

CONTENTS

Chapter 1		
Abstract theology or concrete biblical reflection?		
1.1	Salvation historical biblical reflection	1
1.2	Demarcation and setting of the problem areas	9
1.2.1	The first problem-setting: The grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment	9
1.2.2	The second problem-setting: The nature and centrality of Christ's reconciliation in the array of the grand acts of God	13
1.2.3	The third problem-setting: Mirroring, Interpretation and consensual negotiation approaches of writings, sayings and doings	20
1.2.3.1	Mirroring approach	20
1.2.3.2	Interpretation approach	21
1.2.3.3	Consensual negotiation approach	23
1.2.3.4	Diversified concluding	24
1.3	The structure of the thesis	25
Chapter 2		
The social-historical contexts of Calvin and White		
2.1	Introduction	27
2.1.1	John Calvin	27
2.1.1.1	Historical background	27
2.1.1.2	The backdrop of Calvin's salvation-historical approach	33
2.2.1	Ellen G White	36
2.2.1.1	Historical background	36
2.2.1.2	The backdrop of White's salvation-historical approach	43
2.2	Epilogue	55
Chapter 3		
God's grand acts as divine history embedded in the Bible		
3.1	God's grand acts open to speculative or biblical reflection?	56
3.1.1	Introduction	56
3.1.2	Calvin and White's challenges	58
3.2	Dialectics, scholastics and speculative theology	63
3.2.1	Scholastic and speculative theology	63
3.2.1.1	Neo-Platonic scholastics of the 5th -11th century	64

3.2.1.2	Aristotelean scholastics of the 11th-13th century	65
3.2.1.3	Nominalism and the scholastics of the 11th - 16th century	66
3.2.2	Calvin's double sided dialectic	72
3.2.3	Hegelian dialectic	76
3.2.4	White's dialectic	78
3.3	The notion of the trinity and the biblical historical timeline	95
3.3.1	Introduction	95
3.3.2	Calvin and the Trinitarian problem	99
3.3.3	White and the Trinitarian problem	101
3.3.3.1	A period of anti-Trinitarianism: 1846-1888	102
3.3.3.2	A period of dissatisfaction with Anti-Trinitarianism: 1888-1898	105
3.3.2.3	Paradigm shift: 1898-1915	106
3.4	Epilogue	112
Chapter 4		
Reflection on God's grand acts (continued)		
4.1	God, human beings and nature connected and different	113
4.1.1	Calvin	114
4.1.1.1	God's essence known through God's ordered will to us	115
4.1.1.2	Oneself/Us	118
4.1.1.3	A human being's accountable but determined will	119
4.1.1.4	The natural and graceful constitution of being human	123
4.1.1.5	The natural cosmic world	127
4.1.1.6	How Calvin link God with human beings and the natural cosmic world	130
4.1.2	Ellen G White	131
4.1.2.1	God's love as God's spoken and shining revealed	132
4.1.2.1.1	God and Satan	140
4.1.2.2	Oneself/Us	143
4.1.2.3	A human being's responsible and accountable will1	145
4.1.2.3.1	White on the 'chosen' people	149
4.1.2.4	The natural and graceful constitution of being human	151
4.1.2.5	The natural cosmic world	159
4.1.2.6	How White links God with human beings and the natural cosmic world	163
4.2	Epilogue	164

Chapter 5		
Calvin and White on the coherence of God's grand acts		
5.1	Introduction	165
5.2	Calvin and God's grand acts of Creation, Reconciliation, Renewal and Fulfilment	166
5.2.1	Creation	168
5.2.2	Reconciliation	171
5.2.3	Renewal	179
5.2.4	Fulfilment and Consummation	185
5.3	White and God's grand acts of Creation, Reconciliation, Renewal and Fulfilment	189
5.3.1	Creation	191
5.3.2	Reconciliation	202
5.3.2.1	White's retrocipatory reflexive trajectory directed to the past	203
5.3.2.2	White's anticipatory reflexive trajectory directed to the future	208
5.3.3	Renewal	211
5.3.4	Fulfilment and Consummation	217
5.4	Calvin and White on the role and origin of sin	225
5.5	Calvin and White on the state of the dead	227
5.6	Calvin and White on politics and government	231
5.7	Epilogue	239
Chapter 6		
The centrality of God's grand act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ		
6.1	Introduction	241
6.1.1	The first access area: interactional substantialism	242
6.1.2	The second access area: perpetual mediatorship	243
6.1.3	The third access area: titles, offices and dimensions	243
6.2	Jesus Christ: dual nature	243
6.2.1	Calvin on Christ's dual nature	243
6.2.2	White on Christ's dual nature	249
6.3	Christ's identity as mediator and substitution	253
6.3.1	Calvin's view Christ as perpetual kingly priest as mediator	253
6.3.2	White's view of Christ as perpetual priestly prophet as mediator	257

6.4	The interactive exchange of the roles of divinity and humanity of Christ	262
6.4.1	Quiescent divinity versus active divinity	262
6.4.2	Interactional substantialism while dying at Golgotha	268
6.4.2.1	Calvin on the tension between the two natures of Christ	269
6.4.2.2	Ellen White on the tension between divinity and humanity	275
6.5	Titles, offices and dimensions of Christ's identity	276
6.5.1	Calvin's view of Christ multidimensionality	276
6.5.2	White's view of Christ multidimensional ministering	279
6.6	The Second coming of Christ	284
6.6.1	Calvin's Scriptural exclusivity of prophecy on the Second Coming	284
6.6.2	White's historicalness of prophecy on the Second Coming	284
6.7	Summary of interactional substantialism	289
6.8	Monolithic mono and dual substantialist views	293
6.8.1	First millennium mono- and dual-substantialist views	293
6.8.1.1	Arianism	293
6.8.1.2	Pneumatomachianism	294
6.8.1.3	Apollonarianism	295
6.8.1.4	Nestorianism	296
6.8.1.5	Monophysitism	297
6.8.1.6	Monothelitism	298
6.8.2	Modern liberal monolithic substantialism	299
6.8.2.1	Introduction	299
6.8.2.2	Some trajectories of monolithic substantialism	299
6.8.2.3	Christ's monolithic nature	301
6.8.2.4	Christ identity, role and function in a monolithic substantialist approach	305
6.9	Transformational substantialism	306
6.10	Consubstantialism	308
6.11	Epilogue	311
Chapter 7		
Mirroring, Interpretation and Consensual negotiation approach of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings		
7.1.1	The three approaches	314
7.1.2	Inspiration problem	321
7.1.3	Literality and literalness	324

7.2	Calvin and the mirroring, interpretation and consensual negotiation approaches	325
7.2.1	Calvin and the mirroring approach	325
7.2.2	Calvin and the interpretation approach	326
7.2.3	Calvin and consensual negotiation approach	331
7.3	White and the mirroring, interpretation and consensual negotiation approaches	333
7.3.1	White and the mirroring approach	336
7.3.2	White and the interpretation approach	342
7.3.3	White and the consensual negotiation approach	350
7.5	Epilogue	354

Bibliography		
	Bibliography	355
	Electronic References	370
	Works Consulted	371

CHAPTER 1

Abstract theology or concrete biblical reflection?

1.1 Salvation-historical biblical reflection

In the history of the Christian world, the 16th century John Calvin and 19th century Ellen G. White, in spite of many differences could be regarded as two of the very few theologians in the history of Christianity whose approaches towards God, human beings and nature (natural cosmic world) stayed largely within the salvation-historical portrayal of the Judaeo-Christian Bible of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation (redemption) through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's wholesome renewal process through the Spirit of Pentecost and God's future-directed fulfilment in the new heaven and new earth.

Calvin and White, in their reflection of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world, followed what has been termed the *salvation-historical trajectory* meandering from the book of Genesis to Revelation in the Judaeo-Christian Bible. Their reflections are set within the totality of the Judaeo-Christian Bible as the salvation-historical exploration area wherein reflection about the past, present and future of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world are seen to be executed as determined and demonstrative divine truth for time and eternity. The term 'salvation' in the designation refers to the basic assumption of the approach that the Bible portrays the full divine story line of what is necessary for people's salvation in this life and in future afterlife, and the term 'historical' points to the whole framework of events and processes evolving from Genesis to Revelation as a particular divine historical matrix according to which general history, also with God steering it takes place and plays itself out to the end. Although the term salvation-historical is used in various ways in modern theology, one main feature, shared by most, is that an emphasis on a salvation-historical stance as a non-speculative way of reflection about God, human beings and nature and is set within the range of salvation-history, portrayed through the timeline that appears in the form of history in the totality of the Bible. Advocators of such a view assert that they refrain from moving outside the Bible into a speculative fantasising realm of reflecting on God separated from human beings and the natural cosmic world.

Calvin and White consistently defied the temptation to operate with three separate avenues whereby reflection on the isolated essences of God, human beings or the natural cosmic world could be undertaken. Calvin and White seem to have largely overcome, firstly, in their reflexive dealings with God, human beings and the natural cosmic world, the classic theological and philosophical sucking power of the separation of the essences of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. Secondly, they seem to have overcome the subsequent part of the classic theological and philosophical essence-seeking procedure, whereby speculative reflection is bi-focally directed, speculatively on the one hand, at the 'inside' of God as 'God in God self' – the scholastic emphasis and on the other hand at the 'outside' of God as 'God for us' – the Protestant emphasis - and 'God in us' – the mystical emphasis of inner experience of people of God. The dual essence-seeking procedure, directed at the 'inside' and 'outside' of God in the history of theology was usually accompanied by investigative and speculative procedures directed anthropologically at the 'inside' - the soul, and 'outside' - the body of human beings, and cosmologically at the 'inside' of the world - the logos speculation about the cosmic world and 'outside' of the world - the appearance side of the natural cosmic world.

Calvin, in referring to Exodus 34:6-7, where the name Yahweh is twice mentioned, asserts that his main emphasis concerning God lies on 'not as he is in himself, but as he is toward us:'

Here let us observe that his eternity and his self-existence are announced by that wonderful name twice repeated. Thereupon his powers are mentioned, by which he is shown to us not as he is in himself, but as he is toward us: so that this recognition of him consists more in living experience than in vain and high-flown speculation. Now we hear the same powers enumerated there that we have noted as shining in heaven and earth: kindness, goodness, mercy, justice, judgment, and truth. For power and might are contained under the title *Elohim*.

(Calvin [1559] 1960a:10)

Throughout Calvin's writings he defies the temptation to speculate about God in himself – a theme in Calvin's view beyond our human capacity – but what concerns the human mind is an awareness of God in relation to God's creation and to us as human beings. The awareness of God is for Calvin neither a product of speculative thinking, nor an incentive to speculate about God. He calls his book 'The 1559 Institutes of the Christian Religion,' in the language of his original title 'the whole sum of piety (**summa pietatis**) and whatever it is necessary to know in

the doctrine of salvation and not the ‘whole sum of theology (**summa theologiae**)’ as did Thomas Aquinas of his main work in the era of the Scholastics.

Similarly, for White, God is not a remote mystic who operates exclusively as an un-involved participant in the affairs of the natural cosmos and its creatures, including mankind. In actual fact White portrays God as directly involved in matters terrestrial and celestial. White states,

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 [1898] 1948a:25-26)

White is acutely aware of the dangers of speculative theories based on human imperfect knowledge concerning the Infinite One:

One of the greatest evils that attends the quest for knowledge, the investigations of science, is the disposition to exalt human reasoning above its true value and its proper sphere. Many attempt to judge the Creator and His works by their own imperfect knowledge of science. They endeavour to determine the nature and attributes and prerogatives of God, and indulge in speculative theories concerning the Infinite One. Those who engage in this line of study are treading upon forbidden ground. Their research will yield no valuable results and can be pursued only at the peril of the soul.

(White 1905:427)

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 process 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.

On the one hand, Calvin’s sense-making view that closely encapsulates God, human beings and the natural cosmic world could be described as a *mixture* of his reflection on the whole Judaeo-Christian Bible, the Word of God as an exploration area for truth in the most *particular* sense of the word with reflection on his life-world, the times he lived in and the whole of history as the

exploration area for the truth in *general*. On the other hand, Ellen G White's sense-making view encapsulates God, human beings and the natural cosmic world in what could be described as a dialectical relationship between the whole of the Judaeo-Christian Bible, the Word of God, where the greater light and truth of God shines, and herself, as the lesser light of God, in the role of a visionary prophetic messenger of God, leading people back to the Bible. White says in this regard,

Little heed is given to the Bible, therefore the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.

(White 1953:125)

White, in a similar way as Calvin, defies in her writings the temptation to speculate outside the exploration realm of the Judaeo-Christian Bible, the Word of God on God, human beings and nature. This is decisively demonstrated in the extra dimension in the life of White which was not part of Calvin's world, namely that of being a messenger of God with a prophetic ministry in which she was totally convinced that her visions and experiences were from the Lord. She steadfastly asserted that any vision spelt out in her words has to be aligned with the Bible, thus affirming the message of the Bible. But she also, in the last decade of her life defied the notion of a prophet as a description of herself:

Why have I not claimed to be a prophet? Because in these days many who boldly claim that they are prophets are a reproach to the cause of Christ; and because my work includes much more than the word 'prophet' signifies.

(White 1958b:34)

In a similar vein White states:

To claim to be a prophetess is something that I have never done. If others call me by that name, I have no controversy with them. But my work has covered so many lines that I cannot call myself other than a messenger, sent to bear a message from the Lord to His people, and to take up work in any line that He points out.

(White 1958b:34)

Different versions of Calvin's 'Institutes of the Christian Religion,' including his final [1559] 1960 edition, could be viewed as 'pastoral dogmatics', 'pastoral systematic theology' or 'positive biblical theology' because of a lack of an elaborated set of traditional theological doctrines. Set in the full array of God's grand acts, Calvin's theological reflection about God, human beings

and the natural cosmic world are elaborated within the reflexive realms of God's acts of creation and reconciliation (redemption) as portrayed in the Bible. Calvin's salvation-historical framework in his 1559 'Institutes of the Christian Religion' consists of two realms of reflection, the realm of God's creation and the realm of redemption in Christ.

Calvin mainly followed Luther and other Reformers in his emphasis of a non-speculative salvation-historical approach revolving around two reflexive realms of God's creation and reconciliation, which could also be described with the headings of Old Testament and New Testament as covering the eras of 'promise and fulfilment.' Calvin's duality of 'promise and fulfilment' operates continuously in a complementary way, unlike Luther's famous duality of 'law and gospel' which in all its Lutheran renditions is spelled out mainly in a dialectical way.

The Old Testament, in Calvin's view, designates in a general sense through the particularity of Israel and the Decalogue, God's general law given in God's creative kingly ruling providence. The promissory and provisional particularity concentrated in the Decalogue given to Israel to adhere to, and finally, in a fulfilling sense particularly, once and for all concentrated in Christ as God the redeeming mediator between God and human beings (and nature). Christ the King as priest is personified in the Bible as the prophetic witness. Though Calvin treats the three offices of Christ as prophet, king and priest in a discursive way, in his *Institutes* ([1559] 1960b:15) according to JF Jansen (1956:20-38) the prophetic office largely drops from Calvin's attention. The main reason is that Calvin viewed the understanding, exposition and preaching of the Bible as the prophetic Word of God, embracing the prophetic function of Christians. Calvin, in following Zwingli, viewed the Bible as the personified prophetic embodiment of Christ. Thus, by explaining and administering to people what the Word of God is saying, one is acting out one's prophetic office fully (Calvin 1961:269).

White's approach to the relationship of the Old Testament and the New Testament demonstrates a dialectical relationship between the realm of the law written on two tablets by the finger of God, and the ability of Christ to save us as human beings amply and fully and entirely right into Christ's ministry for his children in the heavenly sanctuary (White [1888] 1987:217). The divine particular concentration in the Decalogue written by the finger of God the Father on the tablets given to Moses as priestly prophet, concentrated in the nation of Israel for general adherence by

all nations, is set in a dialectical relationship with the cross and resurrection through which Christ is posited with a special ministry in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary as the investigative priest judge from where he will come again for a second time. White's message, though strongly permeated by the notion of the law of God, written on the two tablets by the finger of God, does not take precedence over the centrality of Christ in her work. In White's view, the divine finger writing of the Ten Commandments and Christ operate in a dialectical fashion. Describing one of her visions she states:

But the Lord gave me a view of the heavenly sanctuary. The temple of God was opened in heaven, and I was shown the ark of God covered with the mercy seat. Two angels stood one at either end of the ark with their wings spread over the mercy seat and their faces turned toward it. This, my accompanying angel informed me, represented all the heavenly host looking with reverential awe toward the law of God; which had been written by the finger of God. Jesus raised the cover of the ark, and I beheld the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. I was amazed as I saw the fourth commandment in the very center of the ten precepts with a soft halo of light encircling it. Said the angel, 'It is the only one of the ten which defines the living God who created the heavens and the earth and all things that are therein'.

(White [1915] 1943:95-96)

The emphasis on the law gave rise to the perception of many that White's Seventh-Day Adventist world amounts to a clinical and rigid law-abiding approach. The dialectical relationship between the law and Christ – this time with emphasis on Christ - finds expression in the following sentences of White:

As a people, we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God.

(RH March 11, 1890)

Calvin, on the one hand, from the 16th century is still in many circles not regarded as a 'systematic theologian,' in the true sense of the word, because he did not deal in his writings, sayings and doings with a full set of distinct theological doctrines such as doctrines of God, humanity, creation (nature), church and end times. Bouwsma, opposing the commonly accepted view that Calvin was a systematic thinker, states:

The approach by way of tensions and contradictions makes it clear that I cannot accept the received version of Calvin as a systematic thinker. I do not believe that Calvin even aspired to the construction of a system, as the term 'system' is commonly understood; as a biblical theologian, he despised what passed for systematic theology in his own time. He sought, like other humanist, to develop as effective a pedagogy as possible, and this meant arranging what he had to communicate in the most readily apprehensible and effective manner; the urgency of the crisis of his time required it.

(Bouwsma 1988:5)

It is generally correct to state that rigid systematisation and the portrayal of a whole set of doctrines combined in an anthology of –ologies of modern theology such as Theology, Theological anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, Pneumatology and Eschatology came to full fruition in 17th century Reformed and Lutheran Orthodoxy. The topical or -logy approach and the movement toward precision in definition began already in the 16th century era with Melanchthon with his *loci* approach. Melanchthon played a very important role in the establishment of the approach of doctrines, topics, *loci* and –ologies in theology and he determinatively influenced the history of nearly all Protestant traditions. Clear traces and vestiges of the loci or -ologies approach are also found in the works of Calvin, Melanchthon, Bullinger, Vermigli and Musculus (Muller 1986:12).

White, on the other hand, suffered to a larger extent than Calvin under the accusation that she was not a theologian but a prophet. Many objections either by Seventh-day Adventist followers or by outsiders were levelled at a description of Ellen G. White as a systematic thinker or a theologian. White's role in the Seventh-day Adventist world is in many respects forced into a discourse by certain Seventh-day Adventists as that of being either pastorally or canonically to the church, or of that of a prophet or a theologian in the church. Such a view in which White is forced into an 'either-or' instead of a 'both-and' sense making approach is expressed in a letter from DA Delafiel, trustee of the EG White Estate, to PC Drewer (June 24, 1981).

The real conflict and issue today is this: are Seventh-Day Adventists being conditioned to view Ellen White as pastoral and not canonical? Shall we accept the view that a Seventh-day Adventist theologian is more dependable than a Seventh-day Adventist prophet? I highly respect many of our Seventh-day Adventist theologians. I have sat at their feet and been taught by them. I admire and respect them highly. I would like to remind you, however, that you can

search the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and you will not find a single text marking out theologians as having the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures indicate however, that prophets have a gift of the Holy Spirit. Ellen White had that gift and she was canonical insofar as doctrinal interpretation authority is concerned...

However, in accepting the position that White was both pastor and authoritative, both pattern-maker of her faith experience (theologian) and prophet for the Seventh-day Adventist church one cannot deny that regularities and patterns of her experience could be portrayed and are indeed portrayed in White's writings, sayings and doings. In line with this assumption the portrayal of White's sense making approach and the patterns of faith unearthed and viewed in her approach is not imposed on her works but is regarded as emerging in a rather spontaneous way from the 'pattern of growth' through her life.

In the mainline Protestant world of the era before the 19th century the emphasis was mainly on two of the foursome of God's grand acts, namely that of creation and reconciliation, underemphasising renewal and God's future directed fulfilment acts. Many protagonists of the full salvation-historical range of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment has the tendency in their practical operational making and experience of the grand acts of God to underemphasise one, two or three of the grand acts of God. Remarkably, in early Christianity, in various pre- and medieval movements, in the Reformation of the 16th century and in the 19th century prophetic apocalyptic experiential world time after time and century after century strong protagonists of the salvation-historical course acknowledge and even confess to the fullness of the salvation-history as depicted in the Bible but in their practical outworking in their writings, sermons and doings the one-sidedness is practically set in motion.

In the Calvinist ways of doing while working in terms of the salvation-historical mode, the reflection on creation and reconciliation leaned one-sidedly to the past. The reflection was primarily directed at God's schemes pre-existing before creation as these could be read from creation before the fall and by which God determined through his will the structures of creation. Adam and Eve received in this scheme a before and an after treatment, in paradise before falling into sin and especially after falling into sin which emerged as the determining factor causing the total depravity of all human beings. Every part of the biblical history is directed to the

reconciliation in Christ as the mirror through which the determination procedures come to light in people's lives.

As a vehicle for our journey, a comparison of some of the core theological themes between John Calvin and Ellen G. White are engaged in this thesis. Their approaches though different as 'reflexive coherences of faith patterning' while expressing a close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment are not different but are mainly in opposition to the methodologies of scholastic theological traditions in which reflection on God, is speculatively treated and detached from reflection on human beings and the natural cosmic environment. Their approaches in espousing through concrete reflection, discussion and portrayal of the mystery of the close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment is done within the framework of the whole range of the grand acts of God as divine salvation-history in the Bible.

1.2 Demarcation and setting of the problem areas

The approach followed in the thesis is by demarcating and setting of problem areas that have emerged from an involvement and engagement with the writings of John Calvin and Ellen G. White. These problem areas for the sake of a discussion of overlapping and differing views have been patterned in terms of problem-settings which in some instances follow the chapter division and in other instances permeate in a random sense the description trajectory of discussion throughout the thesis.

1.2.1 The first problem-setting: The grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment

In the first problem-setting John Calvin and Ellen G. White's operational use of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal and fulfilment (consummation) as embodied in the *salvation-historical corpus of the Biblical texts* from Genesis to Revelation is investigated and portrayed. This kind of salvation-historical approach embodied in their writings, sayings and doings revolves around a divine history embedded in the portrayal of the whole array of God's grand acts in the Judaeo-Christian Bible with God as the all-initiating agent. This divine

history is of such a special kind that all of world history outside the Biblical depiction of divine history is reliant on the biblical rendition of real and genuine history.

An outstanding feature of their kind of theology is that their *connected and concrete reflection, discussion and portrayal* of God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment is done within the framework of the whole range of the grand acts of God as divine history in the Bible. Calvin and White continually emphasise the simultaneous close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment (nature). In their connected and concrete kind of faith patterning and theorising the three divided avenues of the medieval era of discussing and reflecting on God in a scholastic and orthodox theological avenue separated from the avenues where the discussion and reflection on human beings and the natural cosmic environment in separate avenues ruled by Aristotelian and neo-Platonic points of departure held sway. Generally, the reflection in the theological avenue of discussion revolved around the notions of faith and love closely and directly linked to God while in the avenues of human beings and nature the reflection was done in the embrace of human reason and common sense remotely and indirectly linked to God.

One of various possible reasons why Calvin and White were not regarded as theologians in the classical mould is their insistence on treating God, human beings and nature as a 'reflexive coherence' within the realm of divine history as portrayed by the Bible. It is significant that both of them do not have separate anthropologies or cosmologies. In the writings, sayings and doings of Calvin and White's intrinsic aversion to go beyond and above the divinely set range of the grand acts of God is expressed in their encompassed dealing with divine history as portrayed in the Bible. Moreover, their salvation-historical approaches differently in nature and the ways being worked out continually express the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment.

Secondly, this notion deals with the difference between the essence seeking approach of *scholastic and orthodox types* of theology and Calvin and Ellen G. White's salvation-historical approach in which theological reflection is conducted by following the sequence of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment as portrayed by the biblical texts from Genesis to Revelation. Although Calvin and White, while differing in many respects, have one

major thing in common and that is not to follow the typical scholastic theological approach of speculating about the essences of God, human beings and nature as separate entities above and outside God's grand acts as portrayed in the Judaeo-Christian Bible. Moreover, it is significant that they also are not making use of scholasticism's bifocal speculative treatment of reflecting in an either/or way on the 'inside' and 'outside' of God, human beings or the natural cosmic world. Although, when they discuss God or an aspect of God human beings and nature, explicitly they do not always carry the same weight of God in their reflection.

The notion of the *trinity* is another case in point. The question with regard to Calvin is how a Trinitarian God that operates beyond the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment could be combined, harmonised and radically built into these grand acts. In Calvin's writings, sayings and doings the notion of the trinity plays a less important role than his main reflexive realms of creation and redemption covered and undergirded by his divine salvation-story line. Interestingly, the notion of the trinity is an intrinsic part of the scholastic speculative approach. In the past early centuries, problems with the notion of a Trinitarian God emerged in various theological avenues. The result of the latter was an awareness of increasing problems with the notion of the trinity that spilled over into the Reformed and Presbyterian world. Various new approaches to problems in the 16th century Reformation and Calvin's work are detected. One of which is a seeming contradiction between his acceptance of the notion of the trinity and his strong emphasis on the divine history embedded in the grand acts of God as depicted in the Bible. It looks increasingly certain that Calvin was not able to let the notion of a Trinitarian God collapse with his salvation-historical constructed realms of creation and reconciliation which follow the time and history line of divine history embedded in the Bible.

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. Various Seventh-day Adventist theologians toying with the idea of coming in line with the widely accepted doctrine of the Trinity as accepted by the majority of churches, look at White's views as stemming from, in part, from a lack of understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, during the formative years of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination in the 19th century.

Some early Seventh-day Adventist leaders believed the doctrine to be unscriptural and absurd (Bates [s a]:204-205; White, J 1852:52). The personhood of the Holy Spirit proved to be even more difficult to understand and articulate. Ellen White never used the term 'trinity', although she did refer to the 'three living persons of the heavenly trio' (White [1946] 1970:615). Her comments, as collected in ([1946] 1970:613-617), suggest that she believed that the Scriptures taught the existence of three co-eternal divine persons. In the current debate a large group of theologians in the Seventh-day Adventist world espouse strong Trinitarian views which they undergird with statements from Ellen White's later writings, sayings and doings from 1890 till her death in 1915.

What these Seventh-day Adventist theologians do not realise is that one cannot on the one hand operate with the classical view of a Trinitarian God in its most significant Latin formulation of *Deus est Trinitas* portraying God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, and on the other hand operate with Ellen White's notion of the humanity of the Son of God in combination with his divinity continuing into eternity as the eternal high priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Calvin, on the one hand, an avowed supporter of only divine persons in the trinity – the *Deus est Trinitas* doctrine, connected on the other hand, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God so closely to his humanity in his notion of the *extra-calvinisticum* that Christ's resurrected humanity currently in 'heaven' stays closely connected to his divinity at the right hand side of the Father until the infinity of eternity (van Niekerk 2009b:36f.). Later on we will see that at some distant part of eternity, Christ, according to Calvin will assume his original status as it was in pre-incarnation. Calvin's whole pastoral dogmatic approach of operating with the grand acts of creation and reconciliation, albeit with lesser emphasis on God's grand acts of renewal and fulfilment, at the deepest level does not correspond with the doctrine of a Trinitarian God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

White's hesitation and modesty not to pry and enquire intrusively into the essence of God as God Self as demonstrated in her total underemphasising not to say bypassing of the doctrine of the trinity with all its speculative elements should rather be treasured by Seventh-day Adventists as part of her high respect for the range of God's grand acts expressing her view of divine history embodied and embedded in the salvation-historical trajectory of the Bible. In reflecting on God,

human beings or the natural world White stays within the demarcated biblical historical timeline. She connects in her reflection on the Godhead ‘heavenly history’ and ‘earthly history’ so closely together that Christ speaks to Moses at the burning bush:

When we approach the subject of...divinity...we may appropriately heed the words spoken by Christ to Moses at the burning bush, ‘Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.’ We must come to the study of this subject with the humility of a learner with a contrite heart.

(White [1953] 1985a:348-349)

It is important that the large group of Seventh-day Adventist theologians who strongly advocate the *Deus est Trinitas* as the view of the mature Ellen White, should rather be more involved in the current debate in the global theological world in which the notion of the trinity is sceptically viewed as a 4th century doctrinal artefact mainly devised under the influence of politicians at the ecumenical councils of the first millennium. Furthermore, while experience has demonstrated that the doctrine of the trinity has very little impact in the lives and practical daily experience of Christians, White’s emphasis on the grand acts of God as divine history embodied and embedded in the Bible should rather be embraced and employed as reflexive faith tools for a new way of doing theology. Moreover, her reflexive coherence of faith patterning within the realms of the divine historical timeline of the Bible, especially in the first half of her life, should rather be opened and extended instead of being viewed as lacking a clear understanding of the classical doctrine of the Trinity.

1.2.2 The second problem-setting: The nature and centrality of Christ’s reconciliation in the array of the grand acts of God

One of the main challenges of this thesis is to describe the centrality of Christ within the range of God’s acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. Calvin and White reflect on the mystery of the simultaneity of the close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world in all the grand acts of God that is creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal and consummation (fulfilment). In the divine history embodied and embedded in the salvation-historical trajectory of the grand acts of God’s salvation, redemption and reconciliation in Jesus Christ, his [Christ’s] cross, his resurrection and intercession stands

absolutely central in both Calvin and White's view stretching back to creation and forward to the final consummation and projected eternal bliss.

However, White contributed a slightly different view on Christ as mediator. While White does acknowledge a sequence of change of Christ's office from that of Priest/Mediator currently to that of *the Coming Triumphant King*, which is similar to that of Calvin's stance, more than Calvin, White depicts Christ as a perpetual mediator between divinity and humanity after the fulfilling consummation. In other words regardless of the different phases of offices of Mediator and King which are both present in Calvin and White's Christology, [i.e. like Calvin White does acknowledge a distinct cessation of the office of mediator], the difference is that White takes the mediating aspect of Christ throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Although it must be mentioned that White does not imply that there will be a mediation of the sort that Christ is currently engaged in, since she clearly states by quoting the apostle John in Revelation 21:22, that there will be no temple in the preceding life, and therefore there will be no veil between the redeemed people and God and her further statement that there will be no more sin (White [1888] 1990a:676-678). The difference here is embedded in White's view of the limitation that Christ has assumed by taking upon himself the human nature. To White this perpetual retention of the human nature is a form of an everlasting mediation or a representation of humanity within the realm of divinity. This perpetual mediation makes it possible for an eternal guarantee of partnership since both parties are represented in the centrality of Christ in God's grand acts of creation, redemption, renewal and consummation.

According to White, Christ has always been the mediator of the covenant from the past of eternity to the future of eternity (White [1953] 1985:441). White sticking close to the Judeo-Christian Bible in reflecting on its timeline assumingly with the mindset of Hebrews 7:1-3, portrays Christ's continued perpetual mediation after its official cessation in terms of the heavenly sanctuary's ministration. Once the officiating work is complete in the heavenly sanctuary according to White there will be no mediator for the righteous living, who will be awaiting the second coming of Christ. In this regard White says:

When he leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor.

(White [1888] 1990a:614)

Morris Venden, Seventh-day Adventist Church pastor and author, in his book, *Never without an Intercessor* (1996:57-69), explains what is meant by the latter statement by White. According to Venden there is in reality no such a thing as the righteous ever being able to live at any time without an intercessor, since the human being has always been and will always be dependent upon Christ and God. What emerges in Venden's reading of White's statement is the conspicuous clarity of the statement. White's statement in a broader context reads as follows:

When He [Christ] leaves the sanctuary, darkness covers the inhabitants of the earth. In that fearful time the righteous must live in the sight of a holy God without an intercessor. The restraint which has been upon the wicked is removed, and Satan has entire control of the finally impenitent. God's long-suffering has ended. The world has rejected His mercy, despised His love, and trampled upon His law. The wicked have passed the boundary of their probation; the Spirit of God, persistently resisted, has been at last withdrawn. Unsheltered by divine grace, they have no protection from the wicked one. Satan will then plunge the inhabitants of the earth into one great, final trouble. As the angels of God cease to hold in check the fierce winds of human passion, all the elements of strife will be let loose. The whole world will be involved in ruin more terrible than that which came upon Jerusalem of old...The same destructive power exercised by holy angels when God commands, will be exercised by evil angels when He permits. There are forces now ready, and only waiting the divine permission, to spread desolation everywhere.

(White [1888] 1990a:614)

According to Venden (1996:67) the above passage deals with God's intercession and intervention manifesting God's prevention of the world from collapsing into a disastrous, inhabitable dungeon of chaos. In this regard Venden states,

When this world no longer has an intercessor against Satan and the four winds are let loose, all hell breaks loose. That's what it means when both the righteous and the wicked will live without an intercessor.

(Venden 1996:67)

With the afore said in mind it should therefore suffice to say that Christ's mediation though temporarily, may be deemed absent as he will allow for the angels of destruction to do their

work, Christ's unbroken mediation will continue, since his priesthood is forever, in and after the order of Melchizedek. Hence, Christ's mediation and priesthood continues as a different phase of priesthood/mediation since there will be no temple or sanctuary nor will there be any sin which can be deciphered from White's emphatic suggestion of the retention of Christ's human nature into eternity:

When God would assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, He gives His only begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature as a pledge that God will fulfil His word....Man's substitute and surety must have man's nature, a connection with the human family whom He was to represent, and, as God's ambassador, He must partake of the divine nature, have a connection with the Infinite, in order to manifest God to the world, and be a mediator between God and man.

(White [1953] 1985a:488)

This is a divergent view to Calvin who viewed the office of mediation as transitory. Unlike White who viewed the limitation that Christ has imposed upon himself by assuming the human nature, to be perpetual and thereby rendering himself to be subservient and obsequious to God, Calvin deemed the mediation and submission of Christ to God only to be transient:

Christ, therefore, shall reign until he appear to judge the world, inasmuch as, according to the measure of our feeble capacity, he now connects us with the Father. But when, as partakers of the heavenly glory, we shall see God as he is, then Christ, having accomplished the office of Mediator, shall cease to be the vicegerent of the Father, and will be content with the glory which he possessed before the world was.... God will then cease to be the head of Christ, and Christ's own Godhead will then shine forth of itself, whereas it is now in a manner veiled.

(Calvin [1989] 2001b:418)

It appears here that Christ's humanity which serves to veil his divinity will expire at some point of eternity. The reflection in this problem area revolves around the nature and the centrality of Jesus Christ in the views of Calvin and White. The reflexive discussion, on the one hand, has to do with how and where does Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection fit into the grand acts of God's creation, God's reconciliation circumscribed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's renewal through Pentecost and God's consummation and fulfilment of all things culminating in the new heaven and the new earth. On the other hand the reflexive discussion

points in the direction of the nature and role of Jesus Christ in God's central act of reconciliation, redemption and salvation.

The first dimension is thus a concentration of the discussion on the notion of the how, what and where, the role and function of Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection from beginning to end within God's grand acts as portrayed in the Bible. The second dimension deals with the question of whether we are referring to the realness of events and factual quality and the historical and material quality of realness of the reconciliation, redemption and salvation in Jesus Christ. The problem is how are John Calvin and Ellen White perceiving Jesus Christ's humanity in being born a human being to be closely connected and an equal partner to his divinity? After he had condescended into our world, what actually happened to his divinity? Did Jesus cease to be an active person in God who is a participant in the affairs of the universe from beginning to end while he was on earth as a human being? The other side of this question is whether he ceased to be divine at his death on the hills of Golgotha?

Both Calvin and Ellen G White follow the path of the salvation-historical realness and factuality of reconciliation and salvation embracing human beings and the natural cosmic world in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As a matter of necessity in being complete in what is investigated different approaches are dealt with while one approach of *interactional substantialism* regarding the divinity and humanity of Christ detected in the writings of Calvin and White is treated as the main approach from which stance the others are measured and evaluated. Thus, Calvin and White's interactional substantialist approach is the analytical and synthesising tool through which different approaches in history are criticised and evaluated.

The main approach circulates around the principle notion of *interactional substantialism*. In this position the mystery of the simultaneous interactional at-one-ment and at-other-ment of the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ is embodied in an excellent exemplary sense. The interactional inter-substantialist position has a minority status in the history of Christianity and the Christian churches. Representatives who could easily fit albeit loosely into this position are John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli and Ellen G White. In this thesis both the differences and overlapping between Calvin and White's views are investigated. Ivan T. Blazen, writing on the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the doctrine of salvation, said,

Seventh-day Adventists see themselves as heirs of and builders upon the Reformation insights into biblical teaching on justification by grace through faith alone, and restorers and exponents of the fullness, clarity, and balance of the apostolic gospel.

(Blazen 2000:307)

Jesus Christ is *mysteriously divine and human* from his pre-existence which proceeds through his life, cross and resurrection into his post-existence. Two notions emerged in this approach that the other three approaches did not have. First Jesus Christ mysteriously acted out his divineness sometimes and other times more his humanness in his life, death and resurrection. Secondly in a mysterious way Jesus Christ's divinity and humanity stays together beyond the limiting notions of his pre-existence before 'the virgin birth' and his post-existence on 'the right hand side of the Father' in 'heaven'.

The first of the well known approaches in Christianity revolves around the idea of *transformational trans-substantialism*, thus the humanity of Christ is sacramentally transformed by his divinity. The main Roman Catholic sacramentalist position in which Jesus Christ is seen as *the divine human being* in salvation is representative of this approach. Jesus Christ is *the divine human being* who was the pre-existent divine Son of God transforming the humanity of Jesus through a virgin birth into that of a sacramentalised and sacralised divine human being. This divine human being had proceeded exclusively from heaven as the divine Son of God, and is continued to live into his post-existence through the resurrection and the ascension in his body the Church. The limiting notion of the incarnation in this approach means that the pre-existent divine Son of God had been clothed with divinised human flesh while he was on earth. This means that the risen Son of God who is now on the right hand side of the Father has left behind his creaturely human flesh and is solely divine. Though this view is in current Roman Catholic theologies not propagated it is still strongly operational in Roman Catholic ecclesial practices and sacraments from baptism to the Eucharist.

The second approach revolves around the notion of the divinity of Christ permeating his humanity as expressed by the *con-substantialist* approach. This position has very old papers in the history of Christianity but was given its final format by Luther and the Lutheran tradition by portraying Jesus Christ as *the human God*. This view is expounded by the majority of present

day churches in the global arena – even a large part of Roman Catholicism and evangelicals in the Reformed/Presbyterian, Pentecostal and Charismatic worlds ascribes to the view that Christ's divinity is permeating his humanity. In alignment with this view on the scale of a permeation of the humanity by the divinity many evangelical and pietist views operate with the idea of the divine Jesus nestled in the heart of the believer permeating the ego-centre of a human being – created by God - as the driving force of all a person's good and meaningful thoughts, acts and doings. The great majority of Christological views found within the Evangelical Christian world embrace this view.

Jesus Christ as *the human God* in his life, cross and resurrection is also the pre-existent divine Son of God who has permeated the humanity of Jesus to such an extent that he became Jesus Christ. The human God after his resurrection is the ubiquitous divine agency that continues to permeate people's faith, the Bible, the church and the sacraments of bread and wine.

While there is a whole array of Catholic positions, the central Catholic *transubstantiation*, incarnation approach is one in which at conception the human Jesus is transformed into a divine human being – this is what Catholic views of incarnation entail. In the main Lutheran *consubstantiation*, incarnation approach, God as the divine agency constantly permeates the human Jesus at his conception. This constant permeation of Jesus the human being by his own divine character as God's divine agency circumscribes the Lutheran view of incarnation in all other spheres. These views as well as some forms of one-sided *interactional substantialism* are sometimes called *anhypostatic* views which mean that the emphasis is more on the divinity than the humanity of Christ and while the divinity is overbearingly attested in the transformed or permeated human side.

The third approach which is modern to the hilt revolves around the notion of a monolithic monosubstantialism. This is mainly a liberal and humanist position which has its roots in the Renaissance of the 14-15th centuries and more fully worked out in the Enlightenment period of the 17th and 18th century. In the 19th and the 20th century this approach is circumscribed as the model or special human being that had an impact on history and could function as one of the many human prophets that had emerged in history. According to such a liberal and humanistic

view Jesus Christ as a special and particular human being is a son of God in the same way as all other human beings are sons and daughters of God.

1.2.3 The third problem-setting: Mirroring, Interpretation and consensual negotiation approaches of writings, sayings and doings

The approach followed in this thesis is to look at how Calvin and White approached and made use of writings, sayings and doings in their writings. By sayings and doings is meant to make use of the basic notions of three broad approaches of a mirroring-fundamentalist, interpretation-hermeneutical and the consensual negotiation approach as described and developed by Van Niekerk (2009:277-296). According to various followers and commentators on the writings, sayings and doings of Calvin and White the assertion is made that the emphasis of Calvin in the different versions of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and his commentaries of Bible books leans mainly in the direction of a literal-interpretative approach with a significant number of interpretative notions meandering in the realm of an interpretation-hermeneutical paradigm. White, on the other hand, leans more in the direction of a literal-grammatical approach with a significant number of mirroring notions that could be linked to the realm of a fundamentalist-mirroring paradigm. What is part of the investigation in the thesis is that in various and diverse writings of Calvin and White vestiges, clues and trajectories of all three approaches could be found.

In history followers and commentators investigating Calvin and White's writings, sayings and doings especially with regard to the divine salvation-historical timeline embodied and embedded in the Bible as the grand acts of God of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment detect applications of the mirroring, interpretational and consensual negotiation in their work.

1.2.3.1 Mirroring approach

In the mirroring approach regarding the Bible the basic and underlying principle is that what is Godly and divine is mirrored in the words of the Bible and should be re-mirrored and appropriated in one's life to be divinely meaningful in one's life. Generally, this approach towards texts can be formulated as that of saying the same thing in the same words in the way

these words are appropriated as meaningful and life-giving in one's life (Van Niekerk 2009:280-283).

Are God's marvellous and grandiose acts exclusively – only and alone as divine authorisation - *mirrored and imitated* in the corpus of Biblical texts from Genesis to Revelation which as a follow up has to be re-mirrored and imitated in our lives? The starting point for the theologian in the fundamentalist or Biblicist approach regarding the grand acts of God is the presumed mirrored rendition of these acts in the divine Word of God, the Bible. According to this approach the corpus of Genesis 1-3 is a divine exact portrayal of the way God has created the earth and the universe while scientific and other attempts of scientifically describing the creation or the origin of the world are relegated to a lower and less valid level. Everything scientific regarding the origin of creation and the universe should take their lead from the template provided in the divine history of the Bible.

In the mirroring paradigm people are not really allowed to interpret but only to mirror and imitate God's Word viewed as the whole Bible in people's lives. Some fundamentalists sometimes venture to call their mirroring approach to the Bible interpretation though in practice they operate with the appropriation of divine mirrored images of the Bible. In this regard the term mechanical and literal inspiration of the texts by the Holy Spirit has been introduced in the history of churches and theology.

A considerable number of Calvinist-Reformed and Seventh-day Adventist followers operate with the fundamentalist mirroring paradigm as their main approach towards the books and writings of the Bible as well as towards the writings, sayings and doings of Calvin and White. The question regarding Calvin and White is not whether they made use of a mirroring approach but to what extent have they employed it in their writings, sayings and doings.

1.2.3.2 Interpretation approach

In the interpretation approach regarding the Bible the basic and underlying principle is that what is Godly and divine in the words of the writers and composers of the Bible should be understood, explained and applied in one's life to be meaningful in one's life. Generally, this approach

towards texts can be formulated as that of saying the same thing in other words to be explained and applied as meaningful and life-giving words in one's life (Van Niekerk 2009:283-286).

In the interpretation approach the Biblical text is interpreted that is understood, explained and applied with an interpretative filter or scope that emerges and is drawn from the divine history inspiringly imparted by the Holy Spirit in the minds of the writers and composers (Moses, the prophets, gospel lists and apostles) and written down and composed in the totality of the biblical books from Genesis to Revelation. God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation which we first and foremost learned from the background, contexts and words of the oral narrators, writers and composers of Biblical texts are combined as an interpretative filter which leads the understanding, explication and application approach of the interpreter.

The starting point for the theologian in the interpretation or Bibliocentric or scope-centric approach regarding the corpus of Genesis 1-3 is the presumed underlying scope or centre of these acts that emerge through interpretation of the divine Word of God, the Bible. According to this approach intra-biblically – inside the Bible - the body of Genesis 1-3 are inspired portrayals of the oral narrators, writers and composers of the texts as to how the earth and the universe have been created by God. The intra-biblical portrayal and rendition of creation is viewed as authoritatively inspired by the Holy Spirit and the age of creation intra-biblically is read as having a certain goal in the text for the reader of the text. One of these interpreted goals of the Genesis 1-3 is that the text is a divine metaphorical construction created by the writers and composers of the text to accommodate the minds of human beings that cannot be on the level of the mind of God. The views of scientists and scholars extra-biblically or outside the biblical texts about the how of creation and the age of the created world are viewed as authoritatively inspired by the human spirit not necessarily in line with the Bible but altogether acceptable in a totally different domain, the scientific domain. What is characteristic of the interpretational approach is that the interpretation scope or filter extracted from the Bible is then used as a prescribed filter and scope for the interpretation of different texts of the Bible and writings, sayings and doings of scientists in world history outside of the domain of biblical history.

In 1934 O Noordmans the Reformed theologian from Holland, expressed the main outlines within which the interpretation paradigm operates succinctly in his work *Herscheping*. Noordmans asserts:

We should not approach creation as a quasi-infinity or eternity. We ought to let the million years of astronomy and biology quietly slide. We keep more or less to the old-fashioned 6000 years, which we, practically speaking, encounter in the bible. We keep close to the cross. With the few thousand years we have enough to deal with. The rest we leave to God [my translation].

(Noordmans 1934:55)

Earlier, Noordmans says in this work that:

The creation, which science deals with, is not the actual creation. It is an abstraction. In true creation we encounter sin and suffering and death which fit in with Jesus of the Twelve Articles [my translation].

(Noordmans 1934:55)

In the interpretation paradigm God's Word(s) are extracted from the texts of the Bible via the background, contexts and words of the oral narrators, writers and composers of Biblical texts. In their daily practice many present day theologians and ministers, priests and pastors interpret the Bible through a close following of the interpretation pattern of main assumptions or set of pointers expressed in the writings, sayings and doings of the founding father or mother of the church or faith community. Thus, Calvinists mainly follow Calvin's interpretative schemes and Seventh-day Adventists those of White. In this regard the term organic and scope-centred (Bibliocentric) inspired texts by the Holy Spirit has been introduced in the history of theology and churches. A considerable number of Calvinist-Reformed and Seventh-day Adventist followers operate with Bibliocentric paradigm of interpretation as their main approach towards the Bible as well as in regard to the writings, sayings and doings of the of Calvin and White.

1.2.3.3 Consensual negotiation approach

In the sensible negotiation approach regarding the Bible the sense making approach of the writers (composers) embedded in the biblical text is brought in a negotiation process with the sense making approach of the present negotiating reader of the text. The present negotiating reader of the text negotiate consensually with the text through being empowered and inspired by God's Spirit on the same level as the oral narrators, writers and composers of the Biblical texts

(Van Niekerk 2009:286-289). There is an important difference with the interpretation paradigm which central operational strategy is to see the Holy Spirit's role as that of the internal illuminator of the reader of the Biblical text to understand what the Holy Spirit has inspiringly imparted in the mind of the writers and composers of the Biblical texts. On the other hand, the consensual negotiation approach could in general be described as an approach towards texts in which one negotiates consensually the sense making of differences of similar things expressed in different but connected sense making worlds with the purpose of establishing a co-promise (mutual promise) design from which meaningful clues, cues or hues could be taken and built into people's life-world and experience. Moreover, if our present experience in the era of the Spirit is viewed as containing less of the Spirit than Biblical times or if our present experience and guidance of the Spirit of God is asserted to be on a lower level than the writers and composers of the Bible, we are reverted back to a situation before Pentecost day awaiting the dawn and intensity of Pentecost. To a large extent many churches and Christian groupings are still mainly locked into God's grand acts of creation and reconciliatory salvation in Jesus Christ. In the consensual negotiation approach to the extent that God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment play a role, no greater weight is accorded to one above the other. However, as people living in the era of the Spirit, the time of the Third Testament we are co-writers, co-makers and co-operators of the Holy Spirit in the dynamic and moving Kingdom of God.

1.2.3.4 Diversified Concluding

The third problem-setting is of immense importance for someone working within the ambience of a Calvinist-Reformed and Seventh-day Adventist ethos and sense making approach. The question is whether the Biblical text renders us with a divine mirror and imitation copy of how God created everything, reconciling the world, renewing the world and is taking human beings and the world to the end of consummation and fulfilment or is the bible a portrayal of the oral narrators, writers and composers of the Biblical text which we on our part have to interpret to get at the actual and real meaning for our day? Or are we as people living in the era of the Holy Spirit taking our vindication and validation as co-writers, co-makers and co-operators serious in the meandering of the Kingdom of God in our lives.

The question regarding Calvin and White is not whether they made use of a mirroring, interpretation or even a consensual negotiation approach but to what extent have they employed the basics of all three approaches in different writings, sayings and doings and in different phases and stages of their lives.

1.3 The structure of the thesis

The first chapter of the thesis is intended as a general introduction and provisional discussion of John Calvin and Ellen G White's views in terms of four problem-settings. The hypothesis, thus the basic challenge the thesis poses with its resulting answer is presented in a brief and provisional synopsis of the problem-settings which are simultaneously functioning as the operational tools in the thesis.

In chapter two Calvin and White's historical backgrounds and the contextual backdrop against which their salvation-historical views emerged are described.

In the third chapter, Calvin and White's anti-speculative and anti-scholastic stance with regard to the biblical historical timeline as expressed in the full array of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment is discussed. Built into the grand acts of God is the mystery of the very close and very different relationship between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. Moreover, the trinitarian notion of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is also discussed against the backdrop of Calvin and White's anti-speculative and anti-scholastic stance.

In chapter four different aspects of the mystery of the simultaneity of the closeness and difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world are discussed as part of the biblical historical timeline expressed in the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal and fulfilment (consummation).

In chapter five approaches of Calvin and White regarding the coherence between and connective linking of God's grand acts creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment as expressed in the divine historical timeline are discussed.

In chapter six interactional or inter-substantial christological approaches of Calvin and White are described and discussed. Other major views of a dual- or mono-substantialist nature on the natures of Christ are in passing discussed.

In chapter seven the approaches of Calvin and White towards biblical texts and texts in general are discussed against the backdrop of the mirroring, interpretation and consensual negotiation paradigms. Firstly, the question could be asked whether in their approaches the bible record is viewed as an exact mirrored portrayal of what God wanted to reveal and largely underwritten by a literal mirroring approach. Secondly, are their parts or periods of their lives in which Calvin and White approached the biblical text with an interpretation filter that places the focus on the basic message and scope of the whole biblical historical timeline as portrayed in the biblical text as a whole? Thirdly, though it may be sceptically regarded by followers of Calvin and White we ask the question to what extent they have employed the consensual-negotiation approach. In what sense did they make use of an approach of consensual negotiation whereby the text is thoroughly brought into negotiatory contact with their own sense making God-human-nature experiences?

CHAPTER 2

The social-historical contexts of Calvin and White

2. 1 Introduction

Describing and discussing people who acquired a nearly semi-divine status in the circle of their followers is no longer to be approached with the proof text method that various people from early modernity were acquainted to. The route taken here is that of a contextual-historical hunting and gathering exercise of the notions and topical pointers of Calvin and White's writings, sayings and doings. One important contextual-historical slice of a short period in their lives is not representing the regularities of their unique sense making approaches that emerged over a lengthy period of time. Calvin views emerged over a period of nearly forty years and White's over a period of seventy years. In the 20th century a stronger awareness about the learning curves and growth patterns of people like Calvin and White emerged amongst followers. What may seem to be a contradiction in their writings, sayings and doings in different periods of their lives are no longer vehemently defended as divine perspectives which allow no changes, but is rather viewed as part of a growth pattern in which on the one hand a particular period have to be understood in its own right but still has to be correlated with the main regularities emerging in a person's whole life. In working with the notion that the main regularities of a person's sense making approach are enacted in shifts and turns through his or her whole life, Calvin and White's historical background and the contextual backdrop of their life-worlds are described.

2.1.1 John Calvin

2.1.1.1 Historical background

John Calvin (Jean Cauvin) (1509-1564), 16th century Reformer was born to an upper middle class family on 10 July 1509 in Noyon in France, as a son of Gerard Cauvin - solicitor at the ecclesial court and of the Chapter of Noyon - and Jeanne le Franc, his mother, who was the daughter of a wealthy retired hotelier (Biéler 2005:59). Calvin, who is actually Jean Cauvin, later Latinized by himself as Ioannis Calvinus, where we derive John Calvin, grew up in a little

town of Noyon in Picardy, which is located in the north of France. Calvin's father, Gerard, was a successful lawyer who handled the financial affairs of the cathedral. However, little is known about his mother, Jeanne Le Franc. She was simply 'beautiful and pious.' In short, Calvin grew up 'in an environment of piety'. According to Herman J. Selderhuis (2009:10) in his book, *John Calvin, A Pilgrim's Life,* Calvin's parents seem to have had a total of seven children, of which two were girls. John F. Thorton and Susan B. Varenne, differ in this regard, since they claim that, Calvin was 'the second of four sons of Gerard Cauvin' (Thorton & Varenne 2006:xxxii). However, what is undisputed is that, Calvin's mother died in the year 1515, while he was only six years of age. Without a mother, the little boy Calvin seemed to seek filial love from the Mother Church (Selderhuis 2009:10-11).

In Noyon, he was a pupil at the College of Capettes. McGrath (2000:32), points out that according to Calvin, his father had initially intended for him [Calvin] to study theology in Paris. This fact is confirmed by (Thorton & Varenne 2006:xxxiii), who claims that Calvin left Noyon for Paris in August 1523, in order to study theology at the College de la Marche, which is a university in Paris. In 1521 he was given the income of a chaplain in Noyon and in 1527, the income of a pastor of a neighbouring town. He studied from 1523, at Colleges in Paris. In 1528, due to his father's disagreement with the Chapter of Noyon which resulted in him being excommunicated, Gerhard could no longer count on the support of churchmen to promote his son's advancement.

John Calvin went over to the study of law in Orléans and thereafter to Bourges where he graduated in 1532. According to Selderhuis, Calvin's father had desired for Calvin to become a lawyer or a judge. Ironically of the two laws, God's and Civil law, Gerard did not want for his son to be involved in 'ecclesiastical law' (Selderhuis 2009:15). The reason for this change, was apparently, mainly financial. There was more money to be made from practicing law than from theology (McGrath 2000:32). Hence, approximately, at the end of 1527 to the early 1528, Calvin left Paris, where canon law only was taught. He went to the University of Orleans, which is a world renowned law study centre, where civil law was offered. It was there at Orleans where Calvin received instruction from a man who was as well renowned as the university, a Pierre de l'Estoile. Just over a year, approximately May 1529, Calvin, with his friends, Nicolas du Chemin and Francois Daniel, left for Bourges.

Bourges had been under the protection of Marguerite d'Angouleme, the sister of the king of France, King Francis I. It was at that place, which was purposive as a centre for 'reform-minded critics', where Calvin set under the feet of Andrea Alciati, renowned as de l'Estoile. There, Calvin drank from the wellsprings of Latin sources, where he enjoyed the 'humanistic method of teaching Roman law' (Selderhuis 2009:15). It was during October 1530, when Calvin, on foot, returned to Orleans. In February of the year 1531, Calvin received a bachelor's degree in law (Selderhuis 2009:16). For, he had studied law in College de Montaigu, Paris.

Purportedly, Calvin also went back to Paris to study, in order to complete his literary training at the College des Trois Langues, established in 1530 by the king of France. In Paris, Calvin socialised with evangelical and humanist groups and fled from Paris in 1533 after Nicolaus Cops lecture on 1 November 1533, to Angoulême, where he lived under the pseudonym Charles d'Espeville, taught Greek to pupils and studied hard in theology of which he was a complete autodidact (Biéler 2005:59-70; Bakhuizen, van den Brink & Dankbaar 1967:150-154).

In 1532 Calvin published his first work, a commentary on the *De clementia* of Seneca (2BC - AD 65), which he still as an admirer of the morality of antiquity, saw in alignment with Renaissance humanist views which in turn was for him in agreement with the Christian religion. In this work, Calvin cited the Bible only three times, quoted the writers from Roman antiquity throughout and had very little criticism on Seneca's views, though he pointed to the resemblance between Seneca's stoic views and a Christian approach to divine providence (Bakhuizen, van den Brink & Dankbaar 1967:151). Calvin's later works indicates that, somewhere around 1533, he had made a change over to the Reformation. While he was in Paris, he was exposed to the ideas of Protestant Reformers, especially Luther.

According to Theodore Beza, Calvin's cousin Olivetanus, guided Calvin and taught him 'true religion,' while they were both students in Paris (Calvin 2004:42). Calvin had become a changed man, when like Cop, he also fled from Paris. The French Bible of 1535, translated by Olivetanus, published in Serrieres, began with an inscription by Calvin's hand which read 'to emperors, kings, princes and all people who are subjected to the rule of Christ' (*Ioannis Calvinus caesaribus, regibus, principibus, gentibusque omnibus Christi imperio subditis salutera*). In that

letter Calvin made a fervent plea for the authority of the Bible and a good Bible that is well translated for common people.

This marks the real multi-talented Calvin. He studied two major laws: The Biblical law and the law of the land and human beings. He studied, in turn theology and law in Paris, Orleans, and Bourges. His varied course of study would in every case have driven him to a firsthand examination of the Bible as well as classical and patristic sources. Hence his early writings would display his instincts as a humanist scholar.

Calvin's views, rather than bringing about the reforms he sought, elicited a wave of anti-Protestant sentiment that forced him to flee for his own safety in the decade 1530-40. In 1541 he happened to pass a night in Geneva. He had intended to stay a single night in Geneva, but a fellow French reformer William Farel, residing in the city, persuaded Calvin to stay in support of the Protestant cause there. Apart from a short period in which he was expelled and worked in Strassbourg, he stayed and worked in Geneva for the rest of his life. In 1536, while in Basel, the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was published. Several editions followed with the 1559 edition. The bulk of Calvin's written work, that is his sermons, biblical commentaries and the different editions of his *Institutes* are all directly focused on or done within the comprehensive embrace of the biblical historical timeline of the Judeo-Christian Bible.

The backdrop of the 16th century Reformation in France could be summarised in the most basic of religious problems namely the relation of human beings with God and the basic underlying question of someone's personal salvation. The total ecclesial discourse of the time was permeated with the idea of *merit reputed* and acknowledged in someone because of his or her works through love of Christ or *merit imputed* on someone because of Christ carrying God's wrath and a human being's overbearing sinful load. Was the merit reputed and acknowledged by the Church because of its sacramental rituals, or imputed and apportioned because of Christ's death at the cross and his resurrection? The answer on the latter question was almost always the same in the era of Calvin according to Biéler:

...the Word of God was the only authority worthy of respect; alongside it shallow human teachers were but pale shadows; the living Christ was our one Saviour, the

one nourishment for our faith and life – in every particular the precise opposite of the Pope.

(Biéler 2005:36)

Calvin was an anxious man filled with the underlying anxiety of his times. To Calvin the promise of certain boundaries, which separate one thing from another, such as God given boundaries set by God's Spirit, boundaries set by Holy Scripture and boundaries set by experience, designate the fulfilment of certainty. Any mixture, in a certain way, an abomination and connoted 'adulteration' or 'promiscuity' and its result is slipping into an abyss and an aimless labyrinth without an arrival point (Bouwsma 1988:32-48). However, if we investigate and circumscribe the profile of the man Calvin through his writings, sayings and doings, a highly mixed picture emerges.

What is forgotten in many writings about the Reformation is that, the first part of the 16th century, was a period of spontaneous generation and change. For example, the strong independent devotional life, constituted to a large extent the bedrock of the Reformation,

...for in doing without the church it was quite simply one of the elements of the Reformation. The presence of a 'Lutheran' in a town, a few sermons, the simple indication of certain standpoints, meant that there was a whole region in which minds so inclined took up – or rather thought up – the new ideas.

(Léonard, in Biéler 2005:62)

Calvin was actually a second generation Reformer. Biéler in describing the phenomenon of spontaneous generation of the Reformation in France, states In forty years, from 1519 to 1559, Reformed churches were established in every direction throughout the kingdom without directly involving great Reformers like Luther in Germany, Zwingli in Switzerland or Calvin in Geneva, and despite the vicissitudes of a totally unfavourable political situation that extended to the most ruthless persecutions. One of the main leaders of the Reformation in France was Lefèvre d'Étaples. His boldness and the moderation of his thinking, the result of his irenic character, made him an intermediary between the reformist Catholic humanism of an Erasmus and the radical, evangelical approach of a Farel. Lefèvre's attempt at moderate reform enjoyed the favour of King Francis I and of the humanist circles. The more radical writings of Luther, Karlstadt, Zwingli and Bucer were spreading in France in the same period. Noteworthy, is that the 'subversive' character of the radical Reformation at once aroused a combination of fear and

violence among the clergy and people of influence. However, the nobles in their enthusiasm and liking for action, in fact, were closer to the people than the Renaissance humanists, who were timid and often full of contempt for the common people (Biéler 2005:63-64).

Notwithstanding the above, what is pivotal at this stage is that we keep in mind that Calvin was actually a second generation Reformer. In France, as elsewhere, a strong independent devotional life from the Church was already underway in the beginning of the 16th century, when the first Reformers broke into the scene. The Church did not have the leaders to capitalise on the changed experiences and was to a large extent discredited by its clerics' over-worldly way of life which could not meet the needs of the people whom the Church itself regarded as its own preserve.

After his 'conversion' from Catholicism to the Reformation movement, Calvin continued with his aptitude for rigorous reflection and thinking, the new exegetical method that he shared with the humanists in their determination to be faithful to the grammatical sense, and to bring out the genuine, straightforward meaning of what was written from its own context in text and history while vehemently differing from them in many instances. Similarly, the emergence of a 16th century 'double consciousness' in Calvin is not only to be traced to the harmonizing tendency of Renaissance humanism of the 15th and 16th century, that is, the widespread desire to harmonise the works of the noble pagans with the teachings of Christianity (Breen 1968:74). The sources of influence on Calvin's writings, sayings and doings demonstrated diverse traces, clues and ideas of Luther and Zwingli, Lefèvre d'Étaples and Farel, Aristotle and Plato, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus, the Devotio Moderna of Thomas à Kempis and John Major (Torrance 1988:73-95), Eusebius of Caesarea, Bernard of Clairvaux and from the traditions of interpretations, rhetoric and classical philology especially Lorenzo Valla and Rodolph Agricola (Torrance 1988:97). In the Renaissance humanist world, Calvin's 'growth curve' in his study years and even later, is strongly co-determined by the Renaissance humanist world of the time which was involved in 'revivals' of Platonism, Aristotelianism and Stoicism as well as a rejection of much of the 'revived' Pythagorism, Epicureanism and Scepticism of the era (Battles & Hugo 1969:48).

According to Bouwsma, two Calvins who actually belong together and fitted in the one historical Calvin, emerged in post-reformation history:

One of these Calvins was a philosopher, a rationalist and a schoolman in the high Scholastic tradition represented by Thomas Aquinas, a man of fixed principles, and a conservative. For this Calvin, Christianity tended toward static orthodoxy, and a Christian was a person endowed with certain *status*. This philosophical Calvin, peculiarly sensitive to the contradictions and dilemmas of an eclectic culture and singularly intolerant of what we now call “cognitive dissonance”, craved desperately for intelligibility, order, certainty. Distrusting freedom, he struggled to control both himself and the world.....The other Calvin was a rhetorician and humanist, a sceptical fideist in the manner of the followers of William of Ockham, flexible to the point of opportunism, and a revolutionary in spite of himself. This Calvin did not seek, because he neither trusted nor needed, what passed on earth for intelligibility at the heart of existence. He also asserted the primacy of experience and practice over theory, and he had a considerable tolerance for individual freedom. Christianity, for this Calvin, was dynamic and could be appropriated only gradually and imperfectly; a Christian in this context was a person making progress toward the full stature of Christ.

(Bouwsma 1988;230-231)

2.1.1.2 The backdrop of Calvin’s salvation-historical approach

Calvin’s approach is to a large extent a mixture of Augustine’s neo-platonic views of the early middle ages in which the notion of mimesis, which actually amounts to different forms and levels of mirroring between God and human beings and nature, determined and defined the theological and philosophical reflection of the following centuries, till the end of the first millennium. At the turn of the second millennium, a strong and heightened influence of Aristotle emerged through the Latin translations of Aristotle’s works by mainly Arab Philosophers. The operating principle of the new Aristotelianism, revolves around the reflection about causes and the processes brought about by these causes. This principle amounted to the taking up of a position next to the causal processual dynamics between God and human beings and nature on the one hand and between human beings and nature on the other. In the Late Middle Ages, Aristotle was called ‘the philosopher’ by the likes of Thomas Aquinas (1224/5-1274), who took Aristotle’s philosophy completely as undercarriage for his theology and deviated from the earlier theologies of the Augustinian mirroring types, which worked with mirrored divine periods or designated blocks of history, revolving around a presume neo-platonic succession in the time-

line of Holy Scripture. Either the Old and the New Testaments or the Seven Periods designated by Augustine in his City of God, fulfilled this role of designated divine mirrored periods. In the scholasticism of Duns Scotus (1270-1308) and the Nominalism of Occam, a return to neo-platonism emerged within the framework of an era strongly influenced by Aristotle.

Calvin's salvation-historical approach strongly attached, to the biblical timeline as presented in the texts from Genesis to Revelation, carries the influences of his alignment with certain views of the Renaissance humanist world, especially of the 15th century Lorenzo Valla and Rodolphus Agricola (Torrance 1988:11-126).

Secondly, Calvin is to a large extent indebted to the modern devotion of the late Middle Ages, the *Devotio Moderna*. His overlapping and sharing of the experiential views of the *Devotio Moderna*, especially the views of the Brethren of the Common Life and Thomas à Kempis, with whose views he came into contact during his stay in Paris (1524-28) (Torrance 1988:73). This is especially so with the views of the Brethren of the Common Life and Thomas à Kempis, with whose views he came into contact during his stay in Paris (1524-28). Those views played a major role in influencing his views. Certain views of Thomas à Kempis are unmistakably taken over and adapted by Calvin, in terms of his own scheme of things (Torrance 1988:73).

The experiential trajectory of Thomas à Kempis in his *De Imitatione Christi* revolves around Christ's life as in itself, a cross into which the believers must be assimilated through imitation in their pilgrimage from earth to heaven, from time to eternity. In this pilgrimage, they are absorbed in the love of Christ and schooled in the eternal truth (*Veritas aeterna*). This requires constant study of the Holy Scripture and frequent communion in the Body of Christ, that the Word of God may be the light of the soul and Sacrament, the bread of life. The believer has no source of life and truth in him but must draw out of the inexhaustible fountain of Christ. In the meantime, however, he must walk by faith, not by sight, aspiring to the light of eternity, but at the end of the pilgrimage, he will pierce through the veil into the holy of holies and see the pure light of God in his proper and divine glory (Torrance 1988:74-75). According to Torrance the major part of these views of Thomas à Kempis are echoed in Calvin's enlarged 'Institute' (Calvin [1559] 1960d:7-10).

Thirdly, Calvin reacted against and aligned himself with various notions of the scholasticism of both Thomas Aquinas and John Duns Scotus through the influence of John Mair (Major) of Scotland who lectured to Calvin in Paris during 1526-28. Several of Major's theological and philosophical sense-making lines can be detected in Calvin's work.

According to Torrance (1988:73) Calvin shared with the humanist scholars a violent reaction against mediaeval scholasticism, especially against Nominalism, whether in its terminist dialectics and logical hair-splitting or in its voluntarist stress upon merit and its Pelagianism. This dislike, was conceived during his studies in the Sorbonne, and remained so intense throughout his life that could hardly refrain from indulging in strongly emotive denunciation of the sophistry it produced. Calvin reacted against the Renaissance humanists later in his later years but took much from their way of doing into his writings. Calvin reacted vehemently against medieval scholasticism, especially against Nominalism, whether in its terminist dialectics and logical hair-splitting or in their stress on the free will of God and human beings as well as all their speculative views on the combination of merit and free will. Nevertheless, Calvin owed much to his mediaeval inheritance, even in his own work where he changed what he learned and adapted it into his own Calvinian sense-making theological-philosophical scheme.

And last but not least, Calvin was influenced by his fellow Reformers as well as the Reformers of the 16th century preceding him. We have already mentioned that Calvin was a second generation Reformer. For example Melanchthon the main co-Reformer of Luther, had his commentary on the biblical book of Romans published in 1532 while Calvin, still a Catholic Christian and humanist, published his commentary on Seneca's *De clementia* in that year (Strehle 1995:66). According to Torrance Calvin is indebted to Luther regarding the following aspects.

Firstly, Calvin appears to owe much to Luther's doctrine of the mighty, living, active Word of God. Torrance (Torrance 1988:157) asserts:

Calvin's whole approach to the Scripture and its interpretation falls within the reorientation that came about through Luther's rediscover of the *Word* in which God communicates himself in all his grace and power to the believer.

Secondly, Calvin is indebted to Luther than in his response to Luther's way of expounding the doctrine of justification by faith alone or of laying the stress so emphatically upon the divine mercy and grace. This is of importance here because Calvin also shared with Luther the hermeneutical implications of justification by faith which in Calvin's case

...was expounded more in terms of the *mirifica commutatio* on the ground of which we are justified, in which Christ through taking over human nature, substituted himself in our place, and thus displaces us in all areas of our human knowing and acting, in order that we may be lifted up out of ourselves to share with in his obedient and faithful sonship toward the Father.

(Torrance 1988:158)

Thirdly, Calvin appears indebted to Luther in regard to the point that where and when we are in the mode of natural reason and we feel our reason is under attack by Scripture it is the best point where genuine interpretation can take place and profound understanding of something that we cannot tell ourselves, and we cannot think up for ourselves, emerges (Torrance 1988:158).

2.2.1 Ellen G. White

2.2.1.1 Historical background

Ellen G. White (1827-1915) was a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the early 1860s with her husband James White and Joseph Bates. Ellen White emerged from amongst the Millerite groups as a product of her time. She grew up in rugged Puritan New England, from a strong Methodist family, and was surrounded by the political, social, and religious ferment, characteristic of the age for most of her life. She married James, a hard-working man from the Christian Connection, a loose group of churches that were part of what has been called the Restorationist Movement.

Ellen G. White was born to a Methodist Episcopal Church couple, Robert and Eunice Harmon in Gorham, Maine on the 26th of November 1827. She was a twin of her parents' eight children in total. Through the spiritual labours of her parents, all the White children were converted into the Methodist Episcopal Church:

At the age of eleven years I was converted, and when twelve years old was baptized, and joined the Methodist Church.

(White [1882] 1945a:11)

Unlike Calvin, Ellen G. White did not have much formal education. In Portland, Maine, where her parents had relocated to, Ellen Gould White's early life underwent a misfortune, when an angry thirteen year old girl threw a stone on Ellen's face (White [1915] 1943:17).

This accident prevented Ellen White from continuing with her desired schooling. In part, this is how White relates her ordeal:

My health seemed to be hopelessly impaired. For two years I could not breathe through my nose, and was able to attend school but little. It seemed impossible for me to study and retain what I learned... My nervous system was prostrated, and my hand trembled so that I made but little progress in writing, and could get no farther than the simple copies in coarse hand. As I endeavoured to bend my mind to my studies, the letters in the page would run together, great drops of perspiration would stand upon my brow, and a faintness and dizziness would seize me. I had a bad cough, and my whole system seemed debilitated. My teachers advised me to leave school, and not pursue my studies further till my health should improve. It was the hardest struggle of my young life to yield to my feebleness, and decided that I must leave my studies, and give up the hope of gaining an education.

(White [1940] 1922:16)

However, God's intervention in her life, afforded her the privilege to be trained by the Holy Spirit and to learn from her personal experience. Not only did Ellen G. White become a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but today she is regarded by many as one of America's most prolific female authors of all generations.

The befitting question then is, 'how did this happen?' It is purported that her initial experience to write took place at her home in Portland, Maine. This is probably around 'late spring or early summer' of 1845. Ellen White relates the important turning point of her life that enabled her to write:

Up to this time I could not write. My trembling hand was unable to hold my pen steadily. While in vision I was commanded by an angel to write the vision. I attempted it, and wrote readily. My nerves were strengthened, and my hand became steady.

(White, A L 1985:91; White, E G 1945c:60)

At a much later time after several years had elapsed, White again related her early experience in learning to write:

The Lord has said, 'Write out the things which I shall give'. And I commenced when very young to do this work. My hand that was feeble and trembling because of infirmities became steady as soon as I took the pen in my hand, and since those first writings I have been able to write. God has given me the ability to write....That right hand scarcely ever has a disagreeable sensation. It never wearies. It seldom ever trembles.

(White, AL 1985:91)

How did she feel while going through that experience?

I wept, and said, 'Impossible, impossible.' The words came, 'Nothing is impossible with God.' The effort was made and my hand commenced to write the things that had been given me.

(White, AL 1985:91)

Ellen White's works spans over 100,000 transcribed pages and consists of 250,000 words that were hand-written. Her major contributions are in the area of Faith Studies as well as on nutrition and health. Mrs. White had through her life an avowed love for Jesus Christ in which God's act of reconciliation has been centrally and perpetually enacted through the ages. She produced several classics on Christ such as: *The Desire of Ages* and *Steps to Christ*. The book she regarded to be of more importance of all her work is, *The Great Controversy, Volume 5* which is part of her Conflict of the Ages series. Her prediction with regard to that book was as follows:

The results of the circulation of this book [The Great Controversy] are not to be judged by what now appears. By reading it, some souls will be aroused, and will have courage to unite themselves at once with those who keep the commandments of God. But a much larger number who read it will not take their position until they see the very events taking place that are foretold in it. The fulfilment of some of the predictions will inspire faith that others also will come to pass, and when the earth is lightened with the glory of the Lord, in the closing work, many souls will take their position on the commandments of God as the result of this agency...

(White 1992:214)

After that fateful, life-changing accident we have earlier related to, at the age of nine, the young Ellen ever remained, health-wise, a vulnerable person, and one who though never having had the chance for further formal education, experienced an awakening within her of a deep spiritual yearning for God. All these factors and more, played a role on who she became and how she viewed God, human beings in the world around her and the natural cosmic world (See Land 1987, Knight 1998 and Gaustad 1974).

At the age of 18, on August 30, 1846, she married James White, then 25, a school teacher turned Millerite preacher, who had accompanied her and one or two other companions, on her increasingly frequent travels throughout the North-Eastern part of the country. He had a bright mind and was a careful Bible student, with some writing ability, and considerable business acumen. Both now teamed together in ministry. People saw her as the revivalist and saw him as the organiser.

The first sixty years of the 19th century was pivotal in the American world for the whole of the century, and the determinative codes and modes of many movements developed in that period such as those of the Seventh-day Adventist church in which the authoritative role of Ellen White meandered right into the 20th century. In the mainline Protestant world of the era, before the 19th century, the emphasis was mainly on two of the foursome of God's grand acts, namely that of creation and reconciliation, underemphasising renewal and God's future directed fulfilment acts. In the early part of the 19th century the pendulum swung to the other two grand acts of God, renewal through the Spirit and the future fulfilment of everything in the new heaven and the new earth. The main questions were 'What happen to me now in this life and in the afterlife when I have died?' and, secondly, 'What happen to me before and after the second coming of Christ?'

Many delved deep into themselves in the beginning of the 19th century in the New World as a hangover from a strong Calvinist election directed rhetoric to ascertain whether they were elected in Christ. The anxiety and uncertainty created by a view in which one's will does not come into action on its own in the decision about one's salvation, can be linked to levels of widespread anxiety caused mainly by emerging industrialisation and urbanisation expressed in struggles around issues such as slavery, women's rights and health reform. The development of waterways and railways thereby expressing the fact that the United States became a coast-to-

coast continent with an exploding immigrant population, and increasing riches provided by land availability completes a variegated picture of anxiety and uncertainty. The picture is somewhat blurred because on the other hand, the same burgeoning Industrial Revolution which created anxiety and uncertainty also created new hope of a better millennium and new life. The creation of machine tools, locomotives, textile manufacture, and river transportation was expressive of a capitalist economy which fed on overblown hopes of greater expansion and progress. This hope was also translated in a feeling that things could only get better and that in the sense of millennial hopes things will be settled soon.

In this era millennium views appeared in abundance but amongst a large group of American the prevailing views of a-millennialism and post-millennialism of Calvinist America had to a large degree been subverted and replaced by pre-millennialism. What is of special importance is that the Calvinist overbearing notion of prophecy as just a strict explication and application of the Word of God in the present world has also been replaced by the supernatural acts of prophecy and visions as part of many emerging groups' experiences. In the majority of instances the pre-condition for acts of prophecy and visions was that they be strongly linked, vindicated and affirmed by the Bible.

The Millerite Movement, emerging at the end of Finney's 1830's revivalism, challenged the theologies of the day and replaced *a*-millennialist and *post*-millennialist approaches with *pre*-millennialism, holiness groups proliferated, supernatural acts of prophecy and visions were viewed as part of many of the emerging groups and were widespread and mirroring fundamentalism of the special sort in which biblical history is viewed as a divine-historical template for the whole of history from creation to fulfilment, from Genesis to Revelation was developed to counter the inroads made by Enlightenment's theologians. An incisive scrutiny of the period between 1750 and 1844 - the year of the Great Disappointment, was experienced by thousands of people because Christ's did not come for the second time on October, 22nd 1844 as was predicted by Miller. That Disappointment revealed a very unusual interest in the second coming of Christ. Miller intensively and incisively studied the Bible for two years which brought him to the conclusion that the Bible was its own interpreter, and that the prophecies about time and temporality expressed in Daniel and Revelation ought to be paid special attention.

Apocalyptic prophecy was at the order of the day particularly, between 1798 and 1844, the years that were said to fulfil the 1260 and 2300 days - understood as years - prophecies respectively (Daniel 7 and 8; Revelation 12). The sweeping logic that swept globally through the whole preceding period before 1844 was that the world was on the brink of great apocalyptic events that were to happen soon. It is further demonstrated thereby that dozens of biblical commentators of different church traditions all over the world of four continents, predicted that the prophecy of the 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 by many, were understood as years which would be fulfilled sometime between 1843 and 1847 (Froom 1946-1954a; 1946-1954b). Miller's extensive reading about the time in which he was living and history in general brought him to a historical-interpretive rule of reading the Bible, concluding that, although the prophets frequently spoke in figurative language, their predictions were fulfilled by literal historical events. So, by linking up the 2300 days/years of Daniel 8:14 with the 70 weeks (490 years) of Daniel 9:24-27, he concluded that both periods had begun about 457 B.C. By 1818, he became convinced that the 2300-days to be understood as years' prophecy would be fulfilled in about 25 years, and that Christ would come visibly and literally.

