The Humanity of Christ

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Introduction

It is important to realize that having a correct theoretical knowledge of Christ is not at all the same as having a right relationship with Him, and that our salvation is dependent on the latter. But correct theology is nonetheless vital, because it is essential to the development of such concepts of Christ as will enable us to relate adequately to His saving processes.

Knowing that the quality of one's faith is largely determined by his understanding of the nature and ministry of Christ, Satan has exerted every effort to destroy correct views of these topics. Early in the church's history he attempted to subvert it by attacking the ministry of Christ through legalism. This strategy, however, was countered by Paul's strong repudiation of righteousness by works. Thus, the church was able to avoid a major pitfall of Judaism.

There was no immediate attempt, however, to forget the Jewish types and symbols which pointed forward to Christ in the Old Testament. Instead of being abandoned they were seen to have a depth of meaning that had been overlooked before. Throughout the New Testament book of Hebrews, for example, Christ's sanctuary ministry in heaven is compared with the Aaronic priesthood on earth. This very useful comparison illuminates the entire plan of salvation, giving us insight into the nature of true faith and also the manner in which Christ's righteousness is received by His followers. Here we do not see the church looking to the past so much as we see the church coming to realize how earlier individuals led by the Spirit of God might have looked forward to Christ.

In order to nullify this "great High Priest" focus Satan shifted his attention from legalism to gnostic concepts which would effectively remove the Old Testament from the canon, and with it all predictions of the Savior's life and work. At the same time such concepts would serve both to distort Christ's divinity and deny the significance of His full and complete humanity. In this context gnosticism must be seen as a direct attack on the true nature and ministry of Christ.

The Church's Struggle against Dualism

For three centuries the church fought to eradicate gnostic dualism and preserve its orthodoxy.[1] The Nicene creed testifies to the success of its efforts as regards the Deity, but a dualistic concept of man's nature was incorporated into the church's teaching, not only as an article of faith, but as a doctrinal pillar central to the entire system of papal thought.[2] So deeply embedded were it roots that it survived the Reformation, despite Luther's attempts to expose it as a papal legacy.

Many early gnostics believed that there was a bad god who created the world, imprisoning immortal souls in evil matter, and a good God who sent Christ to rescue men from this imprisonment.[3] The church's formal defeat of this concept left it with a very strong

commitment to the unity of God and to Christ's full divinity and complete humanity. Unfortunately this signal victory over dualism in one area of thought encouraged the church to rest in the false assurance that dualism itself had been defeated. As later history would demonstrate, it had not been.

One by-product of the church's encounter with dualism at this time was the emergence of a counterfeit priesthood, in which an ascetic denial of the principles of life and human relations displaced Christ and His atonement on the one hand and became a substitute for true holiness on the other hand. Based on the gnostic concept of an evil body whose functions, being evil, must be suppressed, asceticism became a major directive force in the church.[4] As a result, despite the attempt to preserve an orthodox doctrine of Christ's nature, the church eventually lost sight of His high priestly ministry.

The greatest impact of dualism, however, was on the doctrine of the nature of man, eventually becoming integrated into the very warp and woof of Christian "orthodoxy." When Luther opposed the concepts underlying this view some people took offense but others simply ignored what he said. Thus, on the one hand, Calvin was incapable of perceiving any true orthodoxy apart from the dualistic concept of an immortal soul and lashed out fiercely against the "heresy" of soul sleep.[5] On the other hand, Luther's successors, wanting neither to take issue with the great reformer nor to accept what he said on this particular point, deliberately camouflaged his true position, which was that man does not naturally possess immortality.[6]

From a doctrinal point of view, therefore, dualism is a pernicious evil that has had any number of unfortunate effects on Christian thought. Some have been pointed out above. Additional examples are that a dualistic concept of the nature of man obscures the nature of sin and also the manner of its eradication. An illusion of inherent life is substituted in place of God's free gift of eternal life. This in turn deprives the church of any true doctrine of the resurrection[7] and robs it of the purpose and meaning of the second coming. Moreover, since Christ Himself became a man, it must in some way affect our views on the humanity of Christ as well as of mankind in general--despite the good influence of Nicea--and to the extent that this happens one is prevented from fully understanding or appreciating our Savior's high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, for it is solely on the basis of His incarnate Sacrifice that the Man Christ Jesus ministers. Any doctrine that affects the nature of man, therefore, affects the nature of Christ, and any doctrine that affects the nature of Christ must have implications of some sort for the manner in which people are saved by Him. We are not dealing here with small or isolated issues.

