

Andrews University

Digital Commons @ Andrews University

Dissertations

Graduate Research

2011

A Comparative Study of the Concept of Atonement in the Writings of John R. W. Stott and Ellen G. White

Lawrence O. Oladini

Andrews University, oladini@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Comparative Literature Commons](#), and the [Comparative Methodologies and Theories Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Oladini, Lawrence O., "A Comparative Study of the Concept of Atonement in the Writings of John R. W. Stott and Ellen G. White" (2011). *Dissertations*. 117.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/117>

<https://dx.doi.org/10.32597/dissertations/117/>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Research at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.



Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

Thank you for your interest in the

**Andrews University Digital Library
of Dissertations and Theses.**

*Please honor the copyright of this document by
not duplicating or distributing additional copies
in any form without the author's express written
permission. Thanks for your cooperation.*

ABSTRACT

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT
IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN R. W. STOTT
AND ELLEN G. WHITE

by

Lawrence O. Oladini

Chair: John T. Baldwin

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN R. W. STOTT AND ELLEN G. WHITE

Name of researcher: Lawrence O. Oladini

Name and degree of faculty adviser: John T. Baldwin, Ph.D.

Date completed: July 2011

The study examines two evangelical penal substitutionary theologies of atonement presented by John Stott and Ellen White. It adopts a descriptive and analytic approach to examine the respective atonement theologies of both authors. Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the dissertation and the methodology adopted. Chapter 2 examines the different theories of atonement in Christian theology. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the respective atonement theologies of Stott and White. Chapter 5 is a comparative analysis of the concept of atonement in both authors, while chapter 6 summarizes the conclusions of the study.

Purpose

The purpose of the research is to describe, analyze, and compare the concept of

atonement as articulated in the theological writings of Stott and White. The study endeavors to explore the contrasting scope of atonement present in the two respective theological systems. It also aims at discovering whether there are any evangelical theological bases for a rapprochement between Stott's atonement theology (which is centered on the cross) and that of White (which is also centered on the cross, but also includes the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ). Additionally, the research also aims at finding out the reasons for the differences in their atonement theologies, since they both subscribe to the penal substitutionary view. Another goal of the research is to discover any distinctive contributions that both theologies might have made to the Christian theology of atonement.

Method

In order to bring out the similarities and differences between the two theologies of atonement, the study examines their respective assumptions, presuppositions, and methodology. Other relevant criteria used in the comparative study include the centrality of the cross, the achievement of the cross, atonement as substitution, the high priestly ministry of Christ, and the scope of the atonement.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the study reveals that the atonement theologies of Stott and White reveal a common commitment to two pillars of evangelicalism, namely the supreme authority of Scripture and the penal substitutionary view of atonement. However, critical differences between the two theologies in their respective presuppositions in their doctrines of God in relation to atonement on the cross versus atonement in stages, the

extent of the atonement, the issue of the revocability of justification, the cosmic controversy theme, and the high priestly ministry of Christ seem to account for the differences observed in the theologies. Overall, White's theology seems to be broader in its presentation of the scope of the atonement and seems to be more consistent with the scriptural evidence. It is hoped that the renewed interest in the judgment aspect of the atonement by some evangelical theologians in recent times may lead to a more sympathetic examination of the broader view of White on atonement in the wider evangelical theological arena.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT
IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN R. W. STOTT
AND ELLEN G. WHITE

A Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Lawrence O. Oladini

July 2011

© Copyright by Lawrence O. Oladini 2011
All Rights Reserved

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT
IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN R. W. STOTT
AND ELLEN G. WHITE

A dissertation
presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Lawrence O. Oladini

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Faculty Adviser,
John T. Baldwin
Professor of Theology

Director of Ph.D./Th.D. Program
Thomas Shepherd

Peter M. van Bemmelen
Professor of Theology, Emeritus

Dean, SDA Theological Seminary
Denis Fortin

Denis Fortin
Professor of Theology

Date approved

DEDICATION

To my wife, Bosede, my three adult children, Tolu, Bolu, and Funmi, who endured years of emotional, and financial sacrifice, but kept the hope alive that their husband and father will “one day” finish the dissertation that he began.

To the memory of my late father, James Adeyera Oladini, who from childhood taught me and my siblings the value of excellence in education.

To the members and leaders of the congregations of which I am the pastor, for their patience, understanding and cooperation, throughout the period of my research.

And to the glory of the Lord Jesus, whose grace has made it possible for me to write this dissertation on the greatest theme of all times and eternity, the atonement provided *pro nobis*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		viii
Chapter		
I. INTRODUCTION		1
Background to the Problem		1
Statement of The Problem		6
Purpose		14
Justification		14
Limitations		16
Method		17
II. THEORIES OF ATONEMENT		18
Ransom Theory		18
Irenaeus (140-202)		19
Gregory of Nyssa (335-395)		23
Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389)		25
Evaluation of the Ransom Theory		27
The Satisfaction Theory of Anselm (c. 1033-1109)		28
Evaluation of the Satisfaction Theory		33
Moral Influence Theory: Peter Abelard (1079-1142)		36
Evaluation of the Moral Influence Theory		39
Penal Substitution Theory		40
Martin Luther (1483-1546)		41
John Calvin (1509-1564)		45
Evaluation of the Penal Substitution Theory		50
The Socinian Theory: The Example View		52
Evaluation of the Socinian Theory		55
Governmental Theory: Hugo Grotius (A.D. 1583-1645)		56
Evaluation of Governmental Theory		60
Contemporary Theories		61
Views of Satisfaction or Penal Substitution		62
Views of Moral Influence		64
Views of Vicarious Confession or Vicarious Penitence		65
Views of Sacrifice		66
The View of Victory over the Evil Powers		67
Summary		69

III. THE ATONEMENT THEOLOGY OF JOHN STOTT	70
John Stott and His Writings	70
Assumptions, Presuppositions, and Methodology	73
Assumptions and Presuppositions	74
God and Forgiveness of Human Sin	75
The Gravity of Sin	77
Human Moral Responsibility and Guilt	79
The Wrath of God	83
Methodology	87
The Authority of the Bible	89
The Interpretation of the Bible	98
Centrality of the Cross	110
The Perspective of Jesus	113
The Perspective of the Apostles	117
The Perspective of New Testament Writers	121
Atonement as Penal Substitution	122
Satisfaction and Substitution	122
Substitution, Divine Holiness, and Divine Love	124
Substitution and Sacrifice in Scripture	128
Stott on the Day of Atonement	137
Isaiah 53	137
The Identity of the Substitute	141
Achievement of the Cross and the Scope of Atonement	144
Images of Atonement	144
Propitiation	145
Redemption	146
Justification	148
Reconciliation	152
The Revelation of God	154
The Conquest of Evil	156
Scope of Atonement	161
High Priestly Ministry of Christ	177
Summary	182
IV. THE ATONEMENT THEOLOGY OF ELLEN G. WHITE	185
Ellen White and Her Writings	185
Assumptions, Presuppositions and Methodology	189
Assumptions and Presuppositions	191
The Love of God	192
The Great Controversy Theme	194
God and the Forgiveness of Human Sin	198
The Gravity of Sin	199
Human Moral Responsibility	205
The Wrath of God	208

Methodology	209
The Authority of the Bible	214
Interpretation of the Bible	224
Centrality of the Cross.	230
Atonement as Penal Substitution	232
Satisfaction of Divine Justice	236
Divine Justice and Divine Mercy	239
Identity of the Substitute	245
Achievement of the Cross and Scope of Atonement	247
Four Phases of Atonement	248
Images of Atonement	253
Christ as Substitute and Surety	254
Christ’s Revelation of the Character of the Father	259
Vindication of God’s Law and Government	260
Pattern	261
Christ’s Ultimate Victory Over Evil and Satan	263
Summary of Images of Atonement	264
Cross and Resurrection	266
Scope of Atonement.	266
High Priestly Ministry of Christ	269
Heavenly Mediation.	272
Atonement as Judgment	277
Judgment on Sin at the Cross	277
Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment	278
Day of Atonement Imagery.	279
“Blotting Out” of Sin	286
Post-Advent Millennial Judgment	289
Post-Millennial Executive Judgment	291
Summary.	293

V. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ATONEMENT

THEOLOGIES OF STOTT AND WHITE	296
Introduction	296
Methodology, Assumptions, and Presuppositions	296
Methodology	297
The Authority of the Bible	298
Revelation and Inspiration	301
The Interpretation of the Bible	304
Assumptions and Presuppositions	308
Creation and Evolution.	309
Great Controversy Theme.	315
Gravity of Sin.	320
Human Moral Responsibility	326
Centrality of the Cross.	330
Atonement as Penal Substitution	334

Substitution and Sacrifice	336
Justice, Mercy, Synergism and the Role of Law	341
Four Phases of Atonement	343
Achievement of the Cross and Scope of Atonement	346
The Achievement of the Cross	346
Justification	348
Scope of Atonement	351
High Priestly Ministry of Christ	361
Judgment Phase(s) of Atonement	367
Judgment as the Fourth Phase of Atonement	369
VI. CONCLUSION	379
Areas of Agreement	379
Areas of Disagreement	381
BIBLIOGRAPHY	394
John Stott	395
Ellen White	401
General Secondary Sources	422

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with profound gratitude that I acknowledge the men and women who have contributed in their unique ways to the completion of this project. As a young child growing up in an Anglican family in Ile-Ife, Nigeria, God sent several people into my life who taught me the divine work of atonement by words and deeds. I will mention only a few of such individuals due to obvious reasons.

My great aunt, the Late Madam Dorcas Omiyele, taught me to love the Lord with all my heart. Christian brothers and sisters from Obafemi Awolowo University taught me to love the Word in the early 1970s while I was in High School. The late Pastor Dr. J. D. Johnson played a crucial role in my decision to be baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1974.

But the early interest I had in knowing more about atonement and the related concept of salvation probably would not have borne the fruit of this dissertation had it not been for the timely contributions of those who the Lord used to make my dream of an education at the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary at Andrews University a reality. I thank my Sister, Helen Ronke Oladini for contributing the initial down payment for my admission. My family's immense gratitude goes to Dr. A.T. Adeleke, who was such a wonderful benefactor who surprised us with the extent of his love and commitment to help my family transition to the United States for further studies. Professor Pastor D. O. Babalola was also very helpful in encouraging me to join the ministry of the Seventh-day

Adventist Church and was instrumental in the struggles to secure the necessary papers for our travel to the United States.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to all the members of my dissertation committee all of whom, at one time or the other, had taught me several courses in the Seminary which influenced my choice of topic. Professor John Baldwin, as the chairperson, was thorough, meticulous and always available for consultation. Professor Peter M. van Bemmelen taught a class on atonement that helped me to crystallize the topic of my dissertation. He was always willing to give extra help and give suggestions that helped to improve the quality of my research. Professor Denis Fortin's provided much help in his own writings and that of others that I found to be of immense help in the course of my research.

Also, I am grateful to the librarians at the Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, for affording me the privilege of using their library's resources for my research. I also acknowledge, with deep appreciation, the contributions of the University dissertation secretary, Ms. Bonnie Proctor, in ensuring that this dissertation conforms to the University standards.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Problem

The use of the English term “atonement” has been traced back to the sixteenth century, when Sir Thomas More employed it in 1513 and William Tyndale used it to translate the Greek word *katallagē* in 2 Cor 5:18.¹ According to Robert H. Culpepper, “atonement” is an ambiguous term of Anglo-Saxon origin whose original meaning is “at-one-ment or reconciliation, the restoration of broken fellowship.”² In theological usage, it has acquired the sense of a means through which reconciliation between God and man is effected.³

¹Alistair E. McGrath, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), 20.

²Robert H. Culpepper, *Interpreting the Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966), 12. See Stephen Sykes, *The Story of Atonement* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1997), 2-3, for the etymology of “atonement.”

³Culpepper, 3. For a fuller discussion of the evolution of the term “atonement,” see Robert S. Paul, *The Atonement and the Sacraments: The Relation of the Atonement to the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper* (New York: Abingdon, 1960), 17-32. Paul traces the development of the use of the term in a way that showed that while its primary meaning is that of reconciliation, its associated meaning of expiation has come from its association with the Old Testament sacrifices. However, he insists that in order to enrich our study of the meaning of the term, we must take into consideration the overtones and undercurrents of its meaning in addition to its root meaning. For him, atonement is such a word that hints at the “unfathomable” “purpose and act of God in Christ for our redemption.” It is “a word which has the heart of the doctrine [of redemption] at its center but which can grow with our understanding of the doctrine’s fulness” (30). Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker have defined atonement broadly as “the saving significance of the death of Jesus Christ.” *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 36.

The doctrine of the atonement holds a central place in the Bible.⁴ In the words of Robert Culpepper:

The doctrine of the atonement is the Holy of Holies of Christian theology. It is a doctrine of unfathomable depth and inexhaustible mystery. Christian theology reaches its climax in it, and in a large measure it is determinative of all other doctrines. Theology is Christian only insofar as all of its doctrines are illuminated by the doctrine of the atonement.⁵

In this dissertation, atonement will be defined as Christ's work *pro nobis* ("for us") in order to reconcile sinful human beings to a holy God.⁶ In relation to the concept of "God for us," Karl Barth⁷ has argued that in "the act of atonement," God reveals and increases His own glory in the world by "hastening to the help of the world as its loyal Creator, by taking up its cause."⁸ It is the radical need of the world that makes the divine intervention imperative, since the world "is lost apart from the fact that He [God] himself hastens to its help and takes up its cause."⁹ But the fact that God does this is due to the

⁴According to Emil Brunner, "a revealed atonement" is the center of the Christian religion. It is "the substance and kernel" of Christianity which distinguishes it from all other religions. Emil Brunner, *The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith*, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947), 40. F. W. Dillistone has also pointed out that "at the heart of the Christian Faith is the good news of reconciliation through the Cross." See the preface to his *The Christian Understanding of Atonement* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968). See also John Murray, *Redemption—Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955), 5.

⁵Culpepper, 11.

⁶Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. IV-1, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), 520. Culpepper defines the atonement as God's provision to deal with the vertical problem of human estrangement from God and the consequent horizontal problem of human estrangement from other human beings. Culpepper, 14-15. James Denney has written that atonement is "the mediation of forgiveness through Christ, and specifically through His death." *The Death of Christ* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), 252-253.

⁷Karl Barth has been referred to as the father of the "neo-orthodoxy" movement in theology. Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 63.

⁸Barth, 212.

⁹*Ibid.*, 212-213.

“sovereign will of His mercy.”¹⁰ Barth referred to this “action” of God in the incarnation and atonement as “the mystery of the atonement.”¹¹

Karl Barth has elaborated very well on the idea of God “for us” in his *Church Dogmatics*. He wrote as follows:

Deus pro nobis is something which He did not have to be or become, but which, according to this fact, He was and is and will be—the God who acts as our God, who did not regard as too mean a thing, but gave Himself fully and seriously to self-determination as the God of the needy and rebellious people of Israel, to be born a son of this people, to let its wickedness fall on Him, to be rejected by it, but in its place and for the forgiveness of its sins to let Himself be put to death by the Gentiles—and by virtue of the decisive co-operation of the Gentiles in His rejection and humiliation to let Himself be put to death in their place, too, and for the forgiveness of their sins.¹²

Therefore, it is clear that the atonement has its origin with God, who initiated the reconciliation of humanity to Himself and set forth the plan of redemption (Lev 10:17, 17:11; 2 Tim 1:9; Eph 1:4-8).¹³ In view of the biblical revelation, it is to be expected that atonement will be of central importance to the Christian church in its historical development through the centuries. In fact, the claim that the death of Jesus has a vicarious element at its heart, which makes a new and actual reconciliation between God

¹⁰Ibid., 213.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid., 214. He identifies four senses in which Jesus Christ is for us: He took our place as our Judge; He takes our place as sinners while still remaining pure, spotless and sinless; He (the eternal God who has given himself in his son) suffered, was crucified and has thereby procured forgiveness for humans and reconciled them to God; and He is the divine righteousness which makes the reconciliation possible. Ibid., 231-257.

¹³For a fuller discussion of the atonement in the Bible, see H. D. McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ: In Faith, Revelation and History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985); see also W. S. Reid and G. W. Bromiley, “Atonement; Atonement,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (ISBE), rev. ed. (1979-88), 1:352-360; Thomas J. Crawford, *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures Respecting the Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1954); Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 159-175; L. W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement* (Manchester, UK: University Press, 1920); and Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 798-858.

and all the people possible, has been central to the reformed evangelical understanding of the cross.¹⁴

Tom Smail rightly states that one of the main pillars of evangelical orthodoxy (which is second only in importance to the supreme authority of Scripture) is the doctrinal position that is called the penal substitutionary view of the atonement. This doctrinal position argues that “Christ brought us back into the reconciled relationship to his Father by bearing on the cross the punishment for sin that was our due.”¹⁵ However, the position has not achieved universal acceptance within the Christian Church.

Despite the importance of atonement to the belief, teaching, and proclamation of the church, one obstacle invariably stands in the way of any study of the doctrine of atonement. It is the fact that the Christian church has never laid down an orthodox theory of the doctrine.¹⁶ Whereas the Christian Church laid down an orthodox position on the doctrines of God and the Trinity, as shown in the Nicene Creed, it has not done so with regard to atonement.¹⁷

Though thousands have been converted through the doctrine of the penal substitutionary theory of the atonement, yet some in contemporary times still question the

¹⁴Tom Smail, “Can One Man Die for the People?” in *Atonement Today*, ed. John Goldingay (London: SPCK, 1995), 75. Dyson Hague wrote: “The atonement is Christianity in epitome. It is the heart of Christianity as a system; it is the distinguishing mark of the Christian religion.” *The Fundamentals*, xi, (Chicago, n.d.), 23, quoted in Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 5.

¹⁵Smail, 75. See also James Denney, 193; and McDonald, 277.

¹⁶John McIntyre, *The Shape of Soteriology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Death of Christ* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992), 1. See also Leon L. Morris, “Theories of Atonement,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 117, and Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1989), 5.

¹⁷McIntyre, 1.

validity of the theory itself.¹⁸ That trend began when Ernst Troeltsch published his book *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religions* in 1902, in which he argued that Christianity is “absolute” in the sense that it is the pinnacle of human religiosity which is only different in degree but not in kind from other religions.¹⁹

Rudolf Bultmann, a notable modern New Testament scholar and theologian, rejected the idea of death as a punishment for sin and therefore ridiculed the doctrine of atonement thus:

How could the guilt of one man be expiated by the death of another who is sinless—if indeed one may speak of a sinless man at all? What primitive notions of guilt and righteousness does this imply? And what primitive idea of God? . . . What a primitive mythology it is, that a divine Being should become incarnate, and atone for the sins of men through his own blood!²⁰

Having argued that the cross is best understood as a mythical event, Bultmann concludes that such “mythological interpretation in which notions of sacrifice are mixed together with a juristic theory of satisfaction” are no longer acceptable.²¹

¹⁸Christiana Baxter, “The Cursed Beloved: A Reconsideration of Penal Substitution,” *Atonement Today*, ed. John Goldingay (London: SPCK), 1995, 54.

¹⁹Ernst Troeltsch, *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religions*, trans. David Reid (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1971), 49. Here he states: “There exists, in reality, only *one* religion, namely, the principle or essence of religion, and this . . . essence of religion, is latent in all historical religions as their ground and goal. In Christianity this universally latent essence, everywhere else limited by its media, has appeared in untrammelled and exhaustive perfection.” Troeltsch has also written in his book, *Christian Thought: Its History and Application* (London: University of London Press, 1923), 21, that Christianity “is the loftiest and most spiritual revelation we know at all. It has the highest validity.” It is in this later book that he modified his position and argued that each religion is “absolute” *only* within its own confines and only to its own adherents (see chapter 1 of his *Christian Thought*, 3-35).

²⁰Rudolf Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 7. Along similar lines, John Hick wrote: “The Christian essence is not to be found in beliefs about God, and whether he is three in one and one in three, but in an attitude to man as our neighbour; not in thinking correctly about Christ’s two natures, as divine and human, but in living as disciples. . . . In short, the essence of Christianity is not in believing rightly but in acting rightly in relation to our fellows.” *God and the Universe of Faiths: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1973), 109-110. His position is very problematic for anyone who really believes in the divinity of Jesus and on that basis accepts that He made atonement for humans on the cross.

²¹Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology*, trans. Schubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia, PA:

Smail notes that much of the contemporary theology of the cross, whether implicit or well articulated, has shifted from the thought of Christ's having done once and for all for us on the cross that which reconciles us to God, and instead presents the cross as the demonstration in time of God's eternal love for and identification with humanity in its misery and failure.²² Smail has put it appropriately when he wrote thus:

We speak much more with Moltmann of Christ's justifying God to us by sharing on the cross our suffering and God-forsakenness than of Christ's justifying us to God by bearing our sins. The cross becomes much more the justification of an empathizing God to a suffering world than the reconciliation of a sinful world to a holy God.²³

Statement of The Problem

In view of the fact that the Christian Church has not adopted any specific theory of atonement as its definitive statement on the meaning of atonement, different contending theories of the atonement have been espoused.²⁴ A related problem to those mentioned above is that, among those theologies that espouse the penal substitutionary²⁵ view of atonement, there is a diversity of understanding.²⁶ This diversity is well

Fortress, 1984), 34.

²²Smail, 75.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Letham, 159-175. For a brief but robust discussion of the various theories, see Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 798-817.

²⁵For an extended discussion of the concept of substitution, see Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 404-417, and also G. W. Bromiley, "Substitution," *ISBE*, 4:645-646. The word "substitution," though not a biblical term, is applied to the work of Jesus as something done in the place of and on behalf of others. The penal substitution view sees the essence of Christ's saving work as consisting in His bearing in the sinner's stead the curse, divine wrath, punishment, and death that is the result of sin. See Morris, "Theories of Atonement," 118.

²⁶See Walter Thomas Conner, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1954), 138-140, where he notes that substitutionary theories depict Jesus as our substitute and sometimes as our representative. It ought to be noted that the two concepts are not synonyms in the theological sense. Conner also notes that proponents of the penal substitutionary theory do not always agree on the grounds of

illustrated by comparing and contrasting two well-published authors, representing two categories within evangelicalism.²⁷

One contemporary evangelical²⁸ theologian who holds a penal substitutionary view of atonement is John R. W. Stott. His own systematic exposition of the cross is a contemporary example of an evangelical approach to the substitutionary theory of atonement.²⁹ Stott is not merely a leader within the evangelical fellowship in the Anglican Church, he is also a leading figure in the Trans-Atlantic and worldwide

Christ's substitutionary or representative suffering for us. In the reformed tradition, this has led to covenant theology of the atonement. See also J. I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?" in *Tyndale Bulletin* 25 (1974): 19-25, in which he identifies three different explanations of what Christ's death achieved. The first one focuses on the subjective effect of the cross on humans. The second focuses on the victorious Christ as our "representative substitute" and the third focuses on the thought that by His death, Christ has offered "satisfaction" for human sins. See also Smail, "Can One Man Die for the People?" 84-91, where he rejects the emphasis on the penal view of substitution, the idea of Christ's substitution as perfect confession of the sins of the world, and also the approach that sees the cross as vicarious repentance, as proposed by R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (London: Murray, 1901).

²⁷Donald W. Dayton and R. K. Johnston, eds., *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991). Robert K. Johnston identifies the characteristics of evangelicalism as including "an emphasis on personal religious experience, an insistence upon witness and mission, a loyalty to biblical authority, an understanding of salvation by grace through faith." See his chapter, "American Evangelicalism: An Extended Family," in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, 252-272. Timothy Dudley-Smith identifies the recurring fundamental evangelical distinctives as "the uniqueness of Christ and the need for personal conversion; the living word of Holy Scriptures; and the centrality of the cross." "John Stott: An Introduction," in Martyn Eden and David F. Wells, eds., *The Gospel in the Modern World: A Tribute to John Stott* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 21. See also Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 19.

²⁸For John Weborg, the term "evangelical" is more a description than a definition. He wrote: "What is connoted in the term *evangelical*, at a minimum, is a confession that persons are redeemed solely by God's grace in Jesus Christ, the fully divine and human person, for no reason other than God's sovereign will to do so; that the hope of the world lies in God's redemptive deed at the end of history; that the Scripture contains all that is needed for life and salvation; and that persons need to be reborn by the power of the gospel." "Pietism: Theology in Service of Living Toward God," in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, 175. See also R. V. Pierard and W. A. Elwell, "Evangelicalism," *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 405-409.

²⁹John Stott's *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986) is his main systematic presentation of the doctrine of the atonement. J. I. Packer refers to the book *The Cross of Christ* as the *magnum opus* of John Stott. For a detailed biography, see Timothy Dudley Smith's two volumes, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999); and *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001). See also Christopher Catherwood, *Five Evangelical Leaders* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1985), 11-50, and Peter Williams, "John R. W. Stott," in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 338-352.

movement of evangelicalism.³⁰ Born on April 27, 1921,³¹ John Stott has been writing for publication for more than sixty years. His first article appeared in January 1945. Since then, his writings have multiplied to include well over thirty-five books and several hundred pamphlets, articles, and chapters in symposia.³²

John Stott is a clergyman, who has distinguished himself by his “clarity of thought, integrity of character, and courageous leadership,”³³ whose preoccupation has been on how to present the gospel in the modern world.³⁴ Associated with the All Soul’s (Anglican) Church, in Langham Place, London, from childhood he was ordained in St. Paul’s Cathedral on Friday, December 21, 1945, when he became the new junior curate at All Soul’s. In April 1950, he was appointed the Rector and has been Rector Emeritus of the same church since 1975.³⁵ In 1959, he became an Honorary Chaplain to the Queen.³⁶ He has been described as “a loved and trusted leader, teacher and spokesman of the world-wide Evangelical movement—apart from William Temple (who died as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1944)—the most influential clergyman in the Church of England during the twentieth century.”³⁷

³⁰David L. Edwards with John R. W. Stott, *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1988), 1.

³¹Catherwood, 13.

³²Timothy Dudley-Smith, *Authentic Christianity: From the Writings of John Stott* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1995), 9.

³³Martyn Eden and David F. Wells, eds., *The Gospel in the Modern World: A Tribute to John Stott* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1991), 7.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Dudley-Smith, “John Stott: An Introduction,” 11.

³⁶Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader*, 326

³⁷Edwards and Stott, *Essentials of Evangelicalism*, 1. Timothy Dudley-Smith has argued that there is probably no other individual who has done so much to bring evangelicals into the mainstream of the Anglican church and create a very powerful movement whose influence has reached beyond that church

The theological credentials of John Stott and his position as a leading figure within the worldwide evangelical movement have been well established. J. I. Packer argues that the publication of the book *The Cross of Christ* has finally established the fact that John Stott is “a first-class biblical theologian with an unusually systematic mind, great power of analysis, great clarity of expression, a superb command of his material, and a preacher’s passion to proclaim truth that will change lives.”³⁸ Packer refers to the book as Stott’s *magnus opus*.³⁹

Ellen G. White, one of several founding personalities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, has written widely on atonement from the penal substitutionary perspective. Her voluminous writings cover a wide range of theological and other issues that are related to the building up of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁴⁰ She was born on November 26, 1827, in the village of Gorham, Maine, just west of the city of Portland,

than John Stott. *John Stott: The Making of a Leader*, 11.

³⁸J. I. Packer, review of *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott, *Christianity Today* 31, no. 2 (1987): 35. Robert L. Reymond has described John Stott as “a mature pastor-theologian—and a practiced craftsman in the art of communication.” Review of *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott, *Evangelical Review of Theology* 13 (July 1989): 280-285.

³⁹Packer, Review of *Cross of Christ*, by John Stott, 35.

⁴⁰For a detailed biography of Ellen G. White, see Arthur L. White’s *Ellen G. White*, 6 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1981-86). For an abridged version, see Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: Woman of Vision* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000). Some of her books that are related to the atonement include *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940); *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911); *Steps to Christ* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1892); *The Story of Redemption* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1947), and *The Sufferings of Christ* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, c.1869) among others. A large number of her periodical articles that were compiled by the Ellen G. White Estate also focus on the atonement. They are found in some of the following publications: *Present Truth and Review and Herald Articles*, 6 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1962); *Signs of the Times Articles*, 4 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1974); *Ellen G. White Periodical Resource Collection*, 2 vols. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1990); *The Youth’s Instructor Articles 1852-1914* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1986). Her books and periodical articles are also available in CD-Rom: *The Complete Published Ellen G. White Writings* [CD-Rom], Comprehensive Research Edition (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008) and online at www.adventistarchives.org.

USA.⁴¹ From the emergence of the church following the Advent Awakening of the 1840s, Ellen White continued to play a very significant role within the church until her death in 1915. It is impossible to understand and evaluate the Seventh-day Adventist Church without a good understanding of the ministry and theological writings of Ellen White.⁴²

Though not a trained theologian as it is usually understood, “she is an independent theological thinker in her own right, guided by the Holy Spirit.”⁴³ Richard Hammill has underlined the crucial role of Ellen White in the theological development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when he asserted that “although she never held an official position, was not an ordained minister, . . . [yet] her influence shaped the Seventh-day Adventist Church more than any other factor except the Holy Bible.”⁴⁴

In fact, Richard Hammill’s assertion is corroborated by the official position of the Seventh-day Adventist Church on the ministry of Ellen White within the church. The position is that she has the prophetic gift, and that “as the Lord’s messenger” her writings constitute “a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction”⁴⁵ of the church.

⁴¹*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. “White, Ellen Gould.”

⁴²Roy E. Graham, *Ellen G. White: Co-Founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), 13. Graham has noted that since Ellen White’s death, her voluminous writings are read, quoted and discussed by theologians, ministers, and the laity of the church “to a much greater degree than are the writings of John Wesley in Methodism, and perhaps more than the works of Martin Luther in the various Lutheran churches” (ibid., i).

⁴³Denis Fortin, “The Cross of Christ: Theological Differences between Joseph H. Waggoner and Ellen G. White,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 131.

⁴⁴Richard Hammill, “Spiritual Gifts in the Church Today,” *Ministry*, July 1982, 17. Ingemar Linden has noted that “without her guidance and counsel the insignificant and individualistic group might very well have disappeared already in the 1840s.” *The Last Trump: An Historico-Genetical Study of Some Important Chapters in the Making and Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1978), 280.

⁴⁵See Fundamental Belief 17 and its exposition in *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines* (Washington, DC: Ministerial Association, General Conference of

Though the church fully supports the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura* as the infallible standard of belief and practice, it also receives Ellen White's writings as "a secondary authoritative source of doctrinal truth" that provides the church with guidance and instruction.⁴⁶ Her popular book *Steps to Christ* has been translated into more than 144 languages and has sold more than 15 million copies. Her greatest work is the five-volume Conflict of the Ages Series, which details the great controversy between Christ and Satan from the origin of sin until its eradication from the universe.⁴⁷

The core of the theological problem that is the focus of this dissertation is exposed when one considers the contrasting positions of the two authors on the cross in relation to atonement. For John Stott, atonement is more or less equated with the cross.⁴⁸ In his view, God has already finished the work of reconciliation at the cross, though it is still necessary for sinners to repent and believe and so "be reconciled to God."⁴⁹ He argues that though sinners need to be reconciled to God, on God's side the work of reconciliation has already been done.⁵⁰

Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 216-229.

⁴⁶*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 216; Fortin, 131. Her literary output by the time of her death consisted of more than 100,000 pages with 24 books in current circulation, two book manuscripts ready for publication, 5,000 periodical articles in the journals of the church; 200 or more out-of-print tracts and pamphlets; 6,000 typewritten manuscript documents consisting of letters and general manuscripts, aggregating approximately 35,000 typewritten pages; 2,000 handwritten letters and documents and diaries, journals, etc., when copied comprising 15,000 typewritten pages. See Neufeld, *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 880-881.

⁴⁷*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 226. See also Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: Woman of Vision*, 5.

⁴⁸See the preface and the first chapter of John Stott's *The Cross of Christ* titled "The Centrality of the Cross." He asserts that "the cross is the center of the evangelical faith" (8). According to Stott, whereas sin caused an estrangement, "the cross, the crucifixion of Christ, has accomplished an atonement." *Basic Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 82.

⁴⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 201.

⁵⁰*Ibid.* In order to emphasize the atonement as a finished work of Christ, he quotes approvingly the words of James Denney as follows: "Reconciliation . . . is not something which is being done; it is

According to Stott, the death of Jesus on the cross was “something objective, final, absolute and decisive.”⁵¹ It is a declaration of a divine deed that has already been done in Christ.⁵² He argues that the climax of Christ’s incarnation and ministry was the cross. He states that “it is this historical act, involving his death for our sins, which Scripture calls his sin-bearing sacrifice and which was finished once for all” and which cannot be repeated, extended, or prolonged.⁵³

In the case of Ellen White, the cross is also the central event in the work of the atonement. She argues unequivocally that atonement was accomplished at the cross. In 1915, she wrote as follows on the significance of the death of Christ:

The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption,—the Son of God uplifted on the cross.⁵⁴

In this connection, Denis Fortin has noted: “Clearly and consistently, Ellen White viewed the sufferings and the death of Christ as the core events of the plan of salvation and used the word atonement to describe their effect in favor of lost sinners.”⁵⁵

something which is done. No doubt there is a work of Christ which is in process, but it has as its basis a finished work of Christ.” James Denney, *The Death of Christ* (London: Tyndale, 1951), 85-86, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 199. Denney adds: “A finished work of Christ and an objective atonement—a *katallage* in New Testament sense—are synonymous terms; the one means exactly the same as the other.” *Ibid.*, 86.