Miller had concluded that the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of in Daniel 8:14 had to mean the cleansing of the earth and of the church, since no earthly sanctuary existed since AD 70. The means of such cleansing, based on 2 Peter 3:7, he derived it to be by fire. So, he assumed that the cleansing of the earth by fire could only mean the Second Coming. Obviously, then, the thousand years of peace and prosperity that pervaded the optimistic prophetic apocalypicians of early 19th century America, could not come *before* the coming of Christ, but *after* it. 'The world and all the wicked will be burnt up,' Miller wrote, '(not annihilated) and then Christ will descend and reign personally with his Saints; and at the end of the 1000 years the wicked will be raised, judged and sent to everlasting punishment' (in Knight 1993:17).

Instead of the 'Great Expected Second Coming of Christ', the 'Great Disappointment' was at the order of the day 22nd of October 1844. Many factions emerged after the great disappointment amongst the Millerites and Adventists in general. Ellen G. White, at the time, found her amidst some of these groups.

In her early days, Ellen White, between the ages of 16 and 20, was caught up with the expected frenzy of an intense, Wesleyan experience first, followed by an Adventist one made up of individuals—those who survived the Great Disappointment—who were thoroughly convinced God had led them to new concepts of truth. Confirmation of her calling came by supernatural means. There was a meeting of Millerites at her home in early 1845, where people came to earnestly pray for her and the burden she faced. While they prayed, something impressive took place. She recounted the incident:

While prayer was offered for me, that the Lord would give me strength and courage to bear the message, the thick darkness that had encompassed me rolled back, and a sudden light came upon me. Something that seemed to me like a ball of fire struck me right over the heart. My strength was taken away, and I fell to the floor. I seemed to be in the presence of the angels. One of these holy beings again repeated the words, “Make known to others what I have revealed to you.

(White [1915] 1943:71)

Some had opposed her in the past, including a John Pearson, respected by the Adventists of those days. Pearson who experienced this occurrence said in the gathering:

I have seen a sight such as I never expected to see. A ball of fire came down from heaven, and struck Sister Ellen Harmon right on the heart. *I saw it! I saw it!* I can never forget it. It has changed my whole being. Sister Ellen, have courage in the Lord. After this night I will never doubt again. We will help you henceforth, and not discourage you.

(White [1915] 1943:71)

Sister Ellen, as many called her, had numerous visions in the first few years, directly after the Great Disappointment, most of them eschatological in nature, in view of the concern, had by the Millerites at that time. For the most part, her visions did not present new doctrine, but served to strengthen faith and correct misunderstandings taught by the ‘spiritualisers’ and other fringe, fanatical groups. In this sense Ellen White’s visions were through the years from the early years not to be seen as a separate source and exploration area for new divine truths that went beyond the historicity of God’s historical timeline of divine truths and events from Genesis to Revelation in the Judeo-Christian Bible. In this, all the Judeo-Christian Bible became a history book in a special sense specifically because of the emerging features of inerrancy and infallibility it gradually attained. The Bible has become the exploration and source book that actually and

virtually expresses God's historical events as divine truths which are to be mirrored in society and science and only to be accepted and appropriated by them.

2.2.1.2 The backdrop of White's salvation-historical approach

For our purpose, however, it will suffice to trace generally not only the main religious and philosophical trends, but also parts of the socio-political and economic trajectories of the 18th and 19th century New World that influenced Ellen G. White. However, we must recognize the attempts made in trying to pin down precisely all the factors that determined the 'what' and the 'how' of the total turn-around from the 16th century Reformation's emphasis on the range of God's grand acts as mainly revolving around God's act of creation and reconciliation to the early 19th century experience of being in awe with God's act of reconciliation especially regarding the certainty of Christ's indwelling in a human person, while underemphasizing God's act of renewal in the Spirit with a direct link with God's future and fulfilment act which begins with the second coming of Christ. The strong emphasis in history on God's act of renewal in and through the Spirit came to its true fruition at the turn of 19th century to the 20th century in the Pentecostalist and Charismatic experiences. These in one sense found its full concentration in the Asuza street events from 1906-1916 in Los Angeles.

Similar, to Calvin but different, God's grand act of renewal through the Holy Spirit is underemphasised. Calvin worked with God's grand acts of creation and God's act of the reconciling mediatorship in Christ, which is central in his sense making approach. White's main emphasis is on God's act of reconciliation in Christ and God's fulfilment in Christ's second coming. In both the Holy Spirit's role is closely demarcated to 'inner illumination' for the believer to read the Bible sensibly and the Bible itself is formatted from start to finish through the Holy Spirit and to bring Christ to the believer. The Holy Spirit's main role is that of opener of the sense of the Bible through illumination within oneself as well as being the Godly inspirer of the minds of the writers and composers of the Bible books in a special sense and inspiring people in a general sense regarding their writings, sayings and doings in the world of the arts, sciences, jurisprudence and politics. In White the Spirit, which was mainly called 'it' in many of her works viewed the Spirit as working in the inner illumination for reading the Bible, as the formatter of divine history in the divine historical timeline of the Bible and as the 'guider' and

‘provider’ of visions in the prophetic sense of White as a messenger of God. The divine historical template that the Bible provides is revolving, looping and spiralling within itself while it is at the same time a virtual history of the person who is taken up and is part of the history. Calvin and White’s under-emphasis of the grand act of renewal in the Spirit in which the Spirit of God makes intercession for us and the whole of creation with ‘groanings which cannot be uttered’ as described in Romans 8:18-27 presents us with methodological difficulties. One of which is that various Calvinists and Seventh-day Adventists regard the under-emphasis as a strong point of their respective positions in which the centrality of the grand act of God’s reconciliation in Christ is strengthened and undergirded by the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit as the elusive X factor we should not try to grasp.

In addition the Calvinist emphasis mainly on God’s acts of creation and its central point in reconciliation in Christ with and coupled with the theory that one can be totally certain of one’s election through the strategy a ‘practical syllogism’ by the Puritans as continuators of the Calvinist tradition. Sthrehle points to the basis of the practical syllogism:

The faith and works of one’s salvation experience became signs through which a true believer could discern his relationship to Christ’s promises and his election before the Father. It was all a simple deduction: ‘Every one that believes is the child of God: But I do believe: Therefore I am the child of God.’

(Sthrehle 1995:38)

The train of thought in the latter string of sentences is from William Perkins (1558-1602) the foremost of all Puritan theologians who considered it a sacred duty that one should examine one’s position in faith as a matter of continuous experience by looking at the ‘signs’ and ‘marks’ thereby becoming aware of the certainty of one’s experience of being elected (Sthrehle 1995:41). The whole procedure of delving in the experience of the self became part and parcel of one side of the Puritan experience in the New World. The other side of Puritanism is the famous formalist attitude of obedience to the law of God.

Puritanism with its Calvinist English and Lutheran German Pietist roots determined to a large extent the sense-making logic of the America of the 18th and 19th century in the double sense of delving experientially in the subjective world of the self, while simultaneously reacting against such a subjective way of doing by adhering and propagating a formalist attitude of obedience to

the law of God. Without the obedience to the law of God one cannot live before the glorious countenance of God. The formalist side expressed overbearing seriousness about the things of God for and by ordinary people. In addition the strategy of viewing the Bible as the exploration area of Bible gradually turned the Bible into an inerrant and infallible template for daily life through the validation and enhancement of laws in the Old Testament to universal divine societal demarcation points and markers. However, the one side of the Puritan mind amounts to a disparaging of the absence of religious experience in Puritans who one-sidedly worked along the lines of law obedience, calling it ‘formalism.’

In the 18th century the inner experience line of Puritanism and Pietism moved in a strange way through the Arminian branch of Calvinism to John Wesley. The accepted practice of viewing the place of Arminius and his followers in the Calvinist research as un-, non- or even anti-Calvinist could be viewed as an exclusive preserve of a more Calvinist orthodox historical perspective on the history of Calvinism.

In the 18th century Jonathan Edwards’ (1703-58) strong Calvinistic preaching led to the revival movement known as the Great Awakening, along with George Whitefield (1714-70) a Methodist preacher in America whose preaching was strongly Calvinist, in contrast to the English John Wesley (1703-91) and Charles Wesley’s (1707-88) Arminian viewpoints taken over from the ‘left’ side of Calvinism relieving themselves from the election inclined views of Edwards and Whitefield. The whole movement began on the two continents as preaching to the masses, seeing immediate results of conversion and surrender in their midst and excessive enthusiasm or hysteria that was often manifested by those claiming to be converted. Edwards especially disapproved of the excessive enthusiasm (Bakhuizen, van den Brink & Dankbaar 1968:40-41). His optimistic theology of peace and prosperity largely influenced American Christianity to embrace post-millennial views of progress in society before the second coming of Christ strongly not imminent and of which no signs of the time are available to us.

Ellen White, as a teenager, and her family, belonged to the Methodist church in the early 19th century and the holiness tradition of Methodism played an important role in her context. The preceding 18th century happenings such as the Great Awakening was preparation for the world in which White lived with the Adventist overtones of pre-millennial expectations amongst the

Millerite movement which followed the era of Revivalism, championed by Charles Finney which came to end in the 1830's. In the preceding 18th century a 'Calvinist' revival movement led by Edwards and Whitefield impacted strongly on the early 19th century decline of Calvinism with a simultaneous upsurge of Arminian viewpoints in which one could decide for oneself whether to accept or reject Christ and broad experiences of prophecy as supernatural acts of God simultaneously a discrediting of naturalist deist experience of divine natural laws that just continued without intervention from God (McLoughlin 1974:141).

In the 19th century the 18th exploration of the self, looking for knowledge of certitude about what one feels and believes, produced vast areas of incertitude and anxiety in people's experience in a society that became more and more directed to development and change in the future. In the early part of the 19th century many people delved deep into themselves to ascertain whether they were elected in Christ. Instead, according to McLoughlin (1974:131) they decided that God had given man the ability, the freedom of the will, to understand his fallen state, to repent of his sins, and to turn to Christ for help and salvation.

Another dimension of the world in which Ellen White was located was the Revivalist mode that swept through large parts of North America of the early 1900's in which pre-millennial notions were bandied about as if they were invented in the period. The Millerite Movement, emerging at the end of Finney's 1830's revivalism, challenged the theologies of the day and replaced *a*-millennialist and *post*-millennialist approaches with *pre*-millennialism, holiness groups proliferated, supernatural acts of prophecy and visions were viewed as part of many of the emerging groups and were widespread and mirroring fundamentalism of the special sort in which biblical history is viewed as a divine historical template for the whole of history from creation to fulfilment, from Genesis to Revelation, developed to counter the inroads made by Enlightenment's theologians.

The strong sense-making logic of Deism of the 17th and 18th century solely emphasising God's grand act of creation as the beginning and setting in motion of a natural process proceeding and running smoothly according to natural laws according to divine plan proved not to be shock resistant against the impact of the events such as that were viewed as supernatural events or cosmic signs. Some of these events the London earthquake in 1751, Lisbon earthquake of 1755,

the Dark Day of 19 May 1780 and other historical events created an apocalyptic atmosphere of anxiety in the New World that in such a situation only God could help (Damsteegt [1957] 1977:25).

As part of the general apocalyptic atmosphere a positive apocalyptic trajectory emerged around the notion of biblical apocalyptic prophecy and the imminent second coming of Christ. The notion of prophecy was strongly on the lips of many people, books on prophecy were published and conferences about prophecy and the coming of the Messiah in glory and majesty were held (From 1946-1954a:263-703). Edward Irving appended to the report from the first Albury Prophetic Conference of 1826. The work generated quite a stir in Europe and Latin America. Among British clergymen, Irving formed the Society for the Investigation of Prophecy, which met regularly to study 'the speedy coming of our Lord.'

Against this background, the Millerite movement at the beginning of the 19th century is to be viewed as a continuation and culmination of an international awakening regarding prophecy and the second coming of Christ which started in the 18th century, especially the latter part round 1798, which some took to be the fulfilment of the 1'260-day/year prophecy (Daniel 7 and 8; Revelation 12). The indwelling of Christ now presently in someone and Christ's imminent coming for the second time was strongly encapsulated in the sphere of biblical apocalyptic prophecy, as supernatural acts of God's children leading adherents to believe in the literal, visible soon coming of Christ to earth.

On the one hand, linking this view to the levels of widespread anxiety caused mainly by emerging industrialisation and urbanisation and the development of waterways and railways, the picture of anxiety and uncertainty is somewhat blurred. On the other hand, the burgeoning Industrial Revolution with the creation of machine tools, locomotives, textile manufacture, and river transportation was expressive of a capitalist economy which fed on blown up hopes of greater expansion and progress. This hope was also translated in a feeling that things could only get better and that in the sense of millennial hopes things will be settled soon.

Although the North American Protestantism of the 19th century was a child of the 16th century Reformation, the Adventism of the 1840's can be identified more closely with many of the

notions brought forward by the Radical Reformation of the 16th century. The Radical Reformation called by some writers the ‘Left-side’ of the Reformation comprised of persons with diverse sense-making approaches to life and society such as Andreas Karlstadt (1480-1541) – a radical reformer who was the one who wanted to push through radical reforms in Wittenberg around 1521, fell out with Luther and was banned because of iconoclastic riots. Thomas Müntzer (1468-1525) – turned against Luther’s notion of justification by faith, the belief in the Bible as ‘faith stolen from the Bible’, regarded himself as a prophet and wanted to establish a community of reborn saints and Caspar von Schwenckfeld (1489-1561) – mystical in approach in that one has to transcend one’s sinful creatureliness and by traveling in a spiritual way become one with the heavenly Christ (Bakhuizen, van den Brink & Dankbaar 1967:97-99). The whole Radical Reformation never seemed to make an impact on later mainline church history but a list of their notions such as adult baptism, prophecy, the notion that one should solely be led by the Holy Spirit, the inclination of establishing the imminent Kingdom of God in one’s life time and to a lesser extent the reception of visions by certain members of a community permeated nearly all evangelical denominations of the 19th and 20th century (Knight 2000:30).

The mainline Reformers developed the idea of the centrality of Christ as *solus Christus* in alignment with the notion of Scripture alone as *sola scriptura*, which was seen as the sole exploration area where meaning and significance could be experienced in time and eternity. However, they still retained beliefs such as infant baptism, strong church discipline regarding the truth and in Luther’s instance the notion that the state is to support the church. They further underemphasized the powerful biblical way of doing in the present era, namely of prophecy. The 16th century Reformers, Calvin and Zwingli, viewed prophecy in the present era as the exposition and the preaching of Bible as the Word of God.

In this New World, the drive to go back to prime sources of Christianity became known as the Restorationist Movement or Primitivism – seeking the first roots. In many instances starting with the Puritan era in the Americas this harking back to the sources was simultaneously a return to the impact of the Reformation with its new emphasis on the underlying historical character of the Bible from beginning to end and was the beginning of an elevated form of divine history embodied and embedded in the text of the Bible as a series of divine events. Partially, the restoration emphasis in the 18th and 19th century on the divine historical character of the biblical

events was also a vehement reaction to the historical-critical historicist strategy of making the Reformation's emphasis of the historical character of the Bible even more historical in a human sense. The heavier load of embodying more of divine history into the events of the Bible in the Restoration Movement, provides the following underlying sense making argumentation for the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible: If the Bible is divine history from beginning to end, then the Bible regarding its human form in words and sentences has to be inerrant and infallible.

Moreover, the following also has to be emphasised, namely, the Reformation's central notion of mercy and grace, forgiveness and justification in Christ, the emphasis of more earthly worldly significance and meaning of religion in one's daily life and last but not least, the Reformation's *coup d'etat* of opening the Bible to the common person as both accessible to everyone as well as accessible in everyone's vernacular. Restorationists sought to continue the 16th century Reformation until faithfulness to Scripture and the defeat of tradition, were accomplished. Getting back to the Bible was paramount and its spirit deeply influenced early Adventists.

A very influential strand making up the context necessary to Ellen White's two prong approach of the indwelling of the now, the present – indwelling of Jesus in one's life and Jesus in his imminent Second coming is to a certain extent a coupling of Methodism with the pre-millennial expectations of the Millerite Adventist movement. Next to the acknowledged Calvinist puritan heritage of a large number of Americans in the 18th and 19th century, Methodism is undoubtedly the other leg of the American heritage and was a great source of influence in New England. In and through the Holiness Movement of Methodism which emphasised 'the indwelling of Jesus' in the believer and the last vestiges of Puritan approach which often has been spoken of as 'the indwelling of the Spirit' by Jonathan Edwards laid the table for a variety of 19th century movements (Nuttall 1947:49).

The tension between the 'indwelling of Jesus' and the 'indwelling of the Spirit' as an either/or experience or a both/and experience became part of Pentecostal and Charismatic experience in the 20th century. The Methodist Movement provided the greatest influence on religious life, next to Puritanism which on the other hand presented later history with strong clues regarding the notion of the 'indwelling of the Spirit'. The emphasis on experiential religion changed Christianity in the New World until this day. In this sense Methodism brought forth the Holiness

Movement from which Pentecostal movement emerged and which in turn gave birth to the Charismatic Renewal of the last half of the 20th century.

The tension between the ‘indwelling of Jesus’ and the ‘indwelling of the Spirit’ in the early Adventist experience worked itself out regarding holiness, sanctification and growth in godliness towards the imminent second coming of Christ as a choice for either of two options or even for both simultaneously: Is holiness and sanctification acquired through the act of ‘a second blessing’ by the Spirit in addition to the ‘indwelling of Jesus’ already being effectuated through conversion experience in the believer? Or is the ‘indwelling of the Spirit’ in the believer a ‘sign’ and ‘mark’ of the ‘conversion’ of the believer that he or she is continuously focussed through obedience on the crucified and resurrected Jesus whose reconciliatory work underlies the ascending step by step acquirement of holiness and fuller and fuller blossoming of sanctification again through guidance of the Spirit? The first option is the Methodist holiness trajectory that spilled over in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in the 20th century in whose ambience White was born and raised, in a Methodist Episcopal home. The second option is the Calvinist-Reformed trajectory which also had an influence on Ellen White, especially regarding the immense emphasis that is placed on obedience in terms of the law to God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. The two trajectories from the Jesus to the Spirit and from the Spirit to Jesus are not mutually exclusive but are to be approached as both valid and inclusive (Nigrini [2006] 2007:22-25).

Puritanism with its ‘indwelling of the Spirit’ notion delivered a more evangelical flavoured Calvinism to the New World and Wesley’s Methodism which aligned itself with the Calvinian anti-Calvinist Arminius of the beginning of the 17th century which delivered an even stronger evangelical flavoured Gospel which contributed to terminate Puritan influence in New England by the end of the 18th century (Olson 1999:494-95). In a strange way what the progressive Arminius and his Remonstrant followers could not do in Holland, they succeeded in doing through Wesley by breaking the stronghold of more orthodox Calvinism in the New World. Loughborough ([1905] 1972:35-6), a contemporary of White describes the impact of the Methodist emphasis of the proclamation of the doctrine of free grace carried by the power of God. As this doctrine was presented to people with the tender love of Christ people grasped it by

living faith and found remission of past sins and were enabled through a sanctifying power to lead a life of holiness. Loughborough ends the description by saying:

Methodism had a humble beginning, and was blessed according to the faith and simple trust of the ministry and laity.

(Loughborough [1905] 1972:36)

The emphasis on a ‘second blessing’ experience of the Holiness movement and the emphasis on ‘obedience to the law through faith’ of the Calvinist Puritan era play a strong role in the writings, sayings and doings of the early as well as the more mature Ellen G. White. Both trajectories became so pervasive in the 19th and 20th century so much so that various churches of today are structured around the main sense-making values and markers of each trajectory.

In the circle of early 19th century Adventists the notion of rationality and thinking in America revolved around the natural condition and abilities of human beings, commonly called natural reason and the supernatural realm of faith as hovering somewhere in the human mind as an inserted ‘new’ condition through God’s grace in someone’s experience. In the experience of natural reason, very little of God played a role except for the insight that reason is a gift from God’s creation that runs as a human faculty and ability according to common natural rules of the mind.

The early sense making experience of Adventists comprises a double-sided view of a human being. A human being, on the one hand, is someone endowed with natural reason as an area in which God is not intervening while God is sustaining the natural laws according to which the rational part of the mind is working. On the other hand, the same human being is experiencing within a realm of religious faith of the mind of God as intervening and working directly in a supernatural way.

The widely accepted approach of Deism since the early 18th century played a role in the Old World as well as in the New World. In the Deistic scheme, God, whose operational ability is located totally with creation at the beginning, limited himself thus without the powers to intervene in his own set of natural laws, abolished the supernatural faith realm of experience in which God operates and intervenes, supernaturally. We have to be aware that the very old double-sided approach of a natural and a supernatural realm of experience in a human being is

intrinsically part of Roman Catholic, Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist, Puritan and early Adventist experience. The sense-making differences are found in the specific and particular way in how deep and wide and what the quality of the dualism is between the natural and supernatural realms. In Roman Catholicism the duality is very deep and wide spelled out as a sacramental-sacred realm on the one hand and as a natural profane realm on the other hand. Both these realms cannot operate without the others. In the Puritan Calvinist experience the duality is viewed as particular and general, grace and nature, realm of experience of God's grace in Christ and realm of experience of God the Father as creator.

William Miller, the originator of the Adventist Movement, was for many years a Deist who, upon conversion, decided to do systematic Bible study with a rational approach which amounted to proceeding no faster than the meaning of the verses would allow, and whenever an obscure passage would arise, his practice became to compare it with all collateral passages with the help of a concordance. He would refrain from reading outside help such as that of commentaries. He called his experience a 'feast of reason' (Miller 1845:6;12). Miller's phrase a 'feast of reason' should be viewed as a departure away from Deism and as a re-introduction of the supernatural/natural scheme in a very particular way. Especially his harmonising of inconsistencies with regard to the Bible was expressive of a view that divine history was embodied and embedded in the Bible which has directly a literal historical impact on the history of the world people live. In line with his newly accepted supernatural/natural scheme in which he experienced the power of Jesus his saviour, thus an experience of the divine in the human being he wanted to harmonise all the apparent contradictions in the Bible because these contradictions cannot have validity in a book that is the embodiment of divine history.

Miller without being expressly aware operated in his study of Scripture with the two main principles of the Calvinist Reformation, that firstly the Scripture in spite of various non-historical books, is representing from Genesis to Revelation a divine historical timeline which one has to follow in ones reflecting so as to be historically relevant in the present age. Secondly, in comparing Scripture with Scripture, Scripture is its own interpreter. Thus, unclear passages must be interpreted in the light of clear passages. One has to remember that Miller was brought up in a Baptist environment where the sense-making ideas of Puritan theology still played a role and was still a Baptist after his conversion experience. In his study of the Bible while refusing to

make use of commentaries he allowed himself the use of the English Bible and ‘Cruden’s Concordance.’

After two years of diligent study of the bible Miller came up with his principles of reading and interpreting of the Bible:

I laid by all commentaries, former views and prepossessions, and determined to read and try to understand. I then began the reading of the Bible in a methodical manner; and by comparing scripture with scripture, and taking notice of the manner of prophesying and how it was fulfilled, I found that prophecy had been literally fulfilled....I found, on a close and careful examination of the Scriptures, that God had explained all the figures and metaphors in the Bible, or had given us rules for their explanation....And I discovered that God had in His Word revealed ‘times and seasons’; and in every case where time had been revealed every event was accomplished as predicted....in the time and manner; therefore I believed all would be accomplished...

(Himes 1842:12)

In Miller’s long quotation, the two main assumptions of his understanding of Scripture is expressed by stating firstly that ‘God had explained all the figures and metaphors in the Bible, or had given us rules for their explanation’ and secondly, his method of treating Scripture with a divine historical timeline of ‘times and seasons’ that God had revealed ‘and in every case where time had been revealed every event was accomplished as predicted...in the time and manner; therefore I believed all would be accomplished...’ The last part of the sentence that he ‘believed that all would be accomplished’ refers to the imminent Second coming of Jesus. This is in general carried by the acceptance of the Bible as manifestation of divine history which literally impacts on the history of the world around us and created a divine historical reflection sphere through which ‘times and seasons’ are revealed in the biblical historical timeline. The underlying assumption is that, ‘real and genuine history’ is the divine history embodied in the words and sentences of the Bible. The ‘real and genuine history,’ through the times and seasons revealed in the Bible, should in some instances and could in other instances, operate as a divine template for historical events and views outside the realm of biblical divine history.

The early Adventist, were aware that unless they surrendered themselves fully to God’s Spirit, they would not be dynamic and would become stagnant in a sort of a static approach. Hence they studied the scriptures together and often fasted so that they could receive clarity of insight in

understanding hidden treasures in God's Word. In describing that spirit in which the foundation of the Adventist truth was established, White wrote:

We would come together burdened in soul, praying that we might be one in faith and doctrine; for we knew that Christ is not divided. One point at a time was made the subject of investigation. The Scriptures were opened with a sense of awe. Often we fasted, that we might be better fitted to understand the truth. After earnest prayer, if any point was not understood it was discussed, and each one expressed his opinion freely; then we would again bow in prayer, and earnest supplications went up to heaven that God would help us to see eye to eye, that we might be one as Christ and the Father are one. Many tears were shed. We spent many hours in this way. Sometimes the entire night was spent in solemn investigation of the Scriptures, that we might understand the truth for our time. On some occasions the Spirit of God would come upon me, and difficult portions were made clear through God's appointed way, and then there was perfect harmony. We were all of one mind and one spirit. We sought most earnestly that the Scriptures should not be wrested to suit any man's opinions. We tried to make our differences as slight as possible by not dwelling on points that were of minor importance, upon which there were varying opinions. But the burden of every soul was to bring about a condition among the brethren which would answer the prayer of Christ that His disciples might be one as He and the Father are one.

(White, AL 1985:147-148)

The reality is that in spite of all of that effort, sometimes meetings would not always be peaceful and harmonious. There are those times when some held to their stubborn position and their own cherished opinions based on personal reasons. The difference is enshrined in the spirit of humility, selflessness and absolute yielding to God control and ultimate revelation. White wrote about this:

Sometimes one or two of the brethren would stubbornly set themselves against the view presented, and would act out the natural feelings of the heart; but when this disposition appeared, we suspended our investigations and adjourned our meeting, and without conversation with others, study the point of difference, seeking light from heaven. With expressions of friendliness we parted, to meet again as soon as possible for further investigation....At times the power of God came upon us in a marked manner, and when clear light revealed the points of truth, we would weep and rejoice together. We loved Jesus; we loved one another.

(White, AL 1985:148)

The approach of employing divine history as set in the Bible as a template to evaluate and described history outside the biblical timeline of divine history was continued by the early Seventh-day Adventists in their exploration of Biblical truths. White in her prophetic pastoral approach in a similar sense reacted against the classic speculative approaches, but what is of importance regarding her era is that she reacted also against what she viewed as the speculative scientific patterning in sciences that transcend the divine biblical historical timeline with a scientific and secular alternative portrayal of the age and the origin of the earth.

2.3 Epilogue

Calvin and White albeit in different ways and different centuries operate with a strong awareness that the timeline of the Bible is expressive of divine history that is embodied and embedded in the Bible. Calvin and White in being engaged in concrete reflection on the reflecting on the divine history and historicity of the Bible meandered between literal-grammatical and literal-interpretative ways of reading the Bible. As demonstration how strong the influence of the 16th century Calvinist Reformation permeated the 19th century, White's description of the Millerite hermeneutics in *The Great Controversy* in 1888 is directly in line with her own meandering between a literal-grammatical and Calvinist literal-interpretative way of engaging the Biblical text:

Endeavoring to lay aside all preconceived opinions, and dispensing with commentaries he [Miller] compared scripture with scripture by the aid of the marginal references and the concordance. He pursued his study in a regular and methodical manner; beginning with Genesis, and reading verse by verse, he proceeded no faster than the meaning of the several passages so unfolded as to leave him free from all embarrassment. When he found anything obscure, it was his custom to compare it with every other text which seemed to have any reference to the matter under consideration. Every word was permitted to have its proper bearing upon the subject of the text, and if his view of it harmonized with every collateral passage, it ceased to be a difficulty. Thus whenever he met with a passage hard to be understood he found an explanation in some other portion of the Scriptures. As he studied with earnest prayer for divine enlightenment that which had before appeared dark to his understanding was made clear. He experienced the truth of the psalmist's words: 'The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple'(Ps119:130).

([1888]1990a:320)

CHAPTER 3

God's grand acts as divine history embedded in the Bible

3.1 God's grand acts open to speculative or biblical reflection?

3.1.1 Introduction

The phenomenon of the belief that by virtually inserting oneself or ones community into the different eras and contexts of the Old and New Testament, one is directly experiencing the presence of God, while divine history is in the making, can be ascribed to the way people make sense of how the scriptural texts are telling us of these eras and contexts have been written and composed. Were these texts written and composed by people in the normal way of telling stories of what happened in their lives or were these people inspired by God's Spirit, to write these stories through their own individual sense-making experiences, or were God's Spirit self the writer and oral composer of these stories by moving the tongue and the pen in the hand of the human speaker and write?. In the era since the Reformation of the 16th century, an overwhelming number of approaches of how people and communities make sense of the divine history in which God has been directly involved emerged. The majority of Christians believe that God was the direct author and player in the divine history and that in the Old and the New Testament the living God of the whole of history was and is still making history for the salvation of people in the world while simultaneously managing the whole of world history (Guthrie 1960:3-13).

God made and makes history through the timeline expressed in the divine history through which God made himself known by God creating everything long ago, letting or not letting people fall into sin, God providing the salvific solution for humanity and nature in Jesus Christ, God again making history by providing the continuous renewing guidance through the Holy Spirit for people and that God finally drawing people to the end of the timeline in the fulfilment of the new heaven and the new earth.

Broadly two directions were taken by people and their communities who inserted themselves as partakers of the divine history into the timeline of divine history of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment in the new heaven and new earth. The first direction is that of the Roman Catholic approach which saw themselves to such an extent as a continuation of the divine history of the First Testament – Old Testament for non-Catholics – and the Second Testament - New Testament for non-Catholics - that they are not only a continuation from the beginning of God's act of creation but also a total care-giving representation of the timeline of divine history into and after the fulfilment of the end of time. The other direction which is propagated by the more Protestant inclined way of making sense in the modern era is expressed therein that the Judeo-Christian Bible from Genesis to Revelation is the total, full and sufficient exploration area where the sense of divine salvation history couched in natural human history is readily available and obtainable in a clear sense.

The type of historicity that covers Calvin and White's views of the Old Testament and the New Testament is expressed in the continuous fusion of divine and supernatural historical acts and events interposed in human and natural historical acts and events of the salvation-historical timeline of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. According to Vos (1906:299) the biblical timeline of supernatural historical events can be intrinsically characterised as salvation-historical, soteriological and evangelical. The extensive exposition given by Vos regarding supernatural biblical revelation as 'on principle inseparable from a background of historic facts' could aptly be applied to both Calvin and White's views (Vos 1906:299-300). A two level scheme of historicity is at work in the evolvement of the salvation-historical timeline in which continuous divine historical interpositions are manifested in the course of natural evolvement of biblical history. The difference between Calvin and White regarding their approaches of a double sense of historicity, historical and historic facts and events within the biblical timeline is not of quality but of degree and emphasis.

Although the latter approach originates from the time of early Christianity, John Calvin was one of a diverse group of 16th century Reformers who finally established and affirmed the Judeo-Christian Bible as exploration area for the full and sufficient, clear and easily to be made sense of Book that according to them depicted divine history for people's salvation in time and eternity. Though Calvin as well as Luther and Zwingli were avowed advocates of the complete range of

God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment they far more than was necessary, emphasised God's grand acts of creation and reconciliation. On the other hand, Ellen G. White as one of another diverse group of 19th century prophetic Reformers in an era of high modernism, followed partially in the footsteps of Calvin and Luther. While giving the phenomenon of divine history expressed in the Bible a higher concentration and intensification quality in the 19th century she simultaneously shifted the emphasis to the grand acts of reconciliation and fulfilment both revolving in and around Christ. It is significant that White's central point was Jesus Christ as present indwelling Lord and as the imminent second coming of Christ as God's glorious future (Damsteegt [1957] 1977:13-16; Plantak 1998:39).

3.1.2 Calvin and White's challenges

Both Calvin and White express in fairly consistent ways the types of Biblical timeline and salvation-historical approaches they employ in their faith reflection. Generally speaking, in operation in most of their works are the explicit and implicit Biblical denotation of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation (redemption) through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's wholesome renewal process 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 their sense-making approaches through different emphasis and ways of working differ considerably in some areas and overlap largely in other areas. What could be reckoned as one of the strong overlapping areas is their emphasis on a salvation-historical framework played out as divine history embodied and embedded in a divine historical timeline of the Judaeo-Christian Bible. Furthermore, has the notion of a Trinitarian God any role to play in the extreme emphasis of Calvin and White on the biblical historical timeline?

The first challenge revolves around a radical emphasis on the notion of coherence that God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment are involved in each grand act of God. For many this may seem an unnecessary challenge because it goes without saying that in each, the grand acts of God human beings and the natural cosmic environment are involved. The first challenge in terms of the accepted approach is that one's faith pattern of coherent reflection should not operate on two separate levels into which one has insight which is not available to any other person around oneself. The question is whether the realms for reflection of Calvin and

White which are entrenched in the divine history embodied and embedded in the timeline of the four grand acts as portrayed in the Judeo-Christian Scripture allow for an extra divine level above the divine historical series of events in the biblical timeline they truthfully viewed themselves as being part of.

Moreover, do Calvin in his biblical patterns of faith reflection and White in her prophetic visionary reflection in combination with her faith reflection, on the biblical patterns have insight into such an extra divine level or realm hovering above the divine history as portrayed in the Bible they are part of? The construction of an extra level or realm for reflection above the biblical historical timeline was part of the fabric that the scholastics and speculative theology Calvin with his pastorally inclined theology, vehemently reacted against. Calvin states regarding the purpose of biblical history:

Indeed, the principal purpose of Biblical history is to teach that the Lord watches over the ways of the saints with such great diligence that they do not even stumble over a stone.

(Calvin [1559] 1960a:17)

The question is, why Calvin in his strong emphasis of the reflection realms of creation and reconciliation in his 'Institutes of the Christian Religion' accepted the notion of a Trinitarian God, which has the ground rule from early Augustinian neo-platonic scholastics to nearly always hover above the biblical divine historical timeline of the grand acts of God? Or in other instances, the construct of the trinity simultaneously precedes and transcends the four grand acts of God.

White in her prophetic pastoral approach in a similar sense reacted against the classic speculative approaches, but what is of importance regarding her era is that she reacted also against what she viewed as the speculative scientific patterning in sciences that transcend the biblical historical timeline viewed by her as set in motion and sustained by God solely. The best example of her emphasis on the biblical divine historical timeline is the ostensible neglect of the doctrine of the trinity in her writings, sayings and doings. In Seventh-day Adventist circles in a bid to be more readily accepted into mainline thinking regarding the trinity appeared to dither on the anti-speculative stance of White and early Seventh-day Adventists.

In the current debate Whidden regarding the early anti-speculative and anti-trinitarian stance of White and her husband asserts:

While it is hard to be dogmatic about the cause/effect relationships between the healing of Adventist Arian and anti-Trinitarian expressions and soteriological imbalance, there are a number of factors that seem to come into play....First of all, one does not get the feeling that there was a lot of self-conscious theological reflection which transpired in any scholastic/systematic way. It appears that these developments were really quite *ad hoc*, almost to the point of seeming 'providential.' What is clear, is that the Whites took the lead and they mainly seemed to draw their theological cues from their pastoral concerns regarding the low estate of the perceived spiritual experience of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. As they began to perceive that legalistic concerns had quite obscured the primacy of Christ as atoning sacrifice and justifying Saviour, they began to reflect practically on how to bring the movement back into a greater emphasis on the centrality of Christ and His atoning sacrifice. In other words, it was practical/theological concerns, primarily having to do with an out-of-balance theology that seemed to draw them to a more critical reflection having to do with the full deity of Christ.

(Whidden 1997:6)

Early Seventh-day Adventists rejected the notion of the trinity. The notion of the trinity did play a determinative undergirding role in Ellen White's reflection on the biblical historical timeline in the sense of being a divine operational tool for theological speculation of doctrinal reflection as it did play a role in many of the mainline churches and their theologies. Karl Barth's approach of the first two volumes of his Church Dogmatics on *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (1956 and 1975) is based on the notion of the trinity centrally expressed in Jesus Christ as the revelation of God. Barth makes his salvation-historical timeline operational by an underlying of God's acts of creation, renewal and fulfilment through an extremely Christ-centric revelational scheme of majestic theo-gnostic proportions.

The second challenge has revolved around the question of whether the Trinitarian notion of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit could be respectively linked with God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. Even if they could be linked God's fulfilment at the end of time has no place in the notion of a Trinitarian God. Moreover, is it still necessary to speak of a trinity hovering above God's grand acts creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment as designated by the Bible? By accepting and supporting the doctrine of the trinity Calvin did not

follow his main approach of strictly reflecting within the realm of the biblically designated grand acts of God each involving God, human beings and nature. The question is why Calvin in his strong emphasis of the reflection realms of creation and reconciliation in his Institutes of the Christian Religion accepted the notion of a Trinitarian God which as a ground rule of early Augustinian neo-platonic scholastics nearly always hovers above the biblical divine historical timeline of the four grand acts of God. White on the other hand in the 19th century lived in a world where the sense-making experience of the notion of the trinity had already been experienced as something far away from biblical history and the biblical historical salvific timeline. It is not a question of for followers of White whether she denied or fully embraced the notion of the trinity. The notion of the trinity to a large extent is not White's main operational hypothesis. Her emphasis on the divine historical timeline of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation made the doctrine of the trinity redundant in her writings. Ellen G. White and other Seventh-day Adventist members who totally underemphasised the notion of a Trinitarian God – some even rejected the trinity – were closer to the biblical historical timeline than the majority of mainline churches who confessed the notion of a trinity but in whose daily patterns of experience of their members played a tiny role.

The third challenge of Calvin and White has to do with the question whether they lay equal weight in their emphasis of the biblical historical timeline on all four of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal and fulfilment (consummation). In the Calvin's way of doing while working in terms of the salvation-historical mode, it seems as if his reflection gives more weight to God's acts of creation and reconciliation which gives his whole approach a strong towards the past. Admittedly, reconciliation (redemption) acquired to an extent the position of Calvin's present situation through the linkage with the Holy Spirit but all in all his whole approach concerning the biblical historical timeline has a leaning towards the past. It is only with the perpetual mediator interceding between God and human beings that the continuation with the future fulfilment is fully maintained. As Calvin's reflection was primarily directed at God's grand acts of creation and redemption, God's thought and will, pre-existing before creation, could only be read from creation - before and after the fall - and by which God determined through his will the structures of creation. Adam and Eve to a large extent viewed as historical figures by Calvin receive in this scheme a before and after treatment, in paradise before

falling into sin and especially after falling into sin which emerged as the determining factor causing the total depravity of all human beings. Every part of the biblical history is directed to the reconciliation in Christ as the mirror through which the determination procedures comes to light in people's lives. The main question was 'How am I saved?' and 'Who is saving me?' Thus, a person was asking whether he or she be saved by the Church with all its rituals or by God through Christ and endorsed by the Word of God. In this all the Judeo-Christian Bible became an authoritative divine source and history book that presented people with enough to know for this life and eternity. The Bible has become the exploration and source book that actually and virtually expresses God's historical events as divine truths which the Reformers such as Calvin reflect on as the light and guidance for their lives.

Regarding White in the section on the historical background earlier the point is made that the mainline Protestant world of the era before the 19th century placed the emphasis mainly on two of the foursome of God's grand acts, namely that of creation and reconciliation, underemphasising renewal and God's future directed fulfilment acts. In the early part of the 19th century the pendulum swung to the other two grand acts of God, renewal through the Spirit and the future fulfilment of everything in the new heaven and the new earth. It is only with the continuation and perpetual role of Christ's investigative judgement in the holy sanctuary that the continuation with the creation filled past is fully maintained.

The main question was 'What happens to me?' Firstly, in afterlife after I have died? Secondly, 'What happen to me before and after the second coming of Christ?' In this all the Judeo-Christian Bible became a history book in a special divine sense specifically because of the emerging features of inerrancy and infallibility it gradually attained in many of the groups in this era. The Bible has become the exploration and source book that actually and virtually expresses God's historical events as divine truths which are to be mirrored in society and science and only to be accepted and appropriated by them. That is to say if a society is a God-fearing society and a science is a genuine and real science looking for God's truth in creation.

The third challenge is trickier than the earlier two because it is in the nature of traditions and their followers that they would claim to advocate and propagate the most biblical, truthful and balanced position of all for their main ancestor and for their own position amongst those who are

earnestly engaged in concrete biblical reflection. Therefore to ask the question, to what extent are the four grand acts of God emphasised on a par and with equal weight in the work and writings of Calvin and White may seem grossly unfair to both their followers. What we are doing here is to portray their respective emphasis they have spelled out. Trying to detect whom of Calvin or White could be termed more biblical is not our main focus, but we have as our aim to described as many as possible sense-making intricacies, of both in the eras in which they lived.

3.2 Dialectics, scholastics and speculative theology

3.2.1 Scholastic and speculative theology

Calvin and White being described in the past, as not theologians in the real sense of the word, consistently defy the temptation to operate with three separate avenues for God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. Instead they give more satisfactorily expression of the mystery of the simultaneous connection and differentiation of God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment through their works.

In many instances, the theological and philosophical investigation and speculation on God, human beings and nature were formalised into highly abstract scholastic works such as that of the medieval scholastics. When such speculative constructs after the necessary struggle between protagonists of different schools entered the space of the church or church communities, these scholastic constructs acquire the status of ecclesial and divinely sanctioned doctrines, only to be slavishly accepted by followers.

Calvin and White, on the other hand, also seemed to have overcome the classic procedure of rigidly setting God, human beings and the natural cosmic world apart with the main aim of speculating and reflecting in a bi-focal way on the essence of either God or human beings or the natural world. The typical essence seeking procedure of medieval scholastics and current neo-orthodox schools of theology investigate the essence of God, a human being or the natural world without the intermediary role of the events and processes of history and the doings and actions of human beings.

While they have largely overcome the simultaneous strong scholastic separation of a bifocal nature of God, human beings and the natural world Calvin and White respectively do portray each in their own way a dialectic of some sort between God's transcendence and God's immanence, God and being human and worldly, divine history of the biblical timeline and world history, and eternal and the finite temporal levels of making sense.

The speculative treatment of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world is aligned with the typical approach of the Mediaeval Scholastics of vigorously and speculatively investigating the essence of God as 'God is in God self' in separation from God as 'God is for us.' God's power, for instance, solely discussed as the notion of 'God as God in himself' is regarded by Calvin as the naked absolute power of God which he viewed as tyranny (Oberman 1991:17).

In what follows, the intention is not to go into an investigation of dialectics as one type of argumentation with its concomitant branch of logic in which this type of argumentation is discussed in contradistinction with the 'scientific' and 'rhetorical' types as is portrayed in Aristotle's works *Topica and De Sophisticis Elenchis* (1928). The background of types of dialectical schemes of the relationship of God and human beings, divine history and world history, God's transcendence and God's immanence, the finite containing the infinite and the finite not containing the infinite, and between divine history demarcating human and world history and divine history intervening in human and world history are touched upon. Different trajectories of medieval scholastics as well as nominalism are described leading to Calvin's dialectical views of the 16th century and the 19th century where Hegel and White's types of dialectical approaches are discussed.

3.2.1.1 Neo-Platonic scholastics of the 5th -11th century

In the early scholastics, in which Augustine's neo-platonic views held sway, dialectics were viewed in the Platonic sense as essentially dialogical in nature. On the one hand, in the dialogical to and fro encounter of one mind (*logos*) with another (*logos*), the 'vertical' intuitive knowledge of the truth of the real and immutable world, is intuited and contemplated wisdom or sage knowledge as shadowy reflexes of the real world embodied in traces within the interlocution of the two minds. On the other hand, the concrete, changeable and ever-shifting

knowledge refers to the external senses of the two *logos* or minds (Torrance 1988:27-28). To Plato the weight is on the intuitive and contemplative truths of the eternal and real world with less weight on the unreal ordinary world of the senses. It is understandable when God is brought into this dualistic scheme by the early scholastics that the intuitive attention was only directed to the essence of the immutable and abstract God. Intuitive seeing with the inner eye of the mind is more important with regard to the divine truth and God-self than the outer eyes of the senses which are directed towards impressions on the senses from the world of fleeting phenomena or appearances. The question of the quality of reality of the outer world of appearances nearly always haunted followers of Plato. Is the latter world directed to the senses then, real or unreal, semi-real or semi-unreal? The closer the real and unreal worlds are a splitting or mirrored image of each other the less there is a difference between the two.

With the early scholastics the essence of God was mirrored into the mental world of the contemplating and speculating human being. In the Augustinian tradition the main emphasis is on the mirrored revealed image of God's essence as the main factor of mediation. In the neo-platonic tradition a similar speculative investigative treatment was dished out to human beings and the natural world whereby 'a human being's soul' is speculatively investigated as main inner substance in separation from 'a human being's body' as lesser outer substance directed to other human beings and the natural world. The natural environment was speculatively divided into a noumenal substance and phenomenal appearance side. Access into the noumenal, the substance side of natural things could only happen through intellectual intuition devoid of the outer phenomenal and appearance side of the things.

The main line of reflection in the Platonic and neo-Platonic schemes is that of an imaging and mirroring procedure between 'God in God self' and 'God directed to us.' The procedure is in a similar sense employed in a mirroring and reflective sense between God and human beings and God and the natural world.

3.2.1.2 Aristotelean scholastics of the 11th-13th century

In later scholastics – actually termed the early scholastics in the literature - of the 11th to the 13th century, the narrative changed because of the impact and influence of the philosophy of Aristotle

in which the emphasis of the processual character of mediation replaced to a large extent the notion of reflected and mirrored images of the essence of God. Aristotle deviating from Plato set the relationship between the dome of the mind of theoretical (contemplative) knowledge and the horizontal dome of the mind of sensible knowledge as a unitary processual scheme. This means that the 'ideas' or objects of our theoretical contemplative notions do not exist apart from, but are embodied and embedded in, the concrete, individual data of the dome of the sensible world. It is one and the same reality that reveals itself under an abstract, universal, static aspect to the theoretical intellect and under a concrete, manifold, dynamic aspect to the senses. What is of importance is that the processual character of the relationship between the theoretical intellect and sensible experience, moves to and fro and the one is not suppressed by the other as is the temptation in various Platonic schemes. The Christian theologians and philosophers of the late Middle Ages, especially Thomas Aquinas took up the emphasis of the Aristotelean processual relationship of the to and fro movement between theoretical knowledge and sensible knowledge with a whole array of distinctions between primary and secondary causes, making it one of the cardinal doctrines of Scholastic theology and philosophy, thereby giving birth to the doctrine of modern realism. The approach of moderate realism taught in conjunction with Aristotle, the notion of *universalia in rebus*, that is, the generic concepts are built into the individual entities and appear through viewing of the individual entities in the human mind. When the emphasis was directed to the extreme end of the top of the ladder where the primary causes had been effectuated the emphasis of reflection was necessarily directed to God in a highly speculative theological mode.

The main line of reflection in the Aristotelean and neo-Aristotelean processes is that of a processual procedure between 'God in God self' and 'God directed to us' expressed in various speculative processes of starting in God self in whom as an absolute thinking mind the primary and first causes of everything else towards us as human beings are housed.

3.2.1.3 Nominalism and the scholastics of the 11th - 16th century

In the era since the 11th century, a struggle emerged around the universal and particular character of concepts, words, beliefs and things. The struggle was termed 'the struggle of the universals'.

Only in the 16th century did the struggle of 'Realists' and 'Nominalists' receded without resulting in a satisfactory solution.

The realists of the middle ages viewed the universals (*universalia*) as things (*res*), cases or instances that have the quality of realness. They really exist. We have to take into account that in this scheme, that an increase in the degree of realness depends on an increase in the degree of generality and universality. The correlation between increasing degrees of generality and increasing levels of realness can best be illustrated with the neo-Platonic metaphysics: the closer things are to God, the more realness of being they have as God, the Absolute, is simultaneous the most real (*ens realissimum*). The ontological proof for the existence of God of Anselm rests on this assumption that the Absolute one which is simultaneously the most Perfect one (*ens perfectissimum*) could only be thought to exist in thinking (Heussi 1971:201).

Thus, God's existence flows from God's conceptuality or logicity. Extreme realism taught, closely following Plato: *universalia ante res*. This means plainly that universal or general concepts are extremely real and exist in their realness before the individual things. Moderate realism in alignment with Aristotle taught: *universalia in rebus*. This means that universal and general concepts lie in the individual things and enter through observance of the individual things in the human mind (Heussi 1971:200-201).

Nominalists taught the notion of *universalia post res*. This means that universal and general concepts are plain abstract segments, terms or words (*nomina*) of the human rational mind regarding individual singular things as the only real, truthful real things. What the nominalists did was to turn the whole scheme of the ladder of which each step to the top is an ascending step of increasing realness to the most real being God around and compressed all of reality and realness onto the level of the first step of the ladder of the individual things.

Nominalists had been called all sorts of names from atheists to secularists, from illusionists to non-realists. However, against all schemes which tend to set nominalism against realism as the real realists, a new realism was born not fitting the sense making frameworks of the classic extreme and moderate realist positions. This new view of what is reality, real and realism

emerged in the ambience of the *via moderna* which included the era of the Renaissance humanists and the *devotio moderna* and nominalism was intrinsically part of the new realism.

The most known representative of the earlier nominalist movement was Roscellinus of Compiègne in the 11th century who in applying nominalism to the doctrine of the trinity came to a denial of the unity of being of the three persons of the trinity. According to his contemporaries Roscellinus landed in tritheism (three Gods). Since the synod of Soisson 1092 CE, where Roscellinus' views were condemned nominalism was held as heresy (Heussi 1971:201). According to Heussi, since the 1100's, realism was the accepted view by a minority in its extreme, Platonic form and by the majority in a moderate Aristotelian form (1971:201).

Oberman writing about the era of the 15th and 16th century on nominalism or *via moderna* states:

the ideas of the *via moderna* are on a wide scale absorbed by non-Franciscans, infiltrating even the doctrinally well-disciplined Dominican order and shaping the piety of thousands of sermons preached all over Europe – a source still largely untapped by scholarship. In the second place, nominalism proves to be the more comprehensive category, as the movement that not only survived, but even flourished long after Ockham and Ockhamism were condemned by the University of Paris in September, 1339, and again in December, 1340.

(Oberman1986:26)

Heiko A. Oberman's comprehensive research on the Middle Ages, Renaissance and the Reformation of the 16th century, portrays a far more complex, interesting and interlinked background of these eras than has been thus far delivered by various traditional theologians, philosophers and historians on these eras. His thesis that nominalist ideas reflect simultaneously the spirit of the times in a search for new securities while acting as a real (co-) agent in bringing forth these new ideas of the modern way (*via moderna*) and as the onset of modern ways of experience, delivered various meaningful results. The sense making change from the old way of experience to the new way of experience is to be seen as that of nominalists cutting of higher and increasing levels of realness to the top in the 'vertical' sense of the word by insisting and compressing all realness and full reality of our experienced world into and onto the lower steps of the ladder in a more 'horizontal' realm.

In today's terms, one would say that nominalism would have received a consistent bad press while it was actually the harbinger of the modern era. A few elements have to be taken into account. The well known insistence of nominalists on God's *potentia ordinata*, God's power as God has ordered and still ordering all things to existence, might seem as if God's freedom was limited. However, a counter view of the nominalist point of view is that God could have decreed – *de potentia absoluta* – through God's absolute power to create another world, to choose other means of salvation, and to establish another order. But God has committed himself to this world, to the Church and the order as we know it.

What happened in this changeover from the old to the new mindset is that this distinction of nominalists of God's ordering and God's absolute power is a continuous reminder that the reality and the world we live in is contingent, full of incidental occurrences and individual things which are the result of a divine decree, a contract and covenant of God (*pactum Dei*) (Oberman 1986:27).

The world and our reality is not set as a continuous cascading vertical down-flowing process from God's being to the most individual event and thing or a continuous mirroring and reflection of God's being in the most individual event and thing in our world.

What nominalists did was to level a protest against the scheme of ascending realness from lesser realness in the natural world to God as the most real of all. They devised a scheme in which the quality of realness and reality we live in was not hierarchically constructed but a scheme which embraces and encapsulates the realness and reality of God, human beings and the natural world.

Oberman says in regard to the notion of realness, reality and realism as central to the nominalist program:

Hunger for reality is so much the mark of nominalism that it is perhaps humorous but certainly a misleading tradition that bequeathed upon its opponents the name "realists". What is often called Ockham's razor is the slashing away of the hierarchy of being, of ideas and concepts, which sheer speculation had invented.

(Oberman 1986:27)

One can understand that in the era of the 14th to the 16th century this created uncertainty and anxiety as to how and where the boundaries between God, human beings and the natural world are to be set. Bouwsma describes Calvin's ambivalence regarding boundaries and margins as follows:

Calvin's anxiety also operated at deeper levels. It found radical expression in his ambivalence about the order of nature. He clung, at times with frantic tenacity, to the conception of a natural order that had traditionally helped human beings to feel comfortable in the world. But this conception was also antithetical to his deep sense of the incomprehensibility of God and the contingency of the world.

(Bouwsma 1988:33)

Nominalists clearly distinguished God from human beings and the natural world but in their scheme they clearly let God, human beings and the natural world appear within the same framework of realness and reality.

Though Calvin reacted against the nominalist sweeping logic that cut away and slashed the upper level of speculative theology of the earlier scholastics he made use of the nominalist scheme as the basic scheme of his Institutes of 1559 in which God's creation and reconciliation as portrayed in biblical history are construed as reflexive realms in which divine and human history are reflexively enacted and are thus to be followed and applied in people's lives (van Niekerk 2009b:33f).

Another reaction and protest of nominalists was against what they regarded as 'wild speculation' and 'vain curiosity' of the scholastics operating mainly in terms of Aristotle's philosophy. Their reaction against the scholastics of neo-Aristotelean branding was directed at the vertical cascading triadic scheme or movement from the top in which God was allotted a logical divine mind most full of possibilities – the so called *ens perfectissimum* of Anselm – while human beings in an analogical sense have a logical mind filled in a lesser sense than God with possibilities and the natural world at the lowest end a 'logical mind' least filled with possibilities, not to say devoid of possibilities (Heussi 1971:201).

The reaction of nominalism as expressive of the *via moderna* went in the direction of the sternest opposition to the claims of logicity, intellect and reason when these are not verified by the tests

of the new scheme of embracing experience of God, human beings and the natural world. Nominalists were careful not to construct causal relations cascading from God as the primal and first causes to the level of secondary causes where human beings and the natural world operated in the older scholastic scheme (Oberman 1986:28). In this way the chain of causation is reduced to observable second causes, a major advance in the transition from *the* speculative law of nature to the observable *laws* of nature (Oberman 1986:28).

In a general way Oberman states:

...the underlying intention of nominalism is best described in terms of the late medieval revolution against the meta-categories that obfuscate reality. Just as it rejected metaphysics to establish physics, so nominalism ventured to strip theology of her distorting meta-theological shackles, with the result that the Scriptures and the prior decrees of God were emphasized at the expense of natural theology.

(Oberman 1986:28)

In conclusion, one has to recall that the scholastic and speculative approaches operated on the basis of three cascading levels of God, human beings and the natural world expressing on each level a difference in the quality of realness or logicity. Human beings and the natural world were linked to the most real or the most filled of logical possibilities, God at the top end of the hierarchical scale. The whole scheme is brought into operation by a revelational mirroring or revelational processual cascading scheme in the movement; God → human beings → natural world. In the modern era from the 16th century onwards the three avenues revolving respectively around God, human beings and the natural environment are still underlying the broad avenues housing the religious- theological disciplines, human sciences and natural sciences but received in modern world, the quality of equality in general terms. In the practicalities of the modern world, through shifts and turns one of the three avenues receives usually a higher rating up to the point of denying or rejecting the claims of one or both of the avenues.

Oberman points as an overall conclusion to the emerging new image of God implied in the emphasis of nominalism on God's *potentia ordinata*, God's power in his ordered and continuous ordering of ordinances:

God is a covenant God, his *pactum* or *foedus* is his self-commitment to become the contractual partner in creation and salvation. Here originates the Pelagianism

of the *facere quod in se est*, which stands in the area of justification for the meagre but sufficient human moral efforts which God has contracted, accepted or pledged to reward. In this emphasis on covenantal and not –necessary relationships between God and his world as well as between God and his Church, man is no longer primarily a second cause moved by the prime mover and first cause. In the nominalist view man has become the appointed representative and partner of God responsible for his own life, society and world, on the basis and within the limits of the treaty or *pactum* stipulated by God.

(Oberman 1986:29)

The carrier notion of the nominalist program is the notion of contingency and contingent, meaning the reality and the world we live in is full of incidental occurrences and individual things. In the nominalist program this should be understood in two directions, embracing both the vertical relation God-human-world and the horizontal relation past-world-human-future. Reality and the world full of incidental occurrences and individual things happening and set within the ordered framework of God's power, should not be seen as unreliable and unrelated accidental occurrences and things. In the vertical dimension of God-human-world in nominalism Godly factors are Godly factors, human factors are human factors and natural worldly factors are natural worldly factors. In the horizontal dimension of past-world-human-future an alternate form of contingent and contingency opens up of a complexity of human and natural worldly factors added to divine factors in the course of events viewed in the past or towards the future.

3.2.2 Calvin's double sided dialectic

Calvin shared with the humanist Renaissance scholars of his day a strong reaction against early and late mediaeval scholasticism especially with regard to their speculative reflexologies and extremities of speculative essence seeking and inquiring about the substances of God, human beings and the natural world. Calvin simultaneously reacted vehemently and aligned himself with both scholastic types of the 13th century mould such as that of Thomas Aquinas and 14th century scholastics of the Duns Scotus and Ockham type which had been given the name of nominalism (Oberman 1986:253-258).

The reaction against the scholastics amongst Renaissance humanists to whom Calvin initially belong was so strong that it is sometimes difficult to understand Calvin's mindset in which he sometimes rejects and sometimes embraces notions and views from the same group of persons.

Vives operating within the Renaissance humanist circles states about scholastic dialecticians

...(they) have invented for themselves certain meanings of words contrary to all civilized custom and usage, so that they may seem to have won their argument when they are not understood....For when they are understood, it is apparent to everyone that nothing could be more pointless, nothing more irrational. So, when their opponent has been confused by strange and unusual meanings and word-order, by wondrous suppositions, wondrous ampliations, restrictions, appellations, they then decree for themselves, with no public decision or [verdict] a triumph over an adversary not conquered but confused by new feats of verbal legerdemain.

(Vives 1979:57-59)

Calvin's dislike was conceived during his studies in the Sorbonne, and remained so intense throughout his life that he could hardly refrain from indulging in strongly emotive denunciation of the sophistry produced by the scholastics and the nominalist views of the theologians of the Sorbonne. Calvin reacted against the Renaissance humanists later in his later years but took much from their way of doing into his writings. Calvin reacted vehemently against medieval scholasticism, especially against nominalism, whether in its terminist dialectics and logical hair-splitting or in their stress on the free will of God and human beings as well as all their speculative views on the combination of merit and free will. His reaction was especially against the notion of merit, supposedly built into human beings in a primordial sense and widespread speculative reflection on the notion of a free will as part of the human condition and constitution (Torrance 1988:73). Nevertheless, Calvin owed much to his mediaeval inheritance, even in his own work where he changed what he learned. In many instances Calvin adapted schemes from the various forms of scholastics and Renaissance humanist schools into his Calvinian sense making theological-philosophical scheme.

The logic of dialectics as used in Scholasticism was directed at abstract issues and abstract concepts. The scholastic approach of an encounter of two abstract ideas, words or notions is been replaced with a person-directed dialog revolving around the notion of consciousness between two minds within the triadic framework of seeing –saying - hearing emerged from the writings of the Renaissance humanists and the John Mair who was well versed in the thought patterns of Nominalism (Torrance 1988:28, 88-89).

Partially differing and partially aligning himself with the Scholastics of the late Middle Ages and Nominalism and Renaissance humanism, Calvin's dialectic is rolled out as encounter between 'mind and mind,' that is between God's mind and human minds and between the time-dimensions of the past, the present as the natural world and human beings and the future.

God



Past ↔ creation (Natural world) ↔ reconciliation (Human beings) ↔ Future

Ganoczy makes the following statement about the two kinds of dialectic in Calvin's writings:

Anyone who reads Calvin's work is struck by a tension that characterizes not only the method but also the substance of his theology. It is as if there are two kinds of dialectic. The first is the art of reasoning according to the demands of formal logic, which gives great clarity and strength to statements; the second is a habit of systematically placing the divine and the human elements in opposition to each other and then resolving the tension with the help of a principle that synthesizes the opposites.

(Ganoczy 1987:185)

Ganoczy is correct regarding the second kind of dialectic in which Calvin systematically places the divine and the human elements in opposition to each other and then resolves the tension with the help of a principle that synthesizes the opposites. Calvin's dialectic between God's acts of creation and redemption which Calvin acquired through his heavily involved and engaged biblical epistemology is not emphasised by Ganoczy. Van Niekerk on the other hand points to the double sidedness of Calvin's God-human-world approach:

Calvin's sense-making approach, which is embedded in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), can be construed as a story embodying two reflexive realms, one of creation and the other of redemption. In each of these realms, two trajectories operate closely together. The first is a "vertical" mirroring trajectory with God and human beings facing each other. The second is a "horizontal" trajectory consisting in a process that begins with God approaching human beings and the natural cosmic world.

(Van Niekerk 2009b:33)

Ganoczy is however correct that in Calvin's way of working with the triad of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world, the natural created world plays a slightly lesser role than God and

human beings. Ganoczy (1982:46;49) suggested that because of the influence of Stoicism on Calvin the natural cosmic world in comparison to the weight given to the pointers of God and humanity, is degraded. On the other hand, he relativised the links between Stoicism and Calvin by making use of a typical Calvinistic theologistic strategy by stating that Calvin's grounding in the 'biblical-Christian faith' softens any similarity with Stoicism and should not be taken totally serious (Ganoczy 1982:52). However, the main reason why the natural created world is a bit less emphasised is to be found in the one leg of Calvin's 'vertical' mirroring trajectory in which God and human beings are facing each other while neglecting the natural cosmic world as an initiating agency partner in the triad of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world.

Calvin's treatment of Christ, the church, faith as experiential dimension and the sacraments all reflected on within the 'vertical' mirroring trajectory in which God and human beings are facing each other portray the same divine and human contracted and concentrated duality. According to van Niekerk, the particular contracted and concentrated divine/human duality expresses:

...an inter-substantial intense closeness and radical difference. There is no trans-substantial transforming of the human by the divine or con-substantial permeation of the human by the divine or the divine by the human in Calvin's view of a dual particularity of the contracted and concentrated divinity and humanity of Christ.

(Van Niekerk 2009b:44)

Charles Partee, while admitting that a dialectic in the broad sense of the word plays a role in Calvin's work, directs his main attention solely to the unity of Christ as basic point of departure:

Admittedly, one can find in Calvin a dialectic of ideal and real, universal and hypothetical, necessary and contingent, rhetoric and philosophic, freedom and predestination, divine and human perspectives, justification and sanctification, and so on. However, valorizing the dialectic process in this way overstates the situation. More basic to Calvin's theology is the unity of truth revealed in Jesus Christ.

(Partee 2008:38)

Calvin describes Christ dually in the divine and human sense

...as God he is the destination to which we move; as man, the path by which we go.
Both are found in Christ alone...

(Calvin [1559] 1960c:2)

In Calvin's words, between us and Christ as God our destination, the trajectory is analogical and mirroring as a sort of step by step seeing and hearing of the Word and between us as human beings and Christ as a human being our path, the trajectory is analogical and processual as ongoing understanding. Regarding the triad of seeing, hearing and saying the scholastics underemphasised the hearing and saying as personal encounter between God and human beings and between human beings themselves. The seeing of God and human beings were strongly couched in the language of neo-platonic intuitive mirroring best expressed by the idea of the beatific vision that a child of God will have when God will be all in all. Calvin learned from Major and Luther that intuitive seeing sprouting mainly from neo-platonic schemes and Aristotelian processual links between saying and hearing could be collapsed into a single scheme (Torrance 1988:88-89).

3.2.3 Hegelian dialectic

In the 19th century the German philosopher GFW Hegel worked out a theoretical historical scheme of in which he believes that Kant's idea in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (2003) of dialectical reasoning leading to contradictions as a correct assumption. He however rejected Kant's view that when general logic as a dialectical logic is seen as an embracing system of logic it amounts to logic of illusion. For Hegel the contradictions of the Kantian view of dialectic became the true form of the history and the historical processes in the world of human beings. Hegel's conception of dialectic could be viewed as an 'ongoing movement of the Truth expressing itself as Spirit' or the way the absolute mind or spirit is unfolding itself repetitively as the truth dialectically in the historical processes in which human beings and the natural environment are dialectically rolling forth. Hegel's method involved the grasping of 'opposites in their unity, the positive in the negative.'

Hegel expresses the different aspects of the ongoing dialectical movement in the first edition of his *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* as follows:

There are three aspects in every thought which is logically real or true: The abstract or rational form, which says what something is; the dialectical negation, which says what something is not; the speculative-concrete comprehension: A is also that which it is not, A 5 non-A. These three aspects do not constitute three parts of logic, but are moments of everything that is logically real or true. They

belong to every philosophical concept. Every concept is rational, is abstractly opposed to another, and is united in comprehension together with its opposites. This is the definition of dialectic.

(Hegel 1959:82)

The whole process of truth rolling out in history develops through the medium of contradiction. In the unfolding of the historical processes as a whole, Hegel's theory of dialectic plays a central role. The word 'dialectic' stems from the Greek word 'dialekein' meaning to dialogue, discourse or argue. Though Hegel did not actually use the terms of the triad thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in the same context his dialectic is generally regarded in a similar sense as in the long quotation above as a process of argument proceeding by triads, each triad consisting of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. One starts with an initial proposition, the thesis; this proves to be inadequate, and generates its opposite, antithesis. This in turn proves inadequate, and the opposites are taken up into a synthesis. The synthesis is called by Hegel a sublation (*Aufhebung*) of thesis and antithesis that is, it preserves what is rational in them, but cancels what is irrational. The whole triadic process is in an ongoing sense repeated in Hegel's writings, sayings and doings in different contexts but always concluding in a synthesis which is at the same time a new thesis generating its opposite, the antithesis, and so on. An important contribution to the 19th century is Hegel's view that in these triadic processes there are leaps thereby rejecting the popular traditional doctrine of his era that 'nature makes no leaps.' To Hegel the latter doctrine is clearly false; there are many cases (for example the transformation of water into steam or ice) in which a new state does not appear gradually, but appears as a leap (Flew & Priest 1984:160).

In the first part of the 19th century the notion of the Divine or Absolute mind manifesting itself in historical processes directed to the future in leaps played itself out in European societies and the Americas as a widespread sense making logic competing with the notion of evolutionism as another widespread sense making approach. While Hegel employed the notion of leaps and Marx made use of the idea of abrupt revolutionary changes as answer to the ongoing processes in history, Lamarck's (d.1829) evolutionary theory of the inheritance of acquired characters and Darwin's (d.1892) evolutionary theory of different species brought about by natural selection described evolutionary processes as slow and gradual changes over successive generations (Hale, Saunders & Margham 2005:147).

Since the early part of the 19th century many views of Christ emerged in which the Absolute mind's evolutionary rolling out from above could be summarised as a divine evolutionary rolling out from above of the absolute Mind or Spirit embracing the totality of humanity or the totality of the cosmos. What is of importance here is that the spiritual divine component manifests itself intrinsically in the materiality of the world. The latter view of the Godhead rolling out into humanity in an evolutionary sense was widely accepted in the 19th century in the European and the American world. Reference in this regard is often made to the statement of F.C. Oetinger that corporeality is the end of all the ways of God (Barth 1975:134). In the 19th century world the approach carried by the statement that corporeality is the end of the ways of God had been directly applied in the Christological sense to Christ or to the consciousness of human beings in general.

3.2.4 White's dialectic

In the 19th century Christian world, including the whole variety of churches, the close linkage and connection of God to historical processes could be seen in a closer binding and connection of divine history in the Bible and the biblical timeline expressed in the Bible. In this era the idea that the Bible is inerrant and infallible – coming to its acme in the 1920's in the USA - was already strongly on track amongst Christians (Harris 1998:19-56). On the basis of the same sense making logic by which Hegelians constructed the whole of history as the sphere outside the biblical timeline where God as the divine mind synthesised himself through a dialectical process with the human mind, many Christians awaiting the imminent second coming of Christ as introduction to the end of times in the 19th century employed the notion of a dialectical divine history enacted between God and human beings and divinely set by God in successive dispensations of the biblical timeline.

Increasingly in the 19th century a dialectical divine/human historical ambience embodied in respective divinely ordained dispensational biblical eras from Genesis to Revelation took root in the experiential worlds of many people in North America. The divinely set dispensations are not only portrayed in the Bible as something happening on the surface of the Bible but could be regarded as intrinsically part of the materiality of the divine historical textuality of the Bible.

Moreover, the dialectically divine/human history set in dispensational biblical eras became increasingly the divine template in sort of experience for the rest of world history. A second dialectic appears as between divine biblical history in dispensations and world history in the sense of sacred divine history and worldly history. In the 16th century world of Calvin the relationship between biblical history and world history had been set as the relationship of ‘particular’ and ‘general’ history in which God is simultaneously at work through his Spirit albeit in a ‘particular’ and ‘general’ way.

Two intersecting tendencies that played a major role in a large part of the Christian world in the 19th century are portrayed in White’s writings, sayings and doings.

The *first trajectory* of White’s faith reflexive pattern is the centrality of Christ in the duality of God and human beings facing each other in being closely connected, concentrated and contracted in a dialectical way. In Christ emerges the divine/human template of how God is connectively working with his creation throughout God’s history with human beings. White portrays God and human beings as directly involved in the matters terrestrial and celestial in Christ. White states,

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 [1898] 1948a:25-26)

The sentence that ‘humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love’ is pointing to the central theme in White’s writings of God’s communicative love manifested through and in Christ. The theme of God’s wrath that had been raised by some Adventists as becoming deemphasised when the love of God is too strongly emphasised, could be met in the following way. God wrath and anger towards sinners and his destruction of them (Isaiah 28:21) as manifested in the biblical historical dynamics, could only be viewed as contradictory and incompatible with his continuous communicative love from a static mindset, which isolates the many references to God’s wrath in the Bible from the dynamics of God’s communicative love. The main problem with these isolated mirrored readings is that they are presented with divine authority in their isolation. The wrath and anger of God in White’s works is continuously subsumed in the dynamics of God’s manifested dynamic love. By accepting the will of God that is God’s law and forgiveness offered through free grace to all in Jesus Christ the wrath of God is deflected. More than that is

speculative, because in White's writings the paradigmatic divine/human coming together of God's infinite love through and in Christ permeates from the middle of history in a retrociprocity way God's actions through the establishment of the Ten Commandments to the dateless ages before creation and in an anticipatory way through the sanctuary ministry to the eternal era after God's fulfilment and consummation.

According to White, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us, thereby expressing the dialectic between heaven and earth, divinity and humanity from above in the sense that,

Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly; God was made manifest in the likeness of men. So it was in Christ's teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar.

(White [1900] 1941:17)

White in her view of incarnation is not operating with an impersonal cosmic Christ framework extended to the natural world in a cosmic ontological way as Protestant views in the footsteps of Hegel did with a divine evolutionary rolling out from above of the absolute Spirit embracing the totality of the cosmos or the totality of humanity. White resolutely maintains and sustains the demarcation line between the divinity and humanity of the person of Christ that she extended Christ's view of truth and his way of his teaching to every phase of nature as employed by him in illustrating truth without the typical 19th fusion fashionable in many circles of her time:

He taught that heaven and earth are linked together, and that a knowledge of divine truth prepares men better to perform the duties of everyday life. He spoke as one familiar with heaven, conscious of His relationship to God, yet recognizing His unity with every member of the human family.

(White [1898] 1940:19)

White, moreover, connects Christ's truth with nature in the most intrinsic sense of the word but never came anywhere close to any of the multiple Christ-centric cosmic approaches which was best represented by the Roman Catholic Teilhard de Chardin who viewed the cosmic Christ as the superhuman real mover directing an overall evolution process and the omega point at the end of time (van Niekerk 2005:155-159). White stays within the realm of Christ as the divine/human person that interprets his message which he himself has given to the plants of the field:

Christ interpreted the message which He Himself had given to the lilies and the grass of the field. He desires us to read it in every lily and every spire of grass. His words are full of assurance, and tend to confirm trust in God....So wide was Christ's view of truth, so extended His teaching, that every phase of nature was employed in illustrating truth. The scenes upon which the eye daily rests were all connected with some spiritual truth, so that nature is clothed with the parables of the Master.

(White [1900] 1941:19)

The *second trajectory* of White's faith reflexive pattern revolves around divinely set time periods or dispensations from Genesis to Revelation, in deeply engrained and embodied of what has been termed above as the divine historical textuality of the Bible. In all the dispensations an aspect of the divine/human history as centrally embodied in Christ and embedded in the Old and New Testament through the Spirit emerges. In White's view during all dispensations, Christ's Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds and to embody revelations in the sacred canon of the Bible from beginning to end:

In harmony with the Word of God, His Spirit was to continue its work throughout the period of the gospel dispensation. During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God.

(White [1888] 1990a:vii-viii)

The main faith reflection line throughout White's writings is to be viewed as a description of the biblical historical timeline and heavenly-earthly spatial demarcations within the biblical historical timeline expressed as different dispensations or covenantal periods. Within the ambience of each of the dispensations White's divine template or paradigm of the linkage of heaven and earth in a double-sided sense as *through* Christ and *in* Christ is basically in operation in her faith reflexive description. White expressed the intrinsic linkage and unity of various dispensations and covenantal periods as expressive of One Gospel:

There is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Him today. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden, when they had by transgression separated themselves from God. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The Hebrews all drank of that spiritual Rock, which was Christ.

(White 1956b:1061; ST Sept. 14, 1882)

In one sense Jesus has condescended and become a tabernacle of God and dwelt with humanity, he [Christ] has revealed God not only to us, but also to the heavenly angels (White [1898] 1940:19) – everything happens through Christ. In another sense we as humans are in Christ as the tabernacle of God. The link we have with God is possible only through and in Christ in every dispensation of time period. Through the brightness of God's light in Christ God impressed upon Israel and on Moses in the 'Moses-dispensation' the exalted character of the law and the glory of the gospel revealed through Christ:

By this brightness God designed to impress upon Israel the sacred, exalted character of His law, and the glory of the gospel revealed through Christ. While Moses was in the mount, God presented to him, not only the tables of the law, but also the plan of salvation. He saw that the sacrifice of Christ was pre-figured by all the types and symbols of the Jewish age; and it was the heavenly light streaming from Calvary, no less than the glory of the law of God, that shed such a radiance upon the face of Moses. That divine illumination symbolized the glory of the dispensation of which Moses was the visible mediator, a representative of the one true Intercessor.

(White [1890] 1958a:330)

White's staying within the divine historical outlines of the divine biblical historical timeline reflexively operated with the linkage of demarcated time and space of heaven and earth, divinity and humanity (and nature) facing each other and established *through* Christ and *in* Christ - also applicable to White the agent of faith reflexivity – are spread and diversified in different dispensations or covenantal periods.

Calvin's operational way of reflexive faith patterns are done within the dispensational realms of God's creation which covers to a large extent the Old Testament and God's redemption and reconciliation which covers mainly the New Testament era. The well known distinction of

various covenants in the Biblical historical timeline emerged mainly from 17th century Calvinist orthodox John Cocceius (Koch) (1603-1669) a professor at the University of Leiden (Heussi 1971:362). Cocceius' federal or covenant's theology was influenced by Melancton, Bucer and Calvin himself with his strong emphasis of the two reflexive covenantal realms of creation and redemption in which one's faith reflexive patterns of faith are extracted from and in which reflection about God, human beings and the natural world take place. The main representatives from the 16th century of a federal theology or a theology of various covenants - dispensations in the modern idiom – were Bullinger, Olevianus and Ursinus. Cocceius elaborated and systematised in a dynamic sense different contractual or covenantal conclusions between God, human beings and the natural world in the divine historical timeline of the whole of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Cocceius' arrangement of his dogmatics or systematic theology was not done in terms of different 'loci' as was the common way of doing theology in Protestant orthodoxy but in terms of the various biblical conclusions of covenants in different eras of the biblical historical timeline. The notion of the Kingdom of God as the determinative notion stringing and connecting the various covenants together was for Cocceius just as important as the notion of multiple covenants in different time-periods of the biblical divine history. In spite of vehement reaction by strict Protestant orthodox protagonists the support for and the influence of the notion of multiple contracts, covenants and dispensations in the Bible between God, human beings and the natural world never faded in many churches (Heussi 1971:362).

Important with regard to White is that, the 17th and 18th century Puritan continuation of the Calvinist branch of the 16th century in the New World, influenced many movements in the 19th century. It is commonly acknowledged that the Puritan emphasis on the laws of God and the divine imperative of people's adherence and obedience to the laws of God influenced White on major points of her whole sense making God-human-world approach.

What is of importance at this point is that already built into 17th and 18th century Puritanism in England and the New World, was a strong mixing of notions from what has been called the Radical Reformation wing of the 16th century Reformation with the mainline viewpoints of the 16th century Reformation. Especially, the pietist experiential views within the Puritan world came from both the 16th century Reformation and Radical Reformation wing as well as from 18th century John Wesley through the Dutch Calvinist, Jacob Arminius, who is regarded in this thesis

not as a non-Calvinist but as representing the ‘left-wing’ of 18th century Calvinism. In conjunction the immense influence of John Wesley who has been heavily influenced by Arminius, is central in White’s works especially with regard to the centrality of Christ in all her works.

A merger and amalgamation of certain central notions of the Radical Reformation as the ‘left wing’ of the Reformation and the so called mainline approaches of Luther and Calvin of the 16th Reformation as well as through formalistic law abiding Puritanism on the one hand and pietistic pious Puritanism of the 17th and 18th century on the other hand, had variegated influences on White’s approach (Knight 2000:30).

The influence of the Puritan mindset, values and beliefs on Ellen G. White and Seventh-day Adventism has been extensively described by B.W. Ball’s work, *The English Connection: The Puritan Roots of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (1981) especially regarding unique notions like the ministry of Christ in heaven, gospel obedience and obedience to the laws of God, a future directed apocalyptic view of prophecy that is anchored and comes true in God’s divine historical events through history. As an appendix, the seventh-day Sabbath is also to be added to her Puritan roots. Ball, through his work, compares similarities of several doctrinal notions between the Puritan sense making world and that of White and Seventh-day Adventism such as a) the sufficiency of Scripture, b) the incomparable Jesus, c) the righteousness of Christ, d) the new birth, e) believer’s baptism, f) the heavenly ministry of Jesus, g) gospel obedience, h) the seventh-day Sabbath, i) the holistic nature of man, j) the return of Christ, k) apocalyptic prophecy, and l) the millennium, hell, and heaven.