Original Sin and the Problems of Evil and Suffering

Gnosticism's most fascinating initial appeal for the church had been its apparent resolution of the age old problem of the existence of evil and suffering. It did this by reducing the pagan pantheon from many gods to two--the one responsible for good and the other for evil.[8] Thus, the good God of Christianity is not blamed for the existence of evil, but only at the expense of introducing a second god.

The church courageously and vigorously repudiated this answer. But it did so without reference to Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, which, although the book of Hebrews

taught otherwise, came increasingly to be looked upon as little more than an unwanted link to Judaism. Perhaps for this very reason the book of the New Testament which deals most extensively with this topic had to struggle for acceptance in the canon.[9] Without understanding the personal conflict between Christ and Satan so clearly portrayed in the sanctuary, the church, which was unwilling to accept a gnostic solution to the problem of evil, was unable to provide one of her own.

Upon this stage stepped a brilliant and sincere ex-professor of rhetoric who was destined to have a major influence on the church's thought. Desiring to deliver Christendom from the subtle encroachments of paganism, yet never completely free from the influence of his own earlier philosophical training in it, Augustine of Hippo combined the orthodox Nicene concept of one God who created all things with a faulty understanding of God's absolute freedom. Believing in an omniscience which demands total knowledge of all future events and an omnipotence which prevents any creature or circumstance from limiting or modifying His sovereign will, Augustine concluded that God had indeed foreordained the existence of sin and determined its entire scope and pattern.[10]

In his doctrine of original sin, Augustine attempted to transfer the responsibility for sin from God, where his predestinarian views had placed it, to man.[11] This only added to God's culpability, however, for, having planned sin and programmed its course, He is now seen to shift the guilt to Adam and then to compound the resulting problem by imputing Adam's guilt to each of his descendants.[12] Thus, while Augustine's views are certainly more acceptable than those of the gnostics, it would be difficult to claim that he has provided a complete answer either.[13]

Original sin, as that term is commonly used, is an unfortunate misnomer which obscures the issues involved and encourages many to subscribe to it who might not otherwise do so. Paul's doctrine of universal human sinfulness should not be confused with Augustine's concept of original sin, which might more appropriately be called original guilt. Paul's concept is to be accepted, Augustine's is not. The two are not fully the same.[14]

Original Sin and Dualism

Belief in original sin and the natural immortality of the soul caused Augustine to defend infant baptism as a means of helping children who died before reaching the age of reason and faith to avoid suffering eternal torment in hell.[15] Intertwined with the same beliefs that led to infant baptism are the doctrine of purgatory[16] and a system of penance to rescue souls from its tortures.

From these roots also sprang the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary.[17] The apostle John's unequivocal insistence upon the literal flesh-and-blood humanity of Christ in John 1:1-3, 14; 6:51-53; 20:17, 20, 27, and his anathamas against any who would deny this, labeling them "anti-Christ" (1 John 4:1-2; 2 John 7-11), prevented the first-century church from denying Christ's human nature. But the doctrine of original sin, whose underlying dualism identifies sin with the flesh, faced the church with a serious dilemma. It appeared that Christ could not partake of the same physical inheritance as sinful man without also inheriting original sin, and with it actual guilt, in which case He Himself would need a Savior.

To resolve this dilemma it was eventually concluded that Mary was miraculously and immaculately preserved from every taint of her mother's sin. Removed from the natural

processes of heredity, she was thought to be restored to the state of Adam before sin.[18] Conceived within a perfect human mother by the Holy Spirit, Christ would thus be totally removed from any hereditary effect of sin.

