

The Human Nature of Christ in View of Rom 8:3 and 1 Cor 15:45

Copyright (c) 2010 by Frank W. Hardy, Ph.D.

When we want a deep problem to study, let us fix our minds on the most marvelous thing that ever took place in earth or heaven--the incarnation of the Son of God.¹

Introduction

Below I discuss the human nature of Christ in view of Rom 8:3 and 1 Cor 15:45. Among Seventh-day Adventists the first passage is used by those with a conservative agenda to show that Christ had the same human nature that we have and the other is used by those with a liberal agenda to make the opposite point, that Christ had the human nature of Adam before the fall. We will always have something more to learn about this topic because it deals with One who is infinite. But some points can be understood and I think some of these have been missed.

If the reality of Christ's humanness and the sinlessness of His character seem incompatible with each other--if it seems impossible to give both equal emphasis or to emphasize both simultaneously--it is because we do not understand these things. As we discuss them it will always appear in some degree that our statements imply too much or too little. The two themes brought together here do not intuitively support each other. And yet Christ unites them.

What we need is a general method for dealing with material that is beyond us. The one I propose is straightforward. Let us gather up and treasure each biblical statement and not be diverted too quickly by the desire to round off our results into a neatly arranged system--a system that fits comfortably within the narrow confines of our minds. Let the loose ends remain loose until the full length and breadth of what we are dealing with becomes clear. Our first task is to know what the Bible says.

One fact that must be accepted by all sides is that Jesus became a man. He lived. The events of the gospels happened. Another equally important fact is that He did not sin. I argue below that Christ's humanity was genuine and complete and also--simultaneously and with equal emphasis--that, as the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), the holy purity of His character was also genuine and complete. A major point to be learned from studying the human life of Christ is that these facts do not contradict each other after all.

The Problem

I am not comfortable with the conservative explanations of Rom 8:3 or again with the liberal explanations of 1 Cor 15:45. These two tendencies or schools of thought within Adventism might see themselves as pursuing opposite theological goals, but I have only one

exegetical problem with both of them and it is the same in both cases. The relevant passages are now quoted from KJV and NIV in the following text exhibit.

Text Exhibit

Rom 8:3

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness [*en homoiōmati*] of sinful flesh [*sarkos hamartia*], and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (KJV)

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness [*en homoiōmati*] of sinful man [*sarkos hamartia*] to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, (NIV)

1 Cor 15:45

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (KJV)

So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. (NIV)

Conservative Seventh-day Adventists see "a literal description of the human flesh of the Saviour" in Rom 8:3.² Liberal Seventh-day Adventists, by contrast, find evidence in 1 Cor 15:45 that Christ had the human nature of unfallen Adam.³ Thus, both passages are applied to Christ in an isolated sense as referring to Himself alone. First there is His own personal flesh, then His own personal nature. One of the surest indications that something is wrong is that the two passages cannot be reconciled with each other under such assumptions. The same writer, led by the same Holy Spirit, made both of these statements in reference to the same man, Christ Jesus. When we understand them correctly they will not disagree, but will support each other perfectly.

In both cases the starting point is wrong. First, the "sinful flesh" of Rom 8:3 is not Christ's human body, but His human family--His adopted race, us. And second, the basis on which He is compared with Adam in 1 Cor 15:45 is not that He resembles Adam but that He, like Adam, has a human progeny--on the one hand physical, on the other hand spiritual. In both passages Paul has in view Christ's link to the rest of mankind.

Romans 8:3

A conservative writer, Ralph Larson, summarizes his understanding of Seventh-day Adventist teaching on Rom 8:3 between the years 1852 and 1952 in the following manner:

The texts of scripture most often employed by Ellen White and other Seventh-day Adventist writers in support of their view that the Lord Jesus Christ, in His earthly incarnation, took upon Himself the human nature of fallen man were:

First and foremost, Romans 8:3:

"God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

They understood the words *in the likeness of sinful flesh* to be a literal description of the human flesh of the Saviour. They understood the word *likeness* to have been used in this passage in the same sense in which it was used in Philippians [sic] 2:7, *made in the likeness of men*, to indicate, not a surface or partial similarity, but a true and complete likeness, differing from ours only in that the flesh (nature) of Christ never became involved in sinning.⁴

Two related problems

Larson's position is that Paul uses the term "sinful flesh" to refer to Christ's own physical body. By saying this he makes "Son" and "sinful flesh" refer to the same object. But if this is the case, why would Paul speak of comparing that one object with itself? In whatever degree "Son" and "sinful flesh" are the same, in that same degree it is illogical to speak of comparing them. That is one point. A second point is that, while Larson correctly indicates that Rom 8:3 must be studied together with Phil 2:7 because of the obvious similarity of wording in the two passages, the main point he draws from doing so is that the word "likeness" in Rom 8:3 has the same meaning as the same word "likeness" in Phil 2:7. The latter passage is now quoted along with the two verses leading up to it.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

- (6) Who, being in very nature God,
 did not consider equality with God something
 to be grasped,
 (7) but made himself nothing,
 taking the very nature of a servant,
 being made in human likeness. (Phil 2:5-7)

At this point, instead of adding in extra context, let all unnecessary words be stripped away. In the Greek the clauses in question read as follows:

Greek: *en homoiōmati sarkos hamartia* (Rom 8:3)

Literal gloss: "in [the] likeness of sinful flesh"

Greek: *en homoiōmati anthrōpōn* (Phil 2:7)

Literal gloss: "in [the] likeness of men"

The comparison can be stated even more simply than this. We need only write the words *en homoiōmati* once. See fig.

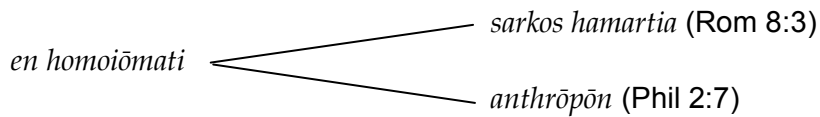


Fig. Comparison of Rom 8:3 and Phil 2:7, where the words *en homoiōmati* ("in [the] likeness"), being identical in both verses, are not repeated.