Though Ball’s portraying of similarities is on target and touches upon central features of White and Seventh-day Adventism, the main deficiency of Ball is the de-emphasising of White and Seventh-day Adventism’s concentration on the centrality of Christ within the full divine historical timeline portrayed as multiple dispensational eras from Genesis to Revelation. White’s faith reflexive patterning of the divine historical timeline is also influenced by the trajectory of the federal and covenantal dispensational eras of Cocceius and the later Puritanist protagonists of federal theology in the 17th and 18th century.

In this regard, she is not directly influenced by the mainline 16th century Reformational notion of *sola scriptura* – Scripture alone – operationally in the works of Calvin and a Luther but by the Radical Reformation on the one hand who viewed Biblical history as a virtual exemplar of what happens in people’s everyday lives and who viewed the Kingdom of God as imminently coming and approaching from the future. In this regard, the well known Thomas Müntzer (1468-1525) lived as pastor in Zwickau engaged in the emergence of a proletarian uprising due to social and economic circumstances at the time. Müntzer for instance described infant baptism as a ‘beastly play of monkeys’ (*viehische Affenspiel*), he reacted against Luther’s doctrine of justification as a view of ‘gentle living spiritless flesh of Wittenberg’ (*das sanfilebende geistlose Fleisch zu Wittenberg*) and biblical belief as ‘faith stolen from books’ (*aus Bücher gestohlener Glauben*) (Bakhuizen, van den Brink & Dankbaar 1967:98). One obviously cannot bring White in the company of the harshness of such statements but the whole approach of the Radical Reformers of viewing God just as directly at work with the same power and strength in their socio-historical experience in the establishment of the Kingdom of God through a community of holy reborn people as in the divine history portrayed in the totality of the Bible, display strong similarities with the whole era around 1844 regarding the imminent second coming of Christ which in their experience was on the brink of factually happening. The difference with the mainline Reformation views of Calvin and Luther lies in the way history is experienced, thus not primarily through the proclamation of the Word of God but prophetically indicating God’s acts and works in the present as qualitatively the same as the divine Biblical history of the total biblical historical timeline.

On the other hand, White’s view of dispensational eras in the biblical historical timeline displays the influence of the notion of multiple covenants and dispensations demarcated in the whole of biblical history. In White’s view, it is primarily God’s communicative love through and in Christ as the determinative notion in all her works that strings and connects the various dispensations and covenants together and not primarily the notion of the Kingdom of God as it was for Cocceius and for some of the later Puritans.

The word, ‘dispensation’ means an organised system, or method by which affairs are conducted. The word is translated into English, ‘economy’ and literally means ‘the law of the house.’ A political economy refers to the way the political affairs in the economic sense are being

conducted during a set period of time. The political economic status of the nation addresses the financial affairs effecting a nation's money supply, commerce and economic state of the citizens of the society. The notion of a 'dispensation' as used reflexively in the biblical sense of the word is a period of time in which God was dealing with human beings in a particular way. For example, the first dispensation is called the Dispensation of Innocence and refers to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before they sinned and is viewed as a divine historical period. God dealt with Adam and Eve in the divine historical way in a particular way and told them to freely eat of all the fruit in the garden, not the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, in a dispensation or covenantal period of time, human beings have to live out their responsibility and be accountable to God, themselves, other human beings and the natural world by obeying the laws, commands and norms set by God.

These laws, commands and norms are emerging through God's graceful and salvific acts set in a particular dispensation. The common way that people in our era make use of the laws, commands and norms of a dispensation is either to mirror the divine and human acts, events and doings of the particular dispensation in their lives or to interpret what these acts, events and doings are actually and essentially portraying, and to apply the essential and interpreted prototypical core as divine examples in their lives of today.

Throughout the 19th century certain forms of the notion of different divine dispensations built into the materiality of the divine historical timeline of the Bible, emerged. The contractual and covenantal view of God's dealings with human beings of different contractual covenants in different periods for different purposes in the biblical historical timeline received special attention in the prophetic and second coming of Christ of people's experience in the 19th century. The whole idea of dispensations in the timeline of the Bible is a continuation in a different guise of the nominalist idea of the relationship in which God and human beings are facing each other in contracted or covenantal relationship. In the 16th century Reformation, with the 17th century Reformed orthodoxy in church experience and theological reflection in Europe, continued by the impact of the Puritan mindset in the New World, the notion that God and human beings in their dealings with each other continue through divinely designated time periods in which a particular contractual agreement is divinely set as a covenant. A multiplicity of covenants emerged in the divine revelational timeline of the totality of biblical history. The leap from the Puritan

experience of an array of covenants God has set for his people is very short to the notion of dispensations in which God's children are tested in terms of a specific divine purpose intensively experienced in the 19th century especially in the north-eastern states of North America.

The best representative summary of a view of dispensations is CI Scofield who in his 1909 and 1917 editions of the Scofield Reference Bible encapsulated various 19th century views of divine revelational history, dispensations and the divine historical linkages into seven dispensations.

The New Schofield Reference Bible (1967) closely following Scofield states:

A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God. Three important concepts are implied in this definition: (1) a *deposit* of divine revelation concerning God's will, embodying what God requires of man as to his conduct; (2) man's *stewardship* of this divine revelation, in which he is responsible to obey it; and (3) a *time-period*, often called an "age," during which this divine revelation is dominant in the testing of man's obedience to God.

The dispensations are a progressive and connected revelation of God's dealings with man, given sometimes to the whole race and at other times to a particular people, Israel. These different dispensations are not separate ways of salvation. During each of them man is reconciled to God in only one, i.e. by God's grace through the work of Christ that was accomplished on the cross and vindicated in His resurrection. Before the cross man was saved in prospect of Christ's atoning sacrifice, through believing the revelation thus far given him. Since the cross man has been saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ in whom revelation and redemption are consummated.

On man's part the continuing requirement is obedience to the revelation of God. This obedience is a stewardship of faith. Although the divine revelation unfolds progressively, the deposit of truth in the earlier time-periods is not discarded; rather it is cumulative. Thus conscience (moral responsibility) is an abiding truth in human life (Rom.2:15; 9:1; 2 Cor.1:12;4:2), although it does not continue as a dispensation. Similarly, the saved of this present dispensation are "not under law" as a specific test of obedience to divine revelation (Gal.5:18; cp. Gal.2:16; 3:11), yet the law remains an integral part of the Holy Scriptures which, to the redeemed, are profitable for "instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim.3:16-17; cp. Rom.15:4).

The purpose of each dispensation, then, is to place many under a specific rule of conduct, but such stewardship is not a condition of salvation. In every past dispensation unregenerate man has failed, and he has failed in this present dispensation and will in the future. But salvation has been and will continue to be available to him by God's grace through faith. Seven dispensations are

distinguished in this edition of the Bible: Innocence (Gen.1:28); Conscience or Moral Responsibility (Gen.3:7); Human Government (Gen.8:15); Promise (Gen.12:1); Law (Ex.19:1); Church (Acts 2:1); Kingdom (Rev.20:4).

(Scofield 1967:3-4)

The undercarriage of this view is that the first creative act of the heavens and the earth followed by the second creative act animal life and the third human life ‘refers to the dateless past’ (Scofield 1967:1). The notion of the ‘dateless past’ informs the overbearing notion that the divine historical dating is revealed only through God’s revelatory acts of the different dispensations. In each dispensation as a demarcated period of time a different qualitative dimension of divine revelation is dominant in that a dimension of divine history is deposited in such a way in the particular time-period that a subsequent dispensation builds in progression on it and is dynamically divinely connected. The Bible portrays divine history in divinely set time-periods in which human beings obedience to God are tested.

The centre of the whole salvation-historical dispensational exposition is Jesus Christ. Schofield is adamant that the different dispensations are not separate ways of salvation but that God’s grace through the work of Christ accomplished on the cross and vindicated in the resurrection is the revelatory deposit from which all dispensations finds their centre. In the dialectic between divinely set revelatory history and the stewardship history of human beings in a certain time-period, comes to an end when the human race fails the test of obedience while the period comes to end with dramatic divine intervention and judgment. On the one hand, the apocalyptic mood amongst people at the end of a time period gives rise to an abundant number of prophets as to what God expects from the people. On the other hand, the prophets could only build on what has divinely and revelatory being deposited in previous time-periods. The central message to human beings in the acting out of their stewardship is the message of obedience to God.

A dispensation is the way God worked with human beings within a defined period of time. There is much confusion on the matter and many have greatly misunderstood what has been understood under God's different dispensational economies. Most of the confusion comes from mixing or misapplying, according to dispensationalists, God's instructions in one dispensation with another. A prime example is confusing God's instructions and promises to Israel with those, God made to be followers in the current age of the church. In the strong dispensational inclined

world, God made specific national promises to Israel. God according to such a scheme of promises, on and divine historical fore-dynamics, promised that the up and coming and emerging Messiah of Israel and the wider world would reign over the whole of the world, sitting on the throne of David in the prototypical and stereotypical Israelite sense of the word while endorsing and occupying the land God gave them in the name of the Messiah.

In terms of the common dispensational sense making view, a dispensation is the way God works with human beings within a defined period of time, God made literal and unconditional promises to Israel. According to this approach to God's promises these promises, have never been fulfilled or nullified. The majority of Protestant churches from the 16th century Reformation hold the view that God has done away with Israel and they say that believers in the church age have inherited these promises in a manifold way. In passing, Pre-Millennial views, boil down to a rejection of what is called A-millennialism. The theological term of 'A-millennialism' or 'no' millennium amounts to precisely what it portrays: 'no millennium' in the divine or human historical sense. Those entertaining a view of Pre-millennialism hold the view of recognising notions of teaching that strict followers of the Bible literally inherit the land God promised to Israel, so they apply these Old Testament truths to the age of the church by giving them some 'spiritualised' and allegorical meaning.

According to strong millennialists, the dispensation of the Tribulation and the Millennium are denied by a-millennialists. By corrupting Scripture in terms of millennialism, a-millennialism amounts to a robbing of believing supporters of the 'blessed hope' of the soon and imminent return of Jesus Christ and deliverance from the wrath of God that will be poured out upon this earth. The confusion of the promises God in one dispensation with the promises of God in another dispensation convolutes different dispensations of God's dealings with human beings. The different dispensations of God's dealings with human beings and the world should be clear and differentiated from each other and should not be mixed and confused. The failure to understand that God works differently in different dispensations and qualitatively in different ways with people of a particular divine historical realm confuses them by not acknowledging the most important rule of reflexively reading Scripture by keeping the dispensations and ages of Israel and the church separate.

Most dispensationalists believe in seven dispensations of time or temporal periods. Some believe in the existence of eight dispensations of God's workings with human beings. The following is a list of these dispensations:

1. Dispensation of Innocence; Creation to the fall of Adam.
2. Dispensation of Conscience: From the fall of Adam to the Flood.
3. Dispensation of Human Government: From the Flood to Abraham.
4. Dispensation of Promise: Abraham to the Giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai by Moses.
5. Dispensation of the Law: Moses till the time of Christ.
6. Dispensation of Age of the Churches: Pentecost till the Rapture.
7. Dispensation of Tribulation: Rapture to the Millennium.
8. Dispensation of Millennium: One thousand year reign of Christ on earth which ends with the Great White Throne judgment and the New Heavens and Earth followed by Eternity.

Many dispensationalists mistakenly combine the Tribulation with the age of the church and show the last age as the Commonwealth or Kingdom Age or Millennium. A dispensation is understood as involving: 1. A test for a human being. 2. A human being's failure. 3. God's judgment. 4. A rule of life. 5. A crucial event or crisis. In each dispensation these five elements can be found.

The dispensations or covenantal eras are clear evidence of the grace of God, according to protagonists of the dispensational view. A human being in each instance of a dispensation failed the responsibility and accountability giving to him or her by God. With his or her failure comes God's judgment. With every judgment comes the offer of forgiveness and salvation. After a human being failed God in the Garden of Eden, God was the initiating agent who made the coats of skins and clothed them, given them a picture of the forgiveness of God and his grace (Genesis 3:21).

In extreme mirroring approaches the divine historical embeddedness and embodiment of events described in the biblical text as for instance the dispensation of Moses is viewed literally as an enclosed divine historical era of which the laws, rules and norms people must be accepted and

followed. Not even a soft interpretation in the real sense is allowed because that would amount to either drawing into the Moses dispensation, for example the divine historical embeddedness and embodiment of events from another more important dispensation or placing the total emphasis on one central dispensation, say for instance the Christ dispensation, as main access area of reading backwards and forwards in the divine historical timeline the permeation of the central happening of God's communicative love in the life and the cross and resurrection of Christ.

White's approach of dispensations is dynamic and not formalistic and scholastic. Salvation in any age from God's acts of creation, the fall of Adam and Eve and the period after the fall are viewed by White as divine historical events embodied and embedded in the natural earthly realm with the accompanying human events and acts. In the same vein she emphasises various dispensations without going beyond the reflexive demarcation set by the perimeters and margins of divine-heavenly and earthly-human levels of the biblical historical timeline. In some instances she connects dispensations as with John the Baptist who is the connecting link between the dispensation of the law and the prophets and the Christian dispensation:

The prophet John was the connecting link between the two dispensations. As God's representative he stood forth to show the relation of the law and the prophets to the Christian dispensation. He was the lesser light, which was to be followed by a greater. The mind of John was illuminated by the Holy Spirit, that he might shed light upon his people; but no other light ever has shone or ever will shine so clearly upon fallen man as that which emanated from the teaching and example of Jesus. Christ and His mission had been but dimly understood as typified in the shadowy sacrifices. Even John had not fully comprehended the future, immortal life through the Saviour.

(White [1898] 1948a:220)

She blends the events and activities of one dispensation with another dispensation for instance in the way Christ permeates and affirms the dispensation of Moses with that of the Gospel:

Christ, during His earthly ministry, emphasized the binding claims of the Sabbath; in all His teaching He showed reverence for the institution He Himself had given. In His days the Sabbath had become so perverted that its observance reflected the character of selfish and arbitrary men rather than the character of God. Christ set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. Although followed with merciless hostility by the rabbis, He

did not even appear to conform to their requirements, but went straight forward keeping the Sabbath according to the law of God.

(White 1917:183)

White concentrates and put a more than usual emphasis on a certain dispensation or period in the biblical timeline than on others:

The Last Period of Probation.--The gospel dispensation is the last period of probation that will ever be granted to men. Those who live under this dispensation of test and trial and yet are not led to repent and obey will perish with the disloyal. There is no second trial. The gospel that is to be preached to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples presents the truth in clear lines, showing that obedience is the condition of gaining eternal life. Christ imparts His righteousness to those who consent to let Him take away their sins. We are indebted to Christ for the grace which makes us complete in Him.

(White 1957:971)

White points in certain of her works to strong similarities of the qualitative sameness of certain principles in different dispensations as for instance those of piety, justice and leadership:

The same principles of piety and justice that were to guide the rulers among God's people in the time of Moses and of David, were also to be followed by those given the oversight of the newly organized church of God in the gospel dispensation. In the work of setting things in order in all the churches, and ordaining suitable men to act as officers, the apostles held to the high standards of leadership outlined in the Old Testament Scriptures. They maintained that he who is called to stand in a position of leading responsibility in the church 'must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.' Titus 1:7-9.

(White 1911:95)

During the Gospel dispensation and after the closing of the canon the Spirit continues its work:

In harmony with the word of God, His Spirit was to continue its work throughout the period of the gospel dispensation. During the ages while the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men

received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God.

(White [1888] 1990a:viii)

A final example of White's use of the notion of a historical time-period viewed as a dispensation is the present time we live:

The dispensation in which we are now living is to be, to those that ask the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Ask for His blessing. It is time we were more intense in our devotion. To us is committed the arduous, but happy, glorious work of revealing Christ to those who are in darkness. We are called to proclaim the special truths for this time. For all this the outpouring of the Spirit is essential. We should pray for it. The Lord expects us to ask Him. We have not been wholehearted in this work.

(White [1923] 1962:511)

Dispensations are not totally different ways or different divine historical time-periods in which different salvific schemes or different methods of administering God's grace are divinely expressed.

White in her 19th century approach goes way beyond Calvin by covering more fully the whole divine biblical horizon of creation, reconciliation in Jesus Christ and God's renewal acts in the era of the Spirit in the direction to the new heaven and new earth in God's ongoing act of fulfilment and consummation. Calvin operates mainly with two covenantal periods or dispensational realms. White is more dynamic by acknowledging more dispensational realms and periods within the divine historical timeline from God's creation to fulfilment. In her faith reflexive pattern of faith dispensational eras overlap and permeate each other without connecting them too tightly and without distinguishing them too strictly. She refers to the Moses, the Gospel and Spirit dispensations amongst others. In each dispensation God works with human beings not only in a very particular and distinct way but in a very pertinent way on the one hand but there is on the other a radical permeation of every dispensational era by the central setting and embodiment of God's dynamic communicative love through and in Jesus Christ's life, cross

and resurrection as God's primordial divine/human exemplar of how heaven and earth are contracted and combined.

The biblical historical trajectory of biblical history enfolds and embraces the whole series of events and happenings spanning the period from the creational beginnings of humanity and the world till the fulfilling ambience of the new heavens and the earth. This embracing historical rendition is elaborated and spelled out through the embrace and encapsulation of God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment through all modes, fields and dimensions of experience as expressive of the Commonwealth of God in the Kingdom, Priesthood and Prophetdom sense of the word.

White's central dialectic we have seen emerges in two trajectories. The first trajectory is the centrality of Christ in the dialectical duality of God and human beings in which God's communicative love is expressed through and in Christ as God's prototypical and exemplary contracted template of heaven and earth and of the essential core of every dispensation. White says in this regard:

There is no such contrast as is often claimed to exist between the Old and the New Testament, the law of God and the gospel of Christ, the requirements of the Jewish and those of the Christian dispensation. Every soul saved in the former dispensation was saved by Christ as verily as we are saved by Him today. Patriarchs and prophets were Christians. The gospel promise was given to the first pair in Eden, when they had by transgression separated themselves from God. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The Hebrews all drank of that spiritual Rock, which was Christ.

(White 1956b:1061)

The second trajectory is the process of divine history expounded in the biblical and salvation historical timeline from Genesis to Revelation in time periods or dispensations. The strong trajectory of dispensational or covenantal eras established and demarcated in the biblical historical timeline in White's works emerged through being influenced by the mixing of biblical historical impulses from the official mainline Reformational as well as Radical Reformational worlds as well as the mixing of impulses from the two sides of Puritanism of formalistic law abiding Puritan experiences and pietist Puritanism in which the striving of certainty is achieved through increasing experience of piousness in a puritan version of holiness. Last but not least

one has to acknowledge the impulses of John Wesley the advocator of the centrality of Jesus enfolded in a constant experiential realm of holiness as well as Baptist New England Puritans and Anabaptist 19th century movements and groups.

God's communicative love is expressed within the array of dispensations but is not bound by them. White in a message to teachers emphasised the higher importance of God's love than the notion of dispensations:

Bible instruction is to be made forcible by the holy life of the teacher. God-fearing teachers will practice every principle they seek to imprint on the minds of the children. Such teachers do not see their heavenly Father except by the eye of faith; but they have learned of Him; they read His love in the most trying dispensations. They do not judge their Creator by dispensations; they are partakers of His divine nature. They can trust Him who withheld not His only-begotten Son, knowing that with Him He will give all things for their spiritual and eternal good.

(White 1913:183)

3.3 The notion of the trinity and the biblical historical timeline

3.3.1 Introduction

The speculative reflection on the operations of the three 'persons' in the Godhead differently portrayed and differently worked out was a contributing factor to the split between the Eastern and the Western church in 1054 CE. The problem with the notion of the trinity is mainly twofold. Firstly the three persons of the trinity in any theological reflection scheme is not strictly and directly linked to God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation and renewal not to speak of God's future oriented act of fulfilment of everything.

Anyone accepting the sense-making logic of the first millennium notion of 'three as one' God or 'one as three' God lays the table for immense speculation that has very little to do with the grand acts of God in the biblical historical timeline. Many expositions and renditions of the notion of the trinity were given the past two millennia, but it revolves around the idea of God as one being equals three beings, modes, processes, operations or persons. The main speculation has to do with the second leg as whether the three beings, modes, etc were of the same ontological quality

or had the same weight as God as one being.’ In many churches in the second millennium an uneasy truce with this sense-making logic of the first millennium that everything in their world from God to human beings had to be distinguished into three parts or sections emerged.

The first millennium logic of a something that is equal to three things but is also not equal to the three things with regard to God as a Trinitarian God found its main expression between 325-553 CE. At the church council of Nicea in 325CE a small minority of church leaders decided that Jesus Christ is God. This council under the forceful leadership of Emperor Constantine who was out of political expediency not a Christian, at the time laid the table for the centuries of trinitarian speculation (Heussi 1971:96). At the council of 381CE in Constantinople the addition of the Holy Spirit as God completed the notion of God as a Trinitarian God (Heussi 1971:98). The notion of the trinity is from the start controversial. This is demonstrated at the council meetings of Ephesus in 431CE, Chalcedon in 451CE and Constantinople in 553CE (Bakhuizen van den Brink 1965:227). The 553CE council meeting ‘solves’ the problem by aligning themselves with what they called the ‘Holy Fathers’ and their four ‘Holy Councils.’

These four council meetings received later special status as ecumenical meetings representative of the whole church of those days which not one of the ecumenical councils were. Round 600CE pope Gregorian in Rome set the four ecumenical meetings on par with the four Gospels of the New Testament as cornerstones of Christian orthodoxy. Except at Ephesus where bribery took place, it was the emperors who mainly determined Christian doctrines.

At the beginning of the second millennium the sense making logic was changing. It is noteworthy that the earliest representative of the nominalist movement was Roscellinus of Compiègne in the 11th century. He applied the early forms of nominalism to the doctrine of the trinity and came to a denial of the unity of being of the three persons of the trinity and his contemporaries accused him of tritheism (three Gods). Since the synod of Soisson 1092 CE where Roscellinus’ views were condemned nominalism was held as a heresy (Heussi 1971:201). It was only in the 14th and 15th century that nominalism re-emerged but then in full force as the undercarriage of the 16th century Reformation. In the period between the 11th and the 14th century extreme realism was accepted by a neo-platonic minority and moderate realism by an Aristotelian majority (Heussi 1971:201).

The nominalist procedure and program from 1100-1600 was a total changeover and subversion of the sense making approach of the first millennium with its perpetual classification system of threesomes and trichotomies of three levels, three substances or three essences into which every being, thing and event were divided, even God, to an approach which in broad terms simultaneously still let God face human beings and the natural world while letting God, human beings and the natural world operate within the same realm or on the same level as the realm or the level of the world where we experience and experiment with God, ourselves and things around us.

The scholastic and speculative approaches of the era from 1100-1600 operated fully with the first millennium notion of dividing and viewing God, human beings and the natural world as operating on three cascading hierarchical levels of emergence and manifestation of *realness* and *logicalness*. While the emergence and manifestation of realness and logicalness roll down from the top that is God, while the rising increase and ascending upsurge of realness and logicity start from bottom that is the natural world to the top. The natural world and human beings are linked to the God as the most real being and the most complete being full of logical possibilities.

The underlying sense making intention of nominalism is best described as a late medieval revolution against the schemes of rising levels of increasing realness to more real and concreter and rising levels of increasing logicalness to more speculative and abstracter substances and essences found in their completeness in God at the top of the scheme. These schemes no longer made sense in the new era because what the continuation of the old procedures in the new era did was to obfuscate and blur the experience of people regarding God, themselves and the natural world. In the process of renouncing metaphysics by establishing physics in the study of the natural world, nominalism ventured to strip theology and the theological schemes such as the notion of the trinity of all its distorting hierarchical speculative and high-above-the-world theological shackles. The result was that the Scriptures became the exploration area for faith reflection and extraction and acquirement of meaning for everyday life and the notion as an operational hypothesis for daily life, fell at the wayside. The result was that the prior decrees of God were emphasised as they were seen to be operationally embodied and embedded in the world at the expense of speculation about God as the most real being and the most thoughtful being from whom we have to derive our thoughts, beliefs and meanings for everyday life.

The new image of God emerging from the approach which in broad terms simultaneously still let God face human beings and the natural world while letting God, human beings and the natural world operate within the same realm or on the same level of the world is that of the covenantal God who through his self-commitment in his *pactum* or *foedus* becomes the contractual partner in creation and salvation. If a human being stands before God as a contractual partner whom God has contracted, accepted and pledged to reward, a human being is no longer a second cause moved by God the first cause as prime mover of all things in the world and in the church. In other words, God is no longer directly causing and working packages of qualitative realness and pockets of meaningful thoughts in the world of human beings and the church, but a human being received his or her own role before God. In this new sense making approach a human being has become the appointed representative and partner of God responsible for his or her own life in the broader society, the church and the world, on the basis and within the limits of the treaty, *pactum* or covenant stipulated by God (Oberman 1986:29).

The carrier notion of the nominalist program is the notion of contingency and contingent, meaning the reality and the world we live in is full of incidental occurrences and individual things. In the nominalist program this should be understood in two directions, embracing both the vertical relation God-human-world and the horizontal relation past-world-human-future. Reality and the world full of incidental occurrences and individual things happening and set within the ordered framework of God's power should not be seen as unreliable and unrelated accidental occurrences and things. In the vertical dimension of God-human-world in nominalism Godly factors are Godly factors, human factors are human factors and natural worldly factors are natural worldly factors. In the horizontal dimension of past-world-human-future an alternate form of contingent and contingency opens up of a complexity of human and natural worldly factors added to divine factors in the course of events viewed in the past or towards the future.

Very seldom in history is in a linear historical sense God the Father linked to the act of creation, God as Son linked to reconciliation and God the Spirit linked to God's act of renewal beginning with Pentecost in the biblical timeline. When the linkages of Father, Son and Holy Spirit with creation, reconciliation and renewal had been concluded different directions were attempted. Either the notion of the trinity broke into three Gods, or had been viewed as one God with three operational ways that is a creational, reconciliatory and renewal operational way or the notion of

a threesome in any way totally disappeared in favour of the notion that there is one God with thousands of dimensions, sides and ways.

3.3.2 Calvin and the Trinitarian problem

It flows from this state of affairs that Calvin emphasised the realms of creation and reconciliatory salvation as his main biblical reflexive realms in which God, human beings and the natural world are reflected upon (Van Niekerk 2009b:42-43). Calvin's main sense making line of operation is the biblical salvation historical timeline following the grand acts of God though Calvin emphasised creation and reconciliation more than God's acts of renewal and fulfilment. The notion of the trinity in the broader scheme of the grand acts of God in Calvin's work is a bit extraneous, though Calvin asserts that the Trinitarian view of God plays a strong role in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* of 1559 (Calvin [1559] 1960a:13).

If one operates with the notion of the trinity expressing the idea of one God with three persons subsisting as Father, Son and Holy Spirit like Calvin ([1559]1960a:13), it is glaringly clear that one cannot link the three persons successively to God's divine historical acts of creation, reconciliation and renewal. The divine historical timeline is the ground structure of Calvin's main theological reflexive realms of creation and reconciliation in which God, human beings and the natural created world reflected on in the sense of the one not without the other. What Calvin is doing, and many before and after him, was to employ the notion of the trinity of one God in three persons as guarantee for the unity of God and God's actions by reading Christ or the Spirit into most obscure texts in the Old Testament.

It is also clear that the notion of the trinity is an auxiliary construction for Calvin's main procedure of working in the biblical historical timeline. For Calvin when he writes about the trinity as such he took on the garb of the church tradition and states lamely that expressions such as 'trinity' and 'person' applied to God aid the interpretation of Scripture and are therefore admissible (Calvin [1559] 1960a:13). He further adds that the church in history has regarded expressions like 'trinity' and 'person' as necessary to unmask false teachers (Calvin [1559] 1960a:13). Remarkably Calvin uses his writing on the trinity to demonstrate how biblically grounded the notion of the trinity is expressive of God's 'infinite and spiritual essence' (Calvin

[1559] 1960a:13) without venturing into the question of how could the respective persons be linked to the grand acts of God.

Calvin's continuation with the traditional doctrine of the trinity in his work is also at odds with his notion of what others called his *extra-calvinisticum* tendency. The term 'extra' in the phrase demonstrates the extra in Calvin's work that is not to be found in the writings, sayings and doings of his fellow reformers in the 16th century. The notion of the *extra-calvinisticum*, meant for Calvin (and Zwingli) that Christ after his ascension, still had his resurrected humanity and full humanness with him (Weber 1962:153; Van Niekerk 2009b:36). Thus, Christ is not been present through his own actions but through the Holy Spirit who applies the cross and the resurrection of Jesus as the present making and saving tools of God in this world, in churches and in people's lives. According to Van Niekerk (2009b:37), Servetus who is been sent to die at the stake by Calvin in his views of the trinity is surprisingly closer to the thrust of Calvin's *extra-Calvinisticum* than Calvin's own views on the trinity. Calvin's trinitarian formula if he was to be consistent with his idea of the *extra-Calvinisticum* should have been something like the following: God, the Father, God, the divine and human Son, and God, the Holy Spirit.

The contradiction in Calvin's work resulted from an alignment with ancient church doctrines such as that of the trinity while Calvin himself strongly emphasised the Bible as his main exploration area for reflection on God, human beings and the natural world. While Calvin's emphasis on the biblical historical timeline embracing the grand acts of God's creation and reconciliation stems from the sense making ambience of the new realism of nominalism and Renaissance humanism of his era, the notion of the trinity is a fully fledged doctrine that emerged from the ecclesial and political struggles of the first millennium.

Calvin while working in the anti-scholastic ambience of Renaissance humanism and nominalism was not sufficiently aware that by accepting the Trinitarian doctrine of the scholastic church tradition with its speculative coordinates, God is thereby positioned outside God's own grand acts. A human theological construction came to life as the Trinitarian God in the church tradition. The main problem with the notion of the trinity is that the constructed realm of theologians being portrayed in church doctrines of the three-in-one divine beings in action in and through the Trinitarian God is set above God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and

fulfilment. When the Trinitarian God is in some way or other connected to the biblical timeline theologians use the term economical trinity while for the trinity above and outside the biblical timeline the term ontological trinity is used. The terms ontological or economic trinity is another way of applying the bifocal procedure of reflecting simultaneously on the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of God.

3.3.3 White and the Trinitarian problem

Early Seventh-day Adventists rejected the notion of the trinity. The notion of the trinity never played any determinative role in Ellen White’s reflection on the biblical historical timeline as it has functioned as an operational tool for theological speculation in many other theologies and doctrinal reflection of many of the mainline churches. She, however, alludes to the ‘three living persons of the heavenly trio (White [1946] 1970:615). Her reflection in *Evangelism* ([1946] 1970:613-617) suggests that she believed that the Scriptures taught the existence of three co-eternal divine persons. White also states in *The Desire of Ages* in 1898:

...sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power.

(White [1898] 1948a:671)

In the current world there is a deliberate attempt to view the last phase of White’s writings as definitive regarding the notion of the trinity. This is arrived through an interpretative unlocking of the developmental line in the Seventh-day Adventist world about the notion of the trinity from the early anti-trinitarian views to the shift and turn Ellen G. White made in 1898 with her work *The Desire of Ages*. The real problem arises when the notion of the trinity is superimposed on White’s work as her main working hypothesis replacing her immense contribution and unlocking of the biblical historical timeline in the 19th and 20th century world with an unhistorical Trinitarian dogma of three divine persons.

Moon asserts regarding the developmental line of White:

Her writings about the Godhead show a clear progression, not primarily from anti- to protrinitarianism, but from relative ambiguity to greater specificity. Some of her early statements are capable of various interpretations, but her later statements, 1898-1906, are explicit to the point of being dogmatic.

(Moon 2003b:278)

In the current Seventh-day Adventist world, three periods of development regarding the notion of the trinity from the early beginnings are acknowledged. For clarity sake we follow the exposition of Moon in his two essays on the Adventist Trinity Debate (2003a and 2003b). The three periods are:

3.3.3.1 Period of anti-Trinitarianism: 1846-1888

Jerry Moon summarises the reasons for the early rejection of the notion of the trinity as the following:

1. Early Adventists did not see biblical evidence for three persons in one Godhead.
2. They thought the Trinity made the Father and the Son identical.
3. They believed the misconception that the doctrine of the Trinity teaches the existence of three Gods.

JN Loughborough stated for example in 1861: 'If Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each God, it would be three Gods (1861; cited from Moon 2003).

4. They believed the doctrine of the Trinity would diminish the value of the atonement.

J.H. Waggoner (1884): Since the 'everliving, self-existent God' cannot die, then if Christ had self-existence as God, he couldn't have died on the cross (cited from Moon 2003).

5. The fact that Christ is called 'Son of God' and 'the beginning of the creation of God' (Revelation 3:14) was thought to prove that he must be of more recent origin than God the Father.

6. The variety of expressions used to refer to the Holy Spirit indicates that *it* could not properly be considered a person.

Moon's conclusion about these reasons boils down to the following statement:

These arguments made sense within an overall antitrinitarian paradigm, but when that paradigm was called into question, these points were recognized as being capable of fitting either interpretation. None of these is a valid objection to the basic trinitarian concept of one God in three Persons.

(Moon 2003a:118)

A closer reading of each of these reasons points to the sense making 19th century Adventist ambience of experience from which these arguments emerged. They were not born out of an anti-trinitarian or an anti-mainline church mindset as such but arose out of an extremely strong emphasis on the biblical historical timeline as the area of all reflection (theology) about God, human beings and the natural world. Moon accepts too easily ‘the basic trinitarian concept of one God in three Persons’, the *Deus est Trinitas* of the ancient Church doctrine (Barth 1975:350) as a broad working hypothesis. The first millennium logic of the trinity as a closed system notion is under extreme pressure from wholesome sense making views of our era that discovered the time-space reality of the biblical historical way of reflection about God, human beings and the natural world. In this regard early Seventh-day Adventists and EG White of the early period were precursors in directing the way to the unlocking of a biblical historical reflexive way of theological discourse.

The first argument that early Adventists did not see biblical evidence for three persons in one Godhead is underwritten by no other than Karl Barth who used the notion of the trinity as one of the grounding structures of his own theological dogmatics:

Already in the early Church the doctrine of the Trinity was attacked on the ground that it is not biblical, that in the form in which it was formulated by the Church’s theology it cannot be read anywhere in the Bible. This is especially true of the crucial terms ‘essence’ and ‘person’ which theology used. But it is also true of the word ‘Trinity’ itself.

(Barth 1975:308)

Barth continues by saying that

...the Bible can no more contain the dogma of the Trinity explicitly than it can contain other dogmas explicitly....We cannot prove the truth of the dogma that is not as such in the Bible merely from the fact that it is a dogma, but rather from the fact that we can and must regard it as a good interpretation of the Bible.

(Barth 1975:310)

The second argument of early Adventists who ‘thought the Trinity made the Father and the Son identical’ is born out of the experience of people who adhered to the divine biblical historical

timeline as the operational area in which and through which God (the Father) worked. In terms of this experiential world directed at the end of times arguing in terms of the notion of the trinity of three persons operating as equal partners on the same level brought them already into one of the major problems of the Trinitarian approach which in hundreds of years had not been solved by the mainline churches since the first millennium.

The third argument of early Adventists who ‘believed the misconception that the doctrine of the Trinity teaches the existence of three Gods’ actually did not have a misconception in this regard. Church history is full of struggles especially around the point of the notion of the trinity as expressive of three Gods. Apart from the practical experience of many in various churches that the notion of the trinity amounts to the existence of three Gods, the early Adventists operated in terms of Jesus Christ as the central scope of the biblical historical timeline in a similar sense as what Barth later did in the 20th century by scoping the biblical historical timeline from Genesis to Revelation as constituted mainly between the first and the imminent second coming of Christ.

The fourth argument of early Adventists who ‘believed the doctrine of the Trinity would diminish the value of the atonement’ again is born out of their experience of atonement in Jesus Christ as the central scope of the biblical historical timeline set between the first and the imminent second coming of Christ.

The fifth argument of early Adventists that ‘Christ is called ‘Son of God’ and ‘the beginning of the creation of God’ (Revelation 3:14) was thought to prove that he must be of more recent origin than God the Father’ though problematical as an argument in the general sense of the word, is an honest acknowledgement of the quality of the divine historical timeline presented in the Bible that the Father could more be linked to creation and Christ as the Son of God with atonement and reconciliation.

The sixth argument of early Adventists that ‘the variety of expressions used to refer to the Holy Spirit indicates that *it* could not properly be considered a person’ has as an underlying argument that the metaphors and images with which the workings and actions of the Spirit as God’s Spirit are described in the Biblical historical timeline demonstrate the characteristics of instrumentality and organic action of God.

Moon is correct in viewing these arguments as anti-trinitarian but what he is not realising is that any version of the first millennium notion of a Trinitarian God cannot be easily fitted into the 19th century emphasis of a divine historical timeline covering the Bible from start to finish. Except for various populist reasons against the notion of a trinity such as that some Evangelical Christians are questioning traditional Trinitarianism and that some Adventists believe church leaders and theologians sold out the ‘original’ Adventist belief on the doctrine of God for the sake of public relations and ecumenical goodwill, there is another reason found in Calvin which is remarkably similar to why the notion of the trinity as ‘one God in three divine persons’ fits in very problematically with Adventist and EG White’s views. If Christ is a divine and human being and if the divinity and humanity is closely aligned but not mixed then Jesus Christ as divine and human Son of God is totally different from the sole divine Son of God of ninety nine percent of Trinitarian schemes in history. Why the trinity is not actually operational in Calvin’s reflection in especially his Institutes of 1559 in spite of innumerable attempts to defend him in this regard is because his views should have been ‘God as Father, God and Human - Son of God and God as Spirit’ which would clearly make the classical Trinitarian dogma of *Deus est Trinitas* unworkable.

3.3.3.2 A period of dissatisfaction with Anti-Trinitarianism: 1888-1898

According to Moon the 1888 emphasis on righteousness by faith and the consequent exaltation of the cross of Christ called into question whether a subordinate, derived divinity of Christ could adequately account for the saving power of Christ. This period can be regarded as the period in which the ambiguity between Adventism’s emphasis on the biblical historical timeline of the Bible and the notion of the trinity was at its peak.

EJ Waggoner in 1890 expressed this ambiguity with his insistence to ‘set forth Christ’s rightful position of equality with the Father, in order that His power to redeem may be better appreciated.’ He also states that Christ has ‘life in Himself’; He possesses immortality in His own right’ (Waggoner 1890:19-22). The more the divinity of Christ was emphasised and lesser his humanity, the more Trinitarian Waggoner’s views became and lesser he was reflecting in terms of the historical timeline of God’s salvation work. It is clear from Moon’s following

statement that to be Trinitarian in one's reflection means necessary to have three divine persons on a par in what a trinity should be:

Waggoner was not yet fully trinitarian [by 1890 when he wrote his book *Christ and His Righteousness*], but he saw clearly that a more exalted conception of Christ's work of redemption demanded a higher conception of his being as Deity.

(Moon 2003a:113-129)

The omission of a 'higher conception of his being as a man' meaning more human is not part of Moon's reflection on this period. In the same period Ellen G. White spoke totally other language than Moon (and Waggoner) in a letter to Waggoner and Jones in 1887:

It was poverty that as He passed to and fro among the subjects He came to save, scarcely a solitary voice called Him blessed, scarcely a solitary hand was stretched out in friendship, and scarcely a solitary roof proffered Him shelter. Then look beneath the disguise, and whom do we see?--Divinity, the Eternal Son of God, just as mighty, just as infinitely gifted with all the resources of power, and He was found in fashion as a man.

(White [1888] 1987:28)

The importance of this quotation especially the part which says '--Divinity, the Eternal Son of God, just as mighty, just as infinitely gifted with all the resources of power, and He was found in fashion as a man' could be viewed as anti-trinitarian because of the close alignment of divinity and humanity in the eternal Son of God in the disguise and fashion as a man.

3.3.3.3 Paradigm shift: 1898-1915

White on the other hand in the 19th century lived in a world where the sense-making experience of the notion of the trinity has already been experienced as something far away from biblical history and the biblical historical salvific timeline. It is not a question of for followers of White whether she denied or fully embraced the notion of the trinity. The notion of the trinity to a large extent is not White's main operational hypothesis. Her emphasis on the divine historical timeline of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation made the doctrine of the trinity as it was professed by the majority of mainline churches redundant in her writings. Ellen G. White and other Seventh-day Adventist members who underemphasised the notion of a Trinitarian God –

some even rejected the trinity – were closer to the biblical historical timeline than the majority of mainline churches who fully acknowledges the notion of a trinity as a central doctrine but whose members in their daily lives experience very little of what is reflected about in high theological Trinitarian reflection.

White's main approach of reflection is concretely embedded in concrete biblical reflection on the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. In terms of her main approach the notion of the trinity as an operational hypothesis plays a secondary role even more secondary than in Calvin's approach. The debate around Ellen G. White as a fully fledged Trinitarian protagonist in line with the Trinitarian dogma of the *Deus est Trinitas* in the later part of her life has to be conducted in terms of the main thrust of her sense making God-human-world view that is that she was always reflecting within the ambience of the divine historical timeline expressed in the portrayal of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment.

The discussion around her fully fledged Trinitarian views follows the following route of argumentation: Though Ellen G. White did not at first recognise God's Trinitarian nature from the beginning of her ministry, she portrayed God as a personal, literal, and tangible being, in contrast to 'spiritualisers' and deists who viewed God as a distant, impersonal, mystical, and ultimately unreal being. Contrary to this argument one has to state that it is not a question of White not recognising God's Trinitarian nature but that her main focus was to follow the divine historical timeline of God's grand acts as markers for the realm in which she reflected on God human beings and the natural world. The latter way of doing is precisely what she did not find in the notion of the *Deus est Trinitas* hovering in a speculative sense above God's acts as portrayed for her in the biblical historical timeline.

The advocates of White as a full fledged trinitarian supporter proceed by arguing that when White changed her views as she did in the 1890's and 1900's, God has been described as real individual persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, she emphasised their *threeness* as willing, thinking, social, and relational persons, and explained their *oneness* in terms of nature, character, purpose, and love, but not in terms of being one person. Moon in his extensive work on the growth pattern of the Trinitarian notion of God in White's writings states:

There is a clear progression from the simple to the complex, suggesting that Ellen White's understanding did grow and change as she received additional light.

(Moon 2009b:284)

Granted that there are various growth patterns of various themes and issues in White's life, one has to be aware that an etymological study and an attempt to group terms, words, notions and metaphors she used through her life in terms of a theological and epistemological scheme that transcends the biblical historical timeline is an attempt to venture into the direction of a speculative mainline church trajectory. White's sense making God-human-nature approach in a specific work and in her works as a whole should theologically be investigated in terms of her emphasis on the reflexive realm of the historical timeline.

One has to be extremely aware especially regarding the notion of a trinitarian God that access areas for speculative theological reflection in the current Seventh-day Adventist world should not be opened because of recognition by mainline church theologies. This does not mean that concrete theological reflection in terms of the grand acts of God of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment within the biblical historical timeline should not be enhanced and taken more seriously than has thus far been the case. We have seen above how Calvin has not been consistent with his add-on of the *Deus est Trinitas* to the biblical historical reflexive realms of creation and reconciliation (redemption). How much more could it be said of White who in a stricter sense adhered to the full biblical historical timeline than Calvin. The whole speculative tradition of the notion of 'God as threesome' brings the strict connection of Christ's divinity and humanity in the grand act of God's reconciliation into an immense problem area. Thus, if we accept fully the notion that the one God is three persons (*Deus est Trinitas*) as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, then what about the humanity of the Son which in a post-incarnation sense is never loosened again in both Calvin and White's views?

There is some debate about whether the current Adventist view of the Trinity is following the classic trinitarian formula of the *Deus est Trinitas*. In this regard Moon in a presentation at the Adventist Theological Society's 2006 Trinity Symposium asserts of Ellen G. White's Trinitarian views:

She taught that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct individuals, which is not true of the medieval doctrine of the Trinity.

(http://atsjats.org/site/1/podcast/06_Trinity_Moon_Quest_Biblical_Trinity.mp3)

The view presented by Moon at this point is closing in on the notion of Tritheism and is remarkably close to the views of the nominalist Roscellinus of Compiègne in the 11th century that has been referred to above (Heussi 1971:201). Roscellinus' early nominalism to a certain extent annunciated the second millennium's sweeping logic of twosomes while bringing officially the first millennium's sweeping logic of threesomes into the binary scheme in which God faces human beings within the same realm. Because early nominalism of the 11th century and later nominalism of the 14th -16th century operated not with the typical threesome sense-making view cascading on three levels but brought God, human beings and the natural world within the same realm their sense making logic when applied to the Trinity nearly always led to three persons as with Roscellinus, three processes such as with Servetus in Calvin's era and three individuals which Jerry Moon shoves Ellen White into the shoes.

White stays within the divine historical outlines of the divine biblical historical timeline and she operates everywhere reflexively in her works with the linkage of demarcated time and space of heaven and earth, divinity and humanity (and nature) facing each other and established *through* Christ and *in* Christ. This reflexive operational mode of White specifically and particularly is applicable to her 19th century so to say nominalist view of the divine threesome she is referring to in her works. One has to be aware that the 'heaven-earth intrinsically linked in Christ' is everywhere at work in her reflexive considerations even in the very few reflexive designations she construed about the notion of the trinity. The centrality of the 'heaven-earth connection in Christ' as the operational reflexive mode of operation is not only spread and diversified in different dispensations or covenantal periods but is central in her remarks on the notion of a threesome partnership of God. It is remarkable that Moon and others are not fully aware of White's anti-speculative stance from her faith reflexive description of the biblical divine historical time and space line.

The following two quotations from White's Special Testimonies regarding a Trinitarian notion are exemplary concerning her anti-speculative stance.

The Father is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fulness 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 [1946] 1970:614)

The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fulness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. 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 co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.

(White 1906:63)

Interesting her use of the two words ‘is’ and ‘bodily’ regarding the Father as the fullness of the Godhead, the two words ‘is’ and ‘manifested’ regarding the Son as fullness of the Godhead and the two words ‘is’ and ‘making manifest’ regarding the Spirit as in all the fullness of the Godhead. The centrality lies in Christ regarding ‘divine grace’, ‘believe in Christ as a personal Saviour’, ‘those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized’ – in the name of the heavenly trio and powers – ‘cooperating with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.’ A classical speculative view of a trinity is not emphasised here but heaven and earth are bound together in Christ. One has to read the elaborate quotation above in conjunction with the way in which in Christ divine history and ordinary history, God and human beings and heaven and earth are inextricable connected,

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 [1898] 1948a:25-26)

Any strict advocator of the notion of the trinity as White’s final and determinative view emerging in the later part of her life should take the following into account:

Firstly, that White not being a speculative theologian avidly applied metaphors and images in her reflection which she mainly took from the Bible as the biblical historical exploration area of

reflection. One has to be aware of the context from which and in which she portrays and describes a certain view.

Secondly, that one has to emphasise that many of White's references and reflective utterances on the notion of the trinity had to do with her strong biblical reflective experience of 'God speaks' (*Deus dixit*) as a God of love. God as a speaking God of love is overall in action in White's writings, sayings and doings. God's love is not a reflective scheme in her works but the phrase 'God is love' as God in action appears repetitively first and foremost in her major books. A good example of the loving God in action is her use of the phrase 'God is love' provides the first three words in the first volume of the Conflict of the Ages Series (*Patriarchs and Prophets*) and the last three words of the final volume of the series (*The Great Controversy*). The many references to the notion of the trinity in her works are encapsulated under the loving God's speaking and not the other way around.

Thirdly, it is remarkable if one meanders in an investigative sense through the contexts in which references to the notion of a trinity appears in nearly all of these instances she was reacting to speculative views of others regarding God's nature or where a dualist view of God was presented or where a mixing of God and human beings were propagated or where God and the natural world were fused in a pantheistic sense as in her opposition to the views of Kellogg.

Great reflexive schemes and grand doctrines were not her intention but to portray and describe God speaking in the real and actual sense as the loving God. The absolute scarcity of quotations in the overall scheme of her immense productivity of either expressed statements against or in favour of the trinity set within a speculative dogmatic framework is evidence of her concrete reflective and anti-speculative focus.

The immense contribution White and Seventh-day Adventists made to the Christian world and thus the Kingdom of God lies firstly in the 19th changeover from an extreme emphasis of the majority of churches on God's grand acts of creation and reconciliation in Christ to a stronger emphasis on all God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment viewed and reflexively rolled forth in terms of the biblical historical timeline.

3.4 Epilogue

One has to be continuously aware that in Calvin and White's approaches the reflection is done within the margins of the biblical historical timeline in which the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment is portrayed. Though Calvin and White have considerable differences each in his and her own way reflexively speak about God continuously in direct relationship with human beings and the natural cosmic world. Their emphasis on the divine historicalness of the biblical timeline is the main reason why so little speculative and fanciful scholastic notions are found in their work. They concentrate their reflection on God not in isolation from human beings and the natural world which are so to speak Calvin and White's other reflexive partners of the triad all intrinsically involved in the reflection exercise that is carried out.

The concentration on the reflection of God's grand acts in the biblical timeline brought a dissonance between Calvin's view of how God linkage with each of the grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment is to be linked in turn with his view of the trinity. Already in Calvin's time it was clear with the aftermath of the Renaissance that the trinity which flowed from a first millennium sense making logic is with great difficulty to be linked with God's grand acts of the biblical timeline. With the glory of hindsight we see that Calvin was not aware that linking the notion of the trinity with God's grand acts created a dissonance in his sense making approach. White who operated more than Calvin with a notion of divine historicity of the biblical timeline in an era where the second millennium sense making logic was already in full swing experienced rightfully from the beginning of her ministry in the 19th century problems with the notion of the trinity. The debate whether White in her later views on the three persons of the trinity is aligning her with the tradition of the church or whether she is presenting a new way of reflection on the notion of three persons of the trinity is not yet been settled.

CHAPTER 4

Reflection on God's grand acts (continued)

4.1 God, human beings and nature connected and different

The kinds of theologies of John Calvin and Ellen G. White as 'reflexive coherences of faith patterning' expressive of their sense-making, God-human-nature experiences of their respective life-worlds are to a large extent different because they lived in different historical contexts and in different centuries with a considerable time gap between them. There is in spite of the obvious differences a remarkable similarity in the way they tackled the problem of the divine historical timeline as expressed in the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. The similarity can be further expressed in the way they tackled the mystery of the close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment as intrinsically part of each of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment.

Calvin and White consistently defied the temptation to operate with three separate avenues in which reflection on the essences of God, human beings or the natural cosmic world could be undertaken. Calvin and White seem to have largely overcome, firstly, in their reflexive dealings with God, human beings and the natural cosmic world the classic theological and philosophical sucking power of the separation of the essences of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. Secondly, they seem to have overcome the subsequent part of the classic theological and philosophical essence seeking procedure whereby speculative reflection is bi-focal directed speculatively, on the hand, at the 'inside' of God as 'God in God self' – the scholastic emphasis and on the other hand at the 'outside' of God as 'God for us' – the Protestant emphasis - and 'God in us' – the mystical emphasis of inner experience of people of God. The dual essence seeking procedure directed at the 'inside' and 'outside' of God in the history of theology was usually accompanied by investigative and speculative procedures directed anthropologically at the 'inside' - the soul and 'outside' - the body of human beings, and cosmologically at the 'inside' of the world - the logos speculation about the cosmic world and 'outside' of the world - the appearance phenomenal side of the natural cosmic world.

In the following description one has to be continuously aware that whether Calvin and White each in his or her own way concentrate their reflection on God or human beings or the natural world the other partners of the triad are intrinsically involved in the reflection exercise that is carried out. Neither God, nor human beings nor the natural world is speculatively treated in isolation and therefore detached from reflection on and of the other partners in the mystery of the very closeness but radical difference between God, human beings and the natural world. The first angle of their reflection is the framework in which their reflection takes place as has been consistently emphasised in this thesis, is the whole range of the grand acts of God as divine salvation-history in the biblical sense of the word. The second angle of their reflection is the strong emphasis on the mystery of the close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment.

4.1.1 Calvin

John Calvin's theology cum philosophy is a reflection of God, human beings and the natural world within the realms of creation and reconciliation. When Calvin in his reaction against speculative theologies draws concrete lines and operational networking activities between God, human beings and the natural world the whole reflection scheme is not only an encountering between God's mind facing the mind of a human being but also between the minds of human beings encountering each other in multiple ways. The speculative approach of the majority of scholastic theologians as an encounter of abstract ideas, words or notions is being replaced with a person-directed dialog revolving around the notion of consciousness between two minds within the triadic framework of seeing > saying > hearing (Torrance 1988:28, 88-89). We must recall that Calvin was reacting against the logic of dialectics used by various Scholastic schools in which they set abstract issues and abstract concepts in positions encountering each other. These issues and concepts would then be compared by the speculative mind of the theologian and philosopher in an attempt to measure these in terms of increasing realness or increasing perfection or both.

In Calvin's way of doing theology, while working in terms of the salvation-historical mode, God and human beings were set in an encountering position within the reflexive realms creation and reconciliation. Though the grand acts of God's renewal and fulfilment were underemphasised

and Calvin's reflexive realm leaned one-sidedly to the past, reconciliation in Christ takes a central position in Calvin's writings. Every part of Calvin's reflection on the divine biblical history from creation to fulfilment is centred on and encapsulated in Christ 'history' from Christ's death and resurrection to Christ in 'heaven' with his divine and humanness in combination at the right hand side of the Father. However, Calvin's close integration between God's essential wisdom, justice, goodness and power revolves around God's will expressed in God's kingly, expressed priestly love in Jesus Christ.

Calvin reflecting on the constant encountering position of God and human beings concentrated and located in Christ asserts, in his commentary on Genesis 28:12:

For although all power was given by the Father to Christ's human nature, yet he would not be the support of our faith if he were not God manifest in the flesh. The fact that the body of Christ is finite in no way prevents his filling of the heavens, since his grace and power is spread over all. To this Paul bears witness when he says that Christ ascended to heaven to fill all things.

(Calvin [1948] 2001: 61)

What has been demonstrated in the divine historical process in Christ emerges as the template which Calvin uses for his view on God and human beings, church and society, faith and reason and word and sacraments.

4.1.1.1 God's essence known through God's ordered will to us

Calvin throughout his writings operates with the view that God's essence is to a certain extent known through God's revealed will. Calvin reacted strongly against the bi-focal procedure of the speculative tradition of the scholastics and nominalist theologians of the Sorbonne of his days in which more or less the same amount of knowledge of God Self and knowledge of God directed to us, knowledge of God's essence and knowledge of God's revealed countenance towards human beings could be acquired and in a speculative sense be reflected on. The human mind that works with measurable things and categories cannot measure the measureless essence of God. Calvin in discussing the traditional notions of God's essence in himself and God as he reveals himself to us states:

And yet I will exert especial effort to the end that they who lend ready and open ears to God's Word may have a firm standing ground. Here, indeed, if anywhere in the secret mysteries of Scripture, we ought to play the philosopher soberly and with great moderation; let us use great caution that neither our thought nor our speech go beyond the limits to which the Word of God itself extends. For how can the human mind measure off the measureless essence of God according to its own little measure, a mind as yet unable to establish for certain the nature of the sun's body, though men's eyes daily gaze upon it? Let us then willingly leave to God the knowledge of himself. But we shall be 'leaving it to him' if we conceive him to be as he reveals himself to us, without inquiring about him elsewhere than from his Word.

(Calvin [1559] 1960a:13;21)

In Calvin's view God's essence is expressed and revealed through God's will in God's creation sustained through providence and in God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ. There is however no essence of God that is open to the theologian and which operates on the same level as God's expressed and demonstrated will in God's creation and God's providence and God's reconciliation in Jesus Christ. According to Calvin:

...the Scriptural teaching concerning God's infinite and spiritual essence ought to be enough, not only to banish popular delusions, but also to refute the subtleties of secular philosophy.

(Calvin [1559] 1960a:13;21)

God's infinite and spiritual essence is carried and revealed in God's creational will and providence and in Jesus Christ. Calvin does not work with any cause superior to God's expressed will because God's expressed will in his creation and in Christ whose divinity is the Word of God (Calvin [1948] 2001:61;75). In Calvin's approach, God accommodates the knowledge of himself to our slight capacity and to do that God descends far beneath his own loftiness (Calvin [1559] 1960a:13). One has immediately to add that God's revealed will in God's creation and reconciliation is directed at human beings through the commandments of God. Calvin calls in commentary on Romans 12:2 the knowledge of God's will true wisdom through which we seek in great eagerness what is right and what is wrong (Water 2004:728).

Regarding Christ's central role in expression of God's will Calvin states:

For Christ is that image in which God presents to our view, not only his heart, but also his hands and his feet. I give the name of his *heart* to that secret love with which he embraces us in Christ: by his hands and feet I understand those works of his which are displayed before our eyes. As soon as ever we depart from Christ, there is nothing, be it ever so gross or insignificant in itself, respecting which we are not necessarily deceived.

(Calvin [1948] 2001:64)

Calvin in his commentary on Micah 4:3 reflects on how little each one of us as human beings practice brotherly and sisterly love:

Daily God declares himself reconciled to us in his Son. Christ bears witness in this law of love that he is the giver of peace with God. He offers himself for us, so that we may willingly and quickly be brothers to one another. And we desire indeed to be enrolled as sons of God; we desire to enjoy the reconciliation won for us by the blood of Christ. But meanwhile we tear at one another; we sharpen our teeth; our minds are wholly ruthless. If we wish to prove ourselves disciples of Christ we must heed this part of his teaching and each one of us strive to help his neighbours.

(Calvin: Commentaries 1958:186)

Calvin operates with double views of Christ as the priestly king. On the one hand, Calvin describes in his commentary on Micah 4:3 the earthly reign of Christ through the church and the kingdom of Christ as mediator in the sense of a priestly king which concentrates not only on the human nature nor only on his eternal divinity but on the mediation between us and God because of our own weakness and sin (Calvin: Commentaries 1958:161). Calvin in his commentary on Romans 8:34, reflects on the divine majesty of Christ as not terrifying us but rather kindly inviting us to himself in his appearance before God, the Father as intercessor:

We are not to measure this intercession by our carnal judgment, for we must not think of him as humbly supplicating the Father on bended knee and with outstretched hand. Christ, however, is justly said to intercede for us because he appears continually before the Father in his death and resurrection, which takes the place of eternal intercession, and to have the efficacy of lively prayer for reconciling the Father and making him ready to listen to us.

(Calvin Commentary Romans 1961:186)

The reign of Christ follows the divine historical timeline through God's acts of creation and reconciliation

...the reign of Christ had already begun when God wished the gospel to be preached everywhere and today it is still in progress and not yet complete.

(Calvin: Commentaries 1958:187)

The Kingdom of Christ which is still ongoing will at the end be turned over to God and the Father, who will be all in all, according to Calvin in line with Paul's view in 1 Corinthians 15:24. Calvin states in this regard: 'Obviously, Christ does reign not only in his human nature, but as God manifest in the flesh. How then will he put aside his Kingship? Plainly, the divinity which we now discern only on the face of Christ will then be seen openly and conspicuously in him as his' (Calvin: Commentaries 1958:181). The divine historical process leading to the point where Christ's divinity will be seen as his own is described by Calvin from Christ's ascendance from earth to heaven when 'the rays of his divine brightness began to shine' and the end when Christ's Kingdom will be handed over to the Father and we will be led to 'the fountainhead of blessed immortality' (Calvin: Commentaries 1958:181).

4.1.1.2 Oneself/Us

When Calvin speaks either in the first person singular 'I' or plural 'we' mode he usually reflects about our weakness and sin in relationship to God's power and perfection. What Calvin continuously recommends is humility before God in piety and humility before one's neighbour through love (Calvin [1559] 1960b:53). Calvin in reflecting on Romans 12:6 with regard to people having gifts according to the grace that was given to them asserts:

Paul does not now speak simply of cherishing brotherly love among ourselves, but commends humility as the best means of regulating our whole life. All men desire to have enough to prevent them from needing help from their bretheren. But there is a bond of fellowship when no one has sufficient for himself, but is forced to borrow from others. I admit, therefore, that the fellowship of the godly exists only when each one is content with his own measure, and imparts to his brethren the gifts which he has received, and in turn allows himself to be assisted by the gifts of others.

(Commentary Romans 1961:186)

There is no injunction from God or the Bible for a human being to love himself or herself in the Calvinian mode. The self in the depraved state of sin is weak and in the restored state of grace

should be in the mode of humility. In the mode of humility the human self should have a pious fear of God through faith and loving observance of the neighbour through love. Calvin emphasises that

...the law and the prophets give first place to faith and whatever pertains to the lawful worship of God, relegating love to a subordinate position. But the Lord means that the law only enjoins us to observe right and equity toward men, that thereby we may become practiced in witnessing to a pious fear of him, if we have any of it in us.

(Calvin [1559] 1960b:53)

There is no reason according to Calvin to advance the notion of self-love:

In the entire law we do not read one syllable that lays a rule upon man as regards those things which he may or may not do, for the advantage of his own flesh. And obviously, since men were born in such a state that they are all too much inclined to self-love – and, however much they deviate from truth, they still keep self-love – there was no need of a law that would increase or rather enkindle this already excessive love. Hence it is very clear that we keep the commandments not by loving ourselves but by loving God and neighbour; that he lives the best and holiest life who lives and strives for himself as little as he can, and that no one lives in a worse or more evil manner than he who lives and strives for himself alone, and thinks about and seeks only his own advantage. Indeed to express how profoundly we must be inclined to love our neighbors [Lev.19:18], the Lord measured it by the love of ourselves because he had at hand no more violent or stronger emotion than this.

(Calvin [1559] 1960b:54)

4.1.1.3 A human being's accountable but determined will

The centuries old problem-setting of 'divine determination...free will' as divine determination of a human being's actions over against a free will expression of the actions of a human being is riddled with the problem of transgression of the borders between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. In classical scholasticism God was the first cause of what happened in people's lives and the natural world. In the nominalist era strongly supported and co-made by Renaissance humanism the first cause philosophy was left behind in favour of secondary causes on a second level where human responsibility and accountability was more respected and taken into account.

Calvin dealt against the backdrop of the scholastic distinction between first and secondary causes mainly with secondary causes concerning God's actions, human doings and events and the natural world in his reflexive realms of creation and reconciliation portrayed for him in the Bible. He could do that because of his anti-speculative stance not speculating on first causes usually seated in the essence of God self. The essence of God is a secret to Calvin which he only knows to a certain extent through God's ordered and expressed will in *creation* (and providence) and *Christ's reconciliatory mediatorship* as portrayed in the Bible. To know that God has expressed and is still expressing his will in creation and reconciliation presented Calvin with a high degree of certainty in an era that was highly uncertain and to a large degree encapsulated with anxiety.

In Calvin's sense making approach God's ordered and revealed will through creation and providence generally determining and embracing all people and the natural world and God's ordered and revealed will in Christ determining and embracing in a particular sense those people elected by God's eternity by God's decree. Calvin is very explicit as to how he links and distinguishes God's foreknowledge and God's eternal decree that sends some to eternal life and others to eternal damnation:

No one who wishes to be thought religious dares simply deny predestination, by which God adopts some to hope of life, and sentences others to eternal death. But our opponents, especially those who make foreknowledge its cause, envelop it in numerous petty objections. We, indeed, place both doctrines in God, but we say that subjecting one to the other is absurd.

When we attribute foreknowledge to God, we mean that all things always were and perpetually remain, under his eyes, so that to his knowledge there is nothing future or past, but all only conceives them through ideas, as we have before us those things which our minds remember, but he truly looks upon them and discerns them as things placed before him. And this foreknowledge is extended throughout the universe to every creature. We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others. Therefore, as any man has been created to one or the other of these ends, we speak of him as predestined to life or to death.

(Calvin [1559] 1960c:21)

Calvin's reflection on and description in his Institutes Book 3, chapter 21, section 5 on the distinction between his notion of predestination and the foreknowledge of God moves into a

highly speculative and problematic area in which he transcends his usual demarcated reflexive biblical historic space realm and time line of creation and reconciliation. The attempt by Wendel (1968:246-251) and many others in the Calvinist tradition to relativise the extreme speculative reflection of Calvin on the distinction between foreknowledge and predestination by showing that he is in line with Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Bucer and Duns Scotus is a grand side-stepping of the speculative nature of Calvin's views on this point. Wendel in emphasising the distinction between foreknowledge and predestination does not recognise the unjustified speculative distinction of foreknowledge extended to *every* creature and foreordination directed only to *some* to eternal life and *others* to eternal damnation. Calvin's standard way of viewing the ordered will of God as the expression of God's secret mind and anthropologically the ordered will of a human being as the expression of the higher part of the soul that is the intellect of a human being. Moreover, we know God through God's ordered will in creation and providence and through God's special ordered will in Christ. Calvin's attempt to soften the blow of the double predestination by making a distinction between foreknowledge and foreordination might be one of the most speculative and scholastic parts of his whole sense making God-human-nature approach.

Calvin's emphasis is when his reflection is in the 'us and we' mode directed at the expressed will of God in creation and in the Bible as the word of God and directed at how the will of a human being is aligned with God's will or at war with God's will. This means further translated into Calvin's distinction between faith and love set in the 'us and we' mode, we are directed through piety and faith awakened love to love God and to love our neighbours.

In the circumstances where our will as human beings is not brought in alignment through God's secret governing providence with God's will the will of a human being is at war with the will of God. Calvin reflecting in the 'us and we' mode about the will of a human being at war with the will of God, comments on Romans 8:7 – 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be' (NKJV 1976:973).

Let us observe here that the will of man is in all respects opposed to the divine will, for there must be as great a difference between us and God as there is between depravity and uprightness...The meditations of the flesh are at war with the will of God, for the will of God can be sought only where He has revealed it. In the law God shows us what is pleasing to Him. Those, therefore, who wish to

examine properly how far they agree with God, test all their purposes and practices by this standard. Although nothing is done in this world except by the secret governing providence of God, to use this as an excuse and say that nothing happens without His approbation is intolerable blasphemy. What foolishness it is to seek in a deep labyrinth for the distinction between right and wrong which the law has plainly and distinctly set before our eyes. The Lord, as I have said, does indeed have His own hidden counsel, by which He orders all things as He pleases; but because it is incomprehensible to us, we should know that we are debarred from a too curious investigation into it. For the meantime let this truth remain unalterable – only righteousness pleases God, and only by the law, in which He has faithfully testified what He approves or disapproves, can we form a right judgment of our works.

(Commentary Romans 1961:162)

Calvin regards the secret governing providence of God as expressed in the grace of Christ. The grace of Christ is the cause for our will be set in alignment with God's will because we are being freed by the grace of Christ. Calvin comments on the 'nor indeed can be' part of the verse of Romans 8:7 – 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be' (NKJV 1976:973):

So much for the power of the freedom of the will which the Sophists cannot sufficiently extol. Paul is without doubt here explicitly affirming what they themselves openly detest, viz. that it is impossible for us to subject our affections to the law. They boast that the heart can turn either way, provided it is assisted by the influence of the Spirit, and that we have in our power the free choice of good and evil, if only the spirit gives us help. Ours, however, is the choice or the refusal. They imagine, too, that there are good motions within us by which we prepared of our free will. Paul, on the other hand, declares that our heart is so swollen with hardness and unconquerable obstinacy that it is never moved to submit to the yoke of God naturally. He is not arguing about one or other of the affections, but uses an indefinite expression to cover all the emotions which arise within us. Let the Christian heart therefore drive far from itself the non-Christian philosophy of the freedom of the will, and let every one of us acknowledge himself to be, as in reality he is, the servant of sin, that he may be freed by the grace of Christ and set at liberty. It is the height of folly to boast of any other freedom.

(Commentary Romans 1961:163)

On the continuum of 'determination of the will...' freedom of the will' Calvin in his writings and in debate with fellow Reformers and in debate with many from the church tradition is constantly biased to take the side of the 'determination of the will' which in effect will be turned into liberty

if the grace of God is revealed and manifested in someone's life because of the grace of Christ. The liberty to adhere and comply with the law of God is pleasing and agreeable to God.

4.1.1.4 The natural and graceful constitution of being human

In describing the anthropological dual constitution of human beings in Calvin's approach we follow the reflexive patterns brought forward by van Niekerk in a seminal article entitled 'The dual story line of Calvin's sense-making approach'(2009:33-55). Van Niekerk views it as important to note that in starting with the knowledge of God's grand acts of creation and redemption (reconciliation), Calvin not only strongly connects and differentiates the knowledge God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment (the latter more worked out in the direction of the common sense part of ones' mind) into a vertical higher and lower layer of knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves (Calvin [1559] 1960a:1-3) but similarly connects and differentiates the knowledge of God the Creator and God the Redeemer in two way processual movements (Calvin [1559] 1960a:6).

Calvin's dual scope of God's act of creation and redemption demarcates the scene in which nearly all later Reformed reflection about God, human beings and the natural cosmic world took place. In viewing God's grand acts of creation and redemption as reflexive areas in which knowledge of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world are acquired, Calvin influenced by other 16th century Reformers, Renaissance humanism and even the scholastics, my suggestion is that Calvin operates with a dual or a double sphere of consciousness in which a *particular mirroring 'vertical' theo-anthropic* trajectory is fused with a *general processual 'horizontal' theo-anthropic-cosmic* trajectory (Van Niekerk 2009:41).

In Calvin's Institutes the fused duality and triad of the two trajectories is sustained and maintained whether he operates and departs from the pointer of God, being human or cosmic nature in the mirroring theo-anthropic and the processual theo-anthropic-cosmic sense. In reading Calvin his writings seem to suggest that the simultaneous connection and difference between the dual and triadic trajectories run right through his views of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world (van Niekerk 2009:41).

What is of importance in Calvin's duality view of human beings is that Calvin's treatment of the knowledge of God, the creator and the knowledge of God, the redeemer in his Institutes as designations for his constructed reflexive realms of creation and redemption espouses a whole array of dualities that fit into each other. The main duality is that of a 'vertical' *mirroring* reflexive double layered consciousness and a 'horizontal' reflexive *processual* consciousness that operates throughout in each of the four books of the Institutes. Moreover, an array of dualities in the mirroring reflexive mode and triadic processual pointers in the processual reflexive mode appear throughout the Institutes of 1559.

The human mind in the sense of Calvin is the playground where the duality of a double consciousness is portrayed. The classic distinction between reasonable intellect and faith is expressive of the double consciousness of the mind in Calvin's views.

We find on the one side of the mind the human intellect and will. In a similar sense as with God's essence expressed in God's ordered will in providence as ongoing sustenance of creation a human being's one side of the mind is expressed in a human being's ordered will. According to Calvin, even Adam's intellect and will was composed to be obedient until he destroyed himself through sin thereby corrupting his own blessings (Calvin [1559] 1960a:8). Therefore, the perfection of a human being's nature originally appeared before the fall into sin:

...when Adam was endued with a right judgment, had affection in harmony with reason, had all his senses sound and well-regulated, and truly excelled in everything good. Thus the chief seat of the divine image was in his mind and heart, where it was eminent: yet was there no part of him in which some scintillations of it did not shine forth. For there was an attempering in the several parts of the soul, which corresponded with their various offices. (*Erat erim in singulis animae partibus temperata quae suis numeris constabat*). In the mind perfect intelligence flourished and reigned, uprightness attended as its companion, and all the sense were prepared and moulded for due obedience to reason; and in the body there was a suitable correspondence with this internal order. But now, although some obscure lineaments of that image are found remaining in us; yet are they so vitiated and maimed, that they may truly be said to be destroyed. For besides the deformity which everywhere appears unsightly, this evil also is added, that no parties free from the infection of sin. [Genesis 1:26]

(Calvin [1948] 2001:95)

Thus, through one side of Calvin's view of the mind of a human being the glory of God shines forth and the divine order is represented by the side of the mind as the intellect, the will and all the senses [Genesis 1:26] (Calvin [1948] 2001:96). In this divine order of the mind as intellect, the will as steered by the mind and the senses especially of seeing and hearing with speaking as human act closely attached a human being is set before God in what van Niekerk calls the mirroring 'vertical' theo-anthropic trajectory of Calvin (Van Niekerk 2009:41).

In many other instances such as his interpretational procedures of texts, events and human doings Calvin mixes Aristotelian with Platonic mirroring schemes. Calvin narrows the soul down to the mind, spirit (anima), reason or intellect as the true image of God (Bouwma 1988:78-81). The intellect, spirit or mind is thereby elevated to be the higher part of the soul which is sometimes relationally expressed as affective love or the will of a human being. In the latter sense Calvin asserts that the intellect (understanding) is the leader and governor of the soul (Calvin [1559] 1960a:7). Between heaven and earth, soul and body and theology and philosophy the human intellect operates in a twosome sense of seeing and hearing, mirroring and processual understanding of the mind of other people whether embedded in the seeing of a text that one reads in the understanding sense of the word or embodied in someone's speaking and oratory understanding sense as impacting on one's hearing. The processual trajectory is effectuated in the processed creation scheme and the redemptive process of God as seeing plus hearing (understanding) → explication (manifestation) and application (affectation). Take into account that Calvin uses affection in two senses, namely affective affectionation of love and affections as passions of the lower level of the bodily world (Calvin [1559] 1960a:7). While the intellect is moved in the Calvinian sense by the will of a human being in one sense the intellect in another sense is governing the direction of the will (Calvin [1559] 1960a:7).

On the other side of the mind a graceful process termed faith consisting of a divine/human concentrated and located realm operates between God and human beings. In the realm of faith, faith operates through faith, certainty is through certainty and in a human being faith is the principal work of the Holy Spirit (Calvin [1559] 1960c:4). Reason and feelings are by implication secondary works of the Spirit. Faith is divinely determined from the smallest drop to the broadest inundation of faith into our hearts through the Spirit. The Spirit seals the forgiveness of sins in the elect only, applying it by special faith to their own use (Calvin [1559]

1960c:11). This means that all other fields of experience such as the intellect and emotions and affectations are in a secondary sense involved in the forgiveness of sins through faith as a mirror or to say it in another way these other fields of experience are indirectly and in a general sense involved with God. The whole special determinative road of faith wanders from God through Christ and the illumination of the Spirit (the inner teacher) to the smallest drop of faith in ones heart.

In the process of faith, faith is expounded as confidence (Calvin [1559] 1960c:15), faith is 'knowledge' (Calvin [1559] 1960c:14) and especially pious affection or a devout disposition (Calvin [1559] 1960c:8). A devout disposition which Calvin terms piety, faith or religion throughout his Institutes of 1559, is not a loose divine piece of flotsam in human beings that drifts without any borders or demarcation but is an utterly human part of the divine *scientia* ('knowledge') in the broadest sense of the word. Although a counter-argument may be levelled that if it is an utterly human part of the divine in the broadest sense why is it that in a very particular sense this broad knowledge is always under the illuminating impulse of the Spirit. The Spirit is not an exclusive Spirit of faith, piety or the Christian religion. The Spirit has impulses in all fields of human experience. In Calvin's sense the Spirit has more things to do than just being the divine playing field for deterministic faith. However, the Spirit operates in a very particular sense in faith and belief and in a very general and common way in the human reasonable intellect and the will in a general sense. On the one hand, in an extra-Calvinistic sense the Spirit opens the playing field in a very particular way in a divine/human concentrated and located way in Christ, in the church, in faith and in the sacraments, and on the other hand the Spirit opens and works in the playing field of other societal institutions, other fields of human experience such as the reasonable intellect, affectations and love in accountability and responsibility towards other human beings and the overall framework in the natural world and cosmic universe.

Regarding the only cause of our salvation, Calvin comments on Romans 8:6 – 'For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace' (NKJV 1976:973):

We learn from it that in following the course of nature we plunge into death, for by ourselves we contrive nothing but destruction. Paul presently adds a contrasting clause, to teach us that if any part of us tends towards life, it is the

Spirit which is displaying its power, since no spark of life proceeds from our flesh. Paul calls spiritual-mindedness life, because it is life-giving, or leads to life. By peace he means, according to Hebrew usage, all that belongs to well-being. Every action of the Spirit of God within us tends to our blessedness. There, is, however, no reason for attributing salvation to works on this account, for although God begins our salvation, and finally completes it by renewing us after His image, yet the only cause of our salvation is His good pleasure, by which He makes us partakers of Christ.

(Commentary Romans 1961:162)

Faith, according to Calvin rests upon the knowledge of Christ, and Christ cannot be known without the sanctification of the Spirit in human beings. The sanctification of the Spirit is directed towards an overall anthropological setting of 'knowledge.' Faith therefore can in no way be something else than a devout disposition (pious affection) of human beings (Calvin [1559] 1960c:8). The emphasis in this train of thought is on 'knowledge' as the broadest idea of a person's experience.

4.1.1.5 The natural cosmic world

We have seen in the previous section that in Calvin's work he continuously operationally connects a particular mirroring trajectory in which God is facing human beings (theo-anthropic) with a general processual trajectory (theo-anthropic-cosmic) in which the triad of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world is either set in a process cascading from God to human beings down to the natural world or cascading up from the natural world to the top God. Though in the linear continuation from God's act of creation to God's act of redemption Calvin allows the mirroring trajectory of God facing human beings a greater role in his reflexive realm of creation and the processual cascading trajectory between God, human beings and the natural world a greater role in his reflexive realm of redemption both these trajectories play a role in both God's acts of creation and redemption. As a general principle one can generally assume that Calvin's main emphasis is on God's act of redemption as the highpoint of his salvation-historical expression of the divine history embodied and embedded in the Bible.

In Calvin's Institutes the fused duality and triad of the two trajectories is sustained and maintained whether he operates and departs from the pointer of God or being human in the mirroring theo-anthropic or from the any of the pointers of God, human beings and the natural

world in the processual theo-anthropic-cosmic sense. One cannot always predict where Calvin's starts in a specific section of his work while at other times one's prediction would be correct. There are a few reasons can be mentioned for this inconsistency after years of research on Calvin. The first reason is because Calvin sometimes uses the mirroring dual trajectory and the processual triadic trajectory very closely connected in the either the creational or the redemptive realm while at other times he uses only one of the trajectories as operational tool to describe and unfold his views in these realms. The second reason flows from the first one in the sense that when Calvin is exclusively emphasising one of the trajectories he tends to be so caught up with his train of reflection that he goes outside his 'usual' sense making God-human-nature pattern.

In his anthropology he uses both trajectories in the sense of a human being comprising a duality and a trichotomy. On the one hand the dual notion that a human being is created with an immortal soul and mortal body runs through his writings, while on the other hand the same human being is created with three upward moving levels. In his Institutes of 1559 Calvin is strongly dualistic in the sense of allowing for only an immortal soul and a mortal body created by God:

That man consists of a soul and a body ought to be beyond controversy. Now I understand by the term "soul" an immortal yet created essence, which is his noble part. Sometimes it is called "spirit". For even when these terms are joined together, they differ from one another in meaning; yet when the word "spirit" is used by itself, it means the same thing as soul.