Protestants and the Doctrine of Immaculate Conception

Protestants repudiate the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary, which elevates her above the sinful race, denies her need of blood atonement, and effectively gives her the status of co-redemptrix. Evangelicals who hold to Augustine's doctrine of original sin, however, take a position which might be called the immaculate conception of Jesus.

Though they protest the Catholic concept that Mary had a sinless nature, in claiming for Jesus the heredity of Adam before sin they are in essential agreement with Catholics concerning the human nature of Christ. The denial of His immediate hereditary relationship to the sinful race causes them no undue perplexity, for their dualistic conception of the nature of man, which dissociates the body from the soul in the redemptive process, greatly reduces the significance of the body and thus of Christ's physical heredity. Moreover, strong reaction to liberalism's almost exclusive focus upon Christ's humanity has caused Evangelicals to take an opposing view, emphasizing His divinity more than His humanity.[19] But there is no safety in either extreme. Christ's entire divine-human nature requires equal and balanced emphasis.

Evangelicals gather biblical support for their position from passages which emphasize the absolute purity, holiness, and sinlessness of Christ. Such passages appear to confirm their view of the manner in which He was to be "separate from sinners" (Heb 7:25). In Paul's statement that Christ came "in the *likeness* of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3) they see clear evidence that, although Christ was a real man, His nature was not the same as but only like or similar to ours.

Where Do Seventh-day Adventists Stand?

Historically Seventh-day Adventists have avoided a dualistic interpretation of the fallen human condition, in regard to both humankind generally and the humanity of Christ in particular. Over the past three or four decades, however, a position has developed that is similar to that of Augustine.[20] This shift represents an attempt to protect the absolute sinlessness of a Savior who could bear our sins only because He Himself "knew no sin" (2 Cor 5:21). Christ's acceptance of human weaknesses is generally affirmed, but is thought in some cases to have taken place vicariously, just as He bore human guilt vicariously.[21] Some Seventh-day Adventists have seen the belief that flesh is somehow inherently sinful[22] as providing a basis for agreement with Evangelicals who, for their part, have been reluctant to recognize Seventh-day Adventists as Christians. Furthermore, statements by Ellen G. White such as the following seem to indicate that Christ took the nature of Adam before his fall:

> Christ came to the earth, taking humanity and standing as man's representative, to show in the controversy with Satan that man, as God created him, connected with the Father and the Son,

could obey every divine requirement. . . . He began where the first Adam began. . . . We should have no misgivings in regard to the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ.[23]

Most Seventh-day Adventist writers, however, and also most statements written by Ellen White, demand that a complete break be made with the Evangelical position. They insist that, because of the time in history when He came into the world, the results of sin did indeed affect the biological inheritance of Christ, as received through Mary, but that instead of being contradictory this fact is entirely consistent with His own perfect sinlessness. Correct doctrine on this point is vital to the development of that experience in righteousness by faith which will prepare the saints for the latter rain and the second coming of Christ. Paul's statement on the humanity of Christ in Rom 8:3 was mentioned earlier. It will now be useful to consider at greater length what he says there.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (Rom 8:3)

One reason for rejecting the Evangelical interpretation of Rom 8:3 is that it is inconsistent. If one were to apply the above interpretation to Phil 2:7, which contains a similar statement by the same author on the same subject, the result would be a denial of the very humanity of Christ:

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (Phil 2:7).

If, by saying "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3) Paul asserted that Christ's flesh was similar to but not the same as ours, then when he states that Christ was "made in the likeness of men" (Phil 2:7) he must be taken to mean that Christ was similar to but not actually a man.

There is a straightforward solution to the problem posed by comparing Rom 8:3 and Phil 2:7 and it lies within the words of the passages themselves. "Sinful flesh" on the one hand is equivalent to "men," i.e., mankind, on the other. Notice carefully that in Rom 8:3 what Paul says is "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (KJV), or "in the likeness of sinful man" (NIV). He does not say "in sinful flesh," which would imply Christ was sinful, or "in the likeness of flesh," which would call into question the reality of His physical nature and support docetism. Christ bore our sins but did not Himself become sinful; He did, however, truly and genuinely take human flesh. By His incarnation He came to fallen man "in the likeness of sinful flesh."

