
- Humanity is not isolated from God.
- The whole creation is brought into the being of God (Gabriel 1995:39, 40).

It is helpful to recognise that both the views – that Barth fails or succeeds to make God immanent – would be based on the individual’s concept of how immanent God is. Fact is that if a scholar views God to be more immanent, they will most likely deny that Barth makes God immanent. On the other hand, if a scholar’s view of God’s immanence is equal to or less than Barth’s immanent God, they are most likely to claim that he achieves making God immanent. The issue of Barth presenting God’s special revelation as non-propositional, while making propositional statements from Scripture, suggests that Barth is not as successful in making God immanent. He does not define the relation between objective, propositional truth and subjective, non-propositional truth (Erickson 1998:221). On the one hand, God’s revelation presents truth that is subjective and non-propositional, while on the other, Scripture is used as a source for objective and propositional truth. God’s non-propositional truth is out of the reach of humanity, whereas the propositional truths found in Scripture, propose demands of humanity. There is, however, an undefined area where one can connect the revelation of God to the demands of humanity, arguing against Barth who postulates that God is truly immanent.

Barth goes to great lengths to make God immanent. The problem is that God is not immanent in our humanity, but in Christ’s humanity. Christ’s act of revelation has value; Christ’s history has value; humanity only has value in as far as God has elected to become human (Barth 1949:65). Where Schleiermacher was considered vulnerable for showing pantheistic tendencies, Barth presents the danger of the ‘absolute qualitative’ difference between God and everyone else (Heron 2000:396). God’s self-

revelation in Christ reveals his activity, but as such, humanity finds no real knowledge of God (Berkhof 1988:33). Despite Barth's best efforts, he creates a schism between God and humanity. The problem is not one of theology, but of relationships. In this concern, theology follows the following pattern: 'Thus, in thinking and speaking of (our relations with) God, we use the same concepts we also use in our thinking and speaking about (our relations with) each other even though we know very well that God is not like other people' (Brümmer 2005:7).

When Barth, placing all knowledge of God in his revelation, speaks of God in terms of humanity, relations become impossible. In addressing God's revelation, Brümmer claims that it enables us to experience God in the concrete circumstances in which we find ourselves. Many scholars would argue that this conclusion is not a strictly theological point, but rather a relational one. A relationship of love can only be maintained if both parties maintain their personal integrity and free autonomy (Brümmer 2005:30).

In response to Barth's argument with respect to God's absolute qualitative difference, Pannenberg has developed two themes in his theology:

1. Theology must demonstrate the reasonableness of the idea of God in such a way that it does not depend entirely on the assumption of divine revelation.
2. Theology must demonstrate that the Christian faith is founded on reliable historical facts (Vanderplaat 1983:90).

The first point does not deny divine revelation, but in contrast to Barth, it denies divine revelation as the only means of knowing God. Pannenberg argues that Barth has advocated that divine revelation was the solitary means of knowing God. As Barth does not define divine revelation, it cannot be considered in any sphere outside of the miraculous. Since Barth has confined abstraction to divine revelation, such abstract thinking is denied to human beings. Humanity can therefore only respond to concrete demands, not only in theology, but in all sciences. The second point emanates from the first, i.e., that human time and space, considered by human reason and divine revelation, should support theological assumptions. Pannenberg attempts to reinstate human's free autonomy by providing dynamism to human history. He allows the abstract reasoning of humanity's past, and hence the present value in investigating revelation.

Initially, Barth's theology ignores the aspect of human thinking in human time and space. Humanity's thinking is not allowed to venture into abstraction, for that belongs to divine revelation. This is also evident in Barth's dealings with sin and Christ's humanity. By designating the relationship between the Son and the Father to revelation and thus abstraction, it marks a uniqueness between God and humanity (cf. section 3.5.1). This turns humanity's relationship with God into abstraction, being only available by divine revelation. Humanity, to be truly human, requires rational abstract thinking within their time and space. From a soteriological viewpoint, it is the abstract reality of their relationship with God that must become the immanent reality in their time and space. To claim that God has revealed himself, presupposes the existence of God (Vanderplaat 1983:73). The modern era, influenced by the Enlightenment promoted that God could be proved through human reason without the need of divine revelation (McGrath 1994:81). It is this very thinking that Barth contradicts with his exclusive promotion of divine revelation. In opposition we find the Enlightenment in the modern era, rejecting revelation for reason. God could therefore not be assumed, but had to be proven (McGrath 1994:82). To only ascribe value to the sphere of divine revelation, robs human reasoning of value. This also becomes clear when Barth denies the church to be of opinion, to have views, convictions, or even enthusiasms about God (abstract thoughts). The church can only believe and confess (concrete acts) (Barth 1949:87). This extends further to proclaiming the revelation of God: 'Consequently, Barth refuses to worry about the question of how the Church should address non-believers' (Vanderplaat 1983:38-39).

In direct contrast to this view of Barth, Pannenberg views the human situation, particularly the human situation of the individual outside of Christ as follows:

> The key…must be sought in the fact that man is looking for something that always eludes his grasp. What drives him on is ultimately the concern with himself, with the meaning of his existence, his destiny (Bestimmung). Man does not merely ask questions here and there, he himself is the question that demands an answer (Vanderplaat 1983:97-98).

Having considered how Barth isolates humanity from real time and space, we now turn to the key problem that Barth faces, for '[j]ust as the humanity of Christ negatively has no existence outside of its union with the divine Logos, so the Church negatively has no existence outside its union with its Head; but as His Church it enjoys the reality of existence in this union' (Haley 2015:103). As much as Barth claims to establish Christ as the overall reality of all things, he does so to the detriment of reality and value of human beings (Heron 2000:407).

In discussing Barth's Christological anthropology, Harper indicates that Barth did not consider beginning with humanity's 'ungodliness,' 'ignorance,' 'incomprehension,' or 'contraction' – one starts with the presupposition that humanity 'knows,' 'understands,' and 'accepts' God's word (Harper 2015:49). From the points made above, it should be noted that to avoid humanity's 'ungodliness,' 'ignorance,' 'incomprehension,' or 'contraction,' also means to avoid their 'godliness,' 'knowledge,' 'comprehension,' and 'expansion.' The second point – the presupposition that humanity 'knows,' 'understands,' and 'accepts' God's word – argues to the contrary. Humanity, where they are and what they are able to do, is diminished in value. Barth is so intent on ensuring that God transcends, that he diminishes Scripture to be a pointer to revelation and not revelation itself (Harper 2015:125). This may pose to be a challenge to a scholar who relies strongly on exegesis in their theology. Rose (2014) claims: 'Barth admired Feuerbach's subversion so much that he often assigned him to students. He wanted them to appreciate that Feuerbach simply took Liberal theology "completely seriously," which could only mean "turning lovers of God into lovers of men."'

This brings us back to Barth's pivotal point that God cannot be known through human endeavour, but only through his self-revelation (Rose 2014). When this concept is applied to Scripture, the natural argument that follows, is that Scripture is a human recording of God self-revelation. However, according to Barth, Scripture is not revelation, but a channel that God utilises for his self-revelation (Hutabarat 2015:125). With respect to history, Barth denies that history can reveal God, even though God's revelation is historical. Historical research cannot give us proof that it was God who became a man (Vanderplaat 1983:53). Barth presents a theology that denies any form of Cartesian conviction derived from oneself (Harper 2015:164).

These roots can be traced back to the promotion of neo-Kantian thinking, impressed on Barth at Marburg. Reality was constructed by the 'knower' in the 'knowing process,' implying that God becomes a necessary or valuable human idea (Hart 2006:39). This thinking stands in contrast to Barth's theology, that was developed after *The Epistle to the Romans*. Schleiermacher, having learnt from Kant, traces God to the human sphere, specifically to a 'sense of absolute dependence.' Schleiermacher conceives of revelation as a divinely caused intuition in the human being. The Ritschl school to which Barth belonged, rejects this idea in favour of the revelation of God as found in the historical Person of Jesus. This revelation could be discovered by any scholar, being equipped in the scientific process of the historical-critical method (Hart 2006:39, 40). Barth, belonging to the Ritschl school of thinking, may differ on the exact nature of revelation as perceived by Schleiermacher, al-though there is a similarity in the processes used by both. Both processes rely on a methodology that humans can employ to understand God's revelation in Christ. Barth would condemn this point in a similar matter as Feuerbach who argues that talking about God, in the end is talking about humanity (Hart 2006:39-40).

Barth conceives of revelation as something for which human beings have no capacity. Humans cannot perceive God's revelation in any way, as they would perceive other stimuli through their natural senses. This is in fact a complete inability, not a partial one (Hart 2006:42). Since human beings cannot perceive God's revelation, Barth argues that human beings cannot define revelation, which would explain his lack of defining the functioning of revelation. He links revelation and salvation to each other, carrying over the inability of humans to redeem themselves to revelation. As human cannot perceive revelation, no less can they save themselves. From this point, one can argue that just as God's righteousness reveals humanity's inability to save themselves, so God's revelation reveals humanity's inability to know him. This is an important point, even if it happens to be negative, for it clearly indicates that human strategic planning and methodology are unable to overcome this problem (Hart 2006:43).

The alternative conclusion is that God must break into the human inability and reveal himself apart from their incapacity. This underscores the general understanding of Barth's theology. This view denies Barth any systematic methodology to define God's revelation, even if he desires to do so. Due to Barth ascribing abstract thinking to

revelation while denying human abstract thinking, one cannot utilise abstract thinking to define scientific method or methodology. Barth depicts revelation as a miracle that defies explanation. He further presents revelation, coming from God through Christ, as a dynamic event (Hart 2006:45). As noted earlier, where Schleiermacher conceives of humanity as dynamic, Barth places that dynamic on God (cf. sections 3.1.1 and 3.5.2).

As revelation is dynamic and humanity is static, it would be pointless to explain revelation. To do so, would require submitting the process of God's dynamic revelation to a static system of abstract human thinking. Barth describes revelation at best as God giving himself to be known (Hart 2006:45). We find a general description, but not a specific description of exactly how this is achieved, or how the revelation of God can enable humanity to perceive what they could not before. God can take objects, events, ideas, and other objects of this world to reveal himself. In this process, the recipient of revelation, as well as the medium, are lifted up by the third component – God himself (Hart 2006:46, 47). This, however, remains a mystery, open only through faith (Hart 2006:46-47). This would seem to support Von Harnack's criticism that Barth has confused the pulpit and the lectern, the classroom and the church (Schwöbel 2006:24). Although Barth's reasoning on God's revelation is pro-faith, it is not pro-science. The lack of a scientific methodology to explain revelation, ostracises theology from other human sciences. It furthermore removes God from the general experience of human life, as God has to crash into the human experience to reveal himself.

Barth creates a relationship within revelation where human beings are only recipients of God's revelation in Christ. The relationship is diminished to one of mere beneficent care and not loving fellowship (Brümmer 2005:39). God crashes into humanity with a miraculous revelation in Christ, though humanity never partners in this event – they are only recipients. Where Schleiermacher argues for the immediate presence of God, Barth chooses to focus on the transcendent power of God (Heron 2000:403). Barth attempts to make God immanent through the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Hart 2006:51). However, he refuses to give humanity any hold on Christ. In turn, Christ's hold on humanity is questionable, as humanity was the agency through whom God would reveal himself in Christ. Humanity was created and fulfilled exactly what it was created for. As Barth focuses on God as transcendent, all things that are real and

dynamic, become transcendent, even true humanity. The result is that the connection of the transcendent God becomes very small in an immanent reality. We now consider Barth's fear of humanity.

3.7.4 Fear of Humanity

Barth is so wary of his humanity, and humanity in general that he hides in the revelation of God at the expense of individual human beings. Linked to this statement, is the fact that, in his theology, Barth rejects all liberalism and social theology. He specifically rejects these views, as they optimistically hold to human intellectual capacity and progression in society (Hutabarat 2015:128). What is not so obvious, is that he was trained by liberal theologians and began his work as a pastor with these ideas, as a foundation for his thinking. His change in theology, witnessed with *The Epistle to the Romans*, was not simply against liberal theology and social gospel, but was against the liberal theologian that Barth was himself. The original *Römerbrief* was rewritten for the very realisation that 'Barth found that he had to rewrite the whole book because he could see now how much he had been under the spell of Platonic and Kantian presuppositions' (Vanderplaat 1983:31).

Barth moved away from the theology that he had instilled, to a new theology. We have discussed the views of Von Harnack and Herrmann (section 3.5.3) and how Barth adopted some theological constructs of both of them, but rejected those based on human reasoning. With this he does not deny humanity, but what remains for humanity is the doxology (Vanderplaat 1983:36). The condemnation of humanity in *The Epistle to the Romans* must also be understood against the background that Barth's mentors followed in supporting Kaiser Wilhelm II's war policy (Harper 2015:19). Heron observes the following: 'A direct line can be drawn from this moment of profound disillusionment to subsequent criticism of "religion" as "idolatry," the glorification of human cultural self-affirmation over against God, to which God can and does address God's shattering "Nein!"' (Heron 2000:398).

By supporting Kaiser Wilhelm II, Barth realised in which way liberal theology was heading. This brings us to a point in which Barth and Bultmann differ in their views: 'For Bultmann, speaking of God meant speaking of a possibility which confronts people

here and now. But Barth went to extraordinary lengths to disengage theology from any sense of being a human possibility' (Eyeons 2010:52).

Another point on which Barth and Bultmann both agree and disagree, is the revelation of God and the consequences thereof for human beings. Both theologians acknowledge the importance of God's revelation, and in this they agree. Bultmann considers the revelation of God as ideally a current event that takes place in the lives of individuals, which pinpoints his disagreement with Barth, who regards Christ as the ideal of God's revelation (Eyeons 2010:32-35). Barth avoids subjective humanity and finds safety in the uniquely constructed humanity of Christ (Harper 2015:10). Keeping in mind the theological beginnings of Barth, we must also include that first and foremost, Barth is avoiding his subjective humanity, as well as the subjective humanity of liberal theology. However, if we may take a look at Nürnberger's view on the transcendence of God, we read:

> God does not exist; God is…but not as a metaphysical, transcendental God, fixed outside the manifestation and processes of the physical universe…Viewing God as the ultimate Source and Destiny of a complex universe (of which humankind is a minuscule part) emphasises the wonder of such a God making Godself known in a language that is understood by humankind (Bentley 2018:5 of 5).

Nürnberger's view finds various similarities to Barth's view. God, as revealed in Christ is the self-existent one, never in abstraction or metaphysical conception, but as the very real destiny of humanity (Barth 1956:10, 31, 52). Barth presents the transcendence of God and goes to great lengths to make Christ as human as possible to stress God's immanence. What Barth does not allow is for the awareness, consciousness, and being of humanity to play a role in God's revelation. For him, humanity always remains a miniscule part in the cosmic revelation and finds their value solely in Christ (Barth 1956:43). God is transcendent and his revelation in Christ has made him immanent. The transcendence of God is a metaphysical reality and Christ is a historical immanent reality:

> This means that Jesus Christ exists as the Son of God while also participating as such in human essence, and He exists as the Son of Man while participating as such in the divine essence of the Son of God. Therefore, on both sides there is a genuine and true participation (Haley 2015:226).

What is missing, is human participation in either divinity or true humanity, other than being recipients. This poses the question, 'Should the present reality currently be compared with either the transcendent reality or the immanent historical reality of Christ?' Barth uses revelation as the starting point of his theology, but the process is ascribed to the transcendent nature of God, meaning that it was inaccessible and indescribable to human beings. He further strengthens this view by making God's revelation state subjective and a non-propositional truth. To this, Barth ascribes abstract concepts. Thus, al sciences and scientific methods that start with abstract reasoning and theorems are bound to revelation. Barth views all sciences as theology, implying that they are revelation. The only variation in science is the concrete, objective, and propositional truth statements that a respective science must deal with. The greatness of God's revelation in Christ as a past event is fully established, but the dynamic nature of revelation cannot overcome the current static nature of human existence, especially when humanity is robbed of abstract thinking and left with only concrete results. Humanity can no longer delve into mystery, search beyond what is known, other than what God chooses to reveal. Humanity is stuck in the present reminiscing about past revelation and hoping for future revelation, but there is still a current void.

3.8 Conclusion

Having surveyed the Christology of Barth, we have discussed his life and achievements. I compared Barth to his former teachers, Von Harnack and Herrmann to illustrate how his thinking changed from liberal to evangelical theology. We then discussed Barth's foundation for his theology, exploring topics such as 'God for us' and how he conceived of the Trinity. Next, we investigated Christ as God's self-revelation. Under this topic, we considered Barth's struggle against the conception of humanity as having any vantage point in the process of revelation. We considered various aspects of revelation that included ensuring the divinity of Christ. We also considered the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* argument and Barth's conception of Christ's humanity concerning sin. We also discussed the virgin birth and its place in Barth's overall theology, as

to its value and relation to the suffering Christ. In our discussion about how Barth deals with the divinity and humanity of Christ, we considered how God the Son is returned to the Trinity.

I highlighted the issue of biology in the virgin birth and its effects on the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* argument. I further considered the issue of transcendence and immanence. Lastly, I investigated Barth's fear of humanity and how in removing humanity's awareness, consciousness, and being from the equation, it is left out of the equation, the result being that revelation becomes a past and future, but not a present reality. In the next chapter, I will look at White's views, especially considering her life and the theological nature of her writings.

Chapter 4
An Overview of White's Christology

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, we reviewed the history and Christology of Barth to get an overview of the Person and the key aspects of his Christology. In Chapter 4, we will turn our attention to White's views on history and Christology. This will allow the reader to better understand White's background and key points in her Christology. The work of Chapters 3 and 4 will form the basis from which we will compare the views of White and Barth, which will be done in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 will present the process to construct a substantive Christology from the works of White.

The twins, Ellen and Elizabeth were born on 27 November 1827, to RF and EG Harmon. The Harmon couple already had two sons and four daughters (Moon & Kaiser 2013:19). The Harmons were staunch Methodists and Ellen was raised during the American Victorian era which was witness to a new wave of Christian evangelism. The religious fervour of the American Victorian era would give rise to the second great awakening (Blue 2015:71). In her early years, Ellen often heard her mother pray for her unconverted children which left her in fear of her sin and failing to find redemption. She started school and advanced rapidly, but in 1836 she was struck by a stone. The stone was thrown by a classmate with whom she and her sister had an altercation. The accident left her in poor health, scarring her physically to the point that she had to forego her studies (Moon & Kaiser 2013:21-22).

Shortly after the accident with the stone, Ellen picked up a scrap of paper containing a warning of the imminent return of Christ. This terrified her as she feared that she would not be ready for the return of Christ. Not long after that, she heard Miller preach in 1840, that Christ would return in 1843 (Knight 1996:14). Her fear of being unworthy of redemption, the accident with the stone, and the preaching of Christ's imminent return, created much fear in her mind. It was only when she found great joy in coming to know Christ as a Saviour and God as loving, that the fear would be dispelled. Her fear of being unworthy of redemption, her accident with the stone, and the preaching of the imminent return of Christ, were further compounded by her expulsion from the

Methodist Church. She turned to the Millerite movement and became a supporter and promoter of the Millerite message of Christ's imminent return (Moon & Kaiser 2013:23, 24, 25).

According to Miller, Christ would return around 1843, but he settled on the final date as 22 October 1844 (Knight 2015:16, 19, 21). Ellen, as part of the Millerite movement was one of many who awaited the return of Christ on 22 October 1844. The failure of Miller's prediction affected the whole of America (Van Niekerk 2019:59). Many Millerites gave up their belief in the second coming of Christ because of the disappointment of 1844. Those that remained in the Millerite movement, experienced that their harmony dissolved into chaos, when self-appointed leaders presented conflicting claims (Knight 2015:26). In December 1844, she was praying with four other women when she received a vision. Her vision was taken as confirmation of God's leading amidst the chaos that had resulted in the Millerite movement. A week later, she received a subsequent vision in which she was commissioned to relate her initial vision to others (Knight 1996:18-20). Despite her initial reluctance, she accepted the commission to relate her vision. She would become active in ministry for more than 70 years and was central in shaping the SDA Church both in practice and doctrine. John White, a young minister from the Christian Connection, heard her relay one of her visions. He was convinced of her sincerity, and since they were both from the Millerite movement, he travelled with her for her protection. On 30 August 1846, the couple was married in a civil ceremony in Portland Maine (Moon & Kaiser 2013:33).

During the 1850's, White and her husband called for the organisation of the developing congregations. Many ex-Millerites viewed that those churches who had opposed the message of Miller, was of Babylon. Because these churches were formally structured, it was assumed that to organise and structure a growing and developing congregation, would be counterproductive. The Whites pushed for an organisation, based on the need for effective mission outreach as well as legality (Moon & Kaiser 2013:39). Another problem that was present among the group of Sabbatarians as they were known at the time, was the disparity of beliefs. Conferences were held to study views and establish basic doctrines. Furthermore, to motivate church organisation, the publication of tracts and magazines were utilised (Knight 2015:53, 55). A general conference, made up of representatives of state conferences, was held on 20 May 1863, to vote

on the matter of organising the emerging SDA Church. White herself did not vote for the official name, as she had given birth, and as her child was ill, she remained at home. Her husband hurried home after the meeting, but the child died shortly afterwards. At the meeting of 20 May 1863, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists became the unifying organisation and the official birth of the SDA Church. John White was elected as the first president, but he declined so that his push for organisation would not be taken for personal ambition. Byington was voted as the first General Conference president in his place (Moon & Kaiser 2013:40, 41).

John White, the husband of White was an energetic and hard worker who alongside White and Bates were the three founding members of the SDA Church (Knight 2000:31). Due to ignorance of health and overworking, he would suffer several strokes and periods of poor health (Moon & Kaiser 2013:44, 45, 46, 47). Publishing would become his focus, as he wrote several articles and books promoting SDA doctrines (Wheeler 2013:558). One of his significant contributions was placing the focus on Christ within SDA theology (Wheeler 2013:559). As he continued to overwork himself, late in July 1881, he had another stroke and due to complications from malaria passed away on 13 August of that year (Wheeler 2013:560).

At a general conference session from 7 to 20 November 1883, White opened discussions on legalistic SDA theological views. There was a concern among many of them that they would not be saved, and the idea was promoted that works were meritorious to salvation. White motivated that faith and not works brought about assurance of salvation (Moon & Kaiser 2013:57). This theme of righteousness by faith would culminate in a conflict at the Minneapolis General Conference in 1888. Although White was active throughout her years, the General Conference session of 1888 was of great prominence concerning White's Christology. Underlying the argument at the 1888 General Conference session of righteousness by faith, were several other topics. These topics included the Trinity, the full divinity of Christ, and the personhood of the Holy Spirit (Knight 2000:117). *The conflict of the ages* series of books appeared after 1888, which dealt related Scriptural history in a narrative style (Webster 1982:63). Although White always held to the pre-existence of Christ, her writings post-1888 support this concept as well as Christ's equality with the Father (Webster 1982:66). Knight labels *The conflict of the ages* series as likely the most important books of White. He argues that it

provides the framework for her Christology for all her other writings (Knight 2013b:123-124). Jones and Waggoner have presented ideas that righteousness is received from Christ through faith alone (Knight 2000:105). Butler and Smith, entrenched theological voices in the SDA Church, held that salvation was dependent of faith and works (Moon & Kaiser 2013:61).

For the next two years, White travelled with Jones and Waggoner to promote the idea that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner as a free gift of God. As a consequence of the 1888 General Conference session, White was requested to go to Australia in 1891. At the time she was 64 years of age and only agreed after she had prayed and received divine motivation to do so (Fortin & Moon 2013:63). She stayed in Australia till 1900 and then returned to America. For the last 15 years, she participates in motivating the restructuring of the administration of the SDA Church, facing various challenges, and promoting new institutions. She died peacefully on 16 July 1915 (Fortin & Moon 2013:70-82).

This brief biography gives some insight into the importance of White and her documents. For the most part, the focus in the SDA Church has been on her visions and her work. Her theological contributions have been acknowledged, but not truly studied. What follows is an attempt to explicate her theological ideas. The ideal is to combine these ideas and remake White's Christological framework. This will enable one to better understand her contribution and influence in SDA Christology.

4.2 The Process of White Developing her Christology

Fact is that White's writings really pose a challenge to her readers. Her Christology has for the most part been dealt with in the area of apologetics. Her theological views were studied to defend incorrect interpretations or substantiate their proof. Her writings consist of 100,000 pages, spanning from 1846 to 1915. Added to these, are compilations of her work on various topics (Webster 1982). Investigations into her Christology as an entity on its own – disregarding any accusations and misinterpretations – have received little attention.

The Ellen G White encyclopedia (Fortin & Moon 1913) contains a passage on White's view of the divinity of Christ which mainly focuses on affirming that she believed in

Christ's complete divinity (Canale 2000). In the same publication, the discussion of her views on Christ's humanity concerns itself with sin, affecting and not infecting Christ (Whidden 2013). Although these studies are helpful, neither presents a systematised theological presentation of White's overall Christology.

In his doctrinal thesis, Webster has done more extensive work on White's Christology, taking into consideration her views on

- the pre-existence of Christ;
- his kenosis;
- his two natures;
- the mystery of his incarnation;
- his divinity; and
- his humanity (Webster 1982:66, 74, 78, 81, 82, 89).

Some would consider this work of Webster as the most extensive work on White's Christology, even though it focuses on the incarnation (Webster 1982:66). His thesis was never published as a book, therefore being isolated from general public reading. It is thus a challenge to reconstruct White's Christology as a theological paradigm in its own right. What follows in this chapter, is therefore a highlight of key themes in her Christology.

4.3 The Source of White's Christology

Lee relates: 'In White's case, her personal study of the Bible, religious books and journals, and her prophetic visions mainly constituted the soil in which her theological roots are embedded' (Lee 2010:273). Although Lee is correct, the literature mentioned can be questioned as the primary sources from which White's Christology developed. Her early life, marked by a conscious lack of sanctification, dread of eternal torment, and a lack of power to love God, filled her with depression to the point of physical illness (Moon & Kaiser 2013:24). In a dream that she had as a child, Christ appeared to her and she experienced 'benevolence and majesty' (Moon & Kaiser 2013:25). This dream left a marked impression on her, as it filled her with 'holy reverence and inexpressible love' (Moon & Kaiser 2013:24). This early experience of White could be regarded as the starting point of her Christology. She does not describe Christ as a concept, an

object, or in any academic construct, but she describes Christ or what he does as she would describe a friend, e.g., ‘God’s glory was subdued, and His majesty veiled, that the weak vision of finite men might behold it. So Christ was to come in “the body of our humiliation,” “in the likeness of men”’ (White 1940:23). Here we find a combination of God’s glory and his compassion in shielding his glory, that as Christ he may draw near to humanity (cf. also White 1940:158, 277, 425). That initial meeting with Christ in her dream and all other subsequent spiritual experiences form the foundation of her Christology.

The main source to which White closely links her writings, is Scripture (Fortin 2013c:241). The high value of Scripture stems from the fact that she views Scripture as the very word of God (Damsteegt 2013:645). As such, the *written word of God* speaks with the same clarity as the *living Word of God*. Christ is found inside Scripture, and those who find Christ, could enjoy the same experience that White did of the ‘holy reverence and inexpressible love’ (Moon & Kaiser 2013:25). From her initial experience of Christ, she reads Scripture, and in her writings, she expresses her holy reverence as well as inexpressible love for God. In the first chapter of *The desire of ages*, we find the following quote: ‘From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was “the image of God,” the image of His greatness and majesty, “the outshining of His glory”’ (White 1940:19).

White depicts Christ with reference to a holiness equalling the Father’s. She also speaks of the love to be found in Christ: ‘In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love’ (White 1940:26).

The two quotes above are surrounded by references to Scripture and serve as an example of White’s sources in her writings and in her Christology. Her special interest is Christ. Therefore, readers of her work will find Christ for the forgiveness of sins and will be able to apply his loving attributes to their everyday life (Bradford 2006:98).

4.4 White’s External Sources

Webster and Lee agree with each other on White’ use of external sources (cf. Webster 1982:64). However, both of them make the mistake by giving White’s sources

preference to her personal experiences. White's Christology in fact grows from her personal experiences with Christ which she shares with her readers. When we research her use of Scripture, this point becomes clearer. Her application of Scripture is not that of an academic exegete, but that of an expositor. The Gospels, in depicting Christ, are written in the following manner: 'As narratives, Gospels do not systematically articulate their doctrines in the manner of theological treatises or creeds. For many reasons, therefore, it is difficult to discern the classic doctrine of the incarnation in a given Gospel' (Parseinos 2013:399).

White follows a similar writing method as described by the Gospel writers in the above quote. In her writings, she is focused on her reader and their relationship with Christ (Pfandl 2013:650). In describing the communion scene, she utilises John 6:54, 'Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life'[17] to the communion scene in John 13. She also utilises the rest of the passage of John 6, referring to being united to Christ (Jn 6:56) in the communion. By combining these two passages (Jn 6 and 13), she applies the following points:

- Communion is a source of spiritual strength.
- Christ was crucified.
- An individual's union with Christ.
- A contemplation on Christ who has suffered, leads to glorifying God, which in turn leads to proclamation to the world (White 1940:660, 661).

White is very creative in her use of Scripture and easily moves from a conceptual to a practical mode. In using Scripture, she is not considering bringing out new ideas, but simply showing what is already stated (Knight 2013a:648).

She also uses external sources added to her use of Scripture, like the writings of Melville (cf. Graybill 1982). Melville was born in 1798, receiving education at St John's and St Peter's Colleges, graduating at the top of his class. His academic record was so impressive that he was retained as a teacher from 1921 to 1929. He became a minister of the Camden Chapel in Camberwell. It is claimed that his sermons were as

[17] White used the KJV Translation in this instance.

brilliant as they were spiritual (Graybill 1982:i of 98). When comparing White's work to that of Melville, we find the following:

> Melville: When we remember that words were spoken in the presence of Adam and Eve, we must regard them in light of a promise.
> White: A part of the sentence pronounced to the serpent, was uttered in the presence of our first parents, and hence must be regarded as a promise (Graybill 1982:1 of 98).

White (in fact Ellen) excelled at reading for the short time that she attended school (Moon & Kaiser 2013:20). After her accident, when health prevented her from receiving formal education, she read extensively to make up for her loss in education. This is evident in her appropriation of Melville's words and ideas. This process of borrowing from other writers is also evident in her borrowing from the book of Conybeare and Howson, *The life and Epistles of St Paul* (Conybeare & Howson 1855) as well as from Stowe's book *Origins and history of the books of the Bible* (Stowe 1867). These are a few examples of sources that she has utilised in her writings.

First, it needs to be emphasised that her sources were numerous. Second, she did not simply copy words or ideas, as she also introduced new matters or ideas. Ramik was an attorney that was called in to investigate the case of potential copyright infringements/piracy in the works of White. After more than 300 hours of researching about 1,000 cases, he concluded that she did not simply create colourful deviations, but created an altogether new literary work (Fortin 2013b:1029, 1031, 1033). Her extensive reading compensated for her lack of education and contributed to the development of her unique style of writing (Webster 1982:64) – one could add, not only a unique writing style, but also a unique method of thinking regarding Christology.

This highlights another aspect that is essential in her Christology, namely that she was a woman of her time (Bradford 2006:133). Not only her sources, but also her views on matters were influenced by the world around her. There are many matters that she did not address, simply because they were not an issue in her time. This is why, after the 1888 General Conference session, her writings started to focus mainly on topics such as the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the personality of the Holy Spirit. Her books

that were published post-1890 became a ‘gold-mine’ of Christological ideas (Webster 1982:74).

Referring to her own experience, her use of Scripture and other writers’ documents, plus her sensitivity to the needs of the time, she displays a unique writing style and a unique way of thinking. It is specifically the latter that has not been fully explored by scholars.

4.5 White’s Writing Style

Despite her spiritual focus, White purposefully sneaks in theological statements. She writes in *Patriarchs and prophets* (White 1958a) that sin started when Lucifer would not accept God the Father declaring that Christ was God the Son, equal to God (White 1958a:34-36). This is a not so subtle accusation for 1890, especially in light of those who rejected the Trinity and the complete divinity of Christ in 1888 such as Butler and Smith (Knight 2000:112; 2015:93). With this writing style, she imprinted what she considered as key theological ideas, bypassing the natural reticence of her readers.

There is no explanation or even excessive exegesis to support her point above. She does quote Scripture (particularly Is 9:6; Mi 5:2; Pr 8:22-30), using the combination of these passages as the foundation from which she writes. She writes with absolute confidence in the truth of the matter as presented in Scripture. Her confidence arises from the simple reading of the specific passages. Any question to her work could be answered simply by reading the Scriptural passages for oneself. She does explain and elaborate on the narrative, not concerning herself greatly with the views of others, but simply narrating a narrative based on several passages of Scripture. She expresses this mindset when she writes:

> With the open Bible before them, and professing to reverence its teachings, many of the religious leaders of our time are destroying faith in it as the word of God. They busy themselves with dissecting the word, and set their own opinions above its plainest statements. In their hands God’s word loses its regenerating power. This is why infidelity runs riot, and iniquity is rife (White 1940:258).

She simply *presents* Scripture as opposed to *dissecting* it. This keeps her writings simple and easy to understand, and provides a counter-argument for potential criticism of her work.

Another important aspect of White's writings is what Webster calls 'tension and paradox' (Webster 1982:154), referring to the method by which she maintains a balance in her writings. She writes in extremes, specifically extremes in opposites, e.g.,

> From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was 'the image of God,' the image of His greatness and majesty, 'the outshining of His glory.'…If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. Therefore Jesus was 'in all points tempted like as we are' (White 1940:19).

In this paragraph, she expresses the divinity and humanity of Christ. In the process of 'tension and paradox,' she takes two ideas – Christ's divinity and humanity – and states both in extremes. She states that the divinity of Christ remained with Christ, equal to the Father, all through the incarnation (Webster 1982:76-78). At the same time she views Christ's humanity as genuine and real (Webster 1982:90, 91). She does not only apply this thinking pattern of 'tension and paradox' to Christology, but to all her writings.

Not only does she promote two opposing ideas with the 'tension and paradox,' but she also combines the two opposite ideas into a single thought. Thus, the divine nature of Christ, being stated to the extreme, is combined with his human nature, also being stated to the extreme. Both these natures met in the one Person of Christ. In this, White would maintain a similar line of thinking as other authors, like the Chalcedon Council and Barth: Christ's two natures remain separate, but are united in one Person (Webster 1982:74, 78; cf. also Parseinos 2013:399).

The process of 'tension and paradox' allows White to express different ideas to their fullest extreme, while still balancing them out. This balance allows her to deal with various potential problems in a simple manner, e.g., she describes God's acts on Carmel in dealing with the nation's apostasy as an act of 'mercy and justice' (White

1917:153). The Baal prophets witness God's act, but refuse to respond to his mercy and therefore condemn themselves to death (White 1917:154). As such, God is not cruel, he is just. Another way in which she utilises this method is in describing Satan: She does not go through the trouble to establish a 'tension and paradox' here. Satan is only described as seeking self-glorification, lacking compassion, and conniving (White 1958a:35, 36, 38, 39). In doing this, she does not promote hate or any strong feelings toward Satan, but she also avoids sympathy toward Satan. Where Christ would be considered a strong character in her writings, depicting in her 'tension and paradox,' Satan's character remains weak, due to the lack of 'tension and paradox.'

Another way in which she utilises this 'tension and paradox' in her writings, is in dealing with human beings. Very often she demonstrates that the two motivations – fear for God and worldly ambition – are equally strong (White 1917:503, 504). As this does not condemn an individual, she uses it to show that the ideal is to remove the worldly component (White 1917:520, 521). Failure to do so, not immediately, but at some point in time, destroys the individual (White 1917:529, 530). In applying this 'tension and paradox' to humans, she achieves not only a practical spiritual goal but also a theological one. She allows for humanity to have value in their reasoning and achievement, but never apart from God. God therefore always remains supreme and the *a priori* cause of humankind. Humankind is allowed to enjoy freedom, permitted that their thoughts or achievements are not in a contest to God's glory or requirements.