Thus, the first problem is that if the words "Son" and "sinful flesh" refer to the same object, it will not have a relationship of "likeness" to itself but one of identity. The challenge for Larson in this regard is not so much to find the right meaning of "likeness" in Rom 8:3 but to find any meaning for it at all. It makes no sense to compare one object with itself, whatever the context or topic might be.

The second problem is the same as the first but occurs when comparing different passages rather than different terms within a single passage. The point to draw from bringing Rom 8:3 and Phil 2:7 together is not that *en homoiōmati* is used in the same way as *en homoiōmati* but that *sarkos hamartia* (lit., "sinful flesh") is used in the same way as *anthrōpōn* (lit., "men"). These latter terms are just as similar in meaning as the two occurrences of *en homoiōmati* are in form. This is the point to bring away from the comparison. Paul shows us in Phil 2:7 what he means in Rom 8:3 by the otherwise enigmatic term "sinful flesh."

What does "sinful flesh" mean?

"Sinful flesh" means "men" (plural). "Sinful flesh" does not mean "Son." Paul uses the term "Son" in reference to Christ. He uses the term "sinful flesh" in reference to us. Thus, there really are two things to compare in Rom 8:3. Notice that the same author writing in the same book uses the same word *sarx* ("flesh") in a similar context when he says, "Therefore no one [*pasa sarx*, lit. 'all flesh' = 'no flesh'] will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin" (Rom 3:20). There can be no doubt that in this latter passage "flesh" means "human being." No human being will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law. Paul is speaking inclusively. The reference is to all descendants of Adam. And this is the sense in which he uses the expression "sinful flesh" in Rom 8:3. He is speaking of all the descendants of Adam.

Thus, the NIV rendering "sinful man" is correct and Paul may be said to have given us a sequel to Gen 1:27 ("Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness'"). In the beginning man was made in the image of God. After some 4000 years of sin (i.e., after that image had been largely effaced), Christ was made "in the likeness of sinful man." Through Him the image of God in mankind is fully and abundantly restored.

I have argued that "sinful flesh" is not something Christ has but something we are. By way of further clarification, "sinful flesh" is something we are and not something we have. Let the gnostic beliefs that human flesh is not merely corrupt in some way but that it is actually sinful to possess it be relegated to a page of church history. We should not attempt to stand between Christ and His human ancestors. The Savior needs no such protecting. His ability to take the same human flesh we have is demonstrated by the fact that He took it. And yet, having done so, He remains "holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (Heb 7:26). All sides must eventually come around to this conclusion or admit that they are in

disagreement with Heb 7:26. So the question is not how to conclude but how to get to the obvious conclusion. Was Christ sinless because He was born in such a manner that the relevant issues never arose? Or was He sinless because He refused to let anything come between Himself and His Father?

I submit that Christ was sinless because He did not sin. His fleshly inheritance from Adam, through a long succession of very faulty ancestors (Matt 1:2-16; Luke 3:23-37), is not an argument against this. Two facts represent the bedrock of any biblical Christology: (1) Christ had human ancestors--ancestors who lived in the same condition that makes salvation necessary for all the rest of us, and (2) He was sinless. When these facts are both accepted at face value, we are left asking what relationship there is between the quality of human nature Christ had to work with and the quality of life choices He made within that framework. But however we may answer this question, I think it will be clear that His human flesh was not a spiritual asset to Christ any more than ours is to us.

In Christ were united the divine and the human--the Creator and the creature. The nature of God, whose law had been transgressed, and the nature of Adam, the transgressor, meet in Jesus--the Son of God, and the Son of man.⁵

Here Ellen White shows that she accepts the doctrine of the incarnation and agrees with Paul when he says that Christ was made "in the likeness of sinful man" (Rom 8:3, NIV). Although Christ did not transgress His Father's law, He was made in the likeness of one who did. Here we have the true nature of Christ's relationship to Adam, which was always a liability to Him. It was not a means of gaining some special advantage that we do not have but yet another factor that made His earthly life difficult.

What does "likeness" mean?

If Paul has us in mind when he says "sinful flesh" in Rom 8:3, the expression "in the likeness of" is meaningful and it becomes important to know what he meant by it. Here is the appropriate place for Larson's observation that "likeness" does not indicate "a surface or partial similarity, but a true and complete likeness."⁶ In saying this Larson is on very firm ground indeed. Paul's word "likeness" must not be weakened to mean "similarity," which when pressed can only mean "dissimilarity." Paul does not state that Jesus is like us when what we really wishes to imply is that He is not like us.

Ellen White cautions, however, that Christ is not "altogether human, such an one as ourselves."⁷ This statement is true by an infinitely wide margin. He is God as well as man. None of us can ever have entirely the same set of characteristics that He does. But in respect to His humanity, it is a true and complete humanity. In taking human flesh Christ did not imitate or mimic us, but became one with us. It is as Larson says. The incarnation did not bring Christ into "a surface or partial similarity" with mankind, but into a true likeness. Until we have said this much, the way remains open for some form of docetism.⁸

What does it mean to condemn sin
"in the flesh"?

So far we have been discussing the middle clause of Rom 8:3. Let us now consider the final clause: "and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (KJV). These words could mean one of

two things. The first alternative is that Christ condemned sin in the flesh by saying we should not have sin in our flesh. (Under these assumptions, how do we get it out of our flesh?) The second alternative is that Christ condemned sin in the flesh by becoming a man, fully identical with ourselves, but without sin. Only in this way could He show that being human does not obligate anyone to sin. If we sin, it is our own doing. Here is a condemnation that accomplishes its purpose. Not only does it bring forward evidence that is at once eloquent and incontrovertible, but it is compassionate as well. It would be like the Christ we know from other passages of Scripture to expose the real nature of our weakness in this manner.

How did Ellen White understand
Rom 8:3?

I reject the notion that Ellen White's statements on Rom 8:3, as they relate to Phil 2:7, must be understood in the way Larson suggests. His position is that we come to Christ's physical body in that passage through the word "flesh." My position is that we come to it through the word "likeness." Although the topic cannot be dealt with in any comprehensive manner here, I claim that all of Ellen White's statements on this topic can be accounted for within the present model and that some cannot be accounted for in any other way. Consider one example:

He clothed His divinity with humanity, made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made *in the likeness of sinful flesh*. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.⁹

Notice the word "For." The fact that Christ "was made in the likeness of sinful flesh" is explained and clarified by saying, "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." Thus, in Ellen White's mind, Christ's act of being made in the likeness of "sinful flesh" is the same as His taking "on Him the seed of Abraham." The likeness in which He was made was that of Abraham. Abraham is one example of what "sinful flesh" means. Other examples would be David, Jeconiah, and so on down through the genealogy of Matt 1:1-16.