The book of Hebrews, which contains the most complete discussion of the nature and ministry of Christ anywhere in Scripture, clearly states that Christ took the same flesh and blood as His brethren. In order to become an effective High Priest, He chose to accept the heredity of Abraham and his descendants (Heb 2:14-18; 4:14-16). This concurs with Paul's introduction to Romans in which he says Christ "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom 1:3), and elsewhere concludes, "whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom 9:5).

That Paul says "the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom 1:3) is especially significant in light of Matthew's genealogy, where we find no fewer than four different women listed. This would be unusual enough in and of itself, but in this case three of the four women were Gentiles and two of them, along with the only Hebrew, were either harlots or conceived

Christ's ancestors illegitimately (Matt 1:3-6). Matthew's apparently deliberate exposure of the illegitimacy of David's son Solomon is also significant. Omitting Bathsheba's name, he refers only to "her that had been the wife of Urias" (Matt 1:6). Could it be that in this way the Holy Spirit was trying to help us grasp the completeness of Jesus' hereditary link with the entire Gentile world and with every sinner? In this setting consider the following statement from *Desire of Ages*:

> It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life.[24]

Three times in Romans Paul emphasizes the biological inheritance of Christ, referring individually to David (Rom 1:3) and the Jewish patriarchs (Rom 9:5) and then more inclusively to all mankind as "sinful flesh" (Rom 8:3). Christ was not only a member of the Jewish race; He became a member of the human race--one with us all.

Conclusion

The urgency of understanding the completeness of the human nature of Christ can be seen from the following statement:

> The Savior was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. . . . God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.[25]

Since "Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church,"[26] and since when this happens "He will come to claim them as His own,"[27] the nature of Christ and its practical faith-developing implications are surely the most urgent issue before us today. During His life on earth, "Christ was seeking to lead [His disciples] from their low condition of faith to the experience they might receive if they truly realized what He was--God in human flesh."[28] He is seeking to lead us now into the same experience that His disciples should have had then, and thus to prepare us for a crisis before He appears that will be very similar to the one faced by His disciples when He was taken away.

Note: Moore has been a missionary--first in Alaska, then in Africa--and has served on the theology faculties of both Solusi College in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland. He holds a New York University Ph.D. in Christian Education (1980). His dissertation, *Theology in Crisis: Ellen G. White's Concept of Righteousness by Faith as it Relates to Contemporary SDA Issues*, was published and widely distributed by Life Seminars (Corpus Christi, TX: 1979). Since 1979 Dr. Moore has been Coordinator for Native American Affairs at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The present paper is a heavily revised and edited form of part 4 in a 1974 series entitled, "Righteousness by Faith: Is the Adventist Concept Unique?" Scripture quotations are from the King James Version. [This note was written in 1987. Moore is now retired, but in the meantime served for a number of years as president of LaVoy Missionary College in Alberta, Canada. I first met him when he was director of La Vida Mission near Farmington, New Mexico.]

[1]"Some scholars today consider gnosticism synonymous with metaphysical dualism--or even with pluralities of gods. Irenaeus denounced as blasphemy such caricatures of the conviction, fundamental to the Hebrew Scriptures, that 'the Lord your God is one God.' But Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus' contemporary, tells us that there was a 'monadic *gnosis*'; and the discoveries at Nag Hammadi also disclose that Valentinian gnosticism--the most influential and sophisticated form of gnostic teaching, and by far the most threatening to the church--differs essentially from dualism" (Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* [New York: Random House, 1979], p. 31). I grant that there was more than one form of gnosticism but challenge the claim that Valentinian gnosticism was the most threatening to the church. It was more subtle at first but its influence was felt for a limited time only. Marcionite gnosticism, on the other hand, with its antipathy toward the Old Testament and its inherent dualism, exerted an influence that has had vastly more significant consequences in the long term.

[2]Luther identified dualism with "all those monstrous opinions to be found in the Roman dunghill of decretals" (quoted by Francis Blackburne in LeRoy Edwin Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers*, 2 vols. [Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1966], 2:27). William Tyndale, the Anabaptists, and others also repudiated soul/body dualism as a papal doctrine (see ibid., pp. 73-79, 94-95).