(Calvin [1559] 1960a:2)

Calvin, in his Commentary on Genesis 2:7 on the creation of human beings are avowedly trichotomous in outlook. A human being is created on three gradations or levels:

Three gradations, indeed, are to be noted in the creation of man; that his dead body was formed out of the dust of the earth; that it was endued with a soul, whence it should receive vital motion; and that on this soul God engraved his own image, to which immortality is annexed.

(Calvin [1948] 2001:112)

In reading Calvin his writings seem to suggest that the simultaneous connection and difference between the dual and triadic trajectories run right through his views of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world (van Niekerk 2009:41).

The question had been raised whether the omission of the natural world in the first mirroring trajectory in which God is facing human beings, does not amount to a degradation of the natural world in Calvin's sense-making God-human-nature view. The addition of the natural world in the processual trajectory as the end part of the process might be a consolation factor that a complete degradation is enacted. But as an overall impression it seems that there is a tendency in Calvin's approach to place the natural cosmic environment on a lower plane than the pointers of God and human beings. Even if we accept that the link Ganoczy (1982:46;49) suggested between the influence of Stoicism on Calvin on the degrading of the natural cosmic world in comparison to the weight given to the pointers of God and humanity, is well established, the historical link does not help us to make real sense of the extent and the degree to which the natural cosmic realm [is so-called degraded] in Calvin's overall God-human-and-nature view. Ganoczy countered and relativised the depth and width of the links between Stoicism and Calvinism by making use of the typical Calvinistic theologistic strategy to use the grounding of his main ancestor – Calvin in the 'biblical-Christian faith' as the interpretive rule of thumb, why the similarities with Stoicism are not to be taken seriously (Ganoczy 1982:52). The interpretative inverse spiralling strategy of using exclusively and one-sidedly the theo-anthropocentric redemptive realm of Calvin to screen and clean Calvin's approach from contamination by Stoicism and other so called pagan elements is one of the strongest and most problematic strategies of a theologistic interpretation approach.

The main problem revolves around, how to make sense of clues and influences from a whole array of life-worlds, traditions and historical contexts that emerge and appear in Calvin's writings and doings whilst appearing still similar from where they came? We have to assume that because of the interchange, exchange, mixing and fusing into Calvin's approach of these clues and influences they have taken on a different function and meaning within Calvin's God-human-and-nature approach.

4.1.1.6 How Calvin links God with human beings and the natural cosmic world

In Calvin's studies, various sense-making approaches regarding the double structure or the pair of avenues of accessing general creational knowledge and special redemptive knowledge of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world are tackled in at least six different ways in the writings, sayings and doings of Calvin. We apply the following operational procedures devised by van Niekerk (2009:297-308) to express the variety in which the two reflexive realms of creation and redemption emerged in Calvin's works:

- General creational knowledge and special redemptive knowledge regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature are sometimes in *opposition* to each other, or
- General creational knowledge and special redemptive knowledge are *correlative and complementary* to each other; or
- General creational knowledge and special redemptive knowledge regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature are *dialectical* to each other; or
- General creational knowledge processually *irrupts* into special redemptive knowledge regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature or vice versa; or
- General creational knowledge annuls, special redemptive knowledge regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature through an *identification* process or vice versa; or
- General creational knowledge and special redemptive knowledge regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature are extended to include the whole mystery of the differentiation and integration of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal through the Spirit and future directed fulfilment.

Of the six positions, the last position as a full employment of the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment in which God, human beings and the natural cosmic world are mysteriously involved are in an explicit sense absent in the works of Calvin. Traces and vestiges of the four grand acts of God operational in the works of Calvin are sporadically detected but then in an implicit way.

Sin and evil are also involved in Calvin's works straddled as a notion before and after the fall. Calvin makes reference on numerous occasions as to how people (Adam and Eve) looked like as being first created before the central event of falling into sin and how they looked like after the event of falling into sin. Calvin asserts in his Institutes of 1559:

We must now speak of the creation of man: not only because among all God's works here is the noblest and most remarkable example of his justice, wisdom, and goodness; but because as we said at the beginning, we cannot have a clear and complete knowledge of God unless it is accompanied by a corresponding knowledge of ourselves. This knowledge of ourselves is twofold: namely, to know what we were like when we were first created and what our condition became after the fall of Adam.

(Calvin [1559] 1960a:1)

4.1.2 Ellen G White

Ellen G. White's experiential theology that amounts to reflexive coherences of faith patterning as an interchange, exchange and fusion between her biblical reflection and prophetic visionary reflection revolves around the close connection and difference between God, human beings and the natural world. Though in her later period she acknowledged the notion of the trinity, her biblical and prophetic visionary reflection is not driven by the notion of the Trinitarian God but by nearly always takes place within the extended and elaborated biblical historical timeline centrally portrayed by the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation (salvation), renewal and fulfilment (consummation). White in reaction against speculative theologies and unbiblical reflexive schemes of her day time after time underscores the mystery of the close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural world. While White's major emphasis is on God's act of reconciliation (salvation) and fulfilment (consummation) through her

life, the full spectrum of God's grand acts led her kind of experiential theology as very concrete coherences of faith patterning.

White operated with a similar but different scheme as Calvin who integrated God's expressed ordered will closely with God's essence. While White refers to God in her reflective coherence of her faith patterning as God, always in relationship to human beings and the natural world, she reveres and worships God as God the Father who as:

Jehovah, the eternal, self-existent, uncreated One, Himself the source and sustainer of all, is alone entitled to supreme reverence and worship.

(White ([1953] 1985:439)

We have seen earlier that Calvin closely integrated God's essential wisdom, justice, goodness and power to revolve around God's will as expressed in creation and in God's reconciliatory kingly priestly love in Jesus Christ. However, White's close integration revolves around God's love expressed in God's prophetically uttered priestly love, though the union of the divine and human being-thereness of Jesus Christ as the Word of God. Incessantly through her writings, sayings and doings, White's operative procedure is to conjoin inextricable heaven and earth, divine history and human history and the family of earth and the family of heaven in Christ.

Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love.

(White 1940:25-26)

Closer than this in the well known quotation of White can the prophetically uttered priestly love not be bound with the essence of God that is 'in the bosom of infinite Love.'

4.1.2.1 God's love as God's spoken and shining revealed will

In terms of the era of the 19th century backdrop of the Millerite and early Seventh-day Adventist experience's strong emphasis on God as a person as well as partially stepping in the footsteps of the 16th century Reformers, White's basic sphere set for communication between God and human beings is that of Christ as the provided personal realm of God through which God

encounter human beings and nature. God's love is centrally and most intensely expressed in Christ who is,

The matchless love of God for a world that did not love Him! The thought has a subduing power upon the soul and brings the mind into captivity to the will of God. The more we study the divine character in the light of the cross, the more we see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice, and the more clearly we discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and a tender pity surpassing a mother's yearning sympathy for her wayward child.

(White [1893] 1982:15)

For White, in a double sense, God's love is expressed in the natural world and in Jesus Christ. White works within the salvation-historical mode wherein human beings and nature are mysteriously encountered through God's love as God's spoken Word and God's revelational shining light as 'nature and revelation alike testify of God's love' (White [1893] 1982:9).

Firstly, according to White the natural world 'speaks to us of the Creator's love' which as a message of God's love, shines through even in a world of sin. Regarding the natural world she states:

...there are flowers upon the thistles, and the thorns are covered with roses. 'God is love' is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass.

(White [1893] 1982:9-10)

Secondly, White points out that the things of nature in a world of sin imperfectly represent God's love. The supreme and clearest illustration of God's love for us is God's sending Jesus to save us from our sins (White [1893] 1982:10;13).

In the double sense of God's love shining, spoken and testified in the natural world and in Jesus Christ, God's matchless love for us in Christ is God's provision for our salvation without parallel in a world that did not love him (White [1893] 1982:111). Apart from many other metaphors two main metaphors, are continually employed concerning God's communicative love of human beings and the natural world namely, communicative love as divine word spoken and as divine light shining. In a manuscript written in Europe in 1886 concerning the Bible and its inspiration

the close connection White made between the mind and will of God and the mind and will of an inspired person who had written the Bible emerged strongly:

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.

(White 1958b:21)

In a very central sense the love of God as driving theme embraces White's reflection in her works, which constantly revolves around the divine historical timeline as presented in the Bible.

For White, God love as God's spoken revealed will is not a speculative notion in an abstract sense to be elaborated on but is in operation dynamically as God's speaking in love as always the same in the proverbial timeline of yesterday, today and forever the same. The main metaphors continually employed by White concerning God's communicative love of human beings and the natural world namely communicative love as divine word spoken and as divine light shining are not emphasised in every setting of her writings, sayings and doings simultaneously in an evenly emphasised sense. In some of her writings, the dynamic 'divine spoken word' metaphor is more emphasised than the 'divine shining light' metaphor and vice versa. As a general conclusion these two metaphors themselves are divine revelational tools which are intrinsically part of God's communicative love expressed in a myriad of divine historical operations and acts through time and history.

The centrality of the embracing theme of God's communicative love in operation finds its expression in the totality of her *Conflict of the Ages Series* which has as its reflexive realm the biblical historical timeline. The dynamic and concrete way in which White is enacting in her faith reflection the phrase, 'God is love' makes it one of the most comprehensive themes in her writings, sayings and doings. The phrase 'God is love' is for example enacted as God's communicative love from the beginning to the end in her five-volume series of the *Conflict of the Ages*. Without detracting from the theme of the Controversy between God and Satan, good and evil a theme of importance in the series, the theme of God's communicative love has an

overriding weight over other important schemes in her reflexive coherence of faith patterning. What is also of importance is that in White is reflexive coherence, the pair God and Satan or good and evil are not set in a dualist scheme in which the two opposites operate on par. God as loving God in speaking, shining and acting is the main actor and all initiating agent of reflexive networking and patterning of the divine history expressed in the biblical historical timeline. It goes without saying that agencies of evil and badness though strong in assault and attack towards human beings and the natural world is not on a par with the communicative loving God.

In the opening pages of her work, *The Great Controversy*, one does not have to perform a close reading to see how the central metaphors of God's dynamic 'divine spoken word' and the 'divine shining light' are sometimes simultaneously and at other times alternately employed. White states the following regarding the way God's communicative love is enacted as God's speaking Word and God shining light:

Before the entrance of sin, Adam enjoyed open communion with his Maker; but since man separated himself from God by transgression, the human race has been cut off from this high privilege. By the plan of redemption, however, a way has been opened whereby the inhabitants of the earth may still have connection with heaven. God has communicated with men by His Spirit, and divine light has been imparted to the world by revelations to His chosen servants. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter 1:21.

During the first twenty-five hundred years of human history, there was no written revelation. Those who had been taught of God, communicated their knowledge to others, and it was handed down from father to son, through successive generations. The preparation of the written word began in the time of Moses. Inspired revelations were then embodied in an inspired book. This work continued during the long period of sixteen hundred years--from Moses, the historian of creation and the law, to John, the recorder of the most sublime truths of the gospel.

The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all "given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men. The Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed have themselves embodied the thought in human language.

The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not of human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14.

(White [1888] 1990a:v-vii)

In White's reflexive coherence of faith patterning that meanders through her writings, sayings and doings, God's communicative love is divinely spoken in words, divinely shining as divine light in greater and lesser lights and in the instance of the Ten Commandments was written by God's own divine hand.

God's communicative love in action is demonstrated through the metaphors of speaking, shining, lightening, illustrating and writing in her work *Steps to Christ* which has been quoted above. God's love in the communicative sense is illustrated through her statement that 'nature and revelation alike testify of God's love (White [1893] 1982:9). The natural world *speaks* to us of the Creator's love while even in a world of sin the message of God's love *shines* (White [1893] 1982:9). She points out that there are flowers upon the thistles, and the thorns are covered with roses amidst which 'God is love' is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass (White [1893] 1982:10). The supreme and clearest *illustration* of God's love for us, she emphasizes, is God's sending Jesus to save us from our sins (White [1893] 1982:13). Further, she points to the study of God's matchless love in the *light* of the cross of Jesus that allows us see mercy, tenderness, and forgiveness blended with equity and justice and enables us to discern innumerable evidences of a love that is infinite and of a tender pity surpassing a mother's yearning sympathy for her wayward child (White [1893] 1982:15).

Another example of White describing the God's communicative love as expressed in the metaphors of light and revealing in the opening pages of *The Desire of Ages*. Jesus, she points out in the first paragraph, 'came to reveal the light of God's love' (White [1898] 1948a:19) which in proceeding the full trajectory of God's love to the end finally elicits the powerful statement of White that through Christ 'love has conquered' (White [1898] 1948a:835). Jesus in his life illustrates the law of self-renouncing love as a blending of earth and heaven:

...that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which seeketh not her own' has its source in the heart of God.

(White [1898] 1948a:20)

The statement above correlates strongly with the strong statement she made that Christ glorified is our brother which entails the dialectic that heaven is enshrined in humanity and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite love (White 1940:25-26). Incessantly through her writings, sayings and doings White's operative procedure is to inextricable conjoin heaven and earth, divine history and human history and the family of earth and the family of heaven in a union existing in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. This divine template of divine and human materiality is also true of

The Ten Commandments were spoken by God Himself, and were written by His own hand. They are of divine, and not of human composition. But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14.

(White [1888] 1990a:v-vii)

Although White regarded Jesus Christ as an equal to God the Father, she has a tendency but not always, to call God the Father as God and God the Son as Christ as can be exemplified by the following statement:

The eternal heavenly dignitaries—God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit—arming them [the disciples] with more than mortal energy, ... would advance with them to the work and convince the world of sin.

(White [1946] 1970:616)

Whenever White makes reference to Christ and God or the Father and the Son she does not always do this inclusive of the third person of the Godhead—the Holy Spirit. There is the congruency of her referral to God the Father and God the Son only. The following paragraph may serve as an example:

The world's Redeemer was equal with God. His authority was as the authority of God. He declared that he had no existence separate from the Father. The

authority by which he spoke, and wrought miracles, was expressly his own, yet he assures us that he and the Father are one.

(White [1953] 1985:439)

Another example where White mentions the Father and the Son with an absence referral of the Holy Spirit can be cited in the following statements:

From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate.

(White [1898] 1948a:22).

The Holy Spirit is sometimes depicted as belonging to God the father especially when we consider the following excerpt by White, 'God...and His Spirit' (White [1953] 1985:442). The Holy Spirit according to White, together with Christ serves as our Mediators. There is a difference in the effectuality of the mediation by the Holy Spirit and that of Christ:

Christ, our Mediator, and the Holy spirit are constantly interceding in man's behalf, but the Spirit pleads not for us as does Christ who presents His blood, shed from the foundation of the world; the Spirit works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving.

(White [1953] 1985:486)

This closeness of relations between the Father and the Son posses an overlapping which is intrinsically born out of the Old Testament, wherein the Son is attributed with the name of God the Father - Jehovah:

Jehovah is the name given to Christ. 'Behold, God is my salvation,' writes the prophet Isaiah; "I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord JEHOVAH is my 'strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day ye shall say, Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted.' 'In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will god appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.'... The heavenly gates are again to be lifted up, and with ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of thousands of holy ones, our Saviour will come forth as King of kings and Lord of lords. Jehovah Immanuel 'shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one.' ... This is the reward of all who follow Christ.

Jehovah Emmanuel—He ‘in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,’ in whom dwells ‘all the fullness of the Godhead bodily’.

(White [1953] 1985:439)

Jesus Christ is sometimes portrayed as one that belongs to God the father, as can be seen in this line, ‘God...His Son’ (White [1953] 1985:442). God the father appears somewhat to be of higher authority to Christ since he [the Father] is the One that appoints Christ ‘at His altar an Advocate clothed with our nature.’ Furthermore Christ is depicted as the One who works for God the Father in that White says that Christ’s *office* is to introduce mankind to God the Father as children of God (White [1953] 1985:488).

In White’s writings, sayings and doings Jesus Christ is simultaneously the central point, scope and contact point between all things from heaven above and all things from earthly below as well as the between all events and happenings from the beginning till the end, all divine and human history from Genesis to Revelation. In effect the overlapping of Christ and God is so intimate that White goes as far as to posit Christ as the divine agency of the ‘I am...’ declarations as depicted in the biblical text from the beginning to the end in the biblical historical timeline. Christ is simultaneously the prototypical form and content of God’s communicative love. White encapsulates the centrality of Christ in terms of her simultaneous operational faith reflective approach of Christ conjoining the heavenly above and the earthly below as well as Christ being divine historically central between the creational beginning and the fulfilling end of the historical timeline. She describes the centrality of Christ in the double sense as between heaven and earth and between the creational beginning and fulfilling end of the historical timeline in terms of the ‘I am’ declarations of the biblical text:

It was Christ who from the bush on Mount Horeb spoke to Moses saying, ‘I AM THAT I AM.... Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.’ Exodus. 3:14. This was the pledge of Israel’s deliverance. So when He came “in the likeness of men,” He declared Himself the I AM. The Child of Bethlehem, the meek and lowly Saviour, is God “manifest in the flesh.” 1 Timothy. 3:16. And to us He says: “I AM the Good Shepherd.” “I AM the living Bread.” “I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. John 10:11; 6:51; 14:6; Matthew. 28:18. I AM the assurance of every promise. I AM; be not afraid. “God with us” is the surety of our deliverance from sin, the assurance of our power to obey the law of heaven.

(White [1898] 1948a:24)

A careful look at the above paragraph in comparison with earlier paragraphs by White, could leave us baffled as to where God the Father is at that point? As an answer White introduces a very ingenious approach with her constantly and continuously employing a double-layered operative faith patterning procedure in which heaven and earth, divine history and human history are inextricable conjoined in each dispensational era through the dynamic communicative loving acts of God the Father centrally manifested through and in Christ. White states regarding the double trajectory of God's communicative love through and in Christ the following:

Ever since Adam's sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been *through* Christ; but now that Jesus had come "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans. 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity through Christ; now He communicated with humanity *in* Christ.

(White [1898] 1948a:116)

God the Father's communicative love is God dynamically in action as the One continuously speaking divine words, shining as divine light and acting through his divine hands with human beings and the natural world *through* Christ and *in* Christ. Through the series of divine historical dispensations in the biblical historical timeline, God communicated and spoke with humanity time after time *through* Christ within the divine realm from above and from below, human-earthly sphere while after Christ came, God communicated and spoke with humanity *in* Christ.

4.1.2.1.1 God and Satan

In White's writings, Satan is depicted as an enemy of God and God's administrative government. The contrast between God and Satan is as vast as the bright noon day is separated from the darkest midnight because Satan misrepresents God's true character and law of love. God on the other hand is portrayed as the One who is the exemplar of infinite wisdom, benevolent justice and perfect goodness that will ultimately work out evil through the undying principles of love and perseverance:

Satan had, at first, concealed his work under a specious profession of loyalty to God. He claimed to be seeking to promote the honour of God, the stability of His

government, and the good of all the inhabitants of heaven.... Satan could use what God could not—flattery and deceit. He had sought to falsify the word of God and had misrepresented His plan of government before the angels, claiming that God was not just in laying laws and rules upon the inhabitants of heaven; that in requiring submission and obedience from His creatures, He was seeking merely the exaltation of Himself...Satan had made it appear that he himself was seeking to promote the good of the universe...Satan charged upon the law and government of God.

(White [1888] 1990a:497-498)

According to White Satan blamed God for all the evil and the discord in heaven. She gives reasons as to why the arch-deceiver was not destroyed by God in the first instance:

The true character of the usurper, and his real object, must be understood by all. He must have time to manifest himself by his wicked works... Therefore it was necessary that he should demonstrate the nature of his claims, and show the working out of his proposed changes in the divine law. His own work must condemn him... Even when it was decided that he could no longer remain in heaven, Infinite Wisdom did not destroy Satan. Since the service of love can alone be acceptable to God, the allegiance of His creatures must rest upon a conviction of His justice and benevolence. The inhabitants of heaven and of other worlds, being unprepared to comprehend the nature or consequences of sin, could not then have seen the justice and mercy of God in the destruction of Satan. Had he been immediately blotted from existence, they would have served God from fear rather than from love. The influence of the deceiver would not have been fully destroyed, nor would the spirit of rebellion have been utterly eradicated. Evil must be permitted to come to maturity. For the good of the entire universe through ceaseless ages Satan must more fully develop his principles, that his charges against the divine government might be seen in their true light by all created beings, that the justice and mercy of God and the immutability of His law might forever be place beyond all question.

(White [1888] 1990a:498-499)

White in her reflection and description of the controversy and struggle between God and Satan sometimes moved outside the divine historical realm of the biblical timeline as portrayed in the grand acts of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. The contributory factor to this state of affairs is White's transcending and going beyond her divinely historical established reflexive dispensational realms demarcated as heaven and earth, divinity and humanity (and nature) facing each other and closely linked *through* and *in* Christ. The dual

function of linking of heaven and earth through and in Christ has as yet not been sufficiently investigated by Seventh-day Adventist theologians.

White maintains throughout her writings that the link between heaven and earth is possible *through* Christ and *in* Christ. Jesus having condescended and become a tabernacle of God and dwelt with humanity, he [Christ] has revealed God not only to us, but also to the heavenly angels (White [1898] 1940:19). The link we have with God is possible only through and in Christ. We know God through the revealing of the Son of God becoming the Son of man – thus God reveals through Christ heaven and we become part of heaven in Christ’s becoming. According to White, by Jesus having condescended and becoming a tabernacle of God and dwelt with humanity, he [Christ] has revealed God not only to us, but also to the heavenly angels (White [1898] 1940:19). The link between heaven and earth was also part of Christ’s teaching for us:

He taught that heaven and earth are linked together, and that a knowledge of divine truth prepares men better to perform the duties of everyday life. He spoke as one familiar with heaven, conscious of His relationship to God, yet recognizing His unity with every member of the human family.

(White [1898] 1940:19)

White’s main contribution is her staying within the divine historical outlines of the divine biblical historical timeline. White’s operational approach of the linked demarcated reflexive space and time of heaven and earth, divinity and humanity (and nature) facing each other and established *through* Christ and *in* Christ - also applicable to White the agent of faith reflexivity – are in very few instances transcended by her. But it did happen that she described and spoke about heaven, God or Satan as if she had exclusive insight into heavenly things.

White’s reflection on and description in her work *The Great Controversy* ([1888] 1990a:492-504) on the origin of Evil as a dispute and controversy in heaven between God and Lucifer (Satan) prior to the beginning of human history moves into a problematic area which transcends her usual demarcated reflexive biblical historic space and time line of heaven and earth held together in Christ. The basic scheme of the origin of Evil is expressed as a dispute that occurred in heaven between God and Lucifer (Satan), over God’s character, God’s law and God’s sovereignty over the universe. Lucifer was subsequently cast out of heaven, and, as the Evil One

he acted through the serpent in the Garden of Eden by leading Adam and Eve into sin. God has permitted Lucifer's rebellion to continue on earth in order to demonstrate to angels and beings and other worlds that God's Law is righteous and necessary, and that the breaking of the Ten Commandments leads to moral catastrophe. One is overtly aware that for White the goal of the fundamental quality of the 'historicality and materiality of salvation' within the salvation-historical timeline is of the utmost importance. Expressive of this is her revering and honouring of God's righteous and necessary Law, divinely expressed in the Ten Commandments, the breaking of which leads necessary to moral catastrophe.

In the majority of instances in White's writings she stays within the linked demarcated reflexive biblical historical space and time realm of heaven and earth when she brings the figure of Satan into the flow of her reflexive patterning she engaged with in a specific train of reflexive faith patterning. She writes about Satan not as outside but thoroughly within the divine biblical historical space realm and time line as in the following:

If men had been willing to receive the truth so plainly stated in the Scriptures concerning the nature of man and the state of the dead, they would see in the claims and manifestations of spiritualism the working of Satan with power and signs and lying wonders. But rather than yield the liberty so agreeable to the carnal heart, and renounce the sins which they love, multitudes close their eyes to the light and walk straight on, regardless of warnings, while Satan weaves his snares about them, and they become his prey. "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," therefore "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." 2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11.

(White [1888] 1990a:559)

Generally, White deals in her reflexive patterning of faith in her writings with God, Satan, evil, human beings and the natural world within the biblical historical timeline as expressed through the actions of God *through* and *in* Christ. The two trajectories of God's actions through and in Christ operate in her works very closely combined but sometimes dialectically and at other times in opposition to each other. In some instances the weight is totally on the one with the exclusion of the other.

4.1.2.2 Oneself/Us

Ellen White came to the point of forcefully articulating the Christian's abject and absolute dependence on Christ for even an inkling of spiritual life. She came to realize that, personally as well as corporately, people easily drifted to a *form* of godliness without the power thereof. The older she became the more she clung to Jesus. To be a Christian, she said, meant actual death to self and total surrender to a loving and righteous God. She wrote in (RH, Dec. 13, 1887):

There is a wide difference between a pretended union and a real connection with Christ by faith. A profession of religion places men in the church, but this does not prove that they have a vital connection with the living Vine. A rule is given by which the true disciple may be distinguished from those who claim to follow Christ, but have not faith in him. The one class are fruit-bearing; the other, fruitless. The one are often subjected to the pruning-knife of God, that they may bring forth more fruit; the other, as withered branches, are to be severed from the living Vine...."I am the vine, ye are the branches." Can we conceive of a more intimate relation to Christ than this? The fibers of the branch are almost identical with those of the vine. The communication of life, strength, and fruitfulness from the trunk to the branches is unobstructed and constant. The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer's relation to Christ. He abides in Christ, and draws his nourishment from him.

(RH, December 13, 1887)

We abide in Christ, and draw our nourishment from him by yielding our will in a total sense to the divine will. This yielding of the human will to the divine will is expressive of a concentrated and particular intimacy of connection and communication between Christ's grace and human experience. She writes:

Our will must be wholly yielded to the divine will; our feelings, desires, interests, and honor, identified with the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the honor of his cause, we constantly receiving grace from him, and Christ accepting gratitude from us....When this intimacy of connection and communication is formed, that "our sins are laid upon Christ, his righteousness is imputed to us.

(White [1882-1889] 1948e:229-230)

The total notion of Christ's righteousness imputed to us is effectuated when an intimacy of connection and communication is formed in the double sense of us receiving constant grace from Christ and Christ accepting gratitude from us a constant sense as though a radical effect which has to be returned by us if there is a real and genuine effectuation of the atoning blood of Christ.

All who form this union must feel their need of the atoning blood of Christ. They must have a change of heart. They must submit their own will to the will of God. There will be a struggle with outward and internal obstacles. There must be a painful work of detachment, as well as a work of attachment.

(White [1882-1889] 1948e:231)

4.1.2.3 A human being's responsible and accountable will

In White's writings, sayings and doings the relationship between the yielding of the human will to the divine will bringing about an intimacy of connection and communication between Christ's grace and human experience gave rise to various objections from theologians operating with the notion that the yielding of the will of a human being to the will of God is divinely decreed and determined. Especially from the Reformed/Presbyterian section of American society White's views had been accused of being strongly in the neighbourhood of the 17th century Calvinist Arminius who concerning atonement left the door ajar that a human being is free to choose or reject the offer of reconciliation through Christ and therefore did not believe that God has predetermined some people to be saved and others to be lost for ever.

One of the biggest hoaxes of later church history is that the Arminians who were actually from the progressive and left side of Calvinism were openly and tacitly denied the name of being followers of Calvin. Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) was a Dutch pastor and professor of theology at the University of Leiden. Following his death his views came to the forefront as in opposition to certain classical tenets of Calvinism. Arminius's followers, the Remonstrants, formulated their views in the *Five articles of Remonstrance* in 1610 a year after he died. Ashby (in Pinson 2002:159) summarised the core beliefs of Arminius and the Remonstrants:

1. Prior to being drawn and enabled, one is unable to believe...able only to resist.
2. Having been drawn and enabled, but prior to regeneration, one is able to believe...able also to resist.
3. After one believes, God then regenerates; one is able to continue believing...able also to resist.
4. Upon resisting to the point of unbelief, one is unable again to believe...able only to resist.

The five articles of the Remonstrants became the focus of the Synod of Dordrecht in the Netherlands, and occasioned *The Canons of Dordt*, a document of the orthodox Calvinists in Holland led by Gomarus rejecting the teachings of Arminius and the Remonstrants and essentially declared their position to be heretical (González 1985: 181). Even though Arminius and the Remonstrants were condemned, the controversy did not end and had a liberalising effect on theology in Europe and England, as well as the American colonies. By the mid 1700s, the basic positions of Arminius were refined and expanded in England under the Methodist movement begun by John and Charles Wesley. John Wesley has historically been the most influential advocate for the teachings of Arminius regarding reconciliatory salvation in Christ. Wesley thoroughly agreed with the vast majority of what Arminius himself taught, maintaining strong doctrines of original sin, total depravity, conditional election, prevenient grace, unlimited atonement, and possibly apostasy. In both England and the newly formed United States, Methodism and an array of churches followed being known as Arminian-Wesleyan theology. Today, the five points of the Remonstrants still articulate the essential differences between Calvinistic/Reformed traditions and their ‘separated brothers and sisters’ of the Wesleyan traditions that theologically followed the left and liberal wing of Calvinism the Arminian branch.

John Wesley grew up in the early 18th century England within a climate of Arminianism and through him Methodism is given its distinctive Arminian character. For Wesley, God acts in co-operation with but not in violation of free human response in the matter of saving faith. God does not merely dispense upon man justifying grace, nor does man simply acquire such grace by believing. There is rather a unified process of God's giving and a human being's reception of grace. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and bears the witness of justification. Thereafter the Holy Spirit continues to work in man in sanctification, such that the believer feels in his heart the mighty workings of the Spirit of God. God continually ‘breathes’ upon man's soul and the soul ‘breathes unto God’, a fellowship of spiritual respiration by which the life of God in the soul is sustained. Sanctification, the renewal of a human being in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, is effected by the Spirit through faith (De Jong 1987:249-252). It includes, been saved from sin and being perfected in love. Works are necessary to a continuance of faith and ‘entire sanctification,’ perfection, is the goal of every believer.

In chapter two, we described the mixed context of Ellen White as teenager and her family belonging to the Methodist church with its strong holiness tradition as well as within the tradition of the preceding 18th century happening such as the Great Awakening. In addition White grew up in the ambience of pre-millennial expectations amongst the Millerite movement following the era of Revivalism championed by Charles Finney which came to end in the 1830's. To a large degree the whole first part of the 19th century signified the total decline in the United States of America, of a determinist classical Calvinist view of God's actions in which human responsibility and accountability was exclusively limited to the act of discernment and ascertaining of whether one has been elected or not by God through God's foreknowledge and foreordination.

One other point of departure between Calvin and White is that by which Calvin has for instance been branded by some for—*the doctrine of predestination*. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, ([2001] 2002:116) for instance, defines Calvinism as 'the form of Protestantism of John Calvin, centring on the belief that God has decided everything that happens in advance.' This is a major divergent point for Ellen G. White who deemed the fore-knowledge of God not necessarily interfering with the free choices that the individual human mind has been freely granted with. An example of this biblical interpretation can be deduced from the narration of White in her deliberation of whether Jesus chose Judas Iscariot as a disciple or not. According to White, Jesus did not choose Judas Iscariot, but because he [Judas] chose to join the disciples that Jesus had chosen, Jesus in spite of Judas's avaricious spirit, afforded him [Judas] an equal opportunity as he [Jesus] had granted the rest of the disciples. This is how White reasons and relates the incident:

Jesus neither repulsed nor welcomed him...The Saviour read the heart of Judas; He knew the depths of iniquity to which, unless delivered by the grace of God, Judas would sink. In connecting this man with Himself, He placed him where he might, day by day, be brought in contact with the out-flowing of His own unselfish love. If he would open his heart to Christ, divine grace would banish the demon of selfishness, and even Judas might become a subject of the kingdom of God...Christ was before him, a living example of what he must become if he reaped the benefit of the divine mediation and ministry.... Jesus....with divine patience bore with this erring man, even while giving him evidence that He read his heart as an open book. He presented before him the highest incentives for right doing; and in rejecting the light of Heaven, Judas would be without excuse.

White [1898] 1940:293-295)

The conclusive point here is that White, unlike Calvin, never endorsed the doctrine of predestination. On the contrary, White's view was that every individual has been endowed with the freedom of choice. While God knows the destiny of the individual, his [God's] desire is still that the individual would choose. [Based on Ezekiel 33:11].

A careful examination of White's writings reveals that she is neither following a classical Calvinist nor a liberal Arminian-Calvinist approach in line with her Wesleyan-Methodist upbringing. White would certainly not only refrain but reject the statement from Calvin to which we referred earlier:

We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he compacted with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal condition; rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal damnation for others.

(Calvin [1559] 1960c:21)

White's whole approach is a repudiation of the position that people are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is fore-ordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. On the contrary her position implies that she believes that people were all created with a similar destiny, and that the varied destinies of men - the certainty of which they acknowledge - were not in any way fore-ordained. Her position boils down to that God foreknew but did not foreordain the salvation of those who are to be saved. God as the eternal sovereign God is omniscient. God knows the end from the beginning. Even before the creation of the world God knew that people would sin and that they would need a saviour. Moreover, as sovereign God, God also knows just who will accept and who will reject his great act of reconciliation and salvation.

In White's writings and sayings the relationship between the enactment of the human will and the enactment of the divine will is spelled out in terms of a human being's responsibility and accountability in the conjoined enactment of the human and the divine will. White's solution to the problem of a stringent divine determination of human actions or total liberty ascribed to the will of a human being is to be found in the mysterious combination of a human being's responsibility and accountability towards God provided for in God's graceful actions through and in Christ. The intimacy of connection and communication between Christ's grace and

human experience in the majority of White's works is expressive of the mystery of the simultaneity of the close connection and radical difference between the Godness of God, the humanness of human beings and the naturalness of nature. Thus, she views that human beings are not predetermined to make a choice or are free to choose or reject the offer of salvation through Christ but human beings have received through the centrality of God's action of reconciliation and salvation in the middle and in the midst of the divine historical timeline between the creational beginning and the fulfilling end thereof, the status of being responsible for him or herself and accountable to God for his or her decision.

4.1.2.3.1 White on the 'chosen' people

Although Calvin and White differ strongly on the idea of predestination as we have seen in a previous chapter of this thesis, Ellen White employed a synonymous word—'*chosen*' people which sounds very much like Calvin's '*elect*,' yet the word means something totally different. The present writer's understanding of White's meaning with regard to the 'chosen' is that she refers here to those who would yield and submit themselves under the supernatural, unction of God's Spirit which woos them to and renders them obsequious. They are deemed the 'chosen' since they accept and choose to be the 'chosen' by God. They are chosen as Israel of ancient times was chosen to be God's depositories of his truth and obedience. However this choice of being the chosen was not without conditions imposed, i.e. they were the chosen of God as long as they were willing to choose being chosen by God and hence be obedient to God's commands. The opposite of this premise is that they could always choose to bail out of being the chosen. The power of choice remained theirs. Although God had already chosen them, it was still in their power to appropriate being chosen. Therefore God's choosing them did not override their choice.

In other words, the chosen would not ultimately go into heaven because God has chosen them but because they would have chosen to accept being chosen and therefore would have yielded willing obedience to God. In context therefore by White's use of the word the 'chosen' people White referred to those Christians of the Remnant Church. These are people characterized by what had been called by the pioneers of the early Seventh-day Advents as people with 'the present truth' or what White called, 'truth for this time.' It is a reference to a special people with the last day message of Revelation 14:6,8:

The Lord desires all who bear the message for these last days to understand that there is a great difference between professors of religion who are not doers of the word, and the children of God, who are sanctified through the truth, who have that faith that works by love and purifies the soul. The Lord speaks of those who claim to believe the truth for this time, yet see nothing inconsistent in their taking part in politics, mingling with the contending elements of these last days, as the circumcised who mingle with the uncircumcised, and He declares that He will destroy both classes together without distinction. They are doing a work that God has not set them to do. They dishonor God by their party spirit and contention, and He will condemn both alike.

(White 1923:482)

This is a special class of people referred to by Ellen White. It is a remnant of the remnant, the 'chosen' of the 'chosen.' She is referring to the Commandment keeping people of God, there are two groups: the professors of religion and the doers of the work commanded to them by God.

These are distinct people, who may be classified under the banner of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, of which Ellen White was a member and co-founder thereof. White however, made a distinction here when we re-look at the above quote. She writes of *'those who claim to believe the truth for this time, yet see nothing inconsistent in their taking part in politics, mingling with the contending elements of these last days, as the circumcised who mingle with the uncircumcised...'* There is something here that is almost overlooked, and that is not all Seventh-day Adventist are regarded as the chosen of the chosen. While the Seventh-day Adventist Church is regarded by White as the chosen movement or church, it is only those who are sanctified in heart and deeds and have the righteousness of Christ are regarded as the chosen of God. It is that particular class of this special, peculiar group of people that are given warning not to mingle with the 'uncircumcised'.

Her call to the chosen people and Christians not to mingle with politics may seem to be a universal call to all Christians. Yet a closer look seems to point to a call to 'the chosen' of 'the chosen' in that, White has her main contention against the worldly states mainly due to their violation of God's law and in particular the seventh day Sabbath (Saturday).

According to White it is only a matter of time that worldly governments will join forces with the Papacy and will in-force religious laws, particularly a decree of Sunday worship, in direct opposition to God's day of worship, the seventh day Sabbath (Saturday). It is with that understanding that White portrayed the '*...feet of the image in which the iron was mixed with miry clay*' in the book of Daniel 2:43, that she understood *the mingling of the church and the state*. This is what she had to say in this regard:

We have come to a time when God's sacred work is represented by the feet of the image in which the iron was mixed with the miry clay. God has a people, a chosen people, whose discernment must be sanctified, who must not become unholy by laying upon the foundation wood, hay, and stubble. Every soul who is loyal to the commandments of God will see that the distinguishing feature of our faith is the seventh day Sabbath. If the government would honor the Sabbath as God has commanded, it would stand in the strength of God and in defense of the faith once delivered to the saints. But statesmen will uphold the spurious Sabbath, and will mingle their religious faith with the observance of this child of the Papacy, placing it above the Sabbath which the Lord has sanctified and blessed, setting it apart for man to keep holy, as a sign between Him and His people to a thousand generations. The mingling of church craft and state craft is represented by the iron and the clay. This union is weakening all the power of the churches. This investing the church with the power of the state will bring evil results. Men have almost passed the point of God's forbearance. They have invested their strength in politics, and have united with the papacy. But the time will come when God will punish those who have made void His law, and their evil work will recoil upon themselves.

(White 1981:52)

To White 'the sign of God' is seen through the commandment keeping-people. Therefore the affirmative is that the commandment-keeping people to White are those who keep all the, commandments which include the seventh day Sabbath observance.

4.1.2.4 The natural and graceful constitution of being human

The combination of a human being's creaturely and graceful constitution in the anthropological sense revolving around chapters 1-3 of Genesis is one of the bugbears, not to say one of the acid tests of many theological and ecclesial sense-making approaches towards human beings and biblical anthropologies. The demarcation line between the created constitution of a human being before the Paradise event of falling into sin of Adam and Eve and their depraved sinful condition

after the fall has been emphasised in the history of Christianity as that of a deeper or more superficial depraved conditional and constitutional status after the fall. Directly and correlatively in relation to the deeper or superficial constitutional status of a human being after the fall the events of Genesis 1-3, the main problem had been in the history of Christianity as to how and to what the degree the events portrayed in Genesis 1-3 had been regarded as divine history or plain human narrative history. The deeper the depravation of Adam and Eve the stronger the notion of the events being a portrayal of divine history, while the more superficial and less divine a more human and portrayed rendition of the priests in Moses' era emerges.

In the history of Christianity and the myriad of Christian churches to a large extent since the Reformation of the 16th century, the notion that one cannot deal with separate doctrines of God, humanity and the natural cosmic world took shape and stayed in place. In traditional orthodox and scholastic Catholic and Protestant circles the idea that one could speak about God, human beings or the natural cosmic world separately from each other is to a large extent still part of the menu of many theologians and philosophers.

White with all the problems attached to her approach followed only in certain of the footsteps of the 16th century Protestant Reformation of which the outstanding footstep followed is that she is reflexively operating within the realm of the biblical divine history from Genesis to Revelation. Her approach is similar but different in many ways from Calvin regarding the margins within which she reflexively draws coherences and patterns of faith that is within the double-layered divine-heavenly and human-earthly reality on the one hand and the whole gambit of a divine historical pre-time and after-time historical processual timeline concatenation of covenantal and dispensational periods. Within this reflexive dynamic divine historical series of events she developed her view of a human being directly linked to God and the natural cosmic world.

Earlier we have spelled out the double-layered divine-heavenly and human-earthly reality as White's faith reflexive pattern of the centrality of Christ in the duality of God and human beings facing each other as being closely connected, concentrated and contracted in a dialectical in Christ. In Christ emerges the divine/human template of how God is connectively working within his grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment, thus throughout God's history with human beings. On the other hand we have spelled out the second trajectory of White's faith

reflexive pattern as revolving around divinely set time periods or dispensations from Genesis to Revelation, embodied and embedded in the divine historical textuality of the Bible. In all the dispensations the divine/human history as centrally embodied in Christ is manifested in different ways as a divine historical trajectory in the full array of the Scriptural dispensations.

In White's view, human beings after the fall received both sinful nature as well as knowledge of the Redeemer. Her double-layered divine-heaven and human-earth template in its conjoined status emerges in her view of a human being's creaturely and sinful nature.

One of the notions of classic and traditional theology concerns the idea of a human being created in the image of God. In the Judaeo-Christian world the background to the idea is usually constructed around Genesis 1:26-27 where it is stated that God said: 'Let us make man being in our image, in our likeness...God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them'(NIV [1978] 2001:2).

According to White in the sinful realm after the Fall, human beings receive sinful nature as well as well as the knowledge of the Redeemer and instruction in righteousness.

Concerning the creation of Adam it is said, "In the likeness of God made He him;" but man, after the Fall, "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." While Adam was created sinless, in the likeness of God, Seth, like Cain, inherited the fallen nature of his parents. But he received also the knowledge of the Redeemer and instruction in righteousness.

(White [1890] 1958a:81)

White demonstrates in this quotation that she is, firstly, not following in the footsteps of Calvin and the Calvinist tradition with the notion of the total depravity of human beings. While sin as it were is transferred and imparted in the generations of human beings the knowledge of 'the Redeemer and instruction in righteousness' is received and manifested in the generations that follow after the Fall. The radical depravity of human beings in the Calvinist sense is replaced with the notion of a large degree of sustaining a human being's responsibility and accountability by the dynamic continuation of God's graceful provision of knowledge of the Redeemer as well as instruction in righteousness. Secondly White's line of discursive reflection on the double use of the notion of 'in the likeness of...' is highly informative. Adam was created in 'the likeness

of God' with a sinless constitution while Seth and Cain were begotten in 'the likeness of Adam' after the Fall.

In terms of a wholesome idea of the image of God in human life and the natural world the classic debates of whether the image of God is to be located exclusively in the human soul or in a combination of soul and body or in the whole of the human and natural cosmic world, were only meaningful as long as the debates were carried out within the ambience of the duality of the immortal soul and mortal body or the tripartite view of spirit, soul and body.

Thomas Aquinas, the late medieval Roman Catholic theologian, in his *Summa Theologiae* asserts that there is an intrinsic substantial unity between body and soul as two substances united. Aristotle, the philosopher, whom Thomas used as the undercarriage of his approach, asserted that body and soul, matter and form formed one unitary substance (van Peursen 1966:105). To Aristotle both soul and body in death come to an end, except the personal divine spirit which continues to exist after death (van Peursen 1966:104). Thomas under the influence of a neo-platonic dualist approach viewed a human as comprising an immortal soul and a mortal body as two substances. He emphasised the unity of body and soul: the soul being the substantial form or pattern of the human body which is that part of human nature which is everlasting and which is the ordering and forming agency of the material temporal body.

Does a human being consist of two or three parts? Is a human being a dichotomous or trichotomous being? In the modern era various theological anthropologies have either gone the route of a dualism of immortal soul and mortal body or trichotomy of spirit, soul and body. In the trichotomous route the spirit is the higher immortal part of the soul which in the proper sense is the psychical vital function of a human being. Brunner the Swiss theologian asserts in this regard:

The question of dichotomy or trichotomy has only been able to play such a large part in the theology of the Church because already the Biblical view of personality had been obscured by the influence of a Platonic dualism through the interest in the *anima immortalis*. Certainly the Platonic trichotomy encouraged this interest, since it set the spirit, as the higher, the immortal soul, against the psychical vital function. The idea of an *anima rationalis* is fused with that of the *natura rationalis* (Irenaeus) into a unity in that of the *anima immortalis*, which in death becomes separated from the body. The soul which after death ascends up to

heaven, that is, after its severance from the body, is that Platonic element which has penetrated most deeply into the faith of the Church – and not only into its theology; even today it is the predominating metaphysic.

(Brunner 1939:362-63)

Important in this regard is that although vast improvements have been achieved on the duality and trichotomous approaches by the modern emphasis on radical wholesome approaches the majority of church doctrines and theological schemes still work with sense-making anthropological tools and components of the dual and tripartite schemes of human beings. Especially the notion of an immortal part built into a human being was certainly meaningful within the social worlds of Plato and Aristotle, hundreds of years before the Common Era (BC), but it hinders in today's world the real diversification of a wholesome human person into various fields, modes and aspects of experience before God and the natural world.

Luther and Calvin operated with modified schemes of the trichotomous or tripartite schemes. Calvin while following Plato's basic distinction of an immortal soul and the mortal body, adds the intellect or spirit to the soul as the higher part through which one's will is effectuated in one's actions and deeds. We have seen above that Calvin in the overall sense operates with a dualistic cum tripartite anthropology of a human being consisting of an immortal created essential part called a soul which is the noble part of a human being and a created mortal body. Sometimes the soul is called spirit. To Calvin the one has to distinguish between soul as soul and soul as spirit because soul as spirit is the higher part of the soul the real immortal part. If soul and spirit are used in the same context, they have to be distinguished from each other as carrying slightly different meanings but when the word 'spirit' on its own is spelled out within a certain context, it means the same thing as soul (Calvin [1559] 1960a:2).

Luther's view is a case in point because while on the one hand, he is attempting to be the biblical theologian par excellence with an immense reaction against every type of philosophy, he reads the tripartite scheme of neo-platonic and modified Aristotelian philosophers into the Bible. Luther asserts in his famous Magnificat passage:

The Scripture divides men into three parts...and each of these three together with the whole man is also divided in another way into two parts... The other, the soul, is the same spirit according to nature, but yet in another work.

(*Weimarer Ausgabe*, Vol 7: 550 quoted in Brunner 1939:363)

Brunner quotes Luther from the same passage of the *Weimarer Ausgabe* as that the spirit is ‘the house wherein dwells faith and the Word of God,’ while the soul is that entity ‘which makes the body alive.’ In a similar sense as Calvin Luther employed a dualistic cum tripartite scheme with regard to human beings of which a certain part has been allotted with immortality.

In the modern era, simultaneous with the hardcore dualist schemes of the two substances of soul and body, broadly following Platonic and Neo-platonic philosophies, softer dual versions were propagated by people who worked more in line with Aristotle’s points of departure. In broad terms this view amounts to that of a human being as one substance with two components of soul and body, which opened the way for the current view that a human being has many fields, modes and dimensions of experience which though differentiated, are simultaneously operating on the same level of experience. The latter are not divided in eternal spiritual soul and temporal earthly bodily groups of fields and modes of experience.

In passing, it is of interest to us to reflect a bit on the age old terms of soul, body, spirit, heart and mind in their contextual usages in the texts of the Old and New Testament.

Firstly, in different textual contexts a human being is designated in his/her totality and wholeness as *being* totally his/her soul, *being* totally his/her body, *being* totally his/her spirit, *being* totally his/her heart or *being* totally his/her mind. Thus, a human being is totally his/her soul, body, spirit, heart or mind depending on the textual contexts where these terms are used as designations of totality. In very few instances of the Judaeo-Christian Bible, traces are found where soul, body, spirit, heart, etcetera are used together in an essentialist sense as substances simultaneously in the same textual and contextual setting. One of the few places where soul and body are being used in the same context is Matthew 10:28. One has, however, to go to great lengths to read platonic and Aristotelian dualistic or trichotomistic essences or substances into the broad and wide text of the Bible (Van Niekerk 2008:121;96).

Secondly, these terms appear in various other textual contexts as partial designations of human beings in the sense of a human being *having* different abilities, sides and aspects such as

thinking, feeling, believing, speaking or evolving. In the most concrete form of the word soul-sides bodily-sides, spirit-sides, heart-sides or sides of the mind come to the fore in different text worlds. One has to be continuously aware that terms such as body, soul, spirit, mind or heart are being used in Biblical texts and contexts in different ways. Sometimes the carrying sense-making approach is a mixed one with a wide range of fluctuating meanings and in other instances, some of the Biblical texts are very closely in the neighbourhood of a dualist soul and body or trichotomist spirit, soul and body approach. In the majority of instances, however these texts and contexts indicate clear sense-making trajectories for the accessing of correlative clues, cues and hues with our life-world (Van Niekerk 2009:99).

White and Seventh-day Adventists do not believe that the whole or any part of a human being is inherently 'immortal.' This view has been criticized as totally wayward and out of line by many mainline church theologians. In the mean time, White seemed to be closer to the wholesome approaches of human beings presented in the biblical historical timeline. It is interesting that many theories took White to task for the notion that moves in the direction of a 'soul sleep' for the saved as if she is asserting in a very strict sense of no conscious existence from the time of death until the resurrection for those who are saved and annihilation for the wicked in which the body and soul are destroyed at death rather than experiencing everlasting torment.

What is totally nonsensical of the critics is that the mystery of unexplained prolonged periods of time of which very little sense could be made in the sense of a mystery is described by White, Calvin, Luther and Thomas Aquinas in a provisional reflexive way. The main point is that death is total regarding soul, body and spirit and that it is not the immortal part of a human being that is the carrier of the human being in some sense through afterlife to eternity but the resurrection and the continuation of the resurrected Christ as divine and human in the eternal sanctuary that could be viewed as the carrier of people into eternity. The resurrection of Christ and continuation of Christ in his investigative judgment replaces the traditional platonic immortality scheme of the soul of the majority of Churches.

The question could be asked which of two schemes with all the problems attached to White's approach is closer to the biblical texts: Eternal continuation through an immortal soul or eternal continuation through the resurrected Christ? Brunner the Swiss Reformed theologian of the

1930's comes very close to White's wholesome view of 'a human being that dies as a whole and is raised as a whole' in stating that the platonic and Aristotelian dualistic and tripartite schemes with their irrevocable notion of a part of a human being as being immortal could be addressed from a different direction:

If, on the contrary, we start from the Biblical idea of personality, then the question: *dichotomy versus trichotomy* becomes pointless. The same human being who has been created by God has physical, psychical and spiritual functions, which as such are absolutely distinguishable, but which cannot be distinguished metaphysically. There is no *anima immortalis*, but only a personality destined by God for eternity, a person who is body-soul-spirit, who dies as a whole, and is raised as a whole. The corporeal personal existence characterizes human creatureliness, not the mortal in contrast to the immortal, not the 'lower' part in contrast with a 'higher'.

(Brunner 1939:363)

In White's view, the link we have with God is possible only through Christ. We know God and God are known to us and we know him through the revealed Son of God who became the Son of man. According to White, by Jesus having condescended and become a tabernacle of God and dwelt with humanity, he [Christ] has revealed God not only to us, but also to the heavenly angels (White [1898] 1940:19).

It is this link which White believes was produced and guaranteed through Christ and in Christ for our benefit. This link she asserts was also part of Christ's teaching for us. According to White:

He taught that heaven and earth are linked together, and that a knowledge of divine truth prepares men better to perform the duties of everyday life. He spoke as one familiar with heaven, conscious of His relationship to God, yet recognizing His unity with every member of the human family.

(White [1898] 1948a:254)

Plato operated with the dualistic notion of an immortal soul and mortal body as two substances while Aristotle viewed the notions of soul and body as one substance and not as immortal as a whole or any part of a human being. Aristotle while operating with the notion of soul and body as a unitary substance that is not immortal in any sense lacks the notion of the resurrection of the human being undergirded by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the Christian world mainline

traditional theologians and ecclesial doctrinal patterns in the majority of churches are espousing the Platonic notion of an immortal soul and a mortal body as grounding undercarriage of their anthropologies.

One may ask whether the notions of duality and tripartite views attempting to access the whole human being from both the spiritual and soul side or the soul or bodily side, have contributed to greater insight into the emergence of wholesome anthropologies that have been developed or are under construction, especially where they claim to work from a Biblical background.

One has to take into account that notions such as a ‘spiritual body’ and its counter position of a ‘bodily spirit’ are supposedly been derived from the linkage of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world in Judaeo-Christian Bible by respecting the margins of the divine historical timeline with its diverse dispensational settings. Dual and triadic descriptions appear in different parts of the Bible. The main question is whether one can build a complete anthropology on episodic descriptions in different contexts of the Bible were a dual or triadic way is presented. One has to state dualist or trichotomist approaches of God, human beings and the natural earthly word are unjustifiably read into the text of the Bible.

4.1.2.5 The natural cosmic world

What emerges throughout White’s works is a twosome approach of the divine-heaven and human-earthly dimensions facing each other in each divine historical dispensation from the creational beginning to the end of fulfilment at the end of times:

After the earth with its teeming animal and vegetable life had been called into existence, man, the crowning work of the Creator, and the one for whom the beautiful earth had been fitted up, was brought upon the stage of action. To him was given dominion over all that his eye could behold; for “God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and let them have dominion over . . . all the earth. . . . So God created man in His own image; . . . male and female created He them.” Here is clearly set forth the origin of the human race; and the divine record is so plainly stated that there is no occasion for erroneous conclusions. God created man in His own image. Here is no mystery. There is no ground for the supposition that man was evolved by slow degrees of development from the lower forms of animal or vegetable life. Such teaching lowers the great work of the Creator to the level of man’s narrow, earthly conceptions. Men are so intent upon excluding God from the sovereignty of the universe that they degrade

man and defraud him of the dignity of his origin. He who set the starry worlds on high and tinted with delicate skill the flowers of the field, who filled the earth and the heavens with the wonders of His power, when He came to crown His glorious work, to place one in the midst to stand as ruler of the fair earth, did not fail to create a being worthy of the hand that gave him life. The genealogy of our race, as given by inspiration, traces back its origin, not to a line of developing germs, Molluscs, and quadrupeds but to the great Creator. Though formed from the dust, Adam was “the son of God.”

(White [1890] 1958a:44)

John H. Kellogg brought about the pantheistic crisis to the Seventh-day Adventist world. The highly influential and powerful physician of the largest medical institution in the country at the time, Battle Creek Sanatorium, by making the pointer of the natural cosmic world his main avenue of access to the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world inevitably operated with a sense-making approach in which the close connection was more emphasised than the radical difference between God and the natural cosmic world. The debate that followed at the time between Kellogg and White might have sounded like a difference in degree and not of substance, but viewed against the backdrop of a myriad of attempts in the modern era in which artificial bridges and connections were built by philosophers and theologians between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world, the debate revolved around the core of the mystery of the simultaneity of the close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. In sharing his pantheistic ideas in the early 1880's with Ellen White, she told him to ‘never teach such theories in our institutions’ (White 1990b:279). Kellogg persistently and confidently followed through with his viewpoints and by 1897 was advocating that God was a servant of man in giving him ‘power to direct the energy within his body’ (White, AL 1981:282; see Douglass 1998:200).

The entire development came to a head-on when Kellogg, against counsel, published his book *The Living Temple*, which he intended to use to raise funds to rebuild the Sanatorium from the fateful fire that destroyed it on February 18, 1902 (Schwarz & Greenleaf 2000:262-271). The book plates, however, burnt in the fierce fire that destroyed the denomination's publishing house only ten months later. Many Seventh-day Adventists viewed those tragic events then to be clear indication of the judgment of God.

The well known EJ Waggoner of Minneapolis in a similar vein slightly changed the emphasis of his pantheistic access avenue mainly to the human side in the mystery of how God, human beings and the natural world are connected and are different by writing that every breath taken by humans is ‘a direct breathing of God’ in the nostrils, and that God is in pure water and good food, because ‘God is in everything’ (*GC Bulletin*, 1899:57-58;119). It is interesting that Kellogg’s soft pantheism starts with an accessing of the natural cosmic world while Waggoner’s soft pantheism revolves in the first place around the humanness of human beings.

Ellen White, from Australia, reacted to Waggoner by writing that ‘nature is not God and never was God...As God’s created work, it but bears a testimony of His power’ (*GC Bulletin*, 1899:157). White in the debates with Kellogg and Waggoner demonstrated that she was not of the intention to partake in the bridge-building reductionist processes of the modern era which either starts in their reductionist bridge-building exercises with either a theologistic and scholastic exercise regarding God or an anthropocentric and humanist exercise with humanity as the main point of departure or with a cosmisation and pantheistic exercise in which the natural created cosmic world is treated as if God is pantheistically inserted in the natural world. According to Van Niekerk when something existentially difficult in life is been elevated to the level of a theoretical problem, the only way left, is to find the solution in terms of theoretical means (2006:368-371). And that is precisely the trap into which Kellogg and Waggoner seemed to fall. By their approaching the connection and differences between God, human beings and the natural world as an intrinsic problem – of which they were seemingly unaware - called for theoretical analogical and metaphorical bridge-building processes to solve the problem. The mystery, according to Van Niekerk, is not to be upgraded to the level of a *problem* in which the divides or the gaps between God, humanity and the natural cosmic world are theoretically solved. Such a problem-solving approach bypasses the nearly obvious existential assumption of the *mystery* of the *simultaneity* of the intrinsic *connectedness* and radical *difference* of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. Van Niekerk views the majority of theological bridging efforts starting exclusively with God as theologism, efforts starting exclusively with human beings as anthropocentrism or humanism and efforts starting exclusively with the natural world as naturalism or cosmologism. He asserts:

In our society many people do not regard the experience of the threesome, each in a separate avenue as a problem which has to be solved: either because the sense making procedure of experiencing the Godness of God in a separate divine and religious avenue, the humanness of being human in a separate human avenue and the naturalness of nature in a separate natural cosmic avenue is accepted as part of the sense making 'logic' of modern societies, or because the problem of three separate avenues of experience was solved long ago through a connection established by one of the partners in the threesome. In history, the initiating and connecting agency between the three partners in many approaches was either God, or human beings, or the natural cosmos. The majority of these attempts foundered because the mystery of the simultaneous connection and otherness of God, human beings and cosmic nature is been speculatively upgraded to the level of a problem that has to be solved through rationality and thinking, faith and believing or language and speaking. One cannot separate the experience of God, being human and nature into three distinct avenues with the aim of establishing the appropriate connection between the avenues in a subsequent reflection procedure of rationality, faith or language. The acceptance of the mysterious connection and otherness of God, being human and nature in experiences of human beings militates against their separation.....In a sense the struggle since the Reformation of the 16th century between 'theologists', 'anthropocentrists' and 'cosmologists' clouded the issue of the mystery of the at-one-ment and at-other-ment of God, human beings and the natural world.

(Van Niekerk 2006:368-9)

White in respects the mystery of the simultaneity of the close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world in two important ways.

Firstly, the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world is spelled out by White through the centrality of God's communicative and dynamic love through and in Christ. In Christ emerges the divine/human template of how God is connectively working with his creation throughout God's history with human beings.

Secondly, the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world is spelled out by White within the margins of the non-speculative and non-scholastic divine historical timeline from Genesis to Revelation deeply engrained and embodied in what we have termed throughout this thesis as the divine historical textuality of the Bible. In all the dispensations aspects of the divine/human history emerge as

centrally embodied in Christ and embedded in the Old and New Testament through the Spirit. In such a view there is no place and space for theologistic, humanistic or pantheistic bridges between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world.

4.1.2.6 How White links God with human beings and the natural cosmic world

In White studies various sense making approaches regarding the double structure or the pair of avenues of accessing special prophetic redemptive knowledge from God *through* Christ in the prophets in the Old Testament, the New Testament and White as prophet - the present truth dimension - and redemptive knowledge in Christ as the centre of history and the perpetual prophetic priest in the eternal sanctuary till eternity are tackled in at least six different ways in the writings, sayings and doings of Ellen White. The following six ways emerged in White's works as expressive of the double-sided link through and in Christ between God and earthly-human world:

- Knowledge from God *through* Christ and redemptive knowledge *in* Christ regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature are in opposition to each other; or
- Knowledge from God *through* Christ and redemptive knowledge *in* Christ regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature are *correlative and complementary* to each other; or
- Knowledge from God *through* Christ and redemptive knowledge *in* Christ regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature are *dialectical* to each other; or
- Knowledge from God *through* Christ *irrupts* into redemptive knowledge *in* Christ regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature or vice versa; or
- Knowledge from God *through* Christ annuls redemptive knowledge *in* Christ regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature through an *identification* process or vice versa; or
- Knowledge from God *through* Christ and redemptive knowledge *in* Christ regarding God, human beings and natural cosmic nature are extended to include the whole mystery of the differentiation and integration of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal through the Spirit and future directed fulfilment.

Of the six positions, the last position as a full employment of the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment in which God, human beings and the natural cosmic world

are mysteriously involved are in an explicit sense absent in the works of White. Traces and vestiges of the divine historical continuity of the four grand acts of God operational in the works of White are sporadically detected but then in an implicit way. The concentration and emphasis of White is on God's reconciliation through and in Christ that stretches into eternity.

Sin and evil are also involved in White's works straddled as a notion before and after the fall. White in a different sense than Calvin viewed the position of Adam before and after the fall because Adam who was created sinless descendant. Seth inherited the fallen nature of his parents but also the knowledge of the Redeemer and instruction of righteousness. White's reflection on this before and after the fall amounts to the following:

Concerning the creation of Adam it is said, "In the likeness of God made He him;" but man, after the Fall, "begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." While Adam was created sinless, in the likeness of God, Seth, like Cain, inherited the fallen nature of his parents. But he received also the knowledge of the Redeemer and instruction in righteousness.

(White [1890] 1958a:81)

4.2 Epilogue

There is in spite of the obvious differences between Calvin and White a remarkable similarity in the way they tackled the problem of the divine historical timeline as expressed in the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. This is the first angle that we continuously have to keep in mind in the description of their views. The second angle of their reflection is the strong emphasis on the mystery of the simultaneity of the close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment.

The way they tackled the mystery of the close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment in regard to different aspects such as the expressed will of God, the problem of free will and determination and election, the age old problem of the soul and the body and especially the way they link God, human beings and the natural cosmic world are differently expressed.

CHAPTER 5

Calvin and White on the coherence of God's grand acts

5.1 Introduction

One of the points of departure in this thesis revolves around Calvin and White not being regarded theologians in the classical mould, is their insistence on treating, on the one hand the relationship of the close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and nature as a mystery that we receive through the graceful revelatory acts of God. On the other hand, in both Calvin and White's writings God, human beings and the created natural world are kept simultaneously together as relational 'partners' within each of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation expressing the divine historical timeline from Genesis to Revelation. Their coherent reflexive networks and patterns of faith in their Faith Studies are done within the margins of divine historicity as portrayed in the revelational history of the Judaeo-Christian Bible.

Too little emphasis by both Calvin and White's followers is laid on the significant fact that both of them did not separate their theologies from their anthropologies and cosmologies. They continuously reflect and discuss God, human beings and the natural created world closely aligned and together in their writings, sayings and doings within the divine historical timeline which they view differently. One cannot assert that there are not immense differences between Calvin and White. They differ considerably on a wide number of issues but an outstanding feature of their kind of theology is that their connected and concrete reflection, discussion and portrayal of God, human beings and the natural cosmic environment is done within the whole array of the grand acts of God. Another thing Calvin and White in spite of their differences have in common, is not to follow the typical scholastic theological approach of speculating about the essences of God, human beings and nature as separate entities above and outside God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation as portrayed in the Bible.

One of the main challenges of this thesis is to ascertain the centrality of Christ positioned within the range of God's acts of creation, redemption, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. As a

vehicle for our journey, we engage ourselves with some of the core theological themes that John Calvin and Ellen White were mainly dealing with in their writings.

5.2.1 Calvin and God's grand acts of Creation, Reconciliation, Renewal and Fulfilment

The main discussion of Calvin's approach to the grand acts of God revolves around the question whether he laid equal weight on all four of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal and fulfilment (consummation) in the biblical historical timeline. In Calvin's way of working, while working in terms of the salvation-historical mode, it seems as if his reflection gives more weight to God's acts of creation and reconciliation giving his whole approach, a strong leaning towards the past and a bit less to the future through the central position of reconciliation in Christ. Reconciliation (redemption) acquired in Calvin's approach the pivotal and prototypical position between creation in the past and consummation in the future through a linkage with the Holy Spirit. Calvin effectuates a link through his emphasis on Christ as the perpetual mediator interceding between God and human beings in a continuous sense till the future fulfilment at the end. As Calvin's reflection was primarily revolving around God's grand acts of creation and redemption everything happening in God self and before God's act of creation could only be read from creation - before and after the fall - and through God's act of redemption. Adam and Eve to a large extent viewed as historical figures by Calvin receive in this scheme a before and after treatment, in paradise before falling into sin and especially after falling into sin which emerged as the determining factor causing the total depravity of all human beings. Every part of the biblical history is directed to reconciliation in Christ as the mirror through which Calvin's view of God's determinative will in a special sense of election of certain people and God's determinative will in a general sense as providential management of the processes set in motion by God's creation come to light in people's lives.

According to Van Niekerk (2009b:40-43), Calvin's main sense-making emphasis on God's creation (nature) and reconciliation (grace) as two of the foursome of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal through the Spirit and future directed fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth, is well known. Calvin's strong emphasis on creation (nature) and reconciliation (grace) paved the way for the majority of later Calvinists to cling in their reflection

to the twosome as the designated pointer pair as access avenues for knowledge about God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. While the twosome was still reflected about by Calvin in his Institutes as dynamic operational acts of God, they acquired the status as theological doctrines in 17th century Reformed Orthodoxy. The hardness and tenacity of the two doctrines is demonstrated by the variability through which the doctrines had been accepted and continued in the majority of the followers in the Reformed, Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches up to our era.

Calvin's treatment of the knowledge of God, the creator and the knowledge of God, the redeemer in his Institutes as designations for his constructed reflexive realms of creation and redemption espouses a whole array of dualities that fit into each other. The main duality is that of a 'vertical' *mirroring* reflexive double layered consciousness and a 'horizontal' reflexive *processual* consciousness that operates throughout in each of the four books of the Institutes. Moreover, an array of dualities in the mirroring reflexive mode and triadic processual pointers in the processual reflexive mode appear throughout the Institutes (Van Niekerk 2009b:42).

Apart from Calvin's strong emphasis on two of God's four grand acts which are God's act of creation and reconciliation the question, arises as to which of the two acts of creation and reconciliation carries the main emphasis, or is the primary access avenue of the two in Reformed theological reflection? One could view the whole of Reformed theological and church history as that of a contestation between viewpoints that departed from the creational point of view and those that departed from God's act of reconciliation. A small minority of Reformed viewpoints had the sense to emphasise a balanced view between God's act of creation and reconciliation.

In regard to the reflexive realms of creation and reconciliation in various of the 16th century Reformation's expressed for short in the pair of Law and Gospel, Calvin comments on Romans 8:15-18 – '15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'. 16 The Spirit Himself bears witness of God, 17 and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be completed with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'

Paul states that there are two spirits. One he calls *the spirit of bondage*, which we are able to derive from the law; and the other, the spirit of adoption, which proceeds from the Gospel. The first, he states, was formerly given to produce fear; the other is given now to afford assurance. The certainty of our salvation, which he wishes to confirm appears, as we see, with greater clarity from such a comparison of opposites. The same comparison is used by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, when he says that we have not come to Mount Sinai, where all things were so terrible, that the people, terrified as if by the immediate declaration of death, implored that the word should not be spoken to them, and Moses himself confessed that he was filled with terror... From the adverb again we learn that Paul is here comparing the law with the Gospel. This the inestimable benefit which the Son of God has brought us by His advent, that we should no longer be bound by the servile condition of the law. We are not, however, to infer from this either that no one was endowed with the Spirit of adoption before the coming of Christ, or that all who received the law were slaves and not sons. Paul compares the ministry of the law with the dispensation of the Gospel, rather than persons with persons. I admit that believers are here warned how much more liberally God has now dealt with them than He did formerly with the fathers under the Old Testament. He regards, however, the outward dispensation, and in this respect alone we excel them, for the faith of Abraham, Moses, and David, was more excellent than ours. Yet in so far as God kept them under a 'schoolmaster', they had not yet attained the liberty which has been disclosed to us....Although the covenant of grace is contained in the law, yet Paul removes it from there, for in opposing the Gospel to the law he regards only what was peculiar to the law itself, viz. command and prohibition, and the restraining of transgressors by the threat of death. He assigns to the law its own quality, by which it differs from the Gospel....Our opinion, therefore, concerning persons should be as follows: 'When the law was published among the Jewish people, and also after it was published, the godly were enlightened by the same Spirit of faith. Thus the hope of eternal inheritance, of which the Spirit is the earnest and seal, was sealed on their hearts. The only difference is that the Spirit is more bountifully and abundantly poured out in the kingdom of Christ.' If, however, we regard the dispensation of doctrine itself, it will be seen that salvation was first revealed for certain when Christ was manifested in the flesh, so great was the obscurity in which all things were covered in the Old Testament, when compared with the clear light of the Gospel.

(Commentary Romans 1961:168-9)

5.2.1 Creation

In reading Calvin's comments in his writings on God's creation and providence they seem to suggest that the simultaneous connection and difference between dual and triadic trajectories run right through his views of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world within his reflexive realm of creation (van Niekerk 2009b:41). We follow Van Niekerk closely in his description of

Calvin's reflexive realms of creation and reconciliation. Here under the descriptive heading of creation he describes Calvin's reflexive realm of creation as follows:

In the *realm of creation* Calvin's "vertical" double-mirroring, reflective consciousness is directed at the dispersion and expansion of images in the background and dome of creation as the theatre of God's glory (Inst. I,5,8; I,6,2; I,14,20; II,6,1), the school of the universe (Inst. II,6,1) through which knowledge of God and simultaneously also knowledge of ourselves as human beings is acquired (Inst. I,1,1-3). Thus, a level of consciousness of "heavenly things" and a level of "earthly things" continue through the reflexive realm of creation (Inst. II,2,13). Simultaneously, a "horizontal" reflexive *processual* consciousness opens itself throughout the realm of creation in that the mode of a particular contracted and concentrated human/divine duality regarding Christ, faith, the church and Holy Scripture which is mainly dealt with in the realm of redemption is already dealt with through reflection on Holy Scripture as one of the contracted dual human/divine modes of the reflexive realm of redemption (Inst. I,6-16).

(Van Niekerk 2009b:43)

Calvin in his sense-making approach follows God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment in the divine historical timeline in his faith reflexive exposition. We have however seen that his main emphasis is on the grand acts of God's creation and reconciliation in a similar sense as the majority of mainline Reformers of the 16th century. On the other hand the emphasis in the 16th century on God's acts of renewal through the Spirit and God's fulfilment to the end of time was mainly carried forward by representatives of what has later been called the Radical Reformation or 'the left wing' of the Reformation. The philosopher of hope, Ernst Bloch in his work *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (1959) points to two pointers that were part for example of Thomas Müntzer's (d.1525) radical reformation attempts. The pointers are the 'spirit of utopia', the Kingdom of God that has to be realised in the present generation (Bloch 1959: 5,317) and the second was his view of God and human beings contracted in Christ demonstrating that God and human beings are understanding and conceiving themselves in the act of doing (Bloch 1959:1482). This approach of God and human beings understanding themselves in the act of doing what is worthwhile is viewed by Müntzer as the outpouring of God's Spirit (Bloch 1959:1538).

In Calvin's sense God's creation and expressed will in God's providential management in the ongoing process, creation portrays a similar pattern as that of Müntzer with the rider that Calvin

made a choice for moderation in all things and not for fanatic radicalism. Resulting from Calvin's strong emphasis on the motif of creation and not like Müntzer on the motif of God's renewal and end time fulfilment in the present is a certain form of conservatism that still haunts various followers of Calvin. Calvin stayed with his view of creation within the divine biblical historical timeline. In Calvin's pattern of faith reflexivity the biblical depiction of lists of generations forms the backdrop of Calvin's calculation within the age of the divine historical timeline and thus of the earth. For Calvin the idea that the earth was nearly six thousand years old was quite acceptable. Calvin asserts:

...once the beginning of the universe is known, God's eternity may shine forth more clearly, and we may be more rapt in wonder at it. And indeed, that impious scoff ought not to move us: that it is a wonder how it did not enter God's mind sooner to found heaven and earth, but that he idly permitted an immeasurable time to pass away, since he could have made it very many millenniums earlier, albeit the duration of the world, now declining to its ultimate end has not yet attained six thousand years. For it is neither lawful nor expedient for us to inquire why God delayed so long, because if the human mind strives to penetrate thus far, it will fail a hundred times on the way.

(Calvin [1989] 2001a:14)

The 16th century Calvin viewed the age of the earth as around 6000 years old. White in the 19th century came to a similar calculation. Interestingly Calvin is nearly nowhere taken to task for his view regarding the age of the earth which is clearly calculated on the basis of a certain approach to the Bible as well as in terms of the accepted earth-centred God-human-world view of the time in the churches. Though a case could be made for the earth to be round, practically the earth's operational area where human beings were habituating is viewed as for all practical purposes as flat. The sense-making world of not the earth in the centre but the sun as advocated by Copernicus (and Galileo) was just in the making in the 16th century. Calvin resisted and agreed with the new astronomy of Copernicus. Bouwsma (1988:71-72) asserts that the sense-making view of the old science had been a source of comfort to the people of the time and that the new sense making view as portrayed by Copernicus was subverting the certainties on which the old view rested and thereby dispersing humankind adrift on an uncharted sea. The effectiveness of the new to a large extent rested on a massive erosion of the old view. Calvin participated in its erosion, but even as he did so he also clung to it.

As seen above Calvin operated with two trajectories in both his reflexive realms of creation and reconciliation. The first is a mirroring trajectory in which God is facing human beings with an omission of the natural cosmic world. In the second trajectory God-human beings-natural cosmic world are fully in operation. The question had been raised whether the omission of the natural world in the first mirroring trajectory in which God is facing human beings does not amount to a degradation of the natural world in Calvin's sense-making God-human-nature view. The addition of the natural world in the processual trajectory as the end part of the process might be a consolation factor that a complete degradation is enacted but as an overall impression is seems that there is a tendency in Calvin's approach to place the natural cosmic environment on a lower plane than the pointers of God and human beings. Even if we accept that the link Ganoczy (1982:46;49) suggested between the influence of Stoicism on Calvin on the degrading of the natural cosmic world in comparison to the weight given to the pointers of God and humanity, is well established, the historical link does not help us to make real sense of the extent and the degree to which the natural cosmic realm is so called degraded in Calvin's overall God-human-and-nature view. Ganoczy countered and relativised the depth and width of the links between Stoicism and Calvin by making use of the typical Calvinistic theologistic strategy to use the grounding of his main ancestor Calvin in the 'biblical-Christian faith' as the interpretive rule of thumb why the similarities with Stoicism are not to be taken seriously (Ganoczy 1982:52). The interpretative inverse spiralling strategy of using exclusively and one-sidedly the theo-anthropocentric redemptive realm of Calvin to screen and clean Calvin's approach from contamination by Stoicism and other so called pagan elements is one of the strongest and most problematic strategies of a theologistic interpretation approach.

5.2.2 Reconciliation

The second reconciliation part as the main part of Calvin's double-sided approach of operation in terms of the realms of God's creation and reconciliation is described by Van Niekerk in the following way:

In the *realm of redemption* the "vertical" double level of mirroring reflection revolves mainly around the particular contracted and concentrated human/divine duality of Christ's humanity/divinity (Inst. II,12-17,1-3), the contracted duality of earthly bread and wine/spiritual body and blood of Christ in the sacred supper

(Inst. I,1,1-3) received and enjoyed through the contracted duality of faith as a particular divine/human mode of experience (Inst. III,1-10) within the church as a particular contracted divine/human sphere as the society of Christ, the mother of the believers, the pious and the godly (Inst. IV,1-7) and Holy Scripture, encapsulated as divine word/human words in its divine and human dimensions. Simultaneously, throughout the reflexive realm of redemption, Calvin's other operational mode of "horizontal" reflexive *processual* consciousness, moving retrospectively back to the general-common generalities of the reflexive realm of creation and anticipating the general-common generalities is dealt with in the reflexive realm of book three, in which the processual movement of grace, benefits and effects from Christ to us are described, while book four deals with the external means (aids) through which we are invited into and being held in the society of Christ (the church).

(Van Niekerk 2009b:43)

In a similar but different sense as White Calvin in his reflexive realm of reconciliation joins God and human beings, heaven and earth in Christ. One could without doubt view the way Calvin operates with 'the particular contracted and concentrated human/divine duality of Christ's humanity/divinity' as the basic divine template through and in which God acts in the world of human beings and in the natural cosmic world. This divine template in which divinity and humanity are combined without being blended appears analogically in the divine/human form of the church, faith and Holy Scripture and is only to be applied to the elected of which Christ is the mirror. We must always be reminded that this model of a divine/human template of the particularity of God and humanity closely connected while being different appears at places and at times in Calvin's work when the graceful act of God's reconciliation is portrayed. The general side of God's work that covers the whole of creation and the providential managing of creation including the lives of the whole of humanity applies to the work of God the creator in the most general of terms.

Calvin writes, in his commentary on Genesis 28:12 in which Jacob dreamed about a ladder which was set up on earth and of which the top reached heaven while the angels of God were ascending and descending on it, about the combining of heavenly divinity and earthly humanity in the mediator Christ:

It is Christ alone who joins heaven to earth. He alone is Mediator, reaching from heaven to earth. He it is through whom the fullness of all heavenly gifts flows down to us and through whom we on our part may ascend to God...Therefore, if

we say that the ladder is a symbol of Christ, the interpretation is not forced. For the metaphor of a ladder is most suited to a Mediator through whom the service of angels, righteousness and truth, and all the spirits of holy grace descend to us step by step. We, on our part, who are firmly fixed not only upon the earth, but in the abyss of the curse, and are submerged in hell itself, through him climb up to God. Moreover, the God of hosts tops the ladder because the divine fullness dwells in Christ, who therefore reaches heaven. For although all power was given by the Father to Christ's human nature, yet he would not be the support of our faith if he were not God manifest in the flesh. The fact that the body of Christ is finite in no way prevents his filling the heavens, since his grace and power is spread over all. To this Paul bears witness when he says that Christ ascended to heaven to fill all things.

(Calvin: Commentaries, Haroutunian1958:147)

In the metaphor of the ladder of Jacob Calvin highlights God's amazing love that in Christ's human nature by which the support of our faith becomes manifest. In Christ we are rightfully reconciled because Christ is God's divine fullness manifested in the flesh. Christ is the only real link between God and us as human beings. It is astonishing how Calvin moves on to show the strangest paradox, of how the unrighteous and corrupt and detestable sinner can be loved by a pure, holy, righteous God, who cannot bear the sight of our corrupted lives and environment.