The manner in which Jesus' own "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39) are constituted cannot be ignored in this context but it is not where Paul puts his emphasis. And it is not where Ellen White puts her emphasis in the above quotation. Neither Paul nor Ellen White has the intent of giving us "a literal description of the human flesh of the Savior" in Rom 8:3.¹⁰ We may draw inferences from the passage in this regard, but doing so does not make them into something other than inferences.

Ellen White should be taken to mean exactly what she says when speaking of the human nature of Christ. And her point is correctly summarized by saying that "the Lord Jesus Christ, in His earthly incarnation, took upon Himself the human nature of fallen man."¹¹ But accepting Ellen White's conclusion is not the same as accepting Larson's argument--his method of defending that conclusion. Nor should the fact that he has interpreted some of our earlier writers correctly be considered evidence that I have interpreted Ellen White incorrectly. She was led by the Spirit of God and it may be that we all have some catching up to do before we fully appreciate the implications of what He was trying to say through her.

1 Corinthians 15:45

I have pointed out that in Rom 8:3 the comparison is between Christ and Adam's human children. From that passage we learn that Christ was a true Child of humanity. He had the same human nature we do, one which was "like" ours in a plenary sense. But I draw back from any suggestion that Christ's flesh was inherently evil. If one wishes to argue that it was, he should do so on the basis of some other passage. I think we need to take Christ's words much more seriously than we do when He says, "the flesh counts for nothing" (John 6:63). So that is one point. In 1 Cor 15:45 the comparison is between Christ and Adam as progenitors of our race. What I draw back from in this case is the idea that Christ had the human nature of Adam before the fall. He did not. Or if He did, by what law of genetics did He obtain it?

Christ was not born before the fall (none of Adam's children were), nor did Adam live 4000 years. If he had, most of that time would have been after he sinned. And in any event Christ's link to humanity was not through a human father but through a human mother. By the same token, Christ's link to humanity was through a human mother and not through His divine Father. God is the Author of Christ's humanity only in the sense that He initially created Adam, through whom the factors that make us human were conveyed. My point here is that humanity was conveyed to Christ not in any direct manner but through a long list of intermediaries. Otherwise it was not conveyed through intermediaries. What is the point being made in Matt 1:1-16 and Luke 3:23-37?

Irenaeus

For Irenaeus (a disciple of Polycarp, who in turn was a disciple of John the Evangelist)¹² Christ is the last Adam, not in the sense that He shares the personal characteristics of Adam, but in the much broader sense that both men initiate a human progeny. Both Adam and Christ stand at the head of the human race, although they do this in different ways.¹³ All who descend physically from Adam are physical, while those who descend spiritually from Christ are spiritual. If in Rom 8:3 we saw Christ as the Child of fallen man, in 1 Cor 15:45 we see Him as the Father of spiritual man. "Christ became one flesh with us, in order that we might become one spirit with Him."¹⁴

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.¹⁵

If the word "carnal" means fleshly, i.e., pertaining to the flesh, then in this neutral sense (but not in any other sense) Christ also was carnal (Latin *caro* or *carnis* "flesh"). Otherwise, what do we mean when we speak of the incarnation? The problem with being carnal is not anything the flesh has but something it lacks, because to have only flesh means to fall short of being spiritual. It is possible, however, to combine the flesh of Adam with the mind of Christ. Jesus did this. And the flesh He took, by the time He took it, was not only that of Adam, but that of Abraham (Heb 2:16), David (2 Tim 2:8), and Mary (Matt 1:21). Saying this does not compromise the perfect sinlessness of Christ. Denying it, however, compromises the biblical record through which we learn these things. A reasonable conclusion to draw from the above confluence of

seemingly incompatible facts is that more is involved in Christ's sinlessness than we had previously supposed.

"I was conceived in sin." [Psa. 51:5] He [David] is not talking about certain actions but simply about the matter, and he says: "The human seed, this mass from which I was formed, is totally corrupt with faults and sins. The material itself is faulty. The clay, so to speak, out of which this vessel began to be formed is damnable. What more do you want? This is how I am; this is how all men are. Our very conception, the very growth of the foetus in the womb, is sin, even before we are born and begin to be human beings."¹⁶

The above statement by Martin Luther shows the thoroughness of his Augustinian training. But here he goes too far because, having said what he does about himself and about the rest of mankind, he leaves no room for the incarnation. There must be some qualifying remark. I do not know exactly what form it should take, but I do know that Christ also was formed in the womb of a human mother and that by this means He also received the flesh of Adam. If the human flesh of which our bodies are formed really is damnable, what room has Luther left himself to speak about Christ's body? If the growth of the fetus in the womb is sin, what can Luther say about the growth of "that holy thing" that the angel describes in Mary's womb (Luke 1:35)? I submit that the nine months this holy Infant spent in Mary's body was not a pantomime. It was not an attempt on God's part to divert our attention so that we would come away thinking His Son was taking human flesh when in fact He was not taking it.

It is clear that the flesh is corrupt in some way. I do not wish to deny this. But the nature of its corruptness is such that Christ could accept the liability of possessing it without Himself needing a Savior. Some form of what Luther says must surely be true and yet we do not want to erect an anthropology that is so completely polluted by Adam that there is no room in it for Christ. He became a man. And yet, while it will never be possible to say the last word on this topic, what we do say should at least not make it impossible to learn more. Such unqualified statements about our own humanity as the one quoted above force us into a position on the incarnation that is tantamount to docetism. What we do not want to end with is a doctrine of Christ in which the body He received was fundamentally different from our own—something which He received only by miraculous means, something which had every appearance of flesh but was not flesh, or if it was flesh was not the same flesh as ours.