[3]Followers of Valentinus believed in one God, while Marcionite gnostics did not. The latter group denied the uniqueness of the God of the Old Testament. "Irenaeus himself tells us that the creed which effectively screened out Marcionites from the church proved useless against the Valentinians. In common with other Christians, they recited the orthodox creed" (ibid., p. 32). The creed referred to affirmed that one and the same God was "both 'Father Almighty' [as in the New Testament] and 'Maker of heaven and earth' [as in the Old]" (ibid., p. 28).

[4]"In the beginning of the fourth century monasticism appears in the history of the church, and thenceforth occupies a distinguished place. Beginning in Egypt, it spread in an irresistible tide over the East and the West, continued to be the chief repository of the Christian life down to the times of the Reformation, and still remains in the Greek and Roman churches an indispensable institution and the most productive seminary of saints, priests, and missionaries" (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols. [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], vol. 3, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity from Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great: A.D. 311-600*, p. 149).

[5]See ibid., pp. 116-25. Calvin, the great systematizer of Augustine's predestinarian doctrine, thus also championed his dualism, branding the restored truth of man's sleep until the resurrection as "psychomannychia" and labeling its adherents as "babblers, madmen, dreamers, drunkards, . . ." (p. 117). One of the three reasons why he consented to Servetus' death was the latter's belief in "soul sleep" (p. 115).

[6]Luther held that death involves an unconscious state. Froom quotes Blackburne as follows: "The misfortune is that his more immediate disciples . . . set themselves to prove he never held it [wishing] to conceal Luther's sentiments on the intermediate state [i.e., sleep in death]" (ibid., p. 76). There is a growing recognition now of Luther's true position. As Earnest Gordon Rupp has pointed out, "Luther returns more accurately and more nearly to the Biblical anthropology than the Platonic dualism of 'soul' and 'body,' . . . And Luther's teaching is concerned with 'the whole man'" (*The Righteousness of God: Luther Studies*, 1947 Birk Beck Lectures in Ecclesiological History [London: Hodder and Staughton, 1953], pp. 253-54). Paul also taught against natural immortality (see 2 Tim 6:15-16).

[7]Gnostics openly ridiculed the literalness of Christ's own resurrection (Pagels, *Gnostic Gospels*, p. 11). Already during his lifetime Paul was forced to deal with such views: "If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Cor 15:13-14). The Seventh-day Adventist theology of death, like Paul's, is solidly based on the biblical doctrine of a bodily resurrection.

[8]"Why [Marcion] asked, would a God who is 'almighty'--all-powerful--create a world that includes suffering, pain, disease--even mosquitoes and scorpions? Marcion concluded that these must be two different Gods" (Pagels, *Gnostic Gospels*, p. 28).

[9]The New Testament book that deals with most extensively with the spiritual meaning of the sanctuary is Hebrews. According to Alfred Wikenhauser, "In the Western Church Heb. was known at a very early date, but in spite of being esteemed and used, it was not considered Pauline and canonical until about 350 A.D. . . . Between 350 and 400 A.D., under Eastern influence the Western Church accepted it into the Canon as a work of Paul's. Yet there were wide fluctuations of opinion up to 400 A.D." (*New Testament Introduction* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1958, p. 458).

[10]This is not to say that God caused Adam to sin, but neither can a disclaimer of this sort suffice to remove the element of predestination entirely from Augustine's views on man's fall. Bear in mind that as an Augustinian friar Martin Luther studied, correctly understood, and eventually repudiated the strong Augustinian position. But before the reaction there was a period of initial acceptance. Young Luther had been taught that "man's destiny is already determined, perhaps adversely. God is so absolute that nothing can be contingent. Man's fate has been decreed since the foundation of the world, and in large measure also man's character is already fixed. This view commended itself all the more to Luther because it had been espoused by the founder of his order, St. Augustine . . ." (Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand*, New American Library [New York: Mentor Books, 1950], p. 44). But Luther could not accept Augustine's position and at the same time acknowledge that God is fair and just. It was precisely his perplexity on this point that drove Luther to say, "Love God? I hated him!" (ibid.).