This writing style is very effective, but it poses an inherent danger: The only way in which the balance can be maintained, is when both objects are allowed to go to the extreme. The reader must keep in mind that to have an accurate picture of White, requires two extremes. This danger would not be present if her theological thoughts were identified as such and researched systematically. As it is up to the reader to discover the dominant themes from the scattered quotes, it presents a common danger (Webster 1982:65). Knight's admonishment to avoid an extreme interpretation of White's works is due to the neglect of the 'tension and paradox' that Webster has identified (Knight 1997:71). If and when the 'tension and paradox' process is not followed with the writings of White, individuals would only be able to interpret singular viewpoints to an extreme. Since White's views are invested with authority, her extreme positions can be taken as faithfulness (Knight 1997:71; cf. also Van Niekerk

2019:119). Having looked at the sources used by White and at her style of writing, we now look at themes which are central to her Christology.

4.6 The Incarnation of God the Son

4.6.1 Combining Various Themes

The difficulty in writing about White, notwithstanding what has already been stated, is that she loves linking several ideas into a single thread and then continues to develop these ideas. For example, she starts her series, *The conflict of the ages* with the pronouncement, 'God is love' (White 1958a:33). This is not mere sentiment for her, but a direction for the commencement of a Christian life, filled with God's love toward the individual (Rolland 2013:951). In using 'tension and paradox,' she expands God's love to contain both mercy and justice. She then uses this theme throughout her writings (cf. White 1958a:48, 71; 1917:153, 275; 1940:107, 577; 1911:333, 507; 1950:48, 415). This culminates at the cross, as White states: 'God's love has been expressed in His justice no less than in His mercy…But Christ shows that in God's plan they are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" Psalm 85:10' (White 1940:762). It is obvious here that the two themes of justice and mercy form part of what constitutes God's love and are woven throughout her writings.

White's writings also include and express the idea that God the Father proclaimed the full divinity of God the Son to the Father himself (Webster 1982:70). In her book, *Patriarchs and prophets*, she narrates how Lucifer responded by going into rebellion (White 1958a:34, 35-37). In the next two chapters, she then describes the creation and fall of humanity (White 1958a:44-62). God's reaction to Lucifer's rebellion was to instigate the plan of salvation that was planned before creation (White 1958a:63). Within the first four chapters of the book, she has introduced God as the primary actor, as well as divine love, sin, creation, the fall, and redemption.

White's book, *The desire of ages* deals exclusively with the life of Christ, and elaborates on the themes pinned down in the previous paragraph. The first page deals with the divinity of God the Son and the love of God (White 1940:19). She also includes the following in the first chapter: Sin, the plan of salvation having been established before the foundation of the world, and creation (White 1940:20, 22). These are just

some of the themes which White binds into her Christology. Others include Christ as mediator, king, teacher, and prophet (Jones 2014:148).

The great controversy, which is the last book in White's *The conflict of the ages* series, also employs the themes, the divinity of Christ, the love of God (White 1950:524, 678), and the culmination of God's plan of salvation (White 1950:674). These themes stretch from the beginning through to the end of White's writings, not always apparent but always underlying in her writings. As the need demands, she brings one or these themes forward. This is not only an important point regarding her methodology, but also her initial thinking. She connects everything and when she refers to one theme, it is never separated from the other themes. This comes to show that she completely understands the value and importance of each theme. She also points to greater and lesser themes, e.g., 'The theme of redemption is one that the angels desire to look into; it will be the science and the song of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity' (White 1892:88).

In her writings, White also highlights Christ's character, redemption, love, and faith. She argues that if this is to be the main theme in heaven, it should also be on earth (White 1892:88). This understanding is very often lacking in her readers. Knight narrates that the underlying principles should be discovered by considering the historical context and through rational thinking (Knight 1997:100, 103). He also motivates that a difference should be made between White's writings about an ideal and those about a reality (Knight 1997:92).

Webster is correct that the reader is left with the task of discovering the themes in White's thoughts (Webster 1982:65). The task is, however, bigger than Webster or Knight has conceived. Not only are the themes to be discovered, they are to be related and placed in order of importance. To simply take a single theme and study that theme, without considering the previous themes, will misrepresent White's thinking and overall her Christology.

4.6.2 Relational Christology

Since White does not write in systematic themes, but in a narrative way, it allows her to focus on the relational qualities between parties. Significantly, she opens her

introductory paragraphs in *Patriarchs and prophets* with God as love. It is immediately followed by the idea that God the Father was not alone (White 1958a:33-34). In relating Christ's declaration of divinity, she frames Christ in a relationship with God the Father (White 1940:470). This theme is also extended to humanity at creation (White 1958a:46, 47). This factor provides a strong relationship quality in White's theology, relating God to God, God to humanity, and God to creation. She never approaches her Christology or any of her theological ideas in a purely conceptual or rational way. This also holds that she does not rely on the creedal or classic theological views of the Trinity (Jones 2014:95). All of her theological ideas maintain their understanding of how God relates to God, to humanity, and to creation. This agrees with her sources, external sources, and writing style (cf. sections 4.1.1 to 4.1.3).

One of the key themes in White's Christology is the 'great controversy.' She conceives of a battle between God and Satan which involved all of humanity (Fortin 2013c:267). Douglas adds that at the end of this conflict, confession has no value, as the character of each individual is taken into account (Douglas 2013a:853). Wallace explains that this character involves two components, namely 'justifying grace' that credits Christ's character to the individual, and 'sanctifying grace' that restores the character of Christ in the individual (Wallace 2013:681). This process is developed relationally between God and the believer. The individual relationship with Christ and others will in turn determine the individual character (Wallace 2013:680). This makes one of White's key themes, the 'great controversy' relational. This relational theme can be expanded to the relationship between God and humanity, the world and humanity, and humanity and humanity (White 1940:19, 20, 307, 756). This also plays to the overall process of White's use of 'tension and paradox,' for she could not create tension if there was nothing at stake. The 'great controversy' theme is of cosmic proportions and as such includes all of God and all of creation (Douglas 2013a:850). Every theme, every relationship that White describes, is a lesser act upon the greater stage of the cosmic conflict.

This concept of a universal truth contradicted postmodernity's denial of metanarratives (Burnham 2011:299). Several key points are indicated:

- The metanarrative denied by postmodernity is the human metanarrative, not the divine one (Burnham 2011:299).

- The denial is not based on the lack of existence of a metanarrative, but human incapability to view the metanarrative (Bassham 2016:476).
- Postmodernity has simply traded one narrative for another. Metanarratives are replaced by local narratives (Bassham 2016:476).

The denial of absolute truth would also be a denial of an absolute lie, which results in having only data to one's disposal, which falls into nihilism. If we rephrase that humanity is incapable of viewing the metanarrative or even that the metanarrative consumes the individual, we conceive of a more plausible view. It is exactly this problem that White addresses with the 'great controversy' theme. By demonstrating a divine metanarrative, visible in Scripture to everybody, and relating that to the local narrative of the individual, she maintains meta-truths, while at the same time giving value to what humans believe and do in their local narratives.

For these reasons, her writings have a strong motivation for correct relational qualities as well as a Christological motivation. This highlights another aspect of her Christology, in that there is an oscillation in understanding her theory and her practical expressions of love. Her grand truths are connected to the local truth, affecting relationships. Her intention is not so much to convince the reader of her theological views, but rather to express how Christology would look in everyday life. Not directly linked, but applicable to this are the words of Knight: 'Belief in the myth of the inflexible prophet tends to lead religious believers to isolate authoritative statements from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White and apply them in an unthinkable manner in their daily lives' (Knight 1999:17).

From the immediate context it is clear that this problem arises through inflexibility and the isolation of statements. Knight also highlights the use of the 'divine gift of reason' (Knight 1999:17). This highlights a danger, as I have already stated, being inherent in the deductive method (cf. section 2.7.2). Not only can White be segregated from her historical context, but also from themes in her writings. As indicated, she loves to link several themes together. She employs a paradoxical tension to state two themes in extremes and links these themes with each other. Although deductive reasoning is not without value, it is unable to present a complete picture of White's Christology.

Especially in the case of the ‘great controversy’ theme, a deductive approach can at best highlight key aspects, but will struggle to show the connectivity of themes or the relational quality of various themes.

The theme of the ‘great controversy’ is not to be separated from God’s love, Christ’s divinity, sin, the incarnation, redemption, or any other theme that White has linked to these themes. Although themes may be discussed separately at times, they should never be completely isolated from the larger whole. The isolation of themes poses a potential danger for anyone who wants to do research on White’s Christology.

Another aspect that is worthy to be noted, is the fact that, to grasp White’s Christology, one must be able to grasp both her Christological thought and the practical expression of those Christological thoughts (Fortin 2013c:275). Her Christology has a strong relational quality because she would like Christians to have good relationships with each other. This concept goes further as it implies that her Christology reveals an interaction between issues of her day and her Christological thoughts. The ‘great controversy’ theme acts as a framework for her Christology and also as a guiding principle for individuals in various situations in their lives (Fortin 2013c:275). Just as the various themes are woven into the ‘great controversy,’ they are also present in the individual’s situation. As much as one may view White’s Christological thoughts, one must remember that they are always tethered to her daily and personal matters. This concept can be extended that her daily and personal matters are directly related to the ‘great controversy’ theme. This theme allows that what takes place in the grand narrative or God’s sphere of activity, impacts what takes place in the local narrative or the human sphere. Likewise, the individual’s activity in the local narrative or human sphere also affects other humans standing before God in the grand narrative. The result is that both the grand narrative and the local narrative have value:

> Men cannot with impunity reject the warning which God in mercy sends them. A message was sent from heaven to the world in Noah’s day, and their salvation depended upon the manner in which they treated that message. Because they rejected the warning, the Spirit of God was withdrawn from the sinful race, and they perished in the waters of the Flood (White 1950:431; cf. also White 1940:307, 588; 1911:82; 1950:336).

First, this adds to the ‘tension and paradox’ in White’s writings, as the reader is included within the cosmic conflict. Second, it equates the value of the metanarrative with the local narrative. The metanarrative does not ascribe cosmic and eternal consequences abstractly, but concretely. The local narrative by participation in the metanarrative also participates in eternal consequences. As such, as much as God’s actions have value, similarly the individual’s actions have value.

Having considered the relational quality of White’s theology and Christology in general, we now turn to another aspect that develops from this one.

4.6.3 Purpose of the Incarnation

White relates the incarnation and sin in the following way in her book, *Patriarchs and prophets*: ‘The Son of God, heaven’s glorious Commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race…None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven…The plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth’ (White 1958a:63). This idea was already narrated in *The desire of ages*: ‘The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam…It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne’ (White 1940:22).

Barth outright rejects the idea that sin could in any way cause God to act. The reason is that this would place God and sin on the same vantage point, something which he finds unacceptable (Barth 1956:134). The question then is, ‘Does White see sin as a necessity for the incarnation?’ Webster implies that the incarnation took place as an original plan of God and that sin was not directly linked but only associated with the plan of incarnation (Webster 1982:137).

To either assume a simple ‘yes’ or a ‘no,’ would neglect the structure from which White writes as well as the full complexity in her thought. *Patriarchs and prophets* expresses key themes, building up to the issue of sin and the incarnation. The themes per chapter are as follows:

1. Why was sin permitted?: This chapter begins with the fact that God is love, and it continues with the equality of the Son and the Father. The converse is brought in where Lucifer covets the position of the Son and then goes into rebellion.
2. The creation: Here she relates God the Son's creative work and God's love for humanity.
3. Temptation and fall: This chapter deals with the temptation of Adam and Eve, who then fell into sin.
4. The plan of redemption: This chapter contains the above passage, quoted from White (1958a:63) and explains how it is expressed and what it will achieve (White 1958a:33-70).

These themes reveal White as progressively working toward the statement posed at the beginning of this chapter that 'God is love.' Each chapter in her book is filled with themes that lay the foundation for the next point. As such, the overall motivation of anything God does, including redemption, must be regarded as love and nothing else. In the preceding paragraphs, we find phrases such as 'divine love,' 'rescue the ruined race,' and 'on behalf of man,' which are intended to reflect the motivation as love and nothing else (White 1958a:63).

Should the incarnation of humankind not be connected to sin, God would not have an eternal plan to become a man. This, however, suggests that God was incomplete without humanity and needed to create them as an instrument to reach his goals. On the other hand, if sin is the cause for the incarnation, it gives sin a vantage point over God. From the structure of White's writings, I believe that there is a solution. God as love, ignoring everything else, is the point from which the incarnation was planned. It must be noted that there was no sin present to motivate this plan. Even when God's revelation was rejected by Lucifer, the plan of God the Son being incarnated was not put into action.[18]

[18] There is no indication as to why God the Son did not die for the fallen angels. It may be suggested that since they were not created in the image of God, as humanity were, they are not the 'sons of God' as humanity was children of God. Therefore, treatment of the angels and humanity was both just and merciful, but not similar.

Creation took place and humanity had the full ability to choose between right and wrong. Had humanity chosen for God, it would have immediately ended the controversy between Satan and Christ (White 1958a:58). However, when humanity fell in sin, the incarnation of God the Son as the plan of salvation was revealed and instituted.

Sin had no vantage point over God, but it did have vantage over humanity. Sin meant that humans would transgress against God and eventually die. Humanity had no power to resist either sin or death (White 1958a:61). White is careful to express obedience to God as positive, as she regards obedience to God as the condition for life. She does not express this point negatively, namely that disobedience would lead to death, but it is hinted at as the opposite of the positive (White 1958a:35). God's love for humanity is hereby regarded as his motivation for the incarnation as a means to salvation. God was moved by his love for fallen creatures. When he had all the legal rights to destroy Adam and Eve and the entire human race who was to exist in a state of rebellion, God the Son implemented the plan that only God knew about. As such, the incarnation is linked to salvation, based on God's love, and not on sin. At the same time, humanity's value is not measured intrinsically, but by the value which the Creator places on the creature, not as an obedient but as a rebellious creature. We conclude then from the evidence that God's love was the motivation for instituting the eternal plan of the incarnation of the Son of God. This love was, however, a redemptive love. Webster is therefore incorrect in his conclusion that sin was directly involved in killing humanity, which required the redemptive love of God.

4.6.4 Christ as Key to the Trinity

From the two previous sections, we are able to discern several key theological points. First, God is the one who acts, he is first, especially in love. In response, the creature reacts to their Creator. God acts and the created being responds. From the onset, White does not portray God in an ontological way, but in a relational understanding. From her writings, it is obvious that she believes in the Trinity (Moon 2013:844). Jones relates that '[t]he notion of the Trinity, to a large extent, is not White's main operational hypothesis' (Jones 2014).

White does not approach the Trinity in an orthodox way as found in the creeds and most theological handbooks (cf. Jones 2014:21; Barth 1949:35, 65, 137; Erickson

1998:346). In *Patriarchs and prophets*, she equates God the Son with God the Father, a point which is further developed in *The desire of ages* (White 1940:19, 483, 591). All the time, she focuses on the crucifixion, which is central to all aspects of her Christology (Van Bemmelen 2013:751). All the abovementioned themes that she links with each other, are not only explanatory of Christ's crucifixion, but essential. Christ crucifixion had meaning because it is the God-man who was crucified (White 1911:134).

To maintain balance, White employs her 'tension and paradox' method to express the God-man in extremes. She is very clear about Christ's divinity (cf. Adams 2013:691), while she is also clear about the humanity of Christ (Whidden 2013:692). These two extremes culminate in Christ, while the other elements are also essential. Webster confirms this and indicates that the combination of the divinity and humanity of Christ is repeatedly stressed by her (Webster 1982:78). The exact nature of the divine-human relationship will be further investigated in the next section.

At this point, it is important to note that *The conflict of the ages* series ends with *The great controversy* where the last words are, 'God is love' (White 1950:678). The beginning and the end for White are these very words, 'God is love,' with Christ at the centre. God the Son who became a man, revealed the Father and redeemed humanity. White employs this single theme throughout her writings to make Christ central in everything. In *The conflict of the ages* series, specifically in *Patriarchs and prophets*, she focuses on God the Son's equality with God the Father. She continues to develop this in *The desire of ages*, showing that despite the humanity of Christ, he did not lose his divinity.

White is continually aware of the fact that she is validating Christ as God in her writings, as is clear from the next quote: 'It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, "I AM THAT I AM...He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God "manifest in the flesh"' (White 1940:24). Here she identifies Christ in the Old Testament in light of the knowledge she has obtained from the New Testament. When we compare this quote to the chapter in her book, dealing with Moses, specifically at the burning bush, she repeatedly states:

- 'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'

- ‘And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.’
- ‘As Moses waited in reverent awe before God the words continued….’
- ‘“I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”’
- ‘…to declare to them a message from God…’ (White 1958a:251-253).

Here we read that White is establishing Christ as God, by inserting Christ as God in her description of Old Testament passages. This flows from a concept in her Christology that Christ is the eternal mediator. This does not infer that his eternal mediation is connected to sin, but rather that he was the representative of God from eternity. Sin did not change the mediation, but required Christ to assume the role of mediating Saviour (Webster 1982:151, 152). Thus, wherever God is revealed in the Old Testament, she views Christ as representative in that role.[19] She is not making God the Father and God the Son the same Person, but is simply acknowledging that Christ is God and that he was active in the Old Testament.

This brings us to the second aspect where White inserts a Christological theme in her use of the Old Testament (Fortin 2013a:1021). She describes the covenant as follows: ‘God’s favor toward Israel had always been conditional on their obedience. At the foot of Sinai they had entered into covenant relationship with Him as His “peculiar treasure... above all people.” Solemnly they had promised to follow in the path of obedience’ (White 1917:293).

MacCarthy narrates:

> At no time was the Divine covenant ever reduced merely to a list of legal stipulations with promised rewards for obedience and punishments threatened for disobedience. The true nature of the covenant was rather a loving relationship of wholehearted devotion to one another in which God pledged Himself to the death for the sake of humankind and asked for our reciprocal, wholehearted pledge of love, devotion, and obedience (MacCarty 2007:2-3).

[19] Also compare Jacob wresting with God/Christ (White 1958a:166, 197; 1979:75); God/Christ commanding Moses to set up the tabernacle (White 1940:23); God/Christ warning about destruction (White 1958a:166); God/Christ as the pillar of the cloud and fire during the exodus narrative (White 1958a:311); God/Christ as the shekinah glory (White 1917:18); and God/Christ misrepresented (White 1917:183).

MacCarty does not quote White directly (cf. MacCarty 2007:10-12), but he echoes her view on the covenant (MacCarty 2007:88,142).

Having established Christ's divinity, White introduces the Holy Spirit by way of the Scriptural narrative and equates the Holy Spirit to Christ (White 1940:669, 671, 765). She does not only establish the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit, but links him to the gift of salvation and the necessity of maintaining salvation. As with Christ, she also puts the Holy Spirit into the Old Testament:

> It was the Spirit of Christ that spoke through Enoch; that Spirit is manifested, not alone in utterances of love, compassion, and entreaty; it is not smooth things only that are spoken by holy men. God puts into the heart and lips of His messengers truths to utter that are keen and cutting as a two-edged sword (White 1958a:86).[20]

In her attempt to establish the personality of the Holy Spirit, she demonstrates that the Holy Spirit was personal and active even in the Old Testament, e.g., 'During the patriarchal age the influence of the Holy Spirit had often been revealed in a marked manner, but never in its fullness' (White 1911:37). Here, she only refers to what she has already established. Writing about the Old Testament, she has woven the Trinity subtly into the narrative. She takes these themes and explicate them on the appropriate times in her books.

Jones is correct that White's main operational hypothesis is not the Trinity, permitted that he refers only to the classical theological way in which the Trinity was understood. White approaches the Trinity in a truly Christological manner by making Christ the key to understanding the Trinity. She also utilises a Christological relational theme to establish the Trinity. This view is relational in the Trinity and is extended as relational as to how God wishes to be known by human beings. She further uses a very simple

[20] See also Moses writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (White 1958a:251); God/Spirit resisted (White 1958a:278); Grieving the Holy Spirit (White 1958a:294); People susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit (White 1917:102, 169); and God's children impelled for a special work by the Holy Spirit (White 1917:174).

deductive argument, making it easy to understand and utilise. If we were to outline the argument of White regarding the Trinity, it would be something like this:

- God the Father is God.
- God the Son is equal to God the Father.
- Thus, God the Son is God.

To further strengthen this argument, she links it to Satan's rebellion, God's salvation, and his love, among other themes. Having established this argument, White moves to the second argument:

- Christ is God the Son, who is God.
- Christ has sent the Holy Spirit as his replacement.
- The Holy Spirit is both divine and a personal being.

White presents these arguments, first, by laying the foundation by way of subtle hints, while reading the divinity of Christ and the personality of the Holy Spirit into the Old Testament. Second, she allows the Scriptural narrative as the foundation for making the final argument. This thinking pattern of hers is not only applicable to the Trinity, but also to other themes that she writes about. As much as we understand that Christ is central in her Christology, we must also grasp a second point: 'What is perhaps most fascinating is to discover that White embraced all the major theories of atonement and therefore supported a broad understanding of the reasons for Calvary' (Fortin 2013c:269).

The above quote may seem out of place, having discussed her development of the Trinity in her writings. However, she does not limit herself to asserting one or a few ideas, but her theological methodology allows for all themes to be included. As such, the doctrine of the Trinity is presented as having a Christological basis. Added to her views on the Trinity, Christ is linked to salvation. These themes can be connected to the theme of God's love, which serves as the foundation of her theology and her Christology (Fortin 2013c:265). To conclude then:

- White's Christology has as its foundation, God's love.
- Christ is the ultimate expression of God in expressing divine love.
- Christ as the ultimate expression of divine love, is the centre of everything.

- She interprets and explains Christ in the fullest sense possible.

Having established these points, I will now move to a more detailed investigation of the dual divine-human nature of Christ.

4.7 Divinity and Humanity

White considers the incarnation of Christ as essential in her Christology. What we now discuss, is how she relates to the divinity and humanity of Christ, and how she combines these two concepts.

4.7.1 Divinity of Christ

According to Webster, 'Ellen White always professed the pre-existence of Christ and in her later writings came out clearly in support of the eternity of Christ and His equality with the Father in nature and essence' (Webster 1982:66).

In referencing the term 'pre-existence,' she argues that, as the Father exists from eternity, so does the Son. Christ possesses the attributes of God which equates him to God (Webster 1982:66-67). Despite the early Arian atmosphere in the SDA Church, she presents the deity of Christ in the strongest statements (Adams 2013:691). She also refers to Christ as 'the fulness of the Godhead manifested' (White 1906:145). She identifies Christ with Yahweh of the Old Testament and interprets key Old Testament passages Christologically (Webster 1982:84), e.g.,

> The Shekinah had departed from the sanctuary, but in the Child of Bethlehem was veiled the glory before which angels bow. This unconscious babe was the promised seed, to whom the first altar at the gate of Eden pointed. This was Shiloh, the peace giver. It was He who declared Himself to Moses as the I AM. It was He who in the pillar of cloud and of fire had been the guide of Israel (White 1940:52).

In this passage, she links Christ to several images from the Old Testament. Considering the passages from the Old Testament relating to 'I AM' (Ex 3:14), originally speaks of God (Yahweh). White reinterprets it to specifically refer to Christ (cf. section 4.2.3.2). She argues that Christ is not simply demarcated to the New Testament, but is

portrayed as an active divine being in the Old Testament. She maintains that Christ was essentially and in the highest sense God (Adams 2013:691). As before, the theme of Christ's divinity should not be regarded as separated from other themes.

White views Christ's divinity as essential for his role as Saviour (Webster 1982:117). This connection is in line with the need of the time in which she lived. From the 1883 General Conference onward, she had to deal with the problem that individuals were not certain about their salvation. There was an atmosphere of legalism and many writers were concerned about their imperfections (cf. Introduction). It appears that, in light of her writings, the practical need of assurance is linked to a correct understanding of righteousness by faith, Christ, the Trinity, and how God's love is the motivating factor. This would also underscore the relational quality that she introduces into these themes. Her view of substitutionary atonement in Christ requires a Saviour with two essential qualities: Life in himself, and being fully equal to God the Father.

These two qualities allow the sacrifice of Christ to be sufficient for atonement (Moon 2013:844). She therefore maintains that God is one in the following qualities:

- One in divine nature;
- one in divine character;
- one in divine purpose; and
- one in divine love.

At the same time, she views the Trinity as three personal Beings. Consistent with her relational Christology, she rejects divine timelessness or divine impassibility (Moon 2013:844). These statements regarding White's views on the Trinity, clarify her focus on Christ. Christ is the God-man, which entails the following, 'By His humanity, Christ touched humanity; by His divinity, He lays hold upon the throne of God' (White 1940:24). The connection by which human beings can have a relationship with God, is therefore found in Christ. Having considered White's view on Christ's divinity, we now turn to her view on Christ's humanity.

4.7.1.1 Challenge to White's View on the Divinity of Christ

Currently, White's Christology is challenged. Mansour, being referred to Chapter 2, and other scholars claim that the Trinity is not Scriptural and that Christ is not fully God (Mansour 2011). Mansour claims support of White's writings and quotes them as a source of authority. On the authority of White, he avers, 'Ellen Gould White was easily the most influential person in leading and guiding the small bands of Advent believers into what later became known as the Seventh-day Adventist church' (Mansour 2017:1 of 56). He therefore accepts her authority. A study regarding Scriptural texts where Mansour and Awde present Christ as being born, denies the Trinity and regards Christ's divinity as relating only to Sonship, and not as a shared essence with the Father (Mansour & Awde n.d.:12, 19 of 40). According to Mansour and Awde, their argument is supported by statements from White (Mansour & Awde n.d.:21 of 40). Their misinterpretation of White arises in that Mansour views the relationship of Father and Son in a very literal sense (Mansour 2017:8 of 56). He also ignores the relational aspects of White's Christology (cf. section 4.2.2).

In contrast, Adams indicates that, despite the Arian atmosphere that was prominent in the early SDA Church history (1844-1870), White made strong statements about Christ's divinity. Furthermore, from 1890 onward, she made unequivocal statements supporting Christ's divinity (Adams 2013:691). Adams is supported by Webster, who points out that White held to the eternity of Christ and his equality with the Father in nature and essence (Webster 1982:66). White narrates:

> There are three living persons of the heavenly trio. In the name of these three powers – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ (White 1906:145).

It is therefore a question how Mansour and Awde have misinterpreted these statements made by White. Erickson narrated that, formulating a position on the Trinity, is truly an exercise for the systematic theologian – a position which is supported by others (Erickson 1998:347; Wainwright 2011:33; Moreland & Craig 2003:575). Neither Mansour nor Awde presents any theological training and lack the foundational knowledge to formulate a sound position on the Trinity. This could be the reason why

they have misinterpreted White's writings. This highlights two points that one should consider:

1. The selective quoting of *What?* statements at the neglect of the *Why?* interrelations will lead to misapplications of White's writings.
2. White's writings are not a shortcut to bypass academic study or processes.

The concept of the Trinity in White's writings will receive more attention later on (cf. section 6.4.3). At this point it suffices to indicate the following:

1. She held on to the full divinity of Christ.
2. She should not be eclectically quoted to prove specific viewpoints.
3. Especially in complex issues such as the Trinity, there is a need for a method that subjects White's writings to an academic process.

Next, we move on to White's conception of the humanity of Christ.

4.7.2 Humanity of Christ

This presents one of the more difficult themes. White is dealing here with uniting the infinite with the finite (Webster 1982:81). She attempts to navigate a path between extreme positions, while still maintaining the various themes that are bound up in her Christology. In regard to the incarnation, she makes it clear that Christ did not substitute his divinity for humanity. She uses the term 'clothed' to describe Christ assuming human nature. She is also very clear that Christ's humanity was 'perfectly identical with our nature' (Whidden 2013:692). In one passage she writes:

> Laying aside His royal robe and kingly crown, Christ clothed His divinity with humanity, that human beings might be raised from their degradation and placed on vantage-ground. Christ could not have come to this earth with the glory that he had in the heavenly courts. Sinful human beings could not have borne the sight. He veiled his divinity with the garb of humanity, but He did not part with His divinity. A divine-human saviour (White 1905a:8).

Here White links the clothing with humanity to the laying aside of Christ's royalty and kingly position. Christ veiled his glory and clothed himself with humanity without losing

his divinity. From the previous section, the following four points are key to the unity of the Trinity:

- One in divine nature;
- one in divine character;
- one in divine purpose; and
- one in divine love.

Christ maintained his essential divine nature by retaining these four points. In becoming human, there was a mysterious holding back of the powers of divinity (Webster 1982:84). White depicts the initiation of the plan of salvation as being wholly Christ's choice to which the Father consented to yield to his Son (White 1958a:63; 1940:22). The free choice of Christ in undergoing the process of incarnation, suggests that the holding back of the divine powers was only by the wilful choice on Christ's part. White describes the alleged attack of Lucifer on God as claiming that God sought self-exaltation (White 1940:21, 22). In assuming the human nature, Christ experienced humiliation, but as such, presented a character of God contrary to what Lucifer claimed (White 1940:25).

The question could be asked, 'In what way is the humanity of Christ equal to our own?' Perhaps the key concept here is that Christ did not resist temptation by way of his divinity (Gulley 2013a:697). White narrates:

> When Jesus entered the wilderness, He was shut in by the Father's glory. Absorbed in communion with God, He was lifted above human weakness. But the glory departed, and He was left to battle with temptation. It was pressing upon Him every moment. His human nature shrank from the conflict that awaited Him…Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ (White 1940:118).

The divine nature was 'clothed' in human nature, and although it continued to exist, Christ wilfully did not utilise the power of his divine nature. As such, not only in temptation, but in all things did Christ as God live completely as a human. White maintains that Christ could yield to temptation and sin. She also depicts Satan's temptation as

questioning if the Father would treat his Son in such a manner, referring to the situation of Christ in the above quotation. She regards sinful humanity as weak and assaulted by Satan's temptations. Satan therefore tempts us where we are weak to further remove us from God (Blanco 2013:1212). This in turn leads to 'coldness, lethargy, self-seeking' (White 1940:493).

In his humanity, with no aid from his divinity, Christ experienced human weakness and was tempted by Satan. Since the holding back of divine powers was wilful on the part of Christ, it was only by his wilful choice that the divine powers remained so. His temptation was to deny being a man and to wilfully live as the God he was. It is in this adherence to his humanity, that Christ remained in the right relationship with the Father, still being truly human.

From the abovementioned, it is clear that White considered Christ's divinity 'clothed' within his humanity. Next, we will consider how she conceives of how divinity and humanity united in Christ.

4.7.3 Uniting Divinity and Humanity

White speaks of the incarnation and the dual nature of Christ as a mystery (Webster 1982:78). This does inhibit some theological discussion, as she does not enter into detail on the *How?* of the incarnation. What is evident, is that she denies the deification of Christ's human nature. She regards the divine and human nature as combined into the one Person of Christ (Webster 1982:79). The divinity-humanity of Christ is linked to and with the themes of the 'great controversy,' God's love, redemption, as well as other themes mentioned.

What is significant is that in her writings, she omits the passage where the angel appeared to Mary to announce her pregnancy (Lk 1:26-38). The only mention of this event is a single line stating:

> Before His birth the angel had said to Mary, 'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever' Luke 1:32, 33. These words Mary had pondered in her heart; yet while she believed

> that her child was to be Israel's Messiah, she did not comprehend His mission. Now she did not understand His words; but she knew that He had disclaimed kinship to Joseph, and had declared His Sonship to God (White 1940:81-82).

I do not intend to read too much into this passage, but one must also avoid the opposite error of ignoring the significance. One could argue that White was avoiding the Roman Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception, keeping in line with anti-Roman Catholic sentiment, prominent at the times (Knight 1998:63-65). However, the immaculate conception is based on Mary being 'full of grace' (Press 1994:140). This phrase is not to be found in either the KJV or RV translation of Scripture. It would also be out of character for White to simply avoid a tricky passage, as we have noted that she employed freedom and creativity in her use of Scripture.

However, why did White omit the announcement of the birth of Jesus in establishing his humanity?[21] She acknowledges the relationship of Jesus to Mary as a son to a mother (White 1940:81, 146) and defines this relationship as one of 'love' and 'respect' (White 1940:90). She expresses this relationship, never allowing Mary to have any authority over Christ and requiring salvation, as many others did (White 1940:146). She maintains a balance in her descriptions of the relationship of Jesus to Mary, depicting Mary as a mother by virtue of giving birth to him and caring for him, but not on any other level. Jesus was Mary's son, and his care for her was born from love and respect, not anything else.

At the same time, White expresses Christ as respecting Mary. She wrote the following passage:

> In His dying hour, Christ remembered His mother. Looking into her grief-stricken face and then upon John, He said to her, 'Woman, behold thy son!' then to John, 'Behold thy mother!' John understood Christ's words, and accepted the trust. He at once took Mary to his home, and from that hour cared for her tenderly (White 1940:752).

[21] In describing this section, the use of the term 'Jesus' is to specifically focus on the humanity of Christ in relation to Mary, whereas 'Christ' refers to his whole divinity/humanity.

In a few sentences, White narrates the removal of Mary as the mother of Christ. The transference of kinship from Jesus and Mary to John and Mary suggests several key points. First, the relationship between Jesus and Mary was not based on genetics. This point is further elaborated when White denies apostolic succession based on a denial of Abraham as father on genetics. The idea to have Abraham as a father, according to White, is based on a spiritual connection (White 1940:467). Second, the relationship was based on mutual care. Third, this denies any concept of Mariology between Christ and Mary, something that deserves further discussion that will be done in Chapter 6.

Since this unity of the divine and human natures of Christ is critical to White, she denies any human to have a hold on the humanity of Christ. To allow this, would also in turn allow a hold on the divinity of Christ. White maintains that Christ ascended to heaven, still retaining his humanity, and he will continue to do so through eternity. She avers:

> To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature…God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the 'Son of man' who shares the throne of the universe...In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love (White 1940:25).

White explains that throughout eternity the incarnation will remain the greatest act of God. She further understands this as linking God and humanity in a way that no other creature is linked to the Creator. Not only is humanity ransomed, but also exalted (White 1940:26).

We conclude that White views the divinity and humanity of Christ as united, to the point that they cannot be separated, while remaining unique. This is an act of God, uniting the infinite with the finite (Webster 1982:81). This unification is a divine act of which Mary was the womb to bear Christ. Mary, however, did not have any direct

influence in the incarnation or the life of Christ. White views Mary's motherhood as being transferred to John as the sonship of Jesus was transferred to John. She regards the union of divine and human as insoluble and sees Christ carrying humanity to heaven at his ascension. Having considered the union between the divine and human natures of Christ, I now turn to the discussion on Christ's human nature as fallen or unfallen.

4.7.4 White's Christology Regarding Kenosis and Kripsis

In *The Ellen G White encyclopedia*, the section on Christ's divinity is covered by Adams (2013:690-692), while Christ's humanity is discussed by Whidden (2013:692-696). In none of these two sections do we find a description of how White conceived of kenosis. Kenosis is based on New Testament passages such as Philippians 2:5-8, that the divine Son of God somehow emptied himself of certain divine attributes (Crisp 2007:118). Thomasius proposes the view that Christ had partially laid aside his divinity during the incarnation (Webster 1984:12). Liebner holds a second view, arguing that Christ had completely laid aside his divinity during the incarnation. A third view, proposed by Franck claims that Christ had completely laid aside his divine existence (Webster 1982:12).

Crisp considers two forms of kenosis, namely 'ontological' and 'functional' kenosis. Ontological kenosis considers the being of Christ, whereas functional kenosis considers the functions that Christ performed (Crisp 2007:119). Ontological kenosis is measured by how much of his divinity the Son of God relinquished during the incarnation. There are three things that one must observe here: First, this view contradicts the Chalcedonian view that Christ was a unity of two natures, equally divine and human; second, it also entails that during the incarnation, Christ ceased to be part of the Trinity; and third, it questions how essential the divinity of the Son of God was, if it is possible to relinquish it. Divinity belongs essentially to a divine being and in the removal of divinity, the divine being would cease to exist. If divine qualities are not essential to a divine being, then they would not only be removeable, but also transferrable.