Augustine and Pelagius

What Augustine and Pelagius debated was the nature of Adam's relationship to his physical progeny. Here I would like to draw from that debate in order to clarify Christ's relationship to His spiritual progeny.¹⁷

Pelagius taught that Adam's fall affected no one other than himself.¹⁸ It was an individual fall. In his model each person starts life with the same nature and the same opportunities for spiritual growth that Adam once had. Augustine took a position that was equally extreme but lay in the opposite direction. For him the actual guilt of Adam's sin rests on every human child and is passed on in this way to all mankind. Few, even among their supporters, accepted what either of these men said in its entirety without qualification.¹⁹ But if Augustine is correct at least in his assertion that Adam's fall affects his progeny, leaving open for now the manner in which we are affected by it, and if Christ stands in a relation to spiritual man similar to that of Adam to physical man, it follows that, just as Adam's physical progeny are affected by his failure, Christ's spiritual progeny are affected by His success. This is Paul's point in the passage under review.

The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. (48) As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. (49) And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. (1 Cor 15:47-49)

As we compare Christ's humanity with our own, it is not primarily the case that we learn what He is like by studying ourselves. Without Christ we cannot know ourselves, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23). This fact systematically skews the available data and from distorted data one can only expect to draw distorted conclusions. Christ must be allowed to occupy a central place in our anthropology just as He occupies the central place in our soteriology. Assuming at the outset that His humanity is fundamentally different from ours only serves to make such comparisons irrelevant. We can learn about ourselves from Christ only in the degree that His human nature and ours are comparable.

Ellen White

I make no attempt here to review the literature on the Christology of Ellen White. Let me make just one comment that bears on the present discussion.

The book *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine*,²⁰ which has produced so much comment, is controversial mainly because of Appendix B and its treatment of the human nature of Christ.²¹ Within Appendix B there are numerous quotations from the writings of Ellen White and to my knowledge they have been reproduced accurately. But heading "III. Took Sinless Human Nature" on p. 650 places one group of quotations in a context that some feel is misleading. The key word here is not "Sinless" but "Nature." Christ's perfect sinlessness is not at issue, except as those who confuse "sinful nature" with "sin" might believe it is at issue. The whole point that conservative Seventh-day Adventists wish to make is that the two concepts are not the same.

Discussion

Christ had no sin--no hint of sin, no propensity to sin. In His mother's womb He was "that holy thing which shall be born of thee" (Luke 1:35, KJV). But to say this intelligently we must understand what sin is and what it is not. There is middle ground between making Christ actually sinful and sealing Him off from the rest of mankind as though His humanity were fundamentally different from ours.

Elsewhere I argue that perfection--in the only sense that it is relevant for Christians to talk about perfection, i.e., Christian perfection--is relational, not residing in the sinner as such but in the relationship between the sinner and Christ.²² It certainly does not reside in any individual separately from Christ. Separation from Christ is the logical opposite of Christian perfection.

In the same way, sin is not a philosophical abstraction but consists in going one's own way independently of God. It also is relational in nature. When Isaiah writes, "We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way" (Isa 53:6), he is describing the sin problem--the good gift of free will cut loose from the controls that would make it a blessing rather than a curse. When we turn to our own way what we are turning away from is the Shepherd.

This is something Christ refused to do. As a man He emptied Himself and took the self-crucifying position of relying on His Father's wisdom and strength for everything. He clung to His Father as a vine to its ledge (see John 15:5) and invites us to cling to Him in turn. Here is the sequel to the Christmas story, in which Jesus was born into the world completely and entirely helpless. It is not a story with an abrupt ending. Christ's entire life was marked by an absolute and total reliance on His Father. Doing so is not sin. Having to do so is not sin. On the contrary, such reliance is the very essence of what I mean by Christian perfection. But my point here is that in casting Himself upon the Father's care in every situation our Lord was not pretending. Christ's relationship with His Father is not merely an example to us, like His baptism (Matt 3:15), but in itself reveals an important truth about His humanity.

Christ had all the human weaknesses that His humanity would imply, but He did not sin. He had no desire to sin. The thought of sinning was loathsome to Him. He was repelled by it.²³ This fact provides the only context for His dependance on the Father that makes any real sense. This is what Ellen White means when she speaks of Christ having a sinful or fallen human nature. She does not mean He was sinful or that He fell. She means that He accepted no advantage over us. "He did not make believe take human nature; he did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature."²⁴

Every child of Adam is born with the need to trust in a power outside himself for spiritual life and growth. We, however, uniformly ignore this need until reaching the age of conversion and new birth. By then our characters have been shaped by years of sinful attitudes and habits, compounding the problem. If this is what it means to go astray like sheep, then conversion is the point at which we accept the need for a Shepherd. But Christ, unlike the rest of us, did not go off on His own, independently of His Father. His flesh was identical to ours, but He did not sin. Nor is there any compelling reason why we should continue in sin once His power has been felt in our lives.

I have pointed out that Paul, in Rom 8:3 and again in 1 Cor 15:45, views Christ in terms that go beyond His role as an individual to His relationship with us--first as a Child of fallen man and then as the Father of spiritual man. We must grasp this broader context before it will be possible to understand what Paul is saying. And in the same way, we must see ourselves in relation to Him in order to realize that there is any solution to the problem of sin as contrasted with the problem of guilt. Clearly in the atonement we have the solution to our guilt problem, but my point is that in the atonement we also have the solution to our sin problem.

So long as the human relationship with sin is thought to be confined within ourselves, it will be irrational to speak of this particular problem in terms of solutions. The natural man cannot root out what is part of himself. And the challenge that confronts spiritual man is not entirely summed up in doing the same thing with outside help. It is not only that the solution lies outside us. The problem also must be seen in relational terms--as a severed relationship. More is at issue than what qualities reside within us. God knows what qualities reside within us. But He asks us to obey. The issue for us, as it was for Christ, is what object holds our attention. So long as we are the object of our own attention, any effort to resolve the sin problem will only compound it. It is not until the perspective is broadened to include a perfectly trustworthy and loving Father--the same one that Jesus relied on so completely under similar circumstances--that the insoluble mystery of overcoming something that is part of ourselves begins to unravel. Is it really impossible for fallen mortals, because they are fallen, to respond to love? Where do we read that in Scripture? Is it impossible to trust One who is in every way trustworthy? Why? If Christ responded to His Father in love and trust, He can put these things in our hearts also. There is nothing impossible in this.