[11]"Augustine makes the important distinction between the possibility of not sinning and the impossibility of sinning. The former is conditional or potential freedom from sin, which may turn into its opposite, the bondage of sin. This belonged to man before the fall. . . . Like Pelagius he ascribes freedom of choice to the first man before the fall" (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* 3:819, 821). Thus, Augustine does not attempt to contradict James 1:13 by teaching that God caused Adam to sin. But such disclaimers only go so far in removing the traces of inevitability from Augustine's views on the fall.

[12]"Since we were, at the time of the fall, 'in lumbis Adami,' the sin of Adam is 'jure seminationis et germinationis,' our sin and guilt, and physical death is a penalty even upon infant children, as it was a penalty upon Adam. The posterity of Adam therefore suffer punishment not for the sin of another, but for the sin which they themselves committed in Adam" (Schaff, *History*, 3:824). The implications of this position were not lost on Luther, who for some time was an Augustinian friar. "The final and the most devastating doubt of all assailed the young man [Luther]. Perhaps not even God himself is just. This misgiving arose in two forms, depending on the view of God's character and behavior. Basic to both is the view that God is too absolute to be conditioned by considerations of human justice" (Bainton, *Here I Stand*, p. 44). Luther's first source of doubt was that God is under no obligation to reward "man's achieve-ments, no matter how meritorious" (ibid.). The second was the concept that, "Man's fate has been decreed since the foundation of the world, . . ." (ibid.). Luther, whose capacity for spiritual insight is well established, had come to a correct understanding of Augustine's theology and of what it implied.

[13]Augustine took some extreme positions, which even his supporters were slow to accept. The same was true of Pelagius, his opposite counterpart in an extended controversy

over the freedom of the human will. For this reason, after Augustine and Pelagius had both died, the most common views were only semi-Pelagian or semi-Augustinian. "At the close of this period Gregory the Great represents the moderated Augustinian system, with the *gratia praeveniens*, but without the *gratia irresistibilis* and without a particularistic *decretum absolutum*. Through him this milder Augustinianism exerted great influence upon the mediaeval theology. Yet the strict Augustinianism always had its adherents, . . ." (Schaff, *History* 3:870).

[14]Protestants must come to grips fully with what Paul is saying in Rom 5:12, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--" (NIV). Sin was thrust on all mankind by Adam in one sense, but Paul states that death comes through sin "because all sinned" and not only because Adam sinned. Here there are the twin elements of universality and of personal responsibility. Any solution that proposes eliminating either factor must be considered defective. Both are required in order to convey Paul's thought adequately. One reason why Augustine failed to do this was that he misunderstood the syntax of what Paul wrote: "For Scriptural authority he appealed chiefly and repeatedly to the words in Rom. v.12, , which are erroneously translated by the Vulgate: *in quo omnes pecaverunt*. As Augustine had but slight knowledge of Greek, he commonly confined himself to the Latin Bible, and here he referred the *in quo* to Adam (the '*one* man' in the beginning of the verse, which is far too remote); but the Greek must be taken as neuter and as a conjunction in the sense: *on the ground that*, or *because*, all have sinned. The exegesis of Augustine, and his doctrine of a *personal* fall, as it were, of all men in Adam, are therefore doubtless untenable" (Schaff, *History* 3:834).

[15]"[Infant baptism] was a very important point from the beginning of the controversy [between Pelagius and Augustine], and one to which Augustine frequently reverted" (Schaff, *History*, 3:835). By contrast Coelestius, a disciple of Pelagius and opponent of Augustine, was accused of teaching that Adam would have died with or without falling into sin and that "children come into the world in the same condition in which Adam was before the fall" (ibid., p. 793; see also pp. 805-9). Both men went to unbiblical extremes, but they did so in opposite directions.

[16]"Also [Dean Farrar] told how, under Augustine, 'we find the first distinct outline of the doctrine of purgatory which robs the opinion of endless torments of its most pressing horrors'" (ibid., p. 408). Farrar speaks of the first "'distinct outline.'" The ultimate source of this doctrine, however, was not Augustine but Tertullian (p. 347).