Calvin portrays in a continuous sense the amazing love of an amazing God for an amazing sinner. God, according to Calvin, anticipates our 'reconciliation in Christ.' To the question, 'How has Christ vanquished sin and bridged the gulf between us and God?' Calvin asserts that this was accomplished through Christ's perfect 'obedience', i.e. through his death. Thus, through death, and not just any death, but a voluntary death stemming from obedience, Christ met the requirements of our punishment. Our guilt was transferred on to 'the head of the Son of God – Isaiah 53:12' as the mediator (Kerr 1989:77-78). In Calvin's view the cross, death and tomb are expressive of a sense of 'weakness.' Moreover, he departs from the viewpoint that while we have been purchased, our sins are paid for and reconciled to God through Christ's death we are 'newborns' through Christ's resurrection which effectuates and secures our hope and victory (Kerr 1989:78-79).

In Calvin's view in Christ we see the ultimate essence of every one of us and of everything that is in Christ we have glorious victory, reign, assurance and eternal life.

When Christ ascended, according to Calvin ([1989] 2001b:449-450):

- Jesus Christ was installed in the government of heaven and earth, and formally admitted to possession of the administration committed to him, and ...to continue until he descends to judgment;
- He is presiding on the judgment-seat of heaven;
- He has opened the entrance into heaven that was closed up by our first parents, Adam and Eve;
- He appears constantly as our intercessor and advocate before our Father in heaven and;
- He entered heaven 'in our flesh' (Calvin [1559] 1960b:14). This is a vital point that Calvin makes. It is a unique assertion to the Christological world. To Calvin, the ascension and entrance of Christ into heaven in our human flesh, is that which enables us to enter heaven and makes our representation real there.

In his 1536 edition of his Institutes, Calvin describes how the work of Christ as the mediator and reconciliator did not end at the cross. By and through Christ's resurrection continuing into his ascension the perpetual heavenly royal and priestly role of the mediator sets forth until the end of time. According to Calvin the Spirit anointing Christ by pouring itself on Christ in order that who of us are partners and partakers of him receive this fullness through faith:

So do we believe in short that by this anointing he was appointed king by the Father to subject all power in heaven and on earth that in him we might be kings, having sway over the devil, sin, death, and hell...Then we believe that he was appointed priest, by his self-sacrifice to placate the Father and reconcile him to us, that in him we might be priests, with him as our intercessor and mediator., offering our prayers, our thanks, ourselves and our all to the Father.

(1536-Institutes 1975:73-74)

Interestingly, Calvin while emphasising the full spectrum of the *munus triplex* of priest, king and prophet, he leaves the prophethood of Christ and thus of believers out of the equation of what happened through the anointment and pouring of the Spirit on Christ. What we have seen throughout this thesis is that Calvin underemphasises the prophethood of Christ and believers

because Calvin locates prophecy within the act of explanation and proclamation of the Bible as the Word of God.

What is of interest in this section is the range of the centrality of Christ from before time to after time in Calvin's writings. On the one hand Christ is simultaneously centrally placed within the Trinitarian scheme and centrally placed within the beginning and end of the biblical historical timeline. Calvin viewed Christ as the only Son of

...the Father to whom the beginning of acting and the fountain and source of all things; to assign to the Son the wisdom and plan of acting; to refer to the Spirit the power and effective working of action. Hence also the Son is said to be the Word of the Father, not as men speak and think, but eternal and unchangeable, coming forth in an ineffable way from the Father, just as the Holy Spirit is called "Power", "Finger", "Might".

(1536-Institutes 1975:65-66)

While Christ is as the only Son of the Father 'the wisdom and plan of acting' of God centrally placed between the Father and the Spirit in the trinity, Christ as the Son of the Father as God self is also centrally placed within the biblical historical timeline as God's enactment within the array of God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment working as royal priest from the beginning of creation till the end of fulfilment:

Since therefore God the Son is one and the same God with the Father, we hold him to be true God, Creator of heaven and earth.

(1536-Institutes 1975:67-68)

The Sonship of Christ is different from believers being sons and daughters of God:

He is the Son, not as believers are – by adoption and grace only – but by nature, begotten of the Father from eternity. When we call him "only" Son we are distinguishing him from all others. Inasmuch as he is God, he is one God the Father, of the same nature and substance or essence, not otherwise than, distinct as to the person which he has as his very own, distinct from the Father.

(1536-Institutes 1975:67)

As royal priest Christ, the Son of God continues in a central sense in God's acts till the end of time, till fulfilment. Through his ascension and being seated at the right hand of the Father Christ is validated as the perpetual and continuing royal priestly mediator:

Likewise, we believe that as he was manifested in the flesh, he sits at the right hand of the Father. This means that he has been constituted and declared king, judge, and Lord over all. All creation without exception, has been subjected to his lordship, in order that, by his power, he may lavish spiritual gifts upon us.

(1536 – Institutes 1975:76)

From the human side, thus from our side the question we ought to ask Calvin is: ‘Seeing that there is nothing from our side that we can do to earn the righteousness of God, what is the role of the individual “I”?’ Does the human steward of God have any part to play? Calvin answers our question when he quotes Augustine saying:

Of all prior men groaning under the burden of corruptible flesh and the infirmities of this life, the only hope is, that we have one Mediator, Jesus Christ the righteous, and that he intercedes for our sins.

(Calvin [1989] 2001c:62)

So we see that in the presence of an offended, un-approachable Judge, the individual believer’s only hope is his Mediator Jesus Christ. Calvin also points the hopeless, defiled sinner to ‘the wounds of the Saviour.’ It is of paramount importance that we take note of the Christological titles that Calvin employs and refers to Christ, with regard to the judgment. At the most highly revered tribunal in the entire universe, the believer is commended to rely on ‘a firm rock.’ If the believer is haunted by the sins and has a troubled conscience, Calvin points that person to yet another Christological title – the ‘Lord’s wounds’ (Calvin [1989] 2001c:62-63).

The judgment itself is very strict and accurate, Calvin suggests. One danger that we as believers face, is the issue of pride and self-righteousness. To Calvin we should be empty of all such corruption, if we are to be accounted righteous before the judgment-seat of God. Without sounding repetitive, there seems to be a continuous question burning in the back of our minds, and that is, what does God require of us? In Calvin’s view, the believer is to be humble before God and man. We need to have contrite hearts. We should have wounded hearts and hope in our Lord and Saviour and Mediator whose merits only are righteous to God (Calvin [1989] 2001c:63-65).

Perhaps at this stage we could ask the question, seeing that our merits do not count, and seeing that the will's intent or rather our motives will be considered in the judgment and that our only hope is our Mediator and Saviour and Lord; how can we know if we are righteous? To state it differently, how can we know if someone is a righteous person? It appears from Calvin that we can know that we are on the wrong track if we have a flattery, self-loving spirit that is boastful and if we feel that we are in some way or another righteous. Calvin in his 1536 Institutes answers the question whether there is any worthiness or merit intrinsic in human beings by counteracting such a notion with the goodness exuded by God the Father as follows:

Indeed all these things are done to us by him (the Father- PPJ), not through any worth of ours, nor by any merit to which he owes this grace, not because we can force his beneficence to make any reciprocal payment. Rather it is through his fatherly kindness and mercy that he has to with us, the sole cause of which is his goodness. For this reason, we must take care to give thanks for this very great goodness of his, to ponder it with our hearts, proclaim it with our tongue, and to render such praises as we are able. We should so reverence such a Father with grateful piety and burning love, as to devote ourselves wholly to his service, and honour him in all things. We should also so receive all adverse things with calm and peaceful hearts, as if from his, thinking that his providence so also looks after us and our salvation while it is afflicting and oppressing us (Job 2:10). Therefore, whatever may finally happen, we are never to doubt or lose faith that we have in him a propitious and benevolent Father, and no less are to await salvation from him. For it is something utterly certain and true that the faith we are each of us taught to hold by this first part of the Creed is the right faith.

(1536 – Institutes 1975:66-67)

For Calvin, Christ the Son of the Father is central and in the middle of the dynamic progression of the biblical historical timeline from beginning to end in two senses.

The first is the 'vertical' double level of mirroring embodied in God's 'wisdom and plan of acting' (1536-Institutes 1975:66) in his Son embodied in the particular contracted and concentrated divine/human duality unified but not blended in Christ Jesus (Calvin [1559] 1960b:12-17).

Van Niekerk (2009b:43-44) finds, the particular contracted, concentrated, unified but not blended divine/human reconciliatory prototype embodied through and in Christ, embedded in other areas and parts of Calvin's writings, sayings and doings where Calvin is employing the

vertical double level of mirroring reflection within the realm and ambience of reconciliation and redemption proper. In the long quotation of Van Niekerk we have seen that a similar structure is employed in the contracted duality of earthly bread and wine/spiritual body and blood of Christ in the sacred supper as a reconciliatory supper between God and human beings. In addition Calvin's approach to that of faith and belief of human beings is that of a field and mode of divine/human experience through which we experience that:

Thus this true faith – which can at last be called “Christian” – is nothing else than a firm conviction of mind whereby we determine with ourselves that God's truth is so certain that it is incapable of not accomplishing what it has pledged to do by his holy Word (Rom 10:11). This Paul teaches in his definition, calling it “the substance of things hope for and the proof of things not seen” (Heb 11:1); he understands a support on which we lean and recline. It is as if he said: faith itself is as sure and certain possession of those things God has promised.

(1536 – Institutes 1975:58)

In Calvin's approach the church as a reconciliatory and redeeming divine/human sphere in society exemplifies in a similar sense as faith, the particular contracted, concentrated, unified but not blended divine/human prototype of reconciliation through and in Christ.

The second dimension of the centrality of Christ in Calvin's approach is the middle position in the dynamic progression of the biblical historical timeline from beginning to end, from God's act of creation in which the Son of God – Christ was involved and God's act of fulfilment in which Christ is involved as perpetual mediator and is to be involved in the events of the end as the one that transfers his Kingdom to God the Father.

Calvin moves in many of his writings with Christ centrally between God and human beings and in the middle of history between beginning and end, simultaneously, on the one hand in his mirroring reflection scheme from the divine to the human and from the human to the divine, and on the other hand, in his processual schemes from the beginning to the end and from the end to the beginning in the biblical historical timeline. Calvin asserts in his 1536 Institutes regarding Scripture and the exclusive position of Christ:

Scripture very often declares the prudence of our flesh to be the enemy of God's wisdom (Rom 8:6-7); it wholly condemns the vanity of our mind; laying low our

whole reason it bids us look to God's will alone (Deut 12:32). Scripture offers Christ alone to us, sends us to him, and establishes us in him. "He", says Ambrose, "is our mouth, through which we speak to the Father; he is our eye through which we see the Father; he is our right hand, through which we offer ourselves to the Father. Unless he intercedes, there is no intercourse with God either for us or for all saints.

(1536 – Institutes 1975:96)

5.2.3 Renewal

God's act of Renewal through the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Pentecost in which the cross and resurrection of Christ has been the empowering, vindicating and affirming 'tools' of the Spirit is strongly qualified and structured by Calvin in the array of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment as fully Christ-centric. Calvin's view of the Spirit in his Institutes of 1536 as the power and effective working of action of Christ as the wisdom and plan of God's acting following turn beginning of acting of the Father as the fountain and source of all things (1536 – Institutes 1975:65-66) moves in the direction Christ → Spirit, Word → Spirit. Even in his Institutes of 1559 Calvin seldom make provision for the simultaneous movement from the Spirit → Christ; Spirit → Word.

Hence also the Son is said to be the Word of the Father, not as men speak and think, but eternal and unchangeable, coming forth in an ineffable way from the Father, just as the Holy Spirit is called "Power", "Finger", "Might".

(1536-Institutes 1975:65-66)

The Holy Spirit stays in Calvin's approach throughout his writings the effectuator and applicator of everything contained in God's reconciliatory act in Christ in a particular way in the faith area of the believers – the elect, and in a general way in the area of reason and emotions of all people – believers included in the realm of God's creation and providence. Christ is positioned central in the Trinitarian process of Calvin between the Father and the Spirit and in the midst of the biblical historical timeline between beginning and end, creation and fulfilment. God's act of renewal in the Spirit as a distinguishable act through Pentecost is unfortunately underemphasised by Calvin.

Although Calvin underemphasises God's act of renewal through the Spirit the powerful action of the Spirit in the sense of renewal and regeneration is varied. In this regard Calvin comments on Romans 8:14 – 'For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.'(NKJV 1976:973):

It I, however, appropriate to observe that the action of the Spirit is varied. There is its universal action by which all creatures are sustained and moved. There are also the actions of the Spirit which are peculiar to men, and these too are varying in their character. But by Spirit Paul here means sanctification, with which the Lord favours none but His elect, while He sets them apart for Himself as His sons.

(Commentary Romans 1961:167)

The Spirit has an embracing illuminating role in the writings of Calvin:

- i. With regard to the role of the Bible from two sides the Spirit is at work. On the one hand the working terrain of the Spirit is amongst the writers and composers of the Bible who have been inspired to compose and write down what God's Spirit had revealed to them, and on the other the working terrain of the Spirit is also to be seen as internally illuminating the believer to understand the Bible as the Word of God.
- ii. Illuminating the knowledge of God and human beings in a *particular* way in theology/Christian philosophy, the church, faith, sacraments, etc.
- iii. Illuminating the knowledge of God and human beings in a general way through science etc in Christians and Pagans alike.

As early as the Reformation of the 16th century a pneuma-directed rectification and rightful addition to the main Christ enacted trajectory of the Reformation period from Word→ Spirit was been emphasised with greater enthusiasm amongst Calvin's than Luther's followers. Calvin and Zwingli operated in large portions of their work with the Spirit→ Word trajectory in which the notion of the *extra-calvinisticum* was a denotation of Christ not present everywhere as the 'same yesterday, today and tomorrow' in the Lutheran sense as directly everywhere present through Christ himself. In Calvin and Zwingli's view, Jesus Christ is present through the Holy Spirit in people's lives and the natural world. Thus, the thrust of this notion reminds us that Christ was, is and will not be directly present everywhere and in every period and in such a way

bypassing the Spirit of God as the one that makes Christ present (Van Niekerk 1984:34; 2006/7:224). The notion of the *extra-calvinisticum*, meant for Calvin and Zwingli that Christ after his ascension, still had his resurrected humanity, thus his full humanness with him (Weber 1962:153; Van Niekerk 2009:224). Christ is not been present through his own actions but through the Holy Spirit who applies God's main reconciliatory actions of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus as the saving tools of God in this world, in churches and in people's lives.

For Calvin and Zwingli this meant firstly that Christ could not be directly everywhere present through himself as the Lutherans asserted. Calvin asserted in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559) of the elements of bread and wine in Holy Communion:

For as we do not doubt that Christ's body is limited by the general characteristics common to all human bodies, and is contained in heaven (where it was once for all received) until Christ return in judgment [Acts 3:21), so we deem it utterly unlawful to draw it back under these corruptible elements or to imagine it to be present everywhere.

(Calvin [1559] 1960d:17)

Secondly, that Christ is not dwelling in a person's heart and life exclusively in a divine sense but was dwelling through the Holy Spirit in the total bodily existence of a human being (the temple of the Holy Spirit - according to Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:19). Calvin continues with his argument on the elements of bread and wine in the context of Holy Communion by saying:

And there is no need of this for us to enjoy a participation in it (bread and wine – PPJ), since the Lord bestows this benefit upon us through his Spirit so that we may be made one in body, spirit, and soul with him. The bond of this connection is therefore the Spirit of Christ, with whom we are joined in unity, and is like a channel through which all that Christ himself is and has, is conveyed to us.

(Calvin [1559] 1960d:17)

Thirdly, the extra-Calvinisticum signifies that the greatest work of the Holy Spirit in salvation or reconciliation is the raising of Jesus from the dead affirmed in the events of the day of Pentecost (Van Niekerk 2006:374f, 379-381).

There had been remarkable contradictions in Calvin's life and work. Calvin to a certain degree has been taking back some of the positive contributions his notion of the extra-Calvinisticum made in the Christian world.

According to Van Niekerk: firstly, Calvin and the total Reformed/Presbyterian tradition are like the proverbial single eagle on the edge of the roof in their rejection of the continuation of the gifts of the Spirit beyond the era of the apostles. Calvin's rejection of a continuation of the gifts of the Spirit in the post apostolic era goes directly against the notion of the extra-Calvinisticum in which Christ is been depicted as still having his resurrected humanity, the Spirit's greatest gift, miracle and wonder done in the world. The question to Calvin why it is not possible that gifts, miracles and wonders are been actualised and eventuated (intra-naturally) by the Spirit in people's lives, similarly to the raising of Jesus Christ from the dead by the Spirit, would have struck at the heart of Calvin's contradiction according to Van Niekerk (2009b:38).

Calvin comments on Romans 8:9- 'But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His'

The kingdom of the Spirit is the abolition of the flesh. Those in whom the Spirit does not reign do not belong to Christ; therefore those who serve the flesh are not Christians, for those who separate Christ from His Spirit make Him like a dad image or a corpse. We must always bear in mind the counsel of the apostle, that free remission of sins cannot be separated from the Spirit of regeneration. This would be, as it were, to rend Christ asunder.

If this is true, it is strange that we are accused of arrogance by the adversaries of the Gospel, because we dare to avow that the Spirit of Christ dwells in us. We must either deny Christ, or confess that we become Christians by His Spirit. It is dreadful indeed to hear that men have so departed from the Word of the Lord, that they not only boast that they are Christians without the Spirit of God, but also ridicule the faith of others. And yet this is the philosophy of the Papists.

Our readers should not hear that the Spirit is sometimes referred to as the Spirit of God the Father, and sometimes as the Spirit of Christ without distinction. This is not only because His whole fullness was poured on Christ as our Mediator and Head, so that each one of us might receive from Him his own portion, but also because the same Spirit is common to the Father and the Son, who have one essence, and the same eternal deity. Because, however, we have no communication with God except by Christ, the apostle wisely descends from the Father, who seems to be at a greater distance, to Christ.

Regarding the way Christ dwells in us through the Spirit, Calvin comments on Romans 8:10 – ‘And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness’:

Paul now applies his previous remarks concerning the Spirit Christ, in order to signify the manner of Christ’s dwelling in us. For as by the Spirit He consecrates us as temples to Himself, so by the same Spirit He dwells in us. He now explains more distinctly what we have already alluded to, that the sons of God are not reckoned spiritual, on the ground of a full and entire perfection, but only on account of the newness of life which has begun in them. He here anticipates a doubt, which might otherwise have caused us uneasiness; for although the Spirit possesses part of us, yet we see another part still being held by death. He therefore gives the answer that the power of quickening exists in the Spirit of Christ, which is able to absorb our mortality. He concludes from this that we must wait with patience until the remains of sin are entirely abolished.

Readers have already been reminded that the word *Spirit* does not mean the soul, but the Spirit of regeneration. Paul calls this Spirit of regeneration *life*, not only because He lives and flourishes in us, but also because He quickens us by His power, until He destroys our mortal flesh and at last renews us perfectly.

(Commentary Romans 1961:165)

Calvin comments on Romans 8:14 – ‘For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.’(NKJV 1976:973):

Paul teaches us that only those are finally reckoned to be the sons of God who are ruled by His Spirit, since by this mark God acknowledges His own. This destroys the empty boast of hypocrites who usurp the title without the reality, and believers are thus aroused to undoubted confidence in their salvation. The substance of his remarks amounts to this, that all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God; all the sons God are heirs of eternal life; and therefore all who are led by the Spirit of God ought to feel assured of eternal life. The middle premise or assumption is omitted because it was axiomatic.

It I, however, appropriate to observe that the action of the Spirit is varied. There is its universal action by which all creatures are sustained and moved. There are also the actions of the Spirit which are peculiar to men, and these too are varying in their character. But by Spirit Paul here means sanctification, with which the Lord favours none but His elect, while He sets them apart for Himself as His sons.

(Commentary Romans 1961:167)

Calvin comments on Romans 8:11 – ‘But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you’ (NKJV 1976:973). Paul takes it for granted in this verse according to Calvin:

...that in the person of Christ there had been exhibited a specimen of the power which belongs to the whole body of the Church. Since He makes God the author of the resurrection, he attributes to Him the life-giving Spirit.

He, Paul, describes God by a paraphrase which suited his present object better than if he had simply called Him by name. For the same reason he ascribes to the Father the glory of having raised up Christ. This offered a stronger proof of what he proposed to say if he had attributed the resurrection to Christ Himself. The objection could have been made that Christ was able to raise Himself by a power which no man possesses. But when Paul says, ‘God raised up Christ by His Spirit, whom He also communicated to you,’ this cannot be contradicted, since God has thus made the hope of the resurrection certain for us. This does not in any way detract from the passage in John: ‘I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again’ (John 10:18). Christ certainly rose of Himself and through His own power, but as He usually ascribes to the Father what divine power He possesses, so the apostle has properly transferred to the Father that which was in Christ the proper work of His divinity. By mortal bodies he means all in us that still remains subject to death. Paul’s general practice is to apply this name to the grosser part of us. We conclude from this that he is not speaking of the last resurrection, which will take place in a moment, but of the continual operation of the Spirit, by which He gradually mortifies the remains of the flesh and renews in us the heavenly life.

(Commentary Romans 1961:165)

The direction which the followers of Calvin should take in this era lies in the fully, evenly and distinctly acknowledged grand acts of God as that of God as creator, God in Christ as reconciler, God as the Holy Spirit the renewer and God the fulfiller of everything in the new heaven and the new earth. In addition to the typical Calvinian focus on the grand acts of God’s creation and God’s reconciliation in Christ in the radical sense of the world God’s act of renewal in the Spirit and God’s act of fulfillment in the new heaven and the new earth should be emphasised. When we focus on the relationship between God, reconciliation and renewal the basic ground of the direction of the reconciling→ renewing, Word → Spirit movement is the Cross and Easter event, universally *vindicated* and *affirmed* by the event of Pentecost as the *inauguration* and *authentication* of the renewing reconciling movement of Spirit→ Word. After Jesus’ mission

seems to have collapsed with his crucifixion and his supporters were scattered, God vindicated and affirmed him through the power of the Spirit, raising him from the dead. In the latter sense Calvin in the quotation above refers to Paul who says, ‘God raised up Christ by His Spirit, whom He also communicated to you,’ and Calvin add thereto that ‘this cannot be contradicted, since God has thus made the hope of the resurrection certain for us.’ The cross and the resurrection as the central message of Jesus’ life, is been simultaneously vindicated and affirmed and inaugurated and authenticated by the Spirit of Pentecost as the genuine renewal power of the Spirit of God in the lives of human beings and the natural cosmic world.

On the one hand, the claim that the salvation of humankind, depends solely on people’s attitude towards God coming from the future as the cruciform and resurrected person of Jesus Christ, is been vindicated and affirmed by the event of Pentecost. On the other hand, the claim that people should operate as co-workers and co-actors of the Spirit, thus as workers and actors of the sanctifying renewal work of the Spirit’s ‘first of the fruit’ awaiting the coming of the resurrected person of Jesus Christ is been *inaugurated* and *authenticated* by the event of Pentecost. The ultimate vindication and affirmation of the reconciled new human being in the cross and the resurrection of Jesus and the inauguration and authentication of the new human being under sanctifying renewing construction by the Spirit designate the range of our experience of Jesus and the Spirit, reconciliation and renewal or justification and sanctification.

5.2.4 Fulfilment and Consummation

In Calvin’s approach Christ ‘ascended to heaven to fill all things’ and thus truly inaugurated his royal priestly Kingdom at his ascension. Therefore, what Calvin perceives in the ascension is that Christ does ascend not for himself, but for us as the priestly king. At the end of Christ’s intercession for us in the heavenly realm as mediator with his combined but unified divine and human natures as priestly king or mediating Lord Christ will deliver his Kingdom to his God and Father discharging his office of mediator ([1559] 1960b:14). Calvin states:

But when as partakers in heavenly glory we shall see God as he is, Christ, having then discharged the office of Mediator, will cease to be the ambassador of his Father, and will be satisfied with that glory which he enjoyed before the creation of the world. And the name “Lord” exclusively belongs to the person of Christ only in so far as it represents a degree midway between God and us... That is, to him was lordship committed by the Father, until such time as we should see his

divine majesty face to face. Then he returns the lordship to his Father so that – far from diminishing his own majesty – it may shine all the more brightly. Then, also, God shall cease to be the Head of Christ, for Christ’s own deity will shine of itself, although as yet it is covered by a veil.

(Calvin [1559] 1960b:14)

For Calvin the corporeality of the resurrection means that Jesus Christ while entering God’s heavenly dimension through his resurrection and ascension is at the same time connected and differentiated in the world in a new way which is being present in our daily lives in expanding and contracting ways ‘to the close of the age’ (Matthew 28:20). Through Jesus’ resurrection and ascension a ‘piece of the world’ finally reached God and is accepted by God. The newness coming into our sphere through Christ’s arrival with God and through his new coming to us is called ‘heaven’ by Calvin. Calvin in emphasizing that one should not pervert the order of God’s wisdom in his creation asserts:

Flesh must therefore be flesh; spirit, spirit – each thing in the state and condition wherein God created it. But such is the condition of flesh that it must subsist in one definite place, with its own size and form. With this condition Christ took flesh, giving to it incorruption and glory, and not taking away from it nature and truth. For there is a plain and clear testimony of Scripture, that he ascended into heaven, and will return, in the way he was seen to ascend (acts 1:9,11]. And there is no reason why these stiffnecked opponents should make rejoinder that he ascended and will return visibly, but meanwhile dwells invisibly with us. Indeed, our Lord testified that he had flesh and bones, which could be handled and seen (John20:27). Also “departing” and “ascending” do not signify giving the appearance of one ascending and departing, but actually doing what the words state. But though he has taken his flesh away from us, and in the body has ascended into heaven, yet he sits at the right hand of the Father – that is, he reigns in the Father’s power and majesty and glory. This Kingdom is neither bounded by any location in space nor circumscribed by any limits. Thus uncircumscribed Christ can exert his power wherever he pleases, in heaven and on earth; he can show his presence in power and strength; he is always able to be among his own people to live in them, sustain them, strengthen, quicken, keep them, as if he were present in the body.

(1536-Institutes 1975:145)

The metaphor of Christ sitting at the right hand of God, the Father as the Lord of the whole world is of interest here. In Calvin’s strong Christ-centric view a statement on the Lordship of

Christ positioned at the right hand side of the Father is also a statement on the eternal dimensions of Christ's Lordship extending into the past in which God's act of creation took place through him at the beginning of time. With regard to the future the world rule of the Messiah as already an existing reality in heaven corresponds to the general Jewish view of the events of the last days, at the end, already been prepared in heaven – i.e. in God's eternity that will become manifest on earth (Pannenberg 1988:125-126).

Jesus Christ from beginning to end, thus from creation as the One through which God 's grand act of creation is effectuated to his positioning at the right hand side of the Father is positioned centrally within the array of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfillment. Two points are to be made at this stage. The first point is that according to Calvin Christ's anointment by the Spirit signifies that Christ:

...was appointed king by the Father to subject all power in heaven and on earth that in him we might be kings, having sway over the devil, sin, death, and hell

and Christ

...was appointed priest, by his self-sacrifice to placate the Father and reconcile him to us, that in him we might be priests, with him as our Intercessor and Mediator, offering our prayers, our thanks, ourselves, and our all to the Father.

(1536-Institutes 1975:73-74)

In leaving out the prophethood of God and Christ out of the equation of the *munus triplex* of king, priest and prophet while emphasising only Christ's appointment as king and priest, Calvin burdened the total post-reformation history with the notion that God and Christ cannot be a prophet similarly of being king and priest. Moreover, it was left to the 19th century prophetic movements and the 20th century Pentecostal movements to rectify and correct Calvin's underemphasising of the gift of prophecy and the application of the biblical central notion of Christ as being a prophet in the same sense as being king and priest.

The second point that one has to make is, why in Calvin's approach is the Holy Spirit as the driver and champion of God's grand act of sanctifying renewal processes in the era of the Spirit - which in our era is the era of Pentecost - being replaced with Christ the Royal Priest as driver and champion of the overall renewal processes which has taking place until the end of time, the era of fulfillment. This question of the Spirit's all embracing renewal work in human life and the

natural cosmic world that is underemphasized, not to say lacking in Calvin's approach, is to be repeatedly directed at all Calvinist and neo-Calvinist, Reformed and Presbyterian and neo-orthodox Christ-centred sense-making approaches.

JS Whale in his work *Victor and Victim* (1960:13) expresses with his equation of 'goal and end, Τέλος and finis of the end of history' the typical identification through a speculative descriptive stringing of the grand acts of God as expressed in the biblical historical timeline

In the Bible . . . goal and end, Τέλος and finis, are equated. It is the end of history, rather than a timeless eternity beyond history, which expresses the complete and perfect will of God. Thus the redeeming activity of the Eternal within time is promissory evidence of that end. Exodus and Sinai . . . prefigure the final consummation of the redemptive process – the coming of the Messiah, the day of the Lord, the ending of the old world order, and the new creation of the new order, which is the Kingdom of God.

(Whale 1960:13)

The underemphasising God's act of renewal in and through the Spirit is due to Calvin's insistence on the extreme centrality of Christ in the array of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. We have seen earlier that Calvin's connection and distinction of God's grand acts of reconciliation and renewal are translated into the movement of Word → Spirit with an underemphasising of the movement of Spirit → Word. The majority of fulfilment or eschatological views in mainline churches follow the Christ-centric view of 16th century Reformers such as Luther, Calvin and Zwingli.

The impact of the simultaneous emphasis on both movements results in a rephrasing of the classic Christ-centred view of fulfilment and eschatology. The one-sided emphasis of Calvin on the perpetual mediatorship of Christ in which we are waiting, living and hoping-in-Christ on the return of Christ on the Lord's day has to be rephrased and changed if and only if one wants the Pentecost Spirit of God embodied in God's grand act of renewal to be the driver and director of the renewal and sanctification processes in the world. The rephrasing of the traditional Christ-centric eschatological and future directed views has to be a Spirit-directed and Spirit-embracing action of which we are constantly aware that we are waiting, living and hoping-in-and-with-the-Spirit on the return of Christ.

Neo-orthodoxy as initiated by the Reformed Barth in the early part of the 20th century, continued Calvin's central positioning of Christ in the array of the grand acts of God. Barth views divine truth and action as revelational truth and action solely in the hands of God as the all-initiating divine agent working always through and in Christ (Barth 1975:295-348). The mainline Barthian emphasis of God irrupting mainly and basically through his grand act of reconciliation in the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ into the human and the natural cosmic world had a strong influence on nearly all churches in the last half of the 20th century (Barth 1956:79-154).

We referred earlier to Calvin and Zwingli who presented us with clues as to how to rectify the situation in which the Christ-centred movement of Word → Spirit holds sway over the Spirit → Word movement. We also pointed to the notion of the *extra-calvinisticum* which meant for Calvin and Zwingli that Christ after his ascension, still had his resurrected humanity and full humanness with him (Van Niekerk 2009:221). Any emphasis on the notion of the *extra-calvinisticum* entails two aspects: firstly, that Jesus Christ's salvific work of the cross and the resurrection is been applied and operationalised by the Spirit in the era we are living. Secondly, Christ is not 'directly everywhere present through himself' as the 'same yesterday, today and tomorrow' in the Lutheran doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ. Christ is present only in and through the Holy Spirit in human lives and the natural cosmic world. Thus, Christ is not been present through his own actions but through the Holy Spirit who applies the salvific and reconciling act of Christ, thus, the cross and the resurrection as the radical saving acts of God in the world, in churches and in people's lives.

5.3 White and God's grand acts of Creation, Reconciliation, Renewal and Fulfilment

The main question in this section on White is whether she is operating with an approach in which there is equitable and even emphasis on God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal and fulfilment (consummation) in the biblical historical timeline. While Calvin in the 16th century gave more weight to God's acts of creation and reconciliation while positioning God's act of reconciliation in Christ as the central pivotal act between past and future, with White in the 19th century in the strong prophetic sense of the word, the pendulum swung to the grand acts of God's reconciliation in Christ and the future fulfilment of everything in the new heaven and the new earth. In the earlier chapters of this thesis we have referred to the

tumultuous religious scene of the early and later part of the 19th century. The pendulum shift from the emphasis on God's acts of creation and reconciliation to God's acts of reconciliation and future fulfilment that was to be enacted in the expected second coming of Christ in the 1840's was a thoroughgoing subversion of the prevailing a-millennialism of Calvinist America and had to a large degree been replaced by post- and pre-millennialism. In addition the loosening of the Calvinist and Puritan screws with which the gifts of the Spirit – especially the gift of prophecy – had been fastened to the era of the apostles were totally loosened. In this regard the Calvinist total emphasis on prophecy as a pure explication and proclamation of the Bible as the Word of God was replaced by the supernatural acts of prophecy and visions as part of the experience of various prophetic groups. One has to emphasise that in the majority of instances the main carrying condition for acts of prophecy and visions was that they be strongly linked, vindicated and affirmed by the Bible as the Word of God.

White's main emphasis on God's acts of reconciliation and future fulfilment (consummation) gives her whole approach a strong leaning towards the future and a bit less to the past. All in all in White's approach God's act in Christ has a central and pivotal position between God's creation in the past and the consummation in the future. The retrospective permeation of the dispensations of creation and the Ten Commandments written with the finger of God, self and anticipatory permeation to the future fulfilment of God in all is effectuated through the continuation and perpetual role of Christ's investigative judgement in the holy sanctuary. The central position and link between creation and fulfilment in the divine biblical historical timeline is in White's works expressed through the communicative love of God continuously enacted through and in Christ. Christ in the era approaching the end of time is the perpetual mediator as heavenly priestly prophet interceding between God and human beings. White's emphasis on reconciliation and fulfilment is connectively expressed through the perpetual role of Christ as the priestly prophet in the heavenly sanctuary.

Though obviously not formally trained in theology, Ellen White's theological thinking was more biblical than it was systematic, allowing the natural flow of God's acts and events in the coherence of the biblical historical timeline to reveal reflexive patterns and principles regarding God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. Her best known set of books exemplifies this point. Known as *The Conflict of the Ages Series*, a revision and expansion of the four-volume

Spiritual Gifts. The five-volume series treats the entire history of the human saga between good and evil from the time that sin broke out with Lucifer in heaven to the end of sin, after Satan and his angels are destroyed in the lake of fire. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, outlines the origin and nature of sin and how it affects the universe. *Prophets and Kings*, follows good and evil, in the context of truth, throughout the life of Israel. *The Desire of Ages* deals with Christ's incarnation, how His life was the onus of the enemy, and how His death meant the end of sin. *The Acts of the Apostles*, tells of the wonderful manifestations of the Spirit among those who accepted Christ, and what sacrifices they were to meet to remain faithful to Him. *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan* traces the history of the church, from the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 to the end of sin after Christ's return and the subsequent millennium, while answering burning questions such as how long will the controversy last, and what future events will give shape to such controversy before the return of Christ.

5.3.1 Creation

In White's view it was providentially necessary that creation should be pliable to delusion and destruction in order that God's power of redemption, reconciliation and ultimately the final consummation could be realized. Sin was divinely deemed an indispensable necessity in God's universe. Through this divinity's limitations can be learned in that it was impossible for God to create a perfect universe with creatures each possessing a free will, without the provision for sin. While God did not create sin, he allowed for its existence. God limited himself in order that his created beings may be unlimited in as far as free-will is concerned.

The discussion we aim at in this section is not whether White approached the Bible as the exact literal portrayal of the divine historical reflexive realm but we aim at discussing the qualitative demarcation lines of her view of creation. Did she regard for instance Genesis 1-3 as an exact account which through the precepts of historical successive generations in the Bible, the earth is deemed to be approximately 6000 years? Such a question had to be answered within the divine historical timeline of the biblical records taken by White in her approach to God's creation as the faith reflexive realm or sole and only area of people's lives within which any valid and authoritative statements about creation could be made.

White in her days was certainly aware of the evolution theories that were being entertained, even by professed Christians who believed that the creation events of the week as described in Genesis 1-3, were accounts that happened over ‘thousands upon thousands of years.’ She rejected the idea that ‘the world has existed for tens of thousands of years.’ She accepted the Biblical record that the creation days were seven literal 24-hour periods, believing that the world ‘is now only about six thousand years old’ she did not claim to have received any special revelation regarding the specific age of the earth (White 1870:87).

Ellen White believed the earth's age to be about six thousand years but as with Calvin, he did not work out elaborate theories that revolve around dispensations and the exact time-setting of eras and dispensations. White was regarding time-setting of eras and dispensations rather open minded and concentrated on the essential issues than on an exercise of the specifics and the particularities of time-setting. With regard to her expectation to see Jesus return in her day she has a similar openness in her description of future events that are to be connected with the end of time. For example, she refers to Satan's ruinous reign having lasted for six thousand years (White [1888] 1990a:673) without pin pointing dates.

In the debate of science and religion of her era White sees no contestation between the truth of biblical history and science if science is in harmony with God's works as portrayed in the realm of the history of the Bible. More than anywhere else White in her comments on God's creation in relation to the findings of the science of her day kept within the non-speculative and non-scholastic margins of the divine biblical historical timeline. One might express from a biblical point of view in the consensual negotiation sense of the word and not from a modernist and atheist perspective of a hermeneutics of suspicion in the sense of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud but from a hermeneutics of trust and faith that both Calvin and White in their 6000 years old earth view were in a total sense intra-textually determined. The scientific knowledge of both their eras, ‘extra-textually’ derived from outside the biblical historical timeline was in its essential characteristics and features determined and qualified in terms of the divine historical truth of the biblical portrayal of creation and the biblical historical rendition of the successive generations depicted by the biblical text. In this sense White depart from her grounding statement that:

God is the foundation of everything. All true science is in harmony with His works; all true education leads to obedience to His government. Science opens new wonders to our view; she soars high, and explores new depths; but she brings nothing from her research that conflicts with divine revelation. Ignorance may seek to support false views of God by appeals to science, but the book of nature and the written word shed light upon each other. We are thus led to adore the Creator and to have an intelligent trust in His word. No finite mind can fully comprehend the existence, the power, the wisdom, or the works of the Infinite One.

(White [1890] 1958a:116-117)

White emphatically stated that ‘apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing.’ Her reason was that those who reasoned in that fashion were void of adequate conceptualization regarding the size of men, animals and trees prior to the flood. She maintained that there were major changes that occurred as the aftermath of the flood. While White acknowledges that there is evidence found underground that supports the notion of a prior existence of different life before the flood, she upheld that the time in which those conditions existed can only be studied in respect and context of the Bible. White purported that, through inspiration, the history of the flood has explained what geologists have failed to fathom (White [1893] 1923:191).

While Ellen White stated that she was shown in vision that creation week consisted of seven literal days she claimed that the notion of creation as taking place through ‘thousands upon thousands of years,

...strikes directly at the foundation of the fourth commandment. It represents the Creator as commanding men to observe the week of literal days in commemoration of vast, indefinite periods. This is unlike His method of dealing with His creatures. It makes indefinite and obscure that which He has made very plain. It is infidelity in its most insidious and hence most dangerous form; its real character is so disguised that it is held and taught by many who profess to believe the Bible.

(White [1890] 1958a:112)

From her intra-textual sense making God-human-nature approach ‘inside’ the text White views the notion of creation as had been taking place through ‘thousands upon thousands of years’ representing the literal days of the biblical historical rendition to which she clings as a direct

attack on the very foundations of the fourth commandment. White's in making sense of the background of the Ten Commandments - especially the fourth commandment - regarding the literal seven days as the time span in which God's grand act of creation took place expresses herself as follows:

On the seventh day man is to refrain from labour, in commemoration of the Creator's rest. But the assumption that the events of the first week required thousands upon thousands of years, strikes directly at the foundation of the fourth commandment. It represents the Creator as commanding men to observe the week of literal days in commemoration of vast, indefinite periods. This is unlike His method of dealing with His creatures. It makes indefinite and obscene that which He has made very plain! White firmly warned that, 'It is infidelity in its most insidious and hence most dangerous form; its real character is so disguised that it is held and taught by many who profess to believe the Bible'. Pointing to the scriptures as the only divine authoritarian, she quoted: 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth'. 'For He spake, and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast'. 'The Bible recognizes no long ages in which the earth was slowly evolved from chaos.

(White [1890] 1958a:113)

To White, what clarifies that the original week constituted of literal days is the fact that each day consisted of evening and morning. So how does White explain the words of the Bible at the end of the creation week which reads, 'These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.' White responds:

But this does not convey the idea that the days of creation were other than literal days. Each day was called a generation, because that in it God generated, or produced, some new portion of His work.

(White [1890] 1958a:112)

So what about the evidence that the geologists of her day claim to present to the debate? Ellen White deals with this when she wrote,

Geologists claim to find evidence from the earth itself that it is very much older than the Mosaic record teaches. Bones of men and animals, as well as instruments of warfare, petrified trees, etc., much larger than any that now exist, or that have existed for thousands of years, have been discovered, and from that it is inferred that the earth was populated long before the time brought to view in the record of creation, and by a race of beings vastly superior in size to any men now

living. Such reasoning has led many professes Bible believers to adopt the position that the days of creation were vast, indefinite periods.

(White [1893] 1923:191)

White emphatically stated that ‘apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing.’ Her reason was that those who reasoned in that fashion were void of adequate conceptualization regarding the size of men, animals and trees prior to the flood. She maintained that there were major changes that occurred as the aftermath of the flood. While White acknowledges that there is evidence found underground that supports the notion of a prior existence of different life before the flood, she upheld that the time in which such an array of conditions existed can only be viewed ‘intra-textually’ from inside the biblical historical timeline. White purported that, through inspiration, the history of the flood has explained what geologists have failed to fathom (White [1893] 1923:191).

Many followers of White inside the Seventh-day Adventist church believe in the exact literal portrayal of God’s grand act of creation as set within the time span of literal days. Through intra-textual mirroring inspiration the Biblical account of creation and other major events such as the flood in the times of Noah reigns supreme in the ambit of divine truth as expressed in the divine biblical historical timeline.

The viewpoint of Seventh-day Adventists undergirded by a text inspirational view of God’s grand act of creation bifurcates mainly in two trajectories. In the one trajectory the divine intra-textual biblical truth determines every finding of science outside the divine biblical history. The extra-biblical scientific experience is determined by the Bible as the Word of God in the biblical historical timeline – the more modern Protestant position taken to its extreme in a Seventh-day Adventist historicist sense. In the other trajectory the intra-biblical divine historical side is distanced from the extra-biblical scientific side in the sense that they do not overlap and are not in contestation with each other, in fact they exist in conjunction with each other without meeting each other – the more modern Catholic position taken to its extremes whereby any extra-biblical scientific viewpoint that does not fit the intra-biblical divine historical spectrum of ‘facts’ is regarded as not existing.

The first trajectory into which Seventh-day Adventists enter is the intra-textual view of condensed divine truth spelled out within the margins of the biblical historical timeline. Amazingly such a view is found with such an eminent Reformed theologian such as Oepke Noordmans in the 1930's. In the first chapter we have quoted Noordmans who expressed the main perimeters of the intra-textual interpretation approach in which the divine biblical historical timeline reigns supreme regarding the realm of divine truth:

We should not approach creation as a quasi-infinity or eternity. We ought to let the million years of astronomy and biology quietly slide. We keep more or less to the old-fashioned 6000 years, which we, practically speaking, encounter in the bible. We keep close to the cross. With the few thousand years we have enough to deal with. The rest we leave to God (my translation).

(Noordmans 1934:55)

We also quoted his condensed theo-gnostic intra-textual theologised approach to God's grand act of creation which declares science's view of creation as unauthentic and not actually creation

The creation, which science deals with, is not the actual creation. It is an abstraction. In true creation we encounter sin and suffering and death which fit in with Jesus of the Twelve Articles (my translation).

(Noordmans 1934:55)

The second trajectory into which Seventh-day Adventists enter is the typical modern position of NOMA of Stephen Jay Gould sympathetic to Roman Catholicism or supported by Roman Catholics. This view amounts to the notion of 'non-overlapping magisteria' or NOMA for short. Magisterium in the Roman Catholic world means that which is managed from some or other authoritative source. Gould as an agnostic Jew (Gould 2007:585) applies the notion of magisteriums (magisteria) as non-overlapping magisterial management or control areas of the two diverse sense-making worlds of religion and science which do not overlap. Gould expresses this notion of non-overlapping management areas of religion and science as follows:

The lack of conflict between science and religion arises from a lack of overlap between their respective domains of professional expertise – science in the empirical constitution of the universe, and religion in the search for proper ethical values and the spiritual meaning of our lives. The attainment of wisdom in a full life requires extensive attention of both domains – for a great book tells us both

that the truth can make us free, and that we will live in optimal harmony with our fellows when we learn to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly.

(Gould 2007:586)

One may view it strange to find Seventh-day Adventists within the ambience of such a view but it is understandable if the view that the earth is six thousand years old is upheld as Seventh-day Adventist dogma and doctrine while multiple sense making impulses and informational snippets through the daily media supported by the 'present truth' of paleontological science of an earth that is millions of years old and human beings existing more than three million years on the paleontological horizon. The view of non-overlapping magisterial or governances of religion and science is been advocated by Gould. Gould wrote in his 2002 effort, *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life*, about the non-overlapping Magisteria between religion and science:

Science tries to document the factual character of the natural world, and to develop theories that coordinate and explain those facts. Religion, on the other hand, operates in the equally important, but utterly different, realm of human purposes, meanings, and values—subjects that the factual domain of science might illuminate, but can never resolve. Similarly, while scientists must operate with ethical principles, some specific to their practice, the validity of these principles can never be inferred from the factual discoveries of science.

(Gould [1999] 2002:4-5)

Many Seventh-day Adventists believe and teach that we are now in the Seventh Millennium in which Christ will make his second return to planet earth, in order to redeem his Church as the remnant that is true, faithful and loyal to God. The present writer of this thesis is one of those believers who adhere to the seven millennia timetable. However, the fact that Ellen White nowhere in her writings refers to a divine timetable of seven millennia which corresponds to the creation week, made a significant impact on a huge variety of Seventh-day Adventist works on the notion of the Seventh Millennium. White consistently opposed any efforts for instance to calculate the date (day or year) of Christ's return (White 1958b:188).

In the broad scheme of things it is not a question of scientific and technological progress connected with humankind's relative progressive ingenuity that makes it somewhat more plausible that there is a possibility that the age of our world, since creation, could be longer than

a six thousand year period set by the old geo-centric God-human-nature view that is expressed in the three tier view of Exodus 20:4. The geo-centric or earth-centric God-human-nature view, in which the creation story of Genesis 1-3 is told by the priests in the dispensation of Moses, is the backdrop against which any theory measuring the earth in terms of six thousand years is to be evaluated. One just has to observe the struggle of Calvin in the 16th century to move over from a geo-centric (earth-centric) God-human-nature view to the new heliocentric (sun-centric) God-human-nature view of Copernicus (and Galileo). Calvin in some instances succeeded in making the transitional move to the heliocentric mindset but failed to succeed in other instances and stayed stuck in the geo-centric God-human-nature view that had been hitherto carried over from the three tier views of the Old Testament times as particularly spelled out in Exodus 20:4 (Van Niekerk 2009:58-59).

The intra-textual nature of the estimation of the six thousand years age of the world in Ellen G. White's early period is not to be viewed as an apologetic attempt by the present writer to hold on to a theory of a literal 6000 years of the age of the world. What I want to achieve is to capture the facts of the divine historical timeline in the creational enacting initial part of the whole process as a dynamic process that has an impact on the everyday life of human beings. What is important is that White purports that the events of the 6000 years have been captured by inspired people of God. White's divine biblical historical approach of a God-human-nature view embedded in the events of the six thousand years period is emphasised through White's biblical historical phases and the Bible's genealogical timeframes of the biblical historical timeline. This sufficiently showed and demonstrated of humanity's instruction in the path and wisdom of the almighty God.

From which point of view one wants to begin in the calculation of the sense-making age of our world is relatively important. Some will not see any age as meaningful, others want to view what they could decipher from the Old Testament and New Testament records, since it is deemed by some that the oldest religion and therefore the oldest records of religion originates from the Jewish religion from where the literal six thousand years rendition of creation is obtained. The nature of such an approach is problematically negotiated from any of the geo-centric or earth-centric, helio-centric or sun-centric, universe-centric or galaxy-centric or multiple universe or multi-verse centric approaches (Van Niekerk 2009:58-61). Where does one have to start with a

God-human-nature view? The present writer has been in class rooms of Seventh-day Adventist universities where different adherents to Seventh-day Adventism differ with regard to the biblical historical calculation of arriving at six thousand years as the earth's age. By that is meant that, there are amongst Seventh-day Adventists, believers who concede to the premise that the biblical historical account could be longer than that which is traditionally held.

In terms of the Big Bang Theory the universe was formed 15 billion years ago. The earth, according to this theory was formed 4600 million years ago. On the other scale, it was reported by various historians that evidence exists of human existence much beyond the 6000 years. Others have taken a more moderate position on this subject, by saying that while it cannot be exactly 6000 years nor can it be millions of years, but somewhat closer to 6000 years or in between. There are other Christians who believe that the planet existed over millions of years but approximately 6000 years or more ago, God began his project on the formless and void planet. In essence, God did the arranging and decorating as poetically described in Genesis. This said, the experience of the present writer is that none of those different groups encountered hold to the evolutionary theory that the process took place through a time span of millions of years.

In his edited works entitled *The Annals of the World*, James Ussher cites Genesis 1:1 to the twenty-third day of October (as per Julian calendar), of the year 4004BC or 710JP. According to this classic, this day was the very 'first Sunday past the autumnal equinox for that year and would have been September 21 on the Gregorian calendar' (Ussher 2006:17). According to the afore-mentioned editor the Julian calendar was regularly used by historians.

Describing the events of the first day of our world, which is cited by the latter as of Sunday, 23rd of October 4004 BC, this historical record reads,

God created the highest heaven and the angels. When He finished, as it were the roof of this building, He started with the foundation of this wonderful fabric of the world. He fashioned this lower-most globe, consisting of the deep end of the earth. Therefore, all the choir of angels sang together and magnified His name. (Job 38:7). When the earth was without form and void and darkness covered the face of the deep, God created light on the very middle of the first day. God divided this from the darkness and called the one Day and the other Night.

(Ussher 2006:17)

While Ellen White's human perception of the age of the earth paralleled Ussher's understanding of an approximate six thousand years, White did not give us a specific date and month, neither a year. In fact, she differs entirely with James Ussher with regard to the time when the angels were created as a category of difference and similarity between human beings and beings outside the realm of human beings.

White and for that matter Calvin have great difficulty to put forward prove of the age of the earth as 6000 years or the other position exceeding 6000 years of several million of years. The difficulty arises through their acceptance of the divine biblical historical timeline especially spelled out in the Old Testament era in terms of an earth-centric worldview in the sense of the three tier worldview of Exodus 20:4. White's approach is further complicated through her working with the text on creation in Genesis as a divinely inspired mirrored rendition of God's grand act of creation. That is what Ellen White understood in her God-human-nature approach at that time and with her insight into the biblical historical timeline at that time. Bible writers during pre-modernity viewed the sun to be rotating around the earth. In the books of the Old Testament we have some references that attest to such a view.

Regarding the problem of time-setting of the starting era of the earth's history Shea in a chapter on creation in *The Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* asserts:

Given the difficulties of using genealogies to compute chronology, the problems of interpretation of texts, and the differences between the Greek and Hebrew recensions, one can only affirm that Creation took place much more recently than the evolutionary theory proposes. This earth's history probably began in the fifth millennium B.C.

(Dederen 2000:436)

One of the main problems of looking for an explicit and worked out reference to a divine timetable of seven millennia that corresponds to the week of creation week is a lack thereof in her works. Although she is more explicit regarding the age of the earth as six thousand years in debates about the setting of particular times and time-setting in general, one has to refer to White's sensitive carefulness to refrain from time-setting and messages based on particular and specific determination of time. In regard to the notion of time-setting White opposed any efforts

to calculate the date (day or year) of the day of the Lord, thus of Christ's return. Careful as if she is sensitive not to raise expectations she wrote that

Again and again have I been warned in regard to time setting. There will never again be a message for the people of God that will be based on time.

(White 1958b:188)

According to White strict and rigorous time-setting is something that is not of divine origin and as message is thus not given by the Lord

Anyone who shall start up to proclaim a message to announce the hour, day, or year of Christ's appearing, has taken up a yoke and is proclaiming a message that the Lord has never given him.

(RH, September 12th 1893)

In White's approach the gift of freedom of choice by God to his creatures made it possible for sin to gain a chance of existence. However, God pledged with his life, on behalf of humankind when humanity would fall. Against such a background the following question may be asked: So why did God create the universe knowing that sin would exist? The answer to the question is: It pleased God to do so. The advantages were far greater because of God's greatness, alluring love, unlimited forgiveness and creative power is expressed to his creatures so that all the glory is directed to God in acknowledgement of his incredible love.

Had the fall first in heaven and later on earth not occurred, there remained the inevitable possibility of God's creatures to contend with the Creator at some undetermined time of existence. We know God through his acts of creation, reconciliation (redemption), renewal and consummation (fulfilment) as embodied and embedded in the divine biblical historical timeline. For how else would we know God as creator that is that we are created by him in a world created by him if God did not connect heaven and earth, divinity and humanity through and in Christ? Through and in Christ do we become aware that we are helplessly in dire dependence on God the creator for all our necessities and that we cannot exist in and through ourselves as if carried by ourselves since all of life is contained in God's hands creatively and powerfully.

The fall with all of the destructions and entrance of sin in heaven and earth, however vile and disconcerting, were divinely deemed indispensable in order that a permanent everlasting peaceful governance of the universe could be guaranteed. Hence our planet and the seeds of Adam and Eve are privileged to be the chosen. Humankind has been divinely chosen as the instruments through which God could express himself through creation, reconciliation, renewal and ultimately the final consummation. Humankind through the act of creation has been created in the image of God. Through sin and the fall, humanity has been privy to the experience of the manifested image of God condescending into the human world so that divinity could be eternally united with humanity through and in Christ. This amazing act of God through and in Christ, has afforded the human race with a second grant of royal partnership and family status with divinity.

Through this act of God, the un-fallen worlds are opportune to learn of the knowledge of which forever would remain a novelty and temptation that had not been experienced in the universal cosmos of God. It was in this stream of thought that White wrote,

But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe.

(White [1827-1915] 1996:19)

White and none of us have any access to God's detailed intention and blueprint of creation, not even through an exact mirroring of the divine historical creation narratives of Genesis. How God created whether in the sense of an event of *creatio ex nihilo*, through a Big Bang or as White's inspired mirrored divine historical rendition of creation, no human being was there to receive our creaturely blueprint as to how God intended every created thing to be. Therefore, a meaningful, wholesome and solid approach towards human beings and the rest of creation is to emphasise God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment embodied and embedded in the divine historical timeline from Genesis to Revelation centrally positioned in Christ.

5.3.2 Reconciliation

White's reflexive approach of faith concerning the centrality of God's grand act of reconciliation in Christ as God's reconciliator and redeemer in the array of God's grand acts is touched upon. The central positioning of God's act of reconciliation in Christ in the midst of the biblical

historical timeline guarantees in a sense our knowledge of God and us as human beings as well as knowledge of the natural cosmic world. The enactment in a central sense of God's communicative love through and in Christ directs ones attention reflexively in a retrocipatory sense to God's act of creation and before creation and in an anticipatory expectative sense to God's act of fulfilment and consummation, even beyond fulfilment to the deepest and furthest eternity.

God in his communicative love expressed through and in Christ is White's divine/human paradigmatic exemplar through which God is to a far greater extent known than he would otherwise have been known by all of his creatures and through which his creatures acquires knowledge of themselves and non-human creation. In other words God is better known to his subjects through the centrality of Christ in the acts of God of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment at the end of time. From the life, cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the historical centre of divine history White reflexively moves retrocipatively to the beginning and anticipatorily to the end of the divine biblical historical timeline.

5.3.2.1 White's retrocipatory reflexive trajectory directed to the past

In a retrocipatory direction to an eternal era before God's act of creation White moves in a spiralling reflection mode within the boundaries of the divine biblical historical history in the direction of what she calls dateless ages, to present a pre-existent Christ as been in existence from eternity as a distinct person who is one with the Father.

Christ carries the mind back through dateless ages. He assures us that there never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God. He, to whose voice the Jews were then listening, had been with God as one brought up with Him.

(ST, August 29th 1900)

In a similar movement to the past through her typical spiralling reflection within the margins of the Bible as God's Word White states regarding Christ's pre-existence the following:

But while God's Word speaks of the humanity of Christ when upon this earth, it also speaks decidedly regarding His pre-existence. The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father. From everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant, the one in whom all

nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God.

(White 1958b:247)

Another example of her retrocipatory spiralling reflection to the past is found in the way she compares the state of Christ with Adam's when they were tempted by Satan. According to White, Christ in his situation being tempted by Satan was to a large degree in a more disadvantaged position than Adam being tempted by Satan. White believed that Christ assumed the degenerated body and mental power been weakened by sin for the period of thousands of years after Adam's falling into sin. In White's view Adam before the fall had no effects of sin because his full vitalities and faculties of his mind, body and spiritual attitude were intact. To White, Christ's circumstances were harsher; for it was in a wilderness, where Christ was tempted, where as Adam's environment was that of a paradise,

He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings.

(White [1898] 1948a:117)

The view of White that Christ had a certain disadvantage in comparison to Adam when he was tempted has a bearing on the status and the type of humanity we are talking of when Christ's humanity is described. The type of humanity of Christ is especially relevant to every individual that seeks to know if Christ was truly a human being. The follow up question would surely be whether Christ was a human being like us. Thus, did Christ really have exactly the same nature as that of Adam? Could he genuinely sin? If he could, that would make him unequal to God since a reading of the scriptural records points in the direction of the impossibility for God to be tempted by sin.

The same is true that, should Jesus not have been able to sin, then he could not have been truly human. White's position seems to indicate to us that it was possible for Christ to be able to sin, since he would not allow his divinity to resist the evil. White's view that Christ was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses of us as human beings, even touched with the feeling of our infirmities and in all points tempted like we are while knowing no sin is to a large degree closer to the dimension of the materiality of God's reconciliation and salvation of human beings than the view of sinlessness of Christ brought forward by Calvin and other 16th Reformers. White

writes regarding Christ's sinlessness that our faith must be an intelligent faith in which should have full and entire faith in Christ atoning sacrifice:

In taking upon Himself man's nature in its fallen condition, Christ did not in the least participate in its sin. He was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses by which man is encompassed, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17). He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are. And yet He knew no sin. He was the Lamb "without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). Could Satan in the least particular have tempted Christ to sin, he would have bruised the Saviour's head. As it was, he could only touch His heel. Had the head of Christ been touched, the hope of the human race would have perished. Divine wrath would have come upon Christ as it came upon Adam. Christ and the church would have been without hope... We should have no misgivings in regard to the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ. Our faith must be an intelligent faith, looking unto Jesus in perfect confidence, in full and entire faith in the atoning Sacrifice. This is essential that the soul may not be enshrouded in darkness. This holy Substitute is able to save to the uttermost; for He presented to the wondering universe perfect and complete humility in His human character, and perfect obedience to all the requirements of God. Divine power is placed upon man, that he may become a partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. This is why repenting, believing man can be made the righteousness of God in Christ.

(White 1958b:255-256)

A careful look at her writings reveals an un-accentuated premise, which seems to suggest, that it was indeed *impossible* for Christ to sin since his divinity was mysteriously combined with his human nature, into one person. The following statement seems to suggest just that,

I saw that although Jesus had taken man's nature, a power and fortitude that was God-like sustained him and he did not depart from the will of his FATHER in the least.

(White [1858] 1945b:57)

The difference in White and Calvin's view on Christ's sinlessness is not of kind but of degree. Calvin described Christ's sinlessness in the following way:

For we make Christ free of all stain not just because he was begotten of his mother without copulation with man, but because he was sanctified by the spirit that the generation might be pure and undefiled as would have been true before Adam's fall. And this remains for us an established fact: whenever Scripture calls our attention to the purity of Christ, it is to be understood of his true human nature, for it would have been superfluous to say that God is pure. Also, the sanctification of which John, ch 17, speaks would have no place in divine nature [John 17:19]. Nor, do we imagine that Adam's seed is twofold, even though no infection came to Christ. For the generation of man is not unclean and vicious of itself, but is so as an accidental quality arising from the Fall. No wonder, then that Christ, through whom integrity was to be restored, was exempted from common corruption.

(Calvin [1559] 1960b:13)

According to Calvin, Christ was sinless because he was begotten of his mother without the copulation of a man and because he was sanctified by the Spirit. Calvin in this description elevated the humanity of Christ to a higher plane than human beings in general. Thus Christ's humanity is not partaking in the depraved and sinful human flesh of human beings after the fall in Calvin's approach. Contrary to his own approach of human beings being in the state of total depravity, Christ's humanity is withdrawn from partaking in the radical sense of the word in the ordinariness of human flesh. Calvin, admittedly in line with the church tradition before him operated with a scholastic speculative notion of the sinlessness of Christ on this point. Calvin is, plainly with his view of the sinlessness of Christ, stepping over the margins of the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and nature. White in her view of the sinlessness of Christ stays closer within the bounds of the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and nature. In another passage White writes about the notion of the sinlessness of Christ as follows:

The humanity of Christ reached to the very depths of human wretchedness, and identified itself with the weaknesses and necessities of fallen man, while His divine nature grasped the Eternal. His work in bearing the guilt of man's transgression was not to give him license to continue to violate the law of God, which made man a debtor to the law, which debt Christ was Himself paying by His own suffering. The trials and sufferings of Christ were to impress man with a sense of his great sin in breaking the law of God, and to bring him to repentance and obedience to that law, and through obedience to acceptance with God. His righteousness He would impute to man, and thus raise him in moral value with God, so that his efforts to keep the divine law would be acceptable. Christ's work

was to reconcile man to God through His human nature, and God to man through His divine nature.

(White 1958b:272)

In this quotation White is expressing in a very explicit sense the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference between God and human beings (and nature) in Christ. In Christ emerges the divine/human template how God is connectively working with his creation throughout God's history with human beings.

From the above, we notice that White, while she perceived Christ in a 'both...and' manner to be both human and divine, she acknowledges that he was both *exactly like us* and *not exactly like us*. In the sense that Christ *was exactly like us* one important question that can be asked is: was it possible for Christ to yield into temptation? Stated differently, was Christ a real potential sinner by virtue of him having the ability to sin? In response to these questions we discover that Ellen White believed that if Christ did not exercise self-control or will, to endure temptation, he [Christ] could have yielded to Satan's snares. She states: 'He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation' (White [1898] 1948a:117). In the sense that Christ was *not exactly like us* as he was also God in the mysterious combination of his dual natures has made it possible for him not to err from the will of his Father.

Christ, according to White, because he was truly human, he was truly tempted and therefore could truly yield to temptation if he so chose. At the point that Christ could yield to temptation if he made that choice is the real difference to be found with Calvin's view of Christ's adherence to and compliance with the will of the Father which is worked out in a divinely determined fashion. In Calvin's view because Christ's humanity 'was begotten of his mother without copulation with a man and because he was sanctified by the Spirit of God that the generation might be pure and undefiled', Christ in line with Calvin's strong divine determination line permeating his whole approach, Christ as a human being was determined in the divine sense of the word not to sin. In White's view Christ was truly human, tempted and could yield to temptation if he had made that choice because 'He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are.' On the other hand, in White's view it was impossible for Christ to sin since he was truly divine and divinity cannot be tempted. It suffices for White, therefore, that due to her strong adherence to the mystery of the simultaneity of the connection and difference between

Christ's divinity and humanity co-existing each with the other in the one person of Jesus, it was possible for Jesus not to sin. White's perception about Jesus is truly expressive of an experiential approach in which the many faith coherences reflexive patterns in her works are representative of a 'both ... and' sense making approach. There are various examples in her works in which a 'both...and' sense making approach is preferred and whereby a modernist and reductionist 'either...or' approach is refrained from. Christ is both truly human and truly divine. She named him with an overwhelming number of Christological titles as we will see in the remainder of this thesis. Some of the Christological titles that White named Jesus Christ are that of 'Empowerer' and 'Exemplar.' How these relate to the statements above is that Jesus has become our example that we may imitate in our strife towards overcoming sin. It is also through his divine characteristics that he is able to distribute his power that can enable us to resist sin.

5.3.2.2 White's anticipatory reflexive trajectory directed to the future

Regarding her salvific reconciliatory views, her influence on scholars, pastors, and writers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, can hardly be overemphasized. Although as we have seen earlier she was not regarded as a real theologian by many of her followers and opponents alike, she was the first 'theologian' who through the coherent patterns of her faith reflexive approach, took seriously into account the sanctuary ministry displayed in the Jewish economy as the truest example of how people are saved. What is of importance is that the sanctuary ministry is directed in terms of the timeline from the past to the present and further to the deepest eternity in the future. White says in regard to the timeline in the divine historical sense

The sanctuary ministry, opened to view a complete system of truth...
[illuminating] the past, the present, and the future of God's people.

(White [1888] 1990a:423)

With the approach of the sanctuary ministry she assisted Adventists greatly in amplifying their view of salvation. White for example, expanded on the traditional narrow view that limited Christ's agony largely to his physical pain by referring to the fact that his true suffering was mental and emotional as indicated by the separation of his Father from his presence (White [1858-1871] 1948c:200-215).

White in a typical extra-Whitean fashion amplified the ‘cost’ Calvary exacted from Jesus, making the point that Christ did not resume his former prerogatives - that is before he became human - after his ascension but had indeed *given* himself to the human race as one of us forever, thus forever limited to time and space (See RH, December 1, 1891; also White 1957:925).

She further extended the nature and scope of man’s response to the gift of salvation, a view far removed from orthodox Calvinist determinism as well as Arminian Calvinism which in the way it is enacted in various social contexts amounts to Puritan legalism. White states that God created us with the freedom to choose. She believes that it is logical that every individual may choose to exercise self-will or choose to yield to temptation (White [1888] 1990:493). A viewpoint such as the latter is generally viewed by mainline church theologians as Arminian to the extreme thereby accusing such a viewpoint that God from beginning to end is not determining an individual’s salvation and reconciliation path. To have every little snippet in the hands of God is for an orthodox Calvinist of the utmost importance. Strangely this is certainly the case if a theologian such as Calvin’s emphasis is more exclusively on the grand acts of God’s creation and reconciliation and less on God’s embracing renewal process in and through the Spirit and God’s grand act of fulfilment to the end of time. White turns the scales in the 19th century with her strong emphasis on Christ’s reconciliation and God’s act of consummation and fulfilment at the end of time.

In terms of White’s approach of the sanctuary ministry in which the emphasis shifted to a bridging of God’s grand acts of reconciliation in Christ and God’s act of consummation and fulfilment in an irreversible process through the remainder of the biblical historical timeline. The central positioning of God communicative dynamic love in Christ is the primordial exemplar in the middle of the divine historical timeline of how heaven and earth, divine and human are brought together and how they should stay together into the eternity after fulfilment and consummation. The bridging of God’s act of reconciliation in Christ with God’s act of fulfilment at the end of time is done in White’s reflexive coherent patterns in terms of the sanctuary ministry. White in a well known quotation draws the lines together from the cross to the full operational mission of Christ in the sanctuary:

The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven.

(White [1888] 1990a:498)

So what happened to Jesus when he entered heaven after having ascended from our world? Here we are presented with a new aspect of the greater picture of Ellen White's perception of cosmology and theology as well as her epistemology of the universe and other created beings that inhabit other planets. In her writings, White depicts a picture where we are made to visualize the un-fallen created beings of other planets participating in the celebration of Christ's victorious and triumphal return into heaven after having completed his mission to planet earth. White makes mention in her writings that Jesus return to heaven, through his ascension and having assumed a resurrected human body, was welcomed by joyous choruses of angelic hosts and other representatives of God's un-fallen worlds (White [1898] 1948a: 829-835).

Therefore in coherence with the centrality of Christ as the mainstay of the thesis Ellen White's view of the ascension of a loving Redeemer who is still at work in a perpetual sense bridge any possible gap that might arise between Christ and his followers. In the concrete sense of the word he did not leave his followers hopeless and while ascended to heaven he was still present with his followers:

When Christ ascended to heaven, the sense of His presence was still with His followers. It was a personal presence, full of love in the form of love and light...[Christ] had ascended to heaven in the form of humanity. They knew that He was before the throne of God, their Friend and Saviour still; that His sympathies were unchanged; that He was still identified with suffering humanity. He was presenting before God the merits of His own precious blood, showing His wounded hands and feet, in remembrance of the price He had paid for His redeemed. They knew that He had ascended to heaven to prepare places for them, and that He would come again and take them to Himself.

(White [1893] 1982a:73-74)

Christ promised his followers to send them the Holy Spirit, who would be their comforter and Substitute of Christ. In the very radical sense of the word Christ ascended to heaven, was still present amongst his followers by communicating with them through the person of the Holy Spirit, and they, from their side communicating with him in the Holy Spirit. Christ is currently

presenting his loved ones before God and does the intercessory work on their behalf. Jesus' Messiah-ship, his Kingship, his divine nature and glorified human body find their exclamation and exaltation in White's doxological language about the entry of the King of glory:

As they ascended up to glory to the Holy City, the angels who escorted Jesus cried out, Light up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. With rapture the angels in the city, who awaited His coming, cried out, who is this King of glory? The escorting angels with triumph answered, The Lord strong and mighty! The Lord mighty in battle! Lift up your heads, O ye gates! Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Again the heavenly host cried out, who is this King of glory? The escorting angels in melodious strains answered, The Lord of hosts! He is the King of glory!

(White [1882] 1945a:78)

5.3.3 Renewal

In White's writings, sayings and doings God's grand act of renewal in the Holy Spirit of Pentecost has to be looked at within the central manifestation of God's communicative love in the divine/human paradigmatic exemplar of Christ as the divine connection and integration of God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment.

White wrote vast numbers of pages on the Holy Spirit and the work and operation of the Holy Spirit. The entries referring to White writing about the Holy Spirit in the four volume *Comprehensive Index* take 42 pages, divided in 37 categories, including 'Baptism of' the Holy Spirit, 'Descent,' 'Endowment,' 'Energy,' 'Impartation,' 'Manifestation(s),' 'Outpouring,' 'Power,' 'Promise,' and many other categories dealing with the Spirit's person and work. However, an etymological investigation into references, names and terms concerning the Holy Spirit is not of real assistance in this thesis. More fruitful is to look at White's approach of the central position of God's dynamic communicative love of God, continuously and perpetually enacted through and in Christ, God's acts of reconciliation and fulfilment at the end of time in the divine biblical historical timeline.

The first trajectory in which we have to look for notions and clues of the Spirit of God is White's 'vertical' heavenly and earthly, divine and human faith reflexive double layered pattern through

and in Christ as the paradigmatic divine/human exemplar of God's communicative love. The Spirit as the Spirit of Christ is the connecting link enacting the close link between heaven and earth, divine and human and is the divine enactor of God's activities through and in Christ. The Spirit is the Comforter and the one that connects people to Christ and whom we receive as a gift from Christ

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter that Christ promised to His disciples...Then let us cease to look to ourselves, but look to Him from whom all virtue comes. No one can make himself better, but we are to come to Jesus as we are, earnestly desiring to be cleansed from every spot and stain of sin, and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

(White [1901] 1985:213)

The Spirit connects people with renewed hearts to the saviour, Christ and is also the re-activator of people whose desire to bring others to Christ has declined. White writes in this regard:

The very first impulse of the renewed heart is to bring others also to the Savior. Those who do not possess this desire give evidence that they have lost their first love; they should closely examine their own hearts in the light of God's Word, and earnestly seek a *fresh baptism* of the Spirit of Christ.

(White 1952:57)

Christ is to such extent central in the writings of White that whatever the Spirit is doing, performing and acting out is flowing from Christ or connected to Christ. In the 1870's White wrote about the scenario sketched in John 3 around the encounter Jesus had with Nicodemus and Jesus' reference to people born of the Spirit as the wind which blows where it wishes. She describes the acting of the Spirit upon the heart of someone who experiences the Spirit's saving power as follows:

Like the wind, which is invisible—yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt—is the baptism of the Spirit of God upon the heart, revealing itself in every action of him who experiences its saving power.

(White 1877a:130; 1877b:14)

Important in regard to White is that the statement brought to the fore, is a gradual but closer connection between the reconciling and saving actions of God in Christ and the Spirit's

application of the saving power of Christ. In the 1890's, White was leaning strongly to Reformed notions, since she seemingly equated the reception of the Holy Spirit with the dwelling of Christ in the heart through faith

Those who have Jesus abiding in the heart by faith, have actually received the Holy Spirit. Every individual who receives Jesus as his personal Savior, just as surely receives the Holy Spirit.

(White 1982b:19; 1995:118)

The reason why the phrase 'seemingly equated' is used here is because one has to be simultaneously aware of the role that the sanctuary ministry plays as sanctifying producer in White's writings as the bridge between God's act of reconciliation in Christ and God's act of fulfillment at the end of time. The outworking of the sanctuary ministry is White's answer to the Reformed and Wesleyan theology of sanctification of the believer. Sanctification in the Wesleyan sense boils down to an instant and immediate dimensional result simultaneously with Jesus inserted in the heart of the believer. The outstanding problem in the Wesleyan procedure is the practicality of being aware that a human person cannot be holy and sanctified once and for all and that therefore immense soul-searching in terms of Jesus as the holy exemplar of God has to follow. The result is that a second blessing through the Spirit of God is needed to endorse and to affirm holiness state of the person in whom Christ is dwelling. Sanctification in the Reformed sense has the intrinsic procedure of a person whose life, Christ the mediator is interceding for before the Father as being sanctified step by step or as gradual mounting the steps of a ladder in the sense of daily conversion through the Holy Spirit.

White's views are in opposition to perfectionism and moralistic enterprises that emerge from self-activated human power or from one-sided views on the Holy Spirit. She, however, leaning towards the Reformed view supported the notion of character perfection in the step by step way as it had been backed up by forensic justification, but she also leaned towards the Wesleyan view of the immediate present working of God in us through the power of the Holy Spirit. At the turn of the century (1899) she presented her view as that, the Lord requires perfection from his redeemed family. White states in regard to the notion of perfection of character:

None need fail of attaining, in his sphere, to perfection of Christian character. By the sacrifice of Christ, provision has been made for the believer to receive all

things that pertain to life and godliness. God calls upon us to reach the standard of perfection and places before us the example of Christ's character. In His humanity, perfected by a life of constant resistance of evil, the Saviour showed that through cooperation with Divinity, human beings may in this life attain to perfection of character. This is God's assurance to us that we, too, may obtain complete victory.

(White [1901] 1985:314)

White calls for perfection in character-building. In that such perfection did not include our sinful human nature, moral perfection is required of all. Thus, from her standpoint in the later part of her life, she stressed the fact that we should never lower the standard of righteousness in order to accommodate inherited or cultivated tendencies of wrong-doing. Christ as the paradigmatic divine/human template of God's communicative love as spelled out in terms of the main lines of this thesis, is to be imitated as the perfect Jesus but the pattern enacted and brought forward by the perfect Jesus cannot be equaled by us (White 1956a:1085).

In writing on revivals, White underscores genuine revivals as leading to profound reformation of character. People's lives should be totally transformed in the wholesome sense of the word as the transformation of one's total soul, but a word of warning has to be expressed regarding the antinomian tendencies of her time that results in a lack of thorough reformation. She writes that:

Erroneous theories of sanctification, also, springing from neglect or rejection of the divine law, have a prominent place in the religious movements of the day...By the word and the Spirit of God are opened to men the great principles of righteousness embodied in His law.

(White [1888] 1990a:469)

In addition, according to White Christians must form their characters in harmony with the principles of God's holy law which is according to the Bible sanctification and which as a work could only be accomplished through faith in Christ, by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God (White [1888]1990a:469). In White's view revivals do not change their environment not because they are not approached with great enthusiasm but,

Because the great principles of righteousness set forth in the law of God are so indifferently regarded by the Christian world that these fruits are so rarely

witnessed. This is why there is manifest so little of that deep, abiding work of the Spirit of God which marked revivals in former years.

(White [1888] 1990a:478)

In White's approach the sanctuary ministry takes the place of the Wesleyan second blessing or the *baptism* of the Spirit as something that happens in an instant and immediately and the Reformed procedure of step by step daily conversion. White's view represents something of both, but goes beyond by the sanctuary ministry in which the Spirit is daily administering in the real sense of the word the activities of the priestly prophet, Christ in the heaven sanctuary in the lives of the people of God, by activating their actions to obey the law of God in this world.

F L Canale, in an article on the Doctrine of God in a Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, refers to the Holy Spirit as emerging within White's vertical divine/human paradigmatic template of God's communicative love through and in Christ by viewing the God's plurality of three persons as originating from Christ self

Even though God the Spirit appears from Genesis (1:2;6:3) onward, the explicit concept that God's plurality involves not only the persons of the Father and the Son but also a third person, the Holy Spirit, originates in Jesus Christ Himself.

(Canale 2000:130)

Canale with such a statement takes up a genuine more reflexive pattern of Trinitarian origin in White's later work in terms of the 'vertical' combination of divine and human layers as manifested in God's act of reconciliation in Christ. However, we have pointed earlier to the state of affairs in White's writings that one must be very careful in ascribing the traditional doctrine of the *Deus est Trinitas* to her. The facile way in which Canale works with a title such as a Doctrine of God for an article is a bit problematic in terms of White's strong non-ology approach. The main reason - according to many - is that White was not formally trained in theology. In this thesis we attempt to demonstrate that what has been reckoned as her theological weak spot, thus her lack of theological training, is actually the strong point of someone who in the 19th century was actually a co-maker and trendsetter of the new and emerging world of Faith Studies. White's approach to Faith Studies amounts to a reflexive networking and setting of coherent patterns of the biblical historical timeline continuously couched within the margins of

God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. White's Faith Studies approach is the main contribution that Seventh-day Adventist could bring to the global arena of theology. It is necessary to repeat that her approach was not a systematic theological exposition of doctrine, doctrinal notions and the omnipresent –logies of mainline church theologies such as Christology, Pneumatology and Eschatology.

The second trajectory in which we have to look for notions and clues of the Spirit of God is to pursue White's reflexive patterns within the 'horizontal' successive grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. Especially with White's 19th emphasis on God's act of reconciliation and pattern of God's act of fulfilment of the end and her downplaying of God's comprehensive act of renewal of which the Spirit is the driver and champion. The notions and clues of the Spirit of God has to be unlocked and derived from White's special emphasis on Christ as the perpetual mediator in the heavenly sanctuary bridging God's act of reconciliation in the cross and the resurrection and God's act of fulfilment at the end of time.

Canale is emphasising the Spirit as the divine historical link between God's act of reconciliation and fulfilment through the sanctuary ministry in understanding the Spirit as the representative of Christ's presence, sacrifice, and ministry and as acting out the work of salvation as a historical activity of the three persons, thus,

...not in an ontological sense, but rather, in a historical sense as the inner divine activity involved in sending the Holy Spirit at Pentecost as the representative of Christ's presence, sacrifice, and ministry...Biblically, however, the procession of the Holy Spirit belongs not to the constitution of the Trinity but rather to its life as the work of salvation is carried out by the historical activity of the three divine persons.