Functional kenosis presents a weaker claim that the Son of God simply did not exercise certain divine qualities during the incarnation. The functional view is more

compatible with orthodox Christology, but still requires that certain positions of orthodox Christology be relinquished. Crisp notes that the functional view contradicts the position of orthodox Christology, for it requires the Son of God to maintain the exercise of his divine attributes (Crisp 2007:141).

Webster argues that White did advocate a form of kenosis. According to him, she claims that Christ forfeited attributes unique to his position as the second Person of the Trinity, such as his splendour, glory, and honour in adopting humanity (Webster 1982:75). Webster also points out that, according to White, Christ did not surrender his essential divine attributes (Webster 1982:76). In other words, Christ assumed humanity in a state of humiliation without sacrificing his essential divine qualities. Webster refers to specifically one sentence in which White declares that 'laying aside His divinity, [he] came to earth to labor and suffer with humanity upon Him' (White 1907:5). Other passages of White's documents with similar words are:

- His divinity was veiled with humanity (White 1940:23).
- His divinity was clothed with humanity (Nichol 1980:904).

White uses the image of Christ, wearing humanity as opposed to divinity. One must also take cognisance that she narrates Christ's divinity as flashing through his humanity (White 1940:158). Furthermore, she also believes that in Christ, the divine and human natures were united in one Person. She repeatedly stresses that the divine and human natures, although united were not confused but remained distinct (Webster 1982:79).

Crisp presents a third option against the ontological and functional kenosis, labelling it 'divine kripsis.' Divine kripsis postulates that the divinity of Christ was fully functional during the incarnation, but not accessible to the humanity of Christ. This created a strong separation between the divinity and humanity of Christ (Crisp 2007:149, 150). What is of interest is that, according to Crisp, several of his views find similarities with White, e.g., they both agree that the Son of God did not relinquish his divinity, but took it on as an additional humanity (White 1940:23). They also both agree that the Word remained hypostatically united to his humanity (Crisp 2007:148; White 1940:803, 832). White's views of the functioning of the divine and human natures in Christ indeed share

more with divine kripsis than with the kenotic views. It then makes sense that she held that Christ was tempted to rise above his humanity and use his divine nature to his advantage (Webster 1982:85).

Webster does raise a point that would require further extrapolation, which is that, according to White, there was a restraint of Christ's divinity during the incarnation (Webster 1982:84). This point would seem to fall back on functional kenosis. As such, it looks as of White's views lean toward divine kripsis, but it would require further investigation for greater clarity (cf. section 6.9.6). Christ's human nature as either sinful or sinless will now be discussed.

4.8 Sinful and Sinless

4.8.1 The Argument

During the 1950s, a representative group of the SDA Church published a book, called *Questions on doctrine*, in response to questions on SDA beliefs and Christology (Anon 1957:7). One of the points made in this book is that the SDA Church and White held that Christ had a sinless human nature (Anon 1957:61). This sparked a discussion that continues up to today. On the one side, some hold that Christ assumed a fallen nature, identical to that of sinful human beings, being labelled post-lapsarian. On the other side, some claim that Christ assumed an unfallen human nature unlike human sinful nature, labelled as pre-lapsarian. The Biblical Research Institute has presented both views in online articles, both written under a pseudonym. Gage presents the view that Christ had a fallen human nature and Rand presents Christ as having an unfallen human nature.

Gage begins his article by comparing the Alexandrian view which emphasises the divinity of Christ at the expense of his humanity. In response, the Antiochene view stresses his humanity. His argument is that the prominence of the Alexandrian view is due to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and Augustinian theology (Gage 1985:1). He poses the primary question in regard to the incarnation's *Why?*, but not to the *How?* This is to avoid human presuppositions and Greek categories of thought (Gage 1985:1).

Rand claims that those who hold to Christ's sinful human nature, are arguing that the sin derived from Mary's genetics. He also indicates an inconsistency in this thinking, stating: 'They believe that Christ was both sinful and sinless in human nature, sinful only in that He took sin-weakened physical nature but sinless in that He never became sin in birth' (Rand 1985).

Rand is very clear that he intends to confine his discussion to the Scriptural evidence (Rand 1985). He presents arguments to underscore his view:

1. Sin is both an act and a relation.
2. All humans die regardless of their acts of sin or not.
3. Humans suffer from broken relationships.

His second argument goes as follows:

1. Christ is one with the Father.
2. Christ maintained his relationship with the Father.
3. Christ was sinless.

Rand focuses much more on the inner consciousness of Christ, than on his actions (Rand 1985). Knight holds a similar view that sin is in its essence relational (cf. Weber 1994:42).

Gage argues that Christ's humanity was similar to ours through genes and chromosomes (Gage 1985:2). In doing so, it implies that in part, Christ's humanity was derived from Mary. This is the key argument from Gage and can be expressed as follows:

1. Human genetics transfer sin.
2. Christ received human genetics.
3. Christ therefore had a sinful human nature.

Gage presents a counter-argument, stating that the opposite view is untenable because Christ

1. was sinless;
2. did not receive human genetics; and
3. was therefore not human like us.

By implication then, sin is genetic and is transferred genetically. Gage makes the following statement which is a key argument of the post-lapsarian view: ‘To reveal Himself as man’s example by providing fallen men and women with a model of obedience…He thus gave them hope that the same power that enabled Him to resist sin was freely available so that those who sought it could also obey the laws of God’ (Gage 1985:2).

Although this view strongly focuses on Christ as an example to humanity, this is not the sole focus, but a primary point of this view. Larson presents a similar view, suggesting that the individual is able to get rid of sin by power made available to them through Christ (Larson 1994:121). A key goal to the view that Christ had a sinful nature, is the potential to overcome sin.

Rand reviews the Greek term for ‘flesh’ and concludes that ‘flesh’ does not denote sin or sinfulness (Rand 1985). He also likens the incarnation to the creation and argue for the sole divine activity of God, and to disconnect Christ from the genetics of Mary: ‘God creatively worked on the planet again, as in Eden. Whether using dust of the ground or Mary’s womb, the life came from Him. Both constituted miracles never known before or repeated since’ (Rand 1985).

Gage specifically argues that one parent’s participation is adequate to instil sinfulness in the humanity of Christ. He argues that to deny the sinfulness based on the genetics of Mary, is to follow the route of Roman Catholicism of the immaculate conception. This argument is taken further that Christ as Adam is a hereditary descendent, hence sinful (Gage 1985:3).

Rand argues that sin constitutes lawbreaking, but also a broken relationship. He adds that Christ came to restore the relationship between God and humanity, hence having a sinless human nature (Rand 1985). He explains that this broken relationship is the foundation of humanity’s general sinfulness, while Christ maintained the correct relationship with God and remained sinless (Rand 1985).

Gage utilises Barth’s views to underscore that Christ, in overcoming sin in a sinful flesh, constitutes true humanity (Gage 1985:4). He does not explain how he relates

this to Barth's views that Christ could not have sinned and was bound to win the struggle (Barth 1956:158). Rand, on the other hand, criticises Barth for this very point that Barth did not allow for human freedom in the humanity of Christ (Rand 1985). Gage utilises Barth's views and extends his (Barth's) argument: 'At times Jesus had to struggle to subordinate His will to His Father's. It is because of this that He becomes relevant to us, that He truly becomes our Saviour and Example' (Gage 1985:7).

Rand concludes that theology does not end in argumentation, but worship, that individuals do not just follow, but fellowship (Rand 1985). He argues that Christianity consists of a relationship that extends beyond rules and regulations (Rand 1985). One can conclude that his concept of this relationship focuses on human response rather than human achievement.

4.8.2 Criticising both Gage and Rand

Their arguments are obscured by a great deal of exegesis, very often of the same terms (such as *sarx* and *hamartia*). Both authors come to different conclusions. This suggests that the different meanings which they have attributed to these terms, are based on personal presuppositions, rather than lexical studies. The meaning of the terms is not extracted as much as inserted by the preconceived notions of the authors.

It appears that by utilising Barth's views, both Gage and Rand are overly simplistic and betray a superficial reading. Both of them quote Barth selectively in what suits them. Neither Gage's nor Rand's views are constructed from a complete consideration of Barth's Christological view or overall methodology.

Furthermore, both authors agree that Christ had a body that suffered the weakness of sin. Gage argues that Christ carried the weaknesses of his human ancestors (Gage 1985:2), while Rand refers to Christ's sin-weakened human flesh (Rand 1985). This begs the question then that if this is nearly identical, why is this a point of debate? The key component in this discussion is the internal character of Christ. Gage argues that even though Christ had a sinful nature, the taint of sin did not rest on him and he had no evil propensity (Gage 1985:8). Rand stresses that Christ's sinless relationship ensured that he remained sinless (Rand 1985). The only fundamental difference between the two authors is whether sin should foremost be constituted as an act or as a

relationship. Essentially, the question in this discussion does not revolve around Christ, but sin. As much as both authors may stress the incarnation and nature of Christ, this is a mere posturing and obscuring of the actual issue.

Gage has the weaker argument, making genetics a foundational point for Christ's sinful human nature. He postulates that one parent's genetics was enough to ensure Christ's sinful human nature (Gage 1985:3). At the same time, he contends that Christ suffered under the genetic law of heredity (Gage 1985:2). Denying biology, Gage misses the point that his argument infers that only the X-chromosome transfers sin to Christ. This would beg the question then, based on genetics, how human was Christ when his genetics only derived from a woman?

Rand's argument is stronger because of one key point, in that he places substitution before example (Rand 1985). He does miss the fault in the goal of those who profess Christ to have a fallen nature. The insistence that Christ's fallen nature led to overcoming sin has not born results. His focus on the example over the substitution of Christ creates an ideal that has not been realised past or present, or can be easily concluded in future.

Having considered the discussion of the two views of Gage and Rand and the motivation behind their respective views, we find that Gage focuses on Christ's internal sinfulness, to present Christ as victor over sin and therefore as an example for humanity. Rand, on the other hand, stresses Christ's internal sinlessness to promote Christ as perfect atonement and full substitute for humanity. From here we progress to consider the current position of the SDA Church.

4.8.3 Donkor's Critique on Gage and Rand

Donkor has also evaluated the position of Gage and Rand. He has done so with a soteriological point in mind. Similarly to Gage, he also references the Alexandrian and Antiochene schools of thought (Donkor 2005:2 of 18), arguing that the response to Arius' views was the following: 'Athanasius argued that salvation can be brought to humankind only by one who is truly God' (Donkor 2005:3 of 18).

Donkor discusses the issue of Christ's humanity, being sinful or sinless, specifically relating to salvation. He claims that when the question arose of the ontology of Christ's human nature, the response was soteriology (Donkor 2005:6 of 18).

Donkor points out that Gage's soteriology presents Christ more as an example than a source of salvation (Donkor 2005:16 of 18). Gage views *sarx* as a synonym for sin but not substantively, as it effectively depicts weakened genetics received from birth (Gage 1985:4). In light of Donkor's comment, one can understand Gage's representation of sin as weakened genetics. As Christ overcame his genetic weakness, humankind should be able to follow and overcome their weakened genetics too.

Donkor notes that Rand develops a case for original sin, not based on the Roman Catholic concept of humanity being seminally present in Adam, but on human solidarity (Donkor 2005:10 of 18). Rand considers *hamartia* to denote sin, as *sarx* refers to humanity as defined by their relationship with God (Rand 1985). This allows Rand to argue that Christ was free of sin (*hamartia*) while indwelling in human flesh (*sarx*).

Donkor specifically criticises Gage for his narrow view of Christ's ontological solidarity with humanity (Donkor 2005:11 of 18). Paul's use of the term *sarx* is far more complex than Gage admits, as *sarx* can refer to sin and depravity, and at times to be under the power of sin (Donkor 2005:11 of 18; cf. Ridderbos 1975:94, 95).

Donkor points out that several of Gage's points rest on assumptions regarding Scriptural passages (Donkor 2005:12 of 18).[22] Gage quotes Barth's view of the human nature of Christ, but neglects a key point: According to Barth, Christ overcame sin by way of his divinity (Barth 1956:40). White, on the other hand, states that Christ overcame sin without advantage of his divinity and solely by his humanity (White 1980:139). Gage does not address this issue, and Donkor is correct in his critique on Gage basing his views on assumptions.

Another issue is that both authors agree that Christ had a body that suffered the weakness of sin. Gage states that Christ carried the weaknesses of his human ancestors

[22] Donkor specifically refers to Hebrews 2:14 and 4:15.

(Gage 1985:2). Rand likewise refers to Christ's sin-weakened human flesh (Rand 1985). Donkor leans toward Rand's view of Christ having an unfallen nature. He argues that Rand's soteriological view, Christ's humanity as unfallen is consistent with his ontology (Donkor 2005:18 of 18). This begs the following question, 'If this is near identical, why is this a point of discussion?' The key component in this discussion is the internal character of Christ. Gage argues that even though Christ had a sinful nature, the taint of sin did not rest on him as he had no evil propensity (Gage 1985:8). Rand stresses that Christ's sinless relationship ensured that he remained sinless (Rand 1985).

Donkor states that humanity's inclination to sin originates from Adam, not in the sense that they all are guilty of Adam's sin, but that Adam represents humanity (Donkor 2005:12 of 18). The universality of sin is not dependent on inner depravity, but subjected to the judgement that underlies the situation of death and sin (Ridderbos 1975:99).

Donkor views Gage as presenting salvation by following Christ's example (Donkor 2005:18 of 18). Donkor sides with Rand, claiming that although Christ is both substitute and example, there is a priority of substitute over example (Donkor 2005:18 of 18). Gage's entire argument is largely based on Christ receiving his genetics from Mary (Donkor 2005:8 of 18).

Rand's argument is stronger in that he places substitution before example (Rand 1985). Something that Donkor does not touch on is that the view of Gage that Christ had a fallen human nature and had to overcome it in his humanity, led to what is called 'Last Generation Theology' (Dwyer 2019). This view asserts that before Christ returns, SDA members must achieve sinlessness like Christ. This form of legalism is well known within the SDA Church but it receives very little attention in academic circles. 'Last Generation Theology' is based in part on reading White through the lenses of Gage's paradigm (Paulson 2019). While discussing the views of Gage and Rand, Donkor makes a reference to White in a footnote (Donkor 2005:15 of 18). This allows him to rely on exegesis and other theologians and avoid argumentation on how to read White (Bradford 2006:200). After having reviewed Donkor's response, we now turn to the current view of the SDA Church.

4.8.4 The Current View of the SDA Church

The SDA Church, despite the statement in *Question on doctrine,* has not made an official report stating the nature of Christ as post- or pre-lapsarian. The current theological view of Christ's human nature is that he was sinless. He took humanity in its fallen condition, bearing the penalties of sin, but not its sinfulness. Thus, Christ was one with the human race, except in the aspect of sin (Dederen 2000:164-165). This view was published in 1997, expressing the need to depict Christ as sinless to justify us and also to be identified with our weaknesses to succour us (Whidden 1997:76). Whidden's conclusion is based on a chronological study of White's writings on this matter. His view found its way into *The Ellen G White encyclopedia*. Here he claims that, according to White, Christ was 'affected' by sin to be identified with us, but not 'infected,' to present a fully effectual sacrifice for atonement (Whidden 2013:696).

Webster agrees with this viewpoint that, according to White, Christ assumed the sinful weaknesses of our human nature, but not the inherent sinfulness of humanity (Webster 1982:96, 99). He also states that for White, Christ had no original sin and that sin was foreign to him in thought and deed (Webster 1982:98-99).

Although not stated, the SDA Church's current view leans toward the pre-lapsarian view as promoted by Rand. What is significant, is that this argument originates from arguments based on a selective quoting of White's works. By indiscriminately applying the theology of other theologians on White's works, one can easily arrive at a different conclusion. For example, Gage has applied the views of Pannenberg and Barth on White's Christology (Gage 1985:3, 4). A similar issue was raised regarding Douglas, imposing the views of Brunner and Webster, as well as Barth on White's Christology (cf. section 2.4.3). Having discussed the link between the conceptual and practical aspects in White's writing, we now turn to the Christological and practical issues.

4.8.5 Christological and Practical Issues

During the 1960s, Brinsmead promoted perfectionism (Knight 2000:173). He based his views mainly on the writings of White, but was successfully countered when requested to prove his point from Scripture (Bradford 2006:189). Of those that successfully countered Brinsmead was Ford, who was head of the theology department at

Avondale College (De Waal 2020). What is noteworthy, is that White never considered her writings to be used to settle doctrinal matters (Knight 1997:27). As with Gage and Rand, as well as others, I have indicated in Chapter 2 that the process of quoting White selectively, continues. Selective quotes of White's views are used as authoritative statements in doctrinal discussions, despite her rejection of this method.

The logical continuation of the view that Christ had a sinful human nature, is labelled as 'Last Generation Theology.' It promotes the idea that, in the same way that Christ overcame sin, human beings should and must overcome sin (Gage 1985:1). In a report given on a conference of speakers promoting 'Last Generation Theology,' Dwyer reports: '"It wasn't God's plan for us to still be here," Dr McNulty said in his opening address on "Why Jesus Waits." A neurologist from Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, McNulty attributed Christ's delay to the insubordination, unbelief, worldliness, and strife among the Lord's people. We don't often look at it from God's point of view, he suggested, to realize that we might be delaying Him' (Dwyer 2019).

Here we observe a practical outflow of a theological point of interpretation of White, even though this theological view is not supported by the current official SDA Church publications. The consequences are that the 'Last Generation Theology' expects to have a group of people who can demonstrate that it is possible to live without sin (Knight 2000:181).

Gage repeatedly demonstrates that his theological views are grounded on the need for Mary's genetics. In his view, these genetics are sinful, thereby avoiding the Roman Catholic view of the immaculate conception. What he fails to discern, is that Mary's so-called sinlessness resulting in Christ's sinlessness is just a part of the Roman Catholic theology (Press 1994:136-140). Denying one part of the immaculate conception, therefore does not deny the entire view. As shown in the previous chapter (section 3.6.1), the issue of the genetics of Mary poses a problem to the uniqueness of Christ's humanity. We have also referred to the fact that White omits the angel's announcement of the virgin birth from her writings, and that the relationship between Christ and Mary seems to deny genetic inheritance (cf. section 4.3.3).

The biggest problem with the 'Last Generation Theology' is that it would turn Adventism into a sect (Knight 2015:142; cf. 2000:167). This demonstrates that White's Christology, which is connected to practice, can be evaluated on two levels: One can either consider the logic of an individual's interpretation of White's Christology, or one can evaluate White's Christology based on its practical outcomes. The success of the SDA Church, based on White's principles, is not shared by other groups, although they also adhere to White, such as the Davidians and Reformed Adventists (Van Niekerk 2019:100-102).

4.8.6 Whidden and Larson on White's view on Christ's Sinfulness/Sinless-ness

Having discussed Gage and Rand above, we now turn to Whidden and Larson who have both investigated White's works and present differing views on her conception of Christ's sinful/sinless human nature. Larson quotes White's documents, stating that Christ took upon himself a 'sinful' or 'fallen' human nature (Larson 1952:8, 13). This is followed by quotes that are intended to give a similar impression as the previous quotes with words such as 'infirmities,' 'desires,' and 'offending' (Larson 1952:8). He then proceeds with the following: '…statements that range from being difficult to understand to being utterly meaningless if applied to Christ in the nature of the unfallen Adam' (Larson 1952:8). From this last section, the reasoning demonstrates that Larson works from the preconceived notion that Christ had a sinful human nature. The grouping of statements into specific categories and the focus on key terms are set up to arrive at the conclusion that White viewed Christ's human nature as sinful.

Whidden avoids the use of the terms 'post-fall' and 'pre-fall,' opting to rather employ the terms 'identity' and 'uniqueness.' He infers that Christ had to be like humans to identify with them, hence the term 'identity.' He adds that, to redeem us, Christ had to be unique to us, hence the term 'uniqueness' (Whidden 1997:15, 16). He first considers what White means by sin and demonstrates that she views sin as an act, but also as a condition of depravity inherited from Adam (Whidden 1997:18, 20).

To avoid simply comparing quotes, I will focus on a letter penned by White in early 1896, referred to by Whidden (1997:59). In this letter, White wrote to a pastor and his wife in which she made several statements regarding Christ's human nature. As both

Larson and Whidden address this letter, it will be ideal to compare the two views. The one paragraph that provides the most controversy is:

> Do not set him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is the second Adam…But Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God. He took upon Himself human nature, and was tempted in all points as human nature is tempted. He could have sinned; He could have fallen, but not for one moment was there in Him an evil propensity. He was assailed with temptations in the wilderness, as Adam was assailed with temptations in Eden (White 1896:Par 14).

White denies that Christ had propensities to sin. She furthermore proposes Jesus as sinless over against the first Adam who was tainted with sin. Christ took our human nature, but without the propensity to sin. In referencing Christ's birth, White further states: 'These words do not refer to any human being, except to the Son of the Infinite God. Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption' (White 1896:Par 16).

Larson's reaction to this letter is to claim that White was neither educated nor a theologian and that she could not express her ideas correctly (Larson 1952:30). This is in contradiction to his previous use of White's quotes that did not present a similar problem (Larson 1952:10). Whidden approaches White's writings on this matter in a chronological way, like Webster does it. He discusses White's quotes before 1888 and after,[23] concluding that she views Christ's humanity as tension between his sinless humanity and our sinful humanity, which Christ took upon himself (Whidden 1997:55). The Baker letter (White 1896) confirms that White's views are in accordance with Whidden's research. Whidden concludes that, in dealing with this matter, White moves between the terms 'sinless' and 'sinful.' In her references to justification and Christ as a substitute, she describes Christ in terms of pre-fall. When dealing with sanctification and Christ as an example, she describes Christ as post-fall (Whidden 1997:75).

[23] 1888 is the chosen date as it was the year of the General Conference session in Minneapolis, where several Christological issues were addressed, including Christ's human nature. It is after this year that White's writings are providing most extensive Christological ideas (Webster 1984:74).

Larson, also a post-fall advocate, avers: ‘They understood condemned sin in the flesh to mean that Christ had lived a life without sin in sinful flesh in order to demonstrate that man, by using the same faith, trust, and God-dependency that He used, can successfully do the same thing’ (Larson 1952:13).

In this matter, Whidden remains consistent with his reasoning and is willing to concede that both elements are present in White’s writings. He presents a one-sided view that is actually a narrow view of the matter. The view that Christ possessed a post-fall nature, such as being propagated by Gage and Larson, suffer from inconsistency in their theological reasoning. The key inconsistency is the selective quoting of White’s literature as well as those of theologians such as Barth. Their post-fall view in fact neglects what was written by White. The pre-fall view promoted by scholars like Whidden, Webster, and Dederen is more consistent. However, the pre-fall proponents fail to address White’s quotes promoting Christ’s sinfulness. Whidden has provided two broad categories in which White presents Christ as sinless in regards to substitution, and sinful as an example to humanity. Although helpful, this view lacks specific criteria to help reconstruct White’s Christological theoretical framework. In the following section, I will present my critique on White’s Christology.

4.9 Preliminary Critique on White’s Christology

I presented criticism on Barth’s Christology and it would only be fair if I do the same to White’s Christology. As White’s Christology has not been presented in a theoretical framework, criticism is somewhat difficult. One factor that stands out is that scholars should not make the mistake of critiquing White’s views by selectively quoting or comparing it. This is an incomplete way of exegesis and results in an incomplete critique on her. Another factor is when scholars start to get personal, critiquing White as a person, rather than her views under discussion. In the next section, one thing with which White struggled, will be discussed.

4.9.1 White’s Childhood Fear

Having accepted the Millerite message of Christ’s imminent return, White feared her lack of readiness. Early Methodists viewed sanctification as a second blessing that would result in holiness in the heart and victory over sin. The early Methodists held that only those who are sanctified, will go to heaven. She was concerned about ‘the

three issues – her conscious lack of sanctification, her terror of eternal torment, and her consequent inability to love and trust God – all combined to again bring "condemnation," "despair," "gloom," "anguish," and "hopelessness." Stressed to the point of weight loss and illness, she still feared to confide in anyone' (Moon & Kaiser 2013:24).

After White had two dreams, she consulted with Stockman, a 'Millerite' minister, in whom she had great confidence (Moon & Kaiser 2013:25). Although the dreams and the meeting had a positive effect on the outlook of White, it is significant to note that the three issues mentioned, found specific attention in her works. The idea of God as love has been addressed and can be regarded as a response to her early views. Regarding eternal torment, she argues:

> How repugnant to every emotion of love and mercy, and even to our sense of justice, is the doctrine that the wicked dead are tormented with fire and brimstone in an eternally burning hell; that for the sins of a brief earthly life they are to suffer torture as long as God shall live. Yet this doctrine has been widely taught and is still embodied in many of the creeds of Christendom (White 1950:535).

At first, it appears that the issue being dealt with, is sanctification, but upon further investigation, it becomes clear that sanctification is not the cause of the problem. We now consider the underlying issue and its expression in sanctification.

4.9.2 The Expression of the Issue in Sanctification

White views sanctification as God's initiative, with a response by the believer. Toews detects a danger in this view: '[T]he danger close at hand is that of falling into the practice of seeking righteousness by works and human efforts' (Toews 2013:1128-1129).

The questions arise, 'Is White unclear regarding sanctification? Why would such a danger exist at all?' In response to Weber, Larson lists a number of quotes by White regarding the overcoming of sin (Larson 1994:117-121). He believes in the 'Last Generation Theology.' This view holds that Christ wishes to be manifested by his church. Christ came in sinful flesh, overcame sinfulness, and achieved perfection. As Christ

has done this, it serves as an example and an ideal for Adventists (Knight 2000:145). What is significant, is that Larson begins with the statement that the idea, 'that man cannot fully obey the commandments of God,' is a lie of Satan. The second statement is that Christ came to disprove this lie (Knight 2000:117). For Larson, this starting point dictates his foundation and his ordering of White's quotes. One of these quotes states: 'Satan was urging upon men the belief that there was no reward for the righteous or punishment for the wicked, and that it was impossible for men to obey the Divine statutes' (White 1958a:88).

Here Larson (as quoted by White) is correct, but in that same chapter, where White elaborates on the life of Enoch, she promotes the following:

- By the grace of God, one can resist sin.
- The closer Enoch connected with God, the deeper was the sense of his weakness and imperfection.
- For 300 years, Enoch was looking for purity of soul.
- However, like Enoch, God's people will seek purity of heart and conformity to his will, until they will reflect the likeness of Christ (White 1958a:85, 87-89).

It should be noted that White does not equate commandment-keeping with sinlessness. This would make sense because White differentiates between acts of sin and a sinful human nature (Webster 1982:95). The Ellen G White Estate compiled a book of White's sermons, ranging from 1881 to 1902, dealing with faith, justification, and sanctification (White 1979:11). In the book, *Faith and works*, White clarifies sanctification:

- The absence of devotion, piety, and sanctification of the outer person comes through denying Christ our righteousness (White 1979:15).
- Works without faith are dead, and faith without works is dead. Works will never save us; it is the merit of Christ that will avail on our behalf. Through faith in him, Christ will make all our imperfect efforts acceptable to God (White 1979:48).
- We can never attain perfection through our good works. The soul who observes Christ by faith, repudiates his righteousness. They regard themselves as incomplete, their repentance insufficient, their strongest faith nothing but feebleness, and their most costly sacrifice as meagre, while they sink in humility at

> the foot of the cross: 'Ye are complete in Him' (Col 2:10). Now everything is at rest in their soul. No longer do they have to strive and find some worthiness in themselves – some meritorious deed by which to gain the favour of God (White 1979:108).

The above quotes are examples that express White's clarity on the theme of sanctification. This implication is that White's view of sanctification is correct. As noted in my discussion of Gage and Rand, I argued that the issue was not Christ, but a definition of sin. Here it is indicated that the problem is not sanctification, as Christology is brought into this view. This would entail that there is something else in White's Christology that could be problematic.

4.9.3 The Root of the Problem

There is a twofold problem: First, White does not define in detail points of distinction between two topics (Douglas 2013c:1107). Second is the use of White's words, which derive from a wide vocabulary. Some of the terms that she uses are 'self-control,' 'Christ-likeness,' 'holiness,' and 'perfection,' to name a few (Larson 1994:118). From the examples below we conclude that White does not always use certain words in an identical manner throughout her writings:

- Self-control is equated to discipline (White 1911:309) as well as full control of physical, mental, and moral powers (White 1940:222).
- Christ-likeness can mean reflecting the glory of God (White 1911:545) or relating to purity and steadfastness (White 1940:312-313).
- Holiness is a surrender to God's will (White 1911:51) and it is also sanctification (White 1911:52).
- Perfection can refer to character development (White 1940:123) or it can refer to Christ's righteousness (White 1940:357).

Because of the unsystematic way in which White has written, one should not assume that a specific word or phrase pertains to a specific meaning. The context should dictate the meaning, and not merely words.

Another aspect of White's writings brings us closer to the actual problem: White writes a great deal on health reform, which in turn has led SDA Church members to live five to 10 years longer than the general population (Fortin 2013c:264). The problem is that most Adventists do not like to read White's writings moderately, as it is common for them to push their favourite topics to the extreme (Foster 2011). Despite the positive results in health, many writings are warning against going to extremes, like making health an issue of salvation (Manu 2005).

White composes her views by combining certain themes into a single thread with an important theme. Health was important to her, but not equally as important as salvation. Douglas states that White has always placed 'heart reform' before 'health reform' (Douglas 2013b:859). He also argues that White has regarded health reform as part of restoring the image of God in human beings (Douglas 2013b:858, 859). Considering the time of White's writing, health in America was of a very low quality. Life expectancy in the 1800s was 32 years, in 1850, 41 years, and by 1950, it was 67 years. The general diet of the people of the time consisted of meat and desserts, avoiding fruit and vegetables. Bathing was a rare occurrence and sanitation affected drinking water (Knight 1998:30-32). What one must not miss is that this general ill-health also applied to SDA Church members. This ill-health was the one extreme and White's health reform was the other extreme, intended to bring a balance. General health conditions have improved in the meantime, but this leaves the positive health reform of White without a counterbalance which results in extremes.

As part of these themes, there are two other themes which are combined and can be termed 'Christ did it all' and 'Believer can do it all.' White views Christ's condescension in the incarnation as one of great humiliation (White 1940:25). In light of this, she claims that believers can similarly provide their means and abilities to work for God (White 1911:71). Knight claims that in White's writings, she often refers to an ideal, then at other times to the reality. He further warns that one should not confuse these two (Knight 2013c:902). The challenge here is that there is no clear indication as to which one is real and which is the ideal. When looking at the two above themes, one might argue that 'Christ did it all' is the reality, while 'believers can do it all' is the ideal.

This poses no problem. Christologically it maintains the priority of Christ, while giving no vantage to humanity over divinity, when the formulation is as follows:

- ‘Christ did it all’ as the reality; and
- ‘believers can do it all’ (also) as the reality.

In this case, human works become a requirement to salvation. When human works are a necessity in any way added to the plan of salvation, it infers that God must reward the works of humanity. Christologically this poses a problem as it gives humanity vantage over God.

As it is obvious that White did not do this intentionally, her writing style have combinations of several themes being brought together, which are not always separated in importance. A minor issue like this one has caused a great deal of discussion.

4.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, we investigated White’s historical background and Christology. Her Christology arose from her personal experiences of first fearing God and later learning that he is a loving God. This would motivate her to construct her Christology so that her readers would come to the same conclusion. She made ample use of Scripture, using Scriptural passages as foundation for her Christological ideas. Furthermore, she combined or elaborated on Scriptural passages to create unique Christological perspectives. External sources were used by her, such as Melville, Conybear, and Howson, altering their ideas to produce unique perspectives. She utilised ‘tension and paradox’ to present two ideas with equal force and to maintain balance in her Christology, and also emphasised the relational aspects in her Christology. Furthermore, she struck a balance between a grand metanarrative and an individual local narrative.

With reference to the incarnation, she combined several themes in her writing and would bring one or more themes to the fore as she deemed fit. The purpose of the incarnation, according to White, was based on God’s love for the fallen humanity, and that it was neither a presupposed plan of God, nor sin, forcing God to become a man. According to her, Christ served as the key to understanding the Trinity. She utilises a

simple deductive argument to equate Christ to the Father as God, and the Holy Spirit to Christ as divine and personal.

White promoted the full divinity of Christ. She also viewed the humanity of Christ as complete, as God lived as a man in the fullest sense with no aid from his divinity. With reference to Christ's divinity and humanity, she neglected the angel's announcement to Mary about the birth of Christ. She furthermore denied a genetic connection between Mary and Christ. Although Mary was the womb from which Christ was born, and she cared for him, White allowed no vantage of Mary over Christ. Regarding Christ's humanity, there are two views – the pre-lapsarian and post-lapsarian – with a long history of discussion. The current position of the SDA Church leans toward the pre-lapsarian view, while there are still others who hold to the post-lapsarian view. White's Christology can be evaluated on the internal logic or the practical outcome.

Lastly, I critiqued White's Christology in that her inherent childhood fear of not being worthy of God, continued to drive much of her work. I have also concluded that White was not always consistent in her use of words and that the meaning of words vary from passage to passage. She also did not differentiate between justification and sanctification. Additionally, ideas in White's Christology must be correctly interpreted as the ideal or the real. Confusing these two concepts, could lead to misinterpretations and extreme interpretations of her work. Having now considered the Christological pointers in White's documentation, we will compare her views to Barth's in the next chapter.

Chapter 5
A Comparison between the Christology of White and Barth

5.1 Introduction

Having overviewed the Christology of both Barth and White, the next step is to compare their views with each other. It should be noted that, due to the lack of White's Christological framework, the comparison between her and Barth should not be considered as comparing two theologians. In this chapter, the ideas of Barth will serve as a backdrop to establish the *What?* points of White's Christology. The establishment of these *What?* points will serve as points of reference in developing the *Why?* interrelations between the *What?* points in Chapter 6. The comparison between the documents of White and Barth will clarify and also demonstrate the gaps that need to be filled by the *Why?* points, revealing the interrelations required for a complete framework of White's Christology.

White and Barth write in different eras with different challenges. White writes to establish and guide the SDA Church. As such, her focus is on more immediate concerns regarding knowledge of Christ. Her goal is for every Adventist to have a relational knowledge of God as presented in Christ.

Barth writes to counter socialism and liberal theology. He therefore depicts God as the one who reveals himself beyond the reach of liberal theologians and the processes of historical criticism. The very real threat, as he understands it, was the support to political motivations on the part of liberal theology. He regards Schleiermacher as anthropocentric and constructs his theology theocentric as alternative to Schleiermacher (Eyeons 2010:17).

White writes with a spiritual perspective in mind, whereas Barth writes in a strict systematic theological sense. In the next section I have categorised the similarities and differences between White and Barth in two groupings. The first category deals with differences and similarities in their methodologies, while the second category depicts the routes taken to arrive at similar conclusions.

5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 Paradoxical and Dialectical Reasoning

Both Barth and White are applying the process of uniting two seemingly opposing ideas: Barth by way of dialectical reasoning and White by way of paradox. Dialectical argumentation requires the juxtaposing of two contradictory ideas and resolving the tension by looking for higher truth (Deist 1984:45). A paradox is a statement which, at face value appears contradictory, by combining two contradictory ideas, yet depicting an expression of truth (Deist 1984:123). Hartley defines a paradox as follows: 'A paradox is generally a puzzling conclusion we seem to be driven toward by our reasoning, but which is highly counterintuitive, nevertheless' (Hartley 1995).

It seems logical to utilise either dialectical or paradoxical reasoning in relating to Christology, since both these fields present several opposing ideas, i.e., Christ as both 'God' and 'man,' being 'sinless' and 'sinful.' However, existing paradoxes within the field of theology do not necessitate the use of a dialectical method. Other theologians deal with Christological paradoxes without the need to resort to the dialectical method, but simply reference Scripture (Erickson 1998:755). They also refer outright to the Christological paradoxes as mysteries (Berkhof 1988:324).