[17]Augustine eventually denied his earlier Manichean concept that the body is sinful in and of itself, but never completely got away from its influence. His doctrine of original sin is based upon a confusion of biological heredity with the pagan concept of a spiritually generated immortal soul. For discussion of Augustine's views on the generation of souls see Schaff, *History*, 3:829-33.

[18]The doctrine of the immaculate conception developed gradually over time. Augustine "exempts the Virgin only from actual sin, not from original, and, with all his reverence for her, never calls her mother of God" (Schaff, *History*, 3:1021).

[19]Without singling out any who might come under his much-needed caution, consider the following from G. C. Berkouwer: "Does not everyone today accept--barring now a few radical exceptions--that there has been a real Jesus of Nazareth and must not we devote all our attention to those doctrines which deny that this man Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father? The question as it is thus formulated in the church tends to weaken the urgency of our warning against the Docetic danger. One must not think that the acknowledgement of the historicity of Jesus of Nazareth is identical with the confession of the church touching the human nature of Christ. The acknowledgement of his historicity is not *half* of the Christological dogma. The point of this dogma is not that there was a historical person, one of whom it is believed on historical grounds that he really lived, but the issue is the significance of the teaching that he was true God and true man in the unity of the person. For this reason, despite the practically general agreement on the historicity of Jesus, the confession of the church regarding the human nature

of Christ remains of critical importance" (*The person of Christ*, Studies in Dogmatics [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954], p. 198).

[20]"We all are born with sinful propensities, but Jesus wasn't. Did the Holy Spirit, creatively present throughout Christ's incarnation, change the corruptible into incorruption for Jesus only (not for Mary) just as He will for all of us at the Second Advent? Is this how He can be 'that Holy thing' without sinful propensities?" (Norman Gulley, "Behold the Man," *Adventist Review*, June 30, 1983, p. 5). This suggestion is not made dogmatically, but leaves open the possibility of retaining concepts that can only be part of an Augustinian model.

[21]*Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1957), pp. 58-62.

[22]Consider the wording chosen by the NIV translators at Rom 7:18 as one example among many illustrating this point: "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature." The Greek says simply *en tē sarki mou*, lit. "in my flesh," as the footnote to vs. 18 also points out.

[23]White, *The Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1898. As regards Christ's status as the "last Adam" (1 Cor 15:45), consider the the views of Irenaeus: "Irenaeus refutes Docetism at length. Christ, he contends against the Gnostics, must be a man, like us, if he would redeem us from corruption and make us perfect. . . . Irenaeus conceived the humanity of Christ not as a mere corporeality, though he often contends for this alone against the Gnostics, but as true humanity, embracing body, soul, and spirit. He places Christ in the same relation to the regenerate race, which Adam bears to the natural, and regards him as the absolute, universal man, the prototype and summing up of the whole race" (Schaff, *History*, 2:556-57). Irenaeus' views on Christ's common inheritance with the rest of mankind would prevent him from placing Christ in the same relation to the natural race which Adam bears to it. The latter is not the significance of the term "last Adam" for Irenaeus or for Paul. Instead, as the author as well as perfecter of our faith (Heb 12:2), Christ originates the spiritual life of His followers (1 Cor 15:46) and thus stands at the head of the church--the body of regenerate believers. Thus, Paul contrasts Adam and Christ in 1 Cor 15 as well as comparing them. The comparison is that both have a progeny; the contrast is that Adam's descendents are fleshly while Christ's are spiritual. The entire point of Paul's discussion is to contrast these two important principles. When Paul states that Christ is the "last Adam" he is not talking about the biological inheritance He received from His ancestors, but the spiritual inheritance that He gives to His followers. Both Irenaeus and Ellen White had the same understanding of this matter that Paul did.

[24]White, *The Desire of Ages: The Conflict of the Ages Illustrated in the Life of Christ*, (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1940; first published 1898), p. 49.

[25]Ibid., p. 664.

[26]White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1941; first published 1900), p. 69.

[27]Ibid.

[28]*Desire of Ages*, p. 664.