(Canale 2000:132)

Because we are living in the era of Renewal - in White's sense, the enacting of the era of the sanctuary ministry - the Spirit is the divine historical and enacting link between God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment as the Spirit of Christ or the Word of God. White states in this regard:

In harmony with the Word of God, His Spirit was to continue its work throughout the period of the gospel dispensation. During the ages while the Scriptures of both

the Old and the New Testament were being given, the Holy Spirit did not cease to communicate light to individual minds, apart from the revelations to be embodied in the Sacred Canon. The Bible itself relates how, through the Holy Spirit, men received warning, reproof, counsel, and instruction, in matters in no way relating to the giving of the Scriptures. And mention is made of prophets in different ages, of whose utterances nothing is recorded. In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God.

(White [1888] 1990a:vii-viii)

The Spirit's comprehensive work of renewal in the whole of the creation is somewhat narrowed down in White's reflexive pattern of coherences as the presenter, applicator and enactor amongst us of Christ work as the perpetual mediator, the heavenly priestly prophet in the heavenly sanctuary interceding between God and human beings, continuously engaged in investigative judgment. White's emphasis on reconciliation and fulfilment is connectively expressed through the perpetual role of Christ as the priestly prophet in the heavenly sanctuary.

White's great contribution regarding the Holy Spirit is that she opened up notions, clues and cues and revealing reflexive patterns and principles regarding God the Spirit, human beings and the natural cosmic world through the natural flow of God acts and events in the coherence of the biblical historical timeline. What White writes about the Spirit of God is strongly couched within the margins of the biblical historical timeline of God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment which in turn results in a multiplicity of operational metaphors concerning the Spirit of God.

5.3.4 Fulfilment and Consummation

For a large group of Americans in the 19th century post-millennialism was enormously popular for religious as well as sociological reasons but it found strong opposition in the pre-millennialist views of the early part of the 19th century in which a millennium as a part of God's future reign would materially come to fulfilment on earth. For the latter group coming out of the revival age the emphasis was no longer on the past, on the beginning of history with creation but on the last era, the last days of the historical world in which they lived. If the curtains of the world were on the brink of finally being drawn to a close, then the second coming of Christ had to be near. After the Great disappointment and dissolution of the Millerite movement in 1844 the emerging

Seventh-day Adventist movement continued several of the dimensions of the then current views, but changed one of the main facets of the premillennialist views: the millennial kingdom or reign of the glorified saints would be in heaven and not on earth. Only after the millennium would the New Jerusalem – together with the saints – descend to the earth to be made new as its eternal abode (La Rondelle, in Rodríguez 2000:41). In general, one can state that Ellen White departed from the strong view of a ‘heaven on earth’ period so prevalent at the time in premillennialist circles to a view of ‘earth in heaven’ where the millennial kingdom would be acted out.

In White’s future directed view of fulfilment and consummation the era of the future directedness towards the end times consists of distinct shorter and longer episodes in the temporal sense of the word. Adventist thinking on the future directed fulfilment contains different stages. The central stages emphasised in the total future directed fulfilment process are: firstly, Christ’s sacrifice for sin on the cross and secondly his prophetic priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary where he applies for believers the salvific benefits of his death.

The sanctuary ministry in its future-directed sense is the centre of White’s eschatology or fulfilment and consummation as it has been termed in this thesis because it bridges, connects and expresses God’s grand act of reconciliation and God’s grand act of fulfilment and consummation. Canale’s statement as to why contemporary Adventism is not paying attention to a doctrine of God by dealing with related issues such as atonement, justification, sanctification, and eschatology could with the same token be applied to White. Canale asserts:

Generally speaking, contemporary Adventists have continued to center their theological interests in soteriological and eschatological matters. For this reason the technical discussion of the doctrine of God has not become an issue. However, while dealing with other related theological issues, such as atonement, justification, sanctification, and eschatology, a growing inclination to overemphasize the love, goodness, and mercy of God to the detriment of His justice and wrath be perceived in some authors (e.g., Provonsha 49).

(Canale 2000: 151-152)

Canale’s assertion regarding contemporary Adventism as centering their theological interests in soteriological (reconciliatory) and eschatological (fulfilment) matters could be to a large degree applied to the way White opened up the biblical historical timeline in terms of God’s grand acts

of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment by emphasising God's acts of reconciliation and fulfilment stronger than God's act of creation and renewal through the Spirit.

The sanctuary ministry in White's writings to a large degree makes her whole approach strongly future, fulfilment- and eschatologically directed. It firstly stretches and determines the biblical historical timeline from on the one hand, the judgement scene in Daniel 7 and 8 where the heavenly sanctuary is described in parallel form to the future directed time of the end of Revelation which shows progression in Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary on the other hand. The investigative judgment and the cleansing of the sanctuary complement each other as underscoring Christ's work in the heavenly sanctuary before his second coming. The investigative judgment which is taking place in heaven, is according to Revelation in White's reading paying particular attention to events on earth while the cleansing and vindication of the heavenly sanctuary is taking place. While God in heaven is determining whose names will remain in the books, on earth the Lord is gathering his remnant through the message of the three angels (Revelation 14:6-11). The urgency of the message of the three angels is based on the fact that God is now making judicial decisions in the heavenly sanctuary by which God is separating true from false worshipers. True worshipers are those who keep God's commandments and who have remained loyal to God's covenant.

The heavenly ministry of forgiveness and reconciliation is climaxed by the cleansing of the sanctuary, beginning in 1844 (Daniel 8:14; Hebrews 9:23). This event entails an 'investigative' or 'pre-advent' judgment through which is revealed who the true people of God are, whose record of sins may be totally expunged. In contrast are those who are merely professed people of God for whom the ultimate efficacy of Christ's sacrifice cannot be applied since, in their lives, the reflected character of Christ, which the cross makes possible, has not been revealed. In consequence of this judgment, when Christ returns, his verdict and reward will be with him and will be rendered when all meet before the throne of God (Revelation 20:11-15). When the saving activity of God has run its full course and restored the image of God in humankind, then not only the inhabitants of this world but those of the universe, for whom the redemption of this world has been a lesson book (White [1898] 1948a:19). They will confess what Scripture has declared to be true: 'God is love' (1 John 4:8; White [1888] 1990a:678).

In the undergirding of the sanctuary ministry White holds the view that in Scripture one of the foremost centre pillars of what Adventists believe, is found in Daniel 8:14:

Unto two thousands and three hundred days; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed.

(White [1888] 1990a:409)

These words as underwritten by Advent Christians were believed to have a termination in autumn of 1844. According to White Adventists at that time shared a world-view that a certain part of the earth was the Bible sanctuary. What this implied was that at the termination of 1844, the earth would be cleansed by the final fires that will accompany Christ's Second Coming. The predicted time came, but Christ did not come. Instead of joining the crowd that abruptly gave up the view that the prophetic prediction ended in 1844, some believers were confident that their calculations were correct. The starting period of the 2300 days prophesy was to be when Artaxerxes would command, to the rebuilding and restoring of Jerusalem, which took place during the autumn of 457BC.

In terms of the biblical historical timeline, White further refers to the notion that the starting point coincided with the predicted events of Daniel 9:25-27 in which the sixty-nine weeks, are 'the first 483 of the 2'300 years', which she says:

...were to reach to the Messiah, the Anointed One; and Christ's baptism and anointing by the Holy Spirit, AD 27. Exactly in the middle 'of the 70th week, the Messiah would be cut off'

(White [1888] 1990a:409-410)

Christ was to be baptized 'in the spring of AD 31.' Furthermore, she states that seventy weeks which equalled 490 years were specifically intended for the Jewish Nation. The Jewish nation, she states, 'sealed its rejection of Christ by the persecution of (Christ's) disciples, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles, in AD 34.' So having the '490 years of the 2300' ended, there remained 1810 years. Hence, starting at AD 34, the remaining 1810 years would lead to the year 1844. The angel's words were that it was then that the sanctuary would be cleansed. All of the 'preceding specifications of the Prophecy were unquestionably fulfilled at the time appointed', says White. The only problem was that Christ did not come and therefore the sanctuary [which was believed to be a certain portion of the earth], had not been cleansed.

White further states that although many changed this view to their former calculations of that specific prophecy, others continued to be steadfast to the scriptures and to the Holy Ghost. These believers, she claims, saw their error, that there was no biblical support for the then popular world-view of an existing earthly sanctuary. These believers discovered from their Bibles a true understanding relating to the sanctuary mentioned in Daniel 8:14. They discovered truth relating to the true historicity in its location, its 'nature', and the testimony of the sacred writings.

Quoting from Hebrews 9:1-5, White seeks to point out that in these portions of scripture, including Exodus 25:8, these earnest seekers after the truth were led by God through the Holy Spirit to see that the sanctuary which was constructed by Moses under God's instruction has been replaced by another, which is known by some as 'the temple of Solomon.' This sanctuary, though it was a permanent structure, resembled that of Moses' in its furnishings and apartments. Even that Temple, White points out, was destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans. According to White, those believers discovered that that was the only sanctuary that existed, of which Paul says is 'the sanctuary of the first covenant' (White [1888] 1990a:409-413).

Since there is a new covenant, the believers asked themselves the question: Has the new covenant no sanctuary? From the Epistles to the Hebrews, White states that the seekers for truth found that the existence of a second or new-covenant sanctuary, was implied in the words of Paul when he wrote:

Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

(White [1888] 1990a:411)

By the word 'also' it was implied that Paul had previously mentioned 'this sanctuary.' Going back into the past chapter they read Hebrew 8: 1-2:

Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

(White [1888] 1990a:413)

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

- The sanctuary of the first covenant was pitched by man;
- The sanctuary of the new covenant was pitched by God;
- In the first covenant earthly priests ministered. In the sanctuary of the new covenant, our Great High Priest, Christ, he ministers before the right hand of God for us.

(White [1888] 1990a:409-413)

What White further wanted for her readers to know, regarding Christ's sanctuary is the following:

- The first Advent believers were to understand how the heavenly sanctuary relates to earthly individuals;
- That there were lessons to be learnt from the earthly sanctuary and its services, and they were to apply those lessons to that of the heavenly sanctuary; and
- While there are similarities between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries, there are also differences.

The similarities and the differences between the earthly and heavenly sanctuaries could be seen in her words when she states:

In the temple in heaven,...In the most holy place is His law...The ark that enshrines the tables of the law is covered with the mercy seat, before which Christ pleads His blood on the sinner's behalf...

(White 1973:69)

The difference is that the earthly sanctuary is a copy of the original, i.e. the heavenly sanctuary is the original copy. While in the earthly sanctuary the blood of animals appeased, in the heavenly only the blood of Christ appeases. One significant difference is that there is a throne in the heavenly sanctuary and it is vast, and there are myriads of angels and seraphim that are before God that worship before Him (White [1888] 1990a:414).

What is important at this stage is, how White defines the sanctuary? The typological relationship between the earthly sanctuary of Moses and the heavenly sanctuary is viewed as followed:

...the tabernacle built by Moses as a pattern of heavenly things; and secondly, to the true tabernacle in heaven, to which the typical service ended. The true tabernacle in heaven is the sanctuary of the new covenant.

(White [1888] 1990a:417)

In White's approach, the notion of reconciliation and atonement today can be best understood by trying to make sense of what is meant by 'the cleansing of the sanctuary.' White purports that as there was a cleansing to be done to the earthly sanctuary, even so must the heavenly sanctuary be cleansed. The common denominator is that both sanctuaries are to be cleansed with blood. Since the earthly was to be cleansed with the blood of animals, the heavenly could only be cleansed by the 'precious blood of Christ.' White concurs with Paul that, 'without the shedding of blood, there is no remission.' According to White, 'Remission, or putting away of sin is the work to be accomplished.' With reference to the example of the earthly sanctuary and its ministration, White points out:

...the daily transfer of sins from the repented sinner, took place by the sinner laying his hands on the head of the innocent animal, and confessing his sins. The victim was then slain. Since the law of God demanded the life of the transgressor, the animal's life substituted that of the sinner. Through this ceremony, the sins of the sinner had been transferred to the life of the victim. Since these sins were transferred to the sanctuary, it was necessary for a special work to take place to remove these sins. Under God's command, atonement for each department of the sanctuary was to be made.

(White 1948: 418)

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

- Two kids were brought to the door of the sanctuary;
- Lots were cast. To the one that the lot fell, it would be slain for the people of Israel;

- Its blood would be sprinkled within the veil; on the mercy seat and before it. This blood was sprinkled also before the veil and on the altar of incense;
- The priest would then lay his hands on the live goat, which would be led far away by a suitable man into the wilderness;
- That goat would bear all the sins of the repented sinners;
- The person who led the goat away was to wash his hands and clothes; and
- During that time, the people or the congregation of Israel were to put aside all business activities. They were to be in prayerful, solemn, earnest and heart-searching mode.

(White 1884:265)

White goes on to explain the precious, sobering truths of the atonement and says: ‘A Substitute was accepted in the sinner’s stead; but the sin was not cancelled by the blood of the victim.’ This was merely a means of transferring the sin into the sanctuary, she says, in compliance with the law’s requirements. The sinner had merely acknowledged his sin and his desire to be forgiven. What remained was for the ‘Redeemer to come and make Atonement for his sin, which remained in the sanctuary.’ In the earthly Day of Atonement service, only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service. White explains the vital implications of this act of ministration and points out that when Christ ascended into heaven, he [Christ] pleaded the blood of sinners before the Father for 1810 years. During this period Christ’s work of pleading before the Father secured our pardon before God. The sins of the believer were forgiven, but not removed from the record of heaven. As there was a special work required to remove these sins, so Christ, our High Priest, entered into the special work of atonement since 1844. This is, according to White’s understanding, the cleansing of the sanctuary spoken of in Daniel 8:14 (White 1884:263).

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

with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth.

(White 1976:93)

5.4 Calvin and White on the role and origin of sin

Sin, in White's perception, originated in heaven with 'one' that was second to Christ in honour. This spiritual being that she calls Lucifer, perverted the freedom which God had granted to all his creatures. This was, and continues to be, the freedom of choice in worshipping, obeying and doing God's biddings. While White finds no difficulty in locating the individual with whom sin originated, she finds it an impossibility to explain the origin of evil in a way as to justify why it exists (White [1888] 1990a:492-493). What is certain for her, is that we know with whom sin originated – it was not God, nor was God responsible for the origin of sin.

To Calvin, the attention of the first act of sin is directed towards the original human life – Adam and Eve. As it has already been mentioned that Calvin's starting point is not solely from below, his starting point here is mainly from below or anthropocentric. Calvin defines the origin of sin as

a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all the parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and produces in us works which in Scripture are termed works of the flesh.

(Irwin 1909:43-44)

Since we are fallen through Adam, Calvin insists that we ought to renounce all boasting and with humility and shamefulness, we should also set aside our self-assurance, bearing in mind that we are utterly dependent on God. Calvin continues to see sin inside of mankind. 'I am quite aware how much more pleasing is the principle which invites us to weigh our good traits rather than to look upon our miserable want and dishonour which ought to overwhelm us with shame.' He continues to say that mankind naturally loves to be flattered. According to him, when mankind sees that his talents are admired he is prone to become too high-minded about them. This according to Calvin is the problem that has bewitched most men (Kerr 1989:55).

Calvin believed that sin entered the heart of men due to his desire to be raised to a loftier state than he was created to be. Therefore, Calvin perceives ambition as the cause for Adam's fall. Speaking on the nature of sin, Calvin concurs with Augustine who declared the words: 'pride was the beginning of all evils.' He admits that the beginning of Adam's fall was due to disobedience. Quoting Paul in Romans 5:19, 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by obedience of one shall many be made righteous', we deduce that this disobedience was actually unfaithfulness. He gives reason for this effect, by pointing to its cause. He says that pride and ambition, combined 'with ungratefulness', sprang up due to Adam's thriving for more than God had bestowed on him. God had created Adam to be perpetually tied to God through cords of unity. As a result of Adam's estrangement, his soul died. According to Calvin, through Adam's rebellion the whole order of creation was perverted. Adam's original heavenly image was destroyed and even his garments became filthy. The whole human race was to suffer the consequences. Instead of the lofty qualities such as holiness, justice and truth, there came only impurity, vanity, impotence; 'Filthy plagues', and injustice. All of this corruption became the inheritance of Adam's offspring, which the church fathers called 'Original Sin.' This Calvin calls 'sin' and he adds 'the depravation of a nature previously good and pure...' (Kerr 1989:56-57). Calvin disagrees with Pelagius, who claimed that sin was transmitted via imitation and not propagation. Instead, Calvin concurs with Augustine, that sin was not transmitted through wickedness, but rather that we 'are born infected with the contagion of sin.' In defining the original sin, Calvin states: '...a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, defused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which scripture calls works of the flesh...' (Kerr 1989:56-57).

White calls sin 'an intruder' and says that there is only one definition for sin. That definition is embodied in the words of scripture, 'the transgression of the law.' She adds:

It is the outworking of a principle at war with the great law of love which is the foundation of the Divine government.

(White [1888] 1990a:493).

The infinite majesty, the immeasurable love of God and his unswerving commitment to closely follow and seek after his erring creatures and the unselfish self-sacrificing life, are learned in

Christ as a result of the existence of sin in people's lives and in the world. In combining the purpose of grace, the state of sin and the cross of White writes,

God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the un-fallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song.

(White [1898] 1948a:20)

However, it would be fatal to assume that God created all the chaos so that he may redeem the world in order to be glorified by the world. The tragic falls in the heavenly and earthly sphere were genuine and God's pain and his acts of redemption and reconciliation are genuinely sincere. However, it would be equally treacherous to say that the fall and tragic entrance of sin into heaven and earth was not known to God before it happened. In this regard, it is meaningful to say that God was not taken by surprise when sin occurred. We saw earlier chapters that according to White that Christ and the Father knew about the fall of humanity before it happened. For God had known about this entire distraction of his ideal dream. Hence he had made provision and devised an exit plan for when it would happen which was surely in secret hidden in eternity – Romans 16:25 (Collins 1999:12-15).

For White it is only through sin that we appreciate Christ the reconciling saviour who saves us from the sting of sin. This results therein that it is through death that we appreciate life, through the experience of darkness that we can fully appreciate light and it is through our suffering and sorrowing and estrangement that we can yearn for rest, happiness and reconciliation. Here one could add that for White the entire cosmos of God needed a show-case from which they could learn from and to enable them to guard the avenues of their souls, lest they too, as a reason of their beauty, be corrupted and fall. We are informed by the Holy Scriptures that even angels in God's sight are not perfect. Hence there ought to be some form of redemption for their faultiness. Our planet is a school from which un-fallen beings continue to learn from.

5.5 Calvin and White on the state of the dead

In exchanging Calvin and White's views of the state of the dead considerable differences appear. Calvin's view is that our mortal bodies are outlived by our souls. He reckons is that our bodies are like huts from which our souls depart from when we die and it is especially the soul that

distinguishes us from 'brute beasts.' His view is deduced from 2 Peter 1:14 and along with other texts as can be seen below:

Thus Peter, near death, says the time has come to "put off" his "tent"...But Paul, speaking of believers, after having said: "When our earthly house is destroyed, we have a building ... in the heavens" [2 Cor. 5:1], adds that "we are away from the Lord as long as we remain in the body [v.8]. If souls did not outlive bodies, what is it that has God present when it is separated from the body? ...If souls when divested of their bodies did not still retain their essence, and have capacity of blessed glory, Christ would not have said to the thief: "Today you will be with me in paradise" [Luke 23:43].

(Kerr 1989:123-124)

White on the other hand, viewed the entire human being to be a soul and not the soul to be a separate entity from the body. Her reflection on the Bible and Christian history assisted her to realise that the widespread view in the Christian churches on the immortality of the soul and the mortality of the body espouses a totally disjointed view on the present state of the dead. She regards her view of the present state of the dead as being supported by the Patriarchs and Prophets from the sacred record of the divine historical timeline. She also appeals to Martin Luther when she states that the theory of the immortality of the souls comes from deluding theories of Rome borrowed from paganism and incorporated into Christendom. Appealing to Martin Luther, she writes:

Martin Luther classed it with the "monstrous fables that form part of the roman dunghill of decretals."—E. Petave, *The Problem of Immortality*, page 255. Commenting on the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes, that the dead know not anything, the Reformer says: "Another place proving that the dead have no ... feeling. There is, saith he, no duty, no science, no knowledge, no wisdom there. Solomon judgeth that the dead are asleep, and feel nothing at all. For the dead lie there, accounting neither days nor years, but when they are awaked, they shall seem to have slept scarce one minute."—Martin Luther, *Exposition of Solomon's Book called Ecclesiastes*, page 152.

(White [1888] 1990a:549)

Hence, according to White, when a person dies, that individual's body returns to the ground, as mentioned in Genesis 3:19. The breath on the other hand, returns to God: 'His breath goeth

forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish' Psalms 146:4. White also reasoned that the sentence pronounced by God, 'Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return' means the 'utter extinction of life.' In fact immortality has been forfeited by the human race as a result of the disobedience of our first parents [Adam and Eve]. It is this philology, that prompted White to declare that the first sermon ever to be preached regarding the immortality of the soul, was preached by the serpent to Eve in the Garden of Eden, when he [the serpent] said, 'Ye shall not surely die.' This is contrary to the divine sentence, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die' (Ezekiel 18:20). Christendom and the majority of mankind have been deluded by the infatuation that caused them to accept Satan's words that told eve, 'Ye shall not surely die' instead of God's declaration, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' Moving back to Genesis 3:24, White points out that God sent forth cherubim with a flaming sword to guard the tree of life so that none of Adam's family could part-take of the fruit of the tree of life, and therefore as a result, which would result in immortal sinners. Strangely, says White, Satan has succeeded in alluring mankind to believe that they are naturally immortal. This, adds White, has served as a foundation for portraying God as one who will castigate sinners into an eternal burning hell for sins committed in a brief earthly life. This is repugnant, in White's view! It misrepresents God's love and mercy and perverts his justice! In fact she is so repulsed by this doctrine, which she asserts that it presents God as though he takes pleasure in the death of the wicked. White resorts, how would it be possible for loved ones that are saved, continue in eternal bliss while looking down from heaven into hell, and see their family and friends being tormented throughout eternity? (White [1898] 1990:532-536;545). Throughout the entire chapter 33 of her work entitled, '*The Great Controversy*,' White puts a persuasive argument and demonstrates her understanding as to why Calvin and other respectable Christians of truth and honesty taught that souls outlived bodies. With pains taking effort she quotes Ecclesiastes 9:5-6; 10, in order to highlight the fact, that the dead know nothing, since they are not in a state of consciousness, while dead:

The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything." "Their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun." There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." When, in answer to his prayer, Hezekiah's life was prolonged fifteen years, the grateful king rendered to God a tribute of praise for His great mercy. In this song he tells

the reason why he thus rejoices: “The grave cannot praise Thee, death cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day.”

(Isaiah 38:18, 19)

On this subject, White demonstrates her numinous quality, in that, she insistently hewed from the rock of the Judeo-Christian Bible, fresh gems which further illumined her view of the state of the dead:

Popular theology represents the righteous dead as in heaven, entered into bliss and praising God with an immortal tongue; but Hezekiah could see no such glorious prospect in death. With his words agrees the testimony of the psalmist: “In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks?” “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.” Psalms 6:5; 115:17. Peter on the Day of Pentecost declared that the patriarch David “is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.” “For David is not ascended into the heavens.” Acts 2:29, 34.

(White [1888] 1990a:546)

Therefore, reasoned White, the fact that the latter text says David is not gone into heaven, proves that the righteous dead do not go to heaven when they die. Instead, they remain in their graves and await their resurrection. In order to prove that there will be a resurrection, which Calvin also espoused, White quotes Paul saying: ‘If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in yours sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished’ (1Corinthians 15:16-18). Now driving the death-blow, White poses this rhetorical question:

If for four thousand years the righteous had gone directly to heaven at death, how could Paul have said that if there is no resurrection, “they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished?” No resurrection would be necessary... The martyr Tyndale, referring to the state of the dead, declared: ‘I confess openly, that I am not persuaded that they be already in the full glory that Christ is in, or the elect angels of God are in. Neither is it any article of my faith; for if it were so, I see not but then the preaching of the resurrection of the flesh were a thing in vain.’

(White [1888] 1990a:546)

There are considerable differences in Calvin and White’s sense making of what happens to a person when he or she dies. Their understanding of how a human being is constituted has an

abstruse ring to it. Hence, it should not surprise us that these differences impact on their view of Christ's divinity and humanity and what happened to Jesus' humanity – and divinity - when he died, i.e. where did he go to when he died before being resurrected. This is where White departs from Calvin. Although there are many other differences between Calvin and White, the Bible prophetic dates and times and the doctrine of the state of the dead form part of the Seventh-day Adventist pillars of faith.

5.6 Calvin and White on politics and government

The big picture of how Calvin viewed politics and government in relation to the church could graphically be presented as in a cinematic methodology stuck in a duality. He construes it in the following way: (1) Christ and our eternal salvation through the cross (2) Our utter helplessness, our deficiencies and dependence on God (3) God's transitory provision through his Church, which is vested with authority and power to edify through ministers of the gospel and the sacraments which serves to affirm the faith of believers, and (4) the Civil Government on earth. In summary this is how Calvin put pen to paper:

... Christ becomes ours, and we are made partakers of the salvation and eternal blessedness procured by him. But as our ignorance and sloth (I may add, the vanity of our mind) stand in need of external helps, by which faith may be begotten in us, and may increase and make progress until its consummation, God, in accommodation to our infirmity, has added such helps, and secured the effectual preaching of the gospel, by depositing this treasure with the Church. He has appointed pastors and teachers, by whose lips he might edify his people (Eph. iv. 11); he has invested them with authority, and, in short, omitted nothing that might conduce to holy consent in the faith, and to right order. In particular, he has instituted sacraments, which we feel by experience to be most useful helps in fostering and confirming our faith. For seeing we are shut up in the prison of the body, and have not yet attained to the rank of angels, God, in accommodation to our capacity, has in his admirable providence provided a method by which, though widely separated, we might still draw near to him. Wherefore, due order requires that we first treat of the Church, of its Government, Orders, and Power; next, of the Sacraments; and, lastly, of Civil Government;-at the same time guarding pious readers against the corruptions of the Papacy, by which Satan has adulterated all that God had appointed for our salvation.

(Calvin [1989] 2001d:280-281)

Again we see Calvin making this link between Christ, God the State and its laws. The government like the law, held a high regard in Calvin's world view of thinking and experience in the spiritual and natural world he found himself.

First are Christ and then the human being in their utter helplessness and then is the church of Christ. According to Bouwsma (1988:227), Calvin's church spelled out in terms of metaphors drawn from the notion of a humanist academy, a school with pupils of God is more than a school of theology in which he imagined God now, looking over the shoulders of his pupils, watching 'their gestures, walking, words and everything else' (Commentary Jeremiah 32:40). Calvin's logic here assumingly that it is from the church where we learn the scriptures. Hence in his Institutes regarding Scripture, Calvin says that only 'a pupil of Scripture' is able to have the slightest taste of right and sound doctrine and 'we must strive onward by the straight path' assisted and instructed by the Word of God directed to 'the very school of God's children' (Calvin [1559] 1960a: 6,2-3).

Therefore the order for Calvin was that the government be structured according to the scriptures as spelt out in the Old Testament. Calvin understood that there ought to be a distinction between common laws and laws relating to spiritual matters that is why he wrote,

But he who knows to distinguish between the body and the soul, between the present fleeting life and that which is future and eternal, will have no difficulty in understanding that the spiritual kingdom of Christ and civil government are things very widely separated

(Calvin [1989] 2001d:651).

Calvin's whole sense making approach demonstrates a duality between the particular and general spheres of God involvement in the world of human beings and the natural cosmic world. Calvin's dual approach could be spelled out as that of soul and body, the future and eternal life and the present fleeting life, the spiritual kingdom of Christ compounded in the church and the government and other social institutions as separated from the kingdom of Christ. According to Van Niekerk(2009:85) nearly every area Calvin touches upon in his writings is caught up in the particular and general realms of God's involvement such as predestination as particular divine determination and providence as general divine determination; faith as particular and thinking (+ feeling, speaking, loving, etc.) as general areas of God's involvement; theology is to be seen as a

particular science of God's Word (Scripture) while other sciences operate in a general sense as cultural, human and natural sciences in the light of God's Word and the church as particular and the state (and other societal institutions) as general areas of God's involvement.

In essence Calvin's view on politics and government could be summarised by saying that the church is God's particular area of work where Christ is reconciliatory mediator and politics, government and society at large is God's general area of work where Christ is indirectly involved through being the mediator through which God created everything. Calvin's view of the state is theo-centric that is people have to be responsible and accountable for matters of civil government which has been 'instituted' by God. The view that Calvin was advocating a theocracy which means rule by God's has no legs to stand on. The contribution of Calvin in changing the face of Europe and the New world in regard to democracy, economic life and social responsibility of societies cannot be discussed here.

White's view on the relationship between Christians and politics and government carries a strong dualistic ring to it. By basically operating with the viewpoint that Christians wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness should not dabble in politics White advocates a strong version of the two realms view that could be traced to the Radical Reformation and other world avoiding movements during the past centuries. This is however one side of White's approach because on the other hand she was advocating a wholesome sense making approach that includes health, education and certain social activities. On the one hand thus her sense making approach approximates the manicheist viewpoint of the 3rd century prophet Mani in which the primordial conflict between light and darkness is expressive of good and evil. On the other hand White advocates, nearly in the same breath, a wholesome viewpoint that surpasses even Calvin's soft duality of particular and general involvement in a person's life.

The dualist side of White's sense making approach regarding the question whether Christians should engage and be involved in politics comes strongly to the fore in the following quotation:

Christianity--how many there are who do not know what it is! It is not something put on the outside. It is a life inwrought with the life of Jesus. It means that we are wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness. In regard to the world, Christians will say, We will not dabble in politics. They will say decidedly, We are pilgrims and strangers; our citizenship is above. They will not be seen choosing company for

amusement. They will say, We have ceased to be infatuated by childish things. We are strangers and pilgrims, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

(White 1962:131)

In this statement the dualistic side of White's approach is articulated of Christians as pilgrims and strangers 'wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness' having their citizenship in the heavenly sphere above where the builder and maker of the city's foundations is God who do not dabble in politics, not choosing company for amusement and having ceased to be infatuated by childish things.

White in the following quotation though still dualistic by saying that one must separate from the world, expresses her stronger in the direction of a wholesome view by including the school in the Christian life alongside the church. White writes:

God calls to His people, saying, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate.' He asks that the love which He has shown for them may be reciprocated and revealed by willing obedience to His commandments. His children are to separate themselves from politics, from any alliance with unbelievers. They are not to link their interests with the interests of the world. 'Give proof of your allegiance to Me' He says, 'by standing as My chosen heritage, as a people zealous of good works.' Do not take part in political strife. Separate from the world, and refrain from bringing into the church or school ideas that will lead to contention or disorder. Dissension is the moral poison taken into the system by human beings who are selfish. God wants His servants to have clear perceptions, true and noble dignity, that their influence may demonstrate the power of truth. The Christian life is not to be a haphazard, emotional life. True Christian influence, exerted for the accomplishment of the work God has appointed, is a precious agency, and it must not be united with politics, or bound up in a confederacy with unbelievers. God is to be the center of attraction. Every mind that is worked by the Holy Spirit will be satisfied with Him.

(White 1923:483)

One of the central focus points in the quotation above is that Christians should have God as 'the center of attraction' in the wholesome sense of the word. If that is the case in people lives who is God's 'chosen heritage' they have to give proof of their allegiance to God by being 'zealous of

good works'. To accomplish this they cannot 'be united with politics' or be united in a 'confederacy with unbelievers'.

The dualistic side of White's approach is undergirded by the notion of God's chosen heritage over against all those not part and outside God's chosen heritage while the emphasis that those who are part of God's chosen heritage should have God as the center of attraction in every act of their lives by obeying God's commandments.

From the American historical back-ground it is self evident that many of the politicians in her time were Christian since America was in that time period predominantly a Christian country run by Christian leadership. White's view of the 'chosen heritage' exclude those politicians of Christian leadership when seen in the light of the three Angel's messages which is intended to be heralding to a great vineyard that must be cultivated. Among that vineyard are those who did not fear God and keep his commandments as was understood by Ellen G. White in her philosophy of '*the present truth.*' In this context, those who did not keep the commandments of God includes non Sabbath-keepers i.e. those who do not observe Saturday Sabbath as opposed to Sunday.

Ellen White's life span covered twenty two American presidents. That is half the amount of American presidents to date, since Barack Obama has become America's 44th president (Russell 2009:99). She lived and witnessed both the eras of slavery and that of the emancipation proclamation through Abraham Lincoln on January 1st, 1863. She lived in a time when the world was impregnated with liberators. When Ellen White was born John Quincy Adam (1825-129) was president. By the time she wrote the above statement, William McKinley (1843-1901) was president of the United States of America. McKinley's second term was tragically and prematurely terminated in September of 1901 by being shot by an anarchist. Ironically McKinley was a Methodist, which is a church Ellen White had been converted from on becoming a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. (http://www.adherents.com/people/pm/William_McKinley)

What is of importance here is that the political environment was volatile during her lifetime. The news that dominated White's world was the 'un-Christ-like' behaviour of politicians and leaders in society. Hence those who had to be targeted with the three angel's message certainly included those Christian politicians. The assumption therefore is, should those Christians who were party

to political matters, embrace the three angel's messages, they would then have to divorce their affiliation to politics because they are not to appear like world-lings:

There is a large vineyard to be cultivated; but while Christians are to work among unbelievers, they are not to appear like world-lings. They are not to spend their time talking politics or acting politics; for by so doing they give the enemy opportunity to come in and cause variance and discord. Those in the ministry, who desire to stand as politicians, should have their credentials taken from them; for this work God has not given to high or low among His people...God's children are to separate themselves from politics, from any alliance with unbelievers.

(White [1892] 1915:395-396)

The above statement that has a similar ring as the previous one, could easily lead us to conclude that White meant that we should not work with those who were non Seventh-day Adventist Christians let alone politicians. So the question arises: Was White saying that we should not cooperate with 'outsider' and politicians? George R. Knight (2007:276-279) in his *'If I Were the Devil'*, relates on how White dealt with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). This account may lead us realise that Ellen White was not the hard-liner as some people might think. According to Knight, in 1887 Adventists worked on the line of 'common grounds' with the WCTU, which was an organization that Adventists could learn from as far as temperance is concerned and the WCTU could learn more about Adventism. But some Adventists took a hard-line approach against the WCTU when it appeared that the latter had aligned itself with the National Reform Association in its pursuit to obtain national legislation that would render Sunday a holy day. Ellen White however continued to foster a working relationship with the WCTU. In 1899 and 1900 after the WCTU had put itself on public record that it would not support persecution of those who worshiped on a different day, the hard-liner Alonzo T Jones hurled editorial material at WCTU accusing them to be apostate, since they were associates of the persecuting powers. This caused a crosscurrent of numerous letters of exchange between the hot-headed Jones and a cool White. White while not in dispute with Jones over his 'truth' she was concerned with his short-sightedness, his void of diplomacy and tender heartedness. She felt that Jones's hard-line treatment would give the WCTU reason for non co-operation and thus deny them the chance of ever converting to the Adventist course. Her sense making approach was to win the WCTU's buoyancy through a harmonious working relationship in as far as possible. She counselled Jones not to present 'truth...as so formidable that those belonging to the

WCTU will turn away in despair.' Thus encouraged Ellen White other Adventist ministers to engage their communities and helping them know that Adventists are '...not bigots' but 'are reformers.'

Though White emphasised Jones' short-sightedness, his void of diplomacy and tender heartedness towards members of the WCTU the fact that they are denied the chance of ever converting to the Adventist course, portrays White's missionary approach in dealing with outsiders. The following quotation is insightful how she how she counselled Adventists in her time to treat and cooperate with 'outsiders' that is Non Adventist Christians and including politicians:

We are to do world-lings all the good we possibly can. Christ has given us an example of this. When invited to eat with publicans and sinners, He did not refuse; for in no other way than by mingling with them could He reach this class'

(White 1923:483)

However, it is equally true that many in the church took advantage of the fact that White had dissuaded Christians not to be involved parties in politics.

God has warned his people not to become absorbed in politics. We cannot bear the sign of God as his commandment-keeping people, if we mingle with the strife of the world. We are not to give our minds to political issues. God's people are walking contrary to his will when they mix up with politics, and those who commence this work in the Southern States reveal that they are not taught and led by God, but by that spirit which creates contention and strife and every evil work. We are subjects of the Lord's kingdom, and we are to establish that kingdom in righteousness. 1 Peter 1: 13-28.

(GH, August 1, 1899)

As a result of reading this statement and others of sorts without contextual back-ground insight many a self-professing Christians hid under the prophetic political counsel of Ellen White's righteous garments while they watched the cruel hand of political expediency rob and ravage those who were weak and un-able to defend themselves. She did not remain silent when injustice reigned. There is a time when silence is betrayal. Time and again, over the vista of time we have seen the church strangely cast an ominous silence when she should have spoken

Stemming from the dualist side of her sense making logic White would encourage Seventh-day Adventist Christians, the 'chosen' people to be rather focused in their mission of the three angels' messages rather than to meddle with politics. However, by taking the background of both the dualist side and the wholesome side of White's sense making approach serious the present writer rather wants to emphasise and extend the wholesome side of White's approach that includes health, education and certain social activities to include speaking out against injustices, enrichment of the few and oppression of the poor in society when the time calls for it and the action is appropriate in terms of the context. The main reason is that one should have 'God as the center of attraction' in every act of one's life, including interceding for the poor and speaking out against injustices and oppression as part of the obeying of God's commandments. White writes on injustice, enrichment of the few and oppression and suffering to the poorer class of society as follows:

The voice of one in authority spoke with great decision, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. Read the directions given by the only-begotten Son of God when enshrouded in the cloudy pillar. When that voice is obeyed, ye will not give your voice or influence to any policy to enrich a few, to bring oppression and suffering to the poorer class of humanity. There is in this excitement just what separates those of the same faith. Is this bearing the divine credentials? Beware. See that your arm is not linked in the arm of a personal demon. He is in appearance as a man. He is walking about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, and he finds them among Seventh-day Adventists. He can terrify by his roaring; but, when it suits his purposes best, he has the sweet voice of an angel of light and speaks of heavenly things. Does he not know all about heavenly glory?

(White 1962:332)

With regard to politics Calvin was in favour of a separation of church and state but had the view that the government should be theo-centrally as a general sphere of God's activities. White was in favour of a type of separation of church and state in which there is as far as possible no partaking and mingling in politics and other societal activities except for two reasons. The first is when there is enough 'common grounds' for cooperation with someone who is not of the 'chosen heritage and secondly mingling with 'outsiders' is recommended as part of the order of the day against the background of the great vineyard that must be cultivated.

5.7 Epilogue

The operating principle that carries through the discussion of Calvin's approach to God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment is that his strong emphasis on the on creation and reconciliation is connectively expressed through the perpetual mediatorship of Christ's kingly priesthood interceding for human beings before the Father in the heavenly realm.

In Calvin's way of doing, while working in terms of the salvation-historical mode, it seems as if his reflection gives more weight to God's acts of creation and reconciliation giving his approach a strong leaning towards the past and a bit less to the future through the central position of reconciliation in Christ. Reconciliation (redemption) acquired to an extent a pivotal position between the creation in the past and the consummation in the future through a linkage with the Holy Spirit. Calvin effectuates a link through his emphasis on Christ as the perpetual mediator interceding between God and human beings in a continuous sense till the future fulfilment at the end.

According to Van Niekerk (2009b:40-43), Calvin's main sense making emphasis on God's creation (nature) and reconciliation (grace) as two of the foursome of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal through the Spirit and future-directed fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth is well known. Calvin's strong emphasis on creation (nature) and reconciliation (grace) paved the way for the majority of later Calvinists to cling in their reflection to the twosome as the designated pointer pair as access avenues for knowledge about God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. While the twosome was still reflected about by Calvin in his Institutes as dynamic operational acts of God, they acquired the status as theological doctrines in 17th century Reformed Orthodoxy.

The operating principle that carries through the discussion of White's approach to God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment, is that her strong emphasis on the acts of reconciliation and fulfilment is connectively expressed through the perpetual role of Christ as the priestly prophet engaged in investigative judgment in the heavenly sanctuary.

Firstly, the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world is spelled out by White through the centrality of God's communicative and dynamic love through and in Christ. In God's grand act of reconciliation in Christ emerges the divine/human exemplar and template of how God's divine historicity has been connected and differentiated from human beings and the natural cosmic world in all of God's grand acts creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. man beings.

Secondly, the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world is spelled out by White within the margins of the non-speculative and non-scholastic divine historical timeline from Genesis to Revelation deeply engrained and embodied in what we have termed throughout this thesis as the divine historical textuality of the Bible. In all the dispensations aspects of the divine/human history emerge the centrally embodied Christ and embedded in the Old and New Testament through the Holy Spirit. In such a view there is no place and space for theologistic, humanistic or pantheistic bridges between God, human beings and the natural cosmic world.

CHAPTER 6

The centrality of God's grand act of reconciliation in Jesus Christ

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the views of Calvin and Ellen G White on the centrality of Jesus Christ as God's act of reconciliation, redemption and salvation are described. What has been termed the second problem-setting revolving around the how, what and where the role and function of Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection is to be viewed within the whole extended timeline of God's grand acts from beginning to end. In another way this problem-setting could be described as the divine/human axis of divine history played out vertically and horizontally in Jesus Christ from creation to fulfilment.

This problem-setting, is among many facets directed at the question of whether we are referring to genuine, tacitly implied facts and real historical accounts that are materially real, or not. Here we are investigating John Calvin and Ellen White's historical realness and factuality of the life, death and resurrection, post-existence and final consummation of Jesus Christ.

In order to understand how Calvin and White perceived Jesus' life, his death, and resurrection [of Jesus Christ] as centrally placed within the array of God's grand acts of creation and renewal through the Holy Spirit of Pentecost and God's consummation and fulfilment of all things culminating in the new heaven and the new earth. The entire scenario of God's grand acts is viewed here through a Christ-centric focus. Thus, some of the most important facts of the great plan of salvation, reconciliation and redemption in the controversy between good and evil are described.

One of the attempts of this thesis is to ascertain what the true identity of Jesus Christ signifies. The question whether the biblical account we are referring to is real, factual and historically describing real events and happenings or is it secular historical, mythical science fiction or totally to be discarded as historical scientific factuality? As far as it relates to Calvin and White, the biblical account is real, literal, historic and factually reported documents.

In what follows we attempt to open up three access areas regarding the principles operating in Calvin and White's description of the tremendous mystery of the identity of the natures of Christ

6.1.1 The first access area: interactional substantialism

The first access area is that of the equity of the dual natures in the person of Jesus. It expresses a reality which John Calvin and Ellen G White are discussed as representatives of the *interactional substantialist* approach, regarding Christ's true, dual nature. Three other approaches *transformational trans-substantialism, con-substantialism and monothelitic substantialism* are cursively dealt with as limiting notions in describing how Christ were seen by others in history.

The perception of the dual natures of Christ, housed in one person, gives rise in terms of Calvin and White's writings, to the second main assumption of a dynamic interactional substantiation of the two natures. The operative principle here is, that Jesus acted out his divinity sometimes, and at other times his humanness in his life, death and resurrection. At times divinity was made manifest through his total humanness and at other times divinity withdrew, allowing for his utter humanity to come to the fore. What this means is that Jesus' identity demonstrated interactional exactions of *quiescent divinity* and *active divinity*.

As we already stated that, John Calvin's Christology, like White's, keeps a distinction of the two natures that are mysteriously combined into one person. Calvin purported the Christological notion that, we are moved by the humility of Christ who, being born in a stable, allows us to see glimpses of his glory from his baptism up to his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension to the right hand side of the Father.

Many modern groups, since the Enlightenment of the 18th century, have interpolated the dual divine and human personhood of Christ with the underlying assumptions and allegations defining him as an ordinary man with extra-ordinary talents. The main assumption is that he is only and exclusively human with a degree of God's presence in him. However, other Christian groups of a more traditional stance, have continued to affirm both of Jesus dual-natures, i.e. his divinity and humanity. Therefore, in this part of the thesis we will mainly deal with the rhetorical and Christological comparisons between Calvin and White. The modern liberal humanistic view

which regards Jesus as consisting of a mono nature will be treated in passing. At this stage we have to assert that the main pre-supposition of Calvin and White with regard to the way they combine and keep the two natures apart, a strong element of a paradox is built into their faith reflexive christological patterning.

6.1.2 The second access area: perpetual mediatorship

The second access area concerns the role and place of Jesus Christ in the divine history from Genesis to Revelation. The continuing and perpetual mediatorship of Christ stretched over the biblical timeline, is of importance here. In the opening up of this assumption as an operative principle in the work of John Calvin and Ellen White, the divine biblical historical period from the pre-existence of Christ to the post-existence of Christ at the right hand of the Father is also of importance.

The perception of the dual natures of Christ, housed in one person, gives rise in terms of Calvin and White's writings to the second main assumption of a dynamic, ongoing and perpetual interactional substantiation of the two natures. The operative principle here is that Jesus acted out his divinity sometimes and at other times his humanness in his life, death and resurrection. At times, divinity was made manifest through his total humanness and at other times divinity withdrew, allowing for his utter humanity to come to the fore. What this means is that Jesus' identity demonstrated interactional exactions of *quiescent divinity* and *active divinity*.

6.1.3 The third access area

The third access area which functions as an operative principle in the writings of Calvin and White is that of a multidimensional approach to the titles, offices and dimensions of Jesus Christ.

6.2 Jesus Christ: dual nature

6.2.1 Calvin on Christ's dual nature.

Earlier in this chapter, we have discussed how a whole array of dualities fitting into each other in Calvin's writings is derived and is expressive of his main duality of the knowledge of God, the

creator and the knowledge of God, the redeemer. Calvin's main dualities, that of a 'vertical' *mirroring* reflexive double layeredness between heaven and earth, divine and humanity and a 'horizontal' reflexive *processual* duality between Genesis and Revelation, beginning and end and creation and fulfilment as expressive of the biblical historical timeline (Van Niekerk 2009b:42).

With regard to the duality of the two natures of Christ in Calvin's approach, Christ is set on the one hand as the combined dual divinely particularised and concentrated divine/human mediating prototype between God and human beings, between heaven and earth as the mediator that intercedes for us before God. And, on the other, within the biblical historical timeline, Christ is centrally placed as the divine/human mediating archetype between God's act of creation at the beginning of time, and God's act of fulfilment at the end of time and is therefore simultaneously fully involved in God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment to the end of time. The main emphasis in Calvin's approach is the two covenantal periods or dispensational realms of creation and reconciliation expressed within the Old and New Testament. Reconciliation (redemption) acquired in Calvin's approach the pivotal and prototypical position between creation in the past and consummation in the future through a linkage with the Holy Spirit. Calvin effectuates a link through his emphasis on Christ as the perpetual mediator interceding between God and human beings in a continuous sense till the future fulfilment at the end.

Regarding the duality of Christ's natures in his Institutes of 1559 Calvin notes:

When it is said that the Word was made flesh, we must not understand it as if he were either changed into flesh, or confusedly intermingled with flesh, but that he made choice of the Virgin's womb as a temple in which he might dwell...

(Calvin 2001:415)

We notice in the aforementioned words of Calvin a striking parallel of what exists in various passages in the Bible. We read in Exodus 25:8 for example, the existence of an idea of an infinite God who is depicted as one that dwelt in an earthly temple. It is this idea of the pre-existent, omnipresent Son of God whose presence, though was and still is universal, remained and continues to be distinct and manifest at a certain fixed locality. Calvin understood the 'mechanics' of Christ's dual participation in the equality of the 'persons' of the trinity while he (Christ) was simultaneously also a participant in his human body and earthly existence. To

Calvin the justification of the unification of Christ's divinity and humanity can be conceptualised in the notion of being miraculously co-descendent of God's Son

... from heaven, yet without abandoning heaven; was conceived miraculously in the Virgin's womb, to live on the earth and hang upon the cross, and yet always filled the world as from the beginning.

(Calvin 2001:414)

Calvin's and later Ellen White's approach of the strong duality of the natures of the one person Jesus Christ, was different on the one hand, from the central Roman Catholic notion of *transubstantiation* in which the divine Son of God is been transformed into a sacramental and sacred divine human being, Jesus Christ. Both Calvin and White on the other hand differ from the main Lutheran notion of *consubstantiation* in which the human Jesus is constantly permeated by his divinity and appears thereby as an actualised and permeated-diffused human God. One has to point to the fact that the view and experience of Christ amongst Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists and Seventh-day Adventists are fore mostly encountered not in the handbooks of their main theological representatives but in the everyday experiences of their followers within the faith codes and modes, rituals and forms operating and functioning in the churches. In these everyday church experiences all traditions in the Christian world have their approaches to Christ as expressive of being a real mystery.

In Calvin's view the mystery of Christ revolves around 'how' the two natures of Christ's person existed in a co-existent way without being mingled or fused. Although Calvin operated strongly with the mystery of the combined but not mixed unity of the two natures of Christ, he attempted to explain the mystery through the example of the two main components of which a human being consists. He mentioned that as a human being is a composite of a body and a soul which as substances cannot be confused and fused into one substance, a human person stays a composite duality in being a single person. In a similar sense the divine and human natures of Christ are expressive of the one person of Christ (Kerr 1989:73).

Calvin refers also to the 'what' of the status of Christ's divinity. In essence, Calvin answered this question above when he asserted that while Jesus was on earth, Christ remained a divine partner of the triune God. According to Calvin, Jesus did not cease to be an active partner in

dealing with the affairs of the universe while he was on earth as a human being, nor did he cease to be God at his death. Calvin's concept of Christ's identity as a duality of contra-natures in the one person of Christ seems to be from the same stream that Ignatius drank from. Ignatius said that, Christ dined with his disciples in flesh while he was simultaneously 'united' with his Father in Spirit (Jones 2004:2).

The question is, what happened to Christ's person, in becoming flesh, at the incarnation is of importance at this stage. Did Christ in other words take upon himself a human body that was tainted by sin? Here Calvin is cautious and introduces an exception, wrought by divine intervention. According to his theory, the Holy Spirit *sanctified* Christ at conception, which immunised him from being contaminated. Calvin further clarifies by mentioning that the ubiquitous being as the Word of God was not contained in the bosom, since he continued to fully inhabit the universe. Calvin states his position as follows:

For we make Christ free of all stain not just because he was begotten of his mother without copulation with man, but because he was sanctified by the Spirit that the generation might be pure and undefiled as would have been true before Adam's fall. And this remains for us an established fact: whenever Scripture calls our attention to the purity of Christ, it is to be understood of his true human nature, for it would have been superfluous to say that God is pure.

(Calvin [1559] 1960b :13)

If we had to ask Calvin as to what happened to Christ's divinity while he (Jesus) was weeping over Jerusalem as reported by Luke 19:41-44? Calvin comes up with the very interesting notion that Christ's divinity was *resting*. In a similar vein one could ask Calvin what was Jesus' divine nature doing while his human nature was suffering excruciatingly at the cross? Calvin's answer is emphatically, simplistically, concisely coined in one word – '*quiescent*' (Calvin 2004:198).

The stance of Calvin in which Christ's resurrected humanity was still with him in 'heaven' at the right hand side of the Father has been called the *extra-calvinisticum* – the notion 'extra-', in the composite term points to what is extra to Calvin's views and which is not part of the other Reformers of the 16th century Reformation though it was a position also held by Zwingli the Swiss reformer.

In a famous portion of his 1559 Institutes, Calvin describes the whole notion of the extra-Calvinisticum by describing how the Word of God became flesh:

They thrust upon us as something absurd the fact that if the Word of God became flesh, then he was confined within the narrow prison of an earthly body. This is mere impudence! For even if the Word in his immeasurable essence united with the nature of man into one person, we do not imagine that he was confined therein. Here is something marvelous: the Son of god descended from heaven in such a way that, without leaving heaven, he willed to be born in the virgin's womb, to go about the earth, and to hang upon the cross; yet he continuously filled the world even as he had done from the beginning!

(Calvin [1559] 1960b:13)

The notion of the extra-calvinisticum caused vehement reaction in Calvin's time. Some of the objections came from Lutheran theological scholars who rejected the *extra-calvinisticum*. On the one hand, the heart of the *extra-Calvinisticum* is that Christ still has his resurrected humanity with him where he is presently been situated at the right hand side of the Father (Van Niekerk 1984:34, 58-69).

The Lutherans objected, against both the idea that Christ in his present state ascended to the right hand side of the Father and still has his resurrected humanity as part of him as well as the notion that Christ is only present through the Holy Spirit in people's lives and in the physical natural world. What they were concerned about in Calvin's doctrine of incarnation was that it made it possible for Christ eternal to be God's Word that cannot be separated from the incarnated Christ of which Christ's humanity is in an intrinsic and intact sense part of him. They feared and saw it as a real threat that people could no longer speak of a *logos asarkos* in which Christ is existing and positioned externally from his human body.

Although the discussion of Calvin regarding the unity of the divine and human natures of Christ sounds totally in line with the Chalcedonian type of argumentation there are real sense making differences that are carried by his making use of the *alloiosis* in his sense making approach. Calvin starts with his discussion by stating that the statement that 'the Word was made flesh' in John 1:14, cannot be understood,

...that the Word was turned into flesh, or confusedly mingled with flesh. Rather, it means that, because he chose for himself the virgin's womb as a temple in which to dwell, he who was the Son of God became the Son of man – not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For we affirm his divinity so

joined and united with his humanity that each retains its distinctive nature unimpaired, and yet these two natures constitute one Christ.

(Calvin [1559] 1960d:17)

In a typical Calvinian manner, Calvin proceeds to undergird the mystery of the two contracted but not fused and mixed natures of Christ with his basic assumptions as to how the mystery is to be worked out in terms of soul and body as two substances of a human being:

If anything like this very great mystery can be found in human affairs, the most apposite parallel seems to be that of man whom we see to consist of two substances. Ye neither is so mingled with the other as not retain its own distinctive nature. For, the soul is not the body, and the body is not the soul. Therefore, some things are said exclusively of the soul that can in no way apply to the body; and of the body, again, that in way fit the soul; of the whole man, that cannot refer – except inappropriately – to either soul or body separately. Finally, the characteristics of the mind (*animus*) are [sometimes] transferred to the body, and those of the body to the soul. Yet, he who consists of these parts is one man, not many. Such expressions signify both that there is one person in man composed of two elements joined together, and that there are two diverse underlying natures that make up this person.

(Calvin [1559] 1960d:17)

Calvin finalises description of the mystery of two substances joined but not fused and mixed by applying this whole train of reflection to the two natures of Christ:

Thus, also the Scriptures speak of Christ: they sometimes attribute to him what must be referred solely to his humanity, sometimes what belongs uniquely to his divinity; and sometimes what embraces both natures but fits neither alone. And they so earnestly express this union of the two natures that is in Christ as sometimes to interchange them. This figure of speech is called by the ancient writers “the communicating of properties.”

(Calvin [1559] 1960d:17)

In Calvin’s sense what he refers to is the figure of speech of the *alloiosis*, carrying the communication of properties. Lutherans were concerned that such a union of Christ's two natures presented by Calvin and especially Zwingli through the notion of *alloiosis* would spell that the human nature could not have divine attributes (Edmonson 2004:198-214). There was a great debate in the 16th century Reformation around the notion of the *communicatio idiomatum* as the interchange, exchange and fusion of properties and characteristics between the divine and human natures of Christ. In the theological debate that ensued later, the impression was created that the

notion of the *communicatio idiomatum* has more or less the same meaning amongst the Reformers, because they all adhered to the line of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. It is of the utmost importance to position a Reformer's use of the notion of the *communicatio idiomatum* within a Reformer's sense-making God-human-nature approach. Even Calvin and Zwingli, supposedly closer to each other than to the other Reformers, have slight differences which are of importance in the broader scheme of their sense making approaches. In general the notion of *alloiosis* expresses more the idea of similarity than of sameness of the divine and human natures of Christ.

6.2.2 White on Christ's dual nature.

Ellen G. White's view of Christ's dual nature is worked out in terms of the outlines of her sense-making God-human-nature approach. Earlier we have spelled out the double-layered divine-heavenly and human-earthly reality portrayed by White as that:

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 [1898] 1948a:25-26)

Through God's communicative infinite love in Christ, God and human beings are closely connected, concentrated and contracted and in Christ, emerges the divine/human template of how God is connectively working within his grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. Christ in and through the divinely set time periods or dispensations from Genesis to Revelation is the central embodiment and manifestation of God's love.

White's view of Christ bears some similarity to that of John Calvin but with considerable differences. Although White is believed by many, particularly members of the Seventh-day Adventist Movement not to be a systematic theologian, she has developed a view of the biblical historical timeline in which the centrality of Christ could be seen as the main result of the divine factuality of God's communicative love. Unlike Calvin's approach to Christ which is totally enveloped in the strong maintenance of his scheme of divine/human duality, White is moving a bit freer in her approach from above, from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven, thus from divinity to humanity and from humanity to divinity but consistently within the same coherent reflexive frame of divine historical making.

In saying the above about White, the present writer do not want to convey the idea that Calvin's view of Christ is totally one-sided. There are times when Calvin's Christology could be viewed from a perspective from above, from below and from a salvific perspective. Similar exchange of perspectives though in a slightly different way holds true for White who delves deep into Christ's pre-existence and post-existence and gives reasons as to why Christ assumed a lowly position. White's writings have a great deal of the holy and lofty position in contrast to the lowly position which Christ, according to White, voluntarily assumed.

Before we take a look at the more detailed aspects of White's concept regarding Christ's divinity and humanity, let's give a brief summary of some important points with regard to Christ's divine and human natures, i.e. his identity.

White makes it clear that Christ held a position second to his Father. The nature of Christ remains a mystery for her even though she claims to having seen him in visions on several occasions:

I have often seen the lovely Jesus, that He is a *person*. I asked Him if His father was a person and had a form like Himself. Said Jesus, "I am the express *image* of My Father's *person*."

(White, AL 1985:80)

In order to establish his identity it is indispensable that we know where he is from and possibly, know his age. When we attempt to know **what** part of, or **how** much of eternity Christ assumes, White furnishes the following answer:

From all eternity Christ was united with the Father...The Word existed as a divine being, even as the eternal Son of God, in union and oneness with His Father.

(White 1958b:248)

White also writes:

Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly

intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right.

(RH; April 5th 1906)

Christ's identity to White is dynamic because in his identity he is not only a mediation between his divinity and humanity, but he is also the exemplar of God's communicative infinite love to human beings and the natural cosmic world.

But to restate our question in our first problem setting would be, did White perceive the identity of Christ as a divinized humanity? The answer is that White, like Calvin does not perceive the identity of the human nature of Christ to have been divinized. She posed her rhetorical question in this manner:

Was the human nature of the Son of Mary changed into the divine nature of the Son of God? No, the two natures were mysteriously blended in one person – the man Christ Jesus. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the God-head bodily...

(White [1953] 1985a:444)

When we come to explaining 'how' this was possible, that Jesus could be both God and man in the one person Jesus Christ, Ellen White admitted that it is a mystery that is unfathomable 'we cannot explain how divinity was clothed with humanity', said White. However, that did not stop her from attempting to explain this great mystery. In an effort to describing how this took place, White wrote,

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.

(White [1953] 1985:648-649)

According to White, Christ is not two separate persons but one person with two natures mysteriously combined. White breaks down this tremendous mysterious complex identity of Christ as follows:

- His divinity is clothed by the garb of his humanity;
- He could not come and accomplish his redemptive work in his form of divinity;
- He divested his form of God and assumed a human form;

The question of how the complexities of the above could be built into the identity of the person of Christ stays the great mystery that not only White but Calvin too is confronted with. White created a decisive impasse to ensure that we are not deluded to entertain the notion that there is a co-mingling of divinity and humanity in the person of Christ. We are not to think that his divinity was in any way degraded to our humanity – instead we are to believe that divinity retained its position.

In a remarkable sense, Christ did not call upon his divine nature to relieve him of his unbearable burden. We may see an indirect form of divine intervention through what one might call a substitute for our substitute in the person of Simon of Cyrene, who by coercion had to carry on him the cross of Christ. White emphasises the point that we wish to make that there was a divine intervention present that helped Christ endure and helped alleviate the burden of the cross. ‘He could not carry the cross...’ However, it is important to note that although Christ received help through divine providence, he did not zoom into his divine nature. In his suffering, divinity was quiescent and God sent Simon to help Jesus carry the cross (White [1898] 1948a:742).

On the one hand, having been ministering on earth, he did not give up his divinity, for he was still God. While on earth he could immediately differentiate right from wrong. When he was tempted, his divinity flashed through. It was this mysterious combination of his divinity and his humanity that made it possible for him to withstand the fiercest temptations.

On the other hand, in calming the storm at the Sea of Galilee, he did not do it as God but as a human being. He exercised his faith in God leaving an example for us to follow. Christ assumed human nature and the liabilities thereof. He was tempted at all points and bore the sins of the world and will always retain his humanity through ceaseless ages (White [1961] 1989:49; 1964:292; RH October 11, 1881).

To the question, ‘What happened to Christ’s divinity, when he died at Golgotha?’ White says that it is only his humanity that perished, but his divinity never sank and died since that could never be a possibility.

- a. As man he could suffer death but not as God. It was therefore his humanity that died, since it is impossible for deity to die.
- b. As human he could identify with suffering sinful humanity, as God he could lift humanity to God.

To the question ‘What happened to the natures of Christ at the incarnation?’ White responds:

He was to take his position at the head of humanity by taking the nature but not the sinfulness of man.

(White [1953] 1985:448; White: ST May 29, 1901)

This was the position of Henry Melville who was one of Mrs White’s preferred authors. It was Melville who had written that while Jesus had assumed humanity, he took the innocent infirmities, excluding the evil and sinful propensities. Added Melville:

Here Deity interposed. The Holy Ghost overshadowed the Virgin and, allowing weakness to be derived from her, forbade wickedness; and so caused that there should be generated a sorrowing and a suffering humanity with tears, but not with strains; accessible to anguish, but not prone to offend; allied most closely with the produced misery, but infinitely removed from producing cause.

(GCB 1988:57)

6.3 Christ’s identity as mediator and substitution

6.3.1 Calvin’s view of Christ as perpetual kingly, priest, and mediator

Bearing in mind that sin had separated us from the presence of God, according to Calvin, it necessitated only one that ‘belongs to God’ to serve as our *intermediary*. For there was none, from the sons and daughters of Adam, that could reach out to God. It required the Son of God to become ‘Emmanuel, God with us.’ In his Commentary on Romans 8:34 Calvin writes:

Who is he that shall condemn? As no one can succeed in his accusation when the judge absolves, so there remains no condemnation, when the laws have been satisfied and the penalty already paid. Christ is the One who once suffered the punishment due to us, and thereby professed that he took our place in order to deliver us. Anyone, therefore, who desires to condemn us after this must kill Christ Himself again. But Christ has not only died, He has also come forth as conqueror of death and triumphed over its power by His resurrection. Paul adds still more – Christ he states, now sits at the right hand of the Father. By this he means that He obtains dominion over heaven and earth, and full power and rule over all things, as he states in Eph. 1.20. Lastly, he teaches us that Christ is seated in this way in order to be a perpetual advocate and intercessor in the defence of our salvation. It follows from this that if any one wishes to condemn us, he not only renders void the death of Christ, but also fights against the incomparable power with which the Father has honoured Him, and with such power conferred on Him supreme authority. This great security which dares to triumph over the devil, death, sin and the gates of hell, ought to be deeply implanted in all godly hearts, for our faith is nothing unless we are persuaded for certain that Christ is ours, and that the Father is propitious to us in Him. There is, therefore, no more pernicious or destructive conception than the scholastic dogma of the uncertainty of salvation....*Who maketh intercession for us.* Paul required to make this explicit addition, to prevent the divine Majesty of Christ from terrifying us. Although, therefore, Christ holds all things in subjection under His feet from His lofty throne, Paul represents Him as a Mediator, whose presence it would be absurd for us to dread, since He not only invites us to Himself in a kindly manner, but also appears for us before the Father as Intercessor. We are not to measure this intercession by our carnal judgment, for we must not think of Him as humbly supplicating the Father on bended knee and with outstretched hands. Christ, however, is justly said to intercede for us, because He appears continually before the Father in His death and resurrection, which takes the place of eternal intercession, and to have the efficacy of lively prayer for reconciling the Father and making Him ready to listen to us.

(Calvin 1961:185-86)

In this very citation it becomes clear that in Calvin's view Christ at the right hand of the Father is the perpetual mediator who continually appears before the Father in his death and resurrection but is simultaneously at the right hand of the Father the one that obtained dominion over heaven and earth, and full of power and rules over all things. It is important to see Christ in Calvin's view in his mediatorship as the kingly priest. The prophetship of Christ is de-emphasised in the Calvinian view because its function is allotted to Scripture as the inscripturated Christ which has to be rightly understood and expounded (Calvin 1961:269).

According to Calvin there had to be an exchange or buffering between us and Christ. Jesus Christ had to become Son of man in order that we could become children of God. If we had to ask Calvin ‘in which nature did he [Christ] destroy death and sin?’ he would say ‘in His [Christ’s] human nature!’ That is how he could appease the Father’s righteous indignation. Christ came primarily and most importantly to be our Mediator and a sacrifice to appease the Father on our behalf’ (Kerr 1989:72-72).

In Calvin’s approach, Christ ‘ascended to heaven to fill all things’ and thus truly inaugurated his kingdom at his ascension. Therefore, what Calvin perceives in the ascension is that Christ does ascend not for himself, but for us as the priestly king. The following titles according to Kerr (1989:79-80) in Calvin’s view is part of Christ as the ascended one who fills all things:

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

In Calvin’s view, in Christ we see the ultimate essence of every one of us and of everything that is in Christ we have glorious victory, reign, assurance and eternal life.

One of the biggest points of contestation in the Calvinist tradition is whether the character of atonement and reconciliation in Christ is of a limited or unlimited nature. Earlier in this thesis, the whole question of determination, predestination and election in regard to Calvin has been touched upon. It suffices here to point to the notion of limited atonement in Calvin as illustrated by Edwin Palmer in his book entitled *The Five Points of Calvinism* (1980:41-42). What Palmer does, is to contrast the Arminian stance of ‘universal atonement’ against that of Calvin’s ‘limited atonement.’ With reference to the Arminians, Calvin says, that they propagate that Christ died for the entire world with Judas and Esau included. This belief, Palmer eludes, makes a disjunction between what Christ did [he died for all] and what Christ accomplished [all are not

saved]. He continues to argue that, for the Arminians, salvation is a 'grab-bag', i.e. there is a package for all, however some will grab one and some will not. He moves on to say that they believe that Christ did not just shed his blood, but that he spilled it also. Thus in terms of Calvin's views, the Arminians believed that Christ intended to save all in sincerity yet in reality only 'some will be saved.' Hence, some of his blood 'was wasted' – for it was spilled (1980:41). Palmer also elaborates by another example, that the Arminian's are like a man who more than a century ago was sentenced to be hanged, but who [that man] received the president's pardon, only to refuse it. In essence what Palmer seeks to prove through this example is that if the Arminian's view is that while Christ's death may offer forgiveness, but the sinner may still reject the forgiveness.

On the other hand, Palmer refers to the Calvinist's case of limited atonement; and he says Calvinists believe that Christ intended that he atone only for the ones his Father has given to him and the text they hold to is John 6:37-40. Palmer continues to say that, Calvin argued that if everyone's sins were paid for, then everyone would go to heaven. The reality is that not all people will be saved. According to Palmer, the texts that Calvin used to justify his view that only a limited number of people receive Christ's atonement are Matthew 1:21, which speak about 'His people'; John 10:15 and John 10:26 which refer to 'His friends'; John 15:13 'His sheep', and Ephesians 5:25, that speak about 'the bride'. Some Calvinists in a clearer expression of Calvin's pattern of reflection have preferred the terms 'definite or particular', instead of the term 'limited' atonement. However, in a similar sense as Calvin they 'stress that the atonement which is unlimited in its power, is limited to a definite, particular number of people, namely the believers' (Palmer 1980:42).

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

In Calvin's Institutes of 1559 ([1989] 2001:61) he directs us to the type of righteousness that the individual believer has to consider. He says that it is 'a heavenly tribunal'. With that in mind, Calvin goes on to warn us of applying our inferior standards in order to measure God's perfect justice. Calling our attention to the judgment-seat of God, Calvin admonished us to proceed into a mode of self-introspection. The great question that we should ask ourselves is, 'How shall we answer the heavenly judge when He calls us to account?' Calvin further calls upon the individual believer to work and accept a concept of a judge that is from Scripture, not created and brought forward by our own devices ([1989] 2001:62).

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

Calvin's description and portraying of God is usually that of an awesome, glorious God of inconceivable purity and holiness who is brighter than the stars, the sun, whose holiness outshines that of angels. Such a God does not need to be appeased by good works and even if the believer's good works matched the requirements of the law that would not change us to be in the right state to meet his righteousness. Calvin repeatedly condemns man's boastful self-righteous arrogance. He also continuously warns against any form of pride from the individual believer before the judgment-seat of God. According to Calvin, there is absolutely nothing that can commend us to God. Not an iota of our being or merit can be accounted or credited towards the righteousness of God. Even that perfect righteousness of God is not to be applied by us on ourselves while it is God that does that (Calvin [1989] 2001:62).

6.3.2 White's view of Christ as perpetual priestly conqueror and as mediator

Christ is understood by White to have been the Mediator of human beings immediately after the fall. He was the only one in the entire universe that could mediate between God and fallen humanity. Here, the two faces of God are been depicted. The identification of Christ is

portrayed as that of an advocate, a broker on behalf of sinful humanity, before the face of an offended God! White writes:

Before the Father He pleaded on the sinner's behalf, while the host of heaven awaited the result with an intensity of interest that words cannot express. Long continued was that mysterious communing – for the fallen sons of men...from everlasting He was the Mediator of the covenant, the one by whom all nations of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, if they accepted Him, were to be blessed.

(RH, April 5th 1906)

There exists a conspicuous paradox of God's persona. The Father appears more sternly and there is a mood of wrath and impending vengeance from the visage of God. The façade of Christ is depicted as deeply sorrowful, emotionally hurt, tense, and heart rent that pleads on behalf of helpless transgresses against the absence of God.

In writing about Christ's salvific and reconciliatory function for us, White points out that when Christ took on the responsibility of being our substitute, he suffered immensely. White eludes that Christ being our substitute had to suffer outside the boundaries of Jerusalem (White [1898] 1948a:742). From insult to renewed insult, from mockery to mockery, twice tortured by the scourge, all that night there had been scene after scene of a character to try the soul of man to the uttermost. In spite of all his suffering, White says that Christ did not fail. He never uttered a word, save that which glorified God. His bodily suffering was so severe, that his human nature could no longer endure. 'Again the burden was laid upon him, and again he fell fainting to the ground'.

White in a well known quotation draws the lines together from the cross to the full operational mission of Christ in the sanctuary:

The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven.

(White [1888] 1990a:498)

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

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

(White 1884:268)

In the ongoing and prolonged sanctuary ministry the cross of Christ plays an enormous role.

With regard to the most victorious words by Christ on the cross, 'It is finished' reflexively expresses the following:

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

(White [1898] 1948a:756)

The most holy place of the earthly Sanctuary is no longer Sacred since the typical lamb as a victim, has escaped from the typical priest's presence. The most awaited time in Christian history had come – type met antitype through the vicarious death of Jesus, the Son of God. Regarding the 'once and for all' and 'ongoing' effectuation of the death on the cross the following points of White's approach can summarised:

- The most prized sacrifice had been offered;
- Our access to God had been laid;
- A new dynamic way for the believer exists;
- There is direct access to God's forgiveness;
- Christ has earned the right to advocate on our behalf; and
- There is no longer a need to offer animal sacrifices, since Christ has offered himself once and for always (White [1898] 1948a:756-757).

In an even more ongoing way, the resurrection of Christ is a decisive part within the sanctuary ministry in the most prolonged and incisive way possible. White when writing about the resurrection, almost sounds triumphant

He is not in Joseph's new tomb; He is risen from the dead and ascended on high
as Substitute and Surety for every believing soul.

(White 1979:107)

From this passage one experiences a sense of a glorious and emotional power, especially in the opening up and material presentation of Christ in his resurrection as substitute and surety for every believing soul. In actual fact, through this statement we are introduced by White of an added dimension of Christ's mission within the embracing ambience of the sanctuary ministry. According to White in Christ's death the emphasis is laid on the reality that Christ completed his mission on earth. In other words, had Christ failed to be obedient to God to the end of his life, before his death on the cross of Golgotha, it arises from the sense-making 'logic' of the sanctuary ministry that Christ would not have arisen from the tomb. But, having succeeded in accomplishing his work through perfect obedience to God, and persevering through the most painful, humiliating death, Christ conquered the power of death. Therefore in White's view the just and proportionate requirements of death that Jesus met on behalf of the sinners of the world

is vindicated, empowered and affirmed 'as substitute and surety for every believing soul' through his resurrection that is set forth in the next phase in the most Holy Place.

In the ongoing and perpetual sanctuary ministry, the ascension of Christ is that of One who is a divine conqueror. The name 'divine conqueror' used for Christ's ascension into heaven is an interesting alternate Christological title which she employed for Christ. Another title dimension expressed by White in addition to the title of divine conqueror is that Christ had, by his resurrection, 'authenticated Himself as a living Saviour.' In this self-authentication of Christ, a glorifying majesty and empowering affirmation took place that is ongoing in the processual interceding of the priestly prophet who as the resurrected, can no longer be associated with death but rather with his glorification within the heavenly cosmos.

White portrays Christ as ascending from Mount Olives to which in her view he shall return. Interestingly she has another Christological title for Christ for the phase of his return: the Triumphant King. Christ that ascended into heaven is 'in the form of humanity.' His return will be in a similar manner with distinct differences. A major difference is that when Jesus returns he will not co-descend in humility as he has been while on earth in his first advent. On the contrary, he will come with divine glory which he always had throughout eternity:

Between the first and the second advent of Christ a wonderful contrast will be seen. No human language can portray the scenes of the second coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. He is to come with His own glory, and with the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. He will come clad in the robe of light, which He has worn from the days of eternity. Angels will accompany Him. Ten thousand times ten thousand will escort Him on His way.

(White 1988:373)

Regarding his ascension White has the view that Christ took with him a host of redeemed people that he liberated on the day of his resurrection:

After His resurrection, Christ did not show Himself to any save His followers; but testimony in regard to His resurrection was not wanting. Those who were raised with Christ "appeared unto many" (Matt. 27:53), declaring, Christ has risen from the dead, and we are risen with Him. They bore testimony in the city to the fulfillment of the scripture, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body

shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19).

(White 1958b:305)

These people that were resurrected with Christ after having appeared before many and having relived their lives died again. Nevertheless the same group if they were faithful will be a part of 'the great multitude' that will be resurrected from their graves at Christ's Second Coming [1Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 7:9]. Essentially, the throng that was resurrected with Christ from their graves was a representation of the people that Jesus will redeem in his second advent to our world.

Furthermore the purpose of Jesus resurrection and ascension is made plain to us by White when she exclaimed that Christ's ascension was for us and that he lives for us and intercedes before our Father and our God on our behalf. She writes:

The time had come for Christ to ascend to His Father's home. As a divine conqueror He was about to return with the trophies of victory to the heavenly courts. Before His death He had declared to His Father, 'I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do' (John17:4). After His resurrection He tarried on earth for a season, that His disciples might become familiar with Him in His risen and glorified body. Now He was ready for the leave-taking. He had authenticated the fact that He was a living Saviour. His disciples need no longer associate Him with the tomb. They could think of Him as glorified before the heavenly universe.

(White [1898] 1948a:829)

Hence Jesus' identity is embellished with a vicarious role on behalf of God's dependent children, upon the self-denying and mediating, Son of God!

6.4 The interactive exchange of the roles of divinity and humanity of Christ

6.4.1 Quiescent divinity versus active divinity

So, when did Jesus exercise his divine power? Why did he use his divine power? When did he function as human? We may continue to ask, if Jesus did engage His divine power while on earth, did he use his divine power in order to glorify himself? Did Jesus, at anytime zoom into His divinity in order that he may *alleviate* his suffering humanity? This questioning is vital,

since it seeks to establish if White's view of Christ portrays a divinised human nature that was at a better advantage than that of the first Adam's sinless nature.

In order to illustrate this *interactional substantialism* position, we will be looking at various incidents that are recorded in the New Testament narratives, in the eyes of Ellen White and also John Calvin. Let us first look at a portion of the narrative which relates to the storm on the Sea of Galilee which Jesus calmed:

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

(White [1898]1948a:336)

Through this passage, White intended to illustrate that Christ did not calm the stormy tempest of Galilee through the power of his divinity. Instead, as a human being like one of us, he calmed the storm through his absolute dependence on his heavenly Father. The first question was: 'When did Jesus use his divine power?' We have already mentioned that, White sometimes portrays Christ to be in a divine active mode, while at other times his divinity is in a quiescent mode, allowing more of his humaneness to be revealed. Let us look at another example of Christ zooming into his divine active mode. Relating on Christ's triumphant entry, this is what White wrote:

The glorious destiny that might have blessed Jerusalem had she accepted her Redeemer rose before the Son of God: He saw that she might through Him have been healed of her grievous malady, liberated from bondage, and established as the mighty metropolis of the earth...But the bright picture of what Jerusalem might have been fades from the Saviour's sight.

(White [1898]1948a:577)

Although one may argue that prophets had the same visionary ability to see future events in panoramic vision, the fact that White states in this passage that Christ sees himself as Israel's Redeemer and that this picture '...rose before the Son of God', seems to indicate that he was at

that stage in his divine active mode. For only God can see himself as God! As a human being, he would see himself dependent on God. Certainly, at this stage, Jesus did not merely speak as a mortal prophet. Had he been speaking in the same manner as that of other prophets, then White might have said that: 'The glorious destiny of Jerusalem had she accepted her Redeemer rose before the *Son of man*'. Instead she calls Him *Son of God*.

With regard to the last supper, White highlights another example of Christ's active divinity. Relating to Jesus and Judas, White wrote:

By reading the secret purpose of the traitor's heart, Christ gave to Judas the final, convincing evidence of His divinity.

(White [1898]1948a:655)

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

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

(White [1898]1948a:655)

More remarkable about this passage are the words she wrote that followed:

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

(White [1898]1948a:655)

In order to answer the question as to why Jesus used or to state it differently, why he was in his active divinity mode, we may find the answer in the question, 'why was His divinity united with humanity?' For, wrote White,

The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united with humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power.

(White [1898]1948a:664)

From this passage we are to learn that Christ's *active divinity* was for the revelation and glorification of God, so that mankind may be restored to God. It was not for his own glory that Christ had himself glorified through his divinity that was made manifest at random.

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

According to White, as a child, Jesus did not engage his divinity in order to alleviate his chores. In fact, White purports that in all his stay in Nazareth, Jesus never made a show or display of his divinity (White 1948:74). However, writing about the time when Jesus' parents realized they had left him at the temple, when he was of adolescent age, White tells us of Jesus' response to his parents: 'How is it that ye sought me?' Asked, the young Jesus:

Wist ye not that I must be about My Fathers business?'_ And as they seemed not to understand His words, He pointed upwards! On His face was a light at which they wondered. Divinity was flashing through humanity.

(White [1898]1948a:81)

Here is demonstrated the combination of divinity and humanity in the one person of Jesus Christ. There is a manifestation of *interactional substantialism* at this point. But, for what purpose, we may ask, is this exchange between divinity and humanity?