Hargrave and Van de Ven make a distinction between paradoxical and dialectical reasoning (Hargrave & Van de Ven 2017:320). Paradoxical reasoning accepts contradictory elements as simultaneously valid and deals with them while combining differentiation and synergy, not aiming at resolving the tension. Dialectical reasoning views the contradictory elements in a dynamic relation, not as coexisting in persistent tension, but rather as involving transformation through conflict (Hargrave & Van de Ven 2017:320).

This poses a subtle difference between Barth and White, in that Barth uses a dialectical method and White a paradoxical method. It also ties into the respective authors' backgrounds and goals in writing. Barth as a theologian brings about synthesis from seemingly two opposing viewpoints (Hargrave & Van de Ven 2017:326), which allows him to utilise the best from opposing views while avoiding the extremes presented in the respective views. White writes spiritual material which presents tension between two seemingly contradictory ideas, without the need to resolve the tension. She retains

the tension as a mystery and a challenge for others to deal with. Both authors utilise these methods to achieve certain goals in their writings as will be discussed below.

5.2.2 Paradoxical and Dialectical Methods Found in the Writings of White and Barth Respectively

Barth's writings can be conceived of as a builder who establishes each basic idea before moving on to the next. Having established the doctrine of the Trinity, he assumes that it is also established in the mind of the reader (cf. section 3.1.2). Sometimes, he refers back to a previous discussion, but for the most part, he avoids mixing his current discussion with a previous one. The consequences are that it makes him one of the more difficult theologians to read, as it is required that one keeps track of what has been written, while trying to understand what is currently being stated. Furthermore, Barth dislikes the concept of systematic theology and has most probably intended his writings to be unsystematical. This poses a challenge for anyone who tries to systematise Barth's ideas (Lowery 1992:20).

Scripture, for Barth, forms the bridge between liberal theology and evangelical theology (Baxter 1981:78). Scripture becomes the link that subjects Barth, and it intends to do the same with his readers in order to understand the revelation of God better (Barth 1956:208). In his exegesis, he bypasses, to a large extent, any evidence outside Scripture, expecting Scripture to be sufficient as an explanation of God's revelation (Baxter 1981:78). He has therefore fashioned the removal of God's revelation from the field of history, science, philosophy, or any other human-centred system of thought (Eyeons 2010:38). Scripture is utilised as the channel of God's revelation, as the revelation found in Christ, and Barth is merely relating the divine relationship as pointed out in Scripture.

When moving from the general non-propositional revelation of God to the more precise aspects of that revelation, Barth utilises dialectical reasoning. His view on the Trinity, for instance, moves between the extremes of modalism and tritheism (cf. section 3.1.3). The conclusion is a transformation that arises through conflict (Hargrave & Van de Ven 2017:320). This conflict becomes obvious as some scholars charge Barth with modalism, while others observe tritheism in his works (McGrath 1994:262). The way in which the Trinity is viewed, includes each Person in the process of God's revelation

with a specific part of that revelation, while keeping Christ as the key proponent of God's revelation. Barth therefore maintains the individuality of the Father, Son, and Spirit, together with the unity of the Trinity (Barth 1956:1, 10).

This method also becomes apparent in Barth's description of Christ's humanity as *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* (section 3.3.1). He specifically adds a negative connotation to *anhypostasis*, and a positive one to *enhypostasis*, to create the thesis and antithesis. This brings about a transformation of Christ's humanity that is unlike anything else and in turn denies humanity of a vantage point over God.

The above is also applicable to Bath's use of Christology, as some scholars view Barth's Christology as Antiochene, while others regard it as Alexandrian. Barth's oscillation between Alexandrian and Antiochene views is the conflict from which he creates a dialectical Chalcedonian view (Roach 2013:44). He creates a new position that transcends, and at the same time retains the best of the Alexandrian and Antiochene views. In this discussion, one also finds that he employs the dialectical process between Lutheranism and Reformed theology (Barth 1956:163; Kantzer 1958:26, 27). In summarising the divinity and humanity of Christ, he denies a synthesis of the divine and human aspects and declares them to be one new creation in Christ (Barth 1956:23, 24). He avoids the paradoxical method of having two extremes coexisting, therefore combining the two extremes into a new expression of truth.

It should be noted that sometimes Barth foregoes the dialectical method when facing insurmountable difficulties. When discussing the issue of natural revelation, he does not apply the dialectical method. To avoid an interpretation of Psalm 19 and Romans 1 that would allow humanity the ability to perceive God in general revelation, he opts to reinterpret these passages in his own way (Erickson 1998:189, 190).

White employed Scripture in the simplest manner possible, to make it accessible to her readers. She does not add new ideas, but simply elaborates on how she interprets a specific passage (Knight 2013a:648). In this simple manner, she exposes various themes such as 'God is love' – the theme she expands into two sub-themes of 'mercy' and 'justice' (cf. section 4.2.1). She then links these themes together in the best way she sees fit. Although it is not always mentioned, it is useful to keep in mind that she

always retains these various themes. Although she may not specifically reference them, the various themes are always underlying a specific discussion in her writings.

As indicated above, this is as much a strength as it is a weakness in the work of White's writings (cf. section 4.4.3). The various themes provide a richness to her thinking and writing. This also allows her to deal with complex points in a simple way, by bringing several themes together as is needed. However, it poses a problem, as it is not always evident from the context which themes carries greater importance (cf. section 4.4.1.3). Therefore, one finds that people regard her work as posing extremes (Manu 2005). As stated above, White's wording does not remain consistent throughout her writings (cf. sections 4.9.3 and 5.2.2).

Connected to her use of various themes and linking them into single units, is her method of 'tension and paradox' (Webster 1982:154). Here she promotes two opposite themes in equal strength. She describes the divinity of Christ and his humanity in the strongest terms possible and unite them in one Person, namely Christ (Webster 1982:74, 78). She is clear that Christ was both divine and human, but she makes no attempt to explain these concepts (White 1940:24; cf. also 1940:43, 49, 762). Using a method of tension and paradox allows White considerable creativity in presenting Christological ideas in her writing (Hargrave & Van de Ven 2017:322). Paradoxical thinking allows for contradictions that persist and require ongoing responses. They are furthermore not solvable by compromise or by adopting both viewpoints simultaneously (Calabretta, Gemser, & Wijnberg 2017:366). When describing the divinity and humanity of Christ (cf. section 4.1.3), she presents these components of Christ with equal force. These contradictions are not dealt with in the same paragraph, but receive separate attention (White 1940:19, 24). She does not attempt to present a view or theory that links these two extremes, but retains the tension while viewing both sides, one at a time. Similarly she maintains Christ's equality with the Father throughout the incarnation, while at the same time, maintaining the genuineness of Christ's humanity (Webster 1982:76-78, 90, 91).

The issue of Christ's sinfulness and sinlessness is perhaps the clearest representation of White's paradoxical method, as it generates much tension within Adventism. She views Christ's humanity as a tension between his sinless humanity and our sinful

humanity, which he took upon himself (Whidden 1997:55). She has not attempted to present a unified view of the sinless and sinful components of Christ's humanity (cf. sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.5). Different theologians have already attempted to transform the humanity of Christ into a greater truth that encapsulates both sinful and sinless qualities. The initial official view of Adventism is that Christ was like humanity in their sinful infirmities and liabilities, but unlike them in his sinlessness (Dederen 2000:164, 165; Whidden 2013:696). Despite the official statement by the church, there is still a tension between those who view the nature of Christ as sinless and those who view it as sinful.

White also omits this process in describing Satan, without promoting a sympathy for him (White 1958a:35, 36, 38, 39). Satan is described without tension or paradox. Alternatively, she utilises this 'tension and paradox' to present two opposing ideas within the lives of individuals: The removal of the negative opposing force then is demonstrated as a positive choice and outcome (White 1917:503, 504, 520, 521, 529, 530).

One difference in the writing methodology between Barth and White is that Barth constructs one point before moving to the next. This does not mean that a single point only receives one mention. A point rather remains as an unmentioned marker, around which other ideas are built. Barth assumes that one understands where the specific point fits and recounts it. White weaves various themes into a unit and then develops each one progressively at a key point in her writings. These themes may not always be apparent, but when needed, White brings a specific theme into focus.

Both Barth and White write by using extremes. Barth uses extremes as markers between which he navigates to assume the balance of a middle path. White expresses two extremes, but leaves them in both tension and balance. As such, both Barth and White utilise the process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The difference is that Barth utilises it to establish points by avoiding extremes, but still utilising the best in both extremes in synthesising new ideas. He presents his opponents as one-sided either on the thesis or antithesis, but not concluding in the synthesis (Barth 1956:123, 134, 142, 143, 163). Barth also includes two opposite sides in his thesis and antithesis and attempts to combine them in his synthesis, such as the Lutheran and Reformed theology (Barth 1956:164).

White, on the other hand, does not combine differing ideas, but leaves the two extremes in tension and balance to promote creativity and ongoing response. The very nature of the writings of both White and Barth suggest that interpretation is not a simple process. Failing to follow the full argument of Barth, may very likely drive the reader to assume that he has sided with a specific view and neglected his final synthesis of the issue. With White, the danger is bigger, as she leaves two opposing and extreme points in tension. Giving more attention to one, will lead the reader to a limited and incomplete view of her Christological concepts. These differences that result from dialectical and paradoxical reasoning, also produce different outcomes which we consider in the next section.

5.2.3 Differences in Outcomes of Paradoxical and Dialectical Reasoning

Schleiermacher bases his theology on human feelings, while composing *The Christian faith* (Schleiermacher 2016:131) in a dialectical structure between sin and grace (McGrath 1994:89, 247). Barth, in response, grounds his theology on divine revelation, while also utilising a dialectical process. He demonstrates that there is a contradiction or dialectic, rather than continuity, between God and humanity (McGrath 1994:99). He does not counter Schleiermacher's liberal theology by simply defending standard theological points and therefore synthesises new theological points as a serious challenge to others. As he wrestles and engages with extreme points, he forces the reader to engage and wrestle with him.

White's intention is not theology, but to draw the reader to Scripture and specifically to Christ in Scripture. As such, she does not present answers, but reveals the truth as she understands it from Scripture. Her paradoxical style presents extremes existing in balanced tension. This tension calls for ongoing engagement. The engagement is not intended with White herself, but to have the reader contend with Scripture. She is not writing to provide answers for the reader, but to draw the reader out to engage the divine paradoxes.

5.3 A Summary of Basic Points

5.3.1 God for Us and God with Us

Barth's theology has been summarised as 'God for us' (cf. section 3.1.1). He conceives God as acting first and continuing to act. God is an active God that is always

the primary active agent. Furthermore, God's intelligent motion for human beings originates before creation in the eternal councils of the Trinity, to be God for humanity, for their benefit (Barth 2016:225). 'God for us' retains divine spontaneity and human receptivity. Humanity is not to analyse, criticise, or evaluate God, but merely to be receptive to divine revelation. Barth categorises everything that God does as divine revelation. Christ as the ultimate of this revelation becomes the foundation for everything in Barth's theology (Barth 1956:63).

The result is that humanity is neither a partner to God nor necessary for God. This latter point becomes self-contradictory regarding God's eternal plan to become incarnate in Christ (cf. section 3.5.4). Barth posits God as a Trinity to be self-sufficient in himself. God's free will is to be a revealing God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Barth 1956:1). He does not allow humanity to be active in this process of revelation, not even in the subjective process, where the Holy Spirit enables the revelation of God in the life of the individual. Barth's explanation of God's self-revelation is viable, only in the passivity of the human being (McGrath 1994:261, 262). Although he has been charged with failing to make God immanent, it has been shown that the contrary is true (Gabriel 1995:39, 40). The failing is not to make God immanent, but humanity is excluded from God's immanent activity for the most part to the extent that all that remains is the doxology (Vanderplaat 1983:36). In reality, even when God comes close to humanity in his revelation, he remains separated from them.

White's theology can be summarised in three words, 'God with us' (Webster 1982:151). The preposition 'with' does not denote position as much as a relationship. White's focus is on the relationship of Christ with individuals, specifically Christ as the Saviour of humanity. She therefore slightly differs from Barth in this respect. She agrees with Barth that God's counsel for humanity originated in the eternal councils of the Trinity (White 1940:22). However, she places the focus on Christ coming to the sinner and the sinner's response.[24] God's incarnation as Christ was God's love toward humanity who had condemned themselves through sin (section 4.2.3). White points out that the plan of salvation, and not incarnation, was the eternal plan of God (White

[24] The entire book, *Steps to Christ*, is intended to describe the steps of redemption, of Christ meeting the sinner (White 1892:5).

1958a:63). The plan of salvation included the incarnation, but as such, the incarnation does not stand on its own. One should therefore also conceive of 'God with us' as having a redemptive quality. This is also affirmed in the first chapter of *The desire of ages*, titled 'God with us,' which deals with Christ's unity with the Father, sin, and the eternal plan of redemption (White 1940:19, 21, 22).

There is a subtle shift of focus between Barth and White. Barth's main concern is God's action:

> For Barth, theology could only be about God if it focused on the scriptural record of God's revelation of himself, rather than on any form of human possibility. For Bultmann, true theology concerned the impact of the message of the scriptures on the individual, rather than any set of ideas in itself (Eyeons 2010:46).

In this sense, White leans more to Bultmann's view for her focus on describing God's action and man's reaction. As such, White is more than willing to regard divine acts as a 'mystery' (Webster 1982:78). Barth, on the other hand, goes to great lengths to describe divine acts while keeping in mind that human description can only serve as indicators of God (Barth 1949:46). White's concern is with the impact on the individual, whereas Barth's focus is on the correct understanding of God's revelation. White maintains that Christ remains primary in all actions, and it always includes the individual (White 1940:111). In making God immanent, she allows humanity to participate in this immanence as a response to Christ's primary act. As such, there is an element of the nearness of Christ in her writings. When Aung, Santmire, and Young critique Barth for not making God immanent, it is not the immanence that is missing, but the human experience of that immanence (cf. Gabriel 1995:39, 40).

Barth and White have similarities in their views concerning Christology. Both focus on God as acting on behalf of human beings. Barth's focus is mainly on God's revelation, whereas White places the focus on redemption. Barth's focus is expressed in the conceptual logic of God's revealing nature, where humanity can observe God's revelation. White's focus is expressed in the relational experience of God's nature, while humanity is able to experience God in a relationship. Next, we consider the views of Barth and White on the Trinity.

5.3.2 The Trinity

Both Barth and White utilise the concept of the Trinity. Barth utilises the creedal formulation of the Trinity as a foundation for the rest of his theology (cf. section 3.1.2). He acknowledges that the Trinity is not Scriptural as one cannot find such a formulation in Scripture (Jones 2014:93). He nonetheless approaches the rest of Scripture from the foundation of the Trinity, framing everything in light of the Trinity. In doing so, he maintains the self-sufficiency of God. God does not need humanity because God is Triune and therefore self-sufficient (cf. section 5.2.1). In describing the Trinity, Barth moves between the two poles of modalism and tritheism. Although he utilises the strong unity of modalism, he does not completely surrender to it. He also avoids tritheism when applying the strong individuality of each member of the Trinity, but not denying the unity that binds God. In dealing with the Trinity, Barth is not relating the ontological description of the Trinity, but rather the divine internal reality (Kantzer 1958:25). He utilises the modes of being, concerning revelation, to avoid revelation being a segregated process. In his freedom of revelation, God remains free and independent of humanity for the very reason that his revelation is interwoven with the Trinity as a unit (Barth 1956:1, 2).

Christ as the second Person or mode of God's revelation becomes pivotal. In this way, it is obvious that Barth does not neglect the Trinity. In his theology, he establishes the Trinity and trusts that it remains so. He outlines the process of revelation about the Trinity in the following way:

- Revelation proceeds from the Father.
- Revelation is objectively fulfilled in the Son.
- Revelation is subjectively (in us) fulfilled by the Holy Spirit (Barth 1956:1).

The Trinity underscores the revelation of Christ and is contained in it (Barth 1956:25, 28, 33). This foundation is part of the Christocentric view of Barth's theology. Everything that God does, is his revelation, while Christ remains the ultimate and the clearest part of his revelation. Barth makes Christ the rule of his interpretative process, not simply a principle (Chan 1999:27, 28). In response to liberal theology, Barth depicts God as denying humanity any action of reaching out to him (Eyeons 2010:25, 26). God

is God; he alone condescends to reveal himself to humanity (Barth 1949:37). Everything done by humanity is derived from God. God's action presupposes any action on the part of humanity. God is revealed for us, incarnated for us, and everything else that humanity can comprehend, is done in 'God for us' (Barth 1949:65). This single event of Christ's revelation of God was determined from eternity, revealed in time, and will remain an eternally important revelation. Where Schleiermacher discusses the Trinity last in his writings, Barth posits the Trinity as the primary starting point (McGrath 1994:260, 261). All other human endeavours, even those who would deny God unknowingly, are according to Barth's scheme, subject to divine revelation (Barth 1963:3, 4).

The conflict of the ages series by White also depicts a concept of the Trinity. Her initial start is only partially developed and she continues to develop the concept by presenting two arguments, one for the deity of Christ and one for the deity and Person of the Holy Spirit (White 1940:19, 669, 671). White's approach to the Trinity is mainly relational, as she utilises the Trinity to demonstrate God's Person and also God's desire for humanity. Unlike Barth, she avoids any creedal formulation and progressively develops her view of the Trinity.

Barth writes to an audience of theologians, who does not question the doctrine of the Trinity. As such, he presents the Trinity as his foundation. This is also done as a counter to Schleiermacher, who places the Trinity at the end of his theology (McGrath 1994:260-261). White writes amidst crises within the SDA Church, with strong anti-Trinitarian sentiments (Knight 2000:117). She therefore has to argue for the validity of the Trinity. She also focuses more on the individual members of the Trinity, maintaining their individuality, except in relationship and divinity (White 1958a:34; 1940:675).

For White, Christ is the key through which she establishes the truth of the Trinity. Christ is equal to the Father. She elaborates on this point, placing Christ as an agent of revelation in Old Testament passages, e.g., where Christ appears to Moses at the burning bush (White 1940:24; 1958a:251-253). Finally, in describing the incarnation, she fully develops her Christological theme (White 1940:19, 483, 591). When she has given sufficient evidence of Christ's divinity, she then reveals the Holy Spirit, in comparison to Christ, as a divine Person (White 1940:669, 671, 765). She does not express the

Trinity in the classical theological way, but rather utilises two simple arguments to establish the divinity of Christ, as well as the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit (cf. section 4.6.4).

Although there is no exact quote as to how White relates revelation to the Trinity, I do believe that the following would be a possibility: White holds that nature has originally revealed God, but that through sin, humanity's minds became clouded and could not discern God in nature (Hasel 2013:1088). As such, Christ became the active agent of revelation. She claims that Scripture is also the inspiration of God, as it attests to Christ (Hasel 2013:1088).

There is a similarity between the views of Barth and White, as both put Christ central in the process of revelation. There is also a similarity in the functions of the individual members of the Trinity.

The differences arise in that White views Scripture as God's word speaking to us (Hasel 2013:1089), while Barth views Scripture as pointing to God's revelation (Hutabarat 2015:125). White regards the revelation of God as more widespread. God was intended to be revealed in nature, but sin had marred nature and humanity. Humanity therefore required redemption and a bigger revelation from God (White 1940:20, 25). To Barth, only Christ is the revelation of God and as such, Scripture points to that revelation, but is not revelation itself. Barth focuses God's revelation on one singular point, as opposed to White who thinks that revelation is more widespread and best shown in Christ. We now consider the respective views regarding Christ's divinity.

5.4 The Divinity of Christ

Both Barth and White are strong promoters of Christ's divinity. This is not simply a particular view, but a foundational concept connected to their respective paradigms. Their entire theology therefore stands or falls on the divinity of Christ.

From starters, Barth establishes Christ as divine, by working from the foundation of the Trinity. He denies humanity the position of affecting God or to act as a judge of what God does or how God should act (Barth 1956:5). He therefore progressively removes humanity as a judge or channel for the revelation of God. God reveals himself

and this revelation can only be achieved by God. Christ is presented as the point between God and humanity. He is thus established as the revelation of God (Barth 1956:8).

Barth's description of God's revealing activity takes on a dynamic aspect. In contrast to that, his description of human thought processes, ascribes everything to God, while the rest is static (Barth 1956:16, 17). For Barth's theology to work, Christ must be fully divine to reveal God. For Christ to be any less than divine would be giving credit to liberal theology. For Barth, God's self-revelation is a dynamic process. He views the process of human critique or inquiry as one that is static. This stands in contrast to liberal theology that refers to progression in society, science, and general humanity (McGrath 1994:93, 94).

Barth claims that the incarnation involved the whole Godhead, as the Son, being the second Person, was specifically appropriated for the task of redemption (Kantzer 1958:25). He therefore links divine revelation to Christ's divinity. Christ's humanity is essential to that revelation, not as a primary position, but one that Christ willingly accepted. By means of *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* Barth argues that the humanity of Christ was subject to the will of God in the incarnation (cf. section 3.3). This argument will receive more attention later in this chapter (section 5.5.1). At this point, it is sufficient to say that the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* argument ensures that Christ's humanity is vital and unique to his divine revelation. When referring to the synoptic Gospels, Barth references the humanity of Jesus as the problem and the solution to his divinity (Barth 1956:22). He point out that Christ could only be completely human, provided that he was completely God. Christ's humanity is not the elevation of humanity in a dynamic process of evolution. His humanity is part of the divine and dynamic revelation as opposed to the static humanity of human beings. Christ's humanity was dynamic because of his pre-existing dynamic divinity. As such, Christ was God's revelation in the fullest sense of the word.

White similarly holds to Christ's divinity and pre-existence (Adams 2013:691). She clearly claims that Christ is equal to the Father in nature and essence (Webster 1982:66). Similar to Barth, she describes Christ, manifested as the fulness of the Godhead and in the highest sense being God (Adams 2013:691).

For White, the origin of sin began with Lucifer's denial of Christ's divinity (White 1958a:35). The divinity of Christ is essential for the salvation of humanity to be effective (White 1940:25). In stating this, she removes humanity from the position of being a possible saviour. The divinity of Christ ensures that he alone is saving humanity, and that humanity, regardless of their achievements, is unable to save themselves. Christ's divinity is essential for his role as Saviour (Webster 1982:117). This is in part the reason for White to read Christ into the Old Testament, to illustrate to the reader that Christ was not a latecomer, but a divine and active being from the beginning of human history. Christ has life in himself and is equal to the Father. These two points make it possible for him to be the Saviour (Moon 2013:844).

Both Barth and White view the divinity of Christ, not simply as a fact of his being, but as an absolute necessity. For Barth, Christ's divinity is an absolute necessity in the process of revelation. God and only God is revealing God. For White, the divinity of Christ is an absolute necessity for salvation. God and only God is redeeming humanity from sin.

Neither Barth nor White considers that Christ's divinity was affected during his incarnation. Barth maintains that, during the incarnation it was God who came in the flesh, not anyone less (Barth 1949:86). The only way to conceive of Christ as God's revelation, is to realise that Christ is God who acted first and continues to do so (Barth 1949:89). White also maintains that during the incarnation, Christ remained fully God in nature and essence (Webster 1982:66). Her focus on redemption links the absolute necessity of not only the humanity, but the divinity of Christ. It is because of the divinity of Christ that he possesses saving qualities (Webster 1982:117). For White, Christ was Yahweh and the 'I AM' of the Old Testament, incarnated into human flesh (cf. section 4.3.1). Next, we consider the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* argument.

5.5 The Humanity of Christ

5.5.1 *Anhypostasis*/*Enhypostasis*

White does not present a single argument referring to either *anhypostasis* or *enhypostasis*. It is possible though, to glean from her writings that, in principle, she would agree

with this argument. Since it is such a vital aspect of Barth's Christology, I will include it with evidence of White sharing a similar view.

Barth follows the discussion of the Council of Chalcedon, which formulated the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* argument. When using this formulation, he establishes the humanity of Christ as existing with the Logos, but not apart from the Logos (Haley 2015:53).

Barth adds his unique approach, claiming that *anhypostasis* states the negative aspect and *enhypostasis* the positive aspect of that which had not been the original intention. He posits these two views as two extremes. With this tension, he avoids adoptionism as well as monophysitism (Haley 2015:98). This becomes a foundational point with which he maintains Christ's divinity, but also establishes his real humanity. As much as it prevents Christ from losing any deity, it also prevents human beings from having a vantage over Christ. His *anhypostatic*/*enhypostatic* humanity is unique to humanity as a whole. As such, humanity can only come to a true realisation of themselves because of the revelation of the God-man (Harper 2015:94). The full divinity of Christ, coupled with his unique humanity, thus encapsulates divine revelation.

Another aspect that Barth builds on the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* postulation is linked to the atonement. He presents three criteria, essential for the atonement: First, Christ as God, second as man, and third as the God-man (cf. section 3.5.1).

This makes atonement also revelation, as its foundation is also the foundation for Christ as the revelation of God. When God the Son assumed humanity, *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* became linked to revelation, atonement, and God's freedom. It is also a demonstration of God's time, a dynamic component totally strange to our concept of time and therefore lost to us (Barth 1956:47). Christ's unique humanity also demonstrates his divinity and his ability to be dynamic as opposed to humans being static. Christ is in the fullest sense the God-man, the revelation of God in which humanity can come to self-realisation.

White does not directly deal with this matter, nor does she consider the argument of *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis*. From her writings, one may garner an indication of her overall understanding of the incarnation:

> God commanded Moses for Israel, 'Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them' (Exodus 25:8), and He abode in the sanctuary, in the midst of His people. Through all their weary wandering in the desert, the symbol of His presence was with them. So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment. He pitched His tent by the side of the tents of men, that He might dwell among us, and make us familiar with His Divine character and life. 'The Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth' (White 1940:23).

In her narrative style, White links the incarnation of Christ to the indwelling of God in the tabernacle. What is of interest is that, unlike the earthly tabernacle, Christ set up his own tabernacle. This identifies a specific point when God the Son assumed humanity (cf. also White 1905a:8). White does not present the humanity of Christ as pre-existent, or humanity deified, although she does not specify *how* there does seem to be a point in time when God the Son clothed his divinity with humanity.

It appears that White, at least to some extent agreed with Barth on the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* view of Christ's incarnation. This will be discussed later on. We next consider the virgin birth.

5.5.2 The Virgin Birth

One of the key components in the theology of both Barth and White is the virgin birth, where there is a marked difference in the importance placed by both of them. Barth places value on this point and makes it a key point in his Christology. Although White relates several narratives surrounding the birth of Christ, she avoids the virgin birth and omits it from her 'theology.'

Barth employs the virgin birth as a means of transferring human genetics to Christ (Barth 1956:185). This is also in contradiction to Schleiermacher who viewed the virgin

birth as a form of human evolution. Barth utilises the virgin birth to depict Christ as truly human, although uniquely human. He views the humanity of Christ as *anhypostasis* to ensure that this humanity does not exist apart from his incarnation (Haley 2015:9). He then employs the concept of *enhypostasis* to ensure that the humanity of Christ had its existence in the incarnation (Haley 2015:9). The virgin birth signifies a definite beginning and the passion a definite end to the event of God's revelation (Barth 1949:127). In doing this, Barth has to contend with the human agent, but in such a way that humanity does not gain vantage over God. Barth focuses on Mary as the example of humble human submission to God's revelatory power (Barth 1956:145; cf. Lowery 1992:10). As such, God remains active and the human being passive in the virgin birth. The virgin birth and the passion together contain this element of God being active and humanity being passive.

Barth does not view the creation of Christ at the virgin birth as *ex nihilo*, but within the human field (Barth 1949:97). According to him, Christ shares the flesh and blood of Mary. Haley elaborates on this:

> One in fact can argue that Barth understands the ontological essence of Jesus Christ as he understands the ontological essence of the triune God; that is, just as the Son exists in perfect union with the Father and the Holy Spirit as one God, so too the Divine nature of Christ exists in perfect union with His human nature as one person. In this way both ontological formulations of 1) the triune God and 2) Jesus Christ manifest perfect union together with perfect distinctiveness in their being (Haley 2015:26).

Barth utilises the virgin birth to support several of his other points such as the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* point, with Christ retaining his humanity post ascension (cf. section 3.4.1) while being both true God and true human. A key point of importance for Barth is to make the humanity of Christ real in the sense that it does not become docetic and only appears to be human. He employs the virgin birth to transfer human genetics and a sinful human nature to Christ (Barth 1956:185).

Barth views true humanity as sinful humanity. For Christ to be truly human he had to be sinful and to suffer (Barth 1949:101). To achieve this, Barth introduces the virgin

birth *minus* the immaculate conception to ensure that Christ is regarded as truly human. For Barth, true humanity is the humanity of Christ, inheriting a sinful weakness and consequences, but willing to live contrary to the sinful condition: 'Jesus replied to Satan that worship and service shall be given to God alone (v10), and this defines the nature of true obedience, which is the key feature of Jesus' humanity' (Smith 1997:121).

This, in turn, confirms another premise, i.e., that God's revelation is the only means for human beings to experience God. In this sense, sin becomes an essential barrier between God and humanity to ensure that the latter can only know God from God's primary act of revelation. Christ as God, having lived the sinful life of humankind without sinning, is the sole answer to humanity's ignorance and impotence (Barth 1956:156, 157).

As we have already indicated, White omits the scene where the angel declared the conception of the Son of God to Mary (Lk 1:26-38). From her writings, it is not possible to discern why she does this. Her view on Christ's humanity has been obscured by a singular focus on the sinful/sinless debate.[25] As such, it makes a comparison between this view of Barth and White somewhat difficult. White utilises several phrases in describing the birth of Christ:

- When the fulness of the time has come, God sent forth his Son.
- The king of glory stooped low to take humanity.
- It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature (White 1940:31, 43, 48).

Although these phrases are not definitive, they indicate that White does not view Christ's humanity as existing before or apart from the incarnation. The general idea in her writings is that God established humanity in general, and not just a human being. Christ's incarnation was an event not specified, but signifying a definite moment when it took place. When God the Son took on a human nature, there was a corporate identification, not an individual one, in the process of the incarnation. White also states:

[25] Both Whidden (1997:692-696) and Webster (1982:89-133) consider White's view of the human nature of Christ merely in relation to it being sinful or sinless.

> Before the world was made, it was arranged that the divinity of Christ should be enshrouded in humanity. 'A body,' said Christ, 'hast thou prepared me' (Hebrews 10:5). But He did not come in human form until the fullness of time had expired. Then He came to our world, a babe in Bethlehem (White 1986:250).

White repeats similar concepts, specifically that divinity should be enshrouded in humanity and that this would happen at a specific time. The body that was prepared by God, only came into being at that specific time which was the incarnation. It therefore looks as if White is in agreement with the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* view of Barth.

This argument is also employed by Gage to validate the sinful human nature of Christ (Gage 1985:3). White, in contrast, avoids the virgin birth (cf. section 4.3.3) and in comparison with Barth, we assume that one reason is to remove Christ from being dependent on the transfer of genetic material. At the 1888 General Conference session, Waggoner and Jones have postulated several ideas, two of which are key to the current investigation, namely Christ's full divinity and Christ's sinful humanity. White supports the idea of Christ's full divinity, but there is no reference of support for Christ's sinful humanity (Knight 2000:117-118). If she did hold to Christ's sinful humanity, it would be ideal to focus on the virgin birth, which she does not. As such, White holds to Christ's humanity as unique, to atone for sin and at the same time be identical to human beings in order to identify with them.

How then could White postulate Christ's humanity as real if Christ did not hold to the same sin as the rest of humanity? She explains that Christ has achieved redemption not by going out of himself, but by taking humanity into himself. She adds that Christ gave human existence out of himself, so that humanity may be one with the Father as the Son is (White 1986:250). If Christ did not go out of himself, regarding what has been stated, it would imply that he did not diminish his divinity. By taking humanity in himself or being incarnated, solved the problem. Christ as creator created humanity, and in a similar sense he recreated humanity out of himself – this recreation is a sinless humanity. Christ's sinless humanity is gifted to sinful humanity so that they may be one with the Father. White states that God has originally made humanity without bias to evil (White 1958a:49). To her, this is true humanity, humanity in harmony with God

(White 1958a:48). In contrast, when the first humans sinned, they feared the presence of God, therefore not constituting true humanity but rather a deformed humanity (White 1958a:57).

White views true humanity as the original creation of God, with humans made in the image of God, capable of communing with God (White 1958a:45). Sin became a critical barrier that God has bridged through redemption. Christ entered the world with true humanity, undefiled by sin, but suffering the effects of sin. White describes Christ as the man of sorrows (White 1940:147). This forms part of her larger view of the innocent and sinless suffering on behalf of the guilty and sinful human race (White 1940:25). This confirms her relational theme in her theology as well as the concept of constant interaction between God and humanity.

In this context, White and Barth differ from each other. What is ironic is that they would both agree that Christ received a body with the weaknesses of sin. At the same time, sin was not present in the inner human nature. Christ possessed the innocent sinful qualities, such as the degradation of sin, but not the guilt of sin. The key difference is that Barth views the innocent sinful qualities of Christ as being derived from Mary's genetics, whereas White views the innocent sinful qualities deriving solely from God assuming them. Next, we consider the plan for Christ to be incarnated.

5.6 Plan of Incarnation

Barth claims that the motivation for the incarnation is based on a divine decision that God would reveal himself as the God-man (Rose 2014). This divine decision would take place, simply because it was a divine decision regardless of the circumstances (Barth 2016:227). Barth makes the revelation of the incarnation his main focus. As such, sin was not the motivation for the divine decision. According to Barth, God has already decided, even before creation, to reveal himself as the God-man, and then he created humans. These humans fell into sin, and it is this sinfully weakened humanity that God took upon himself during the incarnation. Barth carefully negotiates the sinful humanity of Christ to liken him to humanity, particularly in their weaknesses (Barth 1956:155). At the same time, he avoids making Christ in any way guilty of sin, despite him struggling against sin (Barth 1956:157, 158). Barth does not specify what happens to the sinfulness of Christ's humanity at the ascension. He only states that humanity

is exalted in Christ before God (Barth 1949:125). In the struggle with sin, Christ's divinity was bound to win, thereby removing sin from the picture (Barth 1956:158). There is a subtle but precise prescription here that revelation and not humanity's sin is directly responsible for the incarnation. God incarnated is the one who is victorious over sin through his suffering and death, although sin was only incidental in this event. Had Adam not sinned, God would still have gone through the process of incarnation to establish his revelation. God is the revealing God, not the God forced by sin.

White views the incarnation also as a divine decision, but one mitigated by circumstances (White 1958a:63). She makes redemption the focus of the incarnation. To avoid sin being the motivation for the incarnation, she strongly motivates the 'God is love' theme. According to White, God reacts in response to the needs of his creation, thereby establishing a relational theme for her Christology. She regards humans as being part of the equation. Humanity has sinned and doomed itself. From eternity, God made room for human failure and instigated the plan of salvation.

What is of importance about this point, is that White views God as choosing to instigate the plan of redemption. There was no outside compulsion and the only struggle she mentions was for the Father to give up God the Son (White 1958a:63). In doing this, she creates tension between sin and Satan as the originator of sin, over against Christ as the originator of salvation. Within this particular 'tension and paradox,' she places humanity and illustrates humanity's value not of itself, but as deemed by the Creator. Here she combines several themes as part of the metanarrative.

Another aspect in which White differs from Barth is that she elaborates on the events that instigated the rebellion of Satan and the fall of humanity (cf. section 4.6.3). Barth, in contrast, does not elaborate on these events. He focuses solely on the eternal decree that God would be incarnated to be revelation for humanity. We now consider the views of Barth and White on the humanity of Christ.

5.7 The Humanity of Christ related to Sin

Another point of similarity between Barth and White is the humanity of Christ relating to sin. To Barth, the humanity of Christ is of great value because of the revelatory value of the incarnation. He does not simply base his view on the humanity of Christ,

but claims that everything that humanity experiences from birth to death should be ascribed to Christ (Barth 1956:147). He also does not make sin the focal point. Justification precedes sin, in that justification is the prerequisite and not sin (Preuss 1960:237). He defines sin in contrast to what Christ is and what Christ does. Where Christ is humble, sin is proud; where Christ is exalted, sin slothfully denies the exaltation; and God reveals sin, which is the obscuring of his revelation (Lowery 1992:12, 13). Barth formulates sin not as an entity unto itself, but in relation to what Christ is not, or in contrast to the activity of Christ. As such, sin has no power to define humanity.