Conclusion

Christ drew no benefit from His relationship to Adam, nor would He have benefitted from it if the humanity in question had been received before Adam's fall. On the contrary,

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.²⁵

The one person who really did have the nature of unfallen Adam was Adam. But having it did not keep him from sinning when what he wanted to do was sin. And lacking it did not in any way separate Christ from His Father as regards trust or obedience. The human nature that Christ took in the incarnation put Him at a disadvantage and yet He could still say toward the end of His ministry, "I have brought you to glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4). I conclude that there is a sense in which the nature that Christ had was simply irrelevant to His success. He lived by a power that went infinitely far above and beyond it.

This fact has implications. We also, though fatally independent by nature and afflicted with every spiritual malady Paul describes in Rom 7, can respond to Christ's love and can learn to trust our heavenly Father. These are precisely the elements of obedience--the very things God requires of us.

I challenge Luther's assertion that the flesh of Adam is damnable in and of itself. God does not punish us because we are human. We had no choice in the matter of being born. What He punishes is the choice to keep sins that He has made every provision to remove from us. If we turn away from our sins, this is not the same as claiming to be without sin in the sense of 1 John 1:8 ("If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us"). All of us live the first several years of our lives without reference to God and such independence is sin. So we need not worry about the likelihood that someone, by chance alone or by diligent effort, will one day live a life which disproves the truth of John's statement. It will never be. And yet we need not end the same way we began.

Having Christ to turn to for help is not the same as not having Him. Relying on a loving Father is not the same as being oblivious to His existence. The fact that sin is unconquerable without His aid is not evidence that it is unconquerable. The power of God is not irrelevant to what we are talking about here.

The one impression that I would most like to convey in this paper is that the gospel is for real people under every conceivable circumstance of practical life. Christ does not merely appeal to people in all cultures, but appeals to every person in all cultures. This does not mean that all will respond to Him, but they could if they chose. There is a robustness in the religion of Christ that we need to get hold of. The gospel is not designed for some spiritual elite who, by virtue of special theological ability, can alone enjoy its benefits. Christ is able to save the weakest person starting from whatever point is necessary if he or she will simply trust Him and do what He says.²⁶ We make these things harder than they are.

Excursus on Romans 7

When Christ says, "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt 5:48), the key word is not "perfect" but "Father." It is of course true that God created the world and made man in His image. But is He our Father only in the sense that He is responsible for our existence? If that is the case, we must ask what Christ means when He uses the same term, because Christ owes His existence to no one. "In him was life, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:4; see also 5:26). As regards the rest of mankind, if God's creatorship is the only point at issue in Matt 5:48, what does Christ mean when He tells the Pharisees, "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire" (John 8:44)? The second clause explains the first. The Pharisees are called children of the devil in this passage because they wanted to carry out the devil's desire. In the same way, we are called children of God when we want and choose to carry out God's desires. The children of God are "those who are led by the Spirit of God" (Rom 8:14), who "participate in the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4) in a manner that I believe is illucidated by 1 John 4:16 ("God is love").

If we are not led by the Spirit of God and do not participate in the divine nature (in the sense 2 Pet 1:4), as the Pharisees in John 8:44 did not, we cannot call God our Father. We are "illegitimate children and not true sons" (Heb 12:8). This is the point Jesus was trying to convey to Nicodemus in John 3:1-21. There is no new or unusual doctrine here, or at least no doctrine that is any more new or unusual than John 3:16. To be the children of God means to reflect God's character, to be like Him in a spiritual sense.

The conflict that begins at
conversion

The flesh of Adam is at war with the Spirit and yet in some way it is natural for God's children to be like Him and to please Him by what they do. This much follows from the way in which Christ invites us to use terms borrowed from human kinship when addressing the Father and Himself. There is nothing unnatural about kinship. The words "nature," "natural," "native," "nativity," and so on all derive from the concept of birth, which is the point at which all natural relationships begin. Otherwise, what do we mean by a natural relationship?

In view of our fallen human condition, how is it possible to maintain both positions? How is it possible to have a natural relationship both to Adam and to God? I merely point out that Christ did. He had the human flesh of Adam and participated in the divine nature--not only by reason of being co-equal with God but in the same spiritual sense that He opens to each of us. I cannot explain how these things are so, but both assertions are firmly biblical. God's explanation to the world and to the universe, His Word, does not consist only in something we hear, as when Christ preached to the multitudes. It consists also in the person of the One speaking: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched" (1 John 1:1). Through John the Baptist God says, "Behold" (John 1:29, KJV). That one word sums up God's explanation to mankind.

More on Augustine and Pelagius

There are only two ways in which the point of what God is saying to us in Christ can be missed. The first lies in asserting that Christ was nothing more than a man (He was not really

divine). This objection poses no threat to Evangelical Christians or to modern Seventh-day Adventists. The second is to say that Christ was more than a man and no other statement concerning Him is true (He was not really human). He did not have flesh, or at least He did not have our flesh. He was the last Adam in the individual sense that He resembled Adam.

This latter claim has more affinity with the views of Pelagius than of Augustine. Pelagius argued that Adam's fall was confined to Adam alone, leaving his descendants in succeeding generations unaffected. Thus, Adam was an island of failure and, on this analogy, Christ is an island of success, leaving His spiritual progeny unaffected. All the arguments that Pelagius brought forward to support the one view can be adapted to support the other. (Another way to put this is that if the latter is supported, it will be from such arguments.) And all of the arguments with which Augustine opposed Pelagius in regard to Adam can be applied equally to Christ, such that if Adam's fall did not leave his fleshly progeny unaffected, Christ's recovery of Adam's failure does not leave His spiritual progeny unaffected either. "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22). This is the other side of Augustine's argument--a beneficial side that deserves emphasis.

Is there an asymmetry between the two Adams such that the influence of the first is the only natural one and must remain forever dominant? In this event, why do we call God our Father? If in Christ we are true sons and not illegitimate children, how does our spiritual birthright from the last Adam interact with our fleshly birthright from the first Adam?

Martin Luther

A point assumed (and therefore conceded) by even asking the above question is the obvious one that an interaction of some sort does occur.