⁵¹John Stott, “The Meat of the Gospel,” *Decision*, January 1962, 4, quoted in John Stott, *Authentic Christianity*, intro. by Timothy Dudley Smith (Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity, 1995), 54.

⁵²Stott, *Authentic Christianity*, 55.

⁵³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 267. Stott adds, “That is why Christ does not have his altar in heaven, but only his throne. On it he sits, reigning, his atoning work done, and intercedes for us on the basis of what has been done and finished” (267-268).

⁵⁴Ellen G. White, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 315.

⁵⁵Fortin, “The Cross of Christ,” 137. See also Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols.

However, Ellen White broadens the concept of atonement to include not only the cross, but also Christ's intercessory ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. In 1911, she wrote: "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven."⁵⁶ She regarded atonement as moving in a line across the history of redemption in such a way that it not only makes provision for the forgiveness of sins (at the cross), but also involves the application of the gains of atonement to repentant sinners through the high priestly ministry of Jesus (in the heavenly sanctuary).⁵⁷

The theological problem that then arises is this: How can one work towards some potential reconciliation of John Stott's presentation of atonement (which is very crucicentric) with that of Ellen White who goes beyond the cross to include the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Jesus in her understanding of atonement? Are there any bases in the atonement theology of John Stott for the accommodation of the apparently broader view of Ellen White on the atonement and vice versa? What accounts for the differences in their presentations of atonement in the light of their common penal substitutionary

(Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 2:200-215, where she refers to the life, sufferings and death of Jesus as the atonement. See also the following references from the writings of Ellen G. White: *The Spirit of Prophecy*, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1870), 1: 44-54; *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1890), 63-70; Manuscript 128, 1897; "Without Excuse," *Review and Herald*, September 24, 1901; *The Great Controversy*, 421, 428, 489, 623.

⁵⁶E. White, *The Great Controversy*, 489.

⁵⁷Woodrow W. Whidden II, *Ellen G. White on Salvation: A Chronological Study* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995), 48. Denis Fortin has argued that Ellen G. White uses the word "atonement" in three different ways. In a number of instances, she uses the word to describe the event of the cross as a complete atonement. In some other places, "atonement" takes on a broader meaning and includes the intercessory (high priestly) ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary as part of his redemptive work. Her third use of the word "atonement" encompasses Christ's entire life of suffering which includes the cross as the central event and all that Christ is doing for human salvation up to the final eradication of sin ("The Cross of Christ," 139).

understanding of atonement? These questions will guide this dissertation in the effort to better understand the contributions of both John Stott and Ellen White to the doctrine of atonement.

Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to compare and contrast the concept of atonement as found in the writings of John Stott and the writings of Ellen White with particular reference to the theological problem of the contrasting scope of atonement present in the two respective systems. One goal is to discover whether both approaches carry evangelical grounds for any rapprochement between the contrasting positions regarding the scope of atonement. A second goal is to discover whether both approaches make distinctive contributions to the Christian theology of atonement.

The study will analyze the biblical data used by Stott and White to support their respective positions. Each author will be allowed to speak for himself or herself in order to clearly bring out the author's modes of thinking and argumentation. Without distorting their views, the study will endeavor to present their categories of thought and argumentation in a condensed form.

Justification

In view of the fact that the Christian Church has not made any one doctrine of atonement orthodox, the field is left open for the study of the different understandings of atonement within the Christian Church. This is all the more imperative when one realizes that atonement is not a dispensable appendage to the Christian religion, but is rather the

“substance and kernel” of Christianity.⁵⁸ Indeed, it is imperative for the effort toward the understanding of atonement to continue as each generation engages in an effort to make it relevant to its own context inasmuch as “Christian thought and experience are cumulative.”⁵⁹

In spite of the stature of John Stott as a leader of the evangelical wing of the Anglican Church and a key contributor to the growth of evangelicalism internationally, there have been only three dissertations on John Stott’s theology⁶⁰ as far as I can ascertain. None of the dissertations attempted a comparative study of atonement in Stott’s theology. In the case of Ellen White, several dissertations have been written on her role and contributions to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and different aspects of her theology.⁶¹ However, there have been only a few comparative studies done

⁵⁸Brunner, *The Mediator*, 40.

⁵⁹F. R. Barry, *The Atonement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1968), 12-15. See also Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 5, where he argues that different concepts of the atonement have occupied center stage at different periods of history due to the fact that the understanding of the basic human predicament has changed from age to age.

⁶⁰William Arthur Groover, “The Theology and Methodology of John R. W. Stott as a Model for Pastoral Evangelism” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1988); Mark Duane Becton, “An Analysis of John Stott’s Preaching as Bridge-Building as Compared to the Preaching of Martyn David Lloyd Jones” (Ph.D. diss., South Western Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, 1995); Per-Axel Sverker, “‘Bible’ and ‘Gospel’ in John Stott’s Theology” (Diss. for Theol. D., Lunds Universitet, Sweden, 1999). While the focus of Groover’s dissertation is on John Stott’s contributions to pastoral evangelism, Becton’s dissertation is focused on homiletics and Sverker’s (Swedish) on the identity and definition of the Anglican evangelicalism of John Stott.

⁶¹For instance see Guy Herbert Winslow, “Ellen Gould White and Seventh-day Adventism” (Ph.D. diss., Clark University, Worcester, MA, 1933); W. R. Leshner, “Ellen G. White’s Concept of Sanctification” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, New York, 1970); Roy E. Graham, *Ellen G. White: Co-Founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985); Woodrow W. Whidden II, “The Soteriology of Ellen G. White: The Persistent Path to Perfection, 1836-1902” (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, Madison, NJ, 1989); Yoshio Murakami, “Ellen G. White’s Views of the Sabbath in the Historical, Religious, and Social Context of Nineteenth-Century America” (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, Madison, NJ, 1994); Craig H. Newborn, “Articulating and Illustrating a Dialogical Hermeneutic for Interpreting the Writings of Ellen White” (Ph.D. diss., Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, CA, 1997). See also Jairyong Lee, “Faith and Works in Ellen G. White’s Doctrine of the Last Judgment” (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1985). Other related dissertations are Rolf J. Pöhler, “Change in Seventh-day Adventist Theology: A Study of the Problem of Doctrinal Development” (Ph.D.

on Ellen White's soteriology.⁶² The goal of one such study (Gunnar Pedersen's dissertation) was to investigate to what degree the classical Protestant principles of grace alone, Christ alone, and faith alone are shared by Ellen White.

Limitations

This study will focus only on a comparison of the atonement theologies of John Stott and Ellen White. It will also discuss other areas of their writings that may constitute presuppositions for their respective atonement theologies. The discussion of such presuppositions will only go as far as the extent to which they help us to understand the respective theological positions of both Stott and White in relation to atonement. Such presuppositions would include the doctrines of God, the human condition, hamartiology, Christology, the Old Testament sacrificial system, and the New Testament teaching on the atonement. The study will discuss only the work of Christ "for us" (his work for our justification) and not his work "in us" (sanctification).

The study will focus specifically on those primary sources that concern atonement

diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1995); Alberto Ronald Timm, "The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages, 1844-1863: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1995); Ronald D. Bissell, "The Background, Formation, Development, and Presentation of Ellen White's Concept of Forgiveness from Her Childhood to 1864" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1990); Merlin D Burt, "The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White's Role in Sabbatarian Adventism From 1844 to 1849" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, Berrien Spings, MI, 2002).

⁶²Gunnar Pedersen, "The Soteriology of Ellen G. White Compared with the Lutheran Formula of Concord: A Study of the Adventist Doctrine of the Final Judgment of the Saints and Their Justification Before God" (Th.D. diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1995); Nkosiyabo Zhou Zvandasara, "The Concept of Sin in the Theologies of Ellen G. White and Leonardo Boff: A Comparative Study" (Th.D. thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria, SA, 1997); Lee Swafford Burchfield, "Adventist Religious Experience, 1816-1868: A Comparison of William Miller and Ellen White" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1996); Ruth Elizabeth Burgeson, "A Comparative Study of the Fall of Man as Treated by John Milton and Ellen G. White" (M.A. thesis, Pacific Union College, Angwin, CA, 1957). See also Fortin, 131-140.

in both Stott and White. It will not be concerned with those aspects of their writings that relate to issues that are extraneous to the topic under discussion (such as Christian involvement in social action in the case of John Stott or the wide range of counsels to the church and individuals in the case of Ellen White).

Method

In order to bring out clearly the similarities and differences between the two views of the atonement, the presentation of atonement theology of the authors will examine their respective assumptions, presuppositions, and methodology, the issue of the centrality of the cross, what the cross achieved, the issue of atonement as substitution, the high priestly ministry of Christ, and the scope of the atonement. While the presentations of the two views of atonement will be mainly descriptive, the comparison will be largely evaluative.

The study will also examine both their internal consistency (logical coherence) and external consistency (consonance with the biblical data and historical theology). An effort will be made to see if the two views of atonement can be reconciled in the light of their common claim to a commitment to the biblical teaching on atonement. The dissertation will be a descriptive and analytical comparative study of atonement in the writings of John Stott and Ellen White.

CHAPTER II

THEORIES OF ATONEMENT

Because the Christian Church has not clearly defined the orthodox position on the meaning of the work of Christ for our salvation,¹ different theories of atonement have been proposed over the centuries since the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In light of this, and if it is true that “the heart of the Protestant exposition of the Christian faith is the great act of God in Jesus Christ for our redemption,”² then each Christian generation needs both to study and to express the meaning of atonement in terms that are true to Scripture and relevant to its own context. Therefore, in this chapter I endeavor to provide a short account of the development of the doctrine of atonement in the Christian Church over the centuries with a view to show what each generation and particular theologians have contributed to our understanding of atonement.

Ransom Theory

During the first two centuries after Christ, little or no attempt was made to advance a theory of atonement.³ Grensted has argued thus: “It was not in theory but in

¹Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement*, 2. In addition to Grensted’s *A Short History*, the discussion in this chapter makes extensive use of the following books for ease of reference and because they adequately cover the grounds for the discussion: McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ*; Paul, *The Atonement and the Sacraments*; and Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 818-840.

²Paul, 7.

³Grensted, 11.

life that the Living Fact approved itself to men, and so it is natural that the earliest days of the Church should be marked by emphasis upon the Atonement as a fact. . . . The subject is treated in the main devotionally, and the language of the New Testament is used freely and without comment.”⁴

Such New Testament terms as “sacrifice,” “propitiation,” and “redemption” are freely used, but no conscious effort is made to work out their theological implications. The theologians of the period felt that such terms were sufficient to express the Christian experience of the Cross since “the age of doubts and questioning had not yet begun.”⁵ However, it is possible to trace definite tendencies of thought during the period. One such tendency is the ransom theory. In the discussion of the ransom theory, I will be focusing on the views of Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus.

Irenaeus (140-202)

During the first two centuries of the Christian era, when writers ventured to speculate upon the atonement, which seldom happened, they were content with a rudimentary theory that was based upon the idea of a transaction between God and the devil who was thought to have certain rights against man.⁶ That such a theory could occupy center stage for nine hundred years as the ordinary exposition of the fact of atonement is itself an adequate proof that the need for serious discussion of the doctrine

⁴Ibid. Paul has noted that the theological writing of the Apostolic Fathers did not go much beyond the ethical response that the death of Christ is able to inspire in believers. He adds, “Perhaps a great part of the stress which the writers of this early period place upon the Christian’s ethical response must be seen in the light of their consciousness that the Christian was always in the showroom” (*Atonement and the Sacraments*, 41).

⁵Grensted, 11.

⁶Ibid., 33.

had not yet been felt.⁷ Grensted has argued that “it was, indeed, the very crudity of this theory which, at the revival of theological learning, drove the Western Church to speculate on the doctrine, a process which has at times threatened to obscure the fact.”⁸

It is not until the time of Irenaeus that an attempt is made to arrive at a theory of atonement. It is noteworthy that G. Aulén in his seminal work, *Christus Victor*, calls for a return to what he calls the “classic doctrine” of atonement which, in his view, Irenaeus espoused.⁹ His contribution is all the more appreciated when viewed against the views of two of his great theological contemporaries, Clement of Alexandria (150-215) and Tertullian (ca. 155-225), both of whom tend to repeat the same kind of views that we find in earlier writers.¹⁰ In the view of Irenaeus, Jesus Christ has done something for humanity as a whole by His sacrifice and death.¹¹ According to Paul, the “representative character of Christ’s work is central in Irenaeus's doctrine of the Atonement and in particular in his use of the Pauline doctrine of the ‘Second Adam.’”¹²

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid. Grensted further notes that the ransom or bargain theory of atonement does not represent the whole thought of the early Church on the subject neither was it in any sense the official or authoritative position of the Church. The theory was the speculation of curious but isolated thinkers who delved into solving the deeper problems of the faith, and thus it recurs again and again (Grensted, 34).

⁹G. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, trans. A. G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1931), 16-17.

¹⁰Paul, 47. Tertullian’s doctrine of atonement is more or less in line with that of his predecessors. Tertullian is the one who prepared the way for a later theory of the doctrine by appropriating the term “satisfaction” from Roman law and employing it with reference to penance. Robert Paul argues that, while he did not apply the idea to the doctrine of atonement itself, it is quite possible that by using the term “satisfaction” he opened the way for Anselm's later use of the word and thus became the unconscious precursor of both the Western conception of penance and atonement and of the Reformation reaction to it (Paul, 47-48). See also Sydney Cave, *The Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1947), 90-91.

¹¹Paul argues that this emphasis on the objective thing that Jesus has done for human redemption was a reaffirmation of the Pauline conception of the solidarity of the human race and our Lord's action on its behalf (48).

¹²Ibid.

Irenaeus argues that the destiny of the whole human race had been centered in its protagonists—first Adam and then Jesus Christ. Christ “recapitulated in himself the ancient making of Adam.”¹³ Man was held in bondage through apostasy, and because he could not release himself, God’s Word entered into the situation and “gave himself a ransom for those who had been led into captivity.” Even though “the apostasy” had tyrannized over us unjustly, God had to act in accordance with His just nature, “not redeeming his own from it by force, although it at the beginning had merely tyrannized over us, greedily seizing the things there were not its own, but by persuasion, as it is fitting for God to receive what he wishes by gentleness and not by force.”¹⁴

The idea of what is “fitting” for God is perhaps the governing idea in Irenaeus’s distinct concept of recapitulation and his doctrine of atonement. Robert Paul, commenting on this aspect of the writings of Irenaeus, has argued thus:

He works it out by an appeal to the types and parallels in the Old and New Testaments: our bondage to sin had been caused by the fruit of a tree, so we are redeemed by the fruit of the Cross, Adam had been tempted and by the disobedience of a virgin, Eve, and therefore it was fitting that our salvation should also come through the obedience of the Virgin, Mary; the wisdom of the serpent had been responsible for our Fall, but the simplicity of the dove (the Holy Spirit) conquers our sin.¹⁵

The parallelism comes to its climax in the fall of Adam, and in the redemptive work of Christ, the Second Adam, our Lord who “recapitulates” the scene of the fall on behalf of the whole human race and turns the abject defeat of Adam into His own complete victory.¹⁶

¹³Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 5.1.2.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 5.1.1

¹⁵Paul, 49.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

Irenaeus also demonstrates the indispensable relationship between the Incarnation and the Atonement, for Christ would not “have truly redeemed us by his blood if he had not been truly made man, restoring again to his own creation what was said in the beginning, that man was made according to the image and likeness of God.”¹⁷ It seems quite plausible that there was a “fitness” in the way in which God acts, that is, in conformity to His own nature. It is this central idea which leads Irenaeus to insist that even in His dealings with the devil which has us in bondage, God was bound to act justly and not arbitrarily.¹⁸ It is evident that his conception of Christ’s representative work rests in the final analysis on his justification of God's ethical nature.

Additionally, in taking up the conception of Christ's “solidarity” with humanity, Irenaeus asserted that the only kind of objective atonement that is in accord with the Fatherhood of God revealed in Jesus Christ “is redemption which is cosmic in its proportions and all-inclusive in its intention.”¹⁹ In short, his point is that “when Christ acted he redeemed not only men but Mankind, not simply creatures but Creation.”²⁰

In Irenaeus’s *Adversus Haereses*, one finds echoes of Pauline passages such as the following: Rom 5:14-17; 1 Cor 15:20-22, 45-49. He makes several references to 1 Pet 1:18, 19, mostly indirectly, but sometimes directly. One instance is where he wrote as follows: “Redeeming us by his blood in accordance with his reasonable nature, he

¹⁷Irenaeus, 5.1. Here is direct reference to Gen 1:26, 27.

¹⁸Paul, 50. See also Hastings Rashdall, *The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology* (London: Macmillan, 1919), 237.

¹⁹Paul, 50.

²⁰Ibid.

gave himself a ransom for those who have been led into captivity.”²¹ In another place, he links the idea of redemption found in 1 Pet 1:18, 19 with that of the incarnation by asserting that without the incarnation Jesus could not have accomplished the redemption.²² One other significant Bible passage that he utilized is Gen 3:15. He asserted that Jesus “completely renewed all things” by engaging the enemy in battle and crushing him, “trampling on his head” and quoted Gen 3:15 as the biblical support for his doctrine of recapitulation.²³

Gregory of Nyssa (335-395)

The main interest of the fourth-century Cappadocian trio, Basil, and the two Gregories (of Nyssa and Nazianzus), was in securing the Nicene Christology. It is therefore inevitable that when they allude to the work of Christ, they tend to state its significance in terms first that are usually associated with Athanasius.²⁴ Gregory of Nyssa in particular refers most often to the redemption achieved by the Word, the Logos of God, incarnate. His name is often associated with the view of Christ’s work as a ransom paid to the devil,²⁵ a view that Origen had developed about a century earlier.²⁶

Gregory of Nyssa is the one who would make quite clear what Origen left uncertain and develop a classical expression of the theory. He starts from the idea of God’s justice and dwells on the fact that man had placed himself under the devil’s claim.

²¹See Irenaeus, 5.1.

²²Ibid., 5.2

²³Ibid., 5.21.

²⁴McDonald, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ*, 134.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Grensted, 37-39.

Therefore, the devil must have no ground for a just complaint in regard to the method God employs to ransom the captives, since human beings voluntarily bartered away their freedom. He argues further that only a method that is consonant with justice ought be devised by God in order to rescue us. This means that God needs to give the slave master whatever ransom he may agree to accept for the people in his possession.²⁷

The devil, urged on by his own pride, was very eager to accept a price more valuable than the souls which he held in bondage, and such a price was offered to him in Christ, whose Deity was veiled with flesh so that the devil might not feel any fear in approaching Him. This approach, according to Gregory, shows God's goodness, wisdom, and justice.²⁸ The result of this deception is stated by Gregory thus: "Hence it was that God, in order to make himself easily accessible to him who sought the ransom for us, veiled himself in our nature. In that way, as it is with greedy fish, he might swallow the Godhead like a fishhook along with the flesh, which was the bait."²⁹

It is to be noted that, though this is a grotesque image, yet for Gregory of Nyssa it is only an image. Robert S. Paul has written, "Gregory is not unaware of the moral problem of how to reconcile the absolute justice of God with perpetrating a deception in order to achieve his ends."³⁰ Gregory's conclusion is that the deceit was in reality "a crowning example of justice and wisdom," in the sense that what God did was a supreme example of paying the devil with his own coin.³¹ In Gregory's defense, it should be noted

²⁷Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio Catechetica*, 22. See also Grensted, 39.

²⁸Ibid., 23.

²⁹Gregory of Nyssa, *Oratio Catechetica*, 24. See also Grensted, 39-40; Paul, 54-55.

³⁰Paul, 55.

³¹Ibid.

that he does not present his picture as a statement of what happened, but as an analogy of what happened. For the theory to have had such widespread acceptance, to the extent that it almost became the official doctrine of the Church, suggests that it must have demonstrated real spiritual truths about the redemption of mankind.³²

Gregory of Nyssa modifies the image when he likens God's "deception" of the devil to a beneficial deception that may be practiced by a physician to ensure the cure of his patient. He believes that the devil himself will ultimately benefit from God's saving action in Christ.³³ This is an aspect of the doctrine of atonement proffered by Gregory of Nyssa which has not been sufficiently recognized and considered along with the idea of God's entrapment of the devil.³⁴

Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389)

It was during the lifetime of Gregory of Nyssa that his close friend, Gregory of Nazianzus, attacked his ransom theory. Gregory of Nazianzus agreed that we were in bondage to the devil and that ransom is usually paid to the one who is in possession. But he expressed an outrage at the thought that the devil was the one to whom a ransom would be paid. In his words, "Was the ransom then paid to the evil one? It is a monstrous thought. If to the evil one—what an outrage! Then the robber receives a ransom, not only from God, but one which consists of God Himself."³⁵

Though Gregory of Nazianzus showed himself to have an independent and critical

³²Ibid.

³³*Oratio Catechetica*, 26.

³⁴Paul, 56.

³⁵Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 45.22, quoted in J. F. Bethune-Baker, *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine* (London: Methuen, 1949), 343-344.

mind in standing against the ransom theory, he did not proffer any satisfactory theory in its place. He elaborated on the representative character of Christ's work and the idea of a second Adam from Paul and also stressed the obedience of Christ.³⁶ He made a direct reference to Ps 22:1 when he quoted the text and wrote thus: "[Christ] was in his own person representing us. For we were the forsaken and despised before, but now, by the sufferings of Him who could not suffer, we were taken up and saved."³⁷ His writings are replete with many echoes of biblical texts such as the following: "That as for my sake he was called a curse who destroyed my curse [an echo of Gal 3:13], and sin who takes away the sin of the world [an echo of 2 Cor 5:21], and became a new Adam to take the place of the old [an echo of Rom 5:14-19; 2 Cor 15:22, 45], just so he makes my disobedience his own as head of the whole body."³⁸

L. W. Grensted has provided a very useful summary of the thought of the early Eastern fathers in relation to atonement. He states that throughout the period from the time of Origen, the ransom theory is prominent wherever writers are consciously attempting to give an explanation of the significance of the cross.³⁹ In spite of its influence, this theory was never held alone and its unwelcome features are largely covered by the less definite ideas with which it is associated.⁴⁰

Sacrificial language, based largely upon the Bible, constantly recurs and thus the "Godward" aspect of atonement found expression. However, no effort was made to

³⁶Ibid., 4.5; 4.6.

³⁷Ibid., 4.5

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Grensted, 86.

⁴⁰Ibid.

reconcile the sacrificial language with the metaphors of the ransom theory. Also many writers of the period emphasize the influence of the death of Christ as an inspiring example for the believer, though there is no consciousness of a theory.⁴¹ Despite the continued appearance of the ransom theory, the early Greek fathers held to a combination of those conceptions that emphasized what God has done and those that emphasized the human side in atonement. Those conceptions are expressed in sacrificial and ethical language, with the two aspects framed as a single picture with the aid of a mysticism which is characteristic of Eastern Christianity.⁴²

Evaluation of the Ransom Theory

The ransom theory's employment of the image of the cross as victory over the evil powers and its use of the metaphor of ransom or redemption are in line with New Testament usage. The concept of recapitulation is in line with Paul's writing on Adam and Christ.⁴³ The ransom metaphor powerfully communicated the saving significance of the cross and the acute need of humanity for liberation from enslavement to sin and the powers of evil at both the personal and corporate levels. While using the thought forms of the day, such as Platonic realism, they refused to be controlled by them.⁴⁴

While the ransom theory might be criticized for not capturing all of the

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Grensted, 86-87.

⁴³For examples of metaphors of victory over the evil powers, see Gal 4:3-9; Col 2:13-15; and for metaphors of ransom/redemption see Matt 20:28; 1 Cor 6:20; Titus 2:14; Rev 5:9; for metaphors of recapitulation, see Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:22, 45; Eph 1:10.

⁴⁴For example, they did not go along with the logic of Platonism that would have implied that at the moment of incarnation of the Logos all humanity was saved. In addition they fully embraced the scandalous notion of God's becoming incarnate in human flesh and dying on a cross contrary to gnosticism. See Green and Baker, 124.

significance of the Cross, both Irenaeus and Gregory of Nyssa never claim that it does, and, in fact, they include other images and metaphors in their writings about the cross.⁴⁵ Though it is likely that the details surrounding the ransom metaphor may have contributed to its decline after the sixth century, its decline was more likely caused by a changing worldview and the Constantinian synthesis of church and state.⁴⁶

The Satisfaction Theory of Anselm (c. 1033-1109)

Robert S. Paul suggests that most of the really earth-shaking writings in the history of human thought have been short ones. He believes that Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* falls into this category of writings because, as a result of this brief treatise, Anselm completely destroyed the predominance of the ransom theory. In its place he substituted a new set of categories for the study of the doctrine of atonement which would predominate in theological discussions for the next eight hundred years.⁴⁷ Grensted calls Anselm "the most revolutionary thinker of his day," even though he also wore the hat of a "saint and loyal upholder of the Church."⁴⁸

Grensted notes that "it has seldom been given to any writer to work such a change

⁴⁵Green and Baker argue that in this, they were following the New Testament writers in not attempting to put forward a single model as though it exhausted the whole meaning of the cross. When Gregory pushed beyond the New Testament and attempted to explain the details and mechanics of the ransom payment, he got into trouble because he based key parts of his explanation not on Scripture but on what logic told him was acceptable or unacceptable behavior for God. See Green and Baker, 125.

⁴⁶Ibid. Green and Baker add that the tension between the empire and the church had, in the early days of the church, led to an atonement theology grounded in the image of Christ conquering even in death. In their view, when the church became so closely linked with worldly powers, at that time a conflict-victory metaphor was less connected to people's daily lives.

⁴⁷Paul, 65.

⁴⁸Grensted, 120.

in the history of thought as that wrought by Anselm's short treatise."⁴⁹ He states further that the effect of the treatise was to shift the center of theological speculation to the "Godward" aspect of atonement and "finally to put an end to all attempts to state the doctrine of Redemption in terms of transaction with the devil."⁵⁰ In itself this is not completely original. Language of the "Godward" type had often been used by earlier theologians, though it seldom received any great emphasis, with the possible exception of Athanasius.⁵¹

Anselm tries to go deeper into the problem of the meaning of atonement for God Himself.⁵² For him, it is unthinkable to regard the devil as being in any sense the possessor of any rights over human beings. Also, the mere conception of God as Judge does not cover the facts of the case. He questions the justice of releasing the guilty and of punishing the innocent, however willing the latter may be to suffer. For him, "some further thought than that of mere unanalyzed justice is necessary, if we are to regard God as Judge at all."⁵³ Anselm's great contribution to the history of doctrine comes to the fore not just in seeing this difficulty, but in supplying a solution.⁵⁴

One of the principles of Roman Law that was current in the thought of the age was that of satisfaction as an alternative to punishment in the case of private offenses. Such an offense must be punished unless satisfaction is made. In fact, the whole

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid., 120, 121.

⁵²Ibid., 121.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

penitential system of the Church had long rested upon the idea that penance, as a satisfaction offered to God in this life, might, through the mediation of the Church, be accepted as an alternative to eternal death, which is the proper punishment of sin in the world to come. It was through the principle of satisfaction that Anselm sought a solution to the problem of atonement.⁵⁵

Along with the principle of satisfaction, there was another change which, though less conscious, was equally far-reaching in its results. The Roman idea of justice had been replaced by the more concrete personal dignity of the feudal overlords. Justice and law had now become a personal matter since any breach of the law, whether public or private, came to be viewed as a direct offense against a person.⁵⁶ For Anselm, God was no longer a Judge, but rather a feudal Overlord who was bound to safeguard His honor and to demand an adequate satisfaction for any infringement of the same. Since the idea of such satisfaction was deep-seated in the thought of the day, and realizing that the use of the idea of justice seemed to have failed, Anselm attempted to use the former to explain the problem of the Cross of Christ.⁵⁷

It is evident that Anselm's main intention is to destroy those elements in the ransom theory which, in his view, are contrary to the fundamental principle of atonement arising from within God's own nature,⁵⁸ since there is no other way for God to save humanity. Toward this end, he criticizes (through Boso, his interlocutor) the idea that the

⁵⁵Ibid., 121, 122.

⁵⁶Ibid., 122.

⁵⁷Ibid., 123.

⁵⁸John McIntyre, *St. Anselm and His Critics: A Reinterpretation of the Cur Deus Homo* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1954), 203, quoted in Robert S. Paul, *The Atonement and the Sacraments*, 68.

devil has “rights” over humanity. The devil’s seduction of mankind was much more like the action of a mutinous slave who has persuaded his fellow slave to join in his rebellion against their common Master. Though mankind deserved to be punished, nevertheless, the devil had no right to punish him. In fact, this was the height of injustice, since what motivated the devil to do it was not love of justice but malice towards mankind.⁵⁹

The old theory has been based upon a failure to perceive that that which is justly suffered may yet be unjustly inflicted. Neither the devil nor man has any status at all in God’s court of justice, since both rightly belong to God.⁶⁰ Boso argues that “there was nothing in the devil to prevent God from using His power against him to liberate man.”⁶¹ In view of this very cogent argument, despite his earlier deference to his predecessors, Anselm does not even pretend to make a case against Boso in their support.⁶² It is clear that Anselm is the one really speaking through Boso, for all that then follows in the book is an effort to justify this position and to demonstrate the necessity for Christ, as God’s own Son, making satisfaction to God by His suffering and death for the sins of the world.⁶³

In this regard, Robert Paul argues thus:

This is his decisive step which undercut the former ransom theory of the Atonement, for although there had been those like Gregory of Nazianzus who had been unwilling to describe our redemption in terms of payment made to the devil, they had all been equally unwilling to think of the sacrifice of Christ as something

⁵⁹Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*, 1.7.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Grensted, *History*, 129.

⁶³Paul, 68-69.

demanded by and paid to God the Father. What others drew back from, Anselm boldly accepted and sought to justify.⁶⁴

Anselm argues that God cannot simply forgive sin without punishing it, since the right treatment for any sin that is committed without satisfaction is to punish it.⁶⁵ Nothing is less tolerable than that the creature should rob its Creator of the honor that is due to Him, and therefore, we have merited the just punishment of God unless we can give full satisfaction for our sin. But humanity is in a dilemma, since nothing we can do gives satisfaction to God for our past sins: Our penance, obedience, and good works of the present and the future are just what is due to God from us. Therefore, it is impossible for the individual to pay back to God the satisfaction due to Him from the sins of the past and to remove the consequences of past guilt.⁶⁶ For Anselm, mankind's inability to pay to God the satisfaction that is due to Him is not an excuse but an additional condemnation.⁶⁷

Since Anselm argues that the redemption of humanity could not be achieved by human beings themselves, he therefore concludes that it must have been brought about by God's own initiative in such a way that it is won by a Savior who is both God and a representative of the human race—the God-Man. A pertinent question, then, concerns how God could possibly take human flesh and become human. The crucial bases for Anselm's doctrine of Atonement are thus the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth.⁶⁸

Though Anselm's book *Cur Deus Homo* has many echoes of Bible passages such

⁶⁴Ibid., 69.

⁶⁵Anselm, 1.12.

⁶⁶Ibid., 1.11.

⁶⁷Anselm, 1. 24.

⁶⁸Ibid., 2.7, 2.8.

as Gen 3 (1.22), Matt 6:12 (1.12), yet it is clear that his whole theory is not based on any explicit Bible text(s). That is why Joseph M. Colleran has noted that “the book is an attempt to go beyond the explicitly revealed truths, to get the fundamental plan of God underlying the events whose occurrence is attested by revelation.”⁶⁹

Evaluation of the Satisfaction Theory

Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo* has been the subject of rigorous analysis throughout subsequent theological eras and has produced contrary verdicts on its value and validity.⁷⁰ Some have described it as “epoch-making”⁷¹ and “the truest and greatest book on the atonement which has ever been written.”⁷² Other comments have been less favorable. G. B. Stevens, for instance, considers that “it would be difficult to name any prominent treatise on atonement, whose conception of sin is so essentially unethical and superficial.”⁷³ Harnack, having subjected *Cur Deus Homo* to a searching criticism, concludes that “no theory so bad had ever before his day been given out as *ecclesiastical*.”⁷⁴

Even though his desire is to enhance the majesty and honor of God by asserting God’s primacy over all things, he is sometimes led into representing God’s actions in a repulsive manner to the contemporary reader.⁷⁵ One of Anselm’s most difficult problems

⁶⁹Anselm of Canterbury, *Why God Became Man and the Virgin Conception and Original Sin*, trans. Joseph M. Colleran (Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1969), 45.

⁷⁰McDonald, 168.

⁷¹J. Scott Lidgett, *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement* (London: Kelly, 1901), 451.

⁷²Denney, *The Death of Christ*, 293.

⁷³G. B. Stevens, *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation* (London: T. & T. Clark, 1909), 242.

⁷⁴Adolf Harnack, *History of Dogma* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1958), 6:77-78.