Barth defines Christ's human nature as identical to our state of disobedience (Barth 1956:149, 151). He also identifies that Christ was not indwelling his humanity, like Adam when he was created. Christ was God assuming the humanity of Adam after the fall with its weaknesses. In his humanity, Christ was encumbered by the curse and punishment of sin (Barth 1956:155). Barth projects Christ, not as a superman, but as a very real man, acquainted with suffering (Barth 1949:104). It is obvious that Barth is avoiding the concept that Christ was some form of ascended humanity. Christ is not the next step in evolution or leading humanity to a greater vantage point, he is the Logos, assuming our sinful flesh under the curse and retribution of sinful humankind. He is placed in remoteness from the Creator as is the condition of sinful humankind (Barth 1956:155). This does not prevent Barth from stating the opposite, that in this condition of humanity separated from God, Christ did not live as one separated from God, but he decided to live as a human. In the process of Christ being willing to do this, he also decided to live in subjection to God, unlike the first Adam who attempted to become God (Barth 1956:156, 157).

At the same time, Barth states that Christ had no awareness of sin, that unlike Adam, he submitted to God and as such, bore his sinful nature innocently (Lowery 1992:7). Barth strongly advocates the reality of the struggle with sin in Christ's inner human nature. He postulates that, united to the divine will, there was also a human will. Here he merely touches on the human will and is quick to assert that Christ as God could not sin, even in his incarnated humanity (Barth 1956:158). He views Christ as being fully immersed in the sinfulness of humanity, tempted in a real way, but in each case

being victorious over sin. Christ remained true to his divinity, which was bound to win, and in either will or action did not consent to sin.

White likewise places a high value on the humanity of Christ, for in her context, it is an essential motif in God's plan of salvation. God the Son becoming man is fulfilling the plan that the Father and the Son had from eternity. As such, for White, the humanity of Christ is continuous in nature. She maintains that Christ retained his humanity and will continue to do so for eternity (White 1940:25). The utmost divinity of Christ is counterbalanced by his utmost humanity. This 'tension and paradox' between the humanity and divinity of Christ surrounds the incarnation and redemption. This theme is combined to the following themes: God's love, the Trinity, humanity, and history, all bound together in this 'tension and paradox' of Christ.

White's view regarding the sinful or sinless nature of Christ has created an ongoing debate within the SDA Church. Gage, promoting the view that Christ had a sinful nature, utilises arguments from both White and Barth. When considering Barth's view, it would appear that Gage was premature in utilising Barth's view. Barth's view of sin is very technical and cannot simply be applied by grounding it on a superficial reading of his work.

Rand, on the other hand, argues for Christ's sinless humanity. Gage views sin as acts, whereas Rand regards sin as a broken relationship. Despite the SDA Church having no official statement, there are several statements in official publications that state that Christ was affected by sin, but not infected by it (Whidden 2013:696). What is significant, is that Whidden's original study was published in 1997, based on a chronological study of White's quotes (Whidden 1997:76), although this idea was already present in Webster's thinking in 1982, but in a less systematised way (Webster 1982:96, 98-99). This idea of Whidden was adopted by Dederen and included in the *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist theology* (Dederen 2000:164-165). In his assessment of the views of Gage and Rand, Donkor notes that White warned against making Christ completely identical to humanity, that Christ possessed the weakness of a sinful flesh, but was free from sinful propensities (Donkor 2005:13, 14 of 18).

For both Barth and White, the humanity of Christ, with the specification of bearing the results of sin, but not the participation in humanity's sinfulness, is essential to the atonement. Barth views Christ as being truly human and therefore needing to share in the condition of the sin of humans (Barth 1956:147). White also observes the need for a balance in the concept of Christ, being affected with sin, while not suffering the infection of sin (Whidden 2013:694).

In Appendix A, I have put key statements of Barth next to key statements of White, based on Whidden's evaluation. In point 1, both agree that Christ came in a similar state as sinful humanity. White, however, denies that Christ had any sinful 'passions,' 'tendencies,' and 'propensities.' This is also the case with point 2, where Christ took the same nature as humanity, but without the taint of sin, according to White. In point 3, both of them agree that humanity is subjected to sinful degradation. Point 4 is one of disagreement, where Barth puts Christ in the same position as a sinner. White views Christ in the same condition, but not with the same sinful nature. Point 5 is very similar, but the concept of 'hallowed' by Barth suggests a process. White presents Christ's nature as being more elevated from his birth.

In point 6, both of them view Christ's nature as essential to his sacrifice. Barth requires a sinful nature for Christ to make him truly human and in effect to hallow humanity. White observes the need for a sinless nature as a necessity for the atonement of the sacrifice. The difference is that Barth considers sins as acts, while White regards it as both acts and a relationship. In point 7, both Barth and White agree that Christ dealt with sin. Point 8 states that both of them agree that Christ never committed any sins. Point 9 presents a difference between Barth and White, in that the former claims that Christ was struggling with sin, whereas White argues that Christ's nature recoiled from sin. Christ's struggle was to refrain from using his divine power. In point 10, Barth views Christ as not being able to sin, whereas White claims that Christ, although he did not sin, was capable of sinning. Point 11 narrates that both of them agree that Christ did not commit sins.

Point 12 is perhaps the key difference between Barth and White: Barth thinks that God was acting in and through a human vessel, but it still was God who was acting. White argues that the struggle of Christ was the struggle of a human being, and without the

advantage of divine power in any way. From these comparisons, the key differences are that Barth regards the divinity of Christ as active, whereas White views it as wilfully denied by Christ. For Barth, Christ has fallen, but his divine nature prevented his human nature from committing acts of sin. For White, Christ was sinless in his human nature and he remained sinless by not yielding to temptation, without aid from his divine nature.

5.8 Christ's Humanity Post Ascension

Both Barth and White agree that Christ retained his humanity post ascension, following Calvin in this view. Calvin, however, foresaw a problem and maintained that in the far future, Christ would completely relinquish his humanity and return to his full position in the Godhead (Jones 2010b:12). Here Barth and White take different routes to Calvin and foresee the retention of Christ's humanity as eternal.

Barth foresaw this problem and to pre-empt it, he made the Trinity the foundation of revelation. As such, his description of the Trinity moves between modalism and tritheism to establish a strong union, but also a uniqueness within the Trinity. The incarnation of Christ included the Trinity (Barth 1956:33). At the same time, Barth maintains the unity in Christ of both his distinct divinity and distinct humanity. The incarnation included the full divinity of God, but in the full humanity of Christ (*anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis*), united in Christ. For Barth, it is not humanity in general that is taken up into the Trinity, but the specific and unique humanity of Christ.

Barth extends this beyond Christ in maintaining a distinction between the humanity of Christ and our humanity. He rejects ontic immutability in favour of ethical immutability (Malysz 2007:90). God remains the same, not in being static in his being, but in his ethical actions toward humanity. He remains free for humanity, while in Christ, humanity is assumed by the Trinity. Thus, humanity is presented by Christ's humanity, assumed into the Trinity, without deifying humanity.

The humanity of Christ, assumed by the Trinity, becomes the foundation of being the church (Barth 1949:149). Through Christ, the Trinity assumes humanity, which allows the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in humanity as the subjective reality of revelation (Barth 1949:137). This process allows humanity to participate in the real humanity of Christ.

Even though one would live on earth, humanity belongs to Christ, which motivates active living as part of the subjective revelation (Barth 1949:151, 152).

White views Christ's incarnation and the limitations of humanity as a wilful act on the part of Christ (White 1958a:63; 1940:22). It is from this wilful decision of Christ that humanity is 'adopted' by God and carried to the 'highest heaven.' As such, Christ remains a link between God and humanity (White 1940:25). White does this because, being tied to the nature of Christ, is being tied to God's love, the plan for redemption, and the value of humanity. In retaining his human nature, Christ not only retained those themes, but enhanced them. Christ is understood to have become one with the human race while still being one with God (White 1940:25). Since eternity, God the Son was the mediator between God and the universe (Webster 1982:151). Christ is still the mediator between God and the universe, and while retaining his humanity, therefore also the mediator between humanity and God. How White reintroduces Christ into the Trinity, will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Both Barth and White view Christ's humanity as having an origin from eternity as a planned action. White differs in that she understands it as God reacting in love to the sin of his creation, whereas Barth regards this as an intended revelation. Both Barth and White view Christ as becoming truly human and Christ retaining his humanity into eternity. We now consider Christ as God's revelation.

5.9 Christ as God's Revelation

Both Barth and White view Christ as God's revelation. Although they take different routes to this position, they arrive at similar conclusions. Barth was faced with liberal theology which focused on the study of conceptions of states of mind (Newell 2017:51). Once, Barth, ascribing to this view, changed his position as the fallibility of humanity was contrasted to the infallibility of God. This realisation came with the backdrop of liberal theologians who were supporting the Kaiser (Harper 2015:19). Barth's change from liberal to evangelical theology was the bridge by adherence to Scripture (Baxter 1981:131). His theology, however, removes God from the field of human study and sciences (Eyeons 2010:38; cf. Barth 1956:5). God is placed above everybody else, with the only source of revelation, being Christ (Barth 1956:28).

Even in the interpretation of revelation, humanity is not active in any positive sense of the word (McGrath 1994:262). Barth utilises Christ as God's revelation to deny the fallibility of humanity, specifically as ascribed by liberal theology. God, and not humanity, is the object of theology. Even in the realisation of God, humanity is not the discoverer (Barth 1949:36). Barth understands theology not as a response to the human situation, but as a response to the primary act of revelation from God (McGrath 1994:262). Regardless of the human situation, God's revelation is supreme and does not have to be changed or interpreted to fit human conceptions. To Barth, God's revelation conquers and replaces all human thought or activity (Barth 1956:151).

At this point, it will be useful to move between the various arguments that Barth provides. He views the ultimate victory of God's revelation over the human reason, for the various reasons he painstakingly expresses:

- God as Trinity in which the whole Trinity reveals God for us.
- The argument for *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* and all the subsequent conclusions from that argument.
- The virgin birth.
- Christ suffering.

These points are all connecting and support one another, that Barth views the victory of God as inevitable. He assumes that the realisation of what Christ as the revelation of God entails, will be enough to win over human prejudice (Barth 1949:93). Furthermore, he argues that anything from humanity is other than fallible and will inevitably fail. For him, the one recourse is God being revealed in Christ. Humankind can only but accept this truth.

With her focus on redemption, White focuses the revelation of Christ to specifically reveal the character of the Father (Webster 1982:104). Themes such as God's love, human sin, and Christ's dual divinity and humanity, form part of the fact that all humanity should experience that God is love. *The conflict of the ages* series starts with the words, 'God is love' (White 1958a:33). The fifth and final book in the series ends with these same words (White 1950:678). The central book, dealing with Christ, begins with 'God with us' (White 1940:19). All the themes that White connects to Christ, from

beginning to end in the five books, *Patriarchs and prophets*, *Prophets and kings*, *Desire of ages*, *Acts of the apostles*, and *The great controversy* are focusing on that one conclusion.

Where God could originally be observed as being revealed in nature, humanity's mind has become clouded by sin (White 1950:v). Christ came to reveal what humanity could no longer observe, namely God's love. White presents Christ's revelation as a continuing process (White 1940:148, 191), culminating in the cross as the ultimate revelation of God's love (White 1940:279, 762). Therefore, '[j]ustice is the foundation of His throne, and the fruit of His love' (White 1940:762).

Both Barth and White regard Christ as part of the process of revelation. Barth places revelation first and foremost as the foundation of his theology from which everything else develops. White uses revelation as a theme that flows from her main theme of God's love.

5.10 Conclusion

Having compared the main views of White to Barth, it provides us with a clearer picture of White's Christological beliefs in regards to *what* she believes. In this chapter, we have compared methods, the concepts of 'God for us' and 'God in us,' the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ. We also considered the humanity of Christ by looking at the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* argument and the virgin birth. We discussed the way in which Christ's humanity relates to sin, the plan of the incarnation, Christ's humanity post ascension, and lastly, Christ as God's revelation. Having established the *What?* of White's Christology, we will continue in the following chapter to develop the *Why?* of her Christology.

Chapter 6

Reconstructing White's Christology

6.1 Introduction

I will go beyond the *What?* of White's Christological views in an attempt to explicate the *Why?* of her Christology. In other words, this chapter will be my specific contribution in which I will research why White held the views of Christ that she did. Put in other words, my goal is to partially reconstruct the Christological framework that White has utilised when writing her material. As it has been stated, 'It is our task to discover the dominant themes and tendencies in her thought' (Webster 1982:65). A reconstruction of White's Christology, even a partial one, will address the problems of the current methods of evaluation (cf. sections 2.4 and 2.5).

Reconstructing White's Christological framework will serve as a guide to utilising her quotes. With a Christological framework, her quotes can be ordered accordingly, thus reflecting with greater clarity her original intention and concepts in her writings. A researcher would then not be able to just link quotes together simply as they desire, but would have to use the reconstructed Christological framework for the best results. White's work could then be used systematically, instead of becoming a chaos of quotes and counter quotes (Bradford 2006:188).

Reconstructing White's Christological framework will achieve a second purpose. As useful as it is to compare her views to those of specific theologians, we must bring her writings into her own as a lay theologian. With this, I mean that by reconstructing her Christological framework, we should be able to view her Christology as an entity on its own. Currently, by comparing her views to those of specific theologians, her Christology becomes an extension of other theologian's views. In establishing her theological framework, specifically the *Why?* of her beliefs and views, one will be able to appreciate her theology as a self-existing entity.

I have already put the definite *What?* points of White's Christology that have been established in Chapters 4 and 5, in blocks. This is to present a more unified view of

her Christology for the reader. This will also assist in uniting the *What?* points through the *Why?* into a combined whole.

Having given an overview of what has been done and what I intend to do further, the next section will explain the key components that will be utilised in working toward my overall goal.

6.2 Reconstructing White's Christological Framework

6.2.1 Inductive Methodology

In Chapter 2, I mentioned the use of the deductive methodology in which quotes of White are relied upon as premises, and I have drawn a conclusion from those premises. Alternatively, in comparing White's literature to those of specific theologians, the points of agreement or disagreement serve as the premises which in turn support the conclusion (cf. section 2.6). This is also the methodology that I have utilised in Chapters 3, 4, and 5, but now I will utilise an inductive methodology.

An inductive argument implies that if the premises were true, it would be unlikely for the conclusion to be wrong (Anon 1995). Where deductive arguments are either wrong or right, inductive arguments deal with the strength of the possibility that it is right or wrong. With an inductive argument, one is looking for the most likely position that will explain each premise. The specific observation of White's Christology, gleaned from Chapters 4 and 5, supports one to make generalisations to explain White's Christological framework. Put in another way, from the observed *What?* points, we will be able to generalise a way to arrive at the interrelations or *Why?* that connect the *What?*

I will not be using only inductive arguments, but my methodology will largely rely on inductive reasoning. This entails that what follows, will not be absolutely right or wrong, but rather looking for the most likely explanation of *why* White believed *what* she believed. This brings out two points, first, that my conclusions can be disproved. To do so successfully, would require more than selective quoting. The individual would have to follow a similar process as I have done to do so. This possibility of being proven to be less likely, is positive as it would facilitate a process of discussion, not about White as a person, but about her Christological theoretical framework. Second, my conclusion will have to be open-ended and should not be regarded as complete. The amount

of material available and the scattered theological quotes prevent anyone from getting a complete picture. This could also be positive, as it also motivates further study into the framework of White's Christology and other areas of her writings.

By means of the inductive methodology, I will utilise all the *What?* points as markers, referring back to the previous chapters. I will then survey White's writings to make connections in the *What?* points, thereby reconstructing the framework in search of the *Why?* motivators. I will also use this methodology to look at challenging passages and look for the most likely answers or solutions to these passages.

Having explained the inductive methodology, the next section will explain how I will utilise conceptual constructs in reconstructing White's Christology.

6.2.2 Creating Constructs

This section begins with a demonstration on how this idea originated. From the example below it will be easy to explain how I will utilise constructs. According to McGrath (1994:385-388), these are the concept of righteousness by Augustine, Luther, and Calvin:

Augustine:

- The righteousness in question is internal.
- God bestows justifying righteousness upon the sinner, in such a way that it becomes part of their person.

Luther:

- The righteousness in question remains outside the sinner: It is 'alien righteousness.'
- Christians are only 'righteous' by the imputation of a merciful God.

Calvin:

- First, the believer's union with Christ leads directly to their justification.

- Second, on account of the believer's union with Christ – and not on account of their justification – the believer begins the process of being made like Christ through regeneration.

This explanation stimulated my thinking because I detected a similarity of thinking between Calvin and White. This led me to construct the following points:

1. Righteousness is what God does outside me.
2. Righteousness is what God does for me.
3. Righteousness is what God gives to me.
4. The righteousness of Christ, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, becomes the new foundation of my life, from where God does good works in and through me.

When one takes this four-point construction and applies it to the writings of White, it enables one to organise her individual quotes into a systematic whole. Let us take two passagesas an example. The first passage: 'This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy as rags"' (White 1905b:9). This is then followed by the second passage:

> By His perfect obedience, He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ the heart is united with His heart; the will is merged in His will; the mind becomes one with His mind; the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness (White 1905b:9).

The first quote is related to point 1 of my construct. The second quote relates to point 4. Although this example deals with righteousness, it becomes obvious that this method can be extended to all of White's work. Here, I intend to utilise similar constructs in White's Christology.

Concerning the use of constructs to organise White's quotes, one does not only have to create similar constructs when there are existing theological constructs. One will then be able to better utilise arguments, constructs, and concepts of other theologians

to grasp the *Why?* of White's Christology. This does not entail a random application of any construct deemed ideal. One must keep in mind that White did not know or investigate everything. Some aspects of her Christology will not be developed or may not be included. In reconstructing the *Why?* of White's Christology, one must do it in line with the indicated *What?* of her Christology. This should prevent anyone from simply imposing another theologian's views on White's writings. One must also realise that by utilising views or constructs from other theologians, they most likely would have to be adapted to White's unique view. White is not simply a copy of Barth: Although they share certain views, each has their own unique approach and views.

This chapter, therefore, discusses the question, 'Why did White believe in what she believed?' I will move beyond merely stating her views, to understanding her larger paradigm that motivated her beliefs and writings. This will, in turn, help to clarify the following question, 'What did White hope to achieve with what she believed?' What was the bigger picture or the ideal that White was motivating in her works? It must be noted that the *Why?* interrelations presented here are not absolute, but present the most likely relation between two *What?* points. The *Why?* interrelations, whether constructs or relational connections, are my attempts to present White's Christology in a theoretical framework.

Having explained the two methods on which I will rely in this chapter, I will now consider key points in White's Christology. These key points are either unclear or pose a challenge in understanding.

6.3 Key Points in White's Christology

- God is love. This point should be maintained as the starting point of White's theology and specifically her Christology. It should be regarded as the motivation for everything else that follows.

White maintains that '[n]ature and revelation alike testify of God's love' (White 1892:9). She views God's essential nature as love which is testified to in general revelation, such as nature, history, and the inner being of a human (Erickson 1998:178). God's essential nature is also revealed in his special revelation, allowing for the entrance into

a redemptive relationship (Erickson 1998:201). This being the case, the next question is, 'Did White ascribe to natural theology?' Natural theology holds that God can be known through nature. Von Balthazar, for instance considered the beauty in nature as evidence of a Creator, while Aquinas considered the order of nature to provide evidence for God (McGrath 1994:158, 159). Although White views nature as affirming God's intelligence, power, love, and existence, she does not view nature in equal quality to the revelation of Scripture. Scripture is God's inspired book, but nature is not (Hasel 2013:1088; White 1958a:596). In this sense, she is like Calvin. Calvin held that general knowledge of God could be known from nature. Natural knowledge of God denies an individual the excuse to ignore the divine will of God (McGrath 1994:160, 161). White states:

> [I]t is with all who go into the fields with Christ in their hearts. They will feel themselves surrounded with a holy influence. The things of nature take up the parables of our Lord, and repeat His counsels. By communion with God in nature, the mind is uplifted, and the heart finds rest (White 1940:291).

Here she presents Christ as the source of revelation, and nature as his instrument. In doing so, she affirms that nature can reveal elements of God, but that it is subordinate to Christ as the Revealer.

6.3.1 God the Creator as the First Cause

In her writings, White places great stress on the Sabbath, thereby promoting one of the ten commandments (White 1940:283, 774). However, when doing research on the larger corpus of her writings, one realises that the Sabbath entails a more complex component of her theology and also of her Christology.

6.3.1.1 God as First Cause

Craig utilises the Kalam cosmological argument as one of his main apologetic arguments in favour of the existence of God and the refutation of Atheism (Craig & Conway 2022). When the Arabs conquered Egypt, Muslim theologians picked up this argument from Christian theologians who were countering the Greek philosophers. The Greek philosophers presented the argument that the universe had no beginning, but simply

flowed from the being of God and therefore was as essential and eternal as God himself. Al-Ghazali utilised this argument and expressed it in the following way:

1. Whatever begins to exist, has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause (Craig 2020).

The important part in this argument is that all things have their beginning in God. Craig argues that, to consider that everything has originated from nothing, presents an absurdity (Craig 2020). God, and only God, therefore, becomes the single point of origin for everything.

In another publication, Craig deals with the issue of God and time. This issue is connected to the previous point. He denies the argument that God cannot be personal and timeless at the same time, arguing that 'God cannot be timeless if a temporal world exists' (Craig 2001b:240). He bases his argument on an extensive review of the various arguments regarding God as timeless or present in time.

While discussing the transcendence and immanence of God, Bentley makes the following statement regarding the consequences: 'Our experience of reality is dependent, it is believed, on the will and plans of a personal God. A God who is purely transcendental cannot interact with immanent beings, confined by the limitations of time and space' (Bentley 2018:3 of 5).

Bentley foresees a problem in relating a transcendent God to immanent beings. One may argue that this would not be a problem for an omnipotent God. The problem does not lie with God as much as the immanent human being who needs to conceive of God in a sense-making way from within their immanence.

In the views of both Craig and Bentley, God being 'in time' and 'timeless' correspond to God's 'immanence' and 'transcendence.' At the heart of Craig's utilising the Kalam cosmological argument, lies the seed for God and humanity relating to one another. Craig regards God as the beginning, but his existence continues in that he becomes knowable, in the same line as Barth, who would state that God reveals himself (Barth 1949:31). For that reason, Craig presents his view pertaining to God's 'in time' and

‘timeless’ as follows: ‘As a result of God’s creation of and entry into time, He is now with us literally moment by moment as we live and breathe, sharing our every second’ (Craig 2001b:241).

With reference to God and time, Ganssle refers to four individuals, Helm, Padget, Craig, and Wolterstorff (Ganssle 2001:24-26) Helm admits that timelessness presents an image of an impassable God whom he claims to be grotesque. He rectifies this by referring to Christ as entering human time and revealing God (Helm 2001:60). He also maintains God as timeless and impassable, but makes him immanent and knowable in Christ. Craig responds with two questions: First, whether Helm’s view makes God privileged, and second, how God can know tensed time (Craig 2001b:68). Craig’s concern is that Helm’s view makes God transcendent, but at the same time blinds him to qualities of human time. This in turn denies the complete immanence of God, as he would be blind to certain aspects of humanity.

Wolterstorff claims that God exists without a past, present, or future (Wolterstorff 2001:213). Craig responds to this view, questioning how one should construe divine eternity and God’s relationship with time (Craig 2001c:224). He is essentially questioning how God could be immanent when he is transcendent and absent from human time. Padget views God as possessing his own time, which is derived from his being as opposed to our time, derived from the world. Padget furthermore rejects the idea that God requires impassibility to be perfect (Padget 2001:109). In this case, Craig does not raise a question regarding a relationship, but refers to the argument that Padget denies the metric structure of time (Craig 2001c:116). Craig’s responses are based on an underlying concern about God, relating to the creature as Creator. Next, we turn to Canale who shares a similar concern.

6.3.1.2 Canale’s Views on God Concerning Creation

Canale shares the concern of Craig, stating that humanity’s finiteness prevents them from knowing God in his infiniteness. As such, the revelation of God is necessary to go beyond that which cannot be understood, so that the revealed reality is not identified with the mystery (Canale 2000:108). The mystery may be described in this context as to how one would relate God to time. The revelation of the reality of how God relates

to time would be greater than the initial question. This point ensures that the revelation of God transcends human reasoning.

Canale describes God as unlimited by time, while at the same time, not alien to our time. According to him, God's time is qualitatively different from our time, not in denying our time, but integrating and surpassing our time (Canale 2000:109). He maintains that God is greater than time as a revealed reality, but that in his revelation, God can directly relate to human beings. He then narrates that God can relate to humanity in that he shares the same history with them (Canale 2000:109). Here, an interesting point of difference arises, where Barth avers, 'God-created time remains a time hidden and withdrawn from us' (Barth 1956:47). Canale views God's time as revealed to us, hence God's ability to relate with humanity within the same history.

Canale, like Craig maintains a balance between the transcendence of God and his immanence. God must remain the God above all else, but not at the expense of his relation to creation.

- God the Father is discerned as the first cause. A declaration of God the Son's equality with the Father is made (Adams 2013:691).
- White's Christology has a strong relational aspect. Her Christology relates God to God, God to man, and God to the World.

6.4 Why the Son of God was Declared to be Divine

With reference to the pre-existence of Christ, White does not use philosophical terms and does not directly address the philosophical question regarding this matter. She simply combines various Scriptural passages to present Christ's divinity (White 1958a:34).[26] She further states that in response to the beginning of Lucifer's self-indulgence, the Father has presented the Son's true position of equality to himself (White 1958a:36). The announcement of the Son's transcendent divinity suggests that there was already an existing immanence. To balance out the immanence, the Father presented the divinity of the Son and therefore the transcendence of the Son.

[26] Citations of Scriptural passages: John 1:1, 2; Isaiah 9:6; Micha 5:2; Proverbs 8:22-30; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:3, 8; Jeremiah 17:12; and Psalms 89:14.

According to White, the Son was presented as being one with the Father in nature and character (Webster 1984:66).

- Lucifer took this declaration as an insult and started to rebel against the rulership of God.
- This denial of God the Son's true nature started the *great controversy* theme that is founded as the backdrop of White's Christology.
- As evidence of God the Son's divinity, this world is created. God has created humanity free from sin and entered into a relationship of love with humanity.

6.5 White's Combination of God's Transcendence and Immanence

6.5.1 Creator and Creation

Just like Craig, White maintains the view of God as the first cause (White 1958a:33). God as first cause in White's view, must be qualified that it contains the element of divine love which is expressed, not directly but indirectly, as Trinitarian in nature. White describes the process of creation as relational between God the Father and God the Son (White 1958a:34). Thus, the first cause is expressed as a relationship of love between two equals. Hidden in this initial supposition is a thread that is only later revealed. When White speaks of the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Godhead in the fulness of divine power, she intends to unite the Father and the Son in creation (White 1940:669, 671). As we have already discussed, White utilises Christ to establish the Trinity (section 4.2.3) and therefore she does not overtly state the Trinity at the start of *Patriarchs and prophets*. Nonetheless, it should not be conceived that the Holy Spirit was absent from her thinking.

White does not discuss God as being 'in time' or 'timeless.' She does, however, completely deny the evolutionary idea in creation. She does so, not based on philosophy, but solely relying on the authority of Scripture (Abrahamson & Baldwin 2013:744). Despite the lack of theological reasoning, White opts for a philosophical standpoint in this case. In denying the evolutionary theory, she denies human time as the foundation of creation. She places all of creation, including time, with God as the first cause (White 1958a:44). Creation and the time of creation are bound as acts of God in which no created individual shares. In describing creation, White focuses on two aspects: First,

the creation of Adam and Eve, especially their marriage covenant, and second, the Sabbath. The creation of Adam and Eve is intended to give value to humanity as a created being. First of all, they are created in the image of God, as man and woman, and are given original value in their position as God created them (White 1958a:44). This connects human value to human history and establishes the creation story's veracity. As such, creation being fully from God, leads to humanity's value, also fully founded in God.

Second, she states that God celebrated the first marriage (White 1958a:44). Not only has human existence value in history because of creation, but human relations have value by merit of the presence of God. Here, White is using God as Creator to reflect the transcendence of God, but combining that with the presence or the immanence of God. As with the previous point, God's presence in human relationships provides value for human relationships. To remove God from the equation, would be to deny the value of human relationships. Even if one were to find another foundation for the value of human relationships, it could not equal the value of God's presence.

When we turn to the establishment of the Sabbath, White views it as a token of God's love. It is granted by God in a similitude of the created process that, as God worked six days and rested on the seventh day, man is to follow his example (White 1958a:47). This adds to the value being placed in the human creation by God, in that God makes his activity humanity's activity. God's activity is best understood in the following way: 'This suggests that the sense of כלה (be completed) should not be restricted to the simple cessation of activity; it should also be bound to the completion of intent' (Haynes & Krüger 2017:664).

White also states that humanity was to enjoy communion with God in the untainted, original creation (White 1958a:48). God's blessing of the Sabbath was to express his relationship with humanity for whom he has created the Sabbath (Haynes & Krüger 2017:667). The key intent is that the Sabbath as a blessed day of rest, was the intent of God to be with his creation as their Creator. This is underscored by the themes of creating humankind in his image and where he institutes as well as officiates the first wedding. White makes the following statement regarding the Sabbath:

> Both the manna and the showbread pointed to Christ, the living Bread, who is ever in the presence of God for us. He said, 'I am the living Bread which came down from heaven.' John 6:48-51. Frankincense was placed upon the loaves. When the bread was removed every Sabbath, to be replaced by fresh loaves, the frankincense was burned upon the altar as a memorial before God (White 1958a:354).

When White describes the services and implements of the Tabernacle, she combines the bread, the presence of Christ, and the Sabbath into a single theme. This theme is more fully developed in *The desire of ages*, where she utilises the Scriptural narrative in relation to Christ, salvation, and the Sabbath. She makes the following statement:

> The Sabbath was hallowed at the creation…Because He had rested upon the Sabbath, 'God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it,' – set it apart to a holy use. He gave it to Adam as a day of rest. It was a memorial of the work of creation, and thus a sign of God's power and His love…All things were created by the Son of God…And since the Sabbath is a memorial of the work of creation, it is a token of the love and power of Christ…The Sabbath calls our thoughts to nature, and brings us into communion with the Creator…we still may hear His voice who talked with Adam in Eden in the cool of the day. And as we behold His power in nature we find comfort, for the word that created all things, is that which speaks life to the soul (White 1940:281).

For White, the Sabbath is based on what it is, what it is made of, who made it, and the purpose it was made for (Donkor 2013b:1115). The above passage contains answers to these four questions, combined with a larger view on the Sabbath:

- *What is it?* The Sabbath is a literal day set aside by the Creator.
- *What is it made of?* It is made of God communing with man and the creature reflecting on the Creator. The Sabbath is made as a memorial of creation, made by Christ for humanity to contemplate the Creator. However, it goes beyond this because in White's view, the Sabbath is a Christological issue.

- *Who made it?* God, specifically God's Son established the Sabbath. White specifically refers to Christ as the Creator of the Sabbath.
- *For what purpose was it made?* It was intended to contemplate the Creator or transcendent God, as he is immanent. In doing this, humanity shares in the historical event of creation in the current time. This activity is not based on a metaphysical contemplation, but on the most real experience of human time and space. This is not done apart from God, but with God, specifically with Christ as Creator and Saviour. As such the Sabbath allows for an experience of the ideal of a transcendent God in immanent time and space, considering the following statement: 'But theologically, if God can be described as the creative potential and creative reality of and in the universe, then this claim has consequences for how we interpret God's immanence and transcendence' (Bentley 2018:4 of 5).

White has achieved this ideal. She has also taken the ideal which we find in the views of Craig and Canale and made it possible to express them in human immanent ways, while attaining to divine transcendence and immanence. She also goes beyond God's transcendence and immanence. As has been indicated above, Barth is criticised for failing to make God immanent, but this argument is countered by others who claim that he does make God immanent (Gabriel 1995:39, 40). Barth ensures to make God immanent for humanity to be real, as God had to participate in it. Consequently, our humanity becomes real when we are redeemed by grace (Vanderplaat 1983:51, 54). When we look at White's account of God and creation, we find a definite emphasis on relation by participation. God the Father and God the Son are related as equals and participate in the divine activity (White 1958a:34).

At the creation, humanity is created in the image of God. As such, humans are created to relate to humans, humanity to the created world, and humanity to God (White 1958a:44, 46, 47). This relation is within the setting of participation of man to woman, humanity to the created world, and humanity to God (White 1958a:46, 47, 50). However, there is a key difference between the views of Barth and White. Barth's immanent God is without human participation. This is a point in which Pannenberg deviates his theology from Barth. Pannenberg regards humanity's personhood, conceived in the

participation of God's majesty. This view is supported by the history of religions of God, being active in history, while humanity participates in that activity (Vanderplaat 1983:118). By making God immanent, White (as discussed, relating to the Sabbath) allows humanity's immediate response of participation in God's glory. In doing this, she makes humanity more than an observer, but a reacting participant, not simply beholding an immanent God, but sharing in his immanence. Balancing God's transcendence and immanence can be regarded as important, but it requires the element of participation (Bentley 2018:3 of 5). Without a reciprocal participation, God's immanence is merely a visible transcendence. White shifts between the theological and practical aspects in making the transcendent God immanent and allowing human participation in God's immanent activity. This maintains God as supreme, while giving value to humanity in their initial sphere.

6.5.2 Sabbath Construction and its Use in other Works of White

The Sabbath is not simply a commandment or a piece of theology that White considers useful or necessary. For her, the Sabbath is a reality in which human beings should participate and in doing so,

1. focus on the Creator who is the source of value for human beings;
2. provide meaning to their current time and space by participating in historical time and space; and
3. experience the immanence of God, while contemplating his transcendence.

When we consider these points in light of White's other statements, we detect a clearer picture of her overall Christological framework:

> Scriptures that the fourth commandment had been abolished, or that the Sabbath had been changed; the blessing which first hallowed the seventh day had never been removed. They had been honestly seeking to know and to do God's will; now, as they saw themselves transgressors of His law, sorrow filled their hearts, and they manifested their loyalty to God by keeping His Sabbath holy (White 1950:434).

White is not promoting the Sabbath as a commandment that would somehow provide merit for salvation (Anon 1957:121 cf. White 1940:281, 283). She mentions the

blessing of the Sabbath which is connected to Christ and the points in the framework that I have presented. The reference to the law is supporting the continuous and legal nature of the blessing, instituted at creation. White makes this very point in describing God, giving his law to Israel, that it is not a new institution but a creation ordinance (White 1958a:307). Haynes and Krüger elaborate:

> This means that apart from being existence itself, God is also all predications of being in his own being: He is goodness itself, wisdom itself, truth itself, etc. The distinction between existence and essence therefore serves its first purpose for Aquinas in the affirmation that in God, there is no distinction between them: in God, existence and essence coincide (Kruger 2011:61).

God has chosen to utilise the law, in this particular case the Sabbath, as a vehicle to reveal himself (MacCarty 2007:46). The Sabbath is the transcendent God, making his existence and essence immanent and allowing humanity's participation in his immanence. As such, humanity's existence and essence are discovered and established in the memorial of the Sabbath of the Creator. It is at the very point of the Sabbath when God ceased his previous activity in favour of the activity of rest, to demonstrate the inherent value he has placed in his creation.

Here is a weakness in White's Christology because, if what I have described above is taken at face value, it could lead to assuming that human works are key to initiating God's immanence. This must be balanced out by a preceding concept that God's immanence makes it possible for humanity to enter in God's immanence and partake in it. White alludes to this at the institution of the Sabbath after creation (White 1958a:47), also to Christ's pre-eminent immanence being referred to during the incarnation (White 1940:283). She criticises the Pharisees that, despite their 'Sabbath-keeping,' they had departed from God and failed to appropriate Christ's righteousness through faith. The result was that the Sabbath lost its significance (White 1940:283). The danger exists in that White presents this point not overtly, but understated. A deductive process that only relies on selectively quoting White's documents, is very likely to miss subtle points such as these.