Inner conflict takes more than one form. My question in Rom 7 is not how a spiritual person could have the struggle Paul describes, but how anyone else could. Certainly the Spirit of God appeals to unconverted hearts in any number of ways. "'There is no peace,' says the Lord, 'for the wicked'" (Isa 48:22). And an unconverted man might possibly acknowledge, with Paul, "We know that the law is spiritual" (vs. 14). But how can such a person go on to say, "For in my inner being I delight in God's law" (Rom 7:22)? Martin Luther comments:

Oh, how the false philosophy of Aristotle has deceived our theologians (*the medieval Scholastics*)! They teach that sin is entirely destroyed by baptism or repentance, and so regard it as absurd that the Apostle should here confess: "Sin . . . dwelleth in me." As a converted, or spiritual man, they say, he could no longer have any sin in him; therefore, they argue, he here speaks of himself as a carnal (*or unconverted man*).²⁷

Before conversion the mind is in harmony with the flesh and at war with the Spirit. After conversion the mind is in harmony with the Spirit and at war with the flesh. Denying the latter conflict offers no help in understanding it. Paul made no such denial. He openly acknowledged that in his life there was an intense inner struggle against the power of sin. But struggling against sin is not the same as struggling against the Holy Spirit when He attempts to convict us of sin. It is not wrong to struggle against sin. This point needs to be understood with exact clarity. Some forms of conflict are not only expected and acceptable in the spiritual life of a converted person but are of crucial importance to his growth and well being.

Only spiritual people experience Paul's conflict. I submit with Luther that in Rom 7 Paul is describing the inner conflict of a converted Christian. Unconverted people have no basis for experiencing it. Thus, Rom 8 is not the opposite counterpart of Rom 7 but a logical extension of

it which shows how the conflict is resolved--each and every day of a Christian's life. Otherwise, what does Paul mean when he writes, "I die every day" (1 Cor 15:31)? It is crucifying to rely on a source of power outside ourselves for the strength we cannot supply. Spiritual growth involves learning to apply this principle in more and more ways until every facet of one's life is brought into subjection to Christ. What I am saying here should sound very familiar to any converted Christian. And that is my point. Paul's experience in Rom 7 should remind us of our own if, and to the degree that, we are spiritual people. Some have always denied this.

There are some, and among them St. Augustine, who denied that the Apostle here speaks of his own person, and indeed of himself as being spiritual and not as carnal. But the whole passage shows very clearly a strong hatred against the flesh and a sincere love for the Law and all that is good. No carnal man ever does this. He rather hates the Law and follows his flesh and evil lusts. The spiritual man fights against his flesh and deplores that he cannot do what (*as a new man*) he desires to do. The carnal does not fight at all, but readily yields to sin. In I Corinthians 9:27 the Apostle writes: "I keep under my body, and bring it unto subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

Again in 7:14 the Apostle says: "I am carnal, sold under sin." That is the proof of a spiritual and wise man. He knows that he is carnal, and he is displeased with himself; indeed, he hates himself and praises the Law of God, which he recognizes because he is spiritual. But the proof of a foolish, carnal man is this, that he regards himself as spiritual and is pleased with himself.²⁸

Thus, while Augustine holds that Paul was carnal in Rom 7 and spiritual in Rom 8, making the two chapters incompatible with each other, Luther argues that he was spiritual throughout. I agree with Luther. Conversion is a precondition for the level of experience Paul describes. It cannot emerge until the birthright of Christ is introduced into the same life with the birthright of Adam. As soon as they are brought together in this way one must dominate the other. Here is the conflict Paul has in view.

I emphasize that it is not wrong to oppose wrong; it is not sin to resist sin. On the contrary, when sin is resisted, that is evidence that another principle is at work in a person's life and that he has come into spiritual relationship with God. There is no escaping this situation so long as we live in the body. One can deny Christ by a perverse exercise of the will, but one cannot deny Adam short of leaving this life altogether. And yet we should be very careful when evaluating the significance of this fact.

What shall we say about Christ? We now come to a question on Rom 7 which stands in relation to Luther's views as his did to those of Augustine. The question is this: If the experience of Rom 7 is that of a spiritual man (no unspiritual person has any basis for experiencing it), and if Christ is the prototypical spiritual Man, is there any sense in which Paul's war against the flesh can be said to have a counterpart in Christ's life? He took human flesh and above all others was spiritual. So both factors are present. Was there a conflict in Christ's life which bears comparison in some way with that of Paul? And if there was, how can we reconcile it with the biblical statements that He was without sin? That is, how can we reconcile the second clause of Heb 4:15 with the third?

[a] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, [b] but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--[c] yet was without sin. (Heb 4:15)

Rejecting the doctrine of the immaculate conception of Mary implies that Christ had some form of the experience described in Rom 7. One cannot be both human and spiritual and not experience it. But if He did not, how can He understand what we are talking about when we confide in prayer that we are going through it and what does the first clause of Heb 4:15 mean when it says, "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses" (Heb 4:15a)? But let us be very clear which weaknesses we are talking about. I submit that Christ has a very thorough firsthand experience of our conflict against the flesh. What He does not have in any form is an experience of the natural man's conflict against the Holy Spirit. Gaining the latter experience would have been sin. But the former was not. On the contrary, gaining it was an essential qualification for high priestly office (see Heb 7:11-28).

Therefore it is simultaneously true that there are important qualitative differences between Paul's experience and that of Christ on the one hand and that during His life on earth the One who was to become our "merciful and faithful high priest" came under some form of the conflict Paul describes in Rom 7.

I have emphasized the latter point. Let me now emphasize the former. Paul lived the first thirty or forty years of his life in self-righteous independence from God and went on to persecute the church. "Was Christ ever known to consign men to the prison or the rack because they did not pay Him homage as the King of heaven? Was His voice heard condemning to death those who did not accept Him?"²⁹ When Paul says in 1 Tim 1:15 that he was the worst of sinners, his statement can be accepted on grounds other than hyperbole as being literally true. There is no confusing his life record with that of Christ.

Let us assume for argument that in Rom 7 Paul is speaking as an unspiritual man about his earlier conflict against the Holy Spirit (see Acts 26:14). In this case there is no stopping point. If we remove Paul's war against the flesh from Christ's experience, we remove it from our own as well. Before conversion what Paul says would be incomprehensible to us and afterward it would no longer apply. But if we do not remove Rom 7 from discussion in this way, we will have to take one of two positions. We will either have to show how some features of Rom 7 apply to Christ's experience (I specifically deny that all do) or we will have to put forward a definition of spiritual men that excludes the one prototypical spiritual Man.