It appears from the passage above and those that followed, that the divinity of Christ became active in order that Jesus' parents would better understand that they were privileged to be entrusted with the custody of the Son of the Highest God. This seems to be intentional, to remind the human parents of Jesus, that even though it was natural for them to see and perceive Him as

their child and therefore, treat Him like natural parents treat their children, He was more than just an ordinary human-child; He was also a divine Son of the Most High God.

As we follow the life of Christ and seek to understand his divine and human modes, let us now follow him to the time after he had been arrested and brought before Pontius Pilate.

There is something about Christ's person that must have disturbed Pontius Pilate when we consider Ellen White's description of what happened at Pilate's court – White writes:

In fear and self-condemnation Pilate looked upon the Saviour. In the vast sea of upturned faces, His alone was peaceful. About His head a soft light seemed to shine. Pilate said in his heart, He is God.

(White [1898]1948a:739).

Here we see yet another manifestation of *interactional substantialism*. Jesus' divinity is being activated so that we see more of his divinity than of his humanity!

Another example where we see the *interactional substantialism* of Christ is at a site traditionally known by some as the Mount of Transfigurations. It is there where Jesus took along with him, the three disciples that were to witness his agony at the Garden of Gethsemane. This is how White describes what transpired on that Mount:

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

(White [1898]1948a:421)

Should we ask White as to why Jesus' divinity became active or was manifested in this instance, White answers:

Now the burden of His prayer is that they may be given a manifestation of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, that His kingdom may be revealed to human eyes and that they may witness a manifestation of His divinity that will comfort them in the hour of His supreme agony with the knowledge that

He is of a surety the Son of God and that His shameful death is a part of the plan of redemption.

(White [1898]1948a:420-421)

It is clear from the above passage that Christ's divinity was manifested for specific reasons such that Jesus allowed for his divinity to manifest for the sake of the disciples. The disciples were to witness the revelation of God's glory and to believe that he truly was divine and that he was truly the Son of God. According to White the manifestation of Jesus' divinity, i.e. active divinity, had the following results:

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

(White [1898]1948a:425).

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

The confusion hushed. The sound of traffic and bargaining has ceased. The silence becomes painful. A sense of awe overpowers the assembly. It is as if they were arraigned before 'the tribunal of God' to answer for their deeds. Looking upon Christ they behold divinity flash through the garb of humanity. The Majesty of heaven stands as the Judge, will stand at the last day,...His form seems to rise above them in commanding dignity, and a divine light illuminates His countenance...

(White [1898]1948a:158)

Why is interactional substantialism important in White's approach? Rephrased the question could be asked as to why in this instance, did Christ manifested his divinity through his humanness? Stated differently: why did Christ's quiescent divinity become active divinity at this moment? White's reply is clear when she states that 'Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah' (White [1898]1948a:161). In another chapter where she comments on Christ's temptation, White mentions that Jesus was not to show or manifest his divinity for himself.

Neither here nor at any subsequent time in His earthly life did He work a miracle on His own behalf.

(White [1898]1948a:119)

6.4.2 Interactional substantialism while dying at Golgotha

Ellen G. White perceived the death of Christ on the cross of Golgotha as an indispensable necessity for the blending of the mercy and justice of God. Sin had caused such a gulf between the two that there appears to have been such tension within the realm of the Godhead. White reflects in metaphors full of imaginative imagery how God the redeemer expressed his justice and mercy in the cross which is planted midway between heaven and earth:

Justice and Mercy stood apart, in opposition to each other, separated by a wide gulf. The Lord our Redeemer clothed His divinity with humanity, and wrought out in behalf of man a character that was without spot or blemish. He planted His cross midway between heaven and earth, and made it the object of attraction which reached both ways, drawing both Justice and Mercy across the gulf. Justice moved from its exalted throne, and with all the armies of heaven approached the cross. There it saw One equal with God bearing the penalty for all injustice and sin. With perfect satisfaction Justice bowed in reverence at the cross, saying, It is enough.

(White [1953]1985:469)

In similar train of thought she said at a different occasion:

God bowed His head satisfied. Now justice and mercy could blend. Now He could be just, and yet the Justifier of all who should believe on Christ. He [God] looked upon the victim expiring on the cross, and said, "It is finished. The human race shall have another trial.

(White [1953]1985:470)

Jesus according to White, regardless of his sufferings, was still caring and compassionate about those around him. There were women at the scene of Christ's crucifixion who cried for Christ out of human sympathy. 'Daughters of Jerusalem', he said: 'weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children' (Luke 23:28). From the scene before him, Christ looked ahead to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. 'In that terrible scene, many of those who were weeping for Him were to perish with their children' (White [1898]1948a:743). In his divine-prophetic mode, Jesus was looking down the corridors of history. From the time that Jerusalem was to fall to the time of the judgment of the world. 'Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' (White [1898]1948a:743).

Again, as earlier where reference was made to Christ's 'quiescent nature' the notion of Jesus being in a state of interactional substantialism emerges. Even though there is no apparent light glowing through Christ and no mention is being made by Ellen White that divinity was flashing through his humanity, there is a divine manifestation which is almost overlooked. That divine manifestation can be gleaned through the words of Christ when he said: '...for if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' (White [1898]1948a:743). Christ's reference of the green tree, is a reference '...to Himself, the Innocent Redeemer' (White [1898]1948a:743). Certainly, here is some form of tension of interaction between the dual natures of Christ. The point we should not lose sight of here is that no human beings can refer to him- or herself as 'the innocent Redeemer', unless he or she blasphemes. Having said that we should concede that there must have been an activity within the dual natures of Christ at such a point. Christ in his humanity was being moved by his divinity. There is a manifestation of interactional substantialism since, in this prophetic utterance there is a personal recognition of himself as an 'Innocent Redeemer'. This is yet another title for Christ regarding his identity.

6.4.2.1 Calvin on the tension between the two natures of Christ

One of the questions we posed in the previous chapters, is how does Calvin perceive the unity of the two natures? The best illustration Calvin could use, as mentioned previously, was the formation of human beings. To Calvin, as the body and soul could exist in one person, 'without

confusion of substance’, so was it possible for the two natures of Christ to co-exist in unity in one person. Calvin advocately spoke out against an ‘either...or’ continuum regarding the two natures of Christ. He says some

frantic and furious spirits fasten on the attributes of humanity to destroy his divinity; and on the other hand, on those of his divinity to destroy his humanity.

(Calvin [1989]2001b:418)

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

Arguably, we could say to Calvin that there is a real tension between the two natures. We could ask Calvin, how does he see the text, which implicitly acknowledges Christ’s subordination to God the Father? Interestingly, Calvin sees no difficulty in the subordination of the humanity of Christ, as expressed in the various biblical texts, nor where Christ speaks of his eternal divinity. What he sees is expressed in what he calls ‘a figure of speech’ used by people of old, ‘a communication of properties’. In the discussion about the *alloiosis* earlier in the last part of a long quotation refers to his linguistic operational tool of ‘a figure of speech’ within the ancient notion of ‘a communication of properties’:

Thus, also the Scriptures speak of Christ: they sometimes attribute to him what must be referred solely to his humanity, sometimes what belongs uniquely to his divinity; and sometimes what embraces both natures but fits neither alone. And they so earnestly express this union of the two natures that is in Christ as sometimes to interchange them. This figure of speech is called by the ancient writers “the communicating of properties.”

(1559-Inst. (Battles) 4,17,12)

Where Calvin writes about the term ‘flesh’ in John 1:14, ‘And the Word was made flesh’ refers to Christ as the Son of God coming to put on our flesh and showing himself openly to the world. The evangelist John, according to Calvin, touches briefly upon

the ineffable mystery that the son of God put on human nature. Even though brief, he is astonishingly clear. At this point, some mad people amuse themselves with frivolous subtleties and make fools of themselves. They say, 'The Word is said to have been made flesh' in the sense that God conceived the Son in his own mind, and then sent him into the world as a man; as though the Word were I do not know what sort of shadowy image, But we have shown that the statement refers to a real hypostasis in the essence of God. By saying "flesh," the writer expresses himself more forcibly than if he had said *He was made man*. He means to state that the Son of God, for our sake, left the height of his heavenly glory and humbled himself to a state at once low and abject...Flesh here means not, as so of the with Paul, our nature corrupt by sin but mortal men in general...At the same time, however, we must notice that this is 'a figure of speech': [flesh] which is one part of man, stands for him as a whole. Therefore Apollinaris was foolish to fancy that Christ put on a human body without the soul.

(Calvin Commentaries 1958:163)

In the last sentence of the quotation Calvin refers to Apollinaris (d.392) who taught that Christ had a human body and the life of a man, but that in him his rational soul and conscious mind as the divine *logos* is the animating principle permeating and determining the human bodily flesh. Thus he represented Christ as neither God nor man but as a perfect, mainly bodily, human being so animated and permeated by his divinity that there was no room for his human self-consciousness. He was repudiated and condemned in the fourth century, but orthodoxy was permanently influenced by him (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:149-159). Therefore Calvin in his version of the interactional substantialist approach operates very strongly with 'a figure of speech' or the *alloiosis* in which the humanity of Christ refers simultaneously to his divinity in the sense of a similarity between the distinctive existing being thereness of both humanity and divinity. The notion of *alloiosis* is definitely not carried by a formal syllogistic mode of the sameness of the substances of the divinity and humanity in which one part is fused with the other to acquire the substantive properties of the other as in the view of Apollinaris. Apollinaris' views go in two directions. On the one hand his view that the divine substance permeates the human substance in Christ influenced all the permeation schemes in history, including that of the Lutheran tradition. On the other hand his view that Christ's humanity is totally enveloped, embodied and transformed by his divinity influenced the schemes in which Christ appears as a divinised and sacramentalised human being, including that of the orthodox Roman Catholic view in operation in church and ecclesial practice (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:151).

Breen in an article in an essay on 'John Calvin and the Rhetorical Tradition', (1968:122-123), shows that Calvin's approach is effectuated through a rhetorical syllogistic style of enthymeme comprising two members which differs from the known formalistic syllogism style comprising three members such as a *major premise: All men are mortal; minor premise: Socrates is a man; and conclusion: therefore, Socrates is mortal.* A syllogistic enthymeme could read as follows: *major premise: all men are mortal; conclusion: therefore, Socrates is mortal.* The sense making veracity of the meaning of the connection of different words within a rhetorical oratorical setting is more important than the truth that emerges by comparison of the substances of the parts connected. The *alloiosis* notion is born from the Renaissance rhetorical tradition especially through the way Cicero has been delivered in the Renaissance who in a different sense than Aristotle's syllogistic logic is a tailor-made requirement of Calvin and Zwingli to fit the bill of operating with similarities between the divine and human natures of Christ.

What this means is that it is congruous to speak of Christ's divinity and humanity through similarities in which one part of Christ stands for the whole Christ such as for Christ to speak of himself of his human weakness and his limited knowledge as well as we can interchangeably speak of his divine attributes. Examples of these can be seen in John 8:58; when Christ said: 'Before Abraham was I AM'. Christ could also say he does not know when the last day will be; and where the Scripture says: he increased in wisdom and in stature. Since divinity cannot be prone, while still on earth, to these human weaknesses and limitations while as a human being he was, he could rightly, interchangeably be called either way. In fact, Calvin moves on to point out an interesting point – that is, there are texts that refer to both his dual attributes simultaneously. These, according to Calvin, we find especially in the Gospel book of John (Calvin [1989]2001b:416-417). Some examples that Calvin implies are found in the following texts: 1Corinthians 2:8, where it is mentioned that the Jews crucified the Lord. Another text used is Acts 20:28, which says 'that God purchased the Church with His blood'. These texts demonstrate what Calvin calls 'a communication of properties' but then clearly understood in the *alloiosis* or enthymeme sense of the word (Calvin [1989]2001b:416).

One question that keeps prodding ones mind is, since Calvin perceives that the miraculous condescension of Christ did not mean that he ‘abandoned’ heaven, for he was still omnipresent – in heaven as well: what are the implications regarding his Sonship in which Christ has engaged himself in? What happens to the aspect of his voluntary subordination and rightfully so, his humanity? Calvin in discussing the words of Jesus according to John 12: ‘Now, my soul is troubled, and what shall I say?’ he points to the preceding discourse of Jesus in which he exhorted his disciples to deal with death:

There he (Jesus- PPJ) showed more than heroic courage in exhorting his disciples not only to undergo death, but to face it willingly and eagerly whenever needful. But now he shrinks from death and seems to go soft. However, here we do not read anything that does not agree with the believers’ own experience. If scoffers laugh at his, it is no wonder; one cannot understand it except by experience.

Besides, it was necessary for our salvation that the Son of God should have been affected in this way. In his death, we must first consider the work of expiation which appeased the wrath and curse of God; this he certainly could not have done unless our sin had been transferred to him. The death, therefore, to which he was subjected, had to be dreadful even to him, because he could not have made satisfaction for us unless he had known God’s dreadful judgement; we know better the enormity of sin because the Heavenly Father exacted such a dire punishment of his only-begotten Son. Therefore, we must realize that death was not a pleasure or a game for Christ, and that he suffered excruciation to the utmost for our sakes.

And it was not absurd that the Son of God should have been thus troubled. In the act of expiation, the secret divinity of the Son was quiescent and did not exercise its power. Christ in fact put on not only our flesh but also our human feeling; and this he did voluntarily. He was afraid not by constraint, but because he willingly subjected himself to fear. It must be firmly held that his fear was real and not fictitious. But he was unlike the rest of mankind in that, as we have said elsewhere, his feelings were tempered by obedience to the righteous God.

Christ’s humanity in feeling has a further value for us. If Christ had not been troubled by the fear of death, which of us would take his example seriously? It is not given to us that we should face death without a troubled mind; so, when we hear that he was not made of iron, we gather our forces and set out to follow him; and the weakness of our flesh which troubles us at death does not hinder us from joining our Leader in battle.

(Calvin: Commentaries 1958:163-164).

Interestingly, in the long quotation Calvin asserts that it is absurd that the Son of God who is closely connected to Jesus, should have been troubled as Jesus had been troubled as human being and that thus the secret divinity of the Son was quiescent and did not exercise its power in the act

of expiation. This whole reflexive train of thought is typical of Calvin regarding the humanity and divinity of Christ. Sometimes the divinity comes more to the fore and sometimes the humanity. In this particular event of Jesus being troubled, it is more the human side of Christ that is coming to the fore in Calvin's close correlation between Christ voluntarily putting on our flesh and our human feeling and the value for us of Christ's humanity in feeling.

The question may be asked whether there will be a cessation of Christ's subordination to his Father later, sometime in the future or will Christ retain his subordination forever? In 1 Corinthians 15:24, where we read that at the end Christ will deliver the kingdom of God to the Father and Philippians 2:8, where we read that Christ was given the sceptre of royalty and was obedient to the Father, and subjected himself to the lowest point possible and was then glorified by the Father. What will happen to Christ's act of subordination? Calvin responds by saying that the act of Christ's subordination to the Father 'is only for a time, until we enjoy the immediate presence of his God-head' (Calvin [1989]2001b:417).

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

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

(Calvin [1989]2001b:418)

Calvin further states that 'God will then cease to be the head of Christ, and Christ's own God-head will then shine forth of itself, whereas it is now in a manner veiled' (Calvin 2001:418). The purpose and use of Christ's Priestly office is that of 'a pure stainless Mediator. He is by His holiness to reconcile us to God'. God's righteousness prevents us from having direct access to him, says Calvin. He goes as far as portraying a grim picture of an angry judge, who is angry with us. Hence, Christ the Priest, knowing that a ransom ought to be sacrificed in order to appease the wrath of God, fills that office, says Calvin. But how we ask? Through his vicarious

sacrifice - his death is the answer. We ourselves become priests in Christ and have access to God in his sanctuary with our sacrifices, prayers and praises. So we can glean the following: That through Christ's priesthood, we

- Are reconciled to God;
- We have a ransom in Christ; and
- We have access to God as priests before him (Kerr 1989:75-77).

Calvin's view about Christ being our mediator is that even though the sinner's condition may have been without stain, he/she would still be unworthy and incapable of aspiring to the presence of God (Porter and Greengrass 1983:26).

One has to be constantly aware that Calvin sees Christ in his office and capacity as mediator as perpetually moving to and fro through nearly the whole biblical historical timeline up to the stage at the end where in Calvin's view Christ's mediatorship comes to an end. In the words of Calvin above, then Christ, having accomplished the office of Mediator, shall cease to be the vice-regent of the Father, and will be content with the glory which he possessed before the world was. In what follows in the next section the identity of Christ is discussed through enquiring about his salvific work and the offices and titles he held and acquired since all of these offices and titles have to do with his identity. This leads us to our next topic which deals with the offices of Christ.

6.4.2.2 Ellen White on the tension between divinity and humanity

Regarding his divine manifestation, White states that Christ bore testimony of his divinity in the way he died (White [1898]1948a:751). Yet there is a paradoxical statement that she makes regarding his divinity:

The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced his heart...so great was this agony that his physical pain was hardly felt.

(White [1898]1948a:753)

This appears to be a reversal of the permeation paradigm in which Christ divinity permeates his humanity in Lutheran approaches. The withdrawal of Christ's divinity from his humanity is a very good example of White's interactional substantialism in which she could take up a position

in her divine historical reflexive world from above as divinely enacted, from below as through Christ's humanity enacted and from the side as the perspective in which Christ as mediator to human beings is midway between heaven and earth.

One has to raise a question in view of White's description of the withdrawal of divinity while wondering as to which part of divinity White is referring? Is the divine withdrawal that of his Father who was with him from Eternity, or is the divine withdrawal that of his quiescent divinity, which he still had with his human nature? At times it may appear as though she refers to the divine withdrawal of the Father. The ambiguity comes through a statement she makes a few lines later, that '...God and his holy angels were beside the cross. The Father was with His Son. Yet His persona was not revealed.' The Son's agony as human is further explained in the following statement, 'In the thick darkness, God veiled the last human agony of His Son' (White 1948:754). White asserts that Christ in his dying moment after uttering the words 'It is Finished...', Christ's face shone with a glory as that of 'the sun' (White [1898]1948a:756). The element of White's christological operational active movement of interactional substantialism comes in these sentences strongly to the fore.

At this junction, it is fitting that we make a transition at this point to a perception of the complex and diversified person of Christ. We mentioned in our second problem setting that the notion of transformational trans-substantialism is mainly the everyday Roman Catholic sacramentalist position operating in Catholic rituals and religious practice in which Christ is experienced as a divine sacred and sacramentalised human being who simultaneous the pre-existent deity and Son of God. We should look at to what extent are there trans-substantialist fragments and snippets as well as of the con-substantialist position in which the humanity is permeated by the divinity to be found in Ellen White and John Calvin's approaches.

6.5 Titles, offices and dimensions of Christ's identity

6.5.1 Calvin's view of Christ's multidimensionality

The contextual traditional formula of many Reformers during Calvin's era of Christ's offices was that of a two-fold one of priest and king while Calvin went to great lengths to develop the *munus triplex* or the notion of the triple offices of Christ into a triple formula of priest-king and

prophet. However, Calvin cannot be attributed to be the first proponent of the triple offices in the era of the 16th century Reformation. One of the first reformers to suggest a three-fold office before Calvin is Osiander while Bucer in his *Enarrationes in Evangelica* in 1536 stated clearly the combination of the three offices of Christ:

Rex regum Christus est, summus sacerdos, et prophetarum caput.

(Bucer in Battles 1960:495)

It is probably more appropriate to say that the traditional formula owes its wide acclamation to Calvin's use of it in central parts of his writings on Christ's mediatorship and salvific meaning. Notwithstanding the theological criticism of Ritschl and Ernesti, Calvin's formula of triple offices found its way into the convictions of theologians such as Brunner, Schleiermacher, Gerhard, Bavinck, Neuman and transcended even into the ranks of Anglican, Lutheran and Catholic theology (Jansen 1956:16-36).

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

It should not be surprising that the 17th century Reformed Orthodoxy, through its embrace of the triple office had experienced an abundance of exegetical illuminations and the producing of an amazing number of biblical analogies that transcends the limited realms of a dynamic view of Christ's identity. Jansen said it well in his reference to 19th century liberal theology:

The Jesus of Ritschl and Harnack was clad in prophetic garments but was stripped of his Kingly and Priestly vestments.

(Jansen 1956:20).

Having said this, it is perhaps suitable to admit that even though the triplex of priest, king and prophet formula is a more wholesome form of Christ's work and person, it still does not fully describe the complete person of Christ. Many examples were drawn from the biblical historical timeline and set in correlation with people's sense making views of their local context and era to underscore the notion of the triplex office as a truly biblical view. Examples of such were that

human beings were created in three spheres – A *heart* that loves God, a *hand* that rules in his stead and a *mind* that knows him. When human beings sinned, they lost their triune dignity. Hence the Messiah condescended and became the *Second Adam* who ensured our Salvation and through his unfaltering *obedience* as priest-king and prophet the lost Edenic status of humankind was procured and restored. Not only did this triple doctrine seek to permeate the study of man's salvation, but it sought to explore the avenues of the Triune God. For it stated that Christ obtained the kingdom from his *Father* through the Holy Ghost. He functioned as prophet (Jansen 1956:17).

The contribution it has made in theological schools, churches, institutions and to the lives of many people in their experience of religious faith is that of laying a foundation for an open and increased list of the various facets of Christ's extensive multi-faceted identity springing forth from Scripture. This does not mean that there were no other perceptions of his identity based on Christ's work being propagated at the time but a better understanding of the nature of human beings and the work of Christ was achieved through the formula of the triple offices which was combined and fused from an array of reflexive attributes of from the whole biblical historical timeline as the exploration area from where titles, attributes and offices of Christ had been collected and gathered.

The name Christ, according to Calvin refers to those three offices, since priests, prophets and kings were anointed with holy oil. Furthermore, Calvin states that the Messianic name was attributed to the Mediator, who was named in his office of kingship. This person, says Calvin, was anointed for the purpose of witnessing and proclaiming God's grace in a way different from those in a similar office. Calvin gets a little involved and says that this anointing which he received to become a 'teacher' is not for his own interest, but for the entire body. When he would come he would put an end to all prophecies. For Calvin, Christ is mainly to be seen as God's inscripturated embodiment as prophet in Scripture. In regard to the meaning of the word 'prophecy', Calvin in his commentary of Romans 12:4-8 says, he prefers

...to follow those who understand the word in the wider sense to mean the peculiar gift of revelation by which a man performs the office of interpreter with skill and dexterity in expounding the will of God. In the Christian Church, therefore, prophecy at the present day is simply the right understanding of

Scripture, and the particular gift of expounding it, since all the ancient prophecies and all the oracles of God have been concluded in Christ and his Gospel.

(Calvin 1961:269)

With regard to his kingship, Calvin would have his readers understand that Christ's kingship is for our benefit. But this benefit is far superior to the benefits that can be enjoyed in the earthly life – for they are spiritual (Calvin [1989]2001b:429). According to Calvin the function of Christ is mainly to his office of kingship. This kingship, being of a spiritual dimension, has benefits for the individual believer:

- Through it we are raised to eternal life;
- We are enriched with salvation;
- We are conquerors against evil forces;
- We are taught endurance;
- We are inspired and triumphant; and
- We are fortified and loved; (Calvin [1989]2001b:427-431).

6.5.2 White's view of Christ multidimensional ministering

With regard to his earthly ministry, White portrays a Messiah who cared and ministered to the needs of humanity. She points out that it was for this reason that Christ came to live amongst humans – to reveal God's infinite love. She states that Christ described his earthly mission when he said,

The Lord hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised

(White [1893]1982:11)

By unwrapping, the aspects of White's passage, one could distinguish at least five dimensions of Christ's identity. Thus, he is:

- Christ the Preacher – 'The Lord...to preach...'
- Christ the Healer – '...to heal the broken-hearted...'

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

The question worth posing at this juncture is whether Christ’s identity blended with his work while he was on earth? According to White, Jesus fulfilled what he professed. He went about healing the sick and in fact some ‘whole villages’ were completely cleansed of diseases as Christ passed by them. He revealed mercy, love and compassion. His heart was full of the greatest mercy and even children were attracted to him. His work, White says, was evidence ‘of His divine anointing’ (White [1893]1982:11).

How did Christ describe his own identity? What kind of man was he? According to White, people of all ranks were attracted to him. He spoke in love and spoke truthfully. He never spoke carelessly and never ever was he rude. When he would speak out against hypocrisy and sin, there were tears in his voice. Even those who rejected him were regarded with tender pity. His entire life was one of caring for others. He exercised self-denial. Everyone was special to him. He saw every soul as his mission to save. According to White, all streams of love and compassion streamed from the Father’s heart and were manifested in Jesus Christ and were ultimately passed on to the Sons and Daughters of Adam and Eve. It was for our sakes that Christ became a sorrower (White [1898]1948a:12-13).

To White, the eternal Christ is the thought of God made audible (White 1948:20). To various offices which describe his identity another office could be added and that is of Teacher or Prophet. Writing about Christ’s ministry White writes:

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

(White [1898]1948a:20)

This is the picture of his work, even before he came to earth to be born of mankind. Christ was the only being that could enter into all the counsels of God. It was through Christ that God

created all the heavenly beings (White [1888]1990a:494). It is clear from the above that Christ's work, even before sin entered heaven, was that of Mediator and Heaven's commander and the 'Sovereign of heaven, one in power and authority with the Father' (White [1888]1990a:495). For this study it is important to notice the title names of Christ that we find in White's writings. In many passages of White, it is clear that Christ is presented as medium of God's act of creation and which results in various parts of White's writings in the identifications of Christ as Mediator and King and Teacher and Prophet.

White repeatedly makes mention that Christ came to manifest the glory of God to this world. He brought his glorious light to this dark sinful world. His dwelling with humankind was intended to reveal God to both angels and men. Jesus veiled himself with the garb of humanity in order that he may bring light to a dark world. His attempt to tabernacle with humankind, according to White, varied from the burning bush which had been chosen by the deity as a representation to the cloudy pillar by day and a pillar of light by night in which God, in his humble way, could communicate his will to human beings. Hence, through a humble human form Christ came to dwell with humankind in order to teach us about his divine character (White 1948:23).

Furthermore, the great contribution that Ellen G. White has made to the entire group of mainline churches is one of her fundamental operational doctrines in which Christ is dynamically being portrayed as a perpetual intercessor:

In the service of the Jewish priesthood we are continually reminded of the sacrifice and intercession of Christ. All who come to Christ today are to remember that His merit is the incense that mingles with the prayers of those who repent of their sins and receive pardon and mercy and grace. Our need of Christ's intercession is constant.

(White [1953]1985:482-483)

White's view with regard to the heavenly courts and the judicial procedure is that unlike most of the earthly courts, the advocate and judge of the human race is the same as the one who represents heaven on behalf of the triune God. Another interesting view that is presented to us by White is that there is no "*appeals court*" in heaven. Should the human soul be found guilty and sentenced to eternal damnation that soul cannot appeal to the Father or the Holy Spirit because all judgement-setting and final decision-making rests with the *Son of man*. The decision

is final. The reason why God has committed all judgement and the entire judicial process in heaven is based on the undergirding premise that Christ is both human and divine and that heaven and earth are connected in Christ. Hence no better being in the universe is more suited than the *Son of man*. In this are again presented with the underlying synthesis of our topic of this thesis that Christ is centrally and actively positioned in the midst of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. Christ is not only centrally engaged in God's act of creation of human beings and the natural cosmic world but Christ is central to the entire alphabet of the *science of salvation* in which Christ is both mediator and judge. In the following passage White explains why Christ is both mediator and judge:

By personal experience Christ is acquainted with the warfare which, since Adam's fall, has been constantly going on. How appropriate, then, for Him to be the judge. *To Jesus, the Son of man, is committed all judgment. There is one mediator between God and men. Only by Him can we enter the kingdom of heaven.* He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. *From His decision there is no appeal.* He is the Rock of ages, a rock rent on purpose that every tried, tempted soul may find a sure hiding place.... "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." "He hath given him authority to execute judgment also because he is the Son of man." *In His superadded humanity consist the reason of Christ's appointment. God has committed all judgment unto the Son, for without controversy He is God manifest in the flesh.* God designed that the Prince of sufferes in humanity should be judge of the whole world. He who came from the heavenly courts to save man from eternal death; He whom men despised, rejected, and upon whom they heaped all the contempt of which human beings, inspired by Satan, are capable; He who submitted to be arraigned before an earthly tribunal, and who suffered the ignominious death of the cross,— He alone is to pronounce the sentence of reward or of punishment. He who submitted to the suffering and humiliation of the cross here, in the counsel of God is to have the fullest compensation, and ascend the throne acknowledged by all the heavenly universe as the King of saints. He has undertaken the work of salvation, and shown before unfallen worlds and the heavenly family that the work He has begun He is able to complete....In that day of final punishment and reward, both saints and sinners will recognize in Him who was crucified the Judge of all living.

(White [1953]1985:483)

To the offices which describe his interactional identity, White adds yet another office and that is of Teacher or Prophet. As a teacher he would teach God's people the deep things of God and as a prophet he would mediate between divinity and humanity in predicting the future. Hence

through a humble human form Christ came to dwell with humanity in order to teach us about his divine character (White [1898]1948a:23).

In many instances White writes of the substitutionary work of Christ. White believed that Christ's dual natures qualify him to be our substitute and surety. His possession of all the divine attributes and his perfect humanity guaranteed him as our surety and substitute. The substitution and surety that White refers to is a direct and explicit reference to Christ's vicarious death. Jesus made 'a voluntary sacrifice' when he gave back the sceptre into the Father's hand, and chose to condescend lower than the angelic host and lower than the royalties of humanity and allowing himself to suffer a substitutionary vicarious death (White [1898]1948a:22-23).

When Christ took on a human form, Christ identified himself mediatorially with the title of Priest. White writes about Christ as the Priest who is himself the victim:

...so Christ took the form of a servant, and offered sacrifice, Himself a Priest, Himself the victim. He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities...'

(White [1898]1948a: 25).

In another passage she refers to Christ as the offer and the offering:

Christ is bearing a double position of offer and offering...

(White [1953]1985:463)

White's approach to Christ as Priest bearing the dual entitlement of being the offered victim for all and the Priest executing the priestly function is that Christ is right now our intercessor in the heavenly Sanctuary. At the same time Christ through his sacrifice and work of mediation, are both builder and the foundation of the church. Speaking in a wonderfully mixed metaphor of a heavenly Priest on a throne, she writes:

He shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne: As a Priest, Christ is now set down with the Father in His throne.

(White [1888]1990a:41).

White's mixed metaphor of a heavenly Priest on a throne is an inter-linkage with many of the titles that Christ carries. By centrally positioning Christ as the perpetual prophetic Priest as mediating intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary White inter-links his prophetic Priesthood as mediator with him being heavenly Commander.

6.6 The Second coming of Christ

6.6.1 Calvin's Scriptural exclusivity of prophecy on the Second Coming

Calvin in operating very closely within the biblical historical timeline as expressed within the Judaeo-Christian Bible he was strictly against revelations or prophecies that come to the fore outside in the historicity of world history outside the Bible. What the Bible is proclaiming about the Second coming of Christ that it is certain that he will come again and that we do not know when is sufficient for Calvin's view.

6.6.2 White's historicalness of prophecy regarding the Second Coming

Brand and McMahon (2005:29-33) in their book *The Prophet and Her Critics* deal with some allegations that were made against Ellen White's prophecies. On page 29 the book mentions an allegation that was made by Jonathan Butler in 1979, which accuses White of having 'derived her understanding of end-time events' based on the environment that she found herself in and hence that she assumed that the end time was near. The manner in which Butler went about was, to collect all the information he could relating to the political and religious mood of her lifetime and he realised that many were similar to what she had described. He mentioned that White had predicted that spiritualism would be on the rise and that it would be of enormous value in the end time, when actually spiritualism was on the increase by the time she wrote. Hence, concluded Butler that White had actually been predicting the end time of '...her world.' Purportedly, Butler had argued that the events that White had predicted such as for an example the Sunday laws that would be legislated and the increase of spiritualism did not gain momentum but rather went on a decline. Butler alleges, 'What Seventh-day Adventists must fully acknowledge here...is the element of *prophetic disconfirmation*.' By this meant Butler that White's prophecy was a failed prophecy.

While I am of the same persuasion as Brand and McMahon arguing in response to Butler that those events foretold by Ellen White will be repeated prior to Christ's second coming, I am of the opinion that Butler has fallen short of being able to see that even if those events were not repeated prior to Christ's Second Coming, White's prophecy would not have been a failed prophecy. We should not be content to merely say with a repetition of events - that is prior to Christ's second coming - there will be an increase in spiritualism and Sunday laws will be legislated etc. Instead we should allow our minds to stretch to the point of realising that even if those events are not repeated prior to Christ's second coming, White would still not have been wrong in her prediction of what she saw just prior to her death, will be in perfect harmony with her prediction and Christ's second coming since the only events that she predicted to happen prior to the second advent actually transpired before her death. The next moment for her realization, is Christ's second coming. The reason why it is possible that those events might not be repeated is due to the fact that all of God's promises and threatening are conditional:

The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. [SEE ROMANS 13:11, 12; 1 CORINTHIANS 7:29; 1 THESSALONIANS 4:15, 17; HEBREWS 10:25; JAMES 5:8, 9; 1 PETER 4:7; REVELATION 22:6, 7.] Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the Word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional. [SEE JEREMIAH 18:7-10; JONAH 3:4-10.]...We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel, but for Christ's sake His people should not add sin to sin by charging God with the consequence of their own wrong course of action.

(White 1992:39)

Apostles of the early church predicted the end time to be eminent and that Christ would come during their life time. Shall we say that the prophecies of the other apostles as quoted above were false prophets since they prophesied the imminent return of Christ in their day and almost 2000 years have lapsed and Christ has not come?

And of His people He said, 'Behold, . . . I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.' Zechariah 8:3, 7, 8....These promises were conditional on obedience. The sins that had characterized the Israelites prior to the captivity, were not to be repeated. 'Execute true judgment,' the Lord exhorted those who were engaged in rebuilding; 'and show mercy and compassions every man to his

brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother.' 'Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates.' Zechariah 7:9, 10; 8:16.

(White [1917] 1943:704)

Ellen White in her time was aware of the fact that there were those who had felt that due to the fact that Jesus did not come that there must have been a failed prophecy. Hence she wrote:

The angels of God in their messages to men represent time as very short. Thus it has always been presented to me. It is true that time has continued longer than we expected in the early days of this message. Our Saviour did not appear as soon as we hoped. But has the word of the Lord failed? Never! It should be remembered that the promises and threatenings of God are alike conditional...God had committed to His people a work to be accomplished on earth. The third angel's message was to be given, the minds of believers were to be directed to the heavenly sanctuary, where Christ had entered to make atonement for His people. The Sabbath reform was to be carried forward. The breach in the law of God must be made up. The message must be proclaimed with a loud voice, that all the inhabitants of earth might receive the warning. The people of God must purify their souls through obedience to the truth, and be prepared to stand without fault before Him at His coming.

(White 1958b:67)

The point that emerges here is that of the difference in time between a person that dies during the time of the apostle Paul and a person that dies now? When Christ will come and raise the dead how much different in time will there be for the two parties to the coming of Jesus? When a person dies time stops. That person is not conscience of the different events that takes place and is not cognizant of the passing on of time. So when both persons awake, the presence of Christ will be sudden since they will both only recall their existence from the last moment before their death. What may be a seeming delay to those alive, even if 1'000 years transpired, is eminent for those dead, since time is non-existent for them. The scriptures tell us that the dead have no knowledge or an awareness of the transpiring events on earth (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6).

The point we intend to make here is that Butler's conclusion to accuse White of a failed prophecy may indeed be premature since Christ's Second Coming has not taken place.

However there is the other possibility which though is not the belief of the current writer, should be considered: that is, to use Butler's argument that White was merely predicting the end time of her own world, does not in itself constitute a failed prophecy in that what transpired happened prior to the end of her life time. Christ's coming therefore culminates those events. For White Christ's coming was eminent in that she does not see or experience the passing of time while she lies unconscious in her grave. So when she predicted that Christ is coming, yes he [Butler] is correct if he is saying that Christ came for her in her time if he views that with regard to her death in 1915. Jesus will come for her in her time in that when she is resurrected she will begin to recall the moments of her time before she died.

We have already earlier on mentioned how Paul had his prediction of Christ's second coming to be later than the other apostles. For, said Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4:

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

(KJV 1976:1022)

The Classic Bible Commentary, edited by Owen Collins, (1999:1391) says that the words *is at hand*, means: 'is immediately imminent,' but literally, 'is present'; 'instantly coming.' Adds Collins,

...it is not likely that Paul would imply anything contrary here; what he denies is that it is so immediately imminent, instant, or present, as to justify the neglect of everyday worldly duties.

(Collins 1999:1391)

White in her time experienced the same situation as that understood from the Scriptural interpretation of *The Classic Bible Commentary*.

Knight in his *If I Were The Devil*, (2007:252-253), says that ‘Post-Adventists’ were having a mixed understanding about the second advent of Christ. One group emphasised an immediate coming, the other stressed occupying in transit despite the fact that they all anticipated a now long delayed day of Christ’s second coming.

Knight further said that those who held to the former view of immediacy of the Second Advent clung to the sermonising while most engaged themselves in some form of meaningful work to sustain their family lives. The latter group shunned and organized contracts and formal organizational agreements since they deemed such obligations to have implications of some sort of lack of faith in the eminent return of Christ and would therefore also contribute in Christ’s delayed advent. Within the rank of those who held to their immediacy of the Second Advent came the allurements of continued date setting. From this rank were Josiah Litch and William Miller who anticipated Christ’s return to be prior ‘to the end of the Jewish year 1844’ which is spring 1845. Others such as Joseph Marsh and H.H. Gross predicted Christ’s day to be 1847. Early Sabbatarian Adventist such as Joseph Bates also set dates. Seven years after the 1844 Disappointment in October 1851, said Bates, Christ would come.

Ellen White on the other hand was at odds with Bates and the other two founders of the Sabbatarian Adventist movement. Hence on the 21st of July 1851 a letter of importance from Ellen White was included in the *Review and Herald*:

Dear Brethren...the Lord has shown me that the message of the third angel must go, and be proclaimed to the scattered children of the Lord, and that it should not be hung on time; for time never will be a test again. I saw that the third angel’s message was stronger than time can be. I saw that this message can stand on its own foundation, and that it needs not time to strengthen it, and that it will go in mighty power, and do its work, and will be cut short in righteousness.

(RH July 21, 1851)

What is important in this juncture is to understand that Ellen White was [as, George Knight correctly assessed],

- 1) opposed to setting a date to Christ’s Second Advent because it created ‘false excitement’;
- 2) Sabbatarians were to realize that their core message is the third angel’s message of Revelation 14:9-12 and that that message was stronger than

time can be. That message would be coupled with another message for his Remnant Church—Rev. 14:14-20 which for the third angel's message is embedded in verses 9-12. And also

- 3) importance of occupation in daily chores over 'eschatological excitement.'

(Knight 2007:251-255)

The argumentation immediately above should suffice to help us understand that while White heralded the eminence of Christ's second coming, she understood it not to take place so soon that neglect over present, daily responsibilities would be shunned. She understood, like the apostle Paul that the Second Advent would take place after certain events first, having taken place. Hence we see again that Ellen White avoided speculating into date settings and time with regard to Christ's Second Advent. Instead, White worked with the unique principle of the divine historicity expressed in the historical biblical timeline from which she in the mirroring of Christ's words interpreted the words as presenting a clue and a hint regarding more or less signs that will transpire before his Second Advent. She warned against date setting, but rather underscore what is said, 'Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled....But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only' Matthew 24:34;36 (KJV 1976:845).

6.7 Summary of interactional substantialism

Both White and Calvin are faced with a dilemma and a challenge. At times their inadequate explication does not satisfy the tremendous mystery of Christ's dual natures. Commenting on the account of Luke 19:41-44 for instance, White engages the contrasting activities of the two natures of Christ. She says that while Christ was sitting on the colt and making a triumphant entry into Jerusalem, he had intended to show that he was the Lamb of God, Israel's Messiah and King. The contrasts of Christ's two natures are seen in that as a man Christ is depicted as one weeping! As the divine God he foresees the dark impending doom that awaits Israel as a result of her rejecting her King (Who is Jesus). As a divine being, Christ foresees the impending doom that is to fall upon the undiscerning nation of Israel, who failed to recognize the presence of God through the man Jesus Christ.

Commenting on the same text, Calvin says that Christ's divinity was *resting* [my italics]. Calvin is giving opportunity for his humanness to be expressed. This manner of linguistic use is figurative, I believe. Calvin's style in saying, that divinity rested, is that which we read elsewhere in the Bible, which is intended by the narrators to express the inexplicable divine conceptualization experiences, of something relative to the human experience. For example, the Bible says that God rested on the Sabbath day, after creating the world in six days, the animals, the fountains, and all that is in the world and humankind. We are not to interpret the word rest here as though divinity gets tired. The Hebrew word rest in Exodus 20:11 is: (nû wach). It could be translated literally and figuratively as to stay, to let fall, to dwell, let alone, withdraw, to cease, to be quiet, etc. (Hebrew, Interlinear Bible Exodus 19: 20 (5117)).

It could sound almost contradictory to think that a loving, caring God was actually resting in the natural sense of the word rest, while the human nature of Christ was suffering emotional pain and grief. However, when we interpret this word to mean that divinity allowed this grief to be expressed through the humanity of Jesus, then it is slightly of different effect for our reciprocity. The writer believes that Calvin, by his use of the word, *rest*, meant to imply that divinity did not reveal itself in a way that it occasionally did. Even if divinity would have manifested itself, it could always do so in a manner that would express the emotions that are relative to human emotions. Ellen White seeks to express these divine emotions through her picturesque language that seeks to portray what the divine nature of Christ must have been experiencing. In so doing, White relates:

Jesus gazes upon the scene, and the vast multitude hush their shouts, spellbound by the sudden vision of beauty. All eyes turn upon the Saviour, expecting to see in his countenance the admiration they themselves feel. But instead of this they behold a cloud of sorrow. They are surprised and disappointed to see his eyes fill with tears, and his body rock to and fro like a tree before the tempest, while a wail of anguish bursts from his quivering lips, as if from the depths of a broken heart. What a sight was this for angels to behold: their loved Commander in an agony of tears! What a sight was this for the glad throng that with shouts of triumph and the waving of palm branches were escorting him to the glorious city, where they fondly hoped he was about to reign! Jesus had wept at the grave of Lazarus, but it was in a godlike grief in sympathy with human woe. But this sudden sorrow was like a note of wailing in a grand triumphal chorus In the midst of a scene of rejoicing, where all were paying Him homage, Israel's King was in tears...

(White 1940:575-576)

My conviction and opinion is that this moving, dramatic and graphic employ of the most vivid figurative language used by White to describe the events that ultimately led to the death of Christ on the cross of Golgotha was intended to express the mood and the intense indescribable activity of the divine realm. White, like the early writers of the gospels describes the violent catastrophe that took place at the scene of Golgotha, to evoke the emotions that the divinity must have been experiencing. While relating to the events that took place at the cross, Calvin says that the divine nature of Christ was *quiescent*. Commenting on the same events, White says that the Father was with his Son at the cross. She also adds that divinity hid itself in a dark cloud. Certainly, this kind of language should not be taken literally, since God does not need to hide himself in a cloud. This is the same way in which Bible writers have described God's emotions, actions and interactions, to certain events of importance. For White to say that God was at the cross with his Son, means more than we read at face value. What it means to the writer is that God manifested himself in a certain way which expresses the grief, pain, shame and excruciating anguish and trying moment for divinity that is beyond human imagination. While the scriptures reach us that nothing is impossible with God, and that nothing is too hard for God, we are not to take flight with the winds of drastically expurgating the spurious notion of God that is detached from the physical world and is devoid of emotion, pity, love and anger. It does not make sense when we try to understand what White and Calvin are saying if we take their sayings here, literally. God does not need to come down to the cross to be with his Son, since God was always with his Son and knowing that he is always omnipresent. he does not need to hide himself in a cloud since he is invisible to the human eye. The same is true with the notion of God having turned his back on his Son. God does not need to turn around in order to get around. Christ's divinity does not need to rest since divinity does not require rest at any point and bearing in mind that God is not idle. Therefore, Calvin's and White's words should not always be literally interpreted, but they should be interpreted in context in order to understand their intended meaning. I think it is fair to say that White and Calvin are saying that this is how far as possible, inspiration and revelation have allowed them to understand Christ's divinity and humanity to be at that time. What should suffice us, is that both Ellen White and John Calvin, have employed language that they best knew in order to attempt to explicate to mortals that which is eminently, enormously beyond the

facets and realms of human fathoming. However, it is equally a truce to acknowledge that divinity in its infinite distance and vastness, which supersedes humanity's ability to conceptualize its true nature, there is still evidence beyond doubt that human logic is able to comprehend in relative terms, the emotions and activities of God that he allows us to know.

If we are to envisage the premise of a literal interpretation and understanding of the Father as having turned his back on the sight of his Son, whose visage had been one of a heap of all the sins of the world, then we could also allow ourselves to perceive a transitory moratorium of the Trinitarian partnership of which Christ continued to be a sharer thereof while he was on earth since his inception at the incarnation. What I seek to deduce here is that there is never a time that the functional operations of the 'triune' God could ever be separated in the real sense. Divinity has deemed it fit that we would understand, know, participate and experience God through Jesus Christ.

This linguist picturesque is the human instrument's utmost attempt to convey to mortals the immense intensity and inter-actions within the realm of divinity. Regarding her vision, White purports to have been privileged to be captivated in vision. She relates how she saw in that vision, Christ, before he came to earth as a man, pleading with his Father, that he may become the ransom for fallen humanity. Describing in graphic terms, White sites:

...Three times He [Christ] was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father, His person could be seen. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity....said the angel, "Think ye that the Father yielded up His dearly beloved Son without a struggle?" No, no. It was even a struggle with the God of heaven, whether to let guilty man perish, or to give His beloved Son to die for him.

(White [1882]1945a:149-151)

Looking at this scene and interpreting the words employed by White, could afford that there was hesitation, doubt and reluctance from the Father before allowing his Son to be a bearer of sinful humanity's lot. However, bearing in mind that the plan of salvation was devised by the triune God in the midst of eternity's past, before the foundations of the world, makes it most unlikely that there could be a shock or doubt and hesitation on the part of God, in implementing what had remained a mystery and a secret which was hid and kept in silence by God (Romans 16:25).

Nevertheless, this personification of God as depicted by White, I believe is an inference on the ignominy and complexity on the part of divinity. What inspiration intended for us through these writings is that, mankind should behold and reciprocate the immeasurable gift of God, which gift in the truest essence was the giving of God himself to estranged humanity. The language employed, is intended to communicate the incomprehensible, matchless and priceless gift of God to his erring wayward children. Hence interpretation is again essential when we read Ellen White.

Having said this, I do not mean to suggest that White's account of what she declares to have seen is not a literal one. Instead, I uphold that the literal account must be interpreted in as much as the Bible narrations ought to be interpreted, since spiritual things ought to be spiritually discerned, and secondly, we are encouraged by Saint Paul to study the scriptures: 'Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth' (2Timothy 2:15, KJV 1976:1029).

6.8 Monolithic mono and dual substantialist views

6.8.1 First millennium mono- and dual-substantialist views

The history of the well known deviations and so called heresies of the first millennium is cursorily dealt with in order to get to a better understanding of mono- and dual-substantialist views of the first millennium. These views could at the same time function as background to modern liberal mono-substantialist and modern interactional-substantialist views such as those of Ellen White and John Calvin.

6.81.1 Arianism

First we shall look at the doctrine of Arius. **Arianism** arose as a heresy from Alexandria, which was condemned at the first General Council of Nicea in 325. According to Arius God was the Only One, besides whom there is not other and is pure simplicity and spirituality. God as the Only One, created of his free will before the world existed, an independent substance – the Son of God - as the instrument by means of which all other creatures were to be created. The Son is not a creature like other creatures but is a special creature who in the process of God's bestowal

of grace and by his own gradual moral progress he has become God so that we now call him “only begotten God”, “strong God” and so on (Harnack, Vol.4, 1961:15-19). This means in the follow-up process of the incarnation and the human side of the Son of God that the Arians could not accept the notion of immediate incarnation in which the divinity and the humanity were fused into one with the emphasis on the divine side. Thus God does not become man but they rather opted for the position in which the Son of God, Christ, the Logos – with no human soul - being capable of suffering, not an absolute perfect being, but one who by truly taking on and adopting a human body by effort attains absolute perfection. Christ is thus not an absolute perfect being, but through the process of progress in the adopted state of the human body and by being attached to human feelings attains by effort absolute perfection (Harnack, Vol. 4, 1961:19). The Arians with their view of *homoiousios* – Christ is like God – lost out to the Athanasians which fully drew the strongest conclusions from the notion of *homoousios* which was – Christ is God (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:49).

6.8.1.2 Pneumatomachianism

The Pneumatomachians were Semi-Arians who purposely developed the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the fourth century in opposition to the notion of *homoousia* – Christ is God (Harnack 1961:114). Macedonius (d.354) the highly esteemed leader of the Thracian semi-Arians, at a later stage the deposed bishop of Constantinople, defended the doctrine that the Spirit is a creature similar to the angels, a being subordinate to the Father and the Son and in their service. To Macedonius the Holy Scripture does not describe the Holy Spirit as an object of adoration and pointed out the relation of Father and Son did not admit of a third partner. (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:114). He was condemned by the second General Council of Constantinople in 381. The Pneumatomachianism claimed to acknowledge the divinity of Christ and yet they denied the deity of the Holy Ghost. What is at stake here is that while the *homoiousians* usually operating with the view that ‘Christ is like God’ became more *homoousians* thus ‘Christ is God’ they shifted their *homoiousian* view to the Holy Spirit, thus the Holy Spirit is a creature, similarly to the angels, is like God but is not God self but a divine energy. The Pneumatomachians or semi-Arians while starting to acknowledge that in the incarnation the Son is equal to the Father, they still deny the Holy Spirit as God’s energy in this world its full divinity.

6.8.1.3 Apollonarianism

The Council of Constantinople (381) dealt with the heresy of Apollonarianism which derived its name from the churchman and theologian Apollinaris. At first Apollinaris was held in high regard by his contemporaries. According to Harnack:

Epiphanius treated Apollinaris in a friendly fashion, Athanasius corresponded with him, the Cappadocians at first revered him and always held him in high respect, while the Arian theologians extolled him as their ablest opponent.

(Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:49)

Apollinaris (d.392) who was the bishop of Laodicea at first in combating Arianism with its changeable Christ started by allowing that the assumption that in Christ, God as Logos who is equal to Christ in substance, united himself with a physically perfect man out of necessity led to the idea of two Sons of God, one natural and one adopted.. Thus, according to Apollinaris two knowing and two willing beings could not possibly be united in one being. According to Harnack there are three theses which Apollinaris everywhere attacks and from which one can easily understand what his own theology was.

He wishes to disown (1) the view that there are two sons, (2) the idea that Christ was an *ἄνθρωπος ἐνθεος* (human being in God – PPJ), the view he attributed to Marcellus, since heathens and Jews could also believe in a Christ of this kind, (3) the view that Christ as a free and therefore a changeable being.

(Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:151)

In accordance with these theses he directed his attacks firstly, against the Gnostic tendency amongst various contemporaries in which a strong division is made between Christ and Jesus, secondly, against Paul of Samosata, Marcellus and Photinus and thirdly, against Origen and Arius. Apollinaris' approach boils down to the following. Christ was not merely an inspired man but must have assumed our nature in such a way that he made it the perfect organ of his Godhead. As it was with many of his contemporaries and predecessors the prototypical biblical statement of 'the Word (logos) became flesh (sarx)' was understood in terms of his sense making approach. We have seen that the statement meant within Arius' views that the Word or Logos adopted or assumed a human being while in many of the other incarnational views doing the

rounds the Word or Logos had a predisposed inclination in pre-existence to become flesh. In Apollinaris' view the statement that the Word became flesh meant that Christ was found as a man (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:152). Apollinaris works on the basis that Christ appeared both in the likeness of sinful flesh and in the likeness of men. On the one hand, in him there was the most perfect unity of the human and the divine so that what could be said about the humanity holds true for the divinity and vice versa, for instance that God was born and dies, and so on. On the other hand, the Godhead in Apollinaris' view is not to be thought of as capable of suffering. The flesh, the human nature is divine. Apollinaris states:

The flesh therefore is divine, because it is united with God, and it indeed saves.

(In Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:153)

The Logos, the Word certainly did not bring his flesh with him from heaven, but he is nevertheless the 'heavenly man' because it was intended that in the essence of the Logos the mediator between God and humanity thus in the historical incarnation everything in this heavenly man should be divine. Death could be overcome only if it was God who suffered and died. The human side is purely the passive element only, the organ of the Godhead and the object of reconciliation and redemption. (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:154).

6.8.1.4 Nestorianism

In the Nestorian controversy, happening around (428-433AD), the view of incarnation comprises the necessity to maintain that God as Logos assumed a perfect man from the race of David and united such a man with himself. God as Logos was dwelling in the man Jesus from the time of the conception. This indwelling is made sense of in a similar way as the general indwelling of God in human beings. The central notion of the Nestorians amounts to dwelling in or indwelling which is not a substantial indwelling which would mean a transmutation of the humanity of Christ or on the other hand a limiting of the Godhead (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:167).. Nor is it any mere indwelling of inspiration. It is a gracious indwelling in which God out of grace and in accordance with his own good pleasure has united himself with the man Jesus in the way in which he unites himself with every pious soul. The only difference is that in the case of Jesus the union was besides being perfect was also in virtue of the gradual moral growth to perfection through his piety. The indwelling is to be seen as a kind of combination (συνάθειά) or it may be

expressed in the following mixed metaphorical way: God dwells in the man as in a temple (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:167). Nestorius (d.451) rejected the notion that Mary was the Theotokos (i.e. God-bearer). By so doing he implied that the person of the Son and the person of Christ were two diverse persons, who were unified by a nominal kind of relationship.

Nestorianism which was condemned at the third Council at Ephesus, in 431, arose out of Constantinople. It was more specifically condemned at the fifth General Council at Constantinople in 533. The union between the divinity and the humanity of Christ was relative and since each nature in Christ is at the same time person, it was here that the peculiar difficulty arises. The union was in the last resort only nominal and they had two persons in Christ, a divine and a human one (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:168). Nestorianism had been regarded as a heresy because its indwelling view of incarnation brought about a very loose connection between the divinity and humanity of Christ.

6.8.1.5 Monophysitism

The pendulum at the time moved from the Nestorian dualistic view of Christ to a mono-substantialist controversy which called Monophysitism and Eutychianism and happened around 448-451AD. Differences between the mono-substantialists at the time were minimal though they saw a difference between formulae such as ‘one incarnate nature of the Logos’ and ‘one nature of the incarnate Logos’(Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:236). The mono-substantialists taught that Jesus’ humanity was absorbed into his divinity so that his humanity no longer existed as created humanity. Though the champion of monophysitism Severus defended himself against the supposition that he teaches that the human nature of Christ loses its natural peculiarity in the union with the divinity and was thus transformed into something eternal, the total sense making approach boils down to Christ humanity as being transformed into something eternal (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:239-241). According to Harnack,

Here already we meet with the thought that something created can nevertheless be something eternal. We hear no more of a flesh which was brought hither from heaven, but a kindred idea takes the place of this heretical thought.

(Vol 4,1961:240)

This brand of mono-substantialism emerged out of Constantinople and received its condemnation by the fourth General Council in 451 at Chalcedon.

6.8.1.6 Monothelitism

The Monothelitist controversy – round 630-680AD – emerged, on the one hand, between proponents who advocated the doctrine of the one will in reference to Jesus Christ in the sense that his human nature was wholly filled with the divine will or his divinity (God-Logos) was regarded as the subject of the God-Man Jesus Christ. And the other hand, a viewpoint put forward in a doctrinal letter by Pope Leo that each nature does what is peculiar to it in union with the other. Such a formulation was new to the Eastern part of the church and the various mono-substantialist proponents in the East moved in the direction that Christ has two energies and two wills (Harnack, Vol 4, 1961:252-253). The orthodox position that was taught was that Jesus Christ had one will, but two natures. The Orthodox position is contrary to this position since it teaches that Jesus possessed two natures and two wills, the human and divine wills. Monothelitism is a product that developed from Monophysite position through the Christological debates. During the seventh century, Monothelitism enjoyed a great deal of support before it was aborted as a heretical doctrine. The Chalcedon Christological definition of 451AD spelled out that Christ Jesus was a composite of two natures in one person without referring to the notion of energies and wills. Chalcedon was in clear opposition to the extreme Monophysite position which taught that Jesus was one person consisting of one nature and the Monothelitic position which advocated the idea that in Jesus one divine energy and one divine will operated. In the whole era during which the controversy stretched accusations were made that from today's perspective are no longer valid. For instance Nestorius was accused of teaching the doctrine of two wills while a reading of the work *Ektthesis pistews* of Heraclius of 638 clearly shows that it was not the case. Heraclius 633 through the Patriarch of Constantinople by the name of Sergius I (610-638), suggested a compromise that everything operated in Christ existing out two natures through an energy that is a God-man driven activity or operation (*mia Theandrike energeia*). The monophysites were willing to concede that Jesus was a composite of two natures with one will and the monothelitians agreed that Jesus had one will proviso that the monophysites agree that Jesus had two natures. Monotheliticism. After Heraclius had published his works, Pope

Honorius made a dogma in an effort to forbid any mention of one or two energies, one or two wills. He proposed Christ had in himself, only a single will (Walker 1985:182).

6.8.2 Modern liberal monolithic substantialism

6.8.2.1 Introduction

In this section a general description is presented of the broad sense making approach of the modern era in which the two nature approach towards Christ has been turned around and transformed into a monolithic substantialist approach that only encapsulates the humanity of Jesus and fixes their reflexive schemes only on his true humanity. Any talk of his divinity is fitted into the human being Jesus' experience of God. The question one has to ask in this regard is how liberal humanists could conceptualize Jesus Christ to be a human being that is mortal enabled with extra-ordinary skills and the capacity to move a populace to live a better life?

6.8.2.2 Some trajectories of monolithic substantialism

What we really seek to examine here is the modern liberal humanist concept of how and where Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection fit into the grand acts of God's creation, God's reconciliation circumscribed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's renewal through Pentecost and God's consummation and fulfilment of all things culminating in the new heaven and the new earth. There is a vast difference between the sense making worlds of Calvin and White who operated with the notion of the Bible in which the biblical historical timeline from Genesis to Revelation expresses God's revelational history with human beings and the natural cosmic world as set within the ambit of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment and the liberal human-centred view of the Bible in which the composition of oral traditions and eyewitness experience into writing of people's experience of are viewed as part of the experience of human beings of God, themselves, other human beings and the natural cosmic world as a composition of oral and written texts. Thus to Calvin and White the whole Bible is a depiction of divine revelational history while in the liberal humanist sense making approach the whole Bible is a collection of books which expresses various and diverse experiences of people regarding God, themselves, other human beings and the natural cosmic world.

In the liberal humanist approach some parts of the Bible refer to actual history and other parts to a mythical depiction of certain events. In this regard they are accused of not necessarily believing in the actual realness and accuracy of the biblical record while opponents admit they view certain elements of the biblical history from a perspective of realness and actuality. Largely they view the events around Christ's crucifixion and his associates as real characters of the Bible that are believed to have existed in certain earthly locations.

The main question is however how does such a type of liberal humanist sense making God-human-nature approach operate in the downgrading of the Bible to a collection of books only depicting the experience of human beings about God, themselves, other human beings and the natural cosmic world. The question that is of importance here is how does a downgraded Jesus Christ as an exclusively but unique and extraordinary human being look like. Any talk of his divinity is relegated to the level of the unique and particular presence of God in this human being's life and experience.

Two main trajectories in the current world are to a large extent expressive of the liberal humanistic view of the identity of Christ. The first trajectory is that of Gnostic and Mystic views of Jesus. The second trajectory is the multiple science-fiction renditions of Jesus which are contributions to the liberal humanistic ideology of the conception of Jesus' identity as that of a mere mortal that is constructed by the efforts scientific humanism.

In both these trajectories Jesus is viewed as being an enlightened mere mortal human being with extraordinary spiritual powers and both these trajectories in their modern versions have been influenced by the older humanist tradition going back to the era of ancient Greece and the humanist views in the early Roman Empire which influenced humanism of the Renaissance (1350-1550) and the Reformation of the 16th century. The humanist approaches about Jesus in the Reformation influenced the humanist approaches of the 18th century Enlightenment and the hundreds of 19th century studies in which the life of Jesus was investigated from the standpoint of liberal human consciousness. The Jesus been found and constructed in the investigation was a replica of the consciousness of the investigator. With these historical periods as background we only refer to modern gnostic and mystic approaches to Jesus and the modern science fiction approach to Jesus.

6.8.2.3 Christ's monolithic nature

In this section we are mainly referring to two mono-substantialist views of our modern era. The one is the modern gnostic and mystic approach and the other is the science-fiction approach of people like Dan Brown. It is interesting that the modern humanist approaches are contra-views to the traditional historical monotheliticism who taught that Jesus was a composite of two natures where as liberal humanism claims that Jesus is a composite of one human nature.

The first mono-substantialist view has to do with the many current Gnostic and Mystic humanist approaches which hark back to ancient gnostic and mystic histories within and outside Christianity. Various church Fathers described the Gnostics as a perversion of what Christendom is. However, almost all scholars today disagree with the view of the church Fathers, due to the available evidence. Although there is no academic concord with regard to the origins of Gnosticism and Mysticism for that matter and the multiple sense making approaches that operated as undercarriages for the different views.

According to some, Judaism is somewhat in one or other way linked to Gnosticism. Some believe that the Old Testament texts demonstrate many Gnostic features and other view the Gospels of the New Testament and especially the writings and letters of Paul as permeated with gnostic references. Gnostic elements are also found in the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato. In the discovery of the Nag Hammadi texts, there was a partial find of the philosopher Plato's work, entitled the *Republic*. While it appears to some that Gnosticism may have roots in Iranian religious practices or some eastern religions that may have stemmed from Zoroastrianism, that inference remains to be an un-conclusive search. What is certain though is that the many gnostic and mystic approaches in the past were very 'syncretistic' by gathering and sifting enlightenment clues and sparks from nearly every viewpoint that suits the purpose of the enlightened adherents. The adherents of gnostic and mystic movements employed diverse religious ideologies to enhance their intended course of mission (The New Bible Dictionary, Second Edition 1986:426).

Regarding current Gnosticism and mysticism as an expression of the one human nature approach, Jesus is regarded as 'the' human being who had and still has 'a divine spark' which

descended from 'the divine realm above' and which in terms of continuous growth makes all of us participants of the spiritual cosmos. The following provides a description of the movement of the divine spark in gnostic approaches:

Gnostic sects were of the belief that the individual human had 'a divine spark' in him/her which descended from 'the divine realm above' and fell into this planet in which there is death, birth and fate. According to this notion, this spark can be aroused or woken up by its 'divine counterpart' and may be reintroduced as a participant into the spiritual cosmos.

(Encyclopaedia Britannica Vol. 8. 1982:214)

Modern gnostic and mystic approaches about Jesus with regard to people's salvific and spiritual growth patterns see it as part of spiritual growth to gather 'divine sparks' not only from the Bible but simultaneously from ones involvement with different interpretations and other text applications such as the alternate gospels of the Nag Hammadi library as well as many of the gnostic Gospels regarding Jesus' teachings. Their main problem with traditional Christianity is that the deeper gnostic and mystic spirituality of Paul's writings and the Biblical Gospels is not recognised and acknowledged while fundamentalist mirroring Christians, scratching on the surface of the divinely declared texts ridicule gnostic and mystic myths and narratives that are directly similar to some of the central doctrines of the fundamentalist mind-set (Ostow 1990:105f). They regard the myth of the 'inerrant and infallible' text of the Bible emerging in the modern era of every little letter or verse as divinely endorsed and authorised as the main stumbling block in the quest for a deeper spiritual meaning of Jesus (Ostow 1990:101). The second regressive step according to modern Gnostics and mystics is undertaken by claiming that these 'inerrant and infallible' divine texts express real history that supposedly has to function as the scheme of application of all world history outside the divine text. According to these modern gnostics and mystics traditional Christians who work with the divine revelational historical timeline affix their divine schemes to the surface of the texts and had therefore very little understanding of the esoteric symbolic meanings that the gnostics and mystics viewed as being written into the deeper layers of the biblical texts.

The preceding modern Gnostic and Mystic viewpoint and the liberal humanist's point of mono-substantialism regarding the man Jesus is not difficult to link. The liberal humanist position

envisaged in Jesus a man with an extra-ordinary talent, but a mere man with spiritual powers and is demonstrating a spiritual growth pattern that nearly no other human being has acquired. According to this approach Jesus was able to do mighty works through his extraordinary spiritual enlightenment and able to move many people including us who could be enabled spiritually of doing similar mighty works. It is this belief in self, which derived its insights from the gnostic and mystic approaches of the past and the present that enabled a liberal humanistic thinker like Brown to write in a style that could be called science-fiction which sent shock waves throughout the world.

The second mono-substantialist view has to do with the science-fiction approach of people like Dan Brown and is aligned with the modern gnostic and mystic approaches of Jesus.

James L. Garlow in his book *The Da Vinci Code Breaker* (2006:12) makes reference to Peter Jones who pointed out that,

God, to Dan Brown, is not the transcendent, above-and-beyond God portrayed in the Bible. God is creation itself – something within me. It (god) is, in fact, me. I don't look to the Bible for truth. I simply look within.

However, Garlow argues that most Gnostics were Docetists thereby viewing Jesus' appearance as human but regard him as not truly human. Therefore, we are at first glance constrained to concur with Garlow that here is a conflict of belief between Brown and the Gnostics here whom he claims to base his sources from. Brown perceived Jesus to be a mortal man, while Docetists of whom many Gnostics were, saw Jesus to be an appearance of a human being (Garlow 2006:71).

This old idea of 'self-enlightenment' by the Gnostics survived its way through the Renaissance into the 18th century Enlightenment. It was during the early part of the eighteenth century, when the books of German philosophers had a commonly viewed design of the sun which shone brightly through the parting sun. The caption of 'light dispelling darkness' was often inscribed in order to ensure that the message was not missed. This period in history saw itself as the Enlightenment. The main premise which served as a foundation for this historical period was reason. In essence the Enlightenment was an attempt to shed light upon a world that was plagued with faiths of ignorance, oppressive priests, repressive governments and opinions that were void of scientific proof.

In his work entitled *Humanism*, Vernon cites the following:

The leitmotif of the Enlightenment had probably originated elsewhere. In England, historians have pushed its inception all the way back to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 when many of the issues that became non-negotiable to Enlightenment thinkers, and subsequently contemporary humanism, were written into English law: freedom of the individual, habeas corpus, religious toleration, parliamentary rule and, of course, the rule of law itself. There was a marked intellectual flourishing in England at this time, too, that found a variety of expressions in the publication of pamphlets and newspapers, the opening of public libraries and a widespread interest in the theater. These developments were heralded as symptomatic of an enlightened age.

(Vernon 2008:55)

In 1704, the genius, Isaac Newton (1642-1727) who wrote a book on Principia Mathematica, which was an invention of calculus, progressed to overthrow Aristotle's science by introducing the fundamentals of the laws of motion. He defined gravity to be time action at a distance. The Enlightenment swept over to Scotland and was made evident by great geniuses such as the economist, Adam Smith (1723-90) and Adam Ferguson (1723-1816). Amongst the philosophers were Thomas Reid (1710-90) and David Hume (1711-76). In France there was a new birth of Enlightenment. French philosophers had since the 17th century been inventing and developing themes for the Enlightenment. Some of these themes evoked questions concerning God, the nature of the human being and the possible scientific understanding of the political and social bodies. They further probed into the rationale between morality and faith. Religious tolerance was fostered and the existence of God was investigated through scientific methods (Vernon 2008:56).

At this point is Dan Brown's approach of science-fiction of importance which amounts to an approach of a mixing of a so called scientific mentality with 'scientifically constructed facts' about Jesus that fit the moulds of his scientific methods.

Both the approaches of the modern gnostics and mystics and Dan Brown's science-fiction approach are very divergent from the positions of John Calvin and Ellen White who did not perceive Christ to be exactly like every one of us but simultaneously view Jesus like us and was also still God in the highest possible sense.

6.8.2.4 Christ identity, role and function in a monolithic substantialist approach

Here the question is whether Christ's life has or had meaning for anyone else than himself. In other words did Christ have any salvific meaning for other people? How Jesus is of salvific significance according to Gnosticism is that he can be of help to us. However, he is not an indispensable necessity to the quest of mankind's salvation. The idea of Jesus being a Messiah and the Mediator between humanity and divinity as portrayed by Calvin and White is rejected by modern gnostic and mystic views as well as in the science-fiction approach of Dan Brown. The approach of modern day 'New Ager' is one of the many gnostic and mystic approaches which believes that every one of us may experience God in our individual manner (Lutzer 2005:17).

So the question still lingers: Does the liberalistic humanistic movement, perceive Christ's identity as that of a prophet or a Messiah, who would be of salvific-significance to God's helpless people who are in dire need of the divine God to bring salvation to them? What is noteworthy in this context is that the majority of the ancient gnostic and mystic schools were fundamentally against the idea that God ever could become flesh. According to the ancient Gnostics matter has to be considered as evil. They reasoned that since human beings have matter as one of its components – the other part was the divine soul - human beings were evil. The salvific of salvation of the Gnostics amount to self-salvation because humankind was taught that he/she must forge his/her own salvation. The greatest need according to ancient and modern gnostic schemes is not a need to be saved from 'sin' but a '*need for self-knowledge.*' Gnostics further taught that their constructed deity was androgynous with the dual encompassing qualities of masculine and feminine attributes. Furthermore, Gnostics renounced the real organic resurrection of Jesus and if that is not worse, some of the Gnostics upheld the theory that there was actually a dying of Jesus on the cross. Instead, they taught that someone else substituted the death of Christ, i.e. died in his stead. Although there was a dysfunctional harmony with regard to how salvation was received, there was a symphonic concord that redemption rests within the power of every one of us. This redemption is achievable through a direct personal encounter without the church or the mediation of Christ (Lutzer 2005:23-24).

6.9 Transformational substantialism

The whole sense making approach of transformational substantialism is closely attached to the history of the Roman Catholic church in which the notion has been born. In short this sense making approach amounts to a whole series of transformational substantialist forms such as the church as a holy sacramental and sacred space with holy, sacramental and sacred office bearers – the priests – offering a holy, sacramental and sacred sacrificial offer – Christ, accompanied by the blessed Mary - in the form of holy, sacramental and sacred offerings - seven sacraments - to believers carrying them on their way from birth to after death continuing into eternity. As it is with many churches this sense making approach could be termed official congregational theology which operates on the level of the codes and the modes, the forms and the rituals and habits and the prescripts of congregational and diocesan religious practices and experiences.

During the acrimonious debates of the twelfth century, over the Eucharist, the notion of trans-substantiation made its present felt. What was purported according to this notion was that the actual bread and wine underwent a transformation process, where by the elements were changed into another type. What this meant is that these elements were transformed into the actual body of and blood of Jesus Christ, despite their physical appearances to the naked eye. It was during a council known as The Fourth Lateran Council in the year 1215, that a ruling was reached, that announced that Christ's body and blood were actually captivated and contained in the physical bread and wine. What this meant is that the power of the Lord Almighty, trans-substantiated the bread into the body of Christ and the wine into his blood. It was Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who made the affirmation that once the consecration had been made, the actual bread and wine, dissipated and the proper conversion took place, which is called trans-substantiation (Gonzales 1984: 272, 347-349). The main carrier concept of transformational substantialism that is transubstantiation had been firmly established in the Roman Catholic church by the middle of the 15th century and was declared official doctrine by the Council of Constance (1414-18AD) and in response to the critique of the Protestant Reformation confirmed the doctrine during the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The Council of Trent in its thirteenth session chapter four declared:

And because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the

bread and the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is, by the holy Catholic Church, suitably and properly called Transubstantiation.

(Waterworth 1848:78)

Transubstantiation in the mass means that through the uttering of the words by which the sacrament had been instituted ('this is my body', etc.) the bread turns physically into the body of Christ, wine turns physically into the blood of Christ. This miraculous act can only be done by somebody who is authorised to do it, that is, the priest. The act of citing the words of institution as such brings about the change. It means out of the operation flows the change (*ex opera operato*). This act is called consecration. Roughly speaking, the doctrine expects that we believe in two changes from the natural to the supernatural, from the ordinary to the holy, sacramentalised and sacred state: first, that the bread is now 'body' and the wine is 'blood', and second, that the 'body' and the 'blood' still look like bread and wine. Thus, it means in terms of transformational substantialist language that the substance or essence changes while the observable features of bread and wine stays the same.

At a certain point in the liturgical procedure, a bell is rung to mark the precise time of the transformation of the substances into the body and blood of Christ. From this point on the elements must be handled with care. Because of the danger that some of the 'blood' may be spilt, lay members were given only the bread, not the wine. It was assumed that that the blood was contained in the body, so those who only received the body missed very little. The 'host' (=the consecrated bread) is stored away safely in a little cupboard near the altar. It can be carried to the sick and used there without being newly consecrated. When believers enter the church or pass the altar, they bow down deeply because their Lord is physically present there. The host is also carried through the streets in processions to present the presence of Christ to the public. This is done on a special day called the day of the 'Body of Christ' (Corpus Christi).

Though the doctrine of transubstantiation usually revolved around the Eucharist regarding the elements of bread and wine on the one hand and the body and blood of Christ on the other the transformational substantialisation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ that takes place in the Eucharist is an expression of the holy, sacramental and sacred paradigm in

which human and physical earthly phenomena get an overlay of divine transformational embodiment. The archetypical and prototypical paradigm underlying and carrying all sacraments and all phenomena and events within the holy, sacramental and sacred spatial setting of the church is the transformational substantialisation of Christ's humanity into his divinity. Christ as the divine human being operating within the infra structural spatial setting of the church and enacted and performed in and through the sacraments. Outside the holy sacramental and sacred infra structural setting of the church many Roman Catholic theologians would speak about Christ as being so ordinary human that he could catch a cold, get hungry and thirsty and so on. That the majority of church theologians differ on some points from the sense making view that carries the theology of everyday congregational experience usually determined and backed up by a church's administration and bureaucrats, is not a Roman Catholic phenomenon but is a good example of nearly all churches including the Seventh-day Adventist and Reformed churches.

Calvin and White's intersubstantialist view that God is God and human is human but very closely connected in one person Jesus Christ, is miles apart from the transformational substantialist view that something human and something earthly natural could have a transformed divine holy, sacramental and sacred embodiment. Calvin for instance agreed with other Reformers that the Lord's Supper was not meant to be a sacrifice that has to be given to God. He rejected the Mass as a work done by the priests to obtain merits for themselves and others. Calvin described the Mass as a deception of Satan, "a most pestilential error" designed to destroy the Lord's Supper (1559- Inst.4,18,1). The Mass is an unbearable blasphemy and dishonour inflicted upon Christ because those who think they have a need to bring daily sacrifices have a need to appoint priests as substitutes for Christ. But they rob Christ of his honour, his eternal priesthood and his place at the right hand of the Father (1559- Inst.4,18,2)

6.10 Con-substantialism

The term con-substantiation emerged around Luther's view of how Christ's body and blood is related to the bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper. The similarity between Luther's view of the humanity of Christ at the cross and his human bodiliness expressed in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper is remarkable according to Korff though he commented one should not overstretch the similarity (1940:220).

In Luther's view the human body of Christ is everywhere present but particularly at the cross and similarly everywhere present but particularly in the bread and wine in Holy Communion. We can add to that that Christ human body is everywhere present but particularly in the human words of the Bible as the Word of God.

In terms of the sweeping sense making logic that operated amongst the Protestant Reformers of the 16th century Luther was very original with his view of the human body of Christ as everywhere present on the one hand but also present at a specific and particular place, particular spatial sphere at the cross, in the bread and wine and as the human words of the Bible. In Luther's views the relationship of Christ's humanity everywhere present and present in a particular way at a particular place is directly related to the relationship of the divinity and the humanity of Christ present in a particular way in a particular spatial setting.

Luther's solution to the problem of Christ everywhere present and also in some settings particularly present is according to Korff peculiar. According to Luther while Christ's body might be everywhere in all creatures and might be certainly found in stone, fire, water or a rope Christ does not want us to grope for him in these things and throw ourselves in the fire and the water or hang ourselves to a rope without the Word. He (Christ) is everywhere present but he does not want us to grope everywhere for him but where the Word is, there do we have to grope for him and understand we him correctly (Weimarer Ausgabe 19:492, in Korff 1940:221).

For Luther it is different whether God is 'being there' in the everywhere sense of the word or whether God is 'being there for us'. Luther appeals to the notion of God determining and ordaining the way by which Christ could be found and encountered at a particular place. The main factor of finding and encountering Christ at a particular place is Luther's use of the working of the Word of God which permeates the concentrated particular spatial setting and embodiment in which God is present for us in the human body of Christ at the cross, in the bread and wine in the Holy Communion and in the human words of the Bible. God can only be present in being there for us when the Word permeates the humanity of Christ, the bread and wine and human words of the Bible. So we do not find Christ in our everyday bread, although he is being there, unless he says of particular bread: 'This is my body.' (Korff 1940:221).

With regard to his view of the unity of Christ's divine and human nature, Luther has a preference for the formula that 'the human being Christ is God.' Luther asserts:

This is the sum total, this is the summary of salvation in which the church triumphs and elates: that a human being is the true God and that only we have in this God and human being eternal life (our translation).

(Weimarer Ausgabe 20:800, in Korff 1940:217).

Luther consistently operated with the approach of the two natures of Christ of the church of the past. He linked the divine and human nature of Christ in his writings very closely. Thus, when one says that God is present at his moment for us, one also has to say that Christ the human being is also present (Korff 1940:216). In the person of Christ we encounter the true God and the true human being in such a way that in this person both the divinity and the humanity is one or one thing and a cake, thus that one could justifiably say: this human being is God (Korff 1940:217).

According to Luther Christ is certainly in heaven but this should not be thought of as a particular place (*certus locus*) but as an omnipresent heaven (*coelum ubiquitarium*). Christ in his humanity and human body is also omnipresent (Korff 240:219). Luther's view of the omnipresence of Christ's humanity and human body elicited heavy reaction Calvin. Calvin operated with the view that Christ is with his resurrected humanity and body in heaven where he is engaged as the ongoing mediator interceding for us. What is of particular importance in this context is that both Calvin and White though they differ in some of the details the main connecting link between Christ in heaven and us on earth, is through the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit. Luther has a similar view that the Holy Spirit is Christ present (Nürnberg 2005:226). That Calvin and the whole Reformed tradition did not developed the role of the Spirit into a full blown emphasis of God's grand act of renewal through Pentecost is only tackled in the 20th century by Reformed theologians such as Noordmans and Van Ruler during the Pentecostal and Charismatic revival in the middle of the century after the turn of the century Azusa Street Pentecostal revival in Los Angeles.