This, however, entails that it is Christ's pre-eminent immanence in the Sabbath, in which humanity enters by participating in the Sabbath. It furthermore denies that humanity cannot prescribe God's immanence by their participation in the Sabbath. Where Christ is not the primary point of departure, it fails to reach the transcendence of God, despite participation in historical acts such as the Sabbath. It would be better stated that White regards humanity's participation in the Sabbath as the enjoyment of Christ's pre-existing immanent presence in the Sabbath.

6.5.3 Concluding Remarks on the Sabbath

It should be noted that if certain quotes were read in isolation or in a superficial manner, White could be understood in a completely different way. With this method, it is clear that White has linked the Sabbath to Christ as Creator God. The Sabbath, in her Christology, cannot simply be answered by *What?* or simply quoting her, but requires the development of a Christological framework with which one can frame the *What?* with a *Why?* Other writers also have the same view: 'By blessing the seventh day, God marks the unique relationship that he has with it by allowing it to function in a way that the other days did not. The first six days are days of labor; the seventh day is differentiated as God's unique rest day' (Haynes & Krüger 2017:668).

From this point of agreement, we have placed White in a larger field of enquiry. As such, we do not need to consider her person or her level of sanity, but on an academic basis, we are able to evaluate her views in comparison with other scholars' views. Haynes and Krüger relate:

> Rest was also associated with temple structures. Once strife and disorder were ended, the stability that supports and sustains normal modes of existence could continue. In the mind-set of the ANE, the most appropriate place to enjoy that stability was in a temple. Walton goes so far as to suggest that the definition of a temple is a place of divine rest. However, a temple was not simply a place of inactivity – it was the place from which the deity ruled (Haynes & Krüger 2017:671).

This underscores the value that White places on the Sabbath. It also indicates that this method allows White to be supported by specific theologians, while she can also

support them. In this way, she is coming into her own, while her theology is given form and substance, which in turn give value to her Christology.

6.5.4 White and the Ten Commandments

Having considered the Sabbath and how White views and utilises the Sabbath, it is clear that, in her writings she has a strong emphasis on the law of God (White 1958a:49; 1917:148; 1940:117; 1911:387; 1950:260).

In Larson's response to Weber, the former denies viewing salvation as dependent on human sinlessness or achievement. He claims that victory over sin is a possibility, which he bases on quotes of White regarding the law (Larson 1994:115, 117-121). This presents a somewhat confusing theology, as we are not redeemed by our sinlessness, but our sinlessness is made an absolute requirement of salvation (Larson 1994:122). This is not a new idea within Adventism, but one that is promoted by individuals such as Andreason, writing down his views between 1930 and 1950, which corresponds to the Last Generation Theology (cf. section 4.3; Knight 2000:145). Wieland and Short also promoted similar ideas in the 1940s (Knight 2000:178, 181).

Both Andreason and Wieland promote the idea that God empowers the individual to reach a state of keeping the commandments and ceasing to sin. Andreason writes that the last generation will be able to keep the law and live without sinning (Andreason 1969:318). Wieland similarly claims that the last generation must be able to demonstrate their faith by keeping the law and cease from any sinning (Wieland 1980:94). Both Andreason and Wieland demarcate sin as acts, not as an inherent condition of humanity. The foundation of their argument is as follows:

1. Christ will cease his intercession.
2. Humanity will be without an intercessor at that time.
3. Therefore, humanity must stop sinning (Andreason 1969:316-318).

Both authors treat the law of God as a list of stipulations that humans must cease to do to become sinless. They derive this idea from quoting White (Wieland 1980:96-99). However, *Questions on doctrine* poses views that contradict the views of Andreason and Wieland. They present the view that the law of God does not provide any merit toward salvation, and that salvation is by grace alone. Good works are the result of

salvation, but never the means to salvation (Anon 1957:141). Andreason takes an aggressive stance against *Questions on doctrine* and the SDA Church leadership. This resulted in his ministerial credentials being terminated (Knight 2000:171).

There is therefore a lack of clarity on White's treatment of the law of God. When we consider the intent of White in writing about the Sabbath, we find that it exists as more than just a stipulation. She presents the Sabbath as a Christological ordination of activity in which humanity shares in the activity of God. This sharing in the activity of God is to enable humanity to appreciate the transcendence and immanence of God (cf. sections 6.2.1 to 6.2.3). With reference to the law of God, White claims that the eternal principle that undergirds this law is divine love (Knight 2013d:926). This is in line with the rest of her Christology as we have seen in chapter 5 (cf. section 5.2.1).

The expression of the law of God found in the Ten Commandments is an arrangement to meet the needs of fallen humanity (Knight 2013b). White refers to the law of God, also called the Ten Commandments, as the 'law of love' (White 1940:329). Therefore, the Sabbath and all other commandments are ways to proceed from immanent participation in God's activity to lead one to the transcendent aspects of God. As with the Sabbath, the concept should be extended to all commandments, that Christ's initial immanence is to be enjoyed by humanity in obedience to God's commandments. White construes the commandments, not as mere obedience, but as a process whereby the participation of humanity in Christ's immanence leads to the discovery of God's transcendence. This immanence is founded in both Christ as Creator and Saviour.

White portrays the entrance of sin as Satan denying the allegiance of love to God (White 1958a:35). When she describes the temptation of Christ, she portrays sin as cutting humanity off from communion with God. She further states that God has communicated with humanity through Christ, and in the incarnation, God communicated with humanity in Christ (White 1940:116). This is the key to Christ's victory, not in refusing to commit acts that would transgress the law of God, but in the connection between Christ and God. This falls back on the underlying principle of divine love that undergirds the law. When White claims that Christ's victory over temptation becomes humanity's victory, it is the victory of divine love (White 1940:123). Furthermore, just

as with the Sabbath, all other deeds that Christ performed, were to maintain the essential connection between God's transcendence and immanence. White brings the themes of divine love, a relationship between God and humanity, and God's immanence and transcendence into a unity that underscores her understanding of the commandments. Christ's initial immanence as Creator and Saviour should primarily be accepted in faith to enjoy Christ's immanence. This immanence can be enjoyed more fully by humanity, through obedience to the commandments, which in turn enables humanity to enjoy the transcendence of God.

As with the Sabbath or any other command, White does not merely view it as a stipulation that humanity must attain for merit in some form or another. According to her, obedience to the law of God is the opportunity for humanity to share in the activity of God within human time and history. This sharing allows them to experience both the transcendence and immanence of God. As White puts it:

> They had not builded according to the pattern; but Christ, the true temple for God's indwelling, molded every detail of His earthly life in harmony with God's ideal…And we are to 'make all things according to the pattern,' even Him who 'suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.' Hebrews 8:5; 1 Peter 2:21 (White 1940).

This quote indicates that Christ's example is to serve as humanity's template. It also connects the law of God with his transcendence, to become immanent within temporal human reality through participation. We can conclude then that White does not regard the law of God as stipulations, but as a Christological expression of God's love wrought in the lives of believers. Obedience to the law of God does not merit anything toward salvation, but are the result of Christ's indwelling.

In section 6.3.2, I have indicated a weakness in White's reasoning. This weakness emanates from the respective views of people such as Andreason, Wieland, Short, and Larson. These individuals make the mistake of viewing humanity's obedience as having merit to invoke God's immanence as Creator or Saviour. White does not shy away from God's immanence, particularly in the incarnation, and makes it clear that humanity cannot be uplifted apart from God (White 1940:24, 37). At the same time,

she places much emphasis on humanity's obedience to God's commandments (White 1940:107). Larson interprets her writings to claim that, as Christ overcame sin, humanity can also overcome sin (Larson 1952:281). He reaches this conclusion for the simple reason that White does not make the link of Christ's immanence the *a priori* cause for the believer's obedience. Although both elements are present in White's writing, they are posited paradoxically. The immanence of Christ and the resulting obedience of the believer to enjoy the immanence of Christ are not explicitly linked. As such, authors such as Larson miss this connection. Wieland writes that human beings are not only able to be sinless, but have to be so without Christ as mediator (Wieland 1980:102, 105-106). It should therefore become clear that the paradoxical method in White's writings presents both a strength and a weakness, one that can be exploited when care is not taken in reading her documents. Next, we will consider how White utilises the concept of Christ to introduce the Trinity.

6.6 Defining the Human Nature of Christ

As noted earlier the understanding of White's view on Christ's humanity is Christ was 'affected' by sin to be identified with us, but not 'infected,' to present a fully effectual sacrifice for atonement (Whidden 2013:696). In what follows I wish to define this concept into a more detailed description of Christ's humanity according to White's view.

- Throughout the incarnation, Christ remains fully divine, but willingly does not utilise divine powers for his own benefit.

According to White Christ did not utilise his divinity in any way to overcome sin. White thus seeks to establish the idea that Christ firstly suffered as humans do and secondly that he serves as an example in dealing with sin.

6.7 An Alternative View on the Human Nature of Christ

6.7.1 Adam Before or After the Fall

The discussion within the SDA Church regarding Christ's nature as sinful or sinless, has been concluded that Jesus was sinless. The official worldwide publication *Ministry Magazine*, intended for SDA Pastors, posted an article in 1994, claiming that Christ was sinless (Bauman 1994). The *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist theology* in

2000 states that Christ had a sinless human nature (Dederen 2000:164). Lastly, *The Ellen G White encyclopedia* in 2013 states that Christ was not infected with humanity's sinfulness (Whidden 2013:695). Despite official publications, there are online articles that still promote that Christ assumed a fallen human nature, e.g., an article on the *Adventist Today* website promotes the sinful human nature of Jesus (Striemer 2014). As recently as 2019, an article posted on the *Compass Magazine* website, argues for the fallen human nature of Christ (Paulson 2019). This article refers to Gage (1985), but not to Rand. Despite official publications by the SDA Church, there are unofficial publications that continue to present a view counter to the official view. In surveying these articles, there is a great reliance on quotations from White's documents. The conclusion that one reaches is, first, that despite various publications, the matter is still debated; second, that the discussion continues because statements by White are used as a definite vindication of viewpoints. Most authors would deny the latter point, but the reliance on White's views suggests otherwise; and third, if both sides utilise White's documents, why are there different views? The continuation and the difference in views suggest that this issue suffers from an essential misunderstanding of White's views.

A key phrase that is used in these discussions refers to a 'nature like Adam.' It is qualified with the premise whether Christ assumed a nature like Adam before the fall or after the fall (Gage 1985:2; Rand 1985). To better understand White's views, I will employ a theological construct used by Ladd. In comparing Ladd to White, Lee concludes that the similarities between Ladd and White regarding the Kingdom of God has outweighed the differences (Lee 2010:318).

6.7.2 Ladd and the Kingdom of God

A major point in Ladd's theology is the concept of the Kingdom of God. The Greek term *Basileia*, which Christ used while keeping the Hebrew term *Malkuth* in mind, signifies the kingly rule of God, not his Kingdom (Lee 2010:68). As has been stated, Ladd also states that the Kingdom of God is synonymous with the term 'age to come' (Ladd 1974:64). He argues that the Kingdom of God's reign and rule would be pointless without a realm (Lee 2010:70). One could draw the connection between Barth and Ladd that the Kingdom of God is also the revelation of God (Ladd 1974:93, 104; cf. Barth 1956:31). Both these events have their origin in the incarnation of the Son of

God – in Christ (Lehmann 2000:899). Also linked to Barth, Ladd identifies the Kingdom not as people, but as the rule of God. This raises the question: 'What is rulership without realm?' Lee construes Ladd's view that there is a time when the rule of God would be a spiritual reality, but also a time when it would be a physical reality (Lee 2010:71-73).

As such, we live in the present aeon which constitutes the totality of unredeemed life, dominated by sin outside of Christ (Lehmann 2000:894). The current age or kingdom is one where the sin of Adam and the death of his descendants serve as a prefiguration of the righteousness of Christ and the life of his descendants (Ridderbos 1975:95). Ridderbos raises a crucial point that the age of sin or the kingdom of sin finds its origin in Adam. Subsequently, we could reason that, had Adam not sinned, his descendants would not have faced death. Adam's sin has brought death, and therefore the current age or kingdom is corrupted. This necessitates the need to be rescued from the current age, or as Ladd terms it the 'kingdom of Satan' (Lehmann 2000:894, 895; cf. Ladd 1974:53). As such, sin coincides with being in the world, or more precisely, the kingdom of this world. For that reason, all humans born in the kingdom of this world, are subject to sin, face death, and are slaves of Satan, being the ruler of the current kingdom (Ridderbos 1975:93). From Adam onward, his generation is part of an aeon or kingdom which is under the control of Satan, constituted of rebellion against God (Lee 2010:80).

Judaism holds that at the end of the current age or the end of the kingdom of Satan, God would manifest his sovereignty to the world (Ladd 1974:62). To Ladd, it is the very background of Satan's kingdom that opposes God's Kingdom, which provides the background for the conflict (Lee 2010:78). Judaism postulates that the establishment of the Kingdom of God was a response to human commitment (Green 2013:472). God was therefore expected to establish his Kingdom when humanity committed fully to God. Ladd points to the story of the rich young rulers, expressing the desire of the Jewish people for eschatological redemption and the Kingdom of God (Ladd 1974:64).

The arrival of Christ thus signified that he has invaded the kingdom of Satan to conquer it. It is this commission of the Son that brings about the fulness of time. It is in this revelation of the mystery that Paul's eschatology functions in the realised and still to

be realised redemptive work of God in Christ (Ridderbos 1975:44, 50-51). Ladd confirms this view that the Kingdom of God operated and succeeded in the life and mission of Christ. According to him, Judaism expected a day when God would end the age of sin and inaugurate the new Kingdom of God (Ladd 1974:68). However, the life, death, and resurrection of Christ establish the Kingdom of God. Although the current age – the kingdom of Satan – continues, nonetheless, it has been defeated and the Kingdom of God is now the reigning reality (Ladd 1974:69). These two kingdoms will exist concurrently until the day of the Lord when God will act and end the kingdom of Satan completely (Kreitzer 1993:259). The end of the kingdom of Satan results in the Kingdom of God coming to earth (Ladd 1974:69).

I have provided a short overview of Ladd's theology regarding the Kingdom of God. In the next section, I will discuss points of similarity between the writings of Ladd and White, and how they provide an alternative answer to explain the human nature of Christ and the relation to sin.

6.7.3 Applying the Kingdom of God to White's Christology

6.7.3.1 Adam and the Current Age

We begin with an investigation into how White conceived Adam and the effects of his sin on the created world. It is important to understand that White does not argue that sin originated with God. She states that 'God did not ordain that sin should exist' (White 1940:22) and thereby envelops all sin in any form as a counter to God's plan. She describes the moment that Adam and Eve sinned, as Adam thinking that he was experiencing a higher state of being, but soon his feelings were replaced with terror. She describes sin affecting nature, replacing the love and peace that Adam and Eve shared, with fear (White 1958a:57). She further elucidates that Adam's sin affected all of creation, stating:

> Under the curse of sin all nature was to witness to man of the character and results of rebellion against God. When God made man He made him rule over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule (White 1958a:59).

Here, White argues that the creation was deformed by Adam's sin and that it infected and affected everything bound to it. She also speaks of Satan, claiming the earth as his kingdom:

> When Satan was thrust out of heaven, he determined to make the earth his kingdom. When he tempted and overcame Adam and Eve, he thought that he had gained possession of this world; 'because,' said he, 'they have chosen me as their ruler.' He claimed that it was impossible that forgiveness should be granted to the sinner, and therefore the fallen race were his rightful subjects, and the world was his (White 1958a:69).

White is very cautious in denying Satan validity to his claim, but she nonetheless narrates that he claimed the world as his kingdom. It is important to note that Adam's sin, the effects of that sin, and Satan's rule are part of the current age. Whidden cites White in which she describes the human condition as

- the natural depravity of the heart;
- our present fallen state;
- there is in their (humanity's) nature a bent to evil; and
- our natures are fallen (Whidden 1997:99-100).

Something that poses a problem here, is that sin is isolated into very specific categories. When Bauman describes the view of Christ, having a fallen nature, he argues, 'He [Christ] was born sinless and He never chose to sin' (Bauman 1994). Ridderbos disagrees and claims that, according to Paul's theology, to belong to this world, constitutes a person as a sinner, a person participating in sin and experiencing judgement. He recognises sin as a supra-individual mode of existence in which all human beings of this world share (Ridderbos 1975:93). White similarly regards sin as the way in which this current world or age deviates from the original, ideal world. For her, the central point of sin is an opposition to the immanence of God and in turn, the law of God as it extends from God's *a priori* immanence (Moskala 2013:1164).

White therefore agrees with Ladd that from Adam's sin to the current time, we are in the current age and everybody shares in its sinfulness. Furthermore, Satan rules the

current age by illegitimate claims, in an attack on God. The fallen state of Adam has infected and affected all of creation and continues to do so. Next we will consider the extent of sin.

6.7.3.2 The Extent of Sin

According to Barth, sin is not descriptive of God or his acts. This is why Barth focuses on Christ and explains everything and everybody in relation to Christ. As such, he describes redemption as follows: 'By His appearing, over and against the verdict that man pronounced on himself God's verdict comes into view, to remove all human self-condemnation. God's faithfulness triumphs in this sea of sin and misery' (Barth 1949:80).

Here is a very subtle and important point, that Christ stood 'over and against' sin. If sin is not to be descriptive of God or his acts, it cannot become descriptive in light of Christ's revelation as God incarnated. At the same time, it must also be stated that Christ cannot be presented, completely segregated from sin. As such, Barth presents Christ as having a fallen human nature, without participating in sin (Barth 1956:156, 158).

Barth's view is also applicable to White. According to Moskala, White views sin as everything that deviates from God's will (Moskala 2013:1164). This includes the relationship of God with humanity and acts of sin. White even goes further in extending sin not only to our relationship with God, but also to ourselves, others, and the world (White 1940:142, 150, 165). The four areas can be considered as concentric circles. From the outside moving inward of the imaginary concentric circles we have humanity's value and identity, determined by their relationship with the world. This concept is very far-reaching, as this would relate to all the ways in which humans connect to their environment and the world around them.

This is related to God, where both before and after sin, humanity was commanded to take care of the created world (White 1958a:50, 60). Within that field is an area where humanity's values and identity are determined by their relationship with one another (White 1917:90, 132). This includes all the possible conceivable ways in which one human being has any contact with another human being. Within that area, we could

place an additional area of humanity's determining values and identity as determined by their self-relations (White 1958a:46, 57, 87), as humans relate to themselves in all possible ways, which create their own particular identities. Then there is the inner core of humanity's values and identity where God relates to humans (White 1940:173, 324). Where the other areas present relational qualities on a horizontal level, the inner core presents a vertical relationship. This is because God is always greater than humanity, who stands in subjection to God. At the same time, this core of human identity and values is also horizontal, referring to God coming down to relate to humanity on their level, by means of Christ. The horizontal part develops from the vertical, in that the relationship of God to humanity and their response will affect all other areas.

God initially created humankind to enjoy the vertical and horizontal relationship offered by the Creator. This is where the Sabbath (cf. section 6.2.2) enters as a vital reflection of the inner core relationship of God to his creatures. This relationship was to be determinative of humanity's self-relation, human relationships, and human-world relationships. In her description of creation, White describes the following relationships:

1. God created humanity in his image.
2. Humanity was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to his will.
3. Humanity was not made to dwell in solitude; they were to be social beings.
4. After the creation of Adam, every living creature was brought before him to receive its name (White 1958a:44, 45).

It is important to indicate that White does not follow a strict order in stating these relationships.

The entrance of sin acts as a deviation from the core relationship where humanity responds to God in the same way as God relates to them (Moskala 2013:1165). From this core relationship, all other aspects were infected and affected by sin.

When dealing with the way in which White conceives of sin, one must avoid the mistake of those scholars who promote the fallen nature of Christ or post-Adam Christ. Larson states that 'He [Christ] avoided sin by controlling them [natural passions and propensities toward sin]' (Larson 1952:27). With reference to the term *sarx*, Gage

writes, ‘Christians, though living in physical flesh (*sarx*), should no longer allow sin to rule their *sarx* (flesh)’ (Gage 1985:4). Sin is approached as something that relates to the external areas of human values and identity.

White weaves several themes together to give full expression to her view of sin. While both Gage and Larson focus on sin as acts, White considers the law of God as identical with the character of God (White 1958a:34, 52). She adds that humanity was created in the image of God, bearing the character of God (White 1950:644). She also states that salvation has restored the image of God by writing the law on the hearts of humanity (White 1940:175). When she refers to sin as a transgression of the law, it does not merely constitute a physical activity taking place in the external areas of human values and identity. Sin constitutes a violation within the very inner core of human values and relationships. It is violating the law, meaning that humanity rejects God’s love relationship with themselves (White 1958a:35).

This, in turn, means that sin has become intrinsically part of every human, not as genetics, but as a condition of judgement that underlies the reality of sin and death (Ridderbos 1975:99). This would entail that the inner core where God relates to humanity, is not solely individual, but also communal. As such, when Adam and Eve violated the relationship at the core of humanity, their transgression subjected all of creation to sin (Ridderbos 1975:100). The rejection of God’s law or God’s character by Adam and Eve left a void that Satan claimed for himself: ‘After tempting man to sin, Satan claimed the earth as his, and styled himself the prince of this world. Having conformed to his own nature the father and mother of our race, he thought to establish here his empire. He declared that men had chosen him as their sovereign’ (White 1940:114).

To summarise, White views several areas that concern humanity’s values and identity. The inner core refers to God relating to humanity, where humanity relates to themselves, to other human beings, and to the world. Sin violated the inner core area of God relating to humanity and infected and spread to all other areas. The inner core of God relating to humanity, shares a communal property which entails that the rejection of God by Adam and Eve allowed the sinful condition and judgement of death to become reality for humanity. As such, sin does not define God, but had come to define

humanity as sinners, rightfully worthy of God's wrath, although gracefully receiving God's love in the form of his Son (White 1940:116, 421).

6.7.3.3 The Kingdom of God

Although White, as per her writing style, does not deal with the Kingdom of God topically, the concept is interwoven in her writings. God's Kingdom enjoys a central place in her writing (Donkor 2013a:919). She stresses that the Kingdom of God and Christ's righteousness should be the first great objects of the Christian life (Lee 2010:153), by linking the Kingdom of God, or God's reign, to Christ's righteousness. According to her, the Kingdom of God was instituted immediately after the fall and established with Christ's first advent (Donkor 2013a:919).

Although White does not define the Kingdom of God, there are four supporting themes in her documents referring to the Kingdom, i.e., ruler, subjects, law, and territory (Lee 2010:154). The Kingdom is always in the control of God and never subject to human rule (Lee 2010:159). Having linked redemption to the Kingdom of God, she argues that God is always seeking and finding the sinner, and never *vice versa* (Lee 2010:192). In the previous point, White and Ladd agree that the mission of the Kingdom is that God will find and redeem the sinner (Ladd 1974:53). White also views the Kingdom of God as a spiritual kingdom that will only be physically manifested at the end of time (White 1940:56).

White compares Herod to Christ and makes the following statement: 'But this new Prince [Christ] had a superior claim as he was born to the kingdom' (Lee 2010:61). Here, a key observation should be made: Lee claims that for White, the Kingdom of God's origin is solely with God (Lee 2010:205-206). In the same vein, White refers to Christ and salvation: 'This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us' (White 1905b:9).

We have already established that White connected the Kingdom of God with redemption. We also observed that God is the sole initiator of the Kingdom and hence of salvation. White comments on the body of Christ, stating: 'His divinity was veiled with

humanity, – the invisible glory in the visible human form…So Christ set up His tabernacle in the midst of our human encampment' (White 1940:23).

The original tabernacle was set up by human agents, but in the above quote, White claims that 'Christ set up His tabernacle.' This suggests that there were no human agents involved in the incarnation. This is in line with Barth's reference to the virgin birth to give Christ human genes (cf. section 3.4.2). In contrast, White avoids the announcement of the virgin birth to avoid this conclusion (cf. section 4.3.3). Regarding Christ's human nature, there is a key point of relation to salvation: 'His sinlessness of human nature and perfect obedience (His character) were essential to the efficacy of His atoning sacrifice' (Whidden 2013:693).

The conclusion that Whidden reaches about White's view on the human nature of Christ is as follows: 'The best possible answer seems to be: while Christ was "affected" by sin, He was not "infected" with sin in either His "inherited" human nature or in any "cultivated tendencies" and acts of sin in His human character' (Whidden 2013:695).

White regards Christ as simply not committing acts of sin, although he had an inward disposition to sin. The incarnation as relating to salvation, is the key entrance of the rule of God into this world governed by Satan (Ridderbos 1975:44, 45). Christ is therefore pictured as the starting point of establishing the reality of the Kingdom of God.

6.7.3.4 Christ's Nature, Pre- or Post-fall?

Was Christ like Adam in his nature before or after the fall? Christ as Adam before the fall would imply that he did not possess sinful propensities or inclinations. Conversely, if Christ possessed a nature like Adam after the fall, he would then possess propensities and inclinations like sinful human beings.

I wish to interject on the point of Adam having no sinful propensities or inclinations. White views the fall as first, Eve believing the serpent (Satan), viewing the tree as desirable, and then eating the fruit as the act of sin (White 1958a:55, 56). The origin of sin does not originate in the creation of God, in this instance humanity, but in the free choice of that creation. A lack of faith in God was the origin of sinful desire or propensity in Eve (White 1958a). Adam and Eve were made upright, would remain so

by their relationship with their Creator and would sin by wilful choice (Fowler 2000:234; cf. Erickson 1998:616). They were created free agents without a bias toward evil. They were therefore responsible and accountable for their sin.

It should be noted that, although White connects Christ to Adam, it is based on Christ coming in the place of Adam to succeed where Adam failed and redeem humanity (Webster 1982:94; cf. also White 1940:114, 117, 143, 741). When she compares Christ to Adam, she states:

> In what contrast is the second Adam as He entered the gloomy wilderness to cope with Satan singlehanded! Since the fall the race had been decreasing in size and physical strength, and sinking lower in the scale of moral worth, up to the period of Christ's advent to the earth. And in order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He, who knew no sin, became sin for us. He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man, and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him (White 1986:268).

White does not view Christ as sharing in the sinfulness of sinful Adam, but at the same time, she clearly makes a marked separation between Christ and Adam. The logical question now is, 'If White intended to liken Christ to Adam, either pre- or post-fall, why did she not do so?' This suggests that the answer is not in comparing Christ to Adam, but in looking for another option.

The first challenge in using Adam as a determining factor in establishing the nature of Christ, is that it establishes the created being as the determining factor for the Creator. One may argue that this only applies to the humanity of Christ, but it is still the humanity of the Creator. According to White, the Kingdom of God or plan of salvation was established before creation (White 1958a:63). The plan was not pinpointed to Adam, but the occurrence of sin. This entails that the humanity of Christ was not dependent on any created being. Like salvation, the Kingdom of God and the humanity of Christ are all connected. This implies that the humanity of Christ belongs to the Kingdom of God and not the kingdom of Satan. Ladd states that the early church references the

suffering of Christ or Jesus, but not of the Son of Man. Christ alone employs that title, indicating that it is a self-designation of Christ (Ladd 1974:153.) White similarly presents Christ's humanity as different from other humans (Whidden 1997:53). When Christ rises from the grave, he is the 'Inaugurator' of a new humanity (Ridderbos 1975:85). The suggestion of a new humanity would indicate a new humanity created by God, which indicates that Christ possessed a new humanity.

The next question: 'What then constitutes this humanity of Christ which belongs to the Kingdom of God?' Christ's humanity was encumbered with sin, but did not possess the inherent sinful propensities or inclinations (cf. section 4.3). There is a second aspect to this humanity, namely that Christ resurrected while still maintaining a physical body, but one that transcended the limitations of sinful humanity (Dederen 2000:184). We can divide the humanity of Christ into two phases, i.e., before and after the resurrection:

1. Pre-resurrection:
    a. Sinless propensities and inclinations.
    b. Humanity affected and limited by sin.
2. Post-resurrection:
    a. Sinless propensities and inclinations.
    b. Humanity unaffected and transcendent.

It is this very humanity that Christ offers to impart to those who believe in him: '[T]he effectiveness of Christ's intercessory work requires the sinlessness not only of His character but also of His human nature' (Whidden 2013:696).

White also avers, 'Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us' (White 1905b:9). Because of their faith, sinners are given the human nature of Christ so that they, by forensic declaration encumbered with sin, have an alternative to sinful propensities and inclinations. White describes this action as follows: 'When Christ dwells in the heart, the soul will be so filled with His love, with the joy of communion with Him, that it will cleave to Him' (White 1892:45).

This humanity that Christ gives the believer, also contains their sharing in the resurrection at his second Advent. Human beings will be resurrected or changed similarly to Christ, no longer being encumbered with and affected by sin (White 1950:645).

However, what would make Christ truly human? Gage argues that for Christ to be truly human, he had to have a fallen nature (Gage 1985:2). The challenge is that it resorts to the same mistake as making Adam the criterion for Christ. Gage is making sin the criterion for true humanity. White describes humanity in God's original creation, making the following points:

- Humanity had no bias toward evil.
- Humanity enjoyed communion with God.
- Their capacity to learn, find pleasure, and love would increase.
- They were created in the image of God (White 1958a:45, 49-51).

In contrast, she describes humanity after the fall as follows:

- Humanity had a bias toward evil.
- Humanity no longer enjoyed communion with God.
- Sin and fear entered their mind.
- Their image of God was marred (White 1958a:57-58, 595).

White refers to Christ's humanity in the following words:

- Christ had no bias toward evil.
- Christ enjoyed communion with God.
- Christ had joy and love.
- Christ was the image of God (White 1940:20, 25,115, 363).

Christ, being free from the infection of sin, portrays humanity as being created by God, but not in a post-fall state. White uses this sinlessness to enhance the reality of Jesus' humanity, arguing, 'The enticements which Christ resisted were those that we find it so difficult to withstand. They were urged upon Him in as much greater degree as His character is superior to ours' (White 1940:116).

In this, she takes a similar view as Barth, in placing Christ in the position of one who has suffered (Barth 1949:102). As such, Christ was a true human, living amongst sinful conditions. He was the possessor of a new humanity, which is the humanity granted to those belonging to the Kingdom of God.

Having presented a third option for White's view on the humanity of Christ, I will now utilise quantum physics to present a conceptual paradigm in thinking about the dual divinity and humanity of Christ.

6.7.3.5 Combining Christ's Sinless and Sinful Qualities

Having presented an alternative view by relating Christ's humanity to the new age of salvation, it is important to consider the following point referring to White (in line with a point raised earlier in section 4.3.5): 'When it came to Christ as fully sinless, sacrificial substitute, she was pre-fall. But when she wrote of His ability to sustain in times of temptation, she emphasized His identity and spoke largely in post-fall terms' (Whidden 1997:75). A possible way to resolve this tension is with the process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. The thesis would be that Christ, in the context of soteriology, was pre-fall. The antithesis would be that Christ, as a moral example, was post-fall. What is missing is the syntheses between the theses and antheses. I therefore turn to White's writings in order to find the missing synthesis.

It is ironic that those who promote the pre-fall view, are focusing on the soteriological aspects (Rand 1985; cf. Donkor 2005a:6), being in line with the Alexandrian thinking (McGrath 1994:287).[27] Those who promote the post-fall view, focus on Christ as our moral example to overcome sin (Gage 1985:7; Larson 1952:27), which is in line with the Antiochene thinking (McGrath 1994:289).[28]

White presents two extreme positions, and it is up to the reader to appropriate the best of both views in their particular ways. Larson attempts to apply dictionary definitions to White's terminology (Larson 1952:344). This assumes that she consistently remains strictly within the dictionary definitions of words. However, it also denies a

[27] Note that I am not equating the pre-fall view with the Alexandrian School, nor the post-fall with the Antiochene School, as I am only illustrating similarities.
[28] Once again, I am merely illustrating similarities and not suggesting complete identical views.

development in White's understanding. To apply a similar process would be to place oneself in a position where one cannot distinguish between the forest and the trees in it. When we return to White's concept of sin and how it infects and affects humanity, I have designated four areas. The first is the core where God relates to humanity in both a vertical and horizontal way; the next three refer to humanity's relationship with themselves, then their relationship with other human beings, and lastly their relationship with the world. We have already indicated that sin originated through humanity, rejecting God – the inner core relationship – which in turn affected the others.

In her writings, White sets the thesis that Christ was sinless (pre-fall), but also the antithesis that Christ was sinful (post-fall) (Webster 1982:124). When we consider Christ's humanity, the inner core would require that for Christ to be fully human, he would have to relate to God in a similar way as humans should. God the Father as Creator would then relate to Christ the man. At the same time, God the Father would also be relating to God the Son. As to the relationship between God the Father and God the Son, the question is, 'What was the nature of that relationship during the incarnation?' White presents this relationship as:

- Christ was one with the Father.
- First, God the Father has communicated with humanity *through* Christ; now He communicated with humanity *in* Christ.
- In everything that he did, Christ was fully cooperating with his Father (White 1940:19, 116, 325, 536).

As I have indicated (cf. section 4.3.3), in *The desire of ages*, White omits the passage where the angel announced Mary's pregnancy (Lk 1:28-35). In all her writings, there is only one paragraph where she discusses this event. This paragraph is found in the Baker letter (White 1896): Preceding this paragraph, White compares the first Adam to Christ, who was the second Adam. She describes the first Adam to be 'pure,' 'sinless,' 'without a taint of sin,' being in the image of God. Christ, she argues, was the 'only begotten Son of God,' not merely in his image, but God himself. She then claims that 'not for one moment was there in Him [Christ] an evil propensity.' This stands in contrast to the posterity of Adam, meaning humanity, being born after the fall, and having 'inherent propensities of disobedience' (Cairus 2000:216). White contrasts

Adam to Christ, in that Adam fell through transgression. On the other hand, Christ was tempted, could have fallen, but in no way did he yield to temptation (White 1896:Par 14).

After this separation between Christ, Adam, and humanity, White then writes about the angel's announcement to Mary. She states that the incarnation was a miracle of God, and as Scriptural evidence she quotes Luke 1:31-35. She then attributes the miracle of the incarnation to the Trinity and gives no indication of human genetics being part of the miracle. In the next paragraph, she emphasises that Christ was free from 'taint,' 'inclination,' or 'corruption' (White 1896:Parr 15, 16). This would agree with my earlier proposed view that Christ's humanity is neither post- nor pre-fall, but a new humanity belonging to the new age of salvation (section 6.2.3.2). Christ was born into a world of sinners, encumbered with the weakness of sin in his relationships to himself, others, and the world. Yet, he did not inherit a sinful human nature. How then could he be depicted as being both sinless and sinful?

White presents the core relationship of God the Father to Christ, as Christ was both God and human, being perfect and sinless. In describing Satan's temptation of Christ, she relates the following:

> If Christ's confidence in God could be shaken, Satan knew that the victory in the whole controversy would be his. He could overcome Jesus. He hoped that under the force of despondency and extreme hunger, Christ would lose faith in His Father, and work a miracle in His own behalf. Had He done this, the plan of salvation would have been broken (White 1940:119).

Although Satan tried to abuse Christ's physical condition, White indicates that his goal was the core relationship that Jesus shared with God the Father. She earlier contrasts Christ to Adam and points out that Adam's condition was far superior to Christ's conditions, having the following benefits:

- Possessing the full vigour of mind and body;
- surrounded with the glories of Eden; and
- in daily communion with heavenly beings (White 1940:117).

In contrast, White describes humanity that have suffered the effects of being infected with sin as decreasing in

- physical strength;
- mental power; and
- moral worth (White 1940:117).