Discussion

In becoming a man Christ emptied Himself completely. Never once did He draw strength from His own unlimited resources. If He had, the very success that resulted in this way would have been sin for Him, just as surely as our own feeble efforts to be independent are sin for us. And at this point the issues in the great controversy would have been yielded.

But this is not how things happened. Christ relied on His Father for everything and, as a result, lived above the limitations of His fleshly inheritance from Adam. So in what sense must we think that He is tainted by succeeding under such circumstances? How is Christ rendered less capable in His role as "a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God" (Heb 2:17) by undergoing an ordeal that was real instead of one that was imaginary? The author of Hebrews makes precisely the opposite point, that it was this experience which rendered Him "perfect" (Heb 5:8), i.e., perfectly adapted to be "the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him" (Heb 5:9). The claim after all is not that Christ failed, but that He succeeded.

It is crucifying to rely on a power outside oneself and yet Jesus did this constantly throughout His life. Thus, when He was finally placed physically on the cross, His willingness to go there was the outward expression of a dying to self which had characterized His entire life leading up to that moment. It was not a break with what had gone before (His death as opposed to His life) but the epitome or ultimate expression of that life. If we marvel at Christ's deeds because He was able to perform them, feeling that they create a barrier between us, we completely miss the entire point they were designed to convey. He trusted His Father and fully accepted the implications of His own words, "By myself I can do nothing" (John 5:30).

There is nothing in the human condition which would prevent us from relying on the Father in the same way Jesus did. After His resurrection Christ told Mary, "I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (John 20:17). The Source of His strength can be the source of ours. This is not a point of difference between us.

Nor is this the only way in which our situations are comparable. All the infrastructure left over from Adam's sin (and that of Noah, Abraham, David, and so on down to Mary) was present in Christ's human body--every bit--and yet there was in Him nothing that responded to it. It is at this point that Christ distinguishes Himself from us. Paul says, "For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members" (Rom 7:22-23). Christ also delighted in God's law. But He did not finish His sentence the same way Paul did. Instead He says, "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him" (John 8:29). Christ did not become a prisoner to His inheritance from Adam. He did have that inheritance but the tables were now turned. Christ's flesh was made a prisoner of His will. Thus, while it is true that, "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Eph 4:8, KJV), it is also true that He led captivity captive before ascending up on high--here, in His body. Christ and Paul did not inherit different bodies from Adam. Their bodies were exactly the same. But Christ did not sin.

Let us assume for discussion that Christ did not receive the same fleshly inheritance from Adam that Paul had. For some, saying that He did is tantamount to saying He was sinful. At issue is what it means to live without sin. Christ did not want to do wrong and He did not do wrong--ever. "Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation."³⁰ This is sinlessness. His character was pure and holy. More than this, He was infinite in purity and holiness. The question is not whether these facts are facts but how to account for them. Not being defeated because there was no compromise is widely different from not being defeated because there was no contest. When we try to separate Christ from sin by giving Him a body other than ours, we do not enhance His victory but deprive Him of it.

One might argue that He did not take our fallen sinful nature because He could not, since doing so would have exposed Him to sinfulness. I take the opposite position. The fall of Adam is conveyed to his posterity through the flesh but having human flesh is not in itself sinful because Christ took that same flesh and, in the face of every seemingly impossible difficulty, remained sinless. "Such a high priest meets our need--one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens" (Heb 7:26). We know that He could take our flesh because He did take it. Otherwise He did not take it. That is docetism.

It will be argued that the above model flies in the face of accepted distinctions. They are the wrong distinctions. If it is sinful to have flesh and bones, how do we explain Christ's words after the resurrection: "Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have" (Luke 24:39)?

It is imperative that we make room in our anthropology for Christ. He should not be confined to a separate chapter labeled "Christology," as though, in respect to His human nature, there is mankind here and Christ there. Christ did truly become a man. But He did not sin. If we cannot bring together these two great facts about Him under current theory, we need a different theory because it is inescapable that He did both. And His humanity must be allowed to instruct us concerning our own. Otherwise we will remain uninstructed by Him on this crucial point and thinking ourselves wise we will prove in the end to have been fools.

Let me clarify what I mean about being fools. If we assume that the law of God cannot be kept because we are men and in Adam mankind is fallen, we excuse ourselves from the duty of obedience. But God was not ignorant of our condition when He gave us His law. Otherwise, what does Christ mean when He states that, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mark 2:27)? This statement addresses precisely the objection of those who argue that the law is inapplicable to man in his fallen condition.³¹ Is it the case that only unfallen beings need rest? If sin has weakened the race at all, the above commandment is even more appropriate now. But if we tell ourselves that we need not obey because we cannot obey, we pit our theology against the expressed will of God. We use it as a defense against Him.

This sort of theology might seem all very logical. There might even be texts of Scripture to support it. Satan quoted Scripture to Christ with exactly the same end in view--i.e., to make duty seem unnecessary, to make the expedient thing seem the right thing (see Matt 4:3). But in the judgment we will stand, as it were, before Christ, and His very person is the strongest argument that can be brought either for us or against us. Once more fallen man will hear the words, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Look! Behold! Beyond this there is no explanation and no excuse. He Himself is the embodiment of holiness and, if it is something we insist on remaining in, the condemnation of human sin. Here is the meaning of Rom 8:3.

NOTE: All Scripture quotations in this paper, except when noted otherwise, are from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright (c) 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society.

¹Ellen G. White, MS 76, 1903; quoted in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953-57), 7:904.

²Ralph S. Larson, *One Hundred Years of Seventh-day Adventist Christology: 1852-1952* (Cherry Valley, CA: Cherrystone Press, 1986), p. 13.

³Lauri Onjukka, *The Sanctuary and Perfection* (Temecula, CA: Lifemark Press, 1982), p. 21.

⁴Larson, *One Hundred Years*, p. 13. Larson was once chairman of the Church and Ministry Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Far East, which is located in the Philippines.

⁵SDA *Bible Commentary*, 7:926.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ellen White, Letter 8, 1895 (SDA *Bible Commentary*, 5:11). This is the "Baker Letter," discussed at considerable length by Larson (ibid., pp. 29-154) and, in his published doctoral dissertation, by A. L. Moore (*Theology in Crisis: Ellen G. White's Concept of Righteousness by Faith as It Relates to Contemporary SDA Issues* [Corpus Christi: Life Seminars, 1980], pp. 258-67).