What Luther wanted for believers to do is that the words of Jesus when he said 'This is my body', be accepted because it is not against Scripture or faith that these words were given in the

first Lord's Supper to Christ's body by Christ self and it is also not against Scripture or faith that it should happen in all following Lord Suppers (Korff 1940:218). To Luther, the Lord's Supper consisted of a combination of two elements the divine body and blood permeating the earthly bread and wine. At the cross in a similar sense Christ divinity is permeating Christ's human body.

John Calvin negated the notion of the bread becoming in some sense the real body of Christ and the wine being converted into the real blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. While Christ's resurrected body is in heaven it is Christ's Spirit that feeds the believers with Christ's heavenly body in and through the bread and the wine which stay just plain bread and wine. As for Ellen White, her position is strongly in opposition to that of Luther. White's position also differs from that of Calvin in a sense that she viewed the Lord's Supper mainly as a memorial of Christ's death and resurrection. She saw the purpose of this celebration as a continual reminder to the believer, to have complete reliance on the Lord's blood for salvific purposes. To White, the broken bread represented the broken body of the Lord, while the grape juice represented the spilt blood of our Lord. Hence, White is more closer to Zwingli in the interpretation above, since she viewed the elements of communion as symbols of the Lord's body and blood (Dederen 2000:602-606). Another difference is that White believes in using grape juice as opposed to the afore-mentioned Reformers who used real fermented grapes as in alcoholic wine. White describes the Last supper as follows:

Christ is still at the table on which the paschal supper has been spread. The unleavened cakes used at the Passover season are before Him. The Passover wine, untouched by fermentation, is on the table. These emblems Christ employs to represent His own unblemished sacrifice. Nothing corrupted by fermentation, the symbol of sin and death, could represent the 'Lamb without blemish and without spot.

([1898]1948a: 653)

6.11 Epilogue

In Calvin's approach the duality of the two natures of Christ is set on the one hand as the combined dual divinely particularised and concentrated divine/human mediating prototype between God and human beings, between heaven and earth as the mediator that intercedes for us before God. And, on the other, within the biblical historical timeline, Christ is centrally

positioned as the divine/human mediating archetype between God's act of creation at the beginning of time, and God's act of fulfilment at the end of time and is therefore simultaneously fully involved in God's acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment to the end of time.

In Calvin's view Christ at the right hand of the Father is the perpetual mediator who continually appears before the Father in his death and resurrection but is simultaneously at the right hand of the Father the one that obtained dominion over heaven and earth, and full of power and rules over all things. Christ in Calvin's view in his mediatorship is the kingly priest. The prophetship of Christ is de-emphasised in the Calvinian view because its function is allotted to Scripture as the inscripturated Christ which has to be rightly understood and expounded

With Calvin the office of mediation is viewed as transitory. Unlike White who viewed the limitation that Christ has imposed upon himself by assuming the human nature, to be perpetual and thereby rendering himself to be subservient and obsequious to God, Calvin deemed the mediation and submission of Christ to God only to be transient:

Christ, therefore, shall reign until he appear to judge the world, inasmuch as, according to the measure of our feeble capacity, he now connects us with the Father. But when, as partakers of the heavenly glory, we shall see God as he is, then Christ, having accomplished the office of Mediator, shall cease to be the vicegerent of the Father, and will be content with the glory which he possessed before the world was.... God will then cease to be the head of Christ, and Christ's own Godhead will then shine forth of itself, whereas it is now in a manner veiled.

(Calvin [1989] 2001b:418)

In White's approach 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. Through God's communicative infinite love in Christ, God and human beings are closely connected, concentrated and contracted and in Christ, emerges the divine/human template of how God is connectively working within his grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. Christ in and through the divinely set time periods or dispensations from Genesis to Revelation is the central embodiment and manifestation of God's love.

In the ongoing and perpetual sanctuary ministry, the ascension of Christ is that of One who is a divine conqueror. The name 'divine conqueror' used for Christ's ascension into heaven is an interesting alternate Christological title which she employed for Christ. Another title dimension expressed by White in addition to the title of divine conqueror is that Christ had, by his resurrection, 'authenticated Himself as a living Saviour.' In this self-authentication of Christ, a glorifying majesty and empowering affirmation took place that is ongoing in the processual interceding of the priestly prophet who as the resurrected, can no longer be associated with death but rather with his glorification within the heavenly cosmos.

With Christ's mediation and priesthood continues as a different phase of priesthood/mediation since there will be no temple or sanctuary nor will there be any sin which can be deciphered from White's emphatic suggestion of the retention of Christ's human nature into eternity:

When God would assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, He gives His only begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature as a pledge that God will fulfil His word....Man's substitute and surety must have man's nature, a connection with the human family whom He was to represent, and, as God's ambassador, He must partake of the divine nature, have a connection with the Infinite, in order to manifest God to the world, and be a mediator between God and man.

(White [1953] 1985a:488)

CHAPTER 7

Mirroring, Interpretation and Consensual negotiation approach of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings

7.1.1 The three approaches

In this chapter our task is to look at Calvin and White as well as some of their followers as to how and in what way the three approaches of mirroring, interpretation or consensual negotiation of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings are embodied and embedded in their writings, faith theoretical patterns and their doings as human beings. The broad outlines of the mirroring-fundamentalist, interpretation-hermeneutical and the consensual negotiation approaches employed in this thesis, is described and developed by Van Niekerk (2009:277-296). According to various followers and commentators on the writings, sayings and doings of Calvin and White the assertion is made that the emphasis of Calvin in the different versions of his Institutes and his commentaries of various Bible books leans mainly in the direction of a historico-interpretative approach with a significant number of interpretative notions meandering around in the realm of an interpretation-hermeneutical paradigm. White, on the other hand, leans more in the direction of a historico-grammatical approach with a significant number of mirroring notions that could be linked to the realm of a fundamentalist-mirroring paradigm.

The main assumption in this chapter is that in various and diverse writings of Calvin and White vestiges, clues and trajectories of all three approaches are found. While Calvin lived at the beginning of the modern era as a co-maker and trendsetter of modernity, especially with regard to the interpretation approach, White's life later spanned a large part of high modernity in which the mirroring approach took centre stage amongst others through the emergence of the natural sciences. Detecting elements of all three approaches in how modern people in their everyday lives go about with texts, theories, natural processes and human doings is not strange and unfamiliar. Van Niekerk points to the meandering and developing shifts and turns of the three approaches in the modern era:

During the modern era the battle lines were often drawn between two approaches: on the one hand, an approach in which the main aim is to **mirror** a text, a theory, processes of

nature or human doings in people's life world, and on the other, an approach in which the main aim is to **interpret** a text, a theory, processes of nature or human doings for a set purpose in people's life world. In this section I want to introduce you to a third approach, namely the emerging approach of **negotiation** of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings. This approach is an attempt to go beyond the modern struggle in which the mirroring and interpretation approaches have locked horns. In the approach of negotiation, the valid elements of mirroring and interpretation are drawn into a differential and integrative approach giving recognition to the most noticeable features of the mirroring and interpretation paradigms.

(van Niekerk 2009:277)

The main operational pointers of the *mirroring approach* with regard to the Judaeo-Christian Bible have their roots in the early medieval era. The main Middle Age view regarding the Bible or Holy Scripture (*sacra scriptura*) operated with the neo-platonic double notion of the letter as fleshly human and the spirit as divine similarly to their anthropological view of a human being's temporal body and eternal soul and their theological view of God's temporal face in the world and God's eternal essence. Origen summarises the position regarding the letter and spirit of Scripture in a homily on Leviticus 1:1:

I published three books [on Genesis] from the sayings of the holy Fathers concerning the letter and the spirit...For the Word came into the world by Mary, clad in flesh; and seeing was not understanding; all saw the flesh; knowledge of the divinity was given to a chosen few. So when the Word was shown to men through the lawgiver and the prophets, it was not shown them without suitable vesture. There is covered by the veil of flesh, here of the letter. The letter appears as flesh; but the spiritual sense within is known as divinity. This is what we find in studying Leviticus...Blessed are the eyes which see divine spirit through the letter's veil.

(Smalley 1983:1)

The double-sided sense making view of a deeper divine and materially fleshly this-worldly side applied to the Bible, a human being and God came to under scrutiny especially in the era of Renaissance humanism (1350-1550) which extensively influenced the 16th century Reformation. Preceding the Renaissance while simultaneously meandering into the time of the Renaissance, the Scholastics of the Middle Ages (1000-1300) while initially under the influence of the mystical and intuitional tradition of the neo-platonism of especially Augustinianism has been strongly influenced by the Arabic philosophers' introduction of Aristotle in the Christian West.

What is of importance is that the Medieval exposition of Scripture couched in the Neo-platonic double-sided scheme of mirroring between the divine and the human, the soul and the body and the spirit and the letter built into each of the four senses of Scripture exposition, the literal-historical, allegorical, tropological and anagogical senses. While the four senses formed part of the scholastics' world in the 13th century insoluble problems were raised which could mainly be ascribed to the impact Aristotle's philosophy made on the sense making 'logic' of the era. Thus, the process of the moulding of the interpretation approach was already in motion and came to the fore in the Renaissance period after and as part of the late mediaeval era.

In recapping the mirroring approach van Niekerk asserts:

The main notions of a fundamentalist approach belong to the family of *mirroring, imitating and mimicking* of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings. The fundamentalist process fulfils itself as *mirroring*→ *re-mirroring*→ *appropriation* of a text, a theory, a natural process or a human doing into the life world of people.

(van Niekerk 2009:280)

The modern day mirroring approach amounts to the following mindset:

The nearest way to know what God's will and recipe is in the total insecure world is to believe that God has mirrored and imitated His (Sic) eternal Word in the infallible and inerrant words of the Holy Book. The written-down, infallible and inerrant words of the Holy Book can only be accepted and thus imitated in one's life. Above the entrance to every fundamentalist home is written: No interpretation, please! It leads to the relativising and liberalising of the God-given intended meaning of the words of the Holy Book that is there just for acceptance, re-mirroring and appropriation in one's life world.

(van Niekerk 2009:281)

The problem of mirroring in Fundamentalism in the Evangelical world has been touched upon by several people amongst others by James Barr in a whole array of works of which *Fundamentalism* (1977) is best known.

The main operational pointers of the *interpretation approach* with regard to the Judaeo-Christian Bible can be traced to the Renaissance period of 1350-1550. While neo-platonists hold that spirit and letter are two entities or substances operating by a to and fro mirroring procedure

Aristotelians hold that the duality between spirit and letter, soul and body and God's essence and God's causal processes firstly has to be seen as one processual substance.

Beryl Smalley asserts about the Aristotelian processual and causal closeness of the two side of the single substance:

Transferring his view of body and soul to 'letter and spirit', the Aristotelian would perceive the 'spirit' of Scripture as something not hidden behind or added on to, but expressed by the text. We cannot disembody a man in order to investigate his soul; neither can we understand the Bible by distinguishing letter from spirit and making a separate study of each.

(Smalley 1983:293)

The Aristotelian theologian of the 13th century thought in terms of processual causes rather than mirroring reflection. This could also be detected in the emerging 'historical' view of how the books of the Bible were set in a processual sequence as one following the other. In an embryonic sense what the Renaissance humanists such as Lorenzo Valla and Rodolpho Agricola were emphasising thus a more historical approach to the world around them and the world of books, texts and letters was a mixture of neo-platonism and Aristotelianism, albeit in a strict humanist sense (Torrance 1983:126). Their broad approach amounts to the view that language and culture belong together; that historical and philological research to be applied to renew the study of the Bible; that more stress should obviously because they were humanists be laid on human personality rather than rites and ceremonies; upon moral inwardness rather than fastidious dogmatism and with pious remembrance of the historical Christ and the simple Gospel as the goal of all learning and eloquence, since wherever something true and beautiful is found it is of Christ (Torrance 1983:126).

The biblical principles of interpretation recovered by the Protestant Reformers of the 16th century, coupled with the advances in textual and historical-grammatical analysis of the Renaissance (Valla, Agricola, Erasmus and others) developed in two directions: on the one hand into a whole bundle of biblical interpretation and hermeneutic approaches which has carried on until now in hundreds of churches from mainline Protestant to Charismatic and Pentecostal churches, including the Seventh-day Adventist church. The main point of this trajectory is that the biblical historical timeline of the Judaeo-Christian Bible is expressive of revelational history

or divine history from its beginning with Genesis to the end with Revelation. The whole revelational historical timeline is embodied and embedded in the Scripture, Holy Scripture or Holy Bible as the exploration area where the genuine answers and the archetypical and prototypical views are presented about the history of the world from beginning to the end. These answers extracted from the Bible through interpretation as to who God is, who human beings are and what the natural earthly world is as well as how the church and society should look like are viewed as divinely authorised because it is done under the guidance and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. According to RM Davidson this approach has become known as the historical-grammatical-literary-theological approach or for short the grammatico-historical method or historical-biblical method (2000:90).

The other interpretational trajectory that emerged sprung from a mixture of Renaissance humanist and Protestant biblical interpretative methods. Though the approaches that emerge in this trajectory are viewed as secular approaches they display the same pattern of pointers as the divine biblical historical approach. The two main differences are that for the historical-critical or rational-critical interpreter on the one hand the biblical texts are human texts that are composed and written by human beings portraying the God-human-world experience of the patriarchal fathers, Moses and Israel, the prophets, Jesus and his disciples and apostles. And on the other hand, the enlightening force and energy that drives the interpretation is not the illumination by the Spirit of God as is the case with the Bible as portrayal of revelational history or divine history but the historical critical or rational critical consciousness of the interpreter.

Van Niekerk recaps the basis of the interpretation approach as follows:

The main notions of the interpretationist approach belong to the family of what a text, a theory, natural process or human doing ‘*actually, authentically, genuinely and really*’ portrays and wants to say. The interpretation process fulfils itself as ‘*understanding→ explanation→ application*’ of what a text, a theory, a natural process or a human doing actually, really and in actual fact is portraying and saying.

(van Niekerk 2009:284)

The main operational pointers of the *consensual negotiation approach* in regard to the Judaeo-Christian Bible developed and emerged during the modern era 1550-2000. Some of the reasons

why the mirroring and interpretation approaches outlived their purpose and why the consensual negotiation approach is emerging as a meaningful approach of the biblical texts are the following:

Firstly, the mirroring and interpretation approaches are locked in a battle in the current world that seems to have no positive ending. In addition it is significant that the mirroring approach which operated with the notions of inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible emerged simultaneously and in conjunction in the 18th and 19th century with a strong mirroring approach in the so called natural sciences with scientists regarding themselves as reporters and registers of the natural processes (van Niekerk 2009:280).

In the 20th century an immense change through the development of quantum mechanics which for instance operated with the uncertainty principle came about. A scientist could no longer claim to be only a reporter of the mirroring processes of nature. In conjunction with the latter change many philosophers of the 20th century also attempted to restore and heal the break that occurred in modern science between the scientific observer and the natural processes by stressing that the mirrored reporting of a process is actually also an interpretative patterning of the process by the scientist. Specifically, at the point of acknowledging that both mirroring and an interpretative dimensions are necessary to constitute a participatory anthropic-cosmological or anthropic-natural relationship between the human observing participant and the cosmic and natural processes a consensual negotiation mindset was already emerging.

Secondly, the extremes of the hundreds of interpretation and hermeneutical approaches especially through the historical-critical and rational-critical reconstructions of the history of the biblical text brought a paralysis of the outcomes of these methods to the fore. If the human historical or rational mind produces many interpretative reconstructions of the same text the question could rightly be asked what the use and meaning of all these contradictory interpretations is. According to van Niekerk a multiplicity of interpretations of the same text leaves the users of a text in the lurch with the only option of going in opposite directions,

either into a fundamentalist mirroring way at least giving them back their comfort zone, or the postmodern fragmentising and relativising way actually allowing a reader to knock off the original author or compiler of a text through a postmodern strategy of a re-writing

or re-composing of the text. The announcing of the death of the author or authors seems superfluous after the executing of such a strategy.

(van Niekerk 2009:285).

Such frustration had the effect of many people asking for something else that could go beyond the myriad of human driven reconstructions of biblical texts.

Thirdly, the 19th century prophetic movements were instrumental in the breaking down of the mirroring and the interpretation methods by shifting the emphasis to God's grand acts of reconciliation and fulfilment at the end of time with a certain underemphasis of God's grand act of renewal in Pentecost. But the emergence of the Pentecostal movement at the end of the 19th century revitalised the shift to God's grand acts of renewal and fulfilment and set the overwhelming Pentecostal and Charismatic oceanic movements in action.

The recognition and acknowledgement that we are living in the times of the Spirit of God had an enormous impact on the emergence of the consensual negotiation approach with regard to the biblical texts. Van Niekerk expresses the main assumption of the consensual negotiation approach as follows:

Our main assumption concerning the Scriptures is that a sense making God-life-and-world approach embodied and expressed in and through a book, chapter and verse of the Bible, does not have more of the Spirit of God than our sense making God-life-and-world approaches as people of the 21st century. In our negotiation between two sense making views – that of the Bible in a particular text and ours in our situation today – a Spirit-filled negotiation process from both sides takes place.

Generally speaking, sensible negotiation with the multifarious experiences of the First (Old), the Second (New) and the Third Testament (our era as of the Spirit of God) establishes the *leading emphasis* and the *perspectival sphere* within which negotiation between the sense making experiential patterns of the textual world and the sense making experiential patterns of our current world takes place.

The negotiation approach, let's say between the sense making approach embedded in the biblical text and an individual's personal sense making approach, moves to and fro in an oscillating, filtering through (percolating) sense and fusing into a compromise (copromissory, joint promise) design from which people in our day and age can take clues, cues and hues into their life worlds.

(van Niekerk 2009:289)

Van Niekerk summarises the consensual negotiation approach as follows

The main notions of a consensible negotiation approach belong to the family of how *'sense, sense making, meaning and significance'* of texts, theories, natural processes and human doings must be negotiated. The consensible negotiation process fulfils itself as *'consensible co-positing ↔ consensible percolating and filtering ↔ consensible fusing into a co-promise design'* from where clues, cues and hues can be drawn and folded into the mix of our life world.

(van Niekerk 2009:286)

The assumption in this chapter and in the thesis is that vestiges and examples of all three approaches interlinking and permeating each other could be detected in Calvin and White's writings, sayings and doings. This makes a struggle either in Calvin or in White's world about which of the three approaches is Calvin or White authentic and rightful approach totally unnecessary.

7.1.2 Inspiration problem

The way of working here is to operate and reflect on Calvin and White's sense making approaches of God, being human and the natural cosmic environment in terms of and by way of looking at the operational use of the three approaches as they appear and occur in their writings, faith patterns and doings embraced and undergirded by the 'inspiration of the Spirit'. The notion of the inspiration of and by the Spirit of the utmost importance from an immanent-investigative perspective because countless times they refer to, draw on, refer to and invoke the Spirit of God and the Spirit's inspiration in their works and doings albeit sometimes in totally different ways.

Concerning the notion of the inspiration of the Bible Calvin drew on the internal illumination of the Spirit in a human being to substantiate something he says in his works as in line with the greatest work of the Spirit namely the Bible as the Word of God. White drew on the Spirit of Jesus in her visions and her writings to substantiate in a harmonising and affirming way with what the Bible as the Word of God portrays are both taken as for granted in this investigation and discussion.

On the one hand, a decision is taken not to enter the fray of trying to detect and to reflect on the intensity and quality of levels of inspiration by the Spirit in their writings, faith patterns and

doings. Such an exercise seems not satisfactorily in investigating and discussing their overall sense making God, human and natural environment approaches. Searching even for different levels of inspiration in a particular writing, faith pattern or human doing of Calvin and White seems equally unsatisfactory. Rather their works and doings are approached from reflexively investigating and the drawing of adductive patterns where and when the mirroring, interpretative or consensual negotiation mode is in operation. On the other hand, the other side of the decision taken is that is fruitless to work with an approach investigating and comparing what Calvin or White has stated in their writings and faith patterns as been given by the Spirit of God and what the Bible is correlatively saying and expressing about the same truth, event or happening.

When the notion of inspiration is viewed in terms of the mirroring, interpretation and consensual negotiation approaches the differences are clear. The bundle of fundamentalist mirroring and imitating approaches operate with the notion of the infallible and inerrant character of the Bible as the divine Word or Words of God which have to be mirrored in people's lives. The main attitude in this approach is that of imitating and mirroring of the Bible or a Holy Book in people's lives expressed in the fundamentalist battle-cry of 'Just accept and mirror and do not interpret!.' In softer mirroring approaches God's Spirit is regarded as inspiring the compilers of oral traditions and writers of the biblical texts to write and mirror in human words the intentions and the meanings which God wanted to give to their words. Both the hard and soft mirroring views could be captured under the name *mechanistic or mirroring theory* of divine inspiration in which the compilers and writers of the biblical texts are mainly mechanical mediums mirroring God's words in the Bible through the Spirit of God (van Niekerk 2009:280).

The bundle of interpretation and hermeneutic approaches operate with the idea that the whole storyline, scope, thrust message and full Gospel of the Bible expressed in the *biblical historical timeline as divine history or revelational history* or as the *full array of the grand acts of God's creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfillment (consummation)* as the Word of God is inspired by the Spirit of God. In various churches and movements such a view of inspiration could be called an *organic, scopic, compassing, guiding, supervising, conducting, monitoring, navigating and steering theory* of divine inspiration of the Bible (van Niekerk 2009:280).

In the world of biblical interpretation since the Reformation of the 16th century the biggest problem we are confronted with is the one-sidedness of nearly every church tradition in trying to determine what the scope, thrust and message of the Bible is. Van Niekerk points to the state of affairs that nearly all churches Evangelical, Protestant and Catholic are,

- one-sidedly emphasizing either a quarter, half three-quarters or, rarely a full gospel.
- a quarter-version of the foursome Gospel message amounts to an exclusive emphasising of either Jesus Christ (reconciliation) or the Holy Spirit (renewal) or God the creator (creation) or God the fulfiller of everything (consummation), or
- a half-version of the foursome Gospel message amounts to an exclusive emphasising of either creation (nature) and reconciliation (grace, re-creation), or reconciliation (Word = Jesus Christ) and renewal (Spirit), or renewal (Spirit) and reconciliation (Word = Jesus Christ), or reconciliation (Jesus Christ) and consummation (Apocalyptic/prophetic future events), or renewal (Spirit) and consummation (apocalyptic/prophetic future events), or
- a three-quarters version of the foursome Gospel message amounts to an exclusive emphasising of any three of the foursome grand acts of God, or
- a full gospel message is seldom encountered in church-centred divine or semidivine churches and the deliberations of their theologistic spokespersons.

(van Niekerk 2006:373)

The bundle of consensual negotiation approaches with regard to the Bible operates with the idea that we are inspired in a similar sense as the compilers and writers of the Bible. We do not have less of God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit in our negotiation with the Bible before us than either the transmitters of oral texts long ago, or the later compilers and writers of biblical texts (Van Niekerk 2006:388).

In the present era of the Third Testament, the era of Pentecost or the era of God's grand act of renewal we are in an ongoing negotiation process with the Spirit of God. Being on the way as pilgrim and nomad of daily negotiation and wrestling with the Spirit about wellness and wellbeing or salvation, sense and meaning as good earthly human living are enacted and experienced conjointly with the physical-organic environment and the dynamic presence of God (Van Niekerk 2006:390). The main assumption concerning the Scriptures is that a sense making God-life-and-world approach embodied and expressed in and through a book, chapter and verse of the Bible, does not have more of the Spirit of God or the inspiration of the Spirit than us in our sense making God-life-and-world approaches as people of the 21st century. In our negotiation

between the sense making approach in a particular text of the Bible and ours in our situation today – a Spirit-filled negotiation process from both sides takes place (Van Niekerk 2006:391).

In reading and working through the writings and doings of Calvin and White it become clear that the three broad approaches of biblical inspiration spelled out above are in varying degrees to be found in their writings and doings.

7.1.3 Literality and literalness

The notion of taking the Bible literally in the literal-grammatical, literal-historical and literal-interpretational sense of the word is discussed here. The Reformers of the 16th century as well as White who to a certain degree follows in their footsteps when they talk of taking the Bible ‘literally’ recognised and acknowledged some ‘figurative’ language in the Bible. One has to admit that the meaning of ‘literal’ has been neither constant nor uncontroversial in the Christian world through the ages. In nearly every century since early Christianity the meaning of the term ‘literal’ was filled differently and was expressing the sense making approach of the person who uses and applies it. People operating with a mirroring-fundamentalist, interpretational or consensual negotiatory approach may all claim to be reading the Bible in a ‘literal’ way. However, it is quite clear from any superficial comparison of any given reading of a biblical text by two people from different churches or two people of the same church how their sense making approaches lead them to different sense making readings of the text.

In the immediate pre- and post-Reformation period the prophetic-literal sense was read within the embrace of a Christ-centric scope which was clearly distinguished from the carnal, rabbinical, or historical-literal senses by which the biblical text was read in the pre- and post-Reformation periods (McGrath 1987:152-74). The scope and aim through which the biblical text is read determines the quality and kind of sense making of the reader. For example, a prophetic-literal sense expressed in terms of a mirroring-fundamentalist approach is usually associated as being extremely exact with regard to the divine history and spiritual realities built into the biblical text. A prophetic-literal sense might be associated with exactitude in the rendering of spiritual realities, in contradistinction from a physical or empirical interpretation (Barr 1989:412).

A fundamentalist-mirroring approach to scripture does not have a monopoly on literalism in the prophetic or spiritual sense. Advocators of the interpretation and the consensual negotiation approaches similarly emphasises the notion of literalism but it is obvious that the sense making filter and scope changes slightly the direction. From a mirroring-fundamentalist point of view glaring contradictions are passed over and for the sake of the infallibility of the divine truth and history the text receives and is allotted the quality of being inerrant and infallible. Remarkably contradictions in the biblical text are usually not tackled with the fundamentalist mirroring approach of the reader but an exception is made to tackle and compare the problematic and mysterious passages from a reflexive interpretational stance or even to a consensual negotiation stance towards the text.

One has to make readers aware at this stage that when Calvin or White uses the notion of ‘literal’ or the notion of ‘factuality’ or ‘fact’ these notions should firstly be read within the era and the context in which such a notion is employed and secondly be read in terms of the stage in the grow curves of their lives.

7.2 Calvin and the mirroring, interpretation and consensual negotiation approaches

John Calvin was one of a diverse group of 16th century Reformers who finally established and affirmed the Judeo-Christian Bible as the main exploration area where the divine truth and divine history for people’s salvation in time and eternity could fully and sufficiently, clearly and directly be accessed and acquired. Though Calvin as well as Luther and Zwingli were avowed advocators of the full range of the biblical historical timeline through which God’s grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment come to the fore there reflection far more than was necessary for the time revolved around God’s grand acts of creation and reconciliation.

7.2.1 Calvin and the mirroring approach

Calvin by building the necessary mirroring dimensions into his interpretation approach does not portray the typical characteristics of mirroring fundamentalism of inerrancy and infallibility that emerged in the modern era. According to van Niekerk (2009b:43), in line with the neo-platonic

and Aristotelian traditions of the Renaissance, Calvin fused for instance in his reflexive realm of creation in his 1559 Institutes, a “vertical” mirroring consciousness of reflection in which “heavenly things” and “earthly things”, knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves are mirrored to and fro. In this realm the universe is founded as the theatre, spectacle or mirror of God’s glory, power, goodness and justice (Inst.1,5,1). Simultaneously, a “horizontal” reflexive *processual* consciousness opens itself throughout the realm of creation in that the mode of a particular contracted and concentrated human/divine duality regarding Christ, faith, the church and Holy Scripture which is mainly dealt with in the realm of redemption is already dealt with in the reflection area of creation.

In the *realm of redemption* the “vertical” double level of mirroring reflection revolves mainly around the particular contracted and concentrated human/divine duality of Christ’s humanity/divinity while Calvin’s other operational mode of “horizontal” reflexive *processual* consciousness, moving retrospectively back to the general-common generalities of the reflexive realm of creation and anticipating the post-resurrection era of Christ being on the right hand side of the Father.

The mirroring dimension in Calvin’s writings the metaphor of the mirror operates very strongly. Partee presents a list from Calvin’s writings regarding his use of the term mirror. For Calvin the works of God are ‘a bright mirror of his wisdom’, the universe is a ‘mirror’ in which people may contemplate God and the world is a ‘mirror or theater’ (**speculum seu spectaculum**). Calvin further uses the term ‘mirror’ of Moses’ history, of the law, of Christ and of a human being (1977:47). But with all these mirroring images Calvin was portraying central interpretational notions within the broader scheme of the biblical historical timeline. With regard to Calvin one has to conclude that the notion of mirroring as was later in 19th and 20th century fundamentalism viewed with the total weight of a divine mirroring mindset was foreign to him because any mirroring procedure whether divine or human plays a relative minor role in his sense making approach.

7.2.2 Calvin and the interpretation approach

The question here is intended to ascertain whether Calvin believed that we ought to interpret the Bible with a certain aim and goal in mind. In other words, could the biblical texts be read and

mirrored anywhere in our lives or are the biblical texts be interpreted in terms of a central scope or central goal and aim? What method did Calvin follow? One cannot read Calvin's sermons without noticing his exceptional expertise in exegesis, exposition and hermeneutical qualities. Calvin's academic background comes to aid at this junction. He was a trained jurist, a theologian and an academic; exposed to the liberal arts and patristic sources. His writings reveal his masterly skills in the areas of textual critique, philosophy, history and humanist scholarship. He was trained in linguistics and displayed the desire for eloquence, which he encouraged. To begin with, the whole interpretative approach that is part of the Calvinist tradition, emerged from Renaissance humanism, the late mediaeval period and his fellow Reformers with their strong insistence on the role of the Bible as the Word of God.

From the Renaissance humanists, Calvin took over the idea of the encountering of minds in the reading of the Bible as well as a strong historical-interpretative way of going about with the text of the Bible. Calvin transformed the notion of the humanists in the sense of one's mind as being enlightened by human reason to a mind as being enlightened by the Holy Spirit in order to understand what the writer or composer of the Bible, inspired by the Holy Spirit, in the recording of the events and history of God, has written down or composed as text of the Bible, 'with Christ's Spirit as precursor in a certain measure dictating the words' (Calvin [1559] 1960d:8).

Though Calvin owes a lot to mediaeval scholasticism he turned many of their basic notions around and transformed it into something with a new meaning. One of these is the notion of dialectics. The logic of dialectics as used in Scholasticism was directed at abstract issues and abstract concepts. The scholastic approach of an encounter of two abstract ideas, words or notions has been replaced with a person-directed dialog revolving around the notion of consciousness between two minds within the triadic framework of seeing - saying - hearing emerged from the writings of the Renaissance humanists and the John Mair who was well versed in the thought patterns of Nominalism (Torrance 1988:28; 88-89).

Regarding the triad of seeing, hearing and saying the scholastics underemphasised the hearing and saying as personal encounter between God and human beings and between human beings themselves. The seeing of God and human beings were strongly couched in the language of neo-platonic intuitive mirroring, best expressed by the idea of the beatific vision that a child of God

will have when God will be all in all. Calvin learned from Major and Luther that intuitive seeing sprouting mainly from neo-platonic schemes and Aristotelian processual links between saying and hearing could be collapsed into a single scheme (Torrance 1988:88-89).

Interpretation in Calvin's sense has to do with two minds locked into each other within the triadic framework of seeing - saying - hearing. Thus, the mind of Calvin the interpreter *sees* and *hears* what for instance Paul *says* in his words in the letter to the Romans. In an attempt to answer we turn to Calvin's own words as recorded in his 1539 commentary of the book of Romans, which reads:

Three years ago, when we conferred together about the best sort of scripture exposition, I remember that the approach that pleased you most was also acceptable to me beyond all others. We both thought that the chief virtue of an interpreter consists in lucid brevity (*perspicua brevitate*). And truly, since almost his only responsibility is to lay open the mind of the writer (*mentem scriptoria*) whom he has undertaken to explain, to the degree that he leads his readers away from it, he goes astray from his own purpose (*a scopo suo*).

(Mckim 2004:60)

What is for Calvin the laying open of the mind of the writer is captured in the triad of seeing, saying and hearing or in the modern form of understanding, explication and application. It certainly would be unfair to sum up Calvin solely on the basis of the method of 'lucid brevity' as the main form of biblical approach. Calvin seems to me, to have been convinced by Augustine's manner of understanding God. Augustine had deliberated much on understanding the triune God as a way in which he felt was similar to understanding oneself. As the trinity operated inseparably, reasoned Augustine, so operated the three inseparable spheres of the human being, namely 'the mind itself, its knowledge, which is its offspring, and love as a third; these three are one and one substance' (Stump 2002:98).

It is this mind-set borrowed from Augustine that Calvin embraced and lucidly explicated in the most alluring terms:

Nearly all the wisdom we poses, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.

(Griffin 2006:37)

Calvin sought to know God through first looking upon himself and having recognized his misery and utter wretchedness. It is this wretchedness that led him to write: ‘...From the feeling of our own ignorance, vanity, poverty, infirmity, and – what is more – depravity and corruption, we recognize that the true light of wisdom, sound virtue, full abundance of every good and purity of righteousness rests in the Lord alone’ (Griffin 2006:38).

So what led Calvin to be a remarkable bible interpreter? Donald Mckim who edited the Cambridge Companion to Calvin cites that when Calvin entered his vocation as a reformer in Geneva and Strasborne, during the 16th century, there had been a great pre-occupation marked with unprecedented waves of biblical interpretations. Calvin as a biblical interpreter recapitulated the tide of most biblical interpreters of that time. Mckim opined that there was a continued alteration of the intellectual modicum due to the printing press being dissimulated all over Europe. With the costs of printing falling, books were readily available and the scholastic tide rose. As those who were being consumed by the quest for knowledge, the cry for the humanist: *Ad fonts – ‘back to the sources’* – was heard. Hence the hunger for those sources increased as they came forth from the printing press/ the linguistic requirements of the time demanded Greek and Hebrew languages in order demand respect.

Calvin was exposed to all of this and the humanist values and teachings combined with his theology and law studies, which he did in turn, in Paris, Bourges and Orleans (Mckim 2004:58-59). All of these factors contributed to making Calvin an exegete of exceptional novice.

In the interpretation paradigm God’s Word(s) are extracted from the texts of the Bible via the background, contexts and words of the oral narrators, writers and composers of Biblical texts. In their daily practice many present day theologians and ministers, priests and pastors interpret the Bible through a close following of the interpretation parameters or main pointers and perimeters or margins set by the works of the founding fathers and mothers of the church or faith community.

What is characteristic of the interpretational approach mentioned above is that the interpretation scope or filter extracted from the Bible is then used as a prescribed filter and scope for the interpretation of different texts of the Bible. The scope and focus of the Bible in the sense of

Calvin is the person and work of Christ. Calvin in commenting on the words “These are the Scriptures that testify about me” in John 5:39- NIV, writes

Moreover, this passage teaches us that if we would know Christ, we must seek him in the Scriptures. Anyone who imagines Christ as he will, gets nothing but a mere blur. So, we must first hold that Christ is known rightly nowhere but in Scripture. If this be so, our chief purpose in reading the Scriptures must be to arrive at a right knowledge of Christ.

(Calvin’s Commentaries, Haroutunian 1958:104-5)

Calvin continues with his comments on the words in John 5:39 by pointing out that Christ was also in the Old Testament and that the Jews abhorred Christ in the days of Moses:

It was sheer apathy that led the Jews, who had the law in their very hands, to abhor Christ. The glory of God shone brightly in Moses, but they put up a veil and darkened it. In this place, Scripture means obviously the Old Testament. It is not true that Christ appears first in the gospel. It is rather that after the witness of the Law and the Prophets, he appeared in the gospel for everyone to see.

(Calvin’s Commentaries, Haroutunian 1958:105)

Commenting on the words in Hebrews 10:1- ‘For the law having a shadow of the good things to come...’ Calvin writes about believers in the Old Covenant and believers in the New Covenant that they are both

shown the same Christ, the same justice, sanctification, and salvation. In the manner of the painting is there difference.

(Calvin’s Commentaries: Hebrews 1963:132).

Calvin’s interpretational scope with regard to the Scriptures is mainly Christ and God’s act of reconciliation in Christ. RW Holder in his book *John Calvin and the Grounding of Interpretation: Calvin's First Commentaries* (2006) reserves a whole chapter for Calvin’s understanding of the aim of biblical interpretation which is to reveal Christ.

The majority of Calvinist-Reformed followers operate with the interpretational approach towards the bible text because the interpretation approach as main approach of Calvin emerged in the time and the life-world of the 15th century Renaissance humanists. The outlines of the approached was adopted, amended and divinely authorised by Calvin for his purpose of serving the Kingdom of God and the church.

7.2.3 Calvin and consensual negotiation approach

In various parts of his work Calvin is rather engaged in a form of consensual negotiation with biblical texts and his social and natural environment from his sense making approach with the biblical texts. Van Niekerk points to the fact that Calvin is mainly negotiating in his 1559 Institutes with God and God's Spirit as the all-initiating agent, as the only One, people have to negotiate and deal with in everything they do from beginning to end in life (**negotium cum Deo**) (van Niekerk 2009b:40). Van refers to various sections of Calvin's Institutes (1559-Inst. 3,3,6; 3,3,16; 3,7,2; also 3,20,29). Calvin in some of his writings transcends the strong emphasis on God in his Institutes by extending his sensible negotiation process to include human beings and the natural cosmic world. The question that could be asked with regard to Calvin amounts to why he so seldom admits and acknowledges that his interpretations are in fact negotiations from a Calvinian God-human-nature sense making approach which include God, human beings and the natural world as stated by Van Niekerk:

Thus, in terms of the mystery through a radical and embracing commitment, we negotiate and deal with the experience of the *Godness* of God – (**negotium cum Deo**), our own and other people's *humanness* (**negotium cum humano**) and the natural world's *naturalness* in every nook and cranny (**negotium cum natura**), every corner and stretch of life through the mysterious workings of the Spirit of God.

(van Niekerk 2009b)

A good example of Calvin employing the consensual negotiation is what Bieler terms Calvin's 'shrewd interpretation of the biblical texts' on traders and trade, bankers and lending at interest and debtors and creditors (Bieler 2005:396-418). The whole array of texts dealing with topics like these receives Calvin's negotiation treatment Calvin negotiates with various biblical texts from the Old and the New Testament to show that the Bible condemns the self-centred quest for gain and usury. He also negotiates with texts to demonstrate that we are not unreservedly forbidden to charge interest, except in so far as it is contrary to fairness or charity (Bieler 2005:405). Bieler says in this regard:

As his custom was, Calvin moves from the biblical passages to the arguments of the doctors of the church. He confutes at length the best known of these arguments, which, coming from Aristotle, was taken up again by St Ambrose, Chrysostom then the

scholastics, and was the basis for the whole ecclesiastical tradition against lending at interest, that is, argentum parere non potest: money does not yield any fruit on its own.

(Bieler 2005:405).

Calvin's conclusion why he supports the notion of lending at interest is neither drawn from mirrored or interpreted passages of the Bible or from philosophical and intellectualising syllogisms but from the rule of fairness and justice:

My conclusion now is that we have to judge interest not in terms of some assured and specific judgment of God's but only in line with the rule of fairness and justice.

(Calvin in Bieler 2005:406)

Bieler summarises Calvin's reflections about traders and trade, bankers and lending at interest and debtors and creditors:

Beginning with the gospel, for whose texts he gives a more illuminating and more discriminating interpretation than did his predecessors, he is extremely strict in condemning the natural tendency of human beings to seek only what profits themselves. This, he says, is why the Bible condemns usury and all its abuses and presents altruistic lending meant to help others as a genuine sign of faith. But Calvin censures legalists and literalists who have no discernment in applying the Old Testament regulations to new realities. The Jews were living under a civil law that is not valid just as it stands for other peoples and other ages, although it retains value as a warning and as universal spiritual teaching. Proof that Jewish law does not apply directly to other peoples lies in its authorizing lending to non-Jews at interest – a matter of making possible international trade in money without which Israel would be cut off from the world. Then the Reformer goes on to say that the Bible does not use the word "usury" to include the relatively new and increasingly more frequent phenomenon that we speak of as productive lending.

(Bieler 2005:418)

This long quotation speaks for itself especially with regard to the way Calvin from his sense-making approach within the era he lived negotiated by disagreeing and agreeing with sections of the Old Testament, the New Testament, his predecessors and phenomena of his era. The topic of Calvin the way he already in his era employed a consensual negotiation approach is a study on its own.

7.3 White and the mirroring, interpretation and consensual negotiation approaches

The first sixty years of the 19th century was pivotal in the American world for the whole of the century and the determinative codes and modes of many movements developed in that period such as those of the Seventh-day Adventist church in which the authoritative role of Ellen White meandered right into the 20th century. In the mainline Protestant world of the era before the 19th century the emphasis was mainly on two of the foursome of God's grand acts, namely that of creation and reconciliation, underemphasising renewal and God's future directed fulfilment acts. In the early part of the 19th century the pendulum swung to the other two grand acts of God, renewal through the Spirit and the future fulfilment of everything in the new heaven and the new earth. The main question was 'What happen to me? firstly in afterlife after I have died? and, secondly, 'What happen to me before and after the second coming of Christ? In this all the Judeo-Christian Bible became a history book in a special sense specifically because of the emerging features of inerrancy and infallibility it gradually attained. The Bible has become the exploration and source book that actually and virtually expresses God's historical events as divine truths which are to be mirrored in society and science and only to be accepted and appropriated by them. That is to say if a society is a God-fearing society and a science is a genuine and real science looking for God's truth in creation.

As research on Ellen White's writings has grown, more and clearer evidence has been seen pointing to a 'pattern of growth' in her faith theoretical understanding and the nuanced integration and differentiation of her views on Scriptural truth. White's early narratives are viewed as simply telling what happened with less sweeping instruction and admonition than writings from her middle and later years. Amongst many Seventh-day Adventists today there is still the view that the biblical historicity of the historical time of the divine truths revealed to her in her visions are the same in all White's writing, sayings and doings whether these be expressed at the age of 17 or at the age of 87. But there are a growing number of Seventh-day Adventists in becoming more aware through extensive and elaborate research on Ellen White's writings of more and clearer evidence focussing and pointing to a 'pattern of growth' in her faith theoretical understanding through the years.

While there is a more nuanced expression of her views on Scriptural truth in later years, there is also a stronger faith theoretical regularising and refinement of what one may term the operability of the divine historicity of the time line of biblical history and the series of events from Genesis to Revelation which she regarded as real history of the divine kind (For this point, see, for instance Knight 2000:20-21; Thompson 2005:151, 155-156).

For White reflecting within the perimeters of the divine historicity of biblical history the divine historical character of the timeline is of the utmost importance. In the modern era the notion of history and historicity is central on the agenda of many people. The historical-critical school main adage revolves around history and historical constructs of the past. In regard to the notion of Preterism which had been an important prophetic apocalyptic hermeneutic for nearly 300 years since the Counterreformation the importance lies in the quality of the historicalness and historicity regarding the coming true of prophecies. The linking of biblical prophecies to the historical realisation and fruition is expressed by a Preterist interpretation of Christian eschatology which holds that most or all of the biblical prophecies concerning the End Times refer to events which have already happened in the first century after Christ's birth. The system also claims that Ancient Israel finds its continuation or fulfillment in the Christian church at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The term preterism comes from the Latin *praeter*, which is listed in Webster's 1913 dictionary as a prefix denoting that something is "past" or "beyond." This signifies that either all or a majority of Bible prophecy was fulfilled by 70 A.D.

What brought discredit to people who operated with the historicalness and the historicity of the coming to fruition and becoming real of prophecies within eras of historical apocalyptic was their date-setting. For a more extensive discussion on the notion of divine historicity of the time line and prophetic realisation within the divine historical character of the timeline, see From 1946-1954a:417-426; Damsteegt, [1957]1977; Pfandl 1992:28-56; Sawyer 2006:373-375; Paulien 2005:248-250. For a careful study of the *year-day principle*, especially as it applies to the Book of Daniel, and including evidences for a much older use of such principle among Jewish interpreters of the pre-Christian Era, see Shea 1992:67-110.

In this regard William Miller's pre-millennialism in the 1830ties as a linkage of historicity to the coming true of realness in the historical sense was a vast departure from the standard theological

approaches of the day. His absolute conviction that understanding and following the historical timeline of God's Word was of the utmost importance for every Christian. In 1832 he wrote to a young minister friend that:

...you must preach *Bible* [,] you must prove all things by *Bible* [,] you must talk *Bible*, you must exhort *Bible*, you must pray *Bible*, and love *Bible*, and do all in your power to make other love *Bible* too.

(Miller quoted in Knight 2000:39)

Miller's Bible study method exemplifies a view of prophecy that was permeated with divine historicity. The type of historicism that developed in the prophetic Adventist movements was of an intra-biblical 'grammatical, contextual, historical' interpretational type closely following in the ongoing events and eventualities of the biblical historical timeline from beginning to the end. The historico-grammatical approach of White and Seventh-day Adventists forms an intrinsic part of the prophetic realisation type of biblical historicity and historicalness. Miller's way of going about with Scripture was standard with virtually all Protestant commentators since the Reformation, though Miller, apparently, kept himself from reading them. The historicism of linking apocalyptic prophecy with the realness of prophetic fulfilment mostly throughout the Christian era till the end of time was in contradistinction with the new dispensational hermeneutic being proposed by John Darby and others at the time. The latter view deferred most prophetic fulfilment to a period immediately preceding the Second Coming which to the apocalyptic historical realists was not sufficient.

In contrast with other historicist modes of exposition, this historical type of ongoing prophetic apocalyptic realisation – through sometimes marred by diverse, sensational, speculative, and contradictory approaches – appears as the most valid hermeneutical approach to the biblical apocalyptic eras. The temporal markers positioned in the ongoing eventuation and happening of divine history serves as a guide to the reader like signposts on a journey that commences in the era of the biblical composer and writer and proceeds through to the end in God's eternal kingdom. The ongoing process of historicist ongoing prophetic apocalyptic realisation does not vanish after a few short footsteps (as constructivist historico-critical interpretation would argue), nor does it appear out of nothing (as open-ended futuristic historicalness would suggest). Rather, it advances in a meandering but ongoing continuous line in its heading towards God's act of

fulfilment and consummation that seems confusing to historico-critical constructivists and open-ended sceptical futurist uncertainty about the end of times (Johnsson 2000:797).

In the sphere of the Adventist Millerites reading the Bible with commentaries was frowned upon because acts of moving about within the exploration area of divine history as portrayed in the Bible delivers its own solutions to problems within the Bible and solutions to world history provided by the template of the divine historical time line from Genesis to Revelation on condition that it is read within the in itself historical ongoing interpretational hermeneutic of the Bible. In the context of a historical ongoing processual hermeneutic, Ellen White first encountered the advent message of Christ as the present one as inclusive in a believer and simultaneous the imminent coming one in his second coming.

The question that is investigated in this section is whether clues and tendencies of the mirroring, interpretation and consensual negotiation approaches are to be detected in Ellen G White's work and writings.

7.3.1 White and the mirroring approach

By employing the mirroring and biblicistic approach White was led to believe that the world is approximately six thousand years of age. This intra-biblical stance led White to instruct that 'we bring our clear evidences from God's Holy Word' (White 1980:29). The phrase 'evidences from God's Holy Word' means evidently in terms of the difference between a mirroring and interpretation approach something slightly else. Mirrored evidence means literally as it stands in its textual setting being 'word for word' mirrored in someone's mind by the Holy Spirit while interpreted evidence means the actual understanding and meaning of the text opened in someone's mind by the Holy Spirit.

White in writing within the ambience of divine mirroring about the immutability of the Decalogue, its lasting authority and unchanging character, affirms that not one command has been annulled and not one jot or tittle has been changed in the period of time. She speaks of the sacred, unchanging character of the divine law which Moses recorded in the Pentateuch as an "unerring transcript" or "the great original". White asserts:

The law of god in the sanctuary in heaven is the great original, of which the precepts inscribed upon the tables of stone and recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch were and unerring transcript. Those who arrived at an understanding of this important point were thus led to the sacred, unchanging character of the divine law. They saw, as never before, the force of the Savior's words: 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law.' Matthew 5:18.

([1888] 1990a:434)

In the modern era the Judeo-Christian Bible became a history book of divine historicity which at stages in the biblical historical timeline produces divine settings of factuality and divine state of affairs with which one cannot differ unless one is courageous or daft enough to be thrown out of the fold. One of these divine settings of factuality is gradually developed after the Reformation of the 16th century is the combined features of inerrancy and infallibility attached to the Bible. The Bible has become the exploration and source book that actually and virtually expresses God's historical events as divine truths which are to be mirrored in people's lives and could only be accepted and appropriated by them. That is to say if a community of people is a God-fearing community looking for genuine and real truth of God.

White's early narratives are viewed as simply telling what happened with less sweeping instruction and admonition than writings from her middle and later years. Amongst many Seventh-day Adventists today there is still the view that the biblical historicity of the historical time of the divine truths revealed to her in her visions are the same in all White's writings, sayings and doings whether these be expressed at the age of 17 or at the age of 87. But there are a growing number of Seventh-day Adventists in becoming more aware through extensive and elaborate research on Ellen White's writings of more and clearer evidence focussing and pointing to a 'pattern of growth' in her faith theoretical understanding through the years. While there is a more nuanced expression of her views on Scriptural truth in later years, there is also a stronger faith theoretical regularising and refinement thereof (See Knight 2000:20-21; Thompson 2005:155-156).

The question we earlier posed is, are God's grand acts exclusively – only and alone as divinely authoritarian – mirrored and imitated in the corpus of Biblical texts from Genesis to Revelation from where they are then only to be mirrored and imitated in our lives? While we investigate

those questions we will be reminiscent of the fact what has been stated earlier too that people within the strong clutches of the mirroring approach are not strictly speaking 'allowed' to interpret but only allowed to mirror and imitate God's Holy Scriptures as the sole and only campus of their lives.

According to such a mirroring approach, the corpus of Genesis 1-3 is a divine exact portrayal of the way God has created the earth and the universe while by way of the divine mirrored images of the history of successive generations in the Bible the age of the earth and the universe is delineated and determined as 6000 years old. What we aim in this section is the structure of the to and fro mirroring movement she reflexively brought to the fore through Genesis 1-3 as the qualitative divine historical enactment that we have to mirror in our reflection of creation.

White described how time originated at creation. The first week originated like the Sabbath at the beginning of creation.

God Himself measured off the first week as a sample for successive weeks to the close of time. Like every other, it consisted of seven literal days. Six days were employed in the work of creation, upon the seventh God rested, and He then blessed this day, and set it apart as a day of rest for man. In the law given from Sinai; God recognized the week, and the facts upon which it is based.

(White [1893] 1923:191).

There are other instances when White approaches the Biblical text literally in regard to the subject of Sabbath keeping. White writes,

Those who desire to know the truth concerning the Sabbath of the Lord are not left to the guidance of uncertain suppositions. But let them not depend upon the teachings of the fathers, or any other human agency, but upon the words spoken by the Creator of heavens and the God. In it is to be found the laws of heaven. And from the Bible alone can we learn the truth regarding the Sabbath. God's word is plain. The fourth commandment is definite and explicate and reveals the divine origin of the Sabbath. And further, the Lord said to Moses: 'Speak...'

(White 1910-1915:526)

To White, what clarifies that the original week constituted of literal days is the fact that each day consisted of evening and morning. So how does White explain the words of

the Bible at the end of the creation week which reads, ‘These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.’ White responds that this does not convey the idea that the days of creation were other than literal days. Each day was called a generation, because that in it God generated, or produced, some new portion of his work (White [1890]1958a:112).

Ellen White made sense of everything around her in terms of her sense making God-human-nature view in which the divine historical time line as captured in the Bible and her visions as divinely determined played a decisive role. We cannot take her to task for the number of things making sense to her in terms of the ‘present truth’ available to her at different times. What we should do is to try and ascertain which of the three dimensions of mirroring, interpretation and consensual negotiation is emphasised in a certain writing, saying and vision. Biblical composers and writers in the Mosaic period viewed the sun in a pre-modern perspective as rotating around the earth. In the book of the Old Testament we have some references that attest to this fact. One such example reads: ‘On the day the Lord gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the Lord in the presence of Israel: ‘O sun, stand still over Gideon, O moon, over the valley of Aijalon. So the sun stood still and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day’ [Joshua 10:12-13]. Even the writer of Ecclesiastics perceived the sun to be rotating around the earth. For he writes, ‘The sun rises and the sunsets, and it hurries back to where it rises’ [Ecclesiastics 1:5]. Are these writings of inspired writers to be regarded as without any historical underlying sense?

While the Spirit of God works with the limitations of the human mind there is always the character of realness embodied and embedded in the creatureliness of God’s world. God works within the existing context of the creaturely nature of this world and our reading of intra- or extra-biblical accounts of the earth is directly correlated to the fulfilment aim and purpose into which we enfold our reading of the Bible. Those who choose to approach the Scriptures with the limiting scope of an intra-biblical scope are not off target, given White’s mirroring approach and portrayal in the biblical narration of the creation account. Their choice is based and is determined on what has been inspired within and revealed through the divine historical timeline of Scripture

and not through extra-biblical sources. In this regard White regarded the total Bible as inspired and not certain portions of the Bible to be inspired while others are not:

When men, in their finite judgment, find it necessary to go into an examination of scriptures to define that which is inspired and that which is not, they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us. I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible.

(Wilcox 1944:12-13).

Could it be stated that the literal reading of the seven days of creation is an inerrant and infallible reading of the biblical text? Is this divine factual state of affairs totally inspired in the sense of being infallibly inspired? To this question one has to answer in the non-affirmative that inspiration in many senses is not infallible. White for instance did not apply the adjectives *inerrant* or *infallible* to her own writings. But she often exalted the Word of God as alone worthy of the title infallible. She states emphatically:

In regard to infallibility, I never claimed it; God alone is infallible. His word is true, and in Him is no variableness, or shadow of turning.

(1958b:37; see also [1946]1970:69 and 1946: 35)

Ellen White's views of inspiration can be differentiated into a threefold way concerning the Bible and her writings, sayings and doings. She sometimes works with a mirroring view of operation by pointing to exact replicas such as the Ten Commandments as an unerring transcript of the great original of the Law of God in the heavenly sanctuary ([1888] 1990a:434). At other times she operates with an interpretation type of inspiration whereby inspiration works in the interactional encounter of the interpretation through transference of mind patterns and forms from one mind to another. This is especially true where she works with the act of 'I saw' in her visions which she transfers to people or in her writing through her words. It is clear that the transferred pattern and form of interpretational inspiration is not an exact mirrored copy of the original action in which she saw as it has taken shape in the words of White the interpreter.

White self points in the direction of the distinction between mirroring and interpretation when she states:

The words I employ in describing what I have seen [in vision] are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.

(RH, October 8, 1867, 260).

The difference between the mirroring and interpretation of what she saw in her visions is important because what she saw could be inspired mirroring and/or inspired interpretation. Her making use of quotation marks points to her employment of an inspired mirroring dimension while what she presents in her words of what she has seen in a vision, points in the direction of an interpretational way of doing. Working with a mixture of mirroring and interpretation dimensions White states:

God was speaking through clay. In these letters which I write, in the testimonies I bear, I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. I do not write one article in the paper expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision the precious rays of light shining from the throne.

([1882-1889] 1948a:63)

For White it was not a case of her writing while in a super-elevated state of experience but of White, after seeing, writes in a mirroring and/or interpretative understanding way about what God had revealed to her. Ronald Graybill in his article 'The 'I saw' Parallels' also provides a suggestion about the mirroring dimension of White's seeing in her visions by referring to her use of quotations marks for the angel's direct using of words in her vision:

It is important to recognize that although Mrs. White sometimes recorded the exact words of her angel-guide in quotation marks, often she merely reported the gist of what was said to her in vision, reconstructing the words of the angel as best she could recall them, placing them in the form of direct address and enclosing them in quotation marks.

(*Adventist Review*, July 29, 1982: 5).

In the interpretational inspiration mode a person is speaking or writing in his or her own words about the same thing or topic that has been spoken about in the words of someone earlier. In terms of White's visions she is writing in her own inspired words later, thus interpreting what she has seen in a vision earlier. The mirroring mode of inspiration is to a large extent more an immediate process in which the same thing or topic is mirrored in the same words or same image as projected by the other person. The consensual negotiation mode of inspiration opened up a large realm of sense making negotiation not only whether writings, sayings and doings of White are 'mirroringly' or 'interpretationally' inspired but in what degree they are inspired.

In passing one has to point to the comprehensive phenomenon of mirroring in White's sense making approach. White sometimes made use of the language of other authors in a mirroring way. While one could play with the euphemism that she borrowed language from other authors without giving specific credit while adding the rider that it was a practice common in her day, one wittingly or unwittingly only emphasises the strong mirroring dimension of White's approach. This demonstrates a rather strange form of respect for authority whether it be God's or that of an accomplished writer. In the introduction to the 1911 edition of *The Great Controversy*, White gives considerable explanation of her use of sources:

In some cases where a historian has so grouped together events as to afford, in brief, a comprehensive view of the subject, or has summarized details in a convenient manner, his words have been quoted; but in some instances no specific credit has been given, since the quotations are not given for the purpose of citing that writer as authority, but because his statement affords a ready and forcible presentation of the subject. In narrating the experience and views of those carrying forward the work of reform in our own time, similar use has been made of their published works.

([1888] 1990a:xi).

White, in her application of the mirroring mode in moving from divine origin and divine original to precepts inscribed upon tables of stone and recorded by Moses in an unerring transcript in the Pentateuch is reminiscent of the principle of the great philosopher Heraclitus who said, 'The road up and the road down are one and the same.' What Heraclitus was saying is that the same road appeared different and the two roads up and down from a position taking both into account appear the same. Mark Vernon uses a similar example of a person travelling from Oxford to London, would say that the road was leading him down from Oxford, while someone travelling the same road from London to Oxford would without being wrong say that that road was leading him up to Oxford (Vernon 2008:6). What Vernon is not realising is that one has to be in an overseeing position to be able to proceed with such an argument in order for it to be meaningful. In a similar sense if one is part of the loop of embracing the mirroring movement from original copy to unerring transcript the process is followed through. The slightest deviation from the mirroring procedure on this point is already setting a sceptic historical-critical interpretation mode in action which is usually viewed with holy scepticism by Seventh-day Adventists.

7.3.2 White and the interpretation approach

The question here was whether we are to interpret the biblical text with an interpretative filter or scope of God's grand acts of creation, reconciliation, renewal and consummation which we learnt from the context of the biblical writers? Ellen White's view concerning the aforementioned question is encapsulated in her words when she wrote: 'The Lord desires you to study your Bible. He has not given any additional light to take the place of His Word' (White 1980:29).

The question could be asked whether White moved away from a strong emphasis on a mirroring view of inspiration and revelation to a stronger emphasis of the interpretational approach in her later life and work. Evidence from primary sources show that Ellen White moved further and further away from a religion based mainly on 'experience' for the sake of being more and more faithful to the Word of God. In general this means that she also began to articulate more thoroughly, and at greater depth, the central message, scope and aim of the Bible as the Word of God expressed in the biblical historical timeline as divine history or revelational history inspired by the Spirit in being recorded by people in different styles and in different eras. Dederen points to the state of affairs in the first chapter of the fourth volume of White's *Testimonies for the Church* in a chapter entitled 'Bible Biographies' White tells us that that the lives recorded in the Bible from Adam down to the times of the apostles are authentic histories of actual individuals. The recording of these histories on pages of the Bible she describes as 'inspired history' written by 'inspired writers', recorded by 'the pen of inspiration' (Dederen 1992:99). Dederen concludes by stating that in this volume of the *Testimonies*, White

has been using the categories of revelation and inspiration side by side, if not interchangeably. Note also that she does not show the slightest hesitation to tell us that those narratives are the product of revelation.

(1992:99).

Dederen's comment on White's side by side use of the categories of revelation and inspiration is in line with the basic assumption in this thesis that White uses the notions of mirroring inspiration and interpretational inspiration side by side from the early days of her ministry and work. The well acknowledged shift that has occurred from her early days to her later life is that

while mirroring and interpretational inspiration still operated conjunctively in the later years the emphasis was more on interpretational inspiration. This can be seen in the distinction she made between God's two books of Scripture and nature, thus the Bible as book and the book of nature.

The Creator of the heavens and the earth has not left Himself without witness to the children of men. The book of nature and the Book of revelation both testify of His infinite power, His unsearchable wisdom, and His boundless love.

(Wilcox 1944:5).

White emphasised gradually more and more the central message, scope and aim of the Bible as the Word of God embodied in the biblical historical timeline as divine revelational history recorded by inspired composers and writers under the inspirational guidance of the Holy Spirit. This divine and human central message as revelatory template takes precedence over and accommodates all mirroring revelatory events in White's later writings. The central theme, message, scope or key of the Bible as the Word of God directs all attention and steers ones interpretation efforts. In her book *Education*, White spells out the central theme which clusters every other theme in the Bible,

The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God. From the first intimation of hope in the sentence pronounced in Eden to that last glorious promise of the Revelation, 'They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads' (Revelation 22:4), the burden of every book and every passage of the Bible is the unfolding of this wondrous theme,—man's uplifting,—the power of God, 'which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' 1 Corinthians 15:57. He who grasps this thought has before him an infinite field for study. He has the key that will unlock to him the whole treasure house of God's word.

(White 1903:125-126)

In emphasising the central theme and scope of the Bible White aligns it with the union of divinity and humanity in the nature of Christ as the central and exemplary focus of God's truth:

But the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ, who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' (John 1:14).

([1888]1990a:vi)

The Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language, Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea. The Bible was given for practical purposes.

([1888]1990a:20)

A true knowledge of the bible can be gained only through the aid of that Spirit by whom the Word was given.

(White 1903:189)

The difference is immense between when the Bible is read with an inspired mind or the mind steered by the Spirit of God or when the Bible is read with the historical-critical method with human reason as the ultimate criterion for criticising biblical and divine truth. The role of historicism in White's employment of the inspired interpretational dimension of the mind is important. White's interpretational exposition of divine historicism in the biblical historical timeline appears as the most valid hermeneutical approach to the biblical apocalyptic events though it evoked sometimes diverse, sensational, speculative, and contradictory understandings. The apocalyptic historical markers mirroringly embodied in apocalyptic biblical events guide the reader's interpretational mind like signposts on a journey that commences with God's grand act of creation and ends in God's eternal kingdom. By continuously moving through the whole spectrum of the biblical historical timeline White was not stuck in isolated cultural historical periods of the Bible as historical-critics tend to do, nor was she locked into a futurism that has no end.

The apostate rational mind of higher criticism or historical criticism is in opposition to the inspired mind by the Spirit who regards the infallible authority of Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice. White wrote about the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism and other modernist sense making approaches that bring misunderstanding and confusion:

As in the days of the apostles, men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism, evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths. To many the bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and

confusion. The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God's Word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives.

(1911:474).

White's interpretation is to be guided by the Spirit of God in being engaged and involved in the loop of biblical interpretation on the basis of principles that emerge from an intimate encounter with Scripture and the Holy Spirit without the hindrances of one's own human rational spirit.

We need the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit in order to discern the truths in God's word. The lovely things of the natural world are not seen until the sun, dispelling the darkness, floods them with its light. ..The Holy Spirit, sent from heaven by the benevolence of infinite love, takes the things of God and reveals them to every soul that has an implicit faith in Christ. By His power the vital truths upon which the salvation of the soul depends are impressed upon the mind, and the way of life is made so plain that none need err therein. As we study the Scriptures, we should pray for the light of God's Holy Spirit to shine upon the word, that we may see and appreciate its treasures.

([1900]1941:113)

We shortly repeat the operational ways of how White goes about with texts, events and human doings. In the interpretational inspiration mode a person is saying the same thing in other words than the words uttered by another person or is writing in (own) inspired words of what is seen in a vision. On the other hand the mirroring inspiration mode entails that one expresses the same thing in the same words (or image) uttered by the other person. The consensual negotiation mode of operation is when sets and clusters of words from both sides in the encounter and conversation fuse into something inspired with hope for the future whether it is God's future revelational work or whether it is the work of inspired human beings.

The employment of the interpretational mode in her writings, visions and testimonies came to the fore in different ways. Regarding her messages, she warned church leaders that those who want to evaluate what the level and degree of inspiration of a certain message of her is, have to take into account,

I do not write one article in the paper expressing my own ideas. They are what God has opened before me in vision—the precious rays of light shining from the throne...Do not feel that you can dissect [my messages, in] the *Testimonies* to suit your own ideas, claiming that God has given you ability to discern what is light from heaven and what is the expression of mere human wisdom. If the *Testimonies* speak not according to the

word of God, reject them. Christ and Belial cannot be united. For Christ's sake do not confuse the minds of the people with human sophistry and scepticism, and make of none effect the work that the Lord would do. Do not, by your lack of spiritual discernment, make of this agency of God a rock of offence whereby many shall be caused to stumble and fall, 'and be snared, and be taken.

([1882-1889] 1948e: 691)

It is remarkable to see the similarity with Calvin in his appeal on the Holy Spirit for his views. First the acceptance of a near absolute certainty that it is God's Spirit that is revealing itself through both of their insights and visions. Secondly, the immense downgrading of the human receptacle – Calvin himself and White herself – for the purposes of letting God's light, truth and message appear more divine than the ordinary human words. Calvin follows through his Institutes a procedure of simultaneously knocking the human species while describing his insights and views of the glory, power and truth of God revealed through creation as the *theatrum gloria Dei* or the created world as God's "mirror or theatre" (*speculum seu spectaculum*) (Partee 1977:47).

White presents the Spirit as the total determinative factor in a testimony of warning and reproof while presenting herself in the role of the humble messenger and instrument through which God speaks:

Those who are reprov'd by the Spirit of God should not rise up against the humble instrument. It is God, and not an erring mortal, who has spoken to save them from ruin.

([1882-1889] 1948c:257).

In addition to the mode of mirroring inspiration, White held to a view of interpretative inspiration of images, words and concepts that flows from a mind filled with the Spirit of God. Interpretative processes are enacted between two minds, thus between the mind of God and the mind of a prophetic messenger. The notion of inspiration by and through images, words and thoughts is slightly different than her employment of mirroring and strict imaging inspiration that houses the idea of mechanical mirroring. One has however to be aware not to set the notion of inspiration of tools of the mind too strictly in contradistinction to the notion of mirroring inspiration in White's writings, sayings and doings. In the history of theology various distinctions had been used not only for depicting theories of inspiration but also setting these

theories in complete opposition to each other with totally different results concerning the engagement with the Bible in the determination of a single truth. NR Gulley describes five major theories of inspiration: intuition, illumination, mechanical, verbal, and dynamic or limited verbal which is not very helpful precisely because the overlap between the different theories forces him to apply characteristics of one of the theories of Bible engagement to the other theories he has systematised (2003:302-304). Gulley's portrayal of a verbal theory of inspiration is exemplary in placing mirroring (dictation) and interpretational (verbal) inspiration modes directly as opposites without the realisation that they have to operate in complementary fashion in someone's engagement with the Bible or as a prophet prophesying the words of God:

The verbal theory of inspiration must not be confused with the dictation or mechanical theory, for many Protestants affirm verbal inspiration but deny dictation inspiration. Verbal inspiration emphasizes the prophet's complete freedom of choice in the process - being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, who aids him in choosing the most appropriate words to describe what God has revealed to him.

(Gulley 2003:303)

White in writing down or speaking about something God has revealed to her in a vision, made a distinction - as we have seen earlier - between the mirroring and interpretation dimensions regarding her words and the angel's words in quotation marks. In a paraphrase of the quotation of White one could say that that the words she employs in describing what she has seen in vision, are her own words, unless they be words spoken to her by an angel, which she always encloses in marks of quotation (RH, October 8, 1867, 260). The angel's words in the vision, she mirrors by placing it in quotation marks, her own visionary imagery she approaches as interpretational inspiration. Regarding her emphasis on the interpretation mode in her visions and prophetic calling, DE Rebok states:

Mrs. White, in all the long years of her life, never had any doubt regarding her divine call to the prophetic work, nor any question about the source or nature of her messages. Hundreds of times, perhaps, in public meetings and in her writings, she claimed that her messages to the church came from God by divine inspiration. She told of her visions. She repeatedly used the expression "I saw," and what she saw in vision she spoke about and wrote about.

(Rebok 1956,184)

Thus, what she saw she transfers through words, thoughts and images of her mind's interpretational eye into writing or into sayings by way of her own speaking. For the most part, Seventh-day Day Adventist members and theologians had a tendency of leaning towards the mirroring dimension of inspiration embedded in White's writings without realising that mirroring and interpretative inspiration operated sometimes side by side and at other times even mixed in White's writings, sayings and doings. Least understood was the distinction that in mirroring inspiration God's revelation affects ones digits while in interpretative inspiration God's revelation affects ones mind. From Europe, in 1886, she wrote about the minds of inspired people enacted as God's penmen, not God's pen:

The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God's mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen. Look at the different writers.

(1958b:21)

The inspiration of the interpretational dimension of the mind in White's writings is well expressed in the following statement written somewhere in Europe in 1886:

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind. The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.

(Manuscript 24, 1886; written in Europe in 1886.)

In understanding the aforesaid it is clear that the interpretational dimension of the mind's inspiration has a stronger emphasis than the mirroring dimension of inspiration in the 1880s, but we should not be deceived by thinking that the inspiration of the mirroring type disappeared from her approach in this context. Though the mirroring dimension of inspiration is less emphasised it is the incontrovertible other side of the interpretational dimension of inspiration of the mind.

What is here termed the mind's interpretational dimension of inspiration is known in SDA circles as 'thought inspiration' for short. At the General Conference, in 1883, a stand on inspiration or enlightenment of the mind was taken and set in opposition to a type of inspiration in which 'word and idea' was identified.

We believe the light given by God to His servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed.

(RH, Nov. 27, 1883, 741, in Knight 2000:135)

What we seen thus far is that White's view of inspiration consists of an intricate relationship between 'revelation and inspiration', or 'mirroring and interpretational inspiration'. The history of Seventh-day Adventism during the past century since 1883 and earlier is that of a simmering low key struggle between Seventh-day Adventists operating with a view of inspiration of the mirroring or mechanical dictation type and those with a view of inspiration of the interpretational type of the mind. Our view is that the inspiration dimensions of mirroring and interpretation are sides of the same coin in White's writings, sayings and doings. Mirroring and interpretation not only complement each other but the one need the other to complete the picture of White's engagement with God the Spirit, the Bible and her visions. In adding the inspirational type of consensual negotiation in what follows as a necessary dimension in the whole of White's writings, sayings and doings, the picture is more fully portrayed.

7.3.3 White and the consensual negotiation approach

Ellen White understood that the Biblical text does not necessarily render to us a divine mirror or imitational copy of how God created the world or how God steers the totality of the historical processes as ongoing motion till the end of time. By this is meant that White was thoroughly aware that she had to make sense of the divine historical biblical timeline embodied and embedded in the Scriptures. We have seen earlier that she made sense of divine historicity through two complementary dimensions of inspiration, namely mirroring inspiration and interpretational inspiration of the mind.

On the one hand White emphasised the whole Bible as a diversified mirrored map of the divine historicity and the historicalness of the grand acts of God as creation, reconciliation, renewal and fulfilment. In some instances White describes the divine biblical historical inspirational mode as in the fourth volume of the *Testimonies for the Church* as the “plain Scripture facts” which “God has revealed” in the “inspired record” of “inspired history” written by “inspired writers”, recorded by “the pen of inspiration” embodied and embedded in the Bible as the Word of God (1876—1881] 1948d: 9,1;12,1; 14;0). In other instances she describes something within the diversified mirroring of divine historicity as of the utmost mirrored importance such as the unerring transcript - of the original copy in heaven - of the law of God, inscribed on the tables of stone and recorded by Moses in the Pentateuch ([1888] 1990a:434)..

White was well aware that the Biblical historical timeline of the Bible was a diversified map that was to be studied in the interpretational sense within the divine historical margins of Jesus Christ as the exemplary template or scope of the entire diversified history of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world from Genesis to Revelation. White was thoroughly aware of the full text of the Bible and types of literature as expressive of diversified mapping of the timeline of the Bible:

The Bible is made up of many parts – history, biography, song and praise, prayer, and prophecy. But all is inspired of God, and “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” In the term “scripture” is included the whole treasure house of revelation and knowledge, in whatever form it is given.

(White 1910-1915:527)

White’s emphasis regarding how heavenly unknown things were revealed through the earthly known things could be detected in both the mirroring and interpretational inspirational modes in the following reflection:

Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly. God was made manifest in the likeness of men...So it was in Christ’s teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known, divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar.

(White 1941:17-18).

What emerges in this reflection is the outlines of the divine/human pattern set in Christ as the exemplar and template that White uses when the divinity is manifested through the humanity, the heavenly revealed through the earthly. What is acquired through the mirroring revelational mode *through* Christ is simultaneously the interpretational divine historical form, the biblical central form *in* Christ that operates nearly everywhere in the biblical historical timeline as expression of the mystery of the simultaneous close connection and radical difference of God, human beings and the natural cosmic world. Higher criticism or historical-criticism, evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism are pleasing sentiments and the enemy of righteousness which lead people into forbidden paths (White 1911:474).

White's in operating simultaneously with the mirroring revelation and interpretation inspiration modes side by side and mixed in her strong engagement with the Bible and her visions, created unwittingly an unresolved struggle between 'mirrorists' and 'interpretationists' in the Seventh-day Adventist movement. The struggle levels are considerably lower when there is an awareness that both the mirroring and the interpretational modes in conjunction with a consensual negotiatory mode are continuously in operation in her writings, doings and sayings. In some contexts in her writings White has a far stronger emphasis on the mirroring mode and in others the interpretation mode seems to have the emphasis. In the grand scheme of White's writings a consensual negotiatory mode that mediates between White's mirroring and interpretational inspiration modes has to get its turn as inspirational mode.

The common challenge whether to assume that everyday things like a list of items to buy from the store or directions on how to care for plants were operating outside the range of inspiration of God's Spirit while only special areas such as the Bible, White's visions and Testimonies are reserved for inspiration by the Spirit of God, is breaking the wholesome sense making approach of White and Seventh-day Adventism with its three inspirational dimensions apart. In operating with a consensual negotiatory dimension to inspiration one could assume that the Bible, events in the divine historical timeline as well as all White's writings, sayings and doings operate within the inspiration range of the Spirit of God with the built in differentiating principle that some are 'mirroringly' inspired and others 'interpretationally' inspired, while others are 'consensually negotiatory' inspired. The suggested way of three dimensions of inspiration of the Holy Spirit that operate together in a wholesome sense making approach through which White and one's

own writings, sayings and doings is approached, relieves a Seventh-day Adventist and Seventh-day Adventists in general of the whole problematic notion of higher and lower degrees of inspiration that seemed to haunt them in the past. Moreover, the addition of the consensual negotiatory inspirational dimension of the Spirit through which White's writings, sayings and doings have to be consensually negotiated and re-negotiated in the presence of the Spirit in the most divine and most mundane situations and contexts of life, relieves Seventh-day Adventists from the stifling and suffocating fear that White might have made a mistake somewhere or has being one-sided at some point.

White's son, WC White in a statement to the General Conference Council in 1911 gave a fairly good portrayal of his mother's sense making approach to different eras and different topics and the way she approached Scripture by elucidating her way of approaching other writers of history and historical texts:

Mother has never claimed to be authority on history. The things which she has written out are descriptions of flash light pictures and other representations given her regarding the actions of men, and the influence of these actions upon the work of God for the salvation of men with views of past, present, and future history in its relation to this work.

In connection with the writing out of these views, she has made use of good and clear historical statements to help make plain to the reader the things which she is endeavoring to present. When I was a mere boy, I heard her read D'Aubigné's History of the Reformation to my father. She read to him a large part, if not the whole, of the five volumes. She had read other histories of the Reformation.

This has helped her to locate and describe many of the events and movements presented to her in vision. This is somewhat similar to the way in which the study of the Bible helps her to locate and describe the many figurative representations given to her regarding the development of the great controversy in our day between truth and error.

Mother never laid claim to verbal inspiration, and I do not find my father, Elders Bates, Andrews, Smith, or Waggoner put forth this claim.

(WC White [1911] 1959:194)

Though WC White's description presents us with a short overview of the main access points of his mother's sense making approach regarding historical texts and the biblical textual world as

well as visions it is not an incisive reflexive patterning of her approach. What comes to the fore is the diversified and let us say meticulous way Ellen White engaged herself with her sources.

Ongoing and increasing awareness that White operated in terms of all three dimensions of inspiration in the mirroring, interpretational and consensual negotiation sense, does not translate into a whole categorisation exercise of degrees of inspiration of her writings, sayings and doings. What is at stake with regard to all of White's writings, sayings and doings is that White employed and accessed all three forms of inspiration side by side and mixed in a mirroring, interpretation and consensual negotiation sense. A form of the consensual negotiation inspiration kind is in operation when she states that there are times when common things must be stated such as when "we converse about houses and lands, trades to be made,...advantages and disadvantages," she added, "such words, such information, are not given under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God." (1958b:38, 39). The phrase 'not given under the special inspiration of the Spirit of God' does not exclude that her advice on these mundane and everyday issues about which she has conversed, was without 'general' inspiration of the Spirit of God. The use of the term 'special' in distinction to 'general' in this context does not confine the Spirit's inspiration to happen only in a 'special' way but opens up a wholesome differential and integral perspective in which the mysterious ways of the Spirit's inspiration happen at least in a threesome of dimensional ways in White's writings, sayings and doings.

TH Jamison gives the known reason why people should not make distinctions or instil levels of inspiration in White's writings, except for everyday experiences and biographical narratives,

It involves setting up one's own judgment as a criterion in place of the clear declaration of the messenger whom he claims to believe as inspired.

(1955: 398.)

Jamison's statement is not too helpful because the messenger – White - he refers to many a time employed the threesome of inspirational modes and dimensions of mirroring, interpretation or consensual negotiation, sometimes in conjunction and sometimes fused in her engagement and encountering of images, words and concepts of God, human beings and nature. Moreover, White operates with these three modes of engagement with varying kinds, dimensions and ways of

inspiration by the Spirit and not with varying degrees of inspiration. This opens the field of differential and integral wholesomeness and coherence of a threesome dimensional view of inspiration to Seventh-day Adventists.

7.4 Epilogue

Calvin and White in broad terms read the biblical historical timeline of the Judaeo-Christian Bible in terms of mirroring, interpretational and consensual negotiation ways of doing. In both Calvin and White's approaches the inspiration dimensions of mirroring and interpretation are two sides of the same coin. Calvin has his main emphasis on the literal-interpretational side and White more on the literal-grammatical mirroring in their engagement with the nature of realness of divine historicity as espoused in the Biblical historical timeline. Wherever Calvin and White's emphasis might have been placed in a certain period of their lives, the sides of mirroring and interpretation not only complemented each other in their writings but both dimensions are expressive of the need of the inspirational type of consensual negotiation to complete the picture.

In White's case the gift of prophecy complements the mirroring and interpretation dimensions in the midst of her use of the consensual negotiation approach. In a meandering way all the experiences portrayed in her writings, sayings and doings are the manifestations and revelations of patterns and regularities, accidental and random occurrences and admonitions and instructions all of which are permeated, guided and carried by the Spirit of God in the employment of the mirroring and interpretation dimensions of her consensual negotiation with God, the Biblical text and her visions.

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