As such, we can conceive that the inner core area of Christ, where God the Father was relating to God the Son, was free from any sin. The identity and values of Christ were therefore completely sinless. In the other areas where Christ related to himself, to others, and the world, his identity and values were that of a man encumbered with the full degenerating effects of sin. In this, we have the thesis of Christ as sinless (pre-fall) and the antithesis of sinful (post-fall). The synthesis is that the core of Christ's being, where God the Father related to God the Son, was without sin, while at the same time, Christ stood in all other ways as no different to humanity. When White refers to Christ as a substitute, she detects the need for the sinless relationship of God the Father to God the Son, which is to be imputed to us. When she considers temptation, she focuses on Christ's solidarity with humanity in its sinfulness. It can be depicted like this:

- Christ's relationship with God. Without sin.
- Christ's relationship with himself. With sin.
- Christ's relationship with others. With sin.
- Christ's relationship with the World. With sin.

The perfect relationship between God the Father and God the Son was not altered at the incarnation (Dederen 2000:162). This perfect relationship between God the Father and God the Son during the incarnation had to exists within the confines of sinful human weakness (Dederen 2000:164, 165), which provides the synthesis between the thesis and anthesis.

The immediate strength of this view is that it allows White to link relational and legal aspects of God's nature to sin and justification. Adam's sin originated with an act of unbelief which led to a broken relationship (Moskala 2013:1165). Christ did not act in unbelief and thus the core relationship between God and Christ remained sinless, even though he experienced sin in all other areas.

There is an inherent danger in this way of viewing Christ's humanity regarding his sinless and sinful nature. The various relationships being described cannot be defined in a strict sense, but only in a general sense. The relationship of Christ with God does not have clear boundaries, but would filter into the other relationships of Christ with Christ, with humanity, and the world. This would also hold for the human individual. Essentially, each of the described relationships would affect the others. Davis discusses the question of whether White was confused about justification as follows:

1. Her view is more than a legal declaration, but contrary to the Roman Catholic view, in that justification never becomes the property of the individual, but remains God's prerogative. Human beings can only retain justification in their relationship with Christ.
2. Justification comes only through faith and not by sacraments.
3. Justification and sanctification are complementary, but separate.
4. Justification is a punctiliar transaction and not a process (Davis 2006:107-109).

When he answers the question of whether White was confused about justification, Davis highlights the following aspects of White's writing:

1. The complexity of White's soteriological and in turn Christological framework.
2. The confusion can arise from neglecting to realise this complexity.

This suggests that authors such as Gage and Larson approach White's Christology with an assumption of simplicity. This, in turn, leads to the neglect of key points, which in turn affect their soteriological viewpoints (cf. section 4.3.3). Any scholar who does research on the Christological framework of White, must take care not to press the nature of Christ into simplified systematic moulds at the neglect of the unsystematic complexity of White's writings. That White regards Christ as the inaugurator of the Kingdom of God, is possible because Christ has a perfect sinless relationship with God. This makes Christ the perfect sinless substitute for sinful humanity. In relating to himself, others, and the world, he is identical to humanity. This makes Christ the perfect example for sinful humanity. Through the process of redemption, it is this humanity that Christ offers believers until they are completely redeemed from sin by a transformation from sinful to sinless.

The four-point construct of righteousness presents how righteousness is provided for humanity apart from humanity, for humanity, in humanity, and through humanity (cf. section 6.2.2).

If we take this construct and include the humanity of Christ as part and parcel of this righteousness, then the humanity of Christ was

1. initiated apart from me;
2. what God did for me in becoming human;
3. what God has given to me; and
4. where the Holy Spirit indwells and the individual becomes the channel for God's works (White 1940:22, 23, 173, 208).

It would be pointless for Christ to adopt a completely identical nature to humanity. If his humanity was in no way different to ours and was part of righteousness, it would diminish righteousness. If the humanity of Christ was identical to sinful humanity and required a later infusion of power for sinners to become sinless, it would argue for the

deification of humanity and deteriorate into a double salvation concept. Christ's humanity as sinless in his relationship with God and sinful in his relationship with himself, others, and the world, allows for a forensic provision of his humanity to believers. This humanity is also part of the Kingdom of God and the entire process of righteousness. In the next section, we turn to the solution of Christ's divinity-humanity.

6.8 Christ as Key to the Trinity

6.8.1 The Link between God and Quantum Physics

It may appear strange to introduce quantum physics into a theological study, as science is sometimes regarded as disproving God. Richardson, however, has shown how various religious thinkers have applied quantum theories to views about God. Richardson describes a pull of quantum science into religious speculation (Richardson 2015:55-57) and adds: 'Here is the source of what has been called quantum mysticism. This analogical correlation of the non-empirical realm described by quantum science to that of the divine or mystical realm of spiritual and religious traditions from around the world has opened quantum science to interdisciplinary scrutiny, inviting theological inquiry' (Richardson 2015:19).

Quantum physics appeared after White's passing, so it would not be something she would be acquainted with. The principles of quantum physics can be used to explain certain key thoughts. In this thesis, it will be applied to explain the unity of Christ's dual nature in the next section to explain one of White's challenging statements. For this purpose, we will focus on the so-called 'Double Slit' experiment.

6.8.2 The Double Slit Experiment

Newton postulated that light is made up of particles. Huygens, on the other hand, avers that light acts like waves. For a time, the 'light as a wave' model became the predominant view in the scientific world. This was based on sending a single light particle through a barrier with a single slit and then through a barrier with a double slit. In this experiment, light behaved like a wave (Gribbin 1991:9-10, 14-16).

There is an ongoing debate on whether light is to be considered as particles or as waves. Although not the first at the time, Einstein stands alone in his theories on light. He claims that light quanta, which would come to be known as photons after 1926,

must be both particles and waves. After 1923, it was established that photons were both particles and waves (Gribbin 1991:81-85). The statement followed that ‘quantum theory as we know it today only really began with the acceptance of Einstein’s idea of the light quantum, and the realization that light had to be described *both* in terms of particles and waves’ (Gribbin 1991:81).

The most surprising thing about the double slit experiment is that with a single slit the photon goes through a single slit as a particle. When the double slit is introduced, the photon passes through like a wave. When the experiment was set up to observe each slit, the photon acted like a particle (Gribbin 1991:170-171). This, among many other quantum discoveries, has led to the following conclusion: ‘Quantum objects can be at more than one place at one time, cannot manifest until observed as a particle, can jump through time to another place in space, can maintain relationships and react simultaneously to distant influences, and severely perplex physicists of every calibre’ (Richardson 2015:20).

It entails that light is at the same time a particle and a wave, but can only be observed as the one or the other: ‘Observed from different perspectives, waves are particles, or matter, or whatever possibility the observer’s angle of observation entails’ (Richardson 2015:22).

Linked to the double slit experiment is another theory called the ‘super positioning of waves.’ This theory considers how two waves can have an effect on one another. One of these equations postulates that two sine waves of different frequencies moving in the same direction, are viewed as a moving particle (Russel 1996).

I will utilise this very specific image of a particle, at the same time being a wave, in key areas to explain White’s views on certain matters.[29] I will also employ the image of two waves of different frequencies moving in the same direction, being viewed as a particle. In the next section, I will employ these concepts on our perception of the nature of God.

[29] These key areas form White’s conception of the Trinity: The incarnation, the death, and the resurrection of Christ (cf. sections 6.8.3, 6.9, and 6.8.3).

6.8.3 God as both Particle and Wave

In most of her writings, White describes the Trinity in functional and relational terms, and not ontological terms. There is an article in *Bible Training School* where White does alter her *modus operandi* and describes the Trinity in ontological terms (White 1906:145). In *The Review and Herald*, Prescott has published an article on the Trinity. White's article differs from his in her introduction and conclusion, while still retaining the key Trinitarian passages (Prescott 1906:3).[30] White's description of the Trinity in this instance is very similar to a systematic theological description and thus becomes ideal to understand how she regards the Trinity. Her introduction reads: 'The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and is invisible to mortal sight' (White 1906:145).

The term 'Godhead' is taken from an older translation of Colossians 2:9 (KJV) for the essence of God (Moon 2013:843). With this, White understands the Father as the fulness of the essence of the deity which is not visible to human observation. Then she describes the Son:

> The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The word of God declares Him to be 'the express image of His person.' 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' Here is shown the personality of the Father' (White 1906:145).

White equalises the Son to the Father that in Christ is the fulness of God. Christ was manifested, and this manifestation is linked to God's love in giving his Son to be manifested as Saviour. White promotes this idea to emphasise the idea that the Son reveals the Father. Thus, although the Father is unseen, he is revealed through the manifestation of the Godhead through the Son. When White discusses the Spirit, she writes: 'The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is

[30] Prescott's presentation on Christ had an impact on White and helped her to clarify her teachings on the Trinity (Valentine 2013:494). The *Review and Herald Article* was printed on 22 February 1906 (Prescott 1906:3) and the article by White in *Bible Training School* was printed during March 1906 (White 1906:145, 147). This suggests that White used Prescott's explanation of the Trinity.

the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour' (White 1906:145).

White combines the two terms 'Comforter' and 'Spirit' in presenting the personality of the Holy Spirit. She also expresses the idea that the Spirit's coming is in all the fulness of the Godhead. As the Son manifested the Father, the Spirit manifests divine grace (White 1906:145).

White uses the term 'Godhead' always in the singular form. There is only one 'Godhead' who is fully shared by three Persons. The Godhead becomes the unifying factor and the Persons the separating factors. Paul speaks of Christ as the fulness of the 'Godhead' or 'Deity' in Colossians 2:9 (KJV) (Moon 2013:843). White takes this concept and combines it with Christ as the revelation of God (including the Father and the Spirit), proceeding to apply the term 'Godhead' to both Father and Spirit. She thus utilises Christ as key to explain the Trinity (cf. section 4.2.3). The Godhead or Deity of Christ becomes the key unifying factor for the Trinity. At the same time, the individuality of Christ is also applied to the Father and the Spirit, allowing for a separation within the Godhead of the three Persons.

The manifestation of Christ as the fulness of the Godhead in Person reveals the Father as the fulness of the Godhead in the unseen Person and the Spirit as the fulness of the Godhead in Person. To these ideas, White links Christ as Saviour, the Father as the one who sent Christ out of love, and the Spirit as the Revealer of divine grace. This latter point is confirmed that it is a consequence of those who accept Christ as Saviour. White continues to explain what this entails in practicality for Christians:

> There are three living persons of the heavenly trio. In the name of these three powers, – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will cooperate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ (White 1906:145).

Here, she views the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as distinct Persons. At the same time, she also refers to them as powers. She uses the term 'powers' to refer to spiritual entities (White 1911:90; cf. also 1940:324, 352, 579; 1958a:717; 1917:167, 330).

Thus, White balances ‘Persons’ by placing them in a paradoxical position with ‘powers.’ This prevents the confusion of ‘Persons’ to human ‘persons.’ What is important, is that she views the entire Trinity availing themselves to individual Christians, emphasising the relational quality of the Trinity.

As such, the comparison must remain open-ended (Brümmer 2005:7). I will therefore return to the double slit experiment, being discussed in the previous section, which states that light is both a particle and a wave.

The conceptual image of photons as simultaneously both particles and waves will be used to reconstruct White’s view of the Trinity.[31] The Father, Son, and Spirit are described as divine Persons – in the language of quantum theory, as particles. Particles are measured in terms of physical volume (weight, height, etc.). The three divine Persons of the Trinity are portrayed as a single unit, as a personal being, located in a singular location, similar to particles (Erickson 1998:204). White presents Christ as appearing in the Old Testament as God in human form and ultimately in the revelation of Christ (White 1958a:139; 1940:24). This view is useful and important to retain the personality of God. However, it is a challenge to explain the omnipresence or the incorporeality of God. In this instance, it is also possible to regard God as a wave or spirit (Jn 4:24):

> The main concepts within quantum mysticism have developed into a metaphysical theory of an ultimate all-encompassing field, or vibrating sea of intelligence or informed consciousness. This consciousness field is thought to be an observer observing itself from an infinite perspective. It is ever experiencing, interpreting, creating and transforming, through us and all other things; an idea that is analogous to many concepts of God (Richardson 2015:40).

In quantum physics, it is possible to view the three divine Persons as vibrations or waves. Waves are measured by a non-physical frequency. Thus, depending on God’s

[31] Seedbed uses a similar idea, and utilises the keys of a piano as I do with particles, and the notes as I do with the wave (Anon 2011:0.38).

choice, members of the Trinity may be presented as a particle or Person, alternatively as a wave or spirit (Erickson 1998:294).

When we apply this concept to White's Trinitarian understanding, we detect individuality and unity. Relying on the super-positioning of the sine waves concept, we are able to view each member of the Trinity existing as two super-positioned waves of different frequencies. The first wave would be the divine wave that each member of the Trinity possesses individually, containing the essential qualities of divinity. This first divine wave is singular in frequency, pointing at one God. Outside of this divine wave there is no other divine wave and therefore no other god. The second wave possessed by the divine Persons of the Trinity is one which characterises the Trinity as three unique Persons. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit each possesses a unique spiritual (wave) quality that differentiates them from one another. God the Father is the fulness of the Godhead but he is also the Father. This holds true for the Son and the Spirit. Each of the waves vibrates on the divine frequency and thus, although the wave originates with three different sources, an identical vibration combines them. To fall back on White's description of the Trinity, the 'Godhead' or 'Deity' would be the singularly shared divine wave.[32]

Since each one vibrates by themselves as a divine wave, they are in themselves divine. The Father, Son, and Spirit are the fulness of the Godhead or the first divine wave. The Father, Son, and Spirit each expresses the fulness of the Godhead, unique to their Person, hence the second wave that allows for distinction. God the Father is the fulness of the Godhead, but he is also the Father. This holds true for the Son and the Spirit. Essentially, they are unique, but effectively united in their shared divine wave frequency. For this reason, in the Old Testament, God's oneness is never presented in the simplicity of his being, but in a complex plurality (Canale 2000:121). This divine wave is not external to the members of the Trinity, for that would create a quaternity. The Deity expressed as a divine wave is inherently and essentially of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. What one should note is that White does not mention three Godheads. She describes a singular Godhead as the inherent and essential

[32] This is similar to the concept of the Trinity being of one substance, but is simplified because it avoids the physical connotation to substance.

quality of the members of the heavenly Trio. Since this Deity is singular, it unites the three members of the Trinity into one God.

At the same time, each individual Person expresses the one Godhead whom they are in different ways. White speaks of the oneness of the Trinity while retaining their threeness. Each unique divine wave remains unique, since they possess unique wave functions that belong to them individually. Therefore, in describing the Father, Son, and Spirit as the fulness of the Godhead, White also describes their acts which are unique to the Father, Son, and Spirit. The ascribing of unique acts to each of the members of the Trinity prevents this concept from collapsing into modalism or even monism. Therefore, each wave can be presented with an individual and unique personality. White lends herself to our analogy of particle and wave as she speaks of three Persons and three powers. This presents a similar view to the analogy of Person as a particle and spirit as wave or power. In this instance, within the uniqueness of the Trinity, there is a unity in their functioning. We once again observe White's paradoxical style of writing juxtaposing the oneness and the threeness of God in extremes.

We never conceive of the Trinity as acting in selfishness, as certain wave functions belong only to one of the three members of the Trinity, the benefits are shared. For that reason, Christ is the Saviour, but the entire Trinity is included in the baptismal formula (Moon 2013:844). Christ remains Saviour, but the intense relational nature of the divine wave shared by the three members, includes them as partners in the act. This would also follow that even when Scripture or White mentions only one or two individuals in the Trinity, it is never an ontological description of the Trinity. Such a single or dual focus would simply be to highlight a particular quality or activity of God or two individuals in the Trinity.

An economic view of the Trinity or modalism would require that there is only one divine wave and that, at different times, God reveals himself as one of three particles. The economic view would not fit into White's concept of the Trinity, where it allows for distinction and distribution, but not division (Erickson 1998:358). White, in contrast does allow for division, permitted that it stands juxtaposed to the unity of the Godhead. One can neither present Christ as a human being who in some way was endowed with the divine wave. The divine wave can only belong to God and there is only one

frequency. It must be inherently and essentially part of God or it would make divinity a transferable quality. This would suggest that anyone can possess divinity under certain conditions. The divine beings, each consisting of a common divine wave as well as a unique divine wave, remain three individuals who together share their Deity. The two super positioned divine waves can also be regarded as three distinct Persons of the Trinity. As such, White would be able to present God as one, but also as three. The presentation of God in the sense of a particle or Person does not negate the spiritual or wave aspect. There is rather a dynamic fluctuation between the two.

When we consider the immutability of God, it would imply that God cannot lose his divine wave or the qualities associated with that wave. He may choose to execute or not execute those qualities, but they remain part of who God is. To make it more specific, God the Father is not able to not be the Father. That is an unchangeable aspect of God the Father's nature and hence identity. This also holds for the Son and the Spirit. It does not deny that any member of the Trinity cannot assume another wave or even a new wave, permitted that it does not negate their personal divine wave. White views the law of God as a revelation of God's will and character, which cannot as such be changed (White 1950:467). At the same time, she allows for God the Son to become human and forever retain his human nature (White 1940:25). She views God's immutability as relating to his nature and will, but not ontologically.

As such, God the Son at the incarnation is not diminished and bound to human genetics, not even in part. Rather, at the incarnation, the Trinity creates in the Son a third human wave which is presented as the man Jesus Christ. Since waves are not measured in volume, the first wave of the Godhead as well as the second wave of the Son' unique nature, can coexist with a third human wave, and be fully contained in the God-man Jesus Christ. As humanity was created in the image of God and as White has indicated, God relates to God through the Trinity, God relates to other creatures, and God relates to creation. In God relating to God, each member of the Trinity relates to themselves individually (MacCarty 2007:4). This would present a difficulty for human minds if one were to define God to God and God to a self-relation. The reason for this difficulty is that, although the Father, Son, and Spirit are individuals, they are also one. Thus, when one of the members of the Trinity relates to himself, it is also a relation to others. This concept would explain God's being as love, for at no time is God's

relationship selfish, but always directed to others (MacCarty 2007:4). This extreme closeness of relationship does not deny the individuality of the Father, Son, or Spirit, as White regards it as establishing the uniqueness of the three Persons (cf. section 4.2.3).

By taking a human wave, God the Son relinquishes primarily how he relates to creation, other creatures, and even the other members of the Trinity, as God. As Christ, God relates to God, to himself, to others, and creation – primarily as a human. The divine wave is not absent, but hidden within the human Person of Jesus Christ. As we have indicated, this human wave belongs to the Kingdom of God. It contains the effects of sin, but not the infection of sin. After the resurrection, the wave's frequency is altered to remove the effects of sin. This wave is to replace the human wave of those who place their faith in Christ. White makes an important statement regarding Christ's divinity:

> But the Son of God was not to prove His divinity to Satan, or to explain the reason of His humiliation…And Christ was not to exercise Divine power for His own benefit. He had come to bear trial as we must do, leaving us an example of faith and submission…Strengthened with the memory of the voice from heaven, He rested in His Father's love. He would not parley with temptation (White 1940:119).

Christ possessed the fulness of divinity, but willingly did not exercise it to have any advantage over humanity (Webster 1982:117). Considering the suffering of Christ, this would increase his suffering. When power is not available, one must suffer whatever one has to suffer. When power is available to relieve suffering, the sufferer has a choice to use the power to overcome the suffering, or willingly not to use the power. It is within this willingness that Christ's temptations are revealed. In relating to God, being primarily a man, Christ wilfully did not use his divinity outside the will of God. At any time, he could relinquish his humanity and return to his rightful place as God. However, to do so, would be a repeat of the mistake of Adam (Barth 1956:157; White 1940:117). Satan's temptation was directed at the very core of Christ's being, regarding the relationship of God the Father to Christ as the God-man. Christ wilfully subjected himself to his humanity and wilfully had to remain so, despite his divinity. Where

Adam opted for the power that was not his, Christ was tempted to utilise the power that was his. As such, Christ resisted his temptation only by means of his humanity, in order to show us that the reality is that it can be done. Christ, therefore, suffered more severely in temptation than human beings.

Webster notes that White often uses the phrase 'divinity flashes through humanity' (Webster 1982:87). White employs this phrase in several events in Christ's life to indicate that, as much as Christ was human, he remained the Son of God (Webster 1982:88). Here, the divine and human waves are pictured to be both contained, but also separated within Christ as a single unit. There is an interchange at times where the divine wave is brought forward in a moment of revelation. Despite this dynamic view, White claims that Christ never exercised any power not readily available to humanity (White 1940:24). She portrays Christ as equal to God the Father, willingly subordinating even his divine power to the will of the Father.

Both Barth and White argue that Christ retained his humanity when he ascended to heaven. White claims that Christ could not be omnipresent and remain true to his humanity. As such,

> [t]he Holy Spirit is Christ's representative, but divested of the personality of humanity, and independent thereof. Cumbered with humanity, Christ could not be in every place personally. Therefore it was for their interest that He should go to the Father, and send the Spirit to be His successor on earth. No one could then have any advantage because of his location or his personal contact with Christ. By the Spirit the Saviour would be accessible to all. In this sense He would be nearer to them than if He had not ascended on high (White 1940:669).

Christ ascended to the Trinity as the Son of God, since the divine wave has not been altered. At the same time, God the Son remained Christ, as he retained the human wave. After his ascension, Christ returned to God the Father who ratified the covenant with his Son, that he would receive him as his beloved Son (White 1940:790). As such, Christ now relates to God, to himself, to other creatures, and creation as both divine and human. This should not lead to a confusion of the divine and human natures of Christ. In Christ, the divine and human natures retain their uniqueness, but are united

as one in Christ (Webster 1982:78). According to White, this remained the same at the ascension, as she does not indicate Christ's humanity as being deified. Wilfully Christ does not exercise certain divine qualities directly, as it would negate his humanity, but utilises these divine qualities through God the Spirit – a point that will be discussed in section 6.9.6.

Christ can exercise his omnipresence and omniscience through sharing in the first divine wave of the Godhead through the Holy Spirit. As such, White has managed to retain Christ's humanity post-ascension. The divinity of Christ is maintained as is his humanity, but as separate components of one being. As the Spirit shares the divine wave in a relational sense with the Father and the Son, it allows believers to enjoy the same relationship as Christ has with the Father. This in turn entails that humanity is glorified in Christ, but in no way is humanity deified.

Having considered how we may conceive of God, as both particle or Person and at the same time as wave or spirit, we will address another theological conundrum that White presents in her writings.

6.9 Death of Christ

- Christ died on the cross, becoming the Saviour for all men and re-establishing a connection between God and humanity. This salvation must be appropriated personally to take effect in the individual's life.
- Satan is defeated at the cross and God's character is revealed as one of love.

6.9.1 Divinity Did not Die; Humanity Died

The following quote is one in which White appears to contradict herself:

> 'I am the resurrection, and the life' (John 11:25). He who had said, 'I lay down my life, that I might take it again' (John 10:17), came forth from the grave to life that was in Himself. Humanity died; divinity did not die. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death. He declares that He has life in Himself to quicken whom He will (White 1986:301).

What we find here is a logical conclusion of White's Christology. The focal point in this quote is the ability of Christ to give life. Nonetheless, she has stated the consequences of uniting two separate natures into one being. However, she does not present the humanity and the divinity of Christ as two separate entities. The divine and human sides are united in

- a divine-human Saviour (White 1911:134);
- his divine-human nature (White 1940:568);
- his divine-human sufferings (White 1940:624); and
- the divine-human heart of Christ (White 1940:655).

According to White, there was no separation of divinity and humanity in Christ, neither at his death nor at his ascension. This being the case, there will have to be an alternative explanation to make sense of the statement. Subsequently, I will consider White's view on death.

6.9.2 White's View on Death

When discussing the abovementioned challenging statement, we must consider White's view on death. She refers to the believer's death as follows: 'Their life is hid with Christ in God, and until the last trump shall sound those who die will sleep in Him' (White 1940:527). This is in line with the SDA theology. This metaphor presents death, not as a finality, but a temporary state that will be terminated by Christ's resurrection (Andreasen 2000:325). White uses the same concept in her quote that the death of the believer will sleep in Christ. In other words, a person is dead until Christ resurrects them.

White argues that when those who have resisted Christ and die, will suffer another kind of death at the second coming, which she refers to as the 'second death' (White 1950:544). The second death is a reference to the eternal destruction of the wicked (White 1950:662, 672-673). This final death, which God hates, is the very thing he uses to protect those he loves from (Andreasen 2000:331). White rejects the idea that individuals ascend to heaven or descend to hell at death (White 1950:549). As such, it is impossible to employ the option that Christ's divinity was existing outside death

like a soul. As such, the only two options are to view death as ‘sleep’ or final destruction. We now turn to the death of Christ.

6.9.3 The Death of Christ

White describes Christ as dying the second death as a sinner, as the sin of humanity was laid upon him. As such, sin created a barrier between the Father and Christ. In describing the spear wound to Christ’s side, she makes it clear that Christ was already dead and that the spear wound would have been mortal if he had not been dead. She states that none of the physical sufferings had brought about Jesus’ death, as the suffering of sin was the cause of his death (White 1940:753, 772).

Two points are important here: First, that Christ died as a sinner – he therefore died the second death; and second, White describes Christ as being killed by sin. How then can we reconcile these points with the initial quote which poses the challenge? I present the following sections as a possible solution.

6.9.3.1 Divinity

We have established that Christ is the second Person of the Godhead, adopting a third human wave (cf. section 6.8.3), so that divinity and humanity could unite in one Person, Christ. When we consider Christ’s divinity, White is correct in her initial assumption: One of the key components of divinity is that it is characterised by life (Erickson 1998:297). This must also be understood in light of God’s eternity (Canale 2000:108). Divinity is not brought into being and as such, cannot be removed from existence (Erickson 1998:297). If the divinity of Christ ended, it would deny his equality with the Father. White thus follows the logical conclusion that Christ’s divinity did not die.

Let us momentarily consider death as an area where God has not entered and is unable to enter. God did not enter death, as he is the source of life and possesses life in himself. He could not enter death, for he cannot die. The human wave that hid the divine wave in Christ, would among other things, serve as the vessel or tabernacle whereby God could enter death. Although this was the second death, Christ’s divinity did not die. White states that in the process of Christ receiving the sins of the world, the Father was obscured from the Son (White 1940:753). From the Son’s perspective he was ‘apparently’ forsaken by God. The Son of God therefore experienced the

separation from the Father, although they were not separated in reality (White 1940:756). This point must be considered with the greatest of horror. As the Son had never been separated from the Father and the Spirit, he now experienced that separation. Where mortal beings are removed from existence, they have no consciousness of that separation. Christ's divinity did not die and would thus be conscious of that separation. There is a second consequence: When the divinity of Christ, possessing life in himself, entered death, it was no longer death. Life entering death depicted the end of death.

6.9.3.2 Christ's Humanity Died

Christ's humanity was a sinless humanity, although subjected to the sins of others. As such, death means that the human wave ceased to function or die. Christ's innocent death served as the propitiation for the sins of humanity. Where propitiation is usually associated with humans appeasing a god, in this context, the God-man appeased God (Dederen 2000:178, 179; cf. Ridderbos 1975:167). As Christ was not coerced, but voluntarily suffered the sacrifice of the sinless for the sinful, he instigated the defeat of sin.

The fact that God the Son assumed a human wave (cf. section 6.4.3), presents a further consequence. Although White does not present the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* argument, she arrives at the same conclusion as Barth. Christ would retain his human nature through eternity. Had the human wave not been resurrected, there would be no resurrection for humanity. If God the Son relinquished the human wave, the greatest revelation of God would lose significance in the span of eternity. White has foreseen this and in maintaining the humanity of Christ, she ensures that sin can never arise again (White 1940:26), for the crucified and resurrected Christ is the answer to all the criticism that could be presented of God. She claims, however, that Christ will retain the marks of his crucifixion (White 1950:674). For her, the God-man that brought about salvation, will remain the eternal God-man as revelation of that redemption.

6.9.4 The Victory of the God-Man

When we combine the divine and human waves in the single Person of Christ, we find that the combination defeats sin and death. There is another point that White raises: 'Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to

escape the terrible torture, the enemy of God and man would have triumphed' (White 1940:761).

White regards Christ as the victor by human faith, not divine power. The plan of salvation was performed at great risk, even to God himself. If Christ had failed, there could be no resurrection and it would make the separation of death permanent. We also find that in Christ, in whom White has united divinity and human sinlessness with his suffering.

The humanity of Christ died, while his divinity was apparently forsaken by God, as sin obscured the Father from the Son. Christ was thus regarded as truly dead within the understanding of Christ's divine-human nature. Regarding the divine rest, Haynes and Krüger argue: 'In the literature of the ANE, the gods (ancient near eastern deities) placed a high premium on rest. Disturbances that interrupt rest lead to conflict' (Haynes & Krüger 2017:671). Christ had completed the work of redemption and could rest in death on the Sabbath.

White contrasts Christ who rested in death on the Sabbath, with the Jewish leaders who did not rest on the Sabbath (White 1940:775, 777). As God rested on the seventh day after creation, Christ had completed his work of atonement and rested in death on the seventh day. Those who had not accepted Christ, would not enjoy the rest of either creation or redemption.

6.9.5 The Resurrection of Christ

The following question must now be answered, 'How did the resurrection function with regards to the divinity and humanity of Christ?' White narrates: 'Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death' (White 1940:785).

The divinity of God the Son had assumed a human wave at the incarnation, and the resurrection could assume that wave once again. The life that White is referring to, is the life of Christ. This, however, is not a continuation of the old life, but Christ was the source of a new creation (Anderson 2013:775). As Christ was thus resurrected, the

same process is available to believers when the divine wave will once again resurrect their human wave.

The conceptualising of God as both wave or spirit and particle or Person, allows various challenging ideas to be resolved. I believe that this has been the case and that I have shown the logic behind the challenging statement of White.

- Christ ascended to heaven and will retain his humanity throughout eternity.

6.9.6 Divine *Deditio*

The previous section compared God to both a particle and a wave, as a means to demonstrate the interrelations, the *Why?*, between the *What?* statements of White. This construction supports certain points of Crisp's divine kripsis in that

- the Son of God took on human nature; and
- the incarnation becomes eternal (Crisp 2007:148).

Crisp, however, postulates that the divine nature of Christ was fully functional during the incarnation. It could influence human nature, although the latter was for the most part ignorant of the divine nature. The divine nature penetrated the human nature of Christ, but his human nature did not penetrate his divine nature (Crisp 2007:149, 150).

This idea poses two challenges that Crisp ignores:

1. It creates two consciousnesses in Christ – one divine and one human.
2. It leads to the deification of humanity (Crisp 2007:150).

White's view of the interrelationship between the divine and human nature of Christ, is clear in the following statements:

- Christ, who was fully God, became a helpless baby.
- Beneath the lowly guise of Christ, it was possible to recognise his divinity.
- When he was at the temple as a child, he confirmed his relationship with God the Father, and there was a moment when divinity flashed through humanity (White 1940:49, 63).

Although White, in her paradoxical style presents Christ's divinity and humanity as equally powerful opposites, there is in some way a limitation of the divine attributes. In describing the life of Christ, she fluidly moves between his humanity and divinity, stating:

> He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant's part (White 1940:645).

There is a full consciousness of Christ's divinity, indicating that he only had one consciousness. As much as it states that Christ was fully aware of his divinity, White binds this to the foot washing and the Son of God becoming a servant. In maintaining that Christ retained his humanity, she states that he could not be in every place in person (cf. section 6.8.3) (White 1940:669). As it is the Son of God that adopted a human wave linked to the source of life (Jn 1:4), the humanity of Christ could not be removed from the equation, but remained. This, however, entails that if Christ were to exercise his omnipresence, it would violate the dimensions of humanity. White furthermore writes that not only did Christ bridge the separation between God and man, he has also brought humanity closer than they would have been if they had not sinned (White 1940:25). Christ was the ultimate revelation of God, and by retaining his humanity, this event of ultimate revelation becomes an eternal process. White retains the humanity of the God-man into eternity and argues that this eternal God-man has exercised his omnipresence through the Holy Spirit. Thus, God the Son could retain his humanity and still exercise his divine abilities.

White therefore views Christ's divine and human natures as both unique and united in his one consciousness. This would deny the kripsis view in favour of the kenosis view (cf. section 4.7.4). At the same time, she presents a wilful limitation by Christ of his divine attributes.

When the Son of God began to vibrate on a human wave, he still had only one mind. Christ was conscious of both his divine and human waves. He was also fully in control

of both waves. As such, there was a fluidity in the interaction between his divinity and humanity. However, White also presents Christ as not utilising his divinity for personal gain. The instances where she refers to Christ's divinity flashing through his humanity, are:

- His victory over Satan at the temptation in the desert.
- The first cleansing of the temple.
- The second cleansing of the temple.
- Before Caiaphas, prior to the crucifixion.
- Before Herod, prior to the crucifixion (White 1940:130, 162, 590, 707, 731).

These instances can be defined as testimonies of Christ's divinity and judgement, and his attempt to reach stubborn human beings. These instances also depict moments where Christ's actions implemented more than human authority.

From the above evidence we conclude that Christ had both a divine and a human nature, but only with one consciousness. His full divinity was accessible to him, but he did not utilise it. He had to wilfully deny any aspect of divinity that would have given him an advantage over human beings, for him to be victorious in his humanity. After the ascension, he would again utilise his divine prerogatives, except for his omnipresence, since that would negate his humanity. Since the divine wave allows for the sharing of the attributes, Christ was present to everybody via the Holy Spirit.

This is one point in White's Christology that is incomplete. There are elements of kenosis but also of kripsis. The statements that do hint at this are not detailed enough to allow us to provide a complete picture. On this point, we are only able to consider a general direction in White's Christology.

However, there is an alternative which I term, divine *deditio* (*surrender*). At the incarnation, Christ did not part with his divinity or simply exercise certain divine qualities. He rather surrendered the control of his divine qualities to the Father. At any stage, he had the right to take back the control of his divinity as it did inherently belong to him. As was required for salvation, he lived as a human being, having relinquished the control of his divinity to the Father. White thus concludes that Christ had to live fully

by faith in the Father (White 1940:389). She describes Christ's laying down of his life and taking it up again, as being in his power to do so (White 1940:484). From his incarnation to his death, Christ surrendered the control of his divinity to the Father. The Father would utilise Christ's divinity to promote his ministry and at times allow divinity to flash through his humanity. When Christ entered the grave, having obtained atonement, he could retake control of his divinity and again fully act as God. This view overcomes three major obstacles:

1. Christ retained his full divinity.
2. It explains the mysterious holding back of Christ's divinity that Webster mentions (Webster 1982:84).
3. It removes the separation between the divine and human consciousness in Christ. His divine and human natures are subject to only one consciousness.

The concept of divine *deditio* incorporates the statements of White regarding the holding back of Christ's divine nature during the incarnation, in a better way. White writes that at the resurrection

> Christ had proclaimed in triumph, 'I am the resurrection, and the life.' These words could be spoken only by the Deity. All created beings live by the will and power of God. They are dependent recipients of the life of God. From the highest seraph to the humblest animate being, all are replenished from the Source of life. Only He who is one with God could say, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. In His divinity, Christ possessed the power to break the bonds of death (White 1940:785).

The idea of divine *deditio* could be regarded as a better way to make the resurrection of Christ an infallible claim to his divinity, in that he could retake control of his divinity. In the next section, we look at White's understanding of the purpose of the incarnation.

6.10 The Purpose of the Incarnation

The concept in White's Christology regarding the purpose of the incarnation will now be discussed. This is one of the key points where Barth and White differ from each other with reference to their Christologies.

6.10.1 White's Purpose in Writing about Christ

It is important to understand that White is not a systematic theologian, writing a systematic theology. As such, she writes spiritual material and is therefore freer to use emotive language and imagery. Nonetheless, her views contain strong and pertinent theological views. One thing that is also evident in White's Christology, is the realness with which she describes Christ. This is partly due to the way in which she presents her views. Her ability to create 'tension and paradox' is not only a theological tool but also a literary one. However, she also employs a theological aspect here.

White's writings fluctuate between the topics of God, humanity, and the world. She expresses the world in history and in the immediate context. In describing the crucifixion, she includes three topics, namely God, man, and the world (White 1940:762, 763). These topics are combined as aspects of faith. When White describes Elijah's 'despondency,' she refers to the real feelings of a real man in history (White 1917:162). Elijah as a real man in real history makes the narrative relatable to another human being in their personal realness and history. White simply has to illustrate that in human realness and history, the real God is acting in a real way.