⁸"The DOCETAE or DOCETISTS taught that the body of Christ was not real flesh and blood, but merely a deceptive, transient phantom, and consequently that he did not really suffer and die and rise again. Hippolytus gives an account of the system of this sect. But the name

applied as well to most Gnostics, especially to Basilides, Saturninus, Valentinus, Marcion, and the Manichaeans. Docetism was a characteristic feature of the first antichristian errorists whom St. John had in view (1 John 4:2; 2 John 7)" (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 8 vols. [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910; reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984], vol. 2: *Ante-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 100-325*, p. 497). Although he goes on to argue for a different position, Williston Walker notes that, "These opinions have sometimes been regarded as the beginnings of Gnosticism. It is true that this Docetic conception of Christ was a feature of much Gnostic teaching" (idem, *A History of the Christian Church*, rev. ed. [New York: Scribners, 1959], p. 51).

⁹*Bible Echo*, December 15, 1892, p. 370, col. 1; quoted in Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, p. 57. Emphasis supplied by Larson.

¹⁰Larson, *The Word Was Made Flesh*, p. 13.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²"In the long and rambling treatise *Against Heresies* we sense a man blessed with a rare vision. The disciple of Polycarp, who was himself the disciple of St John the Evangelist, he is still within the circle of light whose center is the love between John and Christ. This human love gave to John's mystic vision a wholly unique quality, saving it from the element of fantasy which is never entirely absent from mystic writings. The vision is whole, and lovingly contains the world which it utterly transcends; and while the Christian tradition can never die, the tradition of the beloved disciple could not but lose its original savor, which belongs to heaven not earth. Of this tradition, Irenaeus is the last representative" (John Coulson, ed., *The Saints: A Concise Biographical Dictionary* [New York: Guild Press, 1957], pp. 375-76).

¹³Adam and Christ are similar in that they both stand at the head of the human race. But that is where the similarity ends. This is a point that I think Karl Barth is in danger of missing in his book, *Christ and Adam* (New York: Octagon Books, 1983): "About this truth in Adam the *pollo mallon* makes one thing clear. It tells us that it stands under the same ordering principle as the truth in Christ, and that even though the truth in Adam is subordinate to the truth in Christ, yet in it that principle is valid and can be recognized" (ibid., pp. 44-45). This expression "the same ordering principle" occurs repeatedly throughout. But Paul's point--and certainly Irenaeus' point--is that there are two very widely different ordering principles at work in the relationship of Adam and Christ to the human race respectively. The one is physical, the other spiritual. Mistaking the one for the other could result in some form or another of universalism.

¹⁴Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1940; first published 1898), p. 388.

¹⁵Schaff, *History*, 2:556-57.

¹⁶*Luther's Works*, 12:348; quoted in Onjukka, *Sanctuary and Perfection*, p. 23.

¹⁷"To understand Augustine's doctrine of the fall of man, we must remember, first of all, that he starts with the idea of the organic unity of the human race, and with the profound parallel of Paul between the first and the second Adam; that he views the first man not merely as an individual, but at the same time as the progenitor and representative of the whole race, standing to natural mankind in the same relation as that of Christ to redeemed and regenerate mankind" (Schaff, *History*, vol. 3: *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity from Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great, A.D. 311-600*, p. 824).

¹⁸According to Coelestius, a supporter of Pelagius, "Adam's fall injured himself alone, not the human race" (Schaff, *History*, 3:793). "While the Oriental Church was exhausting her energies in the Christological controversies, and, with the help of the West, was developing the ecumenical doctrine of the person of Christ, the Latin church was occupied with the great anthropological and soteriological questions of sin and grace, and was bringing to light great treasures of truth, without either help from the Eastern church or influence upon her. . . . In this fact we see the predominantly practical character of the West, in contradistinction to the contemplative and speculative East. Yet the Christological and anthropologico-soteriological

controversies are vitally connected, since Christ became man for the redemption of man. The person and the work of the Redeemer presuppose on the one hand man's capability of redemption, and on the other his need of redemption. Manichaeism denies the former, Pelagianism the latter. In opposition to these two fundamental anthropological heresies, the church was called to develop the whole truth" (ibid., p. 785). We are now seeing the same controversy replay itself and we, as the remnant just before Jesus comes, are called upon to settle--expeditiously--theological issues that the church has wrestled with for centuries. I think it is generally the case that Seventh-day Adventists have not realized the full weight of theological responsibility that rests upon them. Once more Pelagius and Augustine are at each others' throats. The issues now are identically the same as they were then. Only now there is no time to be wrong.

¹⁹"Many, even opponents of Pelagius, recoiled from a position so wide of the older fathers as Augustine's doctrines of the bondage of man and the absolute election of grace, and preferred a middle ground. . . . Semi-Pelagianism prevailed in Gaul for several decades. Under the lead of Faustus of Rhegium it gained the victory in two synods, at Arles in 472 and at Lyons in 475, where Augustine's doctrine of predestination was condemned, though without mention of his name" (Schaff, *History*, 3:859, 865).

²⁰The full title is, *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine: An Explanation of Certain Major Aspects of Seventh-day Adventist Belief* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957).

²¹Ibid., pp. 647-60.

²²See Hardy, "The Ten Commandments, Part 3: Christian Perfection," *Historicism* No. 11/Jul 87, p. 35.

²³"Not without a struggle could Jesus listen in silence to the arch-deceiver" (Ellen White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 119). This was Christ's response to temptation. It provoked a visceral repulsion in Him.

²⁴Ellen White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 1:247.

²⁵Idem, *Desire of Ages*, p. 49.

²⁶There may be those who do not like the last part of the above sentence. Let us modify it. God can save the weakest person who trusts Him and holds His requirements in contempt. That does not sound right.

²⁷*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, trans. J. Theodore Mueller (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1954 reprint), p. 116.

²⁸Ibid., p. 112.

²⁹Ellen White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1950), p. 570.

³⁰Ibid., p. 623.

³¹The Sabbath was given to mankind on the last day of creation week--before the fall (see Gen 2:1-3)--but Christ's statement concerning it in Mark 2:27 applies afterward.