⁷⁵Paul, 75.

is to reconcile his emphasis on the sovereign majesty of God with the mercy and forgiveness of God as Jesus revealed them in the Gospels.⁷⁶ Anselm argues that for God to forgive a person the satisfaction that is due to Him simply because the person cannot pay the debt is to say that God merely remits what He has no chance of receiving, which makes a mockery of God's forgiveness.⁷⁷

A second criticism of Anselm is in the relationship he presents between the Father and the Son and how this impacts his doctrine of the person of Christ. While it is true that he bases his whole conception of atonement upon the humanity of the Savior and that he holds to the necessity of our Lord having both a divine and human nature,⁷⁸ the content he gives to the humanity of the Savior is seriously limited. While he maintains that it was fitting that the Lord should be like human beings and dwell among them without sin, he also argues that Jesus could not sin,⁷⁹ could not be miserable in his temporal misfortunes,⁸⁰ and could not share the experience of human ignorance.⁸¹

A third criticism concerns Anselm's contrast between the honor and majesty of the Father and the sacrifice and humility of the Son, which driven further leads to either the Arian position regarding the person of Christ or tritheism regarding the doctrine of the Trinity.⁸² While he himself never falls into those errors, in the hands of less skillful

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Anselm, 1.24.

⁷⁸Paul, 76-77.

⁷⁹Anselm, 2.10.

⁸⁰Ibid., 2.12.

⁸¹Ibid., 2.13.

⁸²Paul, 78.

theologians the danger was present.⁸³ A fourth criticism relates to how Anselm sometimes pushed his metaphors beyond their proper use which, when taken over by theologians of later generations, have had serious negative repercussions. Indeed, these metaphors were taken over by the Western Church and they, in fact, provided the dominant ideas in the exposition of atonement until almost the middle of the nineteenth century. It is in this light that Robert Paul noted that, “indeed, they became far more than metaphors and images; they became a theory, a doctrine, and almost a dogma.”⁸⁴

On the positive side, we need to recognize that Anselm utilized the images of law, feudalism, and chivalry that were distinctive features of his own day and in a book which was written to deal with the doubts of ordinary people. Thus, it is clear that there are no categories, however well favored in the past or honored by long usage, which can take the place of the constant theological discipline of re-translating this doctrine into terms that are relevant to contemporary times.⁸⁵

Anselm’s view gives objective reality to the death of Christ. He saw beyond “the terms of his own system the reality of Christ’s work as in a profound sense absolute and adequate for the soul’s salvation.”⁸⁶ The death of Christ was, to him, a vivid personal and pastoral experience. H. D. McDonald has summarized Anselm’s theory thus: “If he [Anselm] failed in his theory to make the idea of it the one ground of justification—the only basis of permanent assurance of man’s full acceptance, as the Reformers were to proclaim—Anselm does at least make sure of the fact that Christ’s death provides the

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., 79.

⁸⁵Ibid., 80.

⁸⁶McDonald, 173.

way whereby sin may be forgiven and the accusations of conscience silenced.”⁸⁷

Moral Influence Theory: Peter Abelard (1079-1142)

Peter Abelard studied theology under Anselm at his school in Laon.⁸⁸ He was the first theologian to give formal expression to what some have called the moral influence theory of the atonement.⁸⁹ The appearance of Abelard’s interpretation of the atonement within a few years of that of Anselm illustrates the need for a revision of the doctrine of atonement by the eleventh and twelfth centuries.⁹⁰ Abelard’s approach could be better referred to as the theory of emotional appeal of divine love.⁹¹ Abelard’s interpretation is found in his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans,⁹² *The Epitome of Christian Doctrine*,⁹³ and in the articles of charges laid against him by Bernard of Clairvaux at the Council of Sens in 1411.⁹⁴

His central focus is on the Cross as the manifestation of the love of God. What provides the justification of humans is the kindling of divine love in the heart in the presence of the Cross. To love is to be free from the slavery of sin and to attain to the true

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Cave, 133.

⁸⁹McDonald, 174. While Abelard is commonly regarded as a solitary exponent of the moral theory who is a remote from his age, that idea is largely mistaken. The idea had been presented by earlier Greek and Latin writers. In some ways, he illustrates well the theological tendencies of his own day. His uniqueness consists in presenting the moral aspect of the atonement with a fullness and vigor that is unparalleled until modern times. Grensted, 103.

⁹⁰Paul, 80.

⁹¹McDonald, 174.

⁹²Peter Abelard, “Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans,” in *Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 276-287.

⁹³Peter Abelard, *Epitome of Christian Doctrine*, 22, 25, quoted in McDonald, 176.

⁹⁴McDonald, 176.

liberty of the children of God.⁹⁵ Our justification and reconciliation consist in the singular grace shown to us in the Incarnation and in the endurance of Christ in teaching us by word and example even unto death on the cross. Therefore, he writes thus: “That fired by so great a benefit of God’s grace, true love may not fear to suffer anything on His behalf.”⁹⁶

Abelard writes further: “Thus our redemption is that loftiest love inspired in us by the passion of Christ, which not only frees us from the slavery of sin, but also gives us the true freedom of the sons of God, that we may be wholly filled not with fear, but with love of Him who has displayed such grace to us. . . . He testifies, therefore, that He came to extend among men this true liberty of love.”⁹⁷ In his commentary on Rom 3:19-26, Abelard notes that love is “a righteousness of God—something which God approves and by which we are justified in God’s sight,” and that righteousness has been revealed in the teaching of the gospel.⁹⁸

In reference to the “righteousness of God,” he asserts: “By the faith which we hold concerning Christ love is increased in us, by virtue of the conviction that God in Christ has united our human nature to himself and, by suffering in that same nature, has demonstrated to us that perfection of love of which he himself says: ‘Greater love than this no man hath (John 15:13).’”⁹⁹ Thus, for Abelard, the purpose of the incarnation and the passion of Christ is the revelation of the love of God to humans.

⁹⁵Grensted, 104.

⁹⁶Abelard, *On Romans* 3:26.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid., 3:22.

⁹⁹Ibid.

Abelard explains that Christ's exhibition of love was made "by dying for us while we were still sinners."¹⁰⁰ Abelard is not the first theologian to argue that the display of God's love in Christ inspires love in human beings. However, in the passages quoted above at least, he seems to regard it as a complete account of human redemption and not simply an aspect of the same.¹⁰¹ In this connection, Moberly has noted that it is a matter of sincere regret that "he seems to lay so much causal stress upon the 'exhibition' of the love of the Cross, as though he conceived it as working its effect mainly as an appeal, or incitement, to feeling."¹⁰²

Remission of sins and reconciliation are wrought in His blood, but the power is love, that is, love in God working as love in us.¹⁰³ But Abelard also notes that no matter how much human love is inflamed by God's great love, it still is imperfect and needs the merits of Christ's own perfect love.¹⁰⁴ In view of the fact that it needed the death of Christ in order to expiate the sin of Adam, he questions the possibility of any expiation for the act of murder committed against Christ. He also questions whether it would not have been easier for God to just pardon the former sin.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹According to Paul, Abelard's importance in the history of the doctrine of atonement does not lie in the originality of having developed a new series of categories which could be used to explain the doctrine as is the case with Anselm. He wrote: "The example of the sacrifice of and death of Christ as that which calls forth in us a like response of love is not only found in the New Testament but . . . also throughout the patristic period and is even to be found in *Cur Deus Homo* itself. Abelard's importance is in the fact that he took this aspect of the Atonement as the fundamental meaning of the doctrine and not simply as one aspect of it." *Atonement and the Sacraments*, 81.

¹⁰²Moberly, 375.

¹⁰³Grensted, 105.

¹⁰⁴Abelard, *On Romans 5:10*.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

Evaluation of the Moral Influence Theory

Abelard rightly emphasizes the love of God as revealed in the work of Christ. He sees the cross and the whole life of Christ as an outpouring of the love of God in forgiveness and restoration of the sinner to divine favor.¹⁰⁶ He is also right to emphasize the moral influence of the God-Man upon human beings. By his emphasis on the subjective view as opposed to the objective view of Anselm, he brings the discussion of the atonement out of the metaphysical sphere into the realm of personal relationships.¹⁰⁷

However, it is a grave mistake that Abelard did not see Christ's death as having an absolutely necessary connection with the forgiveness of sins. In Abelard's view, the Cross is a mere incentive to love which makes its appeal to emotion and feeling but does not enter by the power of the Holy Spirit into the very heart of the human being.¹⁰⁸ For him, though Christ died to kindle love in us, His death was not indispensable to the atonement. Christ showed His love to human beings especially by taking humans into personal union with Himself which was then followed by the forgiveness of sins.¹⁰⁹ In this connection, H. D. McDonald writes as follows: "Since, then, Christ's work is merely to ensure men of union with his divine life and his dealing with sin is a secondary issue, the forgiveness of sins has no vital association with the deed of the Cross. Such a notion is surely at odds with the apostolic word: in Christ we have our redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin (Eph 1:7)."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶McDonald, 179-180.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 180.

¹⁰⁸Grensted, 107.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰McDonald, 180.

Another weakness of Abelard's theory of atonement is that it is primarily focused on the human being and too subjective. However, the New Testament consistently refers to the work of Christ by focusing on what God does. It declares that Christ gave Himself up for us, an offering to God (Eph 5:2); and that "he offered himself without blemish to God" (Heb 9:14). The atonement both reveals the love of God and satisfies the necessity for divine justice. "The cross has influence only in so far as it is in fact a propitiation for our sins."¹¹¹ The moral influence of atonement is far more extensive than its reference to humans; it has a cosmic reach (Col 1:19-20).¹¹²

Penal Substitution Theory

One of the prominent facts of the history of theological thought is that the work of the reformers profoundly affected the doctrine of atonement. Though before the Reformation a few hints of a penal substitution theory can be found, after the Reformation, it becomes the generally held position among the great majority of Protestant writers.¹¹³ One point that must be noted is that the Reformers did not start out with the intention of remodeling the satisfaction theory, even though such remodeling was a natural result of some of the foundational principles they had adopted.¹¹⁴

The reformers saw some aspects of Paul's teaching which had hitherto been generally ignored as central to a proper understanding of the atonement. This change in foundational approach profoundly affected the understanding of the problem of sin and

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Grensted, 191.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

grace and, consequently, how the fact of atonement was understood.¹¹⁵ The penal substitution theory emerged at the Reformation and held a supremacy over other theories within the Protestant churches for about three hundred years.¹¹⁶ Medieval scholasticism had centered soteriology in the authority and ordinances of the church and had also tended to emphasize more completely than ever before both the arbitrariness of the divine will and the futility of the human attempt to comprehend it.¹¹⁷

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Martin Luther studied under the later scholastics who were said to have prepared the way for the ultimate break between reason and revelation.¹¹⁸ Though the Reformation was the result of a long historical process, yet the occasion that launched it concerns a practical and unpremeditated issue. When in 1517 Luther posted his ninety-five theses on the door of All Saints Church, he was really more concerned with checking certain abuses within the practice of the Roman Catholic Church than with presenting a systematic alternative to its doctrines.¹¹⁹

The questions Luther raised in relation to indulgences were primarily in relation to practical ecclesiastical reform. But later as the official position stiffened, the theological implications underlying the practice became glaring and led to the

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Paul, 91. In 1905, the supremacy of the penal substitutionary view was attested by Benjamin B. Warfield, who was the president of Princeton Theological Seminary, when he wrote that "Lutherans and Reformed are entirely at one in their conception of the nature of our Lord's saving work as a substitutive sin-bearer and an atoning sacrifice." Benjamin B. Warfield in introduction to Junius B. Remensnyder, *The Atonement and Modern Thought* (Philadelphia, PA: Lutheran Publication Society, 1905), ix.

¹¹⁷Paul, 92.

¹¹⁸Cave, 149; Paul, 92.

¹¹⁹Paul, 92.

formulation of a particular doctrine of redemption.¹²⁰ Luther, like Paul the apostle and Augustine, had been overwhelmed with the supremacy of the loving grace of God¹²¹ and was horrified by either practice or precept which might appear to set anything human on the same plane as the sole sufficiency of Christ.¹²²

Luther and the other Reformers held a view of sin that is far deeper and more intense than the one generally held in the Middle Ages. Sin was no longer seen as disobedience or dishonor done to God which deprives Him of His due (the Anselmian view); sin was seen as a corruption that brings death (the view held by Athanasius and Augustine).¹²³ Luther rejected the medieval view that the Fall merely deprived humanity of the special gifts of holiness and immortality bestowed upon Adam by God. He saw sin as the corruption of the very nature of human beings, which brings with it an inordinate desire to sin.¹²⁴

His personal struggle with sin and temptation informed his view of the condition of fallen humanity. According to Luther, for human beings to be put right with God again, the one necessity is faith in God in which the original righteousness had centered. It is faith and faith only in God which can justify humanity.¹²⁵ For Luther, the thought of God's grace dominated every aspect of Christian doctrine. Grace is the only bedrock on

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, in *Luther's Works*, 55 vols., trans. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 25:43-48.

¹²²Ibid., 241, 242.

¹²³Ibid., 28, 29.

¹²⁴Ibid., 258, 259; idem, Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* (1535), in *Luther's Works*, 55 vols., trans. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 26:281.

¹²⁵Luther, *Luther's Works*, 26:151-154, 160.

which faith depends. Humans cannot establish such a faith for their will is enslaved to sin. Thus, Luther came to reject belief in human free will to do right. Apart from God's grace, all is sin.¹²⁶

However, despite certain variations in the language used by different writers, Protestant theology as a whole continued to lay emphasis on the sinfulness and helplessness of humans. This was foreign to contemporary Roman theologians and had little precedent except in Augustine. The new emphasis enhanced the rise into prominence of the doctrine of atonement. From this time onward, it occupies a more central position than it had held for the medieval theologians.¹²⁷

Luther's main importance with regard to atonement is due to the fact that he supplied the principles upon which the other Reformers built. However, his own treatment of atonement is not worked out in detail. Its most complete statement is found in his comment on the words, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us" (Gal 3:13)¹²⁸ and it is marked by the force of Luther's mystical and passionate rhetoric more than by any accuracy of thought.¹²⁹ However the elements of the characteristic Reformation doctrine are all present in the comment. He states the transaction of atonement from the point of view of legal justice and views the death of Christ as the legal penalty for sin. The law demands punishment and that punishment

¹²⁶Ibid., 26-28, 41-42. See also Martin Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will: A New Translation of De Servo Arbitrio* (1525), Martin Luther's Reply to Erasmus of Rotterdam, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnson (London: J. Clarke, 1957).

¹²⁷Grensted, 197.

¹²⁸Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians* (1535), in *Luther's Works*, 55 vols., trans. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 26:277.

¹²⁹Grensted, 198.

must not only be inflicted, it must also be endured.¹³⁰

In his comments on Gal 3:13, *Lectures on Galatians*, Luther notes that Paul in this passage does not say that “Christ became a curse on his own account, but that He became a curse ‘for us.’” Thus, the whole emphasis is on the phrase ‘for us.’ He wrote further:

For Christ is innocent so far as His own Person is concerned; therefore He should not have been hanged from the tree. But because, according to the Law, every thief should have been hanged, therefore, according to the Law of Moses, Christ Himself should have been hanged; for He bore the person of a sinner and a thief—and not of one but of all sinners and thieves. For we are sinners and thieves, and therefore we are worthy of death and eternal damnation. But Christ took all our sins upon Himself, and for them He died on the cross. Therefore it was appropriate for Him to become a thief and, as Isaiah says (53:12), to be “numbered among the thieves.”¹³¹

One cannot but notice the force of Luther’s literal interpretation of Isa 53:12 when he wrote further:

Therefore this general Law of Moses included Him, although He was innocent so far as His own Person was concerned; for it found Him among sinners and thieves. . . . Christ was not only found among sinners; of His own free will and by the will of the Father He wanted to be an associate of sinners and thieves and who were immersed in all sorts of sin. Therefore when the Law found Him among thieves, it condemned and executed Him as a thief.¹³²

Luther argues further that, though Jesus Christ is “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29), who is innocent and without blemish, but since He bears the sins of the world, “His innocence is pressed down with the sins and the guilt of the entire world.”¹³³ In his words, “Whatever sins I, you, and all of us have committed or may commit in the future, they are as much Christ’s own as if He Himself had committed them. In short, our sins must be

¹³⁰Luther, *Luther’s Works*: 26:4, 5, 277, 278.

¹³¹Luther, *Galatians*, 276.

¹³²*Ibid.*, 277-278.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 278.

Christ's own sins, or we shall perish eternally."¹³⁴ He employs Isa 53:6 ("The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all") very literally to interpret Ps 40:12, Ps 41:4 and Ps 69:5 to mean that Christ has sinned.¹³⁵ Luther utilizes the dramatic picture of Christ in conflict with the forces of sin and death and the curse of the law, and concludes thus: "Christ, who is the divine Power, Righteousness, Blessing, Grace, and Life, conquers and destroys these monsters—sin, death, and the curse—without weapons or battle, in His own body and in Himself, as Paul enjoys saying (Col 2:15): Having disarmed the principalities and powers, triumphing over them in Him."¹³⁶

It has also been noted that perhaps what comes out clearly in Luther is that though he is a "creative thinker of the highest order," his presentation of atonement is "neither systematic nor consistent."¹³⁷ Luther does not think in terms of clearly formulated "theory," but in terms of pictures and images. Paul has noted that "if the ransom and penal images come to the fore in his thought, they are by no means exclusive of other ideas in which he represents our Lord's work as our sacrifice or sacrament, and as our example."¹³⁸ Thus, it is clear that, apart from the penal image, Luther employs other biblical images to present his understanding of atonement.

John Calvin (1509-1564)

It was the theology of John Calvin that provided the battleground on atonement

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Ibid., 282.

¹³⁷Grensted, 204.

¹³⁸Paul, 97.

among theologians in Britain and America during the nineteenth century. John Calvin was more of a systematic theologian than Luther in the sense that with a single book, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, we have his concise but comprehensive exposition of the Christian faith.¹³⁹ His importance is largely because he is a systematizer (rather than an original thinker) who produced what has been regarded as the great theological handbook of the Reformation, his *Institutes*.¹⁴⁰

Calvin's understanding of atonement has been described as that of penal substitution "in its harshest form."¹⁴¹ He views God mainly as the avenging Judge who will not suffer His law to be violated with impunity.¹⁴² In Calvin, as in Luther, the idea and images of the penal theory are evident. In regard to the reasons for the necessity of the incarnation, he argues that "the only reason given in Scripture that the Son of God willed to take our flesh, and accepted to this commandment from the Father, is that he would be a sacrifice to appease the Father on our behalf."¹⁴³ Though the images that Calvin uses are sacrificial images, yet it is clear that they are often used with a meaning that is close to penal substitution.¹⁴⁴ For Calvin, the manner in which Christ paid "the penalty that we deserved"¹⁴⁵ goes beyond his mere suffering to include his life of

¹³⁹John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. J. T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960).

¹⁴⁰V. J. K. Brook, "The Atonement in Reformation Theology," in *The Atonement in History and Life*, ed. L. W. Grensted (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 233

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, 234.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*

¹⁴³Calvin, 2.12.4.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 2.12.3.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*

obedience to the Father.¹⁴⁶

In order to prove that, from the time of His incarnation, Jesus “began to pay the price of liberation in order to redeem us,” he quotes Paul in Rom 5:19 [“As by one man’s disobedience . . .”], and Gal 4:4-5 [“But when the fullness of time came . . .”] and Phil 2:7-8 [“He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . .”]. He notes that “no proper sacrifice to God could have been offered unless Christ, disregarding his own feelings, subjected and yielded himself wholly to his Father’s will” and quoted Heb 10:7, which itself is taken from Ps 40:8 [“I delight to do Your will, O my God, And Your law is within my heart”], to support his assertion.¹⁴⁷

In the first part of Book II, Calvin describes our disobedience and sin in view of the knowledge of God that is given to us and our need of redemption in the light of the fact that we are totally unable to redeem ourselves. Like Anselm, Calvin constructs his case to show the absolute necessity of divine intervention if mankind is to be saved. He shows that the purpose of the Old Testament is to tell the story of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*) which points forward to the divine intervention of the Mediator, Christ. In his view, “apart from the Mediator, God never showed favor toward the ancient people, nor ever gave hope of grace to them.”¹⁴⁸

For Calvin, like Anselm, the atonement is the purpose of the incarnation and not simply its fulfillment, and therefore the atonement is central in his theology. Although one can find passages which seemingly suggest a separation between the Father and the

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 2.16.5.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., 2.6.2.

Son in the work of redemption, in the light of the total picture Christ's work is presented as the intervention of God Himself in history. He refers to Irenaeus as saying "that the Father, himself infinite, becomes finite in the Son, for he has accommodated himself to our little measure."¹⁴⁹ Having shown on the one hand our utter inability to satisfy the God of righteousness who appears "as the severe judge of evil deeds," Calvin asserts that "but in Christ his face shines forth full of grace and gentleness, even upon us poor and unworthy sinners."¹⁵⁰

He alludes to Rom 5 in his discussion of the incarnation. For instance, he argues that the Lord "took the person and the name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father" and "present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment."¹⁵¹ In his view, the "Mediator never was promised without blood" and quotes Heb 9:22 and Isa 53:4-5 to buttress his point that the prophets promised that "he would be the reconciler of God and man."¹⁵²

Calvin emphasizes that the purpose of Old Testament sacrificial worship was to point to Jesus Christ, who was a "greater and more excellent reconciliation than that procured by beasts."¹⁵³ Paul argues that, just as Christ is "the fulfillment of Israel's history and prophecy in his office of Prophet and of her Messianic hope in his office as King, so in his office as Priest he is the fulfillment of her sacrificial worship."¹⁵⁴ In order

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 2.6.4.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 2.7.8.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 2.12.3.

¹⁵²Ibid., 2.12.4.

¹⁵³Ibid., 2.7.1, cf. Exod 19:6.

¹⁵⁴Paul, 102.

to properly understand Calvin's central ideas about atonement, we need to consider what he says in the whole passage where he discusses the threefold offices of the Lord (prophet, king, and particularly that which speaks of his priesthood).¹⁵⁵ For Calvin, the three offices coalesce in Christ's person as Redeemer.¹⁵⁶

There are many passages in the *Institutes* where the penal substitution theory is clearly depicted, but one passage is particularly apposite in this regard:

The priestly office belongs to Christ alone because by the sacrifice of his death he blotted out our guilt and made satisfaction for our sins. . . . Although God under the law commanded animal sacrifices to be offered to himself, in Christ there was a new and different order, in which the same one was both priest and sacrifice. This was because no other satisfaction adequate for our sins, and no man worthy to offer to God the only-begotten Son, could be found. Now, Christ plays the priestly role, not only to render the Father favorable and propitious toward us by an eternal law of reconciliation, but also to receive us as his companions in this great office.¹⁵⁷

The legal categories in which Calvin expressed the work of Christ led directly to the theory of penal substitution. For instance, he says that Christ was numbered with the transgressors so that He might "take the role of a guilty man and evil doer."¹⁵⁸ He also declares that the very form of His death brought Him not under the curse of men, but under the curse of the divine Law, in which case the whole curse that was due to us might be "transferred to him," and that the sacrifice and expiation that He offered were purifications bearing, by substitution, the curse due to sin.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵Calvin, 2.15.1-6.

¹⁵⁶McDonald, *Atonement*, 188.

¹⁵⁷Calvin, 2.15.6.

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 2.16.5.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 2.16.6. He quotes such Bible passages as Deut 21:23; Isa 53; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24 in order to emphasize that not only were our sins laid on Christ on the cross, but also that He bore the very curse of sin.

Evaluation of the Penal Substitution Theory

Martin Luther has been criticized on the ground that he is too literalistic in his interpretations of atonement and too extreme in his expressions of the same. For instance, he uses grotesque imagery in portraying Christ's victory over the devil and portrays Christ as the greatest of sinners.¹⁶⁰ It is doubtful whether sin and guilt can be transferred in the manner depicted by Luther. There seems to be a dichotomy between the Father and the Son in the sense that, while the Father inflicts punishment, the Son endures it.¹⁶¹

While both Luther and Calvin emphasize penal substitution in their theories of atonement, Calvin's statements are more moderate in tone and more systematic in treatment than Luther's. Calvin takes much more care to protect the moral purity of Christ in his interpretation than does Luther. Calvin's main emphasis is upon Christ enduring the penalty of our sins, whereas in Luther's treatment, the emphasis is upon Christ enduring the penalty of our sins based upon the presupposition that Christ literally became sin for us.¹⁶²

While Luther lays a greater stress upon the victory of Christ than does Calvin, the latter while not neglecting the theme of victory places a much greater emphasis upon the sacrificial aspect of the atonement than does Luther. Calvin interprets the death of Christ as a propitiation and sets his atoning work within the framework of his function as high priest.¹⁶³ While insights from the Apostle Paul are evident in Calvin's presentation of atonement (which Anselm missed—that Christ bore the wrath and judgment of God

¹⁶⁰Culpepper, 96.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²Ibid., 102.

¹⁶³Ibid.

against human sin), nevertheless Calvin understands this situation in an Anselmian way, that is, as a matter of reparation and “compensation.”¹⁶⁴ Like the other Reformers, Calvin agrees with Anselm that divine justice required satisfying, but he presented it in terms of criminal law.¹⁶⁵

Paul Fiddes argues that, though Calvin’s theory of penal substitution is compiled from biblical insights and makes exhaustive references to biblical texts, such as Anselm’s theory (which makes less direct appeal to Scripture), it remains an interpretation of Scriptural elements by contemporary views of justice and therefore has a number of weaknesses.¹⁶⁶ In Fiddes’s view, penal substitution theory is too “objective” at the expense of the “subjective” dimension of atonement.¹⁶⁷ The theory portrays atonement as a legal transaction or settlement between God the Father and God the Son in which human beings are not involved, despite the fact that we are the erring sinners concerned.¹⁶⁸

Penal substitution theories add the human response of repentance and trust as a second stage in atonement. The subjective dimension comes as a later appropriation of what has already been achieved and misses the central aspect of atonement as the restoration of a relationship between persons and as an event of reconciliation in which all estranged partners are involved.¹⁶⁹ Human reaction is irrelevant to atonement if the

¹⁶⁴Calvin, 2.16.5.

¹⁶⁵Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 98.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 98-99.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 99.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

atoning act is already complete. This is where Calvin is quite consistent when he makes the link between past event and present salvation one of election since, in this view, God includes human beings in the event of salvation only in the sense of choosing those who should have justifying faith and those chosen for eternal death.¹⁷⁰ In spite of the criticisms of the penal substitution theories of atonement, it remains the most popular theory within the evangelical fold.

The Socinian Theory: The Example View

The Socinian position on atonement is set out in answer to the question of whether Christ really died “to purchase our salvation” or if He literally paid “the debt of our sins.” The answer from the Socinian viewpoint is stated thus:

Although Christians at this time commonly so believe, yet this notion is false, erroneous, and exceedingly pernicious; since they conceive that Christ suffered an equivalent punishment for our sins, and by the price of his obedience exactly compensated our disobedience. There is no doubt, however, but that Christ so satisfied God by his obedience, as that he completely fulfilled the whole of his will, and by his obedience, through the grace of God, for all of us who believe in him, the remission of our sins, and our eternal salvation.¹⁷¹

The volume by Faustus Socinus, *De Jesu Christo Servatore (Of Jesus Christ the Saviour)* published in 1594, is an immediate and vigorous protest against the forensic and punitive view of the atonement of the Reformers. Socinus and his Unitarian friends claim that the penal substitution view of atonement is “false, erroneous and repugnant” because “nothing concerning it is to be found in the Scriptures” and “that they who maintain the

¹⁷⁰Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 99.

¹⁷¹Thomas Rees, *The Racovian Catechism* (London: Longmans, 1818), 304. The discussion of the Socinian theory will be largely based on this *Catechism* which is a convenient summary of the Socinian doctrine of atonement. The *Catechism* is the work of Faustus and his friends and disciples, first published in 1609.

opinion never adduce explicit texts of Scripture in proof of it, but string together certain inferences by which they endeavor to maintain their assertions.”¹⁷²

The Socinians argue that “the Scriptures every where testify that God forgives men their sins freely, and especially under the New Covenant (2 Cor 5:19; Rom 3:24, 25; Matt 18:23, etc.).”¹⁷³ To buttress their argument, they added: “But to a free forgiveness nothing is more opposite than such a satisfaction as they contend for, and the payment of an equivalent price. For where a creditor is satisfied, either by the debtor himself, or another person on the debtor’s behalf, it cannot with truth be said of him that he freely forgives the debt.”¹⁷⁴

The Socinian theory argues that there are two reasons why Christ should suffer and die the way He did. It quotes Rom 8:32¹⁷⁵ in defense of this assertion. The first is that he might inspire us “with a certain hope of salvation” and incite us “both to enter and to persevere in it.”¹⁷⁶ The second reason is that He might thereby show that “he is with us in every struggle of temptation, suffering, or danger, affords us assistance, and at length delivers us from eternal death.”¹⁷⁷ In support of the first reason, Socinus adduces biblical evidence from 1 Pet 2:21,¹⁷⁸ and Heb 2:10. In support of the second reason, he cites

¹⁷²Ibid., 304.

¹⁷³Rees, 304-305.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 305.

¹⁷⁵“He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?”

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 298.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

¹⁷⁸“For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.”

Heb 2:17, 18,¹⁷⁹ 4:15, and 5:8. He states that “of all the things done by God and Christ with a view to our salvation, the death of Christ was the most difficult work, and the most evident proof of the love of God and Christ toward us.”¹⁸⁰ His emphasis was thus evidently on the exemplary and demonstrative character of the sufferings and death of Christ.

In his critical rejection of the Reformed statement of atonement, Socinus advances a number of propositions which, if true, make the penal substitution theory void. His basic thesis is that the idea of satisfaction excludes the idea of mercy. The dilemma, as he sees it, is as follows: If sin is punished, it is not forgiven; if it is forgiven, it is not punished. He argues that the two, forgiveness and punishment, are contradictory. The Catechism argues thus: “It is evident that God forgives and punishes sins whenever he deems fit, it appears that the mercy which commands to spare, and the justice which commands to destroy, do so exist in him as that both are tempered by his will, and by the wisdom, the benignity, and holiness of his nature.”¹⁸¹

The idea is that a complete equivalent rendered to God for the punishment due for sin nullifies the divine compassion in remitting sin.¹⁸² For Socinus, sin is a personal matter that cannot be borne by another person. The guilty person is the one who bears the punishment alone. Justice, on the other hand, can be arrested or forgone by an act of the will since it is a product of the will. Socinus argues that in relation to mankind, this is

¹⁷⁹“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”

¹⁸⁰Rees, 303.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 308.

¹⁸²Ibid.

precisely what God has done; He has left aside His justice in order to display His mercy. He argues that, quite apart from another's substitution for human sin—for there can be in reality none—God dispenses justice freely to forgive humanity its sin.¹⁸³ There is therefore no need for an equivalent substitution to bear sin's penalty.¹⁸⁴

Evaluation of the Socinian Theory

It is clear from the passages quoted above that Socinus has “realised neither the seriousness of the offence of man, nor the utter holiness of God, holiness which can make no truce with sin.”¹⁸⁵ The significance of Christ is that He assures forgiveness of sins; He does not procure it. He is in no sense the mediator of salvation. He is the “Savior” in the sense that He announces to humanity the way to eternal life. He expiates sin by assuring us of God's pardon following our repentance. The cross draws us to accept divine mercy and reveals to us God's indescribable love.¹⁸⁶ For Socinus, the primary function of Christ is prophetic. As a prophet, He taught humanity the promises of God and also gave them an example of a perfect life.¹⁸⁷

Overall, the positive aspects of the theology of Socinus are of less importance historically than negative criticism, of which he was a master.¹⁸⁸ His positive influence was limited because people realized that orthodoxy, whether Catholic or Protestant, did

¹⁸³Rees, 308.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 305.

¹⁸⁵Grensted, 283.

¹⁸⁶Socinus, *De Jesu Christo Servatore* 1:4.

¹⁸⁷Cave, 287.

¹⁸⁸Grensted, *History*, 289.

more justice to the spiritual experience of Christians than Socinian rationalism.¹⁸⁹

Protestant theologians found it hard to defend the penal substitutionary theory against the criticisms of Socinus in view of the fact that “its unbounded strength in some directions was counterbalanced by glaring defects in others.”¹⁹⁰ Socinian arguments highlighted such weaknesses of the penal substitutionary theory.

Governmental Theory: Hugo Grotius (A.D. 1583-1645)

The Socinian attack on the penal substitution theory soon provoked a counter-attack. Hugo Grotius’s defense of the theory came in the form of a book called *A Defence of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ Against Faustus Socinus*.¹⁹¹

His book opens with a defense of the basic Reformed contention that a satisfaction was necessary for God to justly extend mercy to humanity. Contrary to the position of Socinus, God could not simply forgive as He willed. He begins his case by arguing thus:

The Catholic Doctrine, therefore, is as follows: God was moved by his own goodness to bestow distinguished blessings upon us. But since our sins, which deserved punishment, were an obstacle to this, he determined that Christ, being willing of his love toward men, should, by bearing the most severe tortures, and a bloody and ignominious death, pay the penalty for our sins, in order that without prejudice to the exhibition of the divine justice, we might be liberated, upon the intervention of a true faith, from the punishment of eternal death.¹⁹²

Though Grotius here uses the language of the penal theory, and despite his avowed intention of defending the prevailing Reformed view of the atonement, in reality, his view is a new one which steers something of a middle course between the Reformed

¹⁸⁹Ibid.

¹⁹⁰Ibid.

¹⁹¹Hugo Grotius, *A Defence of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ Against Faustus Socinus*, trans. Frank Hugh Foster (Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper, 1889).

¹⁹²Ibid., 1-2.

view on the one hand and the Socinian view on the other.¹⁹³ His theory has been referred to as the Governmental or Rectoral Theory.¹⁹⁴ The clause in the quote above, “without prejudice to the exhibition of divine justice,” is a reflection of the wide gap between the thoughts of Grotius and the Calvinist theologians. When Grotius goes on to expand his theory, this conception of the display of God’s justice receives a stress which profoundly affects his overall position. Grotius writes:

The end of the transaction of which we treat, in the intention of God and Christ, which, proposed in the act, may also be said to have been effected, is two-fold; namely, the exhibition of the divine justice, and the remission of sins with respect to us, i.e. our exemption from punishment. For if you take the exaction of punishment impersonally, its end is the exhibition of the divine justice; but if personally, i.e. why was Christ punished, the end is that we might be freed from punishment.¹⁹⁵

The penal aspect of the atonement is thus given second place. Hence, the primary purpose of atonement is not satisfaction, but the justice of God. For Grotius, God, in His administration of punishment, is not to be regarded as absolute Lord or as an offended party, but rather as the head of a state or a family.¹⁹⁶ Thus, his basic presupposition is that God is a moral governor of the world who acts in the best interest of His subjects.¹⁹⁷ Therefore, God is not bound to secure the full demands of absolute and ideal justice or full compensation for injury suffered, but only the ends of His own good government.¹⁹⁸ He agrees with Socinus that justice is not an inherent necessity of the divine nature since

¹⁹³Culpepper, 106.

¹⁹⁴Grensted, 292.

¹⁹⁵Grotius, 33.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., 51.

¹⁹⁷Culpepper, 106.

¹⁹⁸Grensted, 293.

“the law is not something internal within God, or the will of God itself, but only an effect of that will.”¹⁹⁹ As a ruler, God can either abrogate or alter the law. God does in fact alter the law for reasons of His own glory and human salvation.²⁰⁰ Though the law still remains, in relaxing it God shows both its continuing validity and His own deity as supreme ruler.²⁰¹

Unlike the Socinian theory, punishment is not ruled out. Grotius concludes that punishment is required in the interest of government, but it is not essential that it should be inflicted upon the sinner himself.²⁰² Indeed, punishment may be inflicted upon someone else other than the sinner where the infliction of penalty is within the power of the punisher, and there is a certain connection between the one who has sinned and the one who is to be punished.²⁰³ He presents Christ’s work as a sacrifice of satisfaction to the necessities of the relaxed law. He concurs with Socinus’s criticism of the penal doctrine, which views Christ’s sufferings as an exact equivalent for the divine penalty of sin.²⁰⁴

Grotius argues that the first cause which moved God to pay the penalty for human sin is His mercy or love for humanity, and quotes John 3:16 and Rom 5:8 to buttress this argument. In his view, the impulsive cause which moved God to act for our salvation is our sins, which fully deserved punishment. He also did some word study on the passages

¹⁹⁹Grotius, 75.

²⁰⁰Ibid.

²⁰¹Ibid., 79-80.

²⁰²Ibid., 88.

²⁰³Ibid., 89.

²⁰⁴McDonald, 205.

in which Greek words such as *dia*, *uper*, and *peri* are used in order to refute the arguments of Socinus that the final and not the impulsive cause of our human salvation is denoted. Such passages include Rom 8:32, Eph 5:6, Isa 53:6, and Rom 15:9.²⁰⁵

Grotius considers the second efficient cause to be the willingness of Christ himself and cites John 10:17, 18, Gal 2:20, and Eph 5:2, 25. What moved Christ was His own love for humans. He quotes John 15:13 and Rev 1:5 in support of this viewpoint.²⁰⁶ He notes the fact that Christ's death is presented in many Scriptural passages such as John 10:18, Col 1:21, 22, and Heb 9:15. He posits that the death of Christ is considered in the Bible with reference to two qualities: its being bloody and ignominious and cited Matt 25:28, Luke 22:20, and Heb 9:12 (for the quality of being bloody) and Heb 12:2, and Isa 53:3 (for the quality of ignominy).²⁰⁷

Unlike Socinus, who allows no necessary causal relationship between Christ's work and the forgiveness of sins, Grotius asserts that Christ bore the punishment for our sins by dying on the cross and referred to Isa 53:11 and 1 Pet 2:24 as his biblical bases for that assertion.²⁰⁸ He writes, "It can by no means be doubted that with reference to God that the suffering and death of Christ had the character of a punishment."²⁰⁹ He quotes Rom 3:25, 26 as Scriptural evidence for this position.

His conclusion is that Scripture teaches unambiguously that "God is appeased and reconciled to us by the blood of Christ, that his blood was given for us as a price, that

²⁰⁵Grotius, 3.

²⁰⁶Ibid., 9-10.

²⁰⁷Ibid., 11.

²⁰⁸Ibid., 15, 32.

²⁰⁹Ibid., 32.

Christ died in our stead, and was our expiation.”²¹⁰ The reason he adduces for the sufferings and death of Christ is that “God was unwilling to pass over so many sins, and so great sins, without a distinguished example”²¹¹ of His hatred for sin and regard for law. In his view, Christ’s work is essentially a sacrifice that reveals the love of God and makes such satisfaction as the law required.²¹²

Evaluation of Governmental Theory

The governmental theory differs from the penal substitution view in several important ways. For instance, in Grotius’s view, love not justice is the dominant quality of God. There is no quality of retributive justice in God which demands satisfaction for sin by punishment or an equivalent of punishment.²¹³ The idea of an equivalence of sin and punishment is dropped, as well as the concepts of the imputation of the sinner’s sins to Christ and of Christ’s righteousness to the sinner.

As a mediating view between the penal substitution view and the moral influence theories of Abelard and Socinus, Grotius’s view has exercised great influence upon theological thought. Its influence was especially strong on Arminian theologians, particularly in England, and could be found in the writings of Daniel Whitby (1636-1726), Samuel Clarke (1675-1728), and Richard Watson (1781-1833). In America, it was accepted partially by Jonathan Edwards, Sr., and almost wholly by Jonathan

²¹⁰Grotius, 50.

²¹¹Ibid., 106.

²¹²McDonald, *Atonement*, 205.

²¹³Culpepper, 107.

Edwards, Jr.²¹⁴

Sydney Cave argues that the great strength of the theory is that it makes it clear that “God who is holy love so forgives as in forgiveness to make sin abhorrent to us.”²¹⁵

The basic weakness of the theory is that it uses traditional terminology with nontraditional meaning and that it fails to make clear how through the death of Christ the sinner’s past is freed from the objective power of guilt. It has also been faulted on the grounds that, in atonement, God works on the basis of what is expedient rather than what is just.²¹⁶

Contemporary Theories

The theories of atonement in contemporary times are so numerous that it would be nearly impossible to deal with each one of them separately. This is, in fact, unnecessary since the theologians of this period, for the most part, instead of putting forward completely new theories, simply adopt or adapt one or more of the views which have been previously discussed.²¹⁷ For the purposes of the discussion in this section, I would follow Robert H. Culpepper in classifying some of the foremost theologians according to the type of view they represent.

This method is not completely satisfactory, because some theologians in their treatment of the doctrine of atonement are eclectic, which makes it difficult to categorize

²¹⁴Ibid. According to Culpepper, the influence of Grotius is clearly discernible in the interpretation of atonement given by such distinguished Scottish theologians as J. McLeod Campbell in the nineteenth century and H. R. Mackintosh in the twentieth.

²¹⁵Cave, 181.

²¹⁶Culpepper, 108.

²¹⁷Ibid.

their views.²¹⁸ Five different types of views will be discussed: satisfaction or penal substitution, moral influence, vicarious confession or vicarious penitence, views of sacrifice, and views of victory over evil powers.²¹⁹

Views of Satisfaction or Penal Substitution

Some theologians of this period have put forth theories of atonement along the lines of rigid forms of seventeenth-century Calvinism. They include Charles Hodge,²²⁰ W. G. T. Shedd,²²¹ Louis Berkhof,²²² and to a lesser degree, T. J. Crawford²²³ and A. H. Strong.²²⁴ All these theologians view the vicarious punishment of Christ as our substitute as the essential ingredient in atonement. In their view, the most important element in the character of God is retributive justice or holiness, which demands the punishment of sin. If God as the Lawgiver so chooses, He can punish His innocent Son in the place of guilty humans. For them, the atonement was intended to propitiate God and reconcile Him to the sinner.

One theologian who has made an effort to present the penal substitution theory in such a way as not to offend the moral sensibilities of people in more recent times is R. W.

²¹⁸Stevens, *Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, 174.

²¹⁹Culpepper, 108. The discussion in the remainder of this chapter will be largely based on Culpepper's presentation in his book *Interpreting the Atonement*, 108-121.

²²⁰Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1871).

²²¹W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1889).

²²²Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959).

²²³T. J. Crawford, *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures Respecting the Atonement*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1874).

²²⁴A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Philadelphia, PA: Griffith and Rowland, 1907).

Dale.²²⁵ He rejects the idea that punishment is corrective in purpose and that it is to be administered as a deterrent to further sin, or that it is an expression of God's resentment of an insult against His personal dignity. For him, punishment is "the suffering which has been deserved by past sin."²²⁶ The kernel of his theory is that, in Christ, God, who has the moral right to inflict punishment, has endured it Himself.²²⁷ He argues that atonement becomes ours by faith-union with Christ and not through formal imputation.²²⁸ James Denney holds a similar interpretation of atonement.²²⁹

Emil Brunner emphasizes the idea that reconciliation is two-sided since there is enmity on the side of God as well as on the side of human beings. He wrote: "God *reconciles*, but He is not reconciled. He *reconciles Himself*, but in this process He is only the One who acts, the One who gives; He is not also the One who receives."²³⁰ Going beyond the objective side, he asserts that there is a subjective side, and that both sides meet in divine justification.²³¹

One of the most profound modern interpretations of atonement is that given by Karl Barth in his *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 4, part 1.²³² The center of Barth's doctrine is set forth in the section entitled, "The Judge Judged in Our Place."²³³ Emphasizing the

²²⁵R. W. Dale, *The Atonement* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875).

²²⁶*Ibid.*, 435.

²²⁷*Ibid.*, 490.

²²⁸*Ibid.*, 480.

²²⁹James Denney, *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation* (London: James Clarke, 1959); and *idem*, *Death of Christ*.

²³⁰Brunner, *The Mediator*, 519.

²³¹*Ibid.*, 524.

²³²Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 4/1: *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, 211-282.

²³³*Ibid.*

substitutionary character of atonement, he writes: “There takes place here [the death of Jesus on the cross] the redemptive judgment of God on all men. To fulfill this judgment He took the place of all men, He took their place as sinners.”²³⁴ It has been noted that perhaps the greatest weakness of Barth’s interpretation of atonement is its tendency to promote universalism, the idea that because Christ died for all, ultimately all will be saved.²³⁵

Views of Moral Influence

Theologians such as Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Bushnell, Rashdall, and Franks are just a few of those who may be classified under this category. One thing that is common to all of them is that they vigorously attack the penal substitution view and insist that the barrier to reconciliation is on the side of human beings and not on the side of God. Friedrich Schleiermacher’s great work on systematic theology is *The Christian Faith*.²³⁶ Defining religions in terms of feeling of absolute dependence, Schleiermacher proceeds to expound the Christian faith in terms of human God-consciousness. Redemption is achieved by the power of Christ’s God-consciousness in which we participate by faith in Him as our representative.²³⁷

Perhaps the most thorough-going Abelardian interpretation of atonement in more recent times is that given by Hastings Rashdall in his *The Idea of Atonement in Christian*

²³⁴Ibid., 247.

²³⁵Culpepper, 113.

²³⁶Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928). Schleiermacher has been generally recognized as the pioneer of the modern era of theology. See McDonald, 208-215.

²³⁷Culpepper, 113. Schleiermacher definitely belongs to the moral influence category in view of his emphasis on the subjective element in the atonement and the effect upon the believer of the love of God

Theology.²³⁸ For him, Christ is not much more than a moral ideal which can be attained through belief in God as revealed in Jesus Christ.²³⁹ For R. S. Franks, the fundamental problem of atonement is that of making humans forgivable.²⁴⁰ This is done by creating in the sinner penitence and trust through the revelation of the love of God in the cross.²⁴¹

Though the moral influence view in its emphasis upon the revelation of the love of God in the cross is obviously stating a vital aspect of atonement, nevertheless, by denying an objective element in atonement, the view as variously expressed, is distorting a sizable portion of the biblical teaching and fails to make clear in what sense the death of Christ is a revelation of the love of God.²⁴²

Views of Vicarious Confession or Vicarious Penitence

J. McLeod Campbell argues that though Christ suffered for all our sins as our atoning sacrifice, He did not endure the punishment due our sins as our substitute. He asserts: “The *sufferer suffers* what he suffers *just through seeing sin and sinners with God’s eyes, and feeling in reference to them with God’s heart*. Is such suffering a *punishment*? Is God, in causing such a divine experience in humanity, inflicting a punishment? There can be but one answer.”²⁴³

Of course, his answer is “No!” He argues that in the same way that the tears of a

in Christ that is revealed in the cross.

²³⁸Hastings Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1919).

²³⁹*Ibid.*, 463.

²⁴⁰R. S. Franks, *The Atonement* (London: Oxford, 1934).

²⁴¹Culpepper, 115.

²⁴²*Ibid.*

²⁴³J. McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (London: James Clarke, 1886), 117.

godly parent over a prodigal child are not penal, so the sorrow of God over our sins is not penal. However, the faith that God so grieves over us is “infinitely more important, as having power to work holiness in us, than the faith that He so punishes.”²⁴⁴ Campbell takes the idea of an equivalent repentance which Jonathan Edwards had dismissed and makes it the key to his interpretation of atonement.²⁴⁵

R. C. Moberly continues Campbell’s main line of thought by contending that “the perfect sacrifice of penitence in the sinless Christ is the true atoning sacrifice for sin.”²⁴⁶ Whereas Campbell uses the terms “confession of sin” and “repentance,” Moberly prefers the term “penitence” since, for him, it is impossible to turn from sin if one has never committed sin as in the case of Jesus Christ. Moberly puts more stress upon the Holy Spirit and upon the church and sacraments than does Campbell, who almost completely left these subjects out of his discussion of atonement.²⁴⁷

Views of Sacrifice

Of the many writers who have contributed to the meaning of sacrifice in the Bible, perhaps none have taken the results of the new understanding and applied them in a way that has profoundly affected the understanding of atonement than F. C. N. Hicks and Vincent Taylor.²⁴⁸ The new interpretation of sacrifice that these two writers and others have put forward repudiates the idea of propitiation in relation to sacrifice. Hicks’s

²⁴⁴Ibid., 140.

²⁴⁵Ibid., 135-136.

²⁴⁶R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1901), 130.

²⁴⁷Culpepper, 117.

²⁴⁸Ibid., 118.

famous work on the subject is the *Fullness of Sacrifice*.²⁴⁹ He argues that the blood of sacrifice stands not for death but for life. “Life—its recovery, uplifting and communication—is the ruling conception of sacrifice.”²⁵⁰

Vincent Taylor’s position on atonement has been clearly set forth in his two books, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*²⁵¹ and *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*.²⁵² He interprets the death of Christ as vicarious, representative, and sacrificial. He regards the biblical category of sacrifice as the most adequate one available for explaining the meaning of atonement.²⁵³ In essence, his view is that Jesus offered the perfect sacrifice of obedience, which when received by faith becomes the means of the sinner’s approach to God. The offering does not render the sinner’s obedience unnecessary, but rather makes it possible. It remains doubtful that this viewpoint does justice to the teachings of both the Old and New Testaments.²⁵⁴

The View of Victory over the Evil Powers

It was Gustav Aulén who in his famous book *Christus Victor*²⁵⁵ brought this viewpoint into prominence in modern theology. He regards his view of the victory over the evil powers of sin, death, and the devil achieved through the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus as a revival of the “classic” idea of atonement. According to

²⁴⁹F. C. N. Hicks, *The Fullness of Sacrifice* (London: SPCK, 1946).

²⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 177.

²⁵¹Vincent Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan, 1959).

²⁵²Vincent Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching* (London: Epworth, 1958).

²⁵³Culpepper, 119.

²⁵⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵⁵Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor* (New York: Macmillan, 1951).

Aulén, in distinction from the Latin view, which regards atonement as an offering made to God from the human side, the classic view regards atonement as a continuous divine action, with God as the effective agent of redemption.²⁵⁶ In this view, God, in Christ, combats and prevails over the tyrants which hold humanity in bondage. By His victory God becomes reconciled to the world and establishes a new relation between Himself and mankind.²⁵⁷ At the same time, these tyrants are the agents of God's judgment on sin.

Aulén does not claim that he is putting forth a new theory. Rather, he claims that he is reformulating the view of atonement which was dominant in the church for the first thousand years of its history. He argues that this view was recaptured by Luther but became obscured again in Lutheran orthodoxy.²⁵⁸ However, while victory over the evil powers is without doubt an aspect of the atoning work of Christ, one cannot interpret the whole biblical witness under this category, as Aulén attempts to do, without distorting that very witness. Nevertheless, the influence of Aulén's work has been great. Sydney Cave, for example, admits that Aulén's work has forced him to rethink his view of atonement.²⁵⁹ A notable contemporary evangelical scholar who has written on the theme of God at war with evil powers is Gregory A. Boyd.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶Culpepper, 120. In this connection, J. Denny Weaver has argued that it was the historical context of church confronting empire that was a major influence in the development of the *Christus Victor* motif of atonement. He also posits that it was the rise of the Constantinian synthesis of church and empire that caused the abandonment of the *Christus Victor* explanation of atonement. See his *Keeping Salvation Ethical: Mennonite and Amish Atonement Theology in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1997), 39-49.

²⁵⁷Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 56.

²⁵⁸Culpepper, 120.

²⁵⁹Cave, *Preface*, v.

²⁶⁰His two books are *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), and *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

Summary

Though penal substitution is viewed by many today as the one correct approach to explaining the meaning of the cross, yet the fact remains that the Christian church has never defined one theory of the atonement as being the only orthodox one. A lesson that one has learned is that in order for one's explanation of the significance of the cross to be intelligible, the images that are employed, while remaining true to the biblical message of atonement, must be relevant to the particular social and historical environment in which one lives. A danger that we have also learned to avoid is the uncritical borrowing of language and images from one's particular world which may lead to a distortion of the biblical message of atonement,²⁶¹ resulting in models of atonement that do not critically engage society and thus cause the cross to lose its saving character.²⁶²

Having examined the different theories of atonement, I now proceed to a discussion of the atonement theory of John R. W. Stott as presented in his writings.

²⁶¹Green and Baker, 150-151.

²⁶²Ibid., 151.

CHAPTER III

THE ATONEMENT THEOLOGY OF JOHN STOTT

This chapter examines the atonement theology of John Stott. It begins with a discussion of the assumptions and presuppositions that undergird his theology, and proceeds to a discussion of his methodology. Next, his view on the centrality of the cross and his understanding of substitutionary atonement are discussed. His view on the achievement of the cross and the scope of atonement is presented next, including his understanding of the high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ. Finally, a summary of his theology of atonement is presented.

John Stott and His Writings

John Stott depicts himself as an evangelical writer whose main focus has been the centrality of the cross of Christ.¹ He has been writing for publication since January 1945 when his first article appeared while he was still a student. Since that time, his writings have multiplied to include well over thirty books, and hundreds of pamphlets, articles, and chapters in symposia.² Martyn Eden and David F. Wells have noted that one thing that is very evident throughout his writings is his “vision of a Christianity that is both

¹John Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 7.

²Timothy Dudley-Smith, foreword to John Stott, *Authentic Christianity*, comp. Timothy Dudley-Smith (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1995), 9.

biblical and contemporary.”³

David L. Edwards, a liberal Anglican theologian and church historian, has argued that one of the great strengths of Stott is that “he has consistently taught a religion which claims to be true and not merely enjoyable or useful; which asks people to think, not merely to tremble or glow; which bases itself on a book which can be argued about, not on ‘experience’ which convinces only the individual who has had it.”⁴ Eden and Wells have also pointed out that a part of the objective of John Stott is to help Christians relate their biblical faith to the modern world as exemplified in the establishment of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity in 1982.⁵

According to Edwards, Stott is “a loved and trusted leader, teacher and spokesman of the worldwide Evangelical movement—and apart from William Temple (who died as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1944) the most influential clergyman in the Church of England during the twentieth century.”⁶ However, it must be noted that while Stott is a brilliant and well-read scholar, he has never been an ivory-tower theologian. He falls into the category of what has been called the “teaching pastor.”⁷ Timothy Dudley-

³Eden and Wells, 5.

⁴Edwards, “Power of the Gospel,” in David L. Edwards and John Stott, *Evangelical Essentials* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989), 16. He also refers to Stott as “the great teacher of the church” (*Essentials*, 4). Edwards has also noted that Stott has challenged Christians to abandon anti-intellectualism and instead employ their minds in the quest for truth. John Stott, *Your Mind Matters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1972), 7-10.

⁵Eden and Wells, 29.

⁶Edwards, “Power of the Gospel,” 1. He also classifies Stott with those evangelical leaders who are both “masters” and “servants” of the Bible and who have therefore been able to have an international influence within the evangelical world (*ibid.*, 15).

⁷George Carey, foreword to *The Incomparable Christ*, by John Stott (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 9. In describing Stott’s ministry, which he argues is epitomized in the objectives of the London Lectures in Contemporary Christianity founded by Stott in 1974, he stated that it included the following: “to expound some aspect of historic biblical Christianity; to relate it to a contemporary issue in the church and the world; to be scholarly in content, yet popular enough in appeal and style to attract the

Smith, a friend and biographer of Stott, has also argued that the power and influence of the evangelicals in the Anglican Church in contemporary times could justifiably be attributed to the ministry of Stott.⁸

In a review of Stott's major book on atonement, *The Cross of Christ*, Robert P. Lightner wrote that the book "takes its place with the classics on the subject of the death of Christ such as Denney's *The Atonement and the Modern Mind*, Crawford's *The Doctrine of Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement*, and Warfield's *The Person and Work of Christ*."⁹ While noting that books with such depth, latitude, and practical application are rare, he also argues that Stott engages in theological thinking throughout the book.¹⁰ In light of the acclaimed contributions of Stott to the growth and influence of the evangelical movement, it remains to be seen what a close study of his theological writings on atonement would reveal.¹¹

educated public; and to present each topic in such a way as to be of interest to the secular as well as the Christian public." Robert L. Reymond on his part describes Stott as a "a mature pastor-theologian—and a practised craftsman in the art of communication [of the gospel]." Review of *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott, *The Evangelical Review of Theology* 13 (July 1989): 280, and also Peter Williams, "John R. W. Stott," *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 338-352.

⁸Timothy Dudley-Smith, "John Stott: An Introduction," in Eden and Wells, 20. Dudley-Smith, a former Anglican Bishop of Thetford (1981-1991), is a friend and biographer of John Stott who has written extensively on Stott. His publications on John Stott and his writings include *Authentic Christianity: From the Writings of John Stott* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1995); *John Stott: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (Downer Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995); *John Stott, the Making of a Leader—The Early Years* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999); *John Stott, A Global Ministry: A Biography—The Latter Years* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001).

⁹Robert P. Lightner, review of *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (April-June 1988): 220.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 221.

¹¹Peter Williams has argued that since Stott's writings have been driven by "evangelistic, pastoral, and ethical concerns," it is not surprising that they have not led to new advances in theological thought ("John R. W. Stott," in *Handbook of Evangelical Theology*, 342).

Assumptions, Presuppositions, and Methodology

In his presidential address to the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) Conference in 1982, Stott defined evangelicalism as follows:

At the risk of oversimplification and of the charge of arrogance, I want to argue that the evangelical faith is nothing other than the historic Christian faith. The evangelical Christian is not a deviationist, but a loyalist who seeks by the grace of God to be faithful to the revelation which God has given of himself in Christ and in Scripture. The evangelical faith is not a peculiar or esoteric version of the Christian faith – it is the Christian faith. It is not a recent innovation. The evangelical faith is original, biblical, apostolic Christianity. . . . Our fundamental desire is to be loyal to the biblical revelation.¹²

Therefore, for Stott, evangelicalism is the “historic Christian faith” revealed through Christ and confirmed in Scripture. In his view, the core of the Christian faith is the cross of Christ. His understanding and commitment to evangelicalism is fundamental in understanding his theology of atonement.

Millard J. Erickson, a well-known evangelical theologian, has noted that one’s understanding of atonement is, to a large extent, influenced by the presuppositions one holds in such doctrines as the nature of God, the status of the law, the human condition, Christ, and the Old Testament sacrificial system.¹³ In light of the statement above by Erickson, a proper understanding of the atonement theology that any theologian holds requires a careful understanding and delineation of the assumptions, presuppositions, and methodology of the theologian.

¹²John Stott, Presidential Address to the 1982 Conference of the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, quoted in Timothy Dudley-Smith, “John Stott: An Introduction,” 21, 22. For a discussion of Stott’s definition of evangelicalism, see his chapter titled “Evangelical Essentials” in his book *Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity, Integrity and Faithfulness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999), 13-34. See also Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 39.

¹³Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 818. In his view, atonement involves sacrifice, propitiation, substitution, and reconciliation in the relationship of God to humanity. He adds that it is the penal substitution theory that best describes this relationship (to the background doctrines) for the atonement.

In this regard, Timothy Dudley-Smith, another evangelical (Anglican) scholar, has also argued that the uniqueness of Christ, the need for personal conversion, the Scriptures as God's living word, and the centrality of the cross are the "recurring fundamental evangelical distinctives" that constitute the background or foundation for the life and work of John Stott.¹⁴ Therefore, in order to facilitate a proper understanding and assessment of Stott's theology of atonement, this chapter will begin with a discussion of his assumptions and presuppositions before delving into his methodology.

Assumptions and Presuppositions

In the preface to his *The Cross of Christ*, Stott writes that "the cross of Christ is the center of the evangelical faith" and is "at the center of the historic, biblical faith."¹⁵ He adds that the fact that it is not universally acknowledged is a sufficient justification for preserving a distinctive evangelical understanding of atonement.¹⁶ He elaborates on this when he writes as follows: "Evangelical Christians believe that in and through Christ crucified God substituted himself for us and bore our sins, dying in our place the death that we deserved to die, in order that we might be restored to his favour and adopted into

¹⁴Timothy Dudley-Smith, "John Stott," in Eden and Wells, 21. For further discussion of what constitutes evangelicalism and its various types, see Dayton and Johnston, eds., *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*. See also Robert Webber and Donald Bloesch, *Orthodox Evangelicals* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1978); George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991); and Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, The British Isles, and Beyond 1700-1990* (New York: Oxford, 1994).

¹⁵Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 7.

¹⁶Ibid. For a discussion of what is Anglican Evangelicalism, see David Holloway, "What Is Anglican Evangelical?" in *Restoring the Vision: Anglican Evangelicals Speak Out*, ed. Melvin Tinker (Eastbourne, UK: MARC, 1999), 15-37. David Edwards in writing about Stott notes that "the kind of evangelicalism for which John Stott is a spokesman is clearly acceptable internationally." See Edwards, "The Power of the Gospel," in *Evangelical Essentials*, 13.

his family.”¹⁷

He quotes J. I. Packer who wrote that the belief stated above is “a distinguishing mark of the world-wide evangelical fraternity” and that it “takes us to the very heart of the Christian gospel.”¹⁸ He states that the basic question that evangelicals try to answer is not “Why did God become man?” but “Why did Christ die?”¹⁹ He adds that his main aim in writing the book *The Cross of Christ* is to show “that the biblical doctrine of atonement is substitutionary from beginning to end” in spite of the contemporary unpopularity of the doctrine.²⁰

God and Forgiveness of Human Sin

The question may be asked, “Why does not God simply forgive us, without the necessity of the cross?” If He requires us to forgive those who sin against us, why can’t He do what He asks us to do? Stott’s first response relates to the seriousness of sin. This was the answer given by Anselm of Canterbury in his book *Cur Deus Homo?* at the end of the eleventh century.²¹ His second response also comes from Anselm and relates to the “majesty of God.” Stott comments: “It is when our perception of God and man, or holiness and sin, are askew that our understanding of the atonement is bound to be askew also.”²²

¹⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 7.

¹⁸Ibid. See also J. I. Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve?” *Tyndale Bulletin* 25 (1974): 3.

¹⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 10.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 87-88. See also Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo?* i.xxi.

²²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 88. Stott argues that God’s omnipotence does not make Him a totalitarian tyrant who exercises his power arbitrarily to do anything whatsoever. He argues, “God’s omnipotence is the freedom and the power to do absolutely anything he chooses to do. But he chooses only to do good, only to

To argue that, since human beings forgive each other unconditionally, God should do the same reflects a theological shallowness which puts sinful human beings on the same platform as the Holy God. Since we are private individuals, people's misdemeanors are only personal injuries against us. On the other hand, God is not a private individual and sin is not just a personal injury against Him. He is "the maker of the laws we break and sin is rebellion against him."²³ The question that we ought to ask is not why God finds it difficult to forgive, but how He finds it possible to do so at all in view of His righteous and profoundly holy nature which abhors our sin and rebellion.²⁴

Stott notes that the problem of forgiveness is due to the inevitable collision between "divine perfection and human rebellion, between God as he is and us as we are."²⁵ He adds that the "obstacle to forgiveness is neither our sin alone, nor our guilt alone, but also the divine reaction in love and wrath towards guilty sinners."²⁶ Though God is love, yet His holy love which yearns over sinners does not condone their sins. Stott expresses the issue for God as follows: "How, then, could God express his holy love?—His love for sinners without compromising his holiness, and his holiness in

work according to the perfection of his character and will. God can do everything consistent with being himself." See his *Guard the Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 64.

²³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 88. Stott notes that God's holiness is foundational to biblical religion and that the deduction from that is that sin is incompatible with his holiness. Sin separates humanity from God. Without righteousness, there can be no fellowship with him (102). See also Stott, *The Letters of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 47.

²⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 88. Stott quotes Carnegie Simpson's words that "forgiveness is to man the plainest of duties; to God it is the profoundest of problems." Patrick C. Simpson, *The Fact of Christ* (New York: Revel, 1901), 109. Stott argues that "the righteousness of God" can best be thought of as combining all the following three components: a divine attribute (our God is a righteous God), divine activity (he comes to our rescue), and divine achievement (he bestows on us a righteous status). See his *Romans*, 63. He adds that God's righteousness is at one and the same time a quality, an activity, and a gift.

²⁵Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 88.

²⁶Ibid.

judging sinners without frustrating his love?”²⁷ The cross is the divine answer to the conundrum.

The divine saving initiative “was compatible with, and expressive of, his righteousness” because at the cross “in holy love God through Christ paid the full penalty of our disobedience himself.”²⁸ Stott argues thus: “He [Jesus] bore the judgment that we deserve in order to bring us the forgiveness we do not deserve. On the cross divine mercy and justice were equally expressed and eternally reconciled. God’s holy love was ‘satisfied’.”²⁹ Therefore to avoid holding a defective theology of the cross, we have to consider both the seriousness of sin and the majesty of God.³⁰ Stott therefore proceeds to examine four biblical concepts, namely the gravity of sin, human moral responsibility, human guilt, and the wrath of God.³¹

The Gravity of Sin

Stott notes that the New Testament uses five main Greek words for sin which together portray sin in both its passive and active aspects. The most common word used is *hamartia*, which depicts sin as missing the target or the failure to attain a goal. *Adikia* is “unrighteousness” or “iniquity,” and *ponēria* is evil of a vicious or degenerate type. The more active words are *parabasis*, which means a “trespass” or “transgression,” the

²⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 88. Stott argues elsewhere that humanity is the object of God’s love and wrath concurrently and that His righteousness (way of salvation) is revealed in the gospel because His wrath is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness. Therefore, God is a God of love and wrath. *Our Guilty Silence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 42. See also *The Message of Ephesians* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1979), 75.

²⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 89.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

stepping over of a known boundary, and *anomia*, which means “lawlessness,” that is, the disregard or violation of a known law. In each case, the usage of the word implies an objective criterion which could be either a standard we fail to attain or a line we deliberately cross.³²

It is assumed throughout Scripture that this criterion has been established by God and is, in fact, His moral law which expresses His righteous character and which He has laid down for us to follow (Rom 2:15). By sinning we commit “lawlessness” (1 John 3:4) and offend against our own highest welfare and the authority and love of God.³³ What Scripture emphasizes is the godless self-centeredness of sin that rejects the position of dependence which we occupy as creatures and instead causes us to make a bid for autonomy. Stott argues further that “sin is not a regrettable lapse from conventional standards; its essence is hostility to God (Rom 8:7), issuing in active rebellion against him.”³⁴

Stott notes that it is perhaps the deep-seated human reluctance to face the gravity of sin that has led to the omission of the word *sin* from the vocabulary of many people today. He quotes Karl Menninger who wrote in his book *Whatever Became of Sin?* that the word *sin* was once “in everyone’s mind” but is now “rarely if ever heard.”³⁵

³²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 89. For a discussion of the fact and nature of sin, see John Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 61-70.

³³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 90.

³⁴Ibid. To drive the point home, Stott quotes Emil Brunner thus: “Sin is defiance, arrogance, the desire to be equal with God, . . . the assertion of human independence over against God, . . . the constitution of the autonomous reason, morality and culture.” *Man in Revolt*, 129.

³⁵Karl Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin?* (New York: Hawthorn, 1973), 13, quoted in Stott, *Cross*, 90-91. Menninger notes that “many former sins have become crimes,” in which case responsibility for them has passed from the church to the state, while others have become labeled as sicknesses or at least symptoms of sickness. In some cases, the idea of “collective responsibility” has enabled us to shift the blame for our deviant behavior from ourselves as individuals to society as a whole or some segment of it

Human Moral Responsibility and Guilt

In response to the question of whether human beings are responsible for their actions, Stott answers with a resounding “Yes.” He argues that, while we may accept the concept of “diminished responsibility,” the total dissolution of all responsibility is unacceptable “except in the most extreme circumstances.”³⁶ Instances will include cases where the individual lacks consciousness or control, such as may be due to insanity.³⁷ Indeed, the whole legal procedure of trying, convicting, and sentencing in the courts is based on the assumption that human beings, within certain limits, freely make choices and are therefore responsible for the choices they make. A human being is not an automaton that is programmed to perform and respond, nor is he an animal who functions at the level of instincts.³⁸ However, Stott recognizes the abiding tension between the pressures which condition and sometimes even control us and our moral responsibility as creatures created by God for Himself.

Original sin

The concept “of original sin” reveals the gravity of the human sinful condition. In Christian thought, “original sin” is the theological designation for the state or condition of

(74ff). He argues further that sin must be taken seriously because it is “a hurting, a breakaway from God and from the rest of humanity, a partial alienation, or act of rebellion.” In addition he wrote that “sin has a willful, defiant or disloyal quality: *someone* is defied or offended or hurt” (19).

³⁶Stott, *Cross*, 92. Stott argues that Scripture dignifies human beings “by holding us accountable for our thoughts and actions.” See his *Evangelical Essentials*, 321.

³⁷Stott, *Cross*, 92-93. In Stott’s view, “human beings are moral by creation” and “have a sense of guilt and remorse when we have done what we know is wrong.” J. W. R. Stott, *Message of Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 89.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 93. See also Stott, *The Contemporary Christian* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 36.

universal sinfulness in which mankind is found as the result of Adam's sin.³⁹ Stott agrees with the view of John Calvin who regards original sin as the "hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls 'works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19).'"⁴⁰ The traditional Christian understanding of original sin includes the notion of personal moral guilt for Adam's sin that every human being presumably inherits. In the Augustinian view, it is seen as a spiritual infection that in some mysterious way is transmitted through reproduction.⁴¹

In Stott's view, the concept of "original sin" means that the very nature that is passed on to us from our parents is "tainted and twisted with self-centredness."⁴² He defines original sin as "a tendency or bias of self-centredness, which we inherit, which is rooted deeply in our human personality, and which manifests itself in a thousand ugly ways."⁴³ In his commentary on Eph 2:1-10, he quotes the Anglican Article 9 as follows:

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (that is, in imitating him) . . . but it is the fault or corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation.⁴⁴

³⁹See Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997). See also G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, 285-322, and Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*, 145-153; Paul King Jewett, "Original Sin and the Fall of Man," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 19 (Fall 1976): 18-30.

⁴⁰John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II.i.8.

⁴¹Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 648-656; Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 1104; Laurent Sentis, "Original Sin," *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 3:1479-1482; *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia (SDAE)*, rev. ed. (1996), s.v. "Sin."

⁴²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 94-95.

⁴³Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 75-76.

⁴⁴The Thirty Nine Articles, Article 9, quoted in Stott, *Ephesians*, 77-78.

Stott adds that what Paul seems to be teaching in Ephesians is that “our inherited human nature itself deserves God’s wrath and judgment.”⁴⁵ Utilizing the concept of biblical solidarity, he argues that “it may truly be said that we sinned in Adam, and that in and with him, we incurred guilt and died.”⁴⁶

According to Stott, human “slavery” to sin is captured by the concept of “total depravity.” He explains that the concept of “total depravity” does not mean that all humans are equally depraved, nor that there is nobody capable of doing some good, but rather “that no part of any human person (mind, emotions, conscience, will, etc.) has remained untainted by the fall.”⁴⁷ Though in Stott’s view we inherit a fallen sinful nature and guilt, which make us deserving of divine judgment,⁴⁸ nevertheless, he argues that we are morally responsible agents who must make a choice between life and death and good and evil (Deut 30:15-20; Jos 24:15; Matt 23:37). Stott acknowledges the place of God’s sovereignty in human salvation, while at the same time upholding human freedom to choose to come to Christ for salvation. In his view, both divine sovereignty and human freedom must be held in tension.⁴⁹

Stott argues that given human sin and responsibility, human guilt logically follows and we are, therefore, liable to bear the penalty for our wrongdoing. He notes that this is the argument of Paul in the early chapters of his letter to the Romans, where he

⁴⁵Stott, *Ephesians*, 78.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 79.

⁴⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 95-96. He notes that “our responsibility before God is an inalienable part of our human dignity” whose final expression will be on “the day of judgment” when all people will stand before God’s throne.

concludes that all humanity is without excuse since we know our duty but have failed to do it (Rom 3:19-20). However, guilt is only a blessing if it leads to reconciliation with God. Contrary to the argument of some critics of Christianity, he argues that it is for the good of humanity “to insist on the gravity of sin and the necessity of atonement, to hold people responsible for their actions, to warn them of the peril of divine judgment, and to urge them to confess, repent and turn to Christ.”⁵⁰

Stott argues that to acknowledge human responsibility and guilt enhances human dignity rather than diminish it, for it presupposes that human beings, unlike animals, are “morally responsible beings, who know what they are, could be and should be”⁵¹ and therefore do not make excuses for their failures. He notes further that “the Bible takes *sin* seriously because it takes *man* (male and female) seriously.”⁵² He adds that Christians do not deny the fact of a diminished responsibility in some instances, but that “diminished responsibility always entails diminished humanity”⁵³ since a part of what it means to be human is that we are held responsible for our actions. Acknowledging our sin and guilt, receiving God’s forgiveness and experiencing divine salvation makes us more completely human and healthy.⁵⁴ While his argument about human responsibility for sin is

⁵⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 98.

⁵¹Ibid., 101.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid. Stott argues that it is the possession of the divine image that distinguishes humanity from animals (*Contemporary Christian*, 36). He defines the image of God as including the mental, moral, social, creative, and spiritual capacities of human beings. See his *Reverence for Human Life* (Fellowship Paper 278, London: Church Pastoral Aid Society, 1972), quoted in Stott, *Authentic Christianity* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity, 1995), 143.

⁵⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 101.

theologically accurate, his argument that we inherit guilt through Adam⁵⁵ does not appear to have a strong biblical basis.

The Wrath of God

Stott asserts that the “essential background to the cross is not only the sin, responsibility and guilt of human beings but the just reaction of God to these things.”⁵⁶

This is where a discussion of God’s holiness and wrath comes in. God’s holiness is foundational to biblical religion. Since sin is incompatible with His holiness, it effectively separates humanity from God. Closely related to God’s holiness is His wrath, which is His holy reaction to evil.⁵⁷

In Stott’s view, the attempts by C. H. Dodd⁵⁸ and A. T. Hanson⁵⁹ to present wrath as an impersonal historical process that affects sinners (as opposed to a divine emotion, attribute, or attitude) are unsuccessful. They betray a position that assumes the presupposition of a “God-given sense of moral justice” which then shapes our understanding of the cross. Stott advocates, instead, what he considers a “wiser and safer” approach which begins with the particular fact of a divinely revealed doctrine of the cross as a presupposition for understanding what is moral justice.⁶⁰

⁵⁵Stott, *Message of Ephesians*, 78.

⁵⁶Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 102.

⁵⁷Ibid., 103; idem, *Romans*, 71-72. But for an extended discussion of God’s wrath, see ibid., 67-79. See also his *Letters of John*, 88.

⁵⁸C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (New York: Harper, 1932), 21-23, referred to in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 103.

⁵⁹A. T. Hanson, *The Wrath of the Lamb* (London: S.P.C.K., 1957), 21, 37, 69, 110, referred to in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 104.

⁶⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 105. He argues that “God’s wrath is neither an impersonal process of cause and effect . . . nor a passionate arbitrary or vindictive outburst of temper, but is his holy and uncompromising antagonism to evil, with which he refuses to negotiate.” See John Stott, *The Message of*

Stott notes that, though there are times when wrath (Greek *orgē*) is used without explicit reference to God, and with or without the definite article, nevertheless, the full phrase “the wrath of God” is used as well without any apparent embarrassment by some Bible writers such as Paul and John.⁶¹ Paul definitely taught that God’s wrath is being revealed in the present time through the moral deterioration of society and the state’s administration of justice.⁶²

However, the truth that God’s wrath (that is, His settled antagonism against evil) is active through social and legal processes does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that it is itself an impersonal historical process of cause (human sin) and effect (wrath).⁶³ Noting that C. H. Dodd had stated that *orgē* (wrath) is constantly used by Paul in an impersonal way,⁶⁴ Stott argues that Paul might have done that “not to affirm that God is never angry, but to emphasize that his anger is void of any tinge of personal malice.”⁶⁵ He argues further that, in the same way that *charis* (*grace*) stands for the gracious personal activity of God Himself, so *orgē* stands for His equally personal hostility to evil.⁶⁶

Quoting Leon Morris, Stott notes that divine wrath is God’s “personal divine

1st and 2nd Thessalonians (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1991), 42. See also his *Ephesians*, 75-76.

⁶¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 105.

⁶²Ibid. He cites Rom 1:18-32 and 13:1-7.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., 103.

⁶⁵Ibid., 105.

⁶⁶Ibid. See also Stott’s *Romans*, 72. See also his *Ephesians*, 76, where he writes that “the wrath that judges and the grace that saves are both personal. They are the wrath and the grace of God.”

revulsion to evil” and His “personal vigorous opposition” to it.⁶⁷ Therefore, any reference to God’s anger must be understood as a legitimate anthropomorphism which must be accompanied by the explanation that God’s anger is absolutely pure and is always principled and controlled. He is “entirely free from animosity or vindictiveness” inasmuch as “he is sustained simultaneously with undiminished love for the offender.”⁶⁸

Stott notes further that the common element to the biblical concepts of the holiness and the wrath of God is the fact that they cannot coexist with sin. He adds, “God’s holiness exposes sin; his wrath opposes it. So sin cannot approach God, and God cannot tolerate sin.”⁶⁹ He notes that the kind of God who appeals to most people today would be very tolerant of sin and would show no violent reaction to human perversion of God’s will for them. He quotes Robert Dale to drive the point home: “It is partly because sin does not provoke our own wrath, that we do not believe that sin provokes the wrath of God.”⁷⁰

Stott states that the Bible reveals that God hates evil, is disgusted and angered by it, and will never come to terms with it. Therefore, when God in His mercy explored the

⁶⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 105. See also Leon Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 190-191, and his *Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 161-166.

⁶⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 105-106. See also his *Ephesians*, 76, where he argues that divine wrath and love are compatible because both are held together in God’s character and that this is the reason why Paul moves from a discussion of the wrath of God to the mercy and love of God without any embarrassment or unease.

⁶⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 106. Elsewhere, Stott writes that “a great chasm yawns between God in his righteousness and man in his sin” (*Basic Christianity*, 73). He adds that both the Old and New Testament writers testify that sin brings inevitable separation of humanity from God. For a fuller discussion of the consequences of sin, see *Basic Christianity*, 71-80. Further, he identifies a mutuality in the hostility between human beings and God. While humans have an attitude of rebellion against God, God’s wrath rests on us because of our sin. See his *Ephesians*, 102.

⁷⁰Robert W. Dale, *The Atonement*, 338-339, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 109.

means whereby He could forgive, cleanse, and accept sinners, He surely did not consider the road of moral compromise. He notes that “it had to be a way which was expressive equally of his love and of his wrath.”⁷¹ Further, he quotes Emil Brunner, who has written that “where the idea of the wrath of God is ignored, there also will there be no understanding of the central conception of the Gospel: the uniqueness of the revelation in the Mediator.”⁷² It is only as we learn to appreciate the greatness of divine wrath that we can truly appreciate the greatness of divine mercy.⁷³

Stott adds a very vital point when he writes:

All inadequate doctrines of the atonement are due to inadequate doctrines of God and man. If we bring God down to our level and raise ourselves to his, then of course we see no need for a radical salvation, let alone for a radical atonement to secure it. When, on the other hand, we have glimpsed the blinding glory of the holiness of God, and have been so convicted of our sin by the Holy Spirit that we tremble before God and acknowledge what we are, namely ‘hell-deserving sinners’, then and only then does the necessity of the cross appear so obvious that we are astonished we never saw it before.⁷⁴

He concludes that, in order to properly appreciate the need for the cross and plumb its meaning, we need “a balanced understanding of the gravity of sin and the majesty of God” and that “if we diminish either, we thereby diminish the cross.”⁷⁵ For Stott, sin is a radical disease which requires the radical remedy of the gospel if humans are to escape the results of sin, namely spiritual death and captivity to the forces of evil and divine condemnation.⁷⁶ God in Christ paid the full penalty for our sins on the cross of Calvary.

⁷¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 109.

⁷²Emil Brunner, *The Mediator*, 152, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 109.

⁷³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 109.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., 110.

⁷⁶Stott, *Ephesians*, 79.

This saving initiative is compatible with the gravity of human sin and the holiness of God.

Methodology

Stott's theological methodology includes three considerations: Scripture, tradition, and reason or "the modern world."⁷⁷ While noting that his first concern has been a careful exegesis of the Bible, he also acknowledges the influential role of tradition in his theology of atonement. He wrote: "In seeking to understand the cross, one cannot ignore the great works of the past. To be disrespectful of tradition and of historical theology is to be disrespectful of the Holy Spirit who has been actively enlightening the church in every century."⁷⁸ Stott, however, insists that tradition, creeds, and confessions are subordinate to Scripture, and "being the composition of men, are fallible documents."⁷⁹ He states that "there is only one supreme and infallible rule which determines the beliefs and practices of the church, and that is Scripture itself. To this we may always appeal, even from the confessions, traditions and conventions of a church."⁸⁰

Though some Anglican scholars have taken the position that there is no distinctive

⁷⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 11. See also William Arthur Groover, "The Theology and Methodology of John R. W. Stott as a Model for Pastoral Evangelism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988), 100-112. For more references on Anglican theology and methodology, see Stephen Sykes, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight, eds., *The Study of Anglicanism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998); and G. R. Evans and J. Robert Wright, eds., *The Anglican Tradition: A Handbook of Sources* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991).

⁷⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 12. See also his chapter "The Authority and Power of the Bible" in *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant*, ed. René C. Padilla (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1976), 46-47.

⁷⁹Stott, "Authority and Power of the Bible," 37. Stott argues that the combination (three-fold cord) of Scripture, tradition, and reason should not be described as comprising the Anglican theological method since it is better described as the method adopted by "semi-liberal" bishops, theologians, and others who do not accept the full authority of Scripture. Interview by author, voice recording, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Manhattan, NY, April 11, 2005.

⁸⁰Stott, "Authority and Power of the Bible," 38.

Anglican theology or theological method, others have argued that, while there may not be a distinctive Anglican theology, there is at least a distinctive Anglican theological method.⁸¹ John Stott seems to belong to this latter group since he acknowledges the so-called “three-fold cord” of Scripture, tradition, and reason, even though he differs from those scholars who conceive of authority in the Anglican church as the association of the three held in tension.⁸²

Under his methodology, the first question that one needs to answer concerns how Stott interprets the Bible. The next question that necessarily follows is, “How does he utilize his findings from the Bible?” In 1972, he wrote the book *Understanding the Bible* in which he addressed the purpose, land, story, message, authority, interpretation, and use of the Bible. By 1999, he had revised the book three times (1976, 1984, and 1999) due to new developments in theology and biblical interpretation and changes in society.⁸³

⁸¹Those who have argued that there is no distinctive Anglican theology include Stephen Sykes in *The Integrity of Anglicanism* (Oxford: Mowbrays, 1978), 73, and W. Taylor Stevenson in his chapter “Is There a Characteristic Anglican Theology?” in *The Future of Anglican Theology*, ed. M. Darrol Bryant (New York: Mellen, 1984), 15, 17. For a contrary view, see D. R. G. Owen, “Is There an Anglican Theology?” in Bryant, 12, in which he argues that there is a distinctive Anglican theological method which originated with Richard Hooker that is characterized by reasonableness, tolerance, and openness. Other authors have traced Anglican theological method even earlier to Thomas Cranmer (1550) and John Jewel (1560). For this view, see John Macquarrie, “The Anglican Theological Tradition,” in *The Anglican Tradition*, ed. Richard Holloway (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1984), 25-43. See also Arthur A. Vogel in *Theology in Anglicanism* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1984), 7-8, where he argues that there is at least an Anglican theological method, if not an Anglican theology, which involves the threefold Anglican theological cord of Scripture, reason, and tradition all which are held in balance and tension with none of them having absolute control over the others but each interpenetrating the others.

⁸²Urban T. Holmes, III, *What Is Anglicanism?* (Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982), 11. Holmes has traced the adoption of the conception of what he referred to as the “three-legged stool” of authority (Scripture, tradition, and reason) not just to Richard Hooker but also to Augustine (A.D. 354-430) and Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1224-1274). According to Holmes, “if one removes a leg, any leg, the stool topples.” Stott, however, gives primacy to the Scriptures over and beyond tradition and reason as will be shown later on in this chapter. For a Roman Catholic position on authority that is almost identical to that of Holmes, see Marian J. Van Dyck, *Growing Closer Together: Rome and Canterbury—A Relationship of Hope* (Middlegreen, UK: St. Paul Publications, 1992), 148-150.

⁸³John R. W. Stott, *Bible*, 7. The discussion in this section of the chapter will be largely based on

The Authority of the Bible

Stott notes that the primary question in every religion relates to the topic of authority. He argues that for the evangelical Christian, “supreme authority resides neither in the church nor in the individual, but in Christ and the biblical witness to him.”⁸⁴ In his discussion of the authority of the Bible, Stott begins with a discussion of three related but distinct concepts: “revelation,” “inspiration,” and “authority.”⁸⁵ He argues that the fundamental concept of the three is “revelation.” It is derived from a Latin noun that means “unveiling” and indicates that God has taken the initiative to make Himself known. God is altogether beyond our knowledge (Job 11:7). Indeed, if we are ever to know God, He must make Himself known.⁸⁶ It is in this context that Stott refers to the Bible as the divine autobiography.⁸⁷

The second concept is “inspiration,” and it indicates the main mode God has chosen by which to reveal Himself. He has done this partly in nature and supremely in Christ, but also by “speaking” to particular human beings. It is this process of verbal

John Stott’s books *Understanding the Bible*, chapters 6, 7, and 8 (pp. 155-216) and also his chapter, “The Authority and Power of the Bible,” 35-47. Other books by Stott will be referred to as necessary to bring out his viewpoints clearly.

⁸⁴Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 35. Peter Williams has noted that Stott’s position of submission to the authority of Scripture has been unchanged throughout his ministry. See his “John R. W. Stott,” 344.

⁸⁵Stott, *Bible*, 157. For a discussion of issues relating to revelation and inspiration of Scripture, see Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992); Don Kistler, ed., *Sola Scriptura! The Protestant Position on the Bible* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1995); and Peter M. van Bemmelen, *Issues in Biblical Inspiration: Sanday and Warfield* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987).

⁸⁶Stott, *Bible*, 157. See also his *Evangelical Truth*, 35-37. Stott distinguishes between the four kinds of revelation in Scripture, namely: general or natural, special or supernatural, progressive, and personal. *Evangelical Truth*, 37-44. He also distinguishes between “revelation” and “illumination.” Revelation describes an objective event, that is, the Holy Spirit’s unveiling of the glory of God in nature or in Scripture. Illumination, on the other hand, describes a subjective event, that is, our enlightenment by the Holy Spirit so that we may see what God has revealed. *Ibid.*, 43.

⁸⁷John R. W. Stott, *God’s Book for God’s People* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983), 69.

communication that is called “inspiration.” Its meaning “is not that God breathed into the writers, nor that he somehow breathed into the writings to give them a special character, but that what was written by men was breathed out by God.”⁸⁸ In other words, God spoke through them. The idea of “verbal” inspiration is to emphasize that the process extended to the very words used by the human authors (1 Cor 2:13, NIV).⁸⁹

The third concept is “authority,” and it speaks to the issue of the power which Scripture possesses because of what it is, namely “a divine revelation given by divine inspiration.”⁹⁰ Since it is a word from God, it has authority over human beings. God’s word carries divine authority in the sense that we believe what God has said because of who He is. Stott argues that “God has revealed himself by speaking; that this divine (“God-breathed”) speech has been written down and preserved in Scripture; and that Scripture is, in fact, God’s word written down, which therefore is true and reliable and has divine authority over us.”⁹¹

In discussing theological authority in the church, Stott discusses four approaches that have been adopted in Christian theology. In Roman Catholicism, authority resides in the *magisterium*, that is, the teaching authority given to the pope and his college of bishops both in the present and through past tradition. In the second approach, liberals argue that authority resides in the individual reason and conscience enlightened by the Holy Spirit or the consensus of educated opinion and, possibly, experience. The third,

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Stott, *Bible*, 157, 158. See also John R. W. Stott’s *The Authority and Relevance of the Bible in the Modern World* (Canberra, Australia: Bible Society of Australia, 1979), 5.

⁹⁰Stott, *Bible*, 158.

⁹¹Ibid. See also Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 54.

which he identifies as the common Anglican response, is that authority is found in the “threefold” cord of Scripture, tradition, and reason.⁹² The fourth approach, which reflects his own position (the evangelical), is that authority resides in Scripture supremely over and beyond tradition, reason, and experience.⁹³

With regard to the Anglican approach, Stephen Platten has pointed out that two documents which are authoritative in defining Anglicanism are the “Thirty Nine Articles” and the *Book of Common Prayer*.⁹⁴ It is noteworthy that Platten points out that the Reformation doctrine of *sola scriptura* has never been embraced by the Anglican Church.⁹⁵ In view of Platten’s assertion above, we need to explore how far Stott’s theology has been influenced by tradition and reason.

Stott argues that the threefold cord that supposedly facilitates the adoption of a *via media* in Anglicanism is unworkable in practice. He denies that the three aspects of the “cord” are equal authorities.⁹⁶ In case of a conflict among the three strands of the cord, “Scripture must take precedence.”⁹⁷ Elsewhere, he argues that the New Testament

⁹²Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 55-56.

⁹³Ibid., 56.

⁹⁴Stephen Platten, *Augustine’s Legacy: Authority and Leadership in the Anglican Communion* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997), 33. For further reference on the Thirty-Nine articles, see Church of England, *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* (Oxford: J. Abrams, 1840), and Stephen S. Smalley, “Thirty-Nine Articles,” *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 1974), 969. See also M. A. Noll, “Thirty-nine Articles,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 1194, 1195, and J.W. C. Wand, *Anglicanism in History and Today* (New York: Nelson, 1962), 21.

⁹⁵Platten, 132.

⁹⁶Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 56.

⁹⁷Ibid. In his support, he quotes Richard Hooker who wrote thus: “What Scripture plainly doth deliver, to that the first place is due; the next whereunto is whatever any man can necessarily conclude by force of reason; after these the voice of the Church succeedeth.” See Hooker’s *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593-1597), 5.8.11, quoted in Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 56. See also E. A. Litton in the preface to his book *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology* (London: James Clarke & Co, 1960), xii-xiii, where he argues that the so-called *via media* theology of the Anglican Church is an unworkable and impossible idea.

Scriptures are the church's foundation documents and that they are "inviolable and cannot be changed by any additions, subtractions or modifications offered by teachers who claim to be apostles or prophets today."⁹⁸ Nevertheless, Stott still calls for a deeper respect for tradition "since it is the church's interpretation of Scripture down the ages, as the Holy Spirit has enlightened it."⁹⁹

To the definitions of the three concepts, Stott adds three disclaimers ostensibly to disarm possible criticism. "First, the process of inspiration was not a mechanical one. God did not treat the human authors as dictating machines or tape recorders, but as living and responsible persons."¹⁰⁰ Sometimes He spoke to them in dreams and visions, other times by audible voice or by angels. At other times we are not told how the word of God came to them. It is possible that the prophets were not even conscious of what was happening to them. In the case of Luke the evangelist, divine inspiration was surely not at odds with human research, as he makes clear in his preface.¹⁰¹

However, whatever means of communication God employed in speaking to human beings, their personality was never obliterated. On the contrary, their literary style and vocabulary remained distinctively their own.¹⁰² Stott adds that the internal evidence, "gathered from reading the biblical text, is that God made full use of the personality, temperament, background and experience of the biblical authors, in order to convey

⁹⁸Stott, *Ephesians*, 107. He adds that the "church stands or falls by its loyal dependence on the foundation truths which God revealed to his apostles and prophets, and which are now preserved in the New Testament Scriptures." Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.. See also Stott's article, "Manufacturing Truth," *In Touch*, no. 2 (1992): 5, quoted in *Authentic Christianity* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1995), 96.

¹⁰⁰Stott, *Bible*, 158. See also his *Evangelical Essentials*, 91.

¹⁰¹Stott, *Bible*, 158.

¹⁰²Ibid., 158, 159.

through each an appropriate and distinctive message.”¹⁰³ Therefore, Scripture is equally the word of God and the word of human beings. For while the Scripture asserts that “the mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isa 1:20), it also says that God spoke “by the mouth of all his holy prophets” (Acts 3:21).¹⁰⁴ Scripture is the word of God through the words of human beings.¹⁰⁵

Stott argues that the “dual authorship of the Bible” is an important truth which must be carefully guarded. “On the one hand, God spoke, revealing the truth and preserving the human authors from error, yet without violating their personality.”¹⁰⁶ He adds that, on the other hand, “men spoke, using their own faculties freely, yet without distorting the divine message. Their words were truly their own words. But they were (and still are) also God’s words, so that what Scripture says, God says.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³Ibid., 159. See also Stott, “The Power and Authority of the Bible,” in *The New Face of Evangelicalism*, 36, 37, and his *Evangelical Truth*, 48, 49. Another useful reference is his *Culture and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 28, where he states: “No word of the Bible was spoken in a vacuum. Every part of it was culturally conditioned. This is not to say that its message was controlled by the local culture in such a way as to be distorted by it, but rather that the local culture was the medium through which God expressed himself. This is a fact which we neither can nor should deny.”

¹⁰⁴Stott, *Bible*, 159. See also Stott’s introduction in Donald Lewis and Alister McGrath, eds., *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honor of J. I. Packer* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 4, where he writes that the “double authorship” of Scripture is what has given rise to the diversity that is observable in Scripture in spite of the underlying unity.

¹⁰⁵John Stott, “The Anglican Communion and Scripture,” in *The Anglican Communion and Scripture: Papers from the First International Consultation of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion*, ed. John Stott et al. (Oxford: Regnum, 1996), 25.

¹⁰⁶Stott, *Bible*, 159. Stott adds that, in the process of inspiration, both the divine Spirit and the human authors’ minds were operating concurrently. Therefore, the Holy Spirit treated them as persons, not machines, respected their personality, and did not violate it. It is, therefore, no surprise that the Bible authors engaged in historical researches, had their respective literary styles and unique theological emphases that were appropriate to their individual personality and experience. In all this process, “the Holy Spirit was carrying them forward to express what was intended by him” (Stott, *Anglican Communion and Scripture*, 25). See also Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 48-51, and *Culture and the Bible*, 10.

¹⁰⁷Stott, *Bible*, 159. Stott argues that the idea of double authorship of Scripture means that it is both “the Word of God and the word of humans, indeed the word of God through the words of human beings.” See his *Evangelical Truth*, 46. One analogy that Stott noted Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians have proposed is that between the double authorship of Scripture and the two natures of Christ.

His second disclaimer is that, although Scripture as God's Word is true, this does not mean that every single word of the Bible is literally true. Every word of the Bible is only true in its context and taken out of that context, it may be quite untrue.¹⁰⁸ The key principle (well expressed in the Lausanne Covenant of 1974) is that Scripture is "without error in all that it affirms."¹⁰⁹ This phrase indicates that not everything contained in the Bible is, in fact, affirmed by the Bible (as shown in the ideas contained in the first thirty-seven chapters of the book of Job). Whatever Scripture affirms is true because such affirmations are God's. Therefore, "whatever Scripture affirms is true, whether in the field of religion or ethics, history or science, its own nature or origins."¹¹⁰ Stott is careful to note that much of Scripture is deliberately presented in a highly figurative manner. Examples of this include descriptions of God in human terms (anthropomorphisms) such as references to His eyes, ears, mouth, and nose. These are not interpreted literally since we know that "God is spirit" (John 4:24) and therefore has no body.¹¹¹

Inasmuch as we cannot say that because Jesus was human as well divine, He must have sinned, so also we cannot say that because the origin of Scripture is human as well as divine, it must therefore contain error. As in the case of the divine and human natures of Christ, "we have no right to say that the conjunction of the divine and human in the production of Scripture is impossible" (*Evangelical Essentials*, 92).

¹⁰⁸Stott, *Bible*, 159-160. He cites the example of the discussion between Job and his friends that constitutes the bulk of chs. 1-37 in the book of Job. As revealed in chs. 38-42, some of what Job and his comforters say about suffering is mistaken. So while the book as a whole is God's Word, it is quite clear that the first 37 chapters of the book can only be properly understood in the light of the last five.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 160. See John Stott, ed., *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1997), 13-14; his chapter, "The Authority and Power of the Bible," 37, and also Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 84.

¹¹⁰Stott, *Bible*, 160. Stott argues that the Scriptures are without error "(1) as originally given, and (2) as correctly interpreted" (Stott, *Essentials*, 101). He states further that "the acceptance of inerrancy is more conducive to an attitude of reverent humility before God's word, than a belief in limited inerrancy, let alone errancy" (ibid., 103). Edwards has criticized Stott for what he calls his "lingering inclination towards fundamentalism" by minimizing the editorial element in the Bible, for instance, Matthew's Gospel as compared to Luke's and Mark's Gospels (Edwards, *Essentials*, 52-54). Edwards accuses Stott of a hesitation to accept "the fruits of scientific research into nature and into the Bible itself."

¹¹¹Stott, *Bible*, 161.

Stott's third disclaimer concerns what is the inspired text of Scripture. He notes that it is "the original Hebrew or Greek text as it came from the author's hands (also referred to as autographs)." ¹¹² In his words, "we claim no special inspiration or authority for any particular translation as *a translation*—whether ancient Latin or modern English, nor indeed for any particular interpretation." ¹¹³ The fact that no autographs have survived might be due to "a deliberate providence of God" in order to prevent superstitious reverence for pieces of paper. ¹¹⁴

He argues further that it is a known fact that the scribes took scrupulous care in copying the sacred Hebrew text and that the same would have been true of the New Testament documents. Further, since we possess a great many more early copies of the original text than of any other ancient literature, which we can compare with each other, with the early translations, and with biblical quotations in the writings of the church fathers, textual critics have been able to establish the authentic text of Scripture (especially of the New Testament) beyond any reasonable doubt. ¹¹⁵

Arguments for the authority of Scripture

Stott's first argument for the authority of Scripture is that "the historic Christian churches have consistently maintained and defended the divine origin of Scripture." ¹¹⁶ It is only in comparatively recent times that some churches have changed their official

¹¹²Ibid..

¹¹³Ibid. See Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 62-63.

¹¹⁴Stott, *Bible*, 161.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 162. See also Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 84.

doctrine on the Scripture. The consensus of the centuries in Protestant churches, the Roman Catholic, and Orthodox churches supports this argument. The second argument is what the biblical writers themselves claimed. Moses, for instance, claimed that he had received the law from God and the prophets introduced their prophecies with formulae like “Thus says the LORD,” or “The word of the LORD came to me, saying.” The apostles, on their part, could write words like this from Paul: “When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also works effectively in you who believe” (1 Thess 2:13).

There is also the phenomenon of cross-authorization, in which biblical authors make similar claims for each other like the one Peter makes for Paul’s writings (2 Pet 3:15-16).¹¹⁷ Also, the New Testament confirms the Old, as is the case when the apostolic authors draw from a rich variety of Old Testament passages as the divine warrant for what they were writing. The third argument is supplied by the readers of Scripture in its perceived “remarkable unity and coherence.” Stott notes, “In view of the diversity of human authorship, the best explanation of this unity seems to be the overshadowing activity of a single divine author behind the human authors.”¹¹⁸ That divine author who inspired the Bible writers is God.

Stott also points to the elements of fulfilled prophecy, the nobility and dignity of the themes of Scripture, and the extraordinary relevance of its message written centuries ago to contemporary people and issues as arguments that strengthen the authority of the

¹¹⁷Stott, *Bible*, 162. In this instance, Peter refers to Paul’s letters as Scripture. See 2 Pet 3:15-16. See also his *Evangelical Essentials*, 84.

¹¹⁸Stott, *Bible*, 163.

Bible.¹¹⁹ Stott further points to the power of the Bible to change human lives for the better. Added to this is the deep assurance that Scripture is truth from God which arises, not from any external confirmation such as archeological discoveries (as helpful as they may be), but internally within the believer's heart from the Holy Spirit Himself. An example of this is the "burning heart" experience that the two disciples on the Emmaus Road had (Luke 24:32).¹²⁰

However, the most important reason why Christians believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible is because Jesus Himself endorsed its authority.¹²¹ Since He endorsed the authority of Scripture, His authority and Scripture's authority either stand or fall together. However, when the believer first approaches the Bible, he accepts it merely as a collection of historical documents which contains the witness of the first-century Christians to Christ. But as he reads their testimony, he comes to believe in Christ, who then sends him back to Scripture.¹²²

Stott asserts that Jesus endorsed the authority of the Old Testament by submitting to its authority in His personal conduct (Matt 4:10).¹²³ He also submitted to its authority

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Stott, *Bible*, 163.

¹²¹Ibid. See his *Evangelical Truth*, 58-59. See *Evangelical Essentials*, 85-87, where Stott points out that "Jesus's determination to resist the devil, to fulfil his costly messianic role and to oppose the authorities all stemmed from his prior determination to obey his Father's will as he discerned it in Scripture." In contrast to Stott's position here, Edwards argues that it ought to be noted that "Jesus was a devout Jew and knowledge of the Scriptures which he gained from his parents and through the synagogue of Nazareth were his only formal education." Ibid., 56-57. Edwards argues further that "Jesus did not live in society full of books" and that "it seems highly unlikely that Jesus owned a complete copy of the Hebrew Scriptures" and that Jesus, like the early Christians, used the Hebrew Scriptures with "freedom" (ibid., 58, 64).

¹²²Stott, *Bible*, 164. Stott further argues that, though Jesus definitely went beyond the Old Testament, He did not contradict it. *Evangelical Essentials*, 87.

¹²³Ibid.

in the fulfillment of His mission (Mark 8:31; Matt 26:54). Christ endorsed the authority of the New Testament by choosing and authorizing the apostles to be His personal representatives and to teach in His name (Luke 6:12-13).¹²⁴ They were the ones He chose and equipped to record and explain God's revelation in and through Christ. Thus, God's revelation in Christ and the biblical witness to Him go hand in hand.¹²⁵ However, the acceptance of the divine origin of the Bible should not lead us to pretend that there are no literary, historical, theological, and moral problems in Scripture. He argues that it is compatible with intellectual integrity to accept the unique authority of Scripture in spite of the residual problems that remain.¹²⁶ He posits that we should struggle honestly with such biblical problems without manipulating Scripture to achieve an artificial harmonization. For Stott, the ultimate reason Christians accept the Bible as the Word of God is that Jesus Himself accepted it as such.¹²⁷

The Interpretation of the Bible

Having stated his presuppositions about the Bible, Stott warns against any pretensions to infallibility in biblical interpretation. He wrote:

¹²⁴Stott, *Bible*, 164, 167-168. See also *Evangelical Truth*, 59, and *Evangelical Essentials*, 89. In the last reference, he notes that the apostles were chosen "to see, record and interpret the mighty acts of God."

¹²⁵Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 39. He argues that "God's special revelation was usually a combination of deed and word, event and testimony." On this ground, Stott rejects the neo-orthodox argument that God's revelation was personal and not propositional. He adds that "the thoughts in God's minds are inaccessible to us until and unless they are communicated by the words of his mouth, at which point they become effective in the fulfillment of his purpose." *Ibid.*, 41.

¹²⁶Stott, *Bible*, 174. With regard to such problem areas, he argues that we should suspend judgment and patiently wait for more light on the issue. See also his *Evangelical Essentials*, 102-103.

¹²⁷Stott, *Bible*, 174-175. See also his *Evangelical Truth*, 58-59, and *Evangelical Essentials*, 86-88, where he argued that, though Jesus disagreed with both the Pharisees and Sadducees in His interpretation of the Bible, and though He went beyond the Old Testament in His preaching and the position He took, He did not go against it. He was "conservative in his attitude to Scripture, and radical in his interpretations of it which challenged the accepted wisdom of his day" (*Evangelical Essentials*, 87).

God's Word is infallible, for what he has said is true. But no Christian individual, group or church has ever been or will ever be an infallible interpreter of God's Word. Human interpretations belong to the sphere of tradition, and an appeal may always be made against tradition to the Scripture itself which tradition claims to interpret.¹²⁸

Stott's hermeneutic involves "three teachers to instruct us, and three principles to guide us."¹²⁹ His "three teachers" he has identified as his "triangle" of "Scripture, tradition and the modern world."¹³⁰ Our "foremost teacher" is the Scripture given through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In the objective sense, the Spirit revealed the message of the Bible and, in the subjective sense, he also illuminates its meaning. The illumination or enlightenment which the Holy Spirit provides is only for his regenerate, humble, obedient, and communicative people.¹³¹ Before discussing the two other "teachers," according to Stott, let us examine the principles of interpretation that Stott has proposed.

Principles of interpretation

Stott's first principle of interpretation is "the principle of simplicity" or the natural sense of the biblical text. God utilized human language as the vehicle for His self-revelation. Therefore, Scripture, though unlike all other books since it is the Word of God, is also like other books inasmuch as it is the words of human beings.¹³² So while it is important that we must study it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for divine illumination, we must also study it like every other book by paying attention to the

¹²⁸Stott, *Bible*, 177.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 11.

¹³¹Stott, *Bible*, 178-181.

¹³²Ibid., 188.

common rules of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.¹³³ The interpreter needs to begin with a disciplined study of the text, preferably in the original biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek. It is also important to use scholarly translations such as the Revised Standard Version and the New International Version.¹³⁴

The natural meaning may be literal, figurative, or even allegorical, though never an elaborate allegorical construction as were common among the Alexandrian exegetes of the fourth century.¹³⁵ In addition to looking for the natural sense, Stott adds that we need to try to discover the intention of the author. Though Stott does employ some limited allegorical interpretation, it seems that his main focus is to find the simple, natural and most obvious interpretation of the biblical passage.¹³⁶

Stott's second principle is to look for the "original" sense of Scripture, which he also called "the principle of history."¹³⁷ He notes that "the permanent and universal message of Scripture can be understood only in light of the circumstances in which it was originally given."¹³⁸ The study of the Bible should be done with such questions as the following in mind: "What did the author intend to convey by this? What is he actually asserting? What will his original hearers have understood him to have meant?"¹³⁹ This

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Ibid., 188-189.

¹³⁵Ibid., 190-191.

¹³⁶Ibid., 190-192.

¹³⁷Ibid., 192.

¹³⁸Ibid., 192-193. Stott candidly admits that the received Hebrew and Greek manuscripts contain some copyists' errors. *Evangelical Truth*, 63.

¹³⁹Stott, *Bible*, 193. See also Stott's *Evangelical Truth*, 51-52, where he discusses the "double approach to Scripture" and the four main types of biblical criticism, namely: textual, historical, literary, and redaction. He argues that the most important question in all four kinds of biblical criticism concerns the

“grammatico-historical” method of interpretation involves using literary and historical criticism to reconstruct the setting.¹⁴⁰

Other questions that need to be asked and answered include the following: Who wrote it and to whom? Under what circumstances? For what reason?¹⁴¹ The second step also includes determining the literary genre of the biblical book under study. One will need to determine whether it is prose, poetry, historical narrative or wisdom, law, prophecy, drama, letter, or apocalyptic. In addition to the question of the type of literature, the interpreter must bear in mind the issue of cultural differences if he/she is to relate the Scriptures to contemporary settings.¹⁴²

The third principle is the “general sense” of Scripture or the principle of harmony. It looks for organic unity in the writings of the different contributors to the biblical message since it is the “Word of God expressing the mind of God.”¹⁴³ The approach here is to “resolve apparent discrepancies and interpret Scripture as one harmonious whole,” which leads “us to interpret Scripture by Scripture, especially what is obscure by what is plain.”¹⁴⁴ In addition, he argues that since every text of Scripture has a “double context,” that is, historical and scriptural, it is imperative that each text must be understood in the

presuppositions with which the critic approaches the biblical text. He notes that the most important principle in finding the true interpretation of a text has to do with the intention of its author (*Evangelical Truth*, 63).

¹⁴⁰Stott, *Bible*, 193.

¹⁴¹Ibid. In view of Stott’s position that “no word of the Bible was spoken in a cultural vacuum” he argues that the judicious thing to do is to preserve “the inner substance” while discarding the cultural shell with which it is wrapped. *Culture and the Bible*, 28.

¹⁴²Stott, *Bible*, 195-196.

¹⁴³Ibid., 198.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 199.

light of its historical and scriptural background.¹⁴⁵ In addition, it must be noted that the scriptural context of every text is both immediate (the paragraph, chapter, and book in which it is embedded) and distant (the total biblical revelation).¹⁴⁶

To illustrate his point about the need to take the context of the text into consideration in interpretation, Stott gives the example of the early chapters of Genesis. He argues that the chapters are easily misinterpreted when they are isolated from the rest of Scripture. While he accepts the historicity of Adam and Eve, he believes that we cannot know some precise details of the story with respect to the nature of the tree of life and the serpent.¹⁴⁷ He refuses to endorse the position of “six-day creationists” on the issues of origins and the age of the earth, but rather argues that “they have misunderstood the *genre* of Genesis 1, which is evidently a highly stylized literary and theological, not scientific, statement.”¹⁴⁸

Stott begins his discussion of creation by noting the Genesis account of creation is earth-centered and man-centered, “in the sense that it is deliberately told from the perspective of man upon earth.”¹⁴⁹ He adds that the account “is above all, God-centered in the sense that the whole initiative in the creation lies with the one-true God.”¹⁵⁰ In view of the controversy that has raged between religion and science in relation to the biblical account of creation, Stott cautions both sides in the debate as follows: “Scientists

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., 199.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 200.

¹⁴⁸Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 96. See also his *Message of Romans*, 163, where he argues that the narrative of Gen 1-3 “warrants no dogmatism about the six days of creation.”

¹⁴⁹ Stott, *Bible*, 53.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

need to distinguish between fact and theory, and Bible students between plain scriptural statement and fallible human interpretation.”¹⁵¹ With regard to the process of creation, he asserts, “Not many Christians today find it necessary to defend the concept of a literal six-day creation, for the text does not demand it, and scientific discovery appears to contradict it.”¹⁵² The defense he posits for this position is that “the biblical text presents itself not as a scientific treatise but as a highly stylized literary statement.”¹⁵³

Stott asserts further that “the geological evidence for a gradual development over thousands of millions of years seems conclusive.”¹⁵⁴ He does not see any contradiction between what he refers to as “some forms of the theory of evolution” and the Genesis account of creation. However, in place of the Darwinian theory of “natural selection,” as the operational principle of his theory of creation through the process of evolution, he prefers the view which posits “multiple changes, in fits and starts, and sometimes by inexplicable major leaps.”¹⁵⁵ He rejects as incompatible with Christian revelation any theory of evolution “which is presented as a blind and random process.”¹⁵⁶ He also argues that “there does not seem to be any biblical reason for denying that some kind of purposive evolutionary development may have been the mode which God employed in creating.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹Ibid., 54.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Ibid.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., 54, 55.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 55.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

Stott believes that Adam was probably created out of one of the several forms of pre-Adamic hominids who, he argued, seemed to have existed for millions of years earlier.¹⁵⁸ He adds that the hominids began to advance culturally, made their cave drawings, and buried their dead. According to Stott, “Adam was the first *homo divinus*,” that is, the first human being “who may be given the specific biblical designation ‘made in the image of God.’”¹⁵⁹ He seems to support the idea that God might have conferred His image on the pre-Adamic hominids which survived natural calamity and disaster and dispersed to other continents and were, therefore, now contemporaries of Adam.¹⁶⁰ He postulates that the “image of God” probably “included those rational, moral, social and spiritual faculties which made man unlike all other creatures and like God the Creator, and on account of which he was given ‘domination’ over the lower creation.”¹⁶¹

Another example that Stott mentions in reference to his point about the scriptural context in biblical interpretation is the Mosaic law. In his view, a discussion of the place of the Mosaic law will throw some light on the relation between the Old and New Testaments, and thus, on the question of progressive revelation. He accepts that there has been progression in God’s revelation of Himself and of His purposes from truth to more truth, not from error to truth.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸Ibid., 55; idem, *Message of Romans* (Downers Grove, IL; InterVarsity, 1994), 164.

¹⁵⁹Stott, *Bible*, 55, 56.

¹⁶⁰Stott, *Romans*, 164.

¹⁶¹Stott, *Bible*, 56. Stott’s position seems to betray an effort to accommodate theology to evolutionary science. His position on evolution as the means that God employed in creating humans seems to introduce a theological contradiction into his theology of atonement. More will be said on this issue in chapter 5 where an analysis of his atonement theory is presented.

¹⁶²Ibid., 203. For a discussion of his idea of progressive revelation, see his *Evangelical Truth*, 42-43. Theologians who supported the idea of progressive revelation include John Henry Newman in *An Essay*

Stott argues that the Mosaic law “was a complex code, consisting of moral instructions, ceremonial regulations and civil statutes.” In his view, “the New Testament clearly teaches that the ceremonial laws are now obsolete, the temple, priesthood and sacrifices having been fulfilled in Christ and the food laws having been abolished by him.”¹⁶³ The civil laws no longer apply to us since in OT times God’s people were both a nation and a church simultaneously. He argues, however, that the moral laws have not been abrogated and therefore are still in force.¹⁶⁴

Reason

The second teacher, according to Stott, is reason, or as he puts it, our own disciplined study of the Word, in addition to dependence on the Holy Spirit. What makes it possible for us to engage reason is that we are made in the image of God. One of the qualities which constitute the image of God in human beings is the capacity for introspection or intelligence.¹⁶⁵ This capacity of the human mind (reason) left to itself cannot discover God by its own sheer effort. It is in this regard that Stott writes:

Like the brilliant intellectuals of ancient Greece our contemporaries have unbounded confidence in the human reason. They want to think their way to God by themselves, and to gain credit for discovering God by their own effort. But God resists such swellings of pride on the part of the finite creature. Of course, men have been given minds to use, and they are never to stifle or smother them, but they must humble them reverently before the revelation of God, becoming in

on the Development of Christian Doctrine (New York: Green, 1891), and C. F. D. Moule in his book *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 1-4.

¹⁶³Stott, *Bible*, 203.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 203-204.

¹⁶⁵John Stott, *Reverence for Human Life*, Fellowship Paper 278 (London: Church Pastoral Aid Society, 1972).

Paul's word "fools" and in Christ's word "babes." It is only babes to whom God reveals himself and only fools whom he makes wise.¹⁶⁶

For Stott, faith and reason are compatible and are not opposed to each other from the scriptural point of view. He asserted: "Faith and sight are contrasted (2 Cor 5:7), but never faith and reason. For faith according to Scripture is neither credulity, nor superstition, nor an illogical belief in the occurrence of the improbable, but a quiet, thoughtful trust in the God who is known to be trustworthy."¹⁶⁷ He argues further:

Too many people regard it [divine guidance] as an alternative to human thought, even a convenient device for saving them the bother of thinking. They expect God to flash on to their inner screen answers to their questions and solutions to their problems, in such a way as to bypass their minds. And of course God is free to do this; perhaps occasionally he does. But Scripture gives us the warrant to insist that God's normal way of guiding us is rational, not irrational, namely through the very thought processes which he has created in us.¹⁶⁸

He adds that, in order to understand God's revealed will, we have to "use our reason responsibly."¹⁶⁹ He supports this assertion thus: "For in our reading of Scripture divine illumination is no substitute for human endeavor. Nor is humility in seeking light from God inconsistent with the most disciplined industry in study."¹⁷⁰

In Stott's view, Scripture itself puts a lot of emphasis on the conscientious Christian use of the mind, "not of course in order to stand in judgment on God's Word, but rather in order to submit to it, to grapple with it, to understand it and to relate it to the contemporary scene."¹⁷¹ He notes further that "there are frequent complaints in Scripture

¹⁶⁶John Stott, *The Preacher's Portrait* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961), 99.

¹⁶⁷Stott, *The Contemporary Christian*, 116.

¹⁶⁸Ibid., 117.

¹⁶⁹Stott, *Bible*, 181.

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

that we keep forgetting our basic rationality as human beings made in God's image and behave instead 'like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding'" (Ps 32:9).¹⁷² He wrote, "We are not to oppose prayer and thought as alternative means of increasing our understanding of Scripture, but to combine them."¹⁷³ He adds, "It is not enough to humble ourselves before God and look to him for understanding; we must also set our minds to understand Scripture and think over what is written in it."¹⁷⁴ Thus humility must be combined with disciplined use of the mind.

He quotes Charles Simeon in this regard: "For the attainment of divine knowledge, we are directed to combine a dependence on God's Spirit with our own researches. Let us then, not presume to separate what God has thus united."¹⁷⁵ Prayer must be combined with disciplined study so that we may grow in understanding of the Scripture. In his words, "Sometimes our growth in understanding is inhibited by a proud and prayerless self-confidence, but at other times by sheer laziness and indiscipline. Those who would increase in the knowledge of God must both abase themselves before the Spirit of truth and commit themselves to a lifetime of study."¹⁷⁶

Stott has also argued that the attempt to replace divine revelation with human reason is a mistake because, even though "reason has a vital role to play in the understanding and application of revelation," "it can never be a substitute for it."¹⁷⁷ Also

¹⁷²Ibid., 181-182.

¹⁷³Ibid., 182-183. He cites the examples of Daniel in Dan 10:12 and Paul's advice to Timothy in 2 Tim 2:7 as Bible references to the proper relation of prayer (faith) and thought (reason).

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 183.

¹⁷⁵Charles Simeon, Sermon 975, in *Horae Homileticae* (1819), quoted in Stott, *Bible*, 183.

¹⁷⁶Stott, *Bible*, 183.

¹⁷⁷Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 83.

“without revelation reason gropes in the dark and flounders in the deep.”¹⁷⁸ He adds, “To bring our minds under Christ’s yoke is not to deny our rationality but to submit to his revelation.”¹⁷⁹ Further, Stott argues that the divine revelation is a rational revelation. He wrote:

The Christian doctrine of revelation, far from making the human mind unnecessary, actually makes it indispensable and assigns to it its proper place. God has revealed himself in *words to minds*. His revelation is a rational revelation to rational creatures. Our duty is to receive his message, to submit to it, to seek to understand it, and to relate it to the world in which we live. That God needs to take the initiative to reveal himself shows that our minds are finite and fallen; that he chooses to reveal himself to babies (Matt. 11:25) shows that we must humble ourselves to receive his Word; that he does so at all, and in words shows that our minds are capable of understanding it. One of the highest and noblest functions of man’s mind is to listen to God’s Word, and so to read his mind and think his thoughts after him, both in nature and in Scripture.¹⁸⁰

The third teacher is the Church or tradition. While agreeing with the reformers on the “right of private judgement” of the individual believer against the assumed teaching authority of the Church of Rome, Stott nevertheless insists that it is unwise to ignore what the Lord has revealed to the Christian church over the centuries. In fact, he assigns a prominent role to tradition. He writes: “Gradually and progressively over the centuries of church history, the Spirit of truth enabled the church to grasp, clarify, and formulate the great doctrines of Scripture. We owe much to the so-called Catholic Creeds . . . and Reformation confessions, together with the biblical commentaries and theological treatises of individual scholars.”¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

¹⁷⁹John R. W. Stott, *Life in Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1991), 53.

¹⁸⁰Stott, *Your Mind Matters*, 18.

¹⁸¹Stott, *Bible*, 184. In emphasizing that a proper understanding of atonement requires discovering and learning from the “great works of the past,” he attributes a great importance to the role of tradition when he argued that “to be disrespectful of tradition and historical theology is to be disrespectful of the

Concerning the relationship of Scripture and tradition, he writes:

Protestants do not deny the importance of tradition, and some of us should have more respect for it, since the Holy Spirit has taught past generations of Christians and did not begin his instruction only with us! Nevertheless, when Scripture and tradition are in collision, we must allow Scripture to reform tradition, just as Jesus insisted with the ‘traditions of the elders’ (cf. Mark 7:1-13).¹⁸²

In relation to the issue of the Anglican theological method, Stott rejects the idea of a “threefold theological cord” comprised of Scripture, reason, and tradition. He writes:

Although it is sometime said in Anglican circles that Scripture, tradition and reason form a ‘threefold cord’ which restrains and directs the church, and although there are not lacking those who regard these three as having equal authority, yet official pronouncements continue to uphold the primary, the supreme authority of Scripture, while accepting the important place of tradition and reason in the elucidation of Scripture.¹⁸³

In addition, Stott rejects the “two-source” theory of divine revelation. He writes:

We cannot rely on church tradition for our message, for we cannot accept the ‘two-source’ theory of divine revelation, namely that Holy Scripture and holy tradition are independent, equal, and authoritative sources of doctrine. Rather, we see tradition standing alongside Scripture as a fallible interpretation of an infallible revelation. We feel obliged to affirm the supremacy of Scripture over tradition, as Jesus did, when he called the traditions of the elders ‘the tradition of men’ and subordinated them to the judgment of Scripture as the Word of God (Mk 7:1-13).¹⁸⁴

While he distinguishes between Scripture and tradition in relation to authority for the Christian, he nevertheless warned against a complete rejection of tradition. Tradition is

Holy Spirit who has been actively enlightening the church in every century.” John Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 12. One thing one would like to know from Stott is whether, in spite of the leading of the Holy Spirit which he claimed was evident in the church through the centuries, it is still possible for the church to make mistakes and be in error in its doctrines. He seems to provide an answer that gives the preeminence to Scripture over and beyond tradition in his quote that follows. How much influence tradition still has within his theology remains to be seen.

¹⁸²Stott, *God’s Book*, 49.

¹⁸³John R. W. Stott, *Christ the Controversialist* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1970), 83. See also idem, *Theology: A Multidimensional Approach*, 8.

¹⁸⁴John R. W. Stott, “Scripture: The Light and Heat for Evangelism,” *Christianity Today*, 6 February 1981, quoted in Dudley-Smith, *Authentic Christianity*, 115-116.

secondary to Scripture as a source of authority in Christian theology. He argues:

When we seek to follow Christ in distinguishing between Scripture and tradition, we must be careful not to overstate the case. Jesus did not reject all human traditions out of hand, forbidding his disciples to cherish or follow any. What he did was to put tradition in its place, namely a secondary place, and then, provided that it was not contrary to Scripture, to make it optional.¹⁸⁵

However, Stott denies that the three teachers are of equal importance. He argues:

I am emphatically not saying that Scripture, reason and tradition are a threefold authority of equal importance by which we know God's truth. No. Scripture alone is God's Word written, and the Holy Spirit its illuminate interpreter. The place of the individual's reason and of the church's tradition lies in the elucidation and application of Scripture. But both are subordinate to God himself as he speaks to us through his Word.¹⁸⁶

While he notes that contemporary Anglican leaders have tended to argue that authority is a 'threefold cord' consisting of Scripture, tradition, and reason (a formula which they claimed was originated by Richard Hooker), he nevertheless asserts that "the historic formularies of Anglicanism plainly attribute supreme authority to Scripture."¹⁸⁷ Thus, for Stott, Scripture seems to be paramount and reason and tradition are subordinate to it. He puts it succinctly when he writes that "the supremacy of Scripture carries with it a radical calling into question of all human traditions and conventions, however ancient and sacred."¹⁸⁸

Centrality of the Cross

John Stott views the death of Christ as very central to his mission. He writes:

¹⁸⁵Stott, *Christ the Controversialist*, 71.

¹⁸⁶Stott, *Bible*, 186. See also Stott's chapter, "Theology: A Multidimensional Discipline," in Lewis and McGrath, *Doing Theology for the People of God*, 8, where he argues that "the role of tradition and reason is to elucidate, systematize and apply Scripture."

¹⁸⁷Stott, "Theology: A Multidimensional Discipline," 8.

¹⁸⁸Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 88.

“From Jesus’ youth, indeed from his birth, the cross casts its shadow ahead of him. His death was central to his mission.”¹⁸⁹ The fact that the church has always recognized the centrality of the cross underlines the importance of this argument.¹⁹⁰ He states that every religion has its visual symbol which illustrates a significant feature of its history or beliefs. In the case of Christianity, the cross was not the earliest symbol that the church adopted. In fact, it was initially avoided due to both its direct association with Christ and especially for its shameful association with the execution of common criminals.¹⁹¹

Stott argues that the early Christians had a wide range of symbols that they could have chosen from, including the manger in which the baby Jesus was laid, the carpenter’s bench at which Jesus worked as a young man in Nazareth, the apron he wore while washing the disciple’s feet, and the dove (symbol of the Holy Spirit sent from heaven on the day of Pentecost).¹⁹² But they chose the cross. He opines that the choice of the cross by Christians was because “they wished to commemorate as central to their understanding of Jesus neither his birth nor his youth, neither his teaching nor his service, neither his resurrection nor his reign, nor his gift of the Spirit, but his death, his crucifixion.”¹⁹³

Stott argues that Christians apparently employed the sign of the cross as a pictorial symbol of their faith at least from the second century onwards. Tertullian, the

¹⁸⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 17. See also his *Evangelical Truth*, 68, and *Basic Christianity*, 82-86.

¹⁹⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 17-18.

¹⁹¹Ibid., 20. He notes that the earliest symbols include a peacock, a dove, the athlete’s victory palm, and particularly a fish.

¹⁹²Ibid., 21.

¹⁹³Ibid. See also Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 68, where he wrote that the “Christian faith is the faith of Christ crucified.” See also his *Why I Am a Christian*, 51-52.

North African lawyer and theologian, supports this argument when he writes that Christians made the sign of the cross on themselves and others.¹⁹⁴ He also notes that Richard Hooker, the notable sixteenth-century Anglican theologian, applauded the fact that the early church Fathers, in spite of the pagan scorn of the sufferings of Christ, chose the sign of the cross instead of any other visible sign to show their commitment to Jesus.¹⁹⁵

Stott also notes that it was Constantine, the first emperor to profess to be a Christian, who gave added impetus to the use of the cross symbol by adopting it as his emblem and emblazoning it on the standards of his army.¹⁹⁶ But the Christians' choice of the cross is all the more surprising in light of the fact that people in the ancient world regarded crucifixion with horror. In their view, no sane person could worship as god a dead man who had been justly condemned as a criminal and subjected to the most humiliating form of public execution.¹⁹⁷

Stott notes further that crucifixion was apparently invented by some obscure people on the edge of the known world from whom the Greeks and Romans took it over. It is probably the most cruel method of execution ever practiced. Typically, the victim would suffer for days before death finally came. In the hands of the Romans, it was reserved for criminals convicted of murder, rebellion, or armed robbery, provided that

¹⁹⁴Tertullian, *De Corona*, 3.94, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 21.

¹⁹⁵Richard Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, 5.55.20, 'Of the Cross in Baptism,' quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 22.

¹⁹⁶Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 23.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*

they were also slaves, foreigners, or others who were regarded as “non-persons.”¹⁹⁸

Roman citizens were exempt from crucifixion except in extreme cases of treason.¹⁹⁹

Stott quotes Cicero, who in one of his speeches condemned crucifixion as “a most cruel and disgusting punishment.”²⁰⁰ He wrote further,

If the Romans regarded crucifixion with horror, so did the Jews, though for a different reason. They made no distinction between a ‘tree’ and a ‘cross’, and so between hanging and a crucifixion. They therefore automatically applied to crucified criminals the terrible statement of the law that ‘anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse’ (Deut 21:23). They could not bring themselves to believe that God’s Messiah would die under his curse, strung up on a tree.²⁰¹

For all those who were opposed to Christianity, whether Jewish or Roman, the claim that God’s anointed and the Savior of human beings died on the cross was not only ludicrous but crazy.²⁰²

The Perspective of Jesus

The strongest reason that Stott adduces for his assertion that the death of Christ was central to His mission is because it originated in the mind of Jesus Himself. He writes: “The fact that a cross became the Christian symbol, and that Christians stubbornly refused, in spite of the ridicule, to discard it in favour of something less offensive, can have only one explanation. It means that the centrality of the cross originated in the mind of Jesus himself. It was out of loyalty to him that his followers clung so doggedly to this

¹⁹⁸Ibid., 24.

¹⁹⁹Ibid.

²⁰⁰Cicero, *Against Verres* 2.5.64, para.165, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 24.

²⁰¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 24.

²⁰²Ibid.. See also Stott’s *Message of Galatians*, 179.

sign.”²⁰³ This is the reason why the cross became the Christian symbol despite the ridicule of its enemies who considered it very offensive. But what evidence is there that the cross was central to the self-understanding of Jesus? Stott begins by examining the story of Jesus at the age of twelve when He went with His parents to Jerusalem for the Passover feast.²⁰⁴

It was evident on that occasion that Jesus was very conscious of God as His Father and felt an inward compulsion to occupy Himself with His Father’s affairs. He knew that His mission in the world was to fulfill the purpose assigned Him by the Father. Stott notes that the evangelists hint that Jesus’ baptism and temptation were both occasions on which He committed Himself to do God’s will rather than the devil’s and to suffer and die rather than receive worldly popularity. He also notes that Mark (followed by Matthew and Luke) pinpoints three occasions when Jesus started teaching this clearly.²⁰⁵

The three predictions reveal the determination of Jesus to go to the cross. Stott notes that they revealed that Jesus “*must* suffer and be rejected and die,” and that “everything written of him in Scripture *must* be fulfilled.”²⁰⁶ He notes further that the predictions share similarity of structure and wording and adds that the Gospels record at least eight more instances where Jesus alluded to His death.²⁰⁷ Stott concludes that the

²⁰³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 24. For instance, Stott argues that the cross was central to the mind of Paul because “it had been central to the mind of Christ.” See his *Evangelical Truth*, 68. See also his *Why I Am a Christian*, 50.

²⁰⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 25.

²⁰⁵Ibid., 26-27. Mark 8:29-32; 9:31; 10:32-34.

²⁰⁶Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 27, 28. See also Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 84.

²⁰⁷Matt 17:9-13; Mark 9:9-13; Luke 9:44; Mark 10:35-45; Matt 20:20-28; Mark 12:1-12; Matt 21:33-46; Luke 20:9-19.

“synoptic evangelists bear a common witness to the fact that Jesus both clearly foresaw and repeatedly foretold his coming death.”²⁰⁸ He concludes that Jesus definitely knew that He was going to die a violent and premature but purposive death. He gave three reasons for its inevitability. They are the hostility of the Jewish national leaders, what was written about the Messiah in the Scriptures, and His own deliberate choice.²⁰⁹

In relation to what was written in the Scriptures concerning the Messiah, Jesus said, “The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him” (Mark 14:21). Stott notes that “when referring to the Old Testament prophetic witness, he tended to couple the death and resurrection, the suffering and glory, of the Messiah.”²¹⁰ He further notes that three of the so-called “seven words” of Jesus while hanging on the cross were direct quotations from Scripture.²¹¹ However, it is from Isa 53 that “Jesus seems to have derived the clearest forecast not only of his sufferings, but also of his subsequent glory.”²¹²

In Isa 53, the servant of Yahweh is first presented as “despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering” (v. 3), on whom the Lord laid our sins so that “he was pierced for our transgressions” and “crushed for our iniquities” (vv. 5-6). However, at the end of both chs. 52 and 53, He is “raised and lifted up and

²⁰⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 28. He adds that John who omits these precise predictions recorded seven references to Jesus’ “hour” of destiny when He would depart the world and return to the Father.

²⁰⁹Ibid., 30-31.

²¹⁰Ibid., 30. He quotes Luke 24:25-27 where Jesus sought to convince the disciples on the road to Emmaus from the Scriptures about why it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die before His glorification. Stott argues that it is probable that Jesus came to know what His mission in the world was through Scripture as shown in the way He applied to Himself “both the designation ‘son of man’ (Daniel 7) and the prophecies relating to the suffering servant (Isaiah 53)” both of which respectively represented in Judaism the highest conceivable declaration of exaltation and the expression of deepest humiliation. See Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 86, and his *Why I Am a Christian*, 38-39.

²¹¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 30. The references are Pss 22:1; 69:21; 31:5.

²¹²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 30.

highly exalted” (52:13) and as a result will “justify many” (53:11). The only straight quotation from Isa 53 by Jesus is from v. 12 where in reference to Himself, He said that “he was numbered with the transgressors,” and added that “this must be fulfilled in me” (Luke 22:37, NIV).²¹³

In relation to the third and most important reason for the death of Jesus, that is, His own deliberate choice, Stott notes that Jesus “was determined to fulfill what was written of the Messiah, however painful it would be.”²¹⁴ He died not because He believed He was fated nor because He chose to be a martyr, but because “he believed Old Testament Scripture to be his Father’s revelation and that he was totally resolved to do his Father’s will and finish his Father’s work.”²¹⁵ Stott noted that despite the great importance of the teaching and example of Jesus, and of His compassion and power, none of these was central to His mission. He opines that “what dominated his mind was not the living but the giving of his life.”²¹⁶ He adds that the four evangelists who bore witness to Jesus in the Gospels reveal that they understand this “by the disproportionate amount of space which they give to the story of his last days on earth, his death and resurrection.”²¹⁷

Stott states that the final sacrifice of Jesus occupies between a third and a quarter of the three synoptic gospels and that John’s Gospel is almost equally divided between

²¹³Ibid., 31. Stott notes that the confident detailed application by Matthew, Luke, John Paul, and Peter of at least eight of the twelve verses of Isa 53 to Jesus must have derived from the very lips of Jesus Himself.

²¹⁴Ibid.

²¹⁵Ibid., 31, 60-61.

²¹⁶Ibid., 32.

²¹⁷Ibid. See also his *Basic Christianity*, 84.

the focus on His life and events surrounding His suffering and death.²¹⁸ In light of the scriptural testimony, one cannot but agree that Jesus viewed His sacrificial death on Calvary as very central to His mission. He chose to die a violent death on the cross in fulfillment of His Father's will in order to save lost humanity (Luke 19:10) and thus give His life as a ransom to set them free (Mark 10:45).

The Perspective of the Apostles

Stott notes that the argument that the apostles emphasis in the book of Acts was on the resurrection rather than the death of Jesus is not warranted by the evidence. Further, the argument that they gave no doctrinal explanation of His death is not valid. While they did not express the full doctrine of atonement in Acts, "yet the seeds of the developed doctrine are there."²¹⁹ He also states that several important points are contained in the gospel core as presented by the apostles.

First, although the apostles attributed the death of Jesus to human wickedness, nevertheless, they declared that it was also due to a divine purpose divinely foreknown and foretold. Therefore, the apostles repeatedly emphasized that the death and resurrection of Jesus happened "according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3-4). Second, though a full-scale atonement doctrine is missing, it is however noteworthy that the apostles referred to the cross on which Christ died as a "tree." Stott notes that Luke records this fact in respect to both Peter and Paul (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29).²²⁰

²¹⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 32.

²¹⁹Ibid. In this connection, Stott wrote that "what was implied in the Gospels is stated explicitly in the Epistles, and most notably by Paul" (*Basic Christianity*, 85).

²²⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 34.

The question that arises, then, is why did the apostles equate the death of Jesus on the cross with death by hanging on a tree? Stott argues that the only possible explanation is to be found in Deut 21:22-23. In this passage, instructions were given for the body of a man who had been executed for a capital offense by hanging, to be buried before nightfall, “for he who is hanged is accursed of God.” Stott argues that the apostles were familiar with this legislation and with its implication that Jesus died under the divine curse.²²¹ Based on this argument, Stott asserts that they must have begun to understand that it was our curse that Jesus was bearing.²²² He then concludes his second point thus:

If then Peter and Paul in their letters plainly saw the cross of Jesus in sin-bearing or curse-bearing terms, and both linked this fact with the verses in Deuteronomy about being hanged on a tree, is it not reasonable to suppose that already in their Acts speeches, in which they called the cross a tree, they had glimpsed the same truth? In this case there is more doctrinal teaching about the cross in the early sermons of the apostles than they are often credited with.²²³

Third, we need to consider how Stott views the presentation of the resurrection by the apostles. He argues that although they emphasized it, their message was not exclusively about the resurrection. Moreover, since it is resurrection from death, its significance is determined by the nature of the death. He argues further that “the resurrection was the divine reversal of the human verdict”²²⁴ on Jesus. Furthermore, “by the resurrection God ‘glorified’ and ‘exalted’ the Jesus who had died.”²²⁵ On account of

²²¹Ibid.

²²²Ibid. He quoted Paul in Gal 3:13: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’” (NIV). He notes further that Peter wrote in 1 Pet 2:24 that Christ “himself bore our sins in his body on the tree” (NIV).

²²³Ibid.

²²⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 35.

²²⁵Ibid. He cites Acts 3:13; 2:33 to provide biblical support for his point here.

His death, God made the crucified and risen Jesus “both Lord and Christ” and “Prince and Savior” with authority to save sinners by granting them repentance, forgiveness, and the gift of the Holy Spirit.²²⁶ Stott argues that the three major letter-writers of the New Testament—Paul, Peter, and John—all gave unanimous witness to the centrality of the cross, as does the letter to the Hebrews and the Revelation.²²⁷ In the case of Paul, he defined his gospel as “the message of the cross,” his ministry as being centered on “Christ crucified,” baptism as initiation “into his death,” and the Lord’s supper as the proclamation of the Lord’s death.²²⁸

Further, contrary to the idea of unbelievers that the cross seemed foolish and was a stumbling block to them, it was for Paul “the very essence of God’s wisdom and power.”²²⁹ Stott notes that Paul argued that what was of paramount importance in the gospel message that he preached was “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures and that he appeared.”²³⁰ When he developed this short outline into a full gospel manifesto some years later (that is, the letter to the Romans), he emphasized the cross much more strongly.²³¹ Having proved all humankind sinful and guilty before God, Paul asserted that we are reconciled to God through Jesus Christ whom God presented as “a sacrifice of atonement through faith in his blood” (Rom 3:25, NIV). Stott writes that,

²²⁶Ibid. The Bible references he cites here include Acts 2:33-36; 5:31-32; 10:43; 13:38-39.

²²⁷Ibid.

²²⁸Ibid. 1 Cor 1:18-25; Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 11:26.

²²⁹Ibid. Stott cites 1 Cor 1:18-25; Rom 6:3; and 1 Cor 11:26.

²³⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 36. He cites 1 Cor 15:1-5.

²³¹Ibid.

for Paul, “without Christ’s sacrificial death for us, salvation would have been impossible. No wonder Paul boasts in nothing except the cross (Gal 6:14).”²³²

With regard to Peter, Stott notes that he began his first letter with the shocking statement that his readers had been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. For him, the price of the redemption of believers was not perishable things such as silver and gold, but rather “the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet 1:18-19). Peter wrote that Jesus “himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet 2:24) and that “Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God’ (1 Pet 3:18). Stott notes that this is in fulfillment of Isa 53 and that, in view of the fact that Peter, in context, was emphasizing the cross as our example, “it is all the more striking that he should at the same time write of Christ as our sin-bearer and substitute.”²³³

Stott notes that, though the emphasis of John in his letters was on the incarnation, nevertheless, he still saw the incarnation in the light of atonement. God’s unique love was seen not so much in the coming as in the dying of His Son who was sent to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins (propitiation) and whose “blood . . . cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7). In the book of Revelation, Jesus is introduced as the One who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood (Rev 1:5, 6). The most common designation that John uses for Jesus in the book of Revelation (28 times) is simply “the Lamb.” Stott

²³²Ibid. Stott notes that one of the most startling words in the biblical teaching about atonement is that Jesus “was made” sin for us on the cross of Calvary, quoting 2 Cor 5:21. Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 92.

²³³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 36. Stott cites three reasons why Peter’s writings on the death of Jesus are important. First, he was one of the intimate group of three apostles of Christ. Second, Peter was himself very reluctant to accept the necessity of the sufferings and death of Jesus and third, the references to the cross in Peter’s first Epistle are asides in which he employs the cross as a source of inspiration for the lives of his readers (1 Pet 2:18-25). Apart from dying as our example, Stott notes that Peter also presents Jesus as

asserts that the reason for the frequent usage of the symbol is “because he has been slain as a sacrificial victim and by his blood has set his people free.”²³⁴

The Perspective of New Testament Writers

Stott asserts that the points discussed above leave “us in no doubt that the principal contributors to the New Testament believed in the centrality of the cross of Christ, and believed that their conviction was derived from the mind of the Master himself.”²³⁵ Thus, the early church had a firm double basis for making a cross the sign and symbol of Christianity, namely, the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Church tradition has affirmed this.²³⁶ He commends the remarkable tenacity of the principal writers of the New Testament who, in the face of the public ridicule and scorn that their Lord and they themselves had to endure because of the cross, still regarded it as a most glorious thing (Luke 24:26; John 12:23-24; 1 Pet 1:11, 4:13, 5:1, 10, 4:14).²³⁷

Stott notes further that those intellectuals who come with a fair mind to the cross can do no other than treat the cross as central to the Christian faith. To emphasize the centrality of the cross, he quotes Emil Brunner:

In Christianity, faith in the Mediator is not something optional, not something about which, in the last resort, it is possible to hold different opinions, if we are only united on the ‘main point.’ For faith in the Mediator—in the event which took place once for all, a revealed atonement—is the Christian religion itself; is the ‘main point’; it is not something alongside of the centre; it is the substance and kernel, not the husk. This is so true that we may even say: in distinction from all other forms of religion, the Christian religion is faith in the one Mediator. . . .

having died as our sinbearer (1 Pet 2:24). Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 87, 90.

²³⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 37.

²³⁵Ibid., 40.

²³⁶Ibid.

²³⁷Ibid.

And there is no possibility of being a Christian than through faith in that which took place once for all, revelation and atonement through the Mediator.²³⁸

For Stott, “the only authentic Jesus is the Jesus who died on the cross.”²³⁹ This is the center of all his writing on atonement.

Atonement as Penal Substitution

In Stott’s view, the reason for atonement stems from human need for forgiveness which arose from the gravity of sin and the majesty of God. He summarizes the problem:

We have located the problem of forgiveness in the gravity of sin and the majesty of God, that is, in the realities of who we are and who he is. How can the holy love of God come to terms with the unholy lovelessness of man? What would happen if they were to come into collision with each other? The problem is not outside God; it is within his own being. Because God never contradicts himself, he must be himself and ‘satisfy’ himself, acting in absolute consistency with the perfection of his character. . . . How then could God express simultaneously his holiness in judgment and his love in pardon? Only by providing a divine substitute for the sinner, so that the substitute would receive the judgment and the sinner the pardon.²⁴⁰

Having defined the problem, he then proceeds to discuss the need for “satisfaction” and “substitution.”

Satisfaction and Substitution

Stott notes that people sometimes question why God needed some kind of “satisfaction” before He could forgive sinners or why Jesus had to endure the punishment

²³⁸Emil Brunner, *The Mediator*, 40, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 44. Brunner later adds that the whole struggle of the Reformation was about the “right interpretation of the Cross” and that to understand the cross rightly is to understand Jesus Christ. *Ibid.*, 435, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 44.

²³⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 46.

²⁴⁰Stott., *Cross of Christ*, 133-134. Also see Stott in “Was It Necessary for Christ to Die on the Cross?” in *Hard Questions*, ed. Frank Colquhoun (London: Falcon, 1967), 50, where he talks of the “divine dilemma.” See also William Groover, *Theology and Methodology of John R. W. Stott*, 100-132, for a summary of Stott’s theology of atonement.

sinners deserved as their “substitute.”²⁴¹ As an example, he quotes from Alister Hardy who wrote:

I cannot accept either the hypothesis that the appalling death of Jesus was a sacrifice in the eyes of God for the sins of the world, or that God, in the shape of his son, tortured himself for our redemption. I can only confess that, in my heart of hearts, I find such religious ideas to be amongst the least attractive in the whole of anthropology. To me they belong to quite a different philosophy—different psychology—from that of the religion that Jesus taught.²⁴²

He believes that we can and indeed must hold to the belief in the saving efficacy of the death of Jesus and the theological terms of “satisfaction” and “substitution” that are used to explain it.²⁴³ He argues further that, though neither term is a biblical word, yet each is a biblical concept. In fact, he states that there is in fact “a biblical revelation of ‘satisfaction through substitution’, which is uniquely honouring to God.”²⁴⁴

In Stott’s view, the primary “obstacle” to forgiveness is located within God Himself. The hindrance to forgiveness is not just the demands of the devil, the law, God’s honor or justice, or the moral order. God must “satisfy Himself” in the way He saves humanity; He cannot do it by contradicting Himself.²⁴⁵ The necessity for “satisfaction” is not found in anything outside of God but within Himself and His own immutable character (2 Tim 2:13; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18; Deut 32:4). The reason why God must judge sinners and not just forgive them without requiring “satisfaction” is because “He cannot

²⁴¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 111.

²⁴²Alister Hardy, *The Divine Flame* (London: Collins, 1966), 218, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 111.

²⁴³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 112.

²⁴⁴Ibid. Stott adds that it was in view of the fact that the concepts have a biblical basis that Anglicans have held that Jesus Christ made on the cross “one oblation of himself once offered” as a “full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.” Ibid.

²⁴⁵Ibid.

deny Himself” (2 Tim 2:13; cf. Mark 8:34). Unlike human beings, He is never other than His true self and so cannot and will not deny Himself, though He can choose to humble Himself in order to save humanity. He is always Himself and is never inconsistent.²⁴⁶

Substitution, Divine Holiness, and Divine Love

In presenting the means God employs in effecting the salvation of humans, Stott writes:

The way God chooses to forgive sinners and reconcile them to himself must, first and foremost, be fully consistent with his own character. It is not only that he must overthrow and disarm the devil in order to rescue his captives. It is not even only that he must satisfy his law, his honour, his justice or the moral order; it is that he must satisfy himself. Those other formulations rightly insist that at least one expression of himself must be satisfied, either his law or honour or justice or moral order; *the merit of this further formulation is that it insists on the satisfaction of God himself in every aspect of his being, including both his justice and his love* [emphasis added].²⁴⁷

In relation to the idea that God’s method of redeeming humans should be consistent with both His justice and His love, Stott argues that there is a “dual nature” in God “which is the central mystery of the Christian revelation.”²⁴⁸ He quotes Emil Brunner: “God is not simply love. The nature of God cannot be exhaustively stated in one single word.”²⁴⁹ He adds further that modern opposition to forensic language in relation to atonement is largely, quoting Brunner, “due to the fact that the idea of the Divine Holiness has been swallowed up in that of Divine love”²⁵⁰ which means “that the biblical

²⁴⁶Ibid., 128.

²⁴⁷Ibid., 129.

²⁴⁸Ibid., 130. See also Brunner, *The Mediator*, 519.

²⁴⁹Brunner, *Mediator*, 281-282, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 130.

²⁵⁰Brunner, *Mediator*, 467, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 130.

idea of God, in which the decisive element is this two-fold nature of holiness and love, is being replaced by the modern, unilateral, monistic idea of God.”²⁵¹

Quoting Brunner further, Stott writes that the cross of Christ “is the event in which God makes known his holiness and his love simultaneously, in one event, in an absolute manner.”²⁵² Stott opines that the duality within the divine being is not “irreconcilable.” He writes: “For God is not at odds with himself, however much it may appear to us that he is. He is ‘the God of peace’, of inner tranquility not turmoil. True we find it difficult to hold in our minds simultaneously the images of God as the Judge who must punish evil-doers and the Lover who must find a way to forgive them. Yet he is both, and at the same time.”²⁵³

Stott argues that in the cross of Christ, God’s divine holiness and His holy love are *simultaneously* revealed.²⁵⁴ In his view, the two concepts are identical or at the very least alternative expressions of the same reality.²⁵⁵ He argues that the problem of atonement arises because God is Himself holy²⁵⁶ and that it is the vision of God’s holy

²⁵¹Ibid.

²⁵²Brunner, *Mediator*, 450, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 131.

²⁵³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 131. He quotes G. C. Berkouwer as having written that “in the cross of Christ God’s justice and love are *simultaneously* revealed.” *Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 277. He also quotes John Calvin as having written of God that “in a marvellous and divine way [he] loved us even when he hated us.” Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.16.4.

²⁵⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 131. See also idem, *Evangelical Essentials*, 161, 162.

²⁵⁵Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 131. He quotes Brunner’s assertion that “the wrath of God is the love of God in the form in which the man who has turned away from God and turned against God experiences it.” *Man in Revolt* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947), 187.

²⁵⁶Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 132. He quotes Forsyth to buttress his point thus: “It is the holiness of God’s love that necessitates the atoning cross.” See P. T. Forsyth, *The Work of Christ* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), 80.

love that helps us avoid holding views that are caricatures of God.²⁵⁷ In his own words, “we must picture him [God] neither as an indulgent God who compromises in order to spare and spoil us, nor as a harsh, vindictive God who suppresses his love in order to crush and destroy us.”²⁵⁸ In order that He might express His holiness without consuming us and His love without condoning our sins, He substituted Himself for us so that He can save us from the destruction that our sins merited.²⁵⁹

In Stott’s view, the divine necessity that arose within the being of God does not mean that God must be true to only a part of Himself (be it His law, or honor or justice), nor that He must express one of His attributes (whether love or holiness) at the expense of another. Rather, it means that He must be completely and invariably Himself in the fullness of His moral being.²⁶⁰ Stott quotes from T. J. Crawford:

It is altogether an error . . . to suppose that God acts at one time according to one of his attributes, and at another time according to another. He acts in conformity with all of them at all time. . . . As for the divine justice and the divine mercy in particular, the end of his (sc. Christ’s) work was not to bring them into harmony, as if they had been at variance with one another, but jointly to manifest and glorify them in the redemption of sinners. It is a case of *combined* action, and not *counteraction*, on the part of these attributes, that is exhibited on the cross.²⁶¹

The only way He could express both “his holiness in judgment and his love in pardon” is “by providing a substitute for the sinner, so that the substitute would receive the

²⁵⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 132.

²⁵⁸Ibid.

²⁵⁹Ibid. Elsewhere, Stott states that “all that was achieved through the death of Jesus on the cross had its origin in the mind and heart of the eternal God” and adds that “no explanation of Christ’s death or man’s salvation which fails to do justice to this fact is loyal to the teaching of the Bible.” Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 82.

²⁶⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 133. See also his *Evangelical Essentials*, 163-164.

²⁶¹T. J. Crawford, *The Doctrine of the Holy Scripture Respecting the Atonement*, 453-454, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 133, 134.

judgment and the sinner the pardon.”²⁶² Though the sinner still has to suffer some of the personal, psychological, and social consequences of sin, “but the penal consequence, the deserved penalty of alienation from God, has been borne by Another in our place, so that we may be spared it.”²⁶³

Stott argues that the ordeal that Jesus prayed that the Father would take from Him if possible (Matt 26:9) was not just physical death.²⁶⁴ He writes: “It symbolized neither the physical pain of being flogged and crucified, nor the mental distress of being despised and rejected even by his own people, but rather the spiritual agony of bearing the sins of the world, in other words, of enduring the divine judgment which those sins deserved.”²⁶⁵ Stott quotes Calvin in this regard: “If Christ had died only a bodily death, it would have been ineffectual. . . . Unless his soul shared in the punishment, he would have been the Redeemer of bodies alone.”²⁶⁶

Furthermore he writes of the moment when Jesus hung on the cross:

The Lord Jesus Christ who was eternally with the Father, who enjoyed unbroken communion with him throughout his life on earth, was thus momentarily abandoned. Our sins sent Christ to hell. He tasted the torment of a soul estranged from God. Bearing our sins, he died our death. He endured instead of us the penalty of separation from God which our sins deserved.²⁶⁷

²⁶²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 134.

²⁶³Ibid. Elsewhere, Stott wrote that Jesus “died for *our* sins, not his own” and that the death “was the penalty which our sins had richly deserved.” John R. W. Stott, *Our Guilty Silence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 39.

²⁶⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 74.

²⁶⁵Ibid., 76.

²⁶⁶Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.16.10, 12, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 81.

²⁶⁷Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 93. Elsewhere, Stott has written thus: “So then an actual and dreadful separation took place between the Father and the Son; it was voluntarily accepted by both the Father and the Son; it was due to our sins and their just reward; and Jesus expressed this horror of great darkness, this God-forsakenness, by quoting the only verse of Scripture which accurately described it, and which he had perfectly fulfilled.” Idem, *Cross of Christ*, 81.

It is thus very clear that Stott teaches that Jesus died what Scripture referred to in Rev 20:11-15 as the “second death,”²⁶⁸ when He died as our substitute on Calvary even though he does not use that terminology.

In the next section, in order to understand the identity of the “Substitute” and justify the idea of Jesus substituting Himself for us, Stott proceeds to discuss the idea of sacrifice in the Old Testament.

Substitution and Sacrifice in Scripture

Stott states that sacrificial language and idioms are widely used in the New Testament. Sometimes the reference is unambiguous (Eph 5:2) and at other times, the reference is less direct (Gal 1:4; Heb 9:14). However, the background of thought is still the Old Testament sacrificial system. The letter to the Hebrews portrayed the sacrifice of Christ as having perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament “shadows” (Heb 8:3, 5). It also depicts Christ as having sacrificed Himself (9:11-12) once for all (9:23-26) in order to restore us into fellowship with God.²⁶⁹ In the book of Revelation, Jesus is seen in heaven as both “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” and as a Lamb which appears “as though it had been slain” (Rev 5:5, 6, 12).²⁷⁰ Stott argues that “from the early chapters of Genesis to the final chapters of the Revelation we can trace what some writers have called a scarlet thread.”²⁷¹ In short, both the Old and New Testaments testify to the fact that forgiveness

²⁶⁸The terminology “second death” refers to the complete destruction of the devil, his angels, and unrepentant sinners in the fires of hell (lake of fire).

²⁶⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 135. See also idem, *Evangelical Essentials*, 164.

²⁷⁰Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 85.

²⁷¹Ibid. Some of the Bible references he cites include Moses (Leviticus), Isaiah (53), Daniel (9:25), Zechariah (13:7), Luke (24:46); Paul (Gal 2:20; 6:14; 1 Cor 1:22-24; 15:3); Hebrews (9:22, 26); and John (Rev 5:5, 6, 12).

and atonement are possible only through the death of Jesus Christ.²⁷²

Before going into the meaning of Old Testament sacrifices, Stott first distinguishes Hebrew sacrifices from pagan sacrifices. He argues that, while they may both have had a common origin in God's revelation to "our earliest ancestors," we cannot assume that they had an identical meaning. In light of scriptural revelation, he argues that it is more plausible to argue that the Israelites (despite their backsliding) kept the substance of God's original purpose while pagan sacrifices were corruptions of the original.²⁷³ While noting that sacrifices were offered in a wide variety of circumstances in Old Testament times, he states that there are two basic but complementary notions of sacrifice in the Old Testament. The first is an expression of the sense of belonging to God by right which human beings have and the second is their sense of alienation from God as a result of their sin and guilt.²⁷⁴

Examples of the first kind include the "peace" or "fellowship" offering, which were often associated with thanksgiving (Lev 7:12), the burnt offering (in which everything was consumed), and the ritual of the three annual festivals (Exod 23:14-17). Examples of the second kind of sacrifices were the sin offering and the guilt offering in which the need for atonement was clearly acknowledged.²⁷⁵ He notes further that the first

²⁷²Ibid., 82-86.

²⁷³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 135. Stott's view of the origin of Jewish sacrifices contrasts sharply with the view of David L. Edwards, who argued that they were undoubtedly offered at earlier times for similar purposes as in pagan religions—"to bribe, feed, placate, thank, eat or simply have joyful communion with the god." *Evangelical Essentials*, 114. Edwards adds that the Jews later made efforts to purge the sacrifices of any ideas that were considered unworthy of the worship of Yahweh. Stott argues that the Old Testament sacrificial system began with Abel and ever since his time, worshipers have brought sacrifices to Yahweh. He states further that "the Old Testament sacrifices foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ in visible symbol" (*Basic Christianity*, 82-83).

²⁷⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 135.

²⁷⁵Ibid.

kind of sacrifices reveal God as the Creator on whom man depends for his physical life, while the second reveal Him as “the Judge who demands and the Saviour who provides atonement for sin.”²⁷⁶ He adds further that the second kind of sacrifice is the foundation for the first kind “in that reconciliation to our Judge is necessary even before worship of our Creator.”²⁷⁷

In the context of the Old Testament sacrificial system, Stott argues that “the notion of substitution is that one person takes the place of another, especially in order to bear his pain and to save him from it.”²⁷⁸ He argues that the idea of substitution was applied by God Himself to the sacrifices. Abraham sacrificed a ram which God had provided “as a burnt offering instead of his son” (Gen 22:13). Moses (presumably under divine guidance) instructed that in the case of an unsolved murder, the town elders should first declare their innocence and then sacrifice a heifer in place of the unknown murderer (Deut 21:1-9).²⁷⁹

Stott notes further that the elaborate Old Testament sacrificial system had provision for daily, weekly, monthly, annual, and occasional offerings. It includes five main types of offerings as detailed in Leviticus, namely the burnt, cereal, peace, sin, and guilt offerings. The cereal offering was atypical since it consisted of grain and oil rather than flesh and blood. It was usually made in association with one of the others.²⁸⁰ The remaining four were blood sacrifices and all shared the same basic ritual that involved

²⁷⁶Ibid., 136.

²⁷⁷Ibid.

²⁷⁸Ibid..

²⁷⁹Ibid., 136-137.

²⁸⁰Ibid., 137.

both the worshiper and the priest. The worshiper brought the offering, laid his or her hand or hands on it, and killed it. The priest then applied the blood, burned some of the flesh, and arranged for the consumption of what was left of it. By laying hands on the animal, the person who brought the offering “was certainly identifying himself [or herself] with it” and was solemnly declaring that the victim was standing in his or her place as sinner.²⁸¹

Stott notes that some scholars see the laying-on of hands as a symbol of the transfer of the sins of the worshiper to the animal, as was clearly the case with the scapegoat. He adds that having taken the place of the worshiper, the substitute animal was killed “in recognition that the penalty for sin was death, its blood (symbolizing that the death has been accomplished) was sprinkled, and the life of the offerer was spared.”²⁸² Further, he argues that the clearest statement of the substitutionary significance of the blood sacrifices in Old Testament ritual is found in the statement where God explains why the eating of blood was prohibited: “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life” (Lev 17:11, NIV).²⁸³

Stott notes that three important affirmations about blood are made in this text.

First, blood is the symbol of life. We can trace back this understanding at least to the time

²⁸¹Ibid. See also Frank Derek Kidner, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale, 1952), 14, and G. J. Wenham, *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981), 202-205.

²⁸²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 137. For a fuller discussion of the theological meaning of laying of hands on the sacrificial victim, see Angel M. Rodriguez, *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979). See also Leon Morris, *The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983), 45, 47.

²⁸³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 137-138.

of Noah when God prohibited the eating of meat which had its “lifeblood” still in it (Gen 9:4, 5), a prohibition that was later repeated in the phrase “the blood is the life” (Deut 12:23). The emphasis here is not on blood flowing in the veins of the living being, but on blood shed, which symbolized a life that is ended, usually by violent means.²⁸⁴ Second, blood makes atonement. Stott notes that “it is only because ‘the life of a creature is in the blood’ that ‘it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.’”²⁸⁵ He adds that “what makes atonement ‘on the altar’ is the shedding of substitutionary lifeblood.”²⁸⁶

Third, blood was given by God for this atoning purpose. God says, “I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar.” Therefore, “we are to think of the sacrificial system as God-given, not man-made, and of the individual sacrifices not as a human device to placate God but as a means of atonement provided by God himself.”²⁸⁷ Stott then introduces what he calls two crucial texts in the letter to the Hebrews which the Old Testament background helps us to understand more clearly. The first is found in Heb 9:22 (NIV), where it is stated that “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” The second is in Heb 10:4: “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.” In light of the above, Stott writes:

No forgiveness without blood meant no atonement without substitution. There had to be life for life or blood for blood. But the Old Testament blood sacrifices were only shadows; the substance was Christ. For a substitute to be effective, it must be an appropriate equivalent. Animal sacrifices could not atone for human

²⁸⁴Ibid., 138.

²⁸⁵Ibid.

²⁸⁶Ibid. He quotes T. J. Crawford to back up his argument: “The text, then, according to its plain and obvious import, teaches the *vicarious* nature of the rite of sacrifice. *Life was given for life*, the life of the victim for the life of the offerer.” Crawford, *The Doctrine of the Holy Scripture*, 237, 241.

²⁸⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 138.

beings, because a human being is ‘much more valuable . . . than a sheep.’ . . . Only ‘the precious blood of Christ’ was valuable enough (1 Pet 1:19).²⁸⁸

The two examples of the principle of substitution which Stott discusses are the Passover and the concept of ‘sin-bearing.’²⁸⁹ A discussion of the Passover is important because the New Testament clearly identifies the death of Christ as the fulfilment of the Passover, and the emergence of His redeemed community as the new exodus. In the Passover story, Yahweh revealed Himself as the Judge of His people, their Redeemer, and their covenant God.²⁹⁰

The message of the symbols of the Passover is clear to those who see the fulfillment of the Passover in the sacrifice of Christ, just as it must have been clear to the Israelites. First, the Judge and the Savior is the same person. “It was the God who ‘passed through’ Egypt to judge the firstborn, who ‘passed over’ Israelite homes to protect them.”²⁹¹ Therefore, we must never characterize the Father as Judge and the Son as Savior, since it is the one and same God who through Christ saves us from Himself.²⁹² Second, “salvation was (and is) by substitution” since “the only firstborn males who were spared were those in whose families a firstborn lamb had died instead.”²⁹³ Third, “the lamb’s blood had to be sprinkled after it had been shed,” which means that “there had to be an individual appropriation of the divine provision.”²⁹⁴ Fourth, each family thus

²⁸⁸Ibid.

²⁸⁹Ibid., 139-149.

²⁹⁰Ibid., 139-140.

²⁹¹Ibid.

²⁹²Ibid.

²⁹³Ibid., 140-141.

²⁹⁴Ibid., 141.

rescued was thereby purchased for God and their whole life now belonged to Him. In the same way, the life of the redeemed Christian belongs to God.²⁹⁵

The second major illustration of the principle of substitution that Stott discusses is the notion of “sin-bearing.” He notes that we read in the New Testament that Christ Himself “bore our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet 2:24) and that He was “offered once to bear the sins of many” (Heb 9:28). The question that then arises has to do with the meaning of what it means to “bear sin.” Must it be understood in terms of bearing the penalty of sin or can it be interpreted in other ways?²⁹⁶ Further, does it necessarily involve the idea of substitution and, if so, what kind of substitution? In Stott’s own words, “Can it refer only to the innocent, God-provided substitute taking the place of the guilty party and enduring the penalty instead of him? Or are there alternative kinds of substitution?”²⁹⁷

Stott notes a number of attempts that have been made over the last 120 years to retain the vocabulary of “substitution” while rejecting the idea of “penal substitution.” The origin of such attempts has been traced to Abelard’s protest against Anselm in the twelfth century and particularly to the contemptuous rejection of the Reformers’ doctrine in the sixteenth century by Faustus Socinus.²⁹⁸ Socinus had argued that the notion that guilt can be transferred from one person to another is incompatible with both reason and justice.²⁹⁹ Stott also notes the more recent contribution of R. C. Moberly in his *Atonement*

²⁹⁵Ibid.

²⁹⁶Ibid. See also idem, *Basic Christianity*, 90-97.

²⁹⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 141.

²⁹⁸See chapter 2 for Socinus’s understanding of atonement.

²⁹⁹Stott quotes Calvin as an illustration of the Reformers’ doctrine of atonement: “This is our

and Personality (1901), in which he rejected all forensic interpretations of the cross, particularly the idea of retributive judgment, but instead proposed the idea of vicarious penitence instead of vicarious penalty.³⁰⁰

Stott asserts that the attempt by the theologians mentioned above to retain the language of substitution and sin-bearing while changing its meaning has failed. He argues: “It creates more confusion than clarity. It conceals from the unwary that there is a fundamental difference between ‘penitent substitution’ (in which the substitute offers what we could not offer) and ‘penal substitution’ (in which he bears what we could not bear).”³⁰¹

Stott’s main focus is on how the biblical authors understood “sin-bearing.” He argues that an examination of the Old Testament reveals that to “bear sins” does not mean to sympathize with sinner, nor to identify with their pain, nor to express their penitence, nor to be persecuted on account of human sinfulness, nor even to suffer the consequences of sin in personal or social terms, but specifically to endure its penal consequences or to undergo its penalty.³⁰² It is written of those who break God’s law that they will bear their iniquity (Lev 5:17, 19:8; 22:9, 24:15; Num 9:13; 14:34; 18:22),

acquittal: the guilt that held us liable for punishment has been transferred to the head of the Son of God (Isa 53:12). We must therefore, above all, remember this substitution, lest we tremble and remain anxious throughout life” (*Institutes*, 2.7.5). He also notes that John McLeod Campbell (*The Nature of the Atonement*) and Horace Bushnell (*The Vicarious Sacrifice*) adopt the same general position as Socinus.

³⁰⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 142, 143. Also see R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, 129-130.

³⁰¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 143. He quotes J. I. Packer’s definition of penal substitution as the notion “that Jesus Christ our Lord, moved by a love that was determined to do everything necessary to save us, endured and exhausted the destructive divine judgment for which we were otherwise inescapably destined, and so won us forgiveness, adoption and glory. To affirm penal substitution is to say that this is the mainspring of all their joy, peace and praise both now and for eternity.” Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve?” 25.

³⁰²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 143. See also idem, *Basic Christianity*, 91.

meaning that they will be held responsible for their sins or that they will suffer for their sins. Sometimes the penalty is specified, as is the case when the offender is to be “cut off from his people” (i.e., excommunicated [Lev 19:8]) or when he is to be put to death for blasphemy; Lev 24:15, 16).³⁰³

It is in the context of sin-bearing that the possibility of someone else bearing the penalty of the sinner’s wrongdoing is envisaged. Stott cites the instance when Moses told the Israelites that their children would have to wander in the desert and suffer for their unfaithfulness (Num 14:34). Another instance he cites relates to what the law of Moses demanded in the case of a married man who failed to nullify the foolish vow or pledge made by his wife: he “shall bear her guilt” (Num 30:15). He notes that in these cases of involuntary vicarious sin-bearing, innocent people suffer the consequences of another’s guilt.³⁰⁴

Stott notes that the same phraseology was used when vicarious sin-bearing was intended. In that case, the notion of deliberate substitution was introduced with God Himself providing the substitute. The sin offering was also referred to in terms of sin-bearing. It was in reference to the sin offering that Moses said to the sons of Aaron: “God has given it to you to bear the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD” (Lev 10:17). He cites the ritual of the annual day of Atonement as providing a clearer instance of deliberate substitution.³⁰⁵

³⁰³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 143.

³⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 143-144.

³⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 144.

Stott on the Day of Atonement

He asserts that the public proclamation of the Day of Atonement is that “reconciliation was possible only through substitutionary sin-bearing.”³⁰⁶ In his view, Jesus was both the high priest (Heb 2:17) and the one symbolized by the two victims (the sacrificed goat whose blood was taken into the inner sanctuary [Heb 9:7, 12] and the scapegoat which carried away the people’s sins [Heb 9:28]).³⁰⁷ Stott argues further that though the sin offering and the scape goat in their different ways had a sin-bearing role, the spiritually mature Israelite must have realized that “an animal cannot be a satisfactory substitute for a human being.”³⁰⁸

He also notes that the famous “servant songs” in the second part of Isaiah depict one whose mission would encompass the nations and who, in order to fulfill it, would need to suffer, to bear sin, and to die (Isa 42:1-4; cf. Matt 12:17-21; Acts 3:13, 26; 4:27, 30). He points out that “it is particularly the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, describing the servant’s suffering and death, which is applied consistently to Jesus Christ.”³⁰⁹

Isaiah 53

Stott notes that the New Testament writers quote eight specific verses of the chapter as having been fulfilled in Jesus. Verse 1 (“Who has believed our report?”) is applied to Jesus by John (12:38). Matthew sees the statement of v. 4 (“he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”) as fulfilled in Jesus’ healing ministry (8:17). The idea

³⁰⁶Ibid.

³⁰⁷Ibid.

³⁰⁸Ibid.

³⁰⁹Ibid., 145. In support of this argument, he quotes Jeremias who wrote that “no other passage from the Old Testament was as important to the Church as Isaiah 53.” Joachim Jeremias, *Eucharistic*

that we have gone astray like sheep (v. 6), but that we have been healed by his wounds (v. 5), is echoed by Peter (1 Pet 2:22-25). Verses 7 and 8, about Jesus being led like a sheep to the slaughter and being deprived of justice and of life, were the very verses the Ethiopian eunuch was reading in his chariot, subsequent to which Philip shared the gospel with him (Acts 8:30-35). The verses thus quoted, vv. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 11—eight out of the chapter’s twelve—“all quite specifically referred to Jesus.”³¹⁰

Stott also notes that careful students of the Gospels have detected numerous references by Jesus Himself, sometimes only in a single word, to Isa 53. Instances include His saying that He would be “treated with contempt,”³¹¹ “taken away,”³¹² and “numbered with the transgressors.”³¹³ He would also be “buried” like a common criminal without any preparatory anointing, so that (as Jesus explained) Mary of Bethany gave Him an advance anointing for burial.³¹⁴

Stott asserts that there is good evidence that His public career, from His baptism through His ministry, sufferings, and death, to His resurrection and ascension, is seen as a fulfillment of the pattern foretold in Isa 53.³¹⁵ He regards Isa 53 as foundational to the New Testament understanding of Jesus. He also notes the two most important sayings of Jesus which focus on the sin-bearing nature of His death. The first is found in Mark 10:45:

Words of Jesus (New York: Scribner, 1966), 228.

³¹⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 145. See also his *Basic Christianity*, 83.

³¹¹Mark 9:12; cf. Isa 53:3.

³¹²Mark 2:20; cf. Isa 53:8.

³¹³Luke 22:37; cf. Isa 53:12.

³¹⁴Mark 14:8; cf. Isa 53:9.

³¹⁵Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 146.

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Stott argues that in the text quoted above, Jesus unites the divergent “Son of man” and “Servant” prophecies. In his words, “the Son of Man [Jesus] would ‘come with the clouds of heaven’ and all people would ‘serve him’ (Dan 7:13-14), whereas the Servant would not be served but serve, and complete his service by suffering, especially by laying down his life as ransom instead of many.”³¹⁶ It was only by serving that He would be served and only by suffering that He would enter into His glory.³¹⁷

The second saying occurred in relation to the institution of the Lord’s Supper, when Jesus declared that His blood would be “poured out for many.”³¹⁸ Both texts say that He would either give His life or pour out his blood “for many,” which echoes Isa 53:12 (“He bore the sin of many”).³¹⁹ In light of the above arguments, Stott asserts: “It seems definite beyond doubt, then, that Jesus applied Isaiah 53 to himself and that he understood his death in the light of it as a sin-bearing death. As God’s ‘righteous servant’ he would be able to ‘justify many’, because he was going to ‘bear the sin of many’. This is the thrust of the whole chapter.”³²⁰ Stott therefore argues that to say that Christ “died for us” really means that he died in our stead.³²¹

³¹⁶Ibid.

³¹⁷Ibid.

³¹⁸Mark 14:24; cf. Isa 53:12.

³¹⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 147.

³²⁰Ibid. He quotes J. S. Whale to clinch his argument here: “The song [Isaiah 53] makes twelve distinct and explicit statements that the servant suffers the *penalty* of other men’s sins: not only vicarious suffering but penal substitution is the plain meaning of its fourth, fifth, and sixth verses.” *Victor and Victim* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 69-70.

³²¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 147.

In Stott's view, the fact that many are offended by the concept of imputation is due to a misunderstanding. He argues that what was transferred to Christ "was not moral qualities but legal consequences: he voluntarily accepted the liability for our sins. That is what the expressions 'made sin' and 'made a curse' mean."³²² He adds that similarly "the righteousness of God,' which we become when we are 'in Christ,' is not here righteousness of character and conduct (although that grows within us by the working of the Holy Spirit), but rather a righteous standing before God."³²³

Stott concludes that a review of the Old Testament material (relating to the shedding and sprinkling of blood, the sin offering, the meaning of 'sin-bearing,' the scapegoat, and Isa 53) in light of its New Testament application to the death of Christ leads us to conclude that "the cross was a substitutionary sacrifice."³²⁴ He adds that Christ died for us and also died instead of us, without sin, in substitution for our sins.³²⁵ In his commentary on Gal 3:13, 14, in connection with salvation by faith in contrast to salvation by works of the law, he writes thus on the substitutionary death of Jesus:

Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross what we could not do for ourselves. The only way to escape the curse is not by our work, but by His. He has redeemed us, set us free from the awful condition of bondage to which the curse of the law had brought us. . . . The 'curse of the law' from which Christ redeemed us must be the curse resting upon us for our disobedience. . . . And he redeemed us from it by 'becoming a curse' Himself. The curse was transferred from us to Him. He took it voluntarily upon Himself, in order to deliver us from it. It is this 'becoming a curse for us' which explains the awful cry of dereliction, of God-forsakenness, which He uttered from the cross.³²⁶

³²²Ibid., 149.

³²³Ibid.

³²⁴Ibid.

³²⁵Ibid.

³²⁶Stott, *Galatians*, 80-81.

The “cry of dereliction” refers to the “divine rejection” of Jesus at the moment He was bearing the consequences of the sins of the world.³²⁷ In dying on the cross, He came under the “divine curse.”³²⁸

The Identity of the Substitute

Though the Scripture asserts that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8), we need to know who He really is and how we are to conceive of Him. If He was just a human being, how then could He stand for other human beings? If He was simply God who seemed to be a man, how could He then represent humankind and how could He have died?³²⁹ Stott identifies our substitute as follows:

Our substitute, then, who took our place and died our death on the cross, was neither Christ alone (since that would make him a third party thrust in between God and us), nor God alone (since that would undermine the historical incarnation), but God *in Christ*, who was truly and fully both God and man, and who on that account was uniquely qualified to represent both God and man and to mediate between them. If we speak only of Christ suffering and dying, we overlook the initiative of the Father. If we speak only of God suffering and dying, we overlook the mediation of the Son. The New Testament authors never attribute the atonement either to Christ in such a way as to disassociate him from the Father, or to God in such a way as to dispense with Christ, but rather to God and Christ, or to God acting in and through Christ with his whole-hearted concurrence.³³⁰

Stott notes that the possibility of substitution rests on the identity of the

³²⁷Ibid., 81.

³²⁸Ibid. Stott cites Deut 21:23 in this regard: “For he who is hanged is accursed of God.”

³²⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 149.

³³⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 156.

substitute.³³¹ For him, “the validity of his work depends on the divinity of his person.”³³² The names Jesus was given at His birth, Jesus (“God saves”) and Emmanuel (“God with us”), reflect His divinity. The Savior who had been born was not just “the Christ of the Lord, the Lord’s anointed,” but actually “Christ the Lord,” who is both Messiah and Lord.³³³ Jesus is the eternal Son who became flesh in the incarnation in order to effect our atonement.³³⁴ He argues further that “it is impossible to hold the historic doctrine of the cross without holding the historic doctrine of Jesus Christ as the one and only God—man and mediator. . . . Only God in Christ, God the Father’s own and only Son made man, could take our place.”³³⁵ He argues that “the person and work of Christ belong together” since “if he was not who the apostles say he was, then he could not have done what they say he did.”³³⁶ For him, “the incarnation is indispensable to the atonement.”³³⁷

Stott elsewhere associates a third element which qualifies Jesus to be our redeemer, apart from His divinity and humanity, namely His righteous life. He writes:

Throughout his life He submitted to all the requirements of the law. He succeeded where all others before and since have failed: He perfectly fulfilled the righteousness of the law. So the divinity of Christ, the humanity of Christ and the righteousness of Christ uniquely qualified Him to be man’s redeemer. If He had not been a righteous man, He could not have redeemed unrighteous men. And if

³³¹Ibid., 149. For a fuller presentation of Stott’s view of Christ’s person, His claims, character and resurrection, see his *Basic Christianity*, 21-60. See also John R. W. Stott, *Message of 1 Timothy & Titus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 69-71.

³³²Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 61.

³³³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 157.

³³⁴John R. W. Stott, *The Epistles of John: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 59.

³³⁵Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 160.

³³⁶Ibid.

³³⁷Ibid. See also Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 323.

He had not been God's Son, He could not have redeemed men for God or made them the sons of God.³³⁸

Though it is true that Jesus received the punishment that was due us because of our sins (Isa 53:6; 1 John 4:9-10; Rom 8:32; 2 Cor 5:21), yet we have no scriptural warrant to conclude "God compelled Jesus to do what he was unwilling to do himself, or that Jesus was an unwilling victim of God's harsh justice."³³⁹ Stott argues further that "Jesus Christ did indeed bear the penalty of our sins, but God was active in and through Christ doing it, and Christ was freely playing his part."³⁴⁰ Both Christ and the Father were active together in our salvation. Therefore, "we must never make Christ the object of God's punishment or God the object of Christ's persuasion"³⁴¹ since both took the initiative together to save us.

Stott adds that the "Father did not lay on the Son an ordeal he was reluctant to bear, nor did the Son extract from the Father a salvation he was reluctant to bestow."³⁴² He argues that the conviction that the Father and the Son cannot be separated, especially in relation to atonement, comes to its fullest expression in some of Paul's great statements about reconciliation (2 Cor 5:17-19).³⁴³ It was only because of who Jesus was (that is, the fullness of God dwelled in Him) that He was able to do what He did for our salvation

³³⁸Stott, *Galatians*, 106.

³³⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 151.

³⁴⁰Ibid.

³⁴¹Ibid. See also Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 76, and idem, *Basic Christianity*, 94.

³⁴²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 151. Stott notes further that "no formulation of the gospel is biblical which removes the initiative from God and attributes it to either us or even to Christ. It is certain that we did not take the initiative. . . . Nor was the initiative taken by Jesus Christ in the sense that he did something which the Father was reluctant or unwilling to do." *Romans*, 111-112.

³⁴³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 157.

(2 Cor 5:17, 18; Col 1:19-20; 2:9).³⁴⁴

Achievement of the Cross and the Scope of Atonement

In this section, I will examine the achievement of the cross in terms of the images of atonement which Stott employs to present his understanding of the atonement. Next, the scope of atonement as presented in the writings of John Stott will be examined.

Images of Atonement³⁴⁵

Stott notes that the salvation offered by Christ to us is presented by the vivid imagery of such terms as “propitiation,” “redemption,” “justification,” “reconciliation,” “revelation of God,” and “the conquest of evil.” The underlying idea that the images reveal “is the truth that God in Christ has borne our sin and died our death to set us free from sin and death.”³⁴⁶ However, he insists that we must be careful not to infer that to understand the images is to fully exhaust the meaning of atonement since “beyond the images . . . lies the mystery of the atonement, the deep wonders of which . . . we shall be exploring throughout eternity.”³⁴⁷ He also argues that ‘substitution’ is not another ‘theory’ or ‘image’ of atonement among the others but is, in fact, the foundation of all of them. In his words, “if God in Christ did not die in our place, there could be neither propitiation, nor redemption, nor justification, nor reconciliation.”³⁴⁸

³⁴⁴Ibid.

³⁴⁵Ibid. 168. Stott argues that “images” of atonement is a better term than “theories” because while the latter is usually abstract and speculative, the former are concrete and are found in the data of biblical revelation.

³⁴⁶Ibid., 167.

³⁴⁷Ibid., 168.

³⁴⁸Ibid. He notes that all the images though beginning in the Old Testament are elaborated and enriched in the New especially by being related to Christ and His cross. See idem, *Evangelical Essentials*,

Propitiation

Stott states that to “propitiate” somebody means to appease or pacify his/her anger. While he rejects what he calls “crude concepts of anger, sacrifice and propitiation” which sees Jesus as a third party who propitiated the Father’s anger by His death, nevertheless, Stott argues that “wrath” and “propitiation” (the placating of wrath) go together.³⁴⁹ He argues that what has necessitated propitiation is the fact that sin arouses divine wrath. However, God’s wrath (anger) is neither mysterious nor arbitrary. It is always provoked by evil and evil alone. It is “his steady, unrelenting, unremitting, uncompromising antagonism to evil in all its forms and manifestations.”³⁵⁰

In a pagan context, it is always humans who seek to ward off divine anger either by the strict performance of rituals, or the recanting of magic formulae, or by offering sacrifices (vegetable, animal, or even human). However, the gospel asserts that nothing humans do, offer, or say can compensate for our sins or avert God’s anger. We cannot bribe God to forgive us since we deserve nothing from Him but judgment, and neither is it the case that Christ by His sacrifice prevailed upon God to pardon us. The initiative has been taken by God Himself out of His sheer mercy and grace.³⁵¹ In fact in the OT, sacrifices were recognized as divine gifts “provided by a gracious God in order that he might act graciously towards his sinful people” (Lev 17:11).³⁵²

The truth of the point made above is clearly acknowledged in the New Testament

165.

³⁴⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 169.

³⁵⁰Ibid., 173.

³⁵¹Ibid.

³⁵²Ibid., 173-174.

especially in the main texts about propitiation (Rom 3:25; 1 John 4:10). Biblically, therefore, “God’s love is the source, not the consequence, of the atonement.”³⁵³ Granted, it is God’s wrath which needed to be propitiated, but it is the love of God which did the propitiating. What the propitiation changed was God’s dealings with us.³⁵⁴ The propitiatory sacrifice was not a thing or an animal but God Himself in the person of His son.³⁵⁵ Stott notes further that “it is God himself who in holy wrath needs to be propitiated, God himself who in holy love undertook to do the propitiating, and God himself who in the person of his Son died for the propitiation of our sins.”³⁵⁶ Stott was careful to state that his argument in favor of divine propitiation does not deny the biblical doctrine of expiation since both belong together.³⁵⁷

Redemption

Stott states that the basic meaning of “redeem” is to “buy” or “buy back,” whether as a purchase or ransom. Its emphasis is on our sorry state in sin which made an act of divine rescue necessary. While “propitiation” focuses on the wrath of God which the cross placated, “redemption” focuses on our plight as sinners from which we were ransomed by the cross.³⁵⁸ He notes further that the Greek words *lytroō* (which is usually

³⁵³Ibid., 174.

³⁵⁴Ibid.

³⁵⁵Ibid., 174-175. Stott quotes Karl Barth to support his argument: ““Only God, our Lord and Creator, could stand surety for us, could take our place, could suffer eternal death in our stead as the consequence of our sin in such a way that it was finally suffered and overcome.”” Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of God*, Church Dogmatics, vol. II-1 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), 398, 403.

³⁵⁶Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 175. See also his *Romans*, 113-116.

³⁵⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 175. See also his *Evangelical Essentials*, 160-161.

³⁵⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 175.

translated “redeem”) and *apolytrōsis* (“redemption”) are derived from *lytron* (“a ransom” or “price of release”) which was almost a technical word for the purchase or manumission of a slave.³⁵⁹ In that sense, he asserts, we have been ransomed by Christ by the payment of a price, that is, “the atoning death of God’s Son.”³⁶⁰

The plight from which we cannot extricate ourselves but from which Jesus has “redeemed” us is a moral bondage which is variously described as “transgressions” or “sins” or “the curse of the law” (the divine judgment which it pronounces on law-breakers).³⁶¹ Redemption will be complete when Jesus finally frees us from all the ravages of the fall when we shall be made perfect. This is yet in the future.³⁶² Though the New Testament never really stresses to whom the ransom was paid, it is unequivocal about the price: It was Christ Himself. In order to accomplish atonement, and beyond the cost of the incarnation (Gal 4:4-5), He had to give Himself or His life (Mark 10:45; Gal 3:13; 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:14).³⁶³

Christ was both the victim as well as the priest in the work of redeeming human beings (1 Pet 1:18-19). Stott quotes Heb 9:12 to emphasize these dual roles and to point out that “he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood.”³⁶⁴ Contrary to the notion of some (led by B. F. Westcott in his *Commentary on the Epistle of John*)³⁶⁵

³⁵⁹Ibid., 176. See also his *Romans*, 113, where he states that redemption is a commercial term borrowed from the marketplace.

³⁶⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 177. He quotes Mark 10:45 in support of this assertion.

³⁶¹Ibid., 178. He cites the following Bible texts in this discussion: Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Gal 3:13; 4:5.

³⁶²Ibid.

³⁶³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 179.

³⁶⁴Ibid.

³⁶⁵B. F. Westcott, *Commentary on the Epistles of John* (London: Macmillan, 1883).

that the blood of Christ symbolizes not His death but His life, Stott argues that the blood of Christ (like the “Cross of Christ”) is just another expression for the death of Christ for our salvation.³⁶⁶

Justification

The next theological word picture that Stott considers is justification. It is a legal or forensic term which belongs to the law courts. Its opposite is condemnation and both are the pronouncements of a judge.³⁶⁷ Justification takes place in an instant,³⁶⁸ whereas sanctification describes the process by which justified Christians are changed into the likeness of Christ.³⁶⁹ Contrary to the view of those who argue that justification is simply free forgiveness,³⁷⁰ Stott asserts that while the two concepts are definitely complementary, they are not identical. In his words, “Forgiveness remits our debts and cancels our liability to punishment; justification bestows on us a righteous standing before God.”³⁷¹

Like many evangelicals, Stott believed in the “total depravity” of humanity, which he defines as the position that asserts that “every part of our humanness has been

³⁶⁶Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 181.

³⁶⁷Stott, *Romans*, 110.

³⁶⁸John R. W. Stott, *Men with a Message—An Introduction to the New Testament and Its Writers*, rev. by Stephen Motyer (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 96.

³⁶⁹John R. W. Stott, *Christian Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 38.

³⁷⁰W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *The Epistle to the Romans*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), 36. See also Joachim Jeremias, 66.

³⁷¹Stott, *Cross*, 182. See also idem, *Romans*, 110. Elsewhere, Stott wrote that “justification (its source God and his grace, its ground Christ and his cross, and its means faith alone, altogether apart from works) is the heart of the gospel and unique to Christianity” (*Romans*, 118). He quotes R. T. Beckwith, G. E. Duffield, and J. I. Packer in *Across the Divide* (Basingstoke, England: Lyttelton, 1977), 58, where they write thus: “Justification by Faith appears to us, as it does to all evangelicals, to be the heart and hub, the paradigm and essence, of the whole economy of God’s saving grace. Like Atlas, it bears a world on its shoulders, the entire evangelical knowledge of God’s love in Christ toward sinners.”

twisted by the Fall.”³⁷² This, he argues, is the reason why he insists on “the need both for a radical salvation and for non-contributory grace.”³⁷³ He denies synergism³⁷⁴ between God’s saving grace and the human will, citing passages such as Eph 2:8-9; Gal 2:16; and Titus 3:5. He wrote: “There is no cooperation here between God and us, only a choice between two mutually exclusive ways, his and ours.”³⁷⁵

With regard to the means of our salvation, he writes that “justification is by grace alone, in Christ alone, through faith alone.”³⁷⁶ While, for Stott, the scope of salvation includes all who have faith in Christ, he makes it clear that there is nothing meritorious about faith. In his view, “salvation is not a cooperative enterprise between God and us, in which he contributes the cross and we contribute faith. No, grace is non-contributory, and faith is the opposite of self-regarding.”³⁷⁷ Further, “the value of faith is not to be found in itself, but entirely and exclusively in its object, namely Jesus Christ and him crucified.”³⁷⁸

Stott writes that Christianity is the good news that “God’s grace has turned away his wrath, that God’s Son has died our death and borne our judgment, that God has mercy on the undeserving, and that there is nothing left for us to do, or even contribute. Faith’s only function is to receive what grace offers.”³⁷⁹ He adds further, “The antithesis between

³⁷²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 187. See also his *Ephesians*, 79.

³⁷³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 187.

³⁷⁴Synergism is the doctrine that states that salvation is achieved through the combination of divine grace working in cooperation with the human will.

³⁷⁵Ibid.

³⁷⁶Stott, *Romans*, 117.

³⁷⁷Ibid.

³⁷⁸Ibid.

³⁷⁹Ibid., 118.

grace and law, mercy and merit, faith and works, God's salvation and self-salvation, is absolute. No compromising mishmash is possible. We are obliged to choose."³⁸⁰ From the foregoing, it is very clear that Stott denies synergism between God's grace and the human response of faith. Clearly, his position is Calvinist.

Stott argues that we cannot equate salvation with justification since salvation is the comprehensive word which has many facets of which justification is just one. Regeneration is not an aspect of justification, but both are aspects of salvation. Neither can take place without the other. In his words, the "justifying work of the Son and the regenerating work of the Spirit cannot be separated."³⁸¹ He argues that the source of justification is God's unmerited grace (Rom 3:24) since self-justification is impossible. The ground of our justification is the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:9).³⁸² He denies that justification and forgiveness are synonymous. He writes, "Pardon is negative, the remission of a penalty or debt; justification is positive, the bestowal of a righteous status, the sinner's reinstatement in the favour and fellowship of God."³⁸³

Justification is not a general amnesty declared by God for all sinners. It is, rather, an act of "gracious justice."³⁸⁴ Stott explains justification as follows: "When God justifies sinners, he is not declaring bad people to be good, or saying that they are not sinners after

³⁸⁰Ibid. See also Stott's *Ephesians*, 83, where he wrote: "We must never think of salvation as a kind of transaction between God and us in which he contributes grace and we contribute faith. For we were dead, and had to be quickened before we could believe." See also his *Galatians*, 22, where he wrote thus: "The work of Christ is a finished work; and the gospel of Christ is a gospel of free grace. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, without any admixture of human works or merits. It is due solely to God's gracious call, and not to any good works of our own."

³⁸¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 188.

³⁸²Ibid., 190.

³⁸³Stott, *Romans*, 110.

³⁸⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 190.

all; he is pronouncing them legally righteous, free from any liability to the broken law, because he himself in his Son has borne the penalty of their law-breaking.”³⁸⁵ He insists that there can be no justification without atonement. For Stott, the means of our justification is faith, but faith’s only function is to receive what God’s grace has freely offered. He explains: “God’s grace is the source and Christ’s blood the ground of our justification; faith is only the means by which we are united to Christ.”³⁸⁶

Consistent with his understanding of divine predestination, God’s eternal decree and the effective call of the believer (as will be shown below in the discussion of the scope of atonement), Stott argues that justification cannot be lost. He writes:

Justified believers enjoy a blessing far greater than a periodic approach to God or an occasional audience with the king. We are privileged to live in the temple and in the palace. . . . *Our relationship with God, into which justification has brought us, is not sporadic but continuous, not precarious but secure.* We do not fall in and out of grace like courtiers who may find themselves in and out of favour with their sovereign, or politicians with the public. No, we stand in it, for that is the nature of grace. Nothing can separate us from God’s love [Emphasis added].³⁸⁷

However, faith is not just the means, but is the only means for human beings to be justified. He explains this emphasis on faith by arguing that “unless all human works, merits, co-operation and contributions are ruthlessly excluded, and Christ’s sin-bearing death is seen in its solitary glory as the only ground of our justification, boasting cannot be excluded.”³⁸⁸ Our justification “in Christ” (Gal 2:17; cf. Rom 8:1,2; 2 Cor 5:21) points

³⁸⁵Ibid.

³⁸⁶Ibid. Stott points out that justification by faith is the heart of the gospel and is unique to Christianity. *Romans*, 118.

³⁸⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 140. However, a consideration of the scriptural evidence does not support his conclusion here. See Matt 24:4, 5, 11-13; Luke 12:42-46; John 15:1-6; Rom 11:20-22; Gal 6:7-9; Heb 3:6-19, 4:1-16; 1 John 2:15-28; Rev 22:18, 19, among many other scriptural references.

³⁸⁸Ibid., 191.

to the personal relationship that we enjoy with Him in His covenant community which is zealous for good works (Titus 2:14).³⁸⁹ This community is an eschatological community of hope which brings into the present the verdict of the last judgment since Jesus died, was resurrected, and now pleads for us in the heavenly courts (Rom 8:33-34, 39).³⁹⁰

Reconciliation

Reconciliation presupposes an original relationship which had been broken but has now been recovered by Christ. It is a theological term which refers to the event through which God and human beings, previously estranged from one another, are made “at one” again. Whereas justification refers to our legal standing before our Judge in court, reconciliation has to do with “our personal relationship with our Father in the home.”³⁹¹ Reconciliation follows and is the result of justification. “It is only when we have been justified by faith that we have peace with God.”³⁹² Having been reconciled to God, we have peace with Him, are adopted into His family and have access into His presence. But reconciliation is not just on the vertical dimension (our relationship with God); it also has a horizontal dimension since “God has reconciled us to one another in his new community, as well as to himself.”³⁹³

Stott then proceeds to discuss how the reconciliation has taken place and the respective roles played by God, Christ, and ourselves. He centers his discussion here on

³⁸⁹Ibid., 192. See also his *Romans*, 117.

³⁹⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 192.

³⁹¹Ibid., 193.

³⁹²Ibid. He cites Rom 5:1 in this regard.

³⁹³Ibid., 194. He quotes Eph 2:11-22 as his biblical support.

2 Cor 5:18-21. The first truth he identifies is that God is the author of the reconciliation. He is the one who is reconciling, giving, appealing, making Christ to be sin for us. Therefore, he argues, “no explanation of the atonement is biblical which takes the initiative from God, and gives it instead to us or to Christ. The initiative is certainly not ours. We have nothing to offer, to contribute, to plead.”³⁹⁴ Thus, reconciliation is wholly the work of God. In his view, it is a mistake to think that the obstacle between God and us which necessitated the work of reconciliation was wholly on the human side so that we needed to be reconciled but God did not. The “enmity” was on both sides. He states that “the . . . barrier between God and us was constituted both by our rebellion against him and by his wrath upon us on account of our rebellion.”³⁹⁵

The second truth is that Christ is the agent of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18, 19).³⁹⁶ The passage shows that God took the initiative to reconcile and He achieved it through Christ, not as His agent at a distance but that God was actually present in Christ as He did the work. He noted that the past tenses used in the passage above in 2 Corinthians show that reconciliation was not only set in motion, but was actually finished at the cross. God refused to reckon our sins to us but instead reckoned them to Christ, whose personal sinlessness uniquely qualified Him to bear our sins in our place. Our sins were imputed to the sinless Savior so that by being united to Him we “might receive as a free gift a

³⁹⁴Ibid., 197.

³⁹⁵Ibid., 197-198. He supports his position that the enmity was on both sides with three arguments. First, the words “enemy,” “enmity,” and “hostility” imply reciprocity. Second, in or near each one of the major passages dealing with reconciliation there is a reference to God’s wrath. The most striking is Rom 5. Third, there is the theological argument that since God has acted objectively in the cross and so has reconciled Himself to us, we too must now be reconciled to Him.

³⁹⁶In the passage, Paul wrote that God “has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ” and that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.”

standing of righteousness before God.”³⁹⁷

The mystery of atonement, for Stott, is how God could have been in Christ when He made Him to be sin. Nevertheless, he argues that we must hold both affirmations strongly and never expound one to contradict the other.³⁹⁸ The third truth is that if God is the author and Christ is the agent, human beings are the ambassadors of the reconciliation. Though God finished the work of reconciliation at the cross, it is still necessary for sinners to repent and believe in order to be reconciled to God.³⁹⁹

The Revelation of God

The cross is the supreme revelation of both Christ and His Father. Although the glory of Jesus was also glimpsed at His transfiguration, its full manifestation will be at the consummation of the kingdom of God.⁴⁰⁰ The cross radiates “that same combination of divine qualities which God revealed to Moses as mercy and justice, and which we have seen in the Word made flesh as ‘grace and truth.’”⁴⁰¹ The cross is also a vindication of God’s justice. In view of the seeming injustice of God’s providence, the Bible responds by looking on to the final judgment, and (from the perspective of the New Testament believers) by looking back to the decisive judgment which took place at the cross.⁴⁰²

Stott argues that “the reason for God’s previous inaction in the face of sin was not moral indifference but personal forbearance until Christ should come and deal with it on

³⁹⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 200.

³⁹⁸Ibid., 201.

³⁹⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰Ibid., 204-205.

⁴⁰¹Ibid., 205.

⁴⁰²Ibid., 207, 208. He cites Ps 73, Acts 17:30-31; Rom 2:4; 2 Pet 3:3-9.

the cross.”⁴⁰³ Commenting on Rom 3:21-26, Stott argues that “because of his past appearance of injustice in not punishing sins, he has given a present and visible proof of justice in bearing the punishment himself in Christ.”⁴⁰⁴ Therefore, God cannot be accused of moral indifference or injustice. “The cross demonstrates with equal vividness both his justice in judging sin and his mercy in justifying the sinner.”⁴⁰⁵ Through the achievement of the cross, God “is able to bestow a righteous status on the unrighteous, without compromising his own righteousness.”⁴⁰⁶ By dying as our Substitute, Jesus not only won for us propitiation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation, but thereby demonstrated also His own justice.

In Stott’s view, the cross is not just a revelation of God’s justice; it is also a revelation of His love. It is in light of this revelation through which the evil, injustice, death, and sufferings in the world should be viewed.⁴⁰⁷ It is only through the cross that we know that true love is. He argues, “Only one act of pure love, unsullied by any taint of ulterior motive, has ever been performed in the history of the world, namely the self-giving of God in Christ on the cross for undeserving sinners.”⁴⁰⁸ Calvary is the definition of pure and unmerited love.⁴⁰⁹ God reveals His love for us in three ways. He gave His Son for us, that is, He gave Himself in the person of His Son, and not a third party.

⁴⁰³Ibid., 208.

⁴⁰⁴Ibid., 211.

⁴⁰⁵Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶Ibid..

⁴⁰⁷Ibid., 212.

⁴⁰⁸Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹Ibid., 212, 213.

Second, he gave His Son to die for us and the Son, in His holy love, inflicted the penalty of sin by bearing it. Third, God gave His Son to die for undeserving sinners like us.⁴¹⁰

Stott argues that an evidence that the cross remains a demonstration of God's love is the fact that several theologians in different periods of church history have tried to find the meaning of atonement in that fact,⁴¹¹ and have therefore proposed the "moral influence" theories of atonement.⁴¹² But he also argues that "the cross can be seen as a proof of God's love only when it is at the same time seen as a proof of his justice."⁴¹³

The Conquest of Evil

Stott agrees with the view of Gustav Aulén who "sees the atonement as a cosmic drama in which God in Christ does battle with the powers of evil and gains the victory over them."⁴¹⁴ He argues that by His death, "Jesus saved us not only from sin and guilt, but from death and the devil, in fact all evil powers, as well."⁴¹⁵ He discusses Christ's victory over the devil in six stages. Stage one is the conquest predicted as recorded in Gen 3:15, where God said: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." Stott identifies the woman's seed as "the Messiah, through whom God's rule of righteousness will be established and the rule of evil eradicated."⁴¹⁶ The Old Testament

⁴¹⁰Ibid., 213, 214. Stott refers to Rom 5:8, Phil 2:7-8, and Rom 3:23 as his scriptural support.

⁴¹¹Ibid., 217.

⁴¹²See chapter 2 for a discussion of the moral influence theories of atonement.

⁴¹³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 220.

⁴¹⁴Ibid., 228. See also Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*.

⁴¹⁵Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 229.

⁴¹⁶Ibid., 231.

texts which declare either God's present rule or His future rule over the nations through the Messiah may be understood as predictions of the ultimate crushing of Satan.⁴¹⁷

The second stage was the conquest begun in the ministry of Jesus. Since he knew Him as his future conqueror, "Satan made many different attempts to get rid of him, for example, through the wilderness temptations to avoid the way of the cross . . . through the crowds, resolve to force him into a politico-military kingship, through Peter's contradiction of