Therefore, by relating the various narratives from Scripture, White includes God, humanity, and the world to establish faith in the reader. A narrative approach to Scripture has been neglected especially in recent years, as liberalism and postmodernity are denying the objective truth of the narrative (McGrath 1994:174). In *The conflict of the ages* series, she utilises a paradoxical narrative theology where she starts with an assumption that the Scriptural narrative is accurate and superior to any other narrative (White 1958a:33, 45, 755).

White utilises narratives as vehicles for her theological ideas. In this way, she also maintains the emotional and cognitive content in her writings. She furthermore remains spiritual in her writings, but with a strong doctrinal presence. When she addresses the purpose of the incarnation, she combines God and humanity as essential partners within her description and utilising of Scriptural narratives. By referring to Christ as the Creator of nature that reveals God, she combines creation and revelation into a single act (White 1911:248; cf. also Abrahamson & Baldwin 2013:745). As much as Christ creates, he is also the Revealer, and as much as he reveals, he is also the Creator.

This is carried further in the process of salvation, where Christ as Creator is also presented as Saviour and in turn, the revelation of God (White 1911:16).

When White gives the reason for the incarnation, it is inseparably linked with revelation. Christ is incarnated as Saviour and therefore he reveals God (White 1940:19). As much as Christ reveals God, he does so as Saviour. In light of God's love, this is not something that compels him, as he acts from the vantage point of *a priori* love. This makes it possible for White to very easily combine God, humanity, and history. For her, these three elements are inextricably linked.

A key point here is that in using narrative, White avoids abstraction and allows God to meet us in the world, in history (McGrath 1994:173; cf. White 1940:213). Barth refers to Scripture as the story of God, but removes humanity and the world from that story (McGrath 1994:171, 262, 332). Bultmann, in turn, removes the divine elements from the narratives (cf. McGrath 1994:171, 172). The question is therefore, 'What makes White's rendering of a story special or common, better or worse, more accurate or less accurate, or anything else, than any other interpretation of the Scriptural narratives?'

At this point, it would be easy to slip into the pattern of apologists or critics. One could focus on the divine and positive elements as advocates do, or on the human and negative side as critics do (Van Niekerk 2019:117). However, White never presents her interpretation of the Scriptural narratives as better, more correct, or superior. She seems to present a challenge to the reader to go and read Scripture for themselves. She does not regard herself as adding truth, but simply expresses truth that is already inherent in Scripture. This unwritten, but underlying challenge to the individual to read Scripture for themselves, is in line with White's view on Scripture (cf. Knight 2013a:648). She does not use a narrative to develop her theology, but she expresses the narratives which she holds to contain theology, something she does not have to prove, but which should be discovered by her reader. As such, she places Scripture and the process of discovery into the hands of everyone who reads her works. A study was done on those who read White's works regularly, as opposed to those who do not. It was found that those who read her documents,

- have a closer relationship with Christ;

- are more likely to study Scripture; and
- are more active in outreach (Anon 2005).

White's simple method thus allows her not only to transmit theological ideas, but enable her reader to enjoy the same process of discovering those ideas for themselves. Therefore, unlike the standard theological processes, she not merely relates theological points to each other, but places them in the hands of her readers.

6.11 Critique on White's Christology

Having partially reconstructed White's theoretical Christological framework, it allows one to move beyond merely quoting single statements and consider the whole framework. The *What?* can be identified through deductive comparison. As I have pointed out, White's paradoxical writing style promotes two ideas in extremes. She thus presents Christ as substitute and as example in a paradoxical manner. Without the interrelation or *Why?* between these *What?* points, the question arises, 'How balanced are they?' Although White presents both Christ as substitute and example as extremes, it does not entail a balance. My critique on White is that she places more emphasis on Christ as example than substitute. Many would argue that I am incorrect, but such an argument is based on a personal reconstruction of *What?* statements. Therefore, Gage and Rand or Whidden and Larson can have such contradicting views (cf. sections 4.8.1 and 4.8.6).

Evidence for my statement is found in a fundamentalist period in Adventism (1920-1950). This was also a period of granting White greater authority (Bradford 2006:158, 167). In this period (1920-1950), the idea of Last Generation Theology was also prominent as the SDA Church's view changed largely due to the teachings of Heppenstall (Bradford 2006). From the time of White, this has been an issue, despite her denial of reaching sinless perfection (Knight 2000:124). This idea was promoted by Andreason between the 1930s and 1940s (Knight 2000:144, 145), while it resurfaces with Larson in 1985 (Larson 1994:121). The one key factor that is identical in all these cases is White. Those who rely mostly on White's *What?* statements for their theological views are also the ones who promote the idea of Last Generation Theology. The problem is obscured, for it begins in White's writing methodology, develops in her Christology,

and culminates in her soteriology. White's *What?* statements about Christ as substitute and her *What?* statements about Christ as example are void of the *Why?* or interrelation. This factor obscures the possibility of evaluating the actual balance. The repeated view that, following Christ's example, huimanity is also to become sinless, indicates that there exists an imbalance. As indicated in my preliminary critique on White's Christology, her fear of being inadequate spilled over into her Christology, as is evidenced by individuals using her *What?* statements as theological markers, ignoring the *Why?* interrelations.

Having limited education and writing with a pastoral motivation, White avoids abstract and philosophical reasoning. If this reasoning is not present, what remains is concrete and literal reasoning to fill the void between the paradoxical *What?* statements. Adherents of the Last Generation Theology argue that concrete sins must be overcome and individuals must literally become sinless (cf. section 4.8.3). Gage presents sin as being transferred by concrete genes and that one should overcome literal acts of sin (Gage 1985:2, 7). The concrete and literal are simpler and tangible as opposed to abstract and philosophical. As such, White's theoretical imbalance between Christ as substitute and Christ as example spills over into concrete and literal expectations. This issue has a further implication, in that Adventism has very easily in the past (1920-1950) slipped into fundamentalism and can do so again as there are still fundamentalists and evangelicals in the SDA Church (Bradford 2006:203, 193). The greater danger of fundamentalism is that the uniqueness of Adventism leads to its isolation from the rest of the Christian and theological communities. Seibold[33] criticises the SDA Church leadership with issues such as women's ordination, losing young people, and members viewing Christ in terms of fear and judgement (Seibold 2022). Lau points out that there is a disparity between official statements regarding White's documents and the use of these documents at church level (Lau 2022). He further comments that decisions at church level are very often made by 'cherry picking' quotes from White's documents (Lau 2022).

The recent nature of this criticism indicates that White's writings are in danger of becoming a barrier rather than a motivation for the church to remain relevant. There is a

[33] He us the executive editor of *Adventist Today*.

fear that to admit discrepancies of White in a specific area, would damage the SDA Church. The SDA Church therefore does not address issues such as the Last Generation Theology (Geraty 1999:12). The issue in White's Christology that I have criticised, is not immediately evident when one only works with the *What?* statements, ignoring the interrelating *Why?* Only when the *What?* and the *Why?* are connected, does White's theoretical Christological framework become clear and are these issues revealed.

6.12 Conclusion

Chapter 6 has attempted to go beyond simply quoting White's *What?* statements, but to partially reconstruct her Christological theoretical framework. I first considered inductive arguments as opposed to deductive arguments that were discussed in Chapter 2 (cf. section 2.7.1). From the established *What?* points, being identified in Chapters 4 and 5, I explained that in this chapter I would move to general indicators to identify White's *Why?* or interrelation that ties together her Christological theoretical framework.

Next, I explained how one could use constructs, either by creating it or applying it to White's work, to discover the underlying *Why?* points. I demonstrated how a reading of McGrath's discussion on righteousness, reviewing Augustine, Luther, and Calvin, has led to the creation of a construct to make sense of White's quotes. The construct serves as a broad generalisation that allows one to arrange *What?* statements concerning the *Why?* interrelations.

In light of the previous chapter, I considered key points in White's Christology. I recapped that for White, 'God is love' and this concept underlies and is elaborated on in her writings. I demonstrated that she regards God being revealed in both nature and divine revelation, while she maintains the superiority of divine revelation. Considering Craig's argument of God as the first cause, and his focus on the immanence of God, places God in time. This view and focus are shared by Canale. The declaration of the Son of God, declared divine, led to how White combined God's transcendence and immanence at creation, with the Sabbath. This furthermore explained why her writings have such a strong focus on the Sabbath, spilling over to the other commandments.

This underlying reasoning is not found in the arguments of Andreason and Wieland, whose documents lead to a theology that focuses more on works.

We next investigated how White used Christ as the key to establish the Trinity. From there we considered the nature of Adam before the fall and moved into a comparison of the views of Ladd and White on the Kingdom of God, based on Lee's work (Lee 2010). By applying the Kingdom of God construct to White's Christology, she postulates that Adam belonged to the current age of sin, while Christ, as the second Adam, belongs to the future age of salvation. We investigated the extent of sin and how White views sin as a human problem and not something to force divinity to act.

The next section investigated White's views on Christ's nature as either pre-fall or post-fall. From there I considered how one could combine White's *What?* statements regarding Christ's sinful and sinless qualities. I indicated that she viewed the humanity of Christ as something unique.

From there I explained and demonstrated how the particle/wave concept of quantum physics can be utilised to view the Trinity. This concept was applied to White's Trinitarian view by investigating how the particle/wave could be used to explain Christ's incarnation. After that, I investigated White's statement that Christ's divinity did not die in him, although his humanity died, which seemed contradictory to her similar view of the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* formula of Chalcedon. I also investigated White's view on Christ's resurrection and the victory found within the resurrection.

I then compared the concepts *kenosis* and *kripsis* with each other, indicating that both concepts share elements in White's writings. Additionally, I proposed a third option, divine *deditio* (*divine surrender*), postulating that Christ retained his divinity, but surrendered the control of his divinity to the Father during the incarnation. Moving forward, I considered the incarnation's purpose and White's purpose in writing about Christ.

This chapter has presented my contribution in attempting to restructure White's Christological theoretical framework. Although the process is not complete, this could serve as a stepping stone to be elaborated on. In the next and final chapter, I will present an evaluation of my work.

Chapter 7
Critique and Evaluation

7.1 Introduction

In this last chapter, I will review and evaluate my goals and method. I will look back at what I have done, elaborate on the method, and clarify certain points. Reviewing my work will present the process I have followed and in turn, assess and evaluate this method as to its effectiveness and potential for future use.

7.2 Overview

In Chapter 1, I reflected on the work done in my Master's dissertation, specifically on the need for a new method to evaluate White's documents. I indicated that my research interest was to develop a new method to evaluate White's documents to construct a Christological framework from which one could better understand and evaluate her Christology. I indicated that my thesis has three research aims, namely

1. to compare White's documents to those of Barth concerning Christology; of particular interest is God's relationship with humanity, as well as the humanity and divinity of Christ, Christ's humanity as sinless or sinful, and lastly, humankind's response to God;
2. to elaborate on White's Christology, utilising both a deductive and inductive methodology; and
3. to develop a partial Christological framework of White's writings (cf. section 1.4).

I also indicated that I would be using a qualitative methodology in this thesis, utilising mainly Barth's *Church Dogmatics* and White's *The conflict of the ages* volumes in comparing the Christological views of both White and Barth.

In Chapter 2, I defined two terms, namely *What?* and *Why?* The *What?* refers to the specific points of doctrine that White held. I related the *What?* to the observable phenomenon which makes up a theory. The *What?* as the proverbial tip of the iceberg, receives a great deal of attention in discussing White's documentation. The *Why?* is, however, crucial in a theological context to understand the paradigm that someone

should use in presenting their views. I related the *Why?* to the interrelations that exist between the observable phenomena, which are the *What?* in a theory. I also discussed Knight's attempts to guide the reader of White. Although well-intended, it does not account for subjectivity, nor does it provide guidelines to avoid subjectivity. I demonstrated that, although White was not a theologian, she made theological statements in her writings, and due to her influence, continues to still influence the SDA's theology.

I also narrated Weber's interactions with various individuals on the issue of salvation and the nature of Christ, specifically regarding White's views on the matter. I then discussed MacCarty's quoting of White's documents while referring to other theologians. In his thesis, Webster has done extensive development of White's Christology, utilising the method of quoting her. He contends that White utilises 'tension and paradox' in her writings (Webster 1982:154). He then organises her quotes in chronological order. To maintain the balance, I also considered this process as it is utilised by non-SDA writers, such as Mansour. Although frequently quoting White, Mansour follows no methodology and utilises White's quotes as he requires it to support his personal arguments. I have indicated that the weaknesses in his method are:

- It suffers from selective quoting.
- Subjectivity is hidden in quoting White as a source of authority.
- It focuses only on what White believes and neglects the *Why?* of what she believes.

I also discussed White's views in comparison to specific theologians. This method provides a clear backdrop to identify her theological views on certain matters. It also provides a basic network to order the random quotes of White. Jones compares White's views to those of Calvin, which allows him to pick up various themes in her work (Jones 2014:1, 145, 148). This method is also used by Oladini to compare White's views to those of Stott. As such, Oladini has likewise found themes and appreciated the scope of White's theological thoughts (Oladini 2011:203-204).

In critiquing the method of comparing White to specific theologians, I indicated that, as much as those who utilise this method, discover aspects of her theological framework, it allows them to neglect other parts of the same framework. White's theology is not

developed to stand on its own, but is always expressed as ‘compared to’ another theologian. In evaluating this system, I discovered the following limitations:

- Comparing White’s views to those of specific theologians, places her at a disadvantage, as her Christological framework is not fully discovered or reconstructed. It may be useful to compare her views with others, but it does not result in reconstructing her Christological framework.
- Because of a lack of framework for White’s Christology, it is worthwhile to impose challenges by other theologians on her views, without ignoring the way in which she deals with these issues. It is also possible to ignore challenges within her writings, specifically with reference to her Christology.
- This method mainly focuses on the *What?* of White’s Christology and not on the *Why?* We find *what* White believes, but there is less investigation into *why* she believes what she believes.

I also pointed out that both methods are limited, in that they rely on a deductive methodology. Deductive arguments present several premises that inevitably lead to a conclusion. Similarly, White’s documents are quoted or compared in such a way that the various points serve as premises that lead to a conclusion. These conclusions tend to isolate her from her context – a limitation that arises from a deductive methodology (Ponter *et al.* 2012:140). This deductive methodology also provides the *What?* of White’s theology, but neglects the *Why?*

In Chapter 3, I investigated Barth’s Christology as it is found in his *CD*. Barth’s theology is founded on ‘God for us,’ which must be regarded as God being dynamically free to choose to reveal himself to humanity (Barth 1956:2). This revelation includes the whole Trinity, which specifically takes place in the mode of the Son (Barth 1956:1). Barth understands God’s being as a self-willed choice from eternity and that this revelation is intended for the incarnation (Barth 1949:63). In response to the liberal theology of Schleiermacher and the humanists, Barth places Christ, and in turn God, at the centre of his theology. I also investigated how Barth relates Christ’s humanity as *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis*. he construes these two terms to avoid adoptionism and monophysitism (Haley 2015:98). To ensure that Christ was human like us, Barth argues that Christ had a sinful human nature. He therefore states that Christ’s humanity

was real because Christ suffered (Barth 1949:107). We also looked at the virgin birth that Barth utilises as an argument against Schleiermacher (Barth 1956:180). He did not consider the genetics of Mary or how they could pose a challenge to certain of his arguments, e.g., *anhypostasis/enhypostasis*. I also referred to the views that Barth originally shared with Von Harnack and Herrmann, in returning Christianity to its primitive roots (McGrath 1994:293, 294; Barth 1963:5, 39). Barth would later develop key differences from these theologians, creating a theology based on God's self-revelation (Vanderplaat 1983:42).

In Chapter 4, I investigated White's Christology. I began by reviewing some of the work that had been done on White's Christology. This review considered White's views on the divinity of Christ (Canale 2000) as well as his humanity (Whidden 2013). Webster presents the most comprehensive work, dealing with several aspects of White's Christology (Webster 1982:66, 74, 78, 81, 82, 89). I indicated that White's Christology should be understood as beginning with a childhood fear of not being good enough, which would be replaced by coming to understand the benevolent majesty of Christ (Moon & Kaiser 2013:24).

White uses Scripture in an expository way, exploring what the text of Scripture means for her (Pfandl 2013:650). In this regard, she uses the works of Melville, Conybeare, and Howson, as well as Stowe (Fortin 2013b:1029, 1031, 1033). This leads her to promote two ideas to the extreme and then combine them into a single unit. The use of 'tension and paradox,' although valuable in her writings, presents a danger, in that a reader may fail to see one of the streams of thought. Another method that she utilises is to combine various themes into a single concept, and as the need dictates, she brings one or more themes to focus. She furthermore presents a strong relational quality in her Christology. I discussed the idea of the metanarrative of White concerning the postmodern view that denies metanarratives. I argued that postmodern thinking does not deny the metanarrative, but there is a human limitation for observing the metanarrative.

White believes in the Trinity (Moon 2013:844). To establish the Trinity in her thinking, she equates God the Son with God the Father (White 1940:19, 483, 591). She then equates the Holy Spirit to Christ and thereby establishes the divinity and personality

of the Spirit (White 1940:669, 671, 765). Furthermore, she supports the divinity and pre-existence of Christ (Webster 1982:66). Christ retained his essential divine qualities when he was on earth, but wilfully denied himself divine powers (Webster 1982:84). When she describes the birth of Christ, she omits the passage of the angel's declaration to Mary (Lk 1:26-38). She also ends the motherhood of Mary at the cross by indicating that it was transferred to John (White 1940:752). As such, Mary did not have any hold over Christ as his mother.

White also believes that Christ is retaining his human nature in eternity (White 1940:25). In comparing the articles of Gage and Rand, their respective views were considered. The one key difference between them and White is the concept of Christ's internal nature as sinful or sinless. The other key difference is that Gage views sin as acts whereas Rand views sin as relational. Gage presents the weaker argument, as his whole argument lies in accepting Christ receiving genetics from Mary. Rand's argument has more strength as he places substitution before example (Rand 1985). I also presented a critique on White's Christology, in that the lines between justification and sanctification become blurred. This problem is compounded by identical words, used to described different concepts. This leads to the confusion that we find with Gage and Rand.

Chapter 5 compared White and Barth in their respective Christological views. To avoid imposing my personal view or Barth's views on White, the comparison served as a backdrop to confirm White's *What?* statements and identified gaps that needed to be filled by the *Why?* The methodologies of White and Barth were also compared. Whereas Barth utilises a dialectical method, White relies on a paradoxical method.

Furthermore, the Christology of White can be summarised as 'God with us,' whereas Barth's Christology bends to 'God for us.' Both Barth and White utilise the Trinity as a foundational concept to which their respective theological views and especially Christology are linked. Barth places the Trinity at the foundation of his thoughts, and moves further to Christ as the link between the Trinity and humanity. White utilises Christ as the key that unlocks the Trinity. Despite different methods, the result is similar, where Barth regards Christ as God's action toward humanity, and White regards Christ as

God acting with humanity. With both authors, there is no question about the divinity of Christ as it is a key component in their respective Christologies.

Both Barth and White agree with the Chalcedonian formulation that divinity and humanity were united in Christ, but never confused. Barth and White differ in that Barth views Christ's humanity as being sinful, while Christ's divinity prevented him from sinning. White, on the other hand, views Christ's humanity as sinless in his relationship with God, but sinful in all other relationships – with himself, others, and the world. Christ at his core was sinless, according to White, which entails that Christ did not sin by subjecting his humanity to the will of God.

Barth places greater emphasis on the virgin birth to present a clear beginning for Christ, but also to establish his sinful humanity. White neglects the virgin birth to limit the influence of Mary as the mother of Christ. In doing so, she also rejects the idea that Christ inherited the genetics of Mary. For Barth, the virgin birth is of great importance because it is the culmination of God's revelation that was intended from eternity, to become a man. White, on the other hand, understands the incarnation as God's unmerited grace, acting to solve the human problem of sin. Where Barth foremost regards Christ as God's revelation, and all other activities as secondary, White understands Christ as God's revelation, specifically linked to sin and salvation.

In Chapter 6, I proceeded from the established *What?* points, being investigated in Chapter 4 and compared to Barth's views in Chapter 5. The inductive methodology allowed me to create connections by establishing a possible *Why?* to reveal the interrelations between the *What?* points. The initial explanation of an inductive process and its value proceeded into the use or the creation of constructs. These constructs were not simply imposed on White's writings, but either grew from the inductive process or could explain potential *Why?* interrelations.

I elaborated on White's views about God as the first cause and how that impacted her view of the Sabbath. In her writings, the Sabbath goes beyond a mere commandment, as she understands it as a Christological issue. This concept can also be transferred to other commandments to which she refers in her writings. This discussion also

included how White combines God's transcendence and immanence as well as the implication in the creation motif.

I moved to a possible explanation of how one could conceive of White's presentation of Christ's humanity as both sinless and sinful. I also connected the human nature to the Kingdom of God concept that finds a similarity between Ladd and White. The humanity of Christ, although born into this age, is effectually the humanity of the future age. We investigated how White compares Adam to Christ and concluded that Christ's humanity can be divided as:

1. Relationship with God	Sinless
2. Relationship with self	Sinful
3. Relationship with others	Sinful
4. Relationship with the world	Sinful

The sinless relationship between Christ and God was the determining factor in how Christ lived his life on earth. In this way, Christ was sinless, to be an atonement for sin, but sinful to identify with sinners.

In reviewing how White conceived of Christ as the key to the Trinity, I introduced quantum physics, particularly the concept of an object being both a particle and a wave. Viewing God as both particle (Person) and wave (Spirit), allows for a fluid understanding of the Trinity. This idea can also be further applied to the incarnation, where the Son of God assumed a human wave. This also explains how White claims that in the death of Christ, humanity died, but not divinity. Whereas the human wave of Christ entered death and ceased, the divine wave entered death, but was cut off from the other two members of the Trinity. As such, the human wave provides atonement and the divine wave destroys death – all in the one Person of Christ.

I furthermore considered the similarities and dissimilarities between *kenosis* and *kripsis* in White's writings. *Kenosis* fails to explain how Christ's divine task would continue to function while he was on earth, while *kripsis* creates a dual mind – divine and human – in Christ. I introduced the idea of divine *deditio*, which claims that Christ surrendered his control of divine qualities to the Father and lived as a human being, led by the Holy

Spirit.[34] As such, the divine task of Christ happened under the control of the Father, while his divinity was still his own. I further discussed White's understanding of the purpose for the incarnation, and lastly White's purpose in writing about Christ.

7.3 Answers to Possible Questions about this Method

After everything has been discussed, a critique on the method used, will now be applied. My original intention was to achieve the following goals:

1. To compare White's documents to those of Barth concerning Christology. Of particular interest is God's relationship with humanity, as well as the humanity and divinity of Christ, Christ's humanity as sinless or sinful, and lastly, humankind's response to God.
2. To elaborate on White's Christology, utilising both a deductive and inductive methodology.
3. To develop a partial Christological framework of White's writings (cf. section 1.4).

With reference to the first point, the Christology of Barth and White was discussed. I have also compared their respective Christologies regarding God's relationship with humanity, and to the humanity and divinity of Christ. Furthermore, I investigated the respective views of White and Barth on Christ's humanity as sinless or sinful, and lastly, humanity's response to God.

In Chapter 6, I elaborated on and expanded White's Christological ideas and developed a partial theoretical framework in this concern, achieving my third research aim. Although other scholars have written about White's Christology, they have focused on selected issues and not considered her Christology in the context of a larger theoretical framework (cf. Webster 1982; Whidden 2013; Adams 2013). Although I have only presented a partial Christological framework for White's documents, it does serve as a foundation for

1. a better understanding of her Christology;
2. future research and elaboration; and

[34] As explained earlier in this thesis, Christ had handed over the control of his divine qualities to the Father and lived as a man without advantages over humanity (cf. section 6.9.6).

3. presenting White as a ‘theologian’ in her own right.

After achieving my research aims, in the next section, I will criticise the method I have presented.

7.3.1 Personal Subjectivity

Chapter 2 indicated that one of the challenges in dealing with White’s documents is the issue of subjectivity. As indicated, there are several instances where personal views of scholars are woven into either the process of quoting White or comparing her to specific theologians. Considering human subjectivity, it is obvious that no human system will ever be truly free from it. The double-slit experiment has shown that even with strict scientific experiments, the subjectivity of the observer affects the outcome (Gribbin 1991:171). My method was therefore just as subjective as any of the other methods that I have considered. I believe the key is not subjectivity, but to ensure that subjectivity does not eclipse White’s ideas. The question then is, ‘How did I prevent my subjectivity from replacing White’s ideas?’

My method provides an advantage in line with the process it follows. The process develops through these steps:

1. Comparing White’s documents to those of a specific theologian.
2. Deductively determining the *What?* of White’s views on a topic.
3. From the *What?*, one applies or creates constructs to apply to her theology. In doing so, it is possible to find the most likely *Why?* or interrelations that combine the various aspects of *What?*
4. Inductively reconstructing the theological framework of White.

These steps are not strictly demarcated, but demonstrate the general process of the method that I have presented. The fact that a clear methodology is followed, utilising different methods, reveals my approach and conception. First, my subjectivity is not done away with, but it is curbed by comparing White’s views to those of a theologian, namely Barth. The first step of comparison has revealed where the two writers agree and disagree with one another. For example, Barth emphasises the virgin birth whereas White does not (section 5.4.2). Having established the respective emphases or lack thereof of both Barth and White on the virgin birth, affected their understanding

of the *anhypostasis*/*enhypostasis* of Christ and sin, among other issues. It also became apparent that both Barth and White have a very strong Christocentric focus in their respective views. I could not subjectively insert these points into the writings of White.

Second, using a deductive process, I had to ensure that my premises are correct to support my conclusion. Comparing White's views to Barth's, clearly defined White's definite *What?* points. From the concluded *What?* points, I utilised an inductive methodology to discover the potential *Why?* interrelations that would complete White's Christological theory.

With the inductive process in hand, I utilised and created theological conceptual structures. If one were to attempt to twist White's ideas, it would become apparent. When comparing the Christologies of Ladd and White, Lee concludes that the commonalities between the two writers are more than the differences (Lee 2010:318). The structure of Ladd's views was useful to organise White's ideas into a theoretical framework. As such, I was justified to apply Ladd's construct to White's Christology. It was therefore not a haphazard process, but one with support from other academics.

Fourth, the inductive methodology would be the most vulnerable area for the prevalence of subjectivity. It was, however, the last step to be taken and it built on what has been done previously. The three previous steps provided a great deal of information on the *What?* of White's views. From these *What?* points, one can consider what would be the most likely answer and produce *Why?* points of White's view. As such, *what* White believed about Christology was first established before the *why* she believed *what* she believed.

Where deductive arguments provide very clear conclusions that cannot be denied if the premises are accepted, inductive arguments do not. Inductive arguments consider the evidence and formulate the most likely answer or best understanding, but cannot consider the conclusion to be irrefutable. The last step utilises an inductive methodology and is therefore unable to present the conclusions as irrefutable. My reconstruction of White's Christological framework is therefore not irrefutable. It is the best possible construction that I could offer at the time. I have also stated that it is incomplete,

and it is because of the previous reason that it is not complete. It is very likely that in the future I may reconsider certain points or find new information which will affect my reconstruction of White's Christological framework.

As such, it is obvious that my subjectivity (or for that matter, anyone else's subjectivity) will to a degree determine the outcome. I have, however, followed a process that limits that subjectivity. I therefore do not have any concerns about the claim that my subjectivity determined the end process.

7.3.2 The Question of Accuracy

Another question – very valid for an academic thesis – concerns the accuracy of my conclusions. My views find an overall similarity to other academics such as Webster and Whidden. I have also utilised the numerous articles that make up *The Ellen G White encyclopedia*. Relying on other scholars to develop the first three steps of my methodology as indicated above, has provided me with a strong foundation for moving to the fourth step.

The best way in which one could determine the accuracy of my contribution, is to validate whether this thesis contributes to White's Christological framework in understanding her overall writings. When one utilises my reconstruction of White's Christological framework, it should provide a better understanding of all her writings concerning Christ. Instead of utilising quotes and counter quotes from her documents, one would be able to view Christological quotes in the context of the partial framework that I have presented. This allows for a broader context from which to analyse and evaluate White's Christology.

Having done this, I have also achieved another goal, and that is to expose White to the larger theological community. This point will be discussed in the following section.

7.4 Placing White in an Academic Arena

7.4.1 Removing the Barriers from White's Works

White has for most part been dealt with inside Adventism. I believe that it is necessary to expose White to a larger audience which will expose Adventism better.

7.4.2 The Value of Falsifiability

One of the biggest problems that I addressed in Chapter 2, is the use of White's quotes to prove personal positions. This process very often leads to opponents quoting White's views selectively in an attempt to win a theological argument (Bradford 2006:188). This method is safe because there is no true method to prove correctness or incorrectness.

The method that I have utilised, allows for falsifiability. In other words, another individual can question, criticise, and even disprove my conclusions. Although the last point is not desirable, it is essential,

1. first, because this is part of an academic process where any viewpoint may be questioned; and
2. second, it eliminates the process of simply quoting White's documents randomly.

Quoting White's literature randomly can no longer function if that quote is not part of a greater study or fitted into a theological framework. This would apply to both the criticism and promotion of White's views, as well as a theological discussion about her documents.

Hopefully, with the method that I presented, White's documents could be treated as an aspect of Adventism and not as Adventism itself. Criticising her views is therefore not necessarily criticising Adventist views. White is an important part of the SDA Church history that must be scrutinised, so that one can understand where the SDA Church originated, and why they exist as they do. Only when the two former points are understood, it is possible to grasp where Adventism is heading to.

7.5 Possible use of Evaluating White's Views

First, speaking as an SDA Church member, I have found that a critical inquiry into White's writings provides valuable insights. The areas of discussion are widespread, and her work should not be considered conclusive, but as foundational. Her statements, therefore, whether they be practical or theological, do not constitute the final word in a discussion. Her views and writings rather serve as a starting point from where one can further develop theological viewpoints and discussions.

Second, for the larger theological community, I believe the first point is applicable in a wider field. Critical evaluations of any other theologian are valuable, providing starting points for personal theological developments. White's documents are no different and her views can also present similar value.

Third, White, being a woman, writing documents with a theological tendency, from a female perspective, provides lines of thinking which are absent in most theological works concerning the SDA Church. Here we find a relatively uneducated woman, making theological statements that affected the SDA Church, and continue to do so.

From these three points, I conclude that this method of evaluating White's documents and reconstructing her theological frameworks hold value. The full extent of the value will become more apparent as this method is utilised by others.

7.6 Why Bother?

Although this heading is mostly out of place in an academic setting, this is most often the criticism thrown at White (Knight 2000:188). The question can therefore be posed, 'Why would one consider White's documentation on a theological basis, when there are well-established theologies by well-established theologians?' Considering White's Christology, I want to present the following to ponder on:

1. As I have indicated in my Master's dissertation, White has produced positive, practical results on a personal level (cf. section 6.6.2) and also for the SDA Church as a whole (Van Niekerk 2019:65, 100).
2. White was a woman, one that has influenced a worldwide organisation, even posthumously. This gives a researcher the opportunity to investigate a female perspective on Christology and other theological issues.
3. Due to her paradoxical style of writing, White presents unique ideas, which can be utilised to develop Christological views. This could be applied to Christ's sinful and sinless qualities (section 6.6.3.4) and his divinity and humanity in death (section 6.8.1).

In this thesis, these points mostly apply to White's Christology. As such, I believe and hope that this partial reconstruction of White's Christology will serve as a valuable starting point for SDA and other theologians.

Perhaps the greatest value for any theologian is the paradoxical nature of White's writings. This has forced me to become creative to combine these ideas and present something unique. The very paradoxical nature of White's documents and views challenges a theologian to consider alternative explanations or views in Christology. White does not simply hold value for Adventism, but also for the larger theological world.

7.7 Evaluation

It is always dangerous and difficult to evaluate oneself, as one must attempt to balance arrogance and self-deprecation. The method that I used is not entirely new, but it utilised established methods in a particular sequence. I also realise that future criticism will require refinement of the method that I used. This method has, however, presented a Christological framework for reading White's documents. Although this is not complete, the fact that Christology underlies so much of theology in general, such as soteriology, creation, the doctrine of humanity, etc., it can also be utilised for the development in other areas of White's theology.

Potential new ways of research that may be considered in future, are to study two opposing views and then compare them with White's view. Instead of comparing White's views to those of a singular theologian, one may compare her views to a particular theological discussion. I have focused this thesis on the books, *Patriarchs and prophets*, *Prophets and kings*, *The desire of the ages*, *The Acts of the apostles*, and *The great controversy*, with some reference to *Steps to Christ*. There are other books and articles by White that can be utilised similarly.

A theory contains the observable phenomena or *What?*, the interrelations or *Why?*, and the method used in establishing the first two aspects. In presenting my method, I have also established the third aspect of a theory which I termed the *How?*, which simply entails how I proceed from beginning to end or simply stipulating the method used.

I am thus able to now present the *What?* and *Why?* of White's Christology, as well as the *How?* With this, I could claim to have gone further than any previous individual in investigating White's documents. My work has also presented a more complete view of her Christology, which was done on an academic level. This method is therefore valuable and can be utilised in future. I have perhaps for the first time exposed White's views to the larger academic world and whatever the consequences may be, I believe this is for the best.

7.8 Conclusion

I want to conclude with a statement that not only expresses the importance of Christ in White's thinking, but also the foundation for anything termed Christian. White writes:

> Jesus says, 'Without Me ye can do nothing.' Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness, – all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly, – by abiding in Him, – that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the Author, but the Finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way (White 1892:69).

Barth and White may have differed in their views on Christ, but both were driven by a desire for Christ. That desire for Christ may be cited as the key reason for the impact they had on the world and continue to have. This may be the most important thing that any theologian can take away from this thesis.

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Appendix A

Comparison of the statements of Barth and White's about Christ's Humanity and Sin

	Barth on Christ and Sin	White on Christ and Sin
1	'…equal to us in the state and condition into which disobedience has brought us' (Barth 1956:151).	'There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation' (White 1940:123).
2	'The nature which God assumed in Christ is identical with our nature as we see it in light of the fall' (Barth 1956:153).	'Christ, who knew not the least taint of sin or defilement, took our nature in its deteriorated condition' (White 1986:253).
3	'…the form into which sin has long and fiercely thrust its sting…' (Barth 1956:155).	'Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity' (White 1940:117).
4	'He exists in the place where we are, in all the remoteness not merely of the creature from the Creator, but of the sinful creature from the Holy Creator' (Barth 1956:155).	'In taking upon Himself man's nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin' (White 1986:256).
5	'Our unholy human existence, assumed and adopted by the word of God, is hallowed and therefore a sinless human existence…' (Barth 1956:156).	'But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men' (White 1940).
6	'Jesus Christ's obedience consists in the fact that He willed to be and was only this one thing with all its consequences, God in the flesh, the Divine bearer of the burden which	'One stain upon His human life, one failure of His humanity to endure the terrible test, and the Lamb of God would have been an imperfect

	the man as a sinner must bear' (Barth 1956:156).	offering, and the redemption of man a failure' (White 1940:734).
7	'He made good what Adam perverted' (Barth 1956:157).	'Christ's victory was as complete as had been the failure of Adam' (White 1940:123).
8	'…put in a sinner's position He bowed to the Divine verdict and commended Himself solely to the grace of God. That is His hallowing, His obedience, His sinlessness' (Barth 1956:157).	'He [Satan] could not lead Jesus into sin' (White 1940:759).
9	'…and wrestled with God in real inward need' (Barth 1956:158).	'For hours He continued pleading with God. Not for Himself but for men were those prayers' (White 1940:379)
10	'Jesus cannot sin…Jesus is bound to win in this struggle' (Barth 1956:158).	'He [Christ] took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation' (White 1940:117).
11	'He really had no awareness of sin' (Barth 1956:159).	'His nature recoiled from evil' (Whidden 1997:27).
12	'…the eternal Word of God is immune from temptation even in the flesh' (Barth 1956:158).	'It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, on man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature' (White 1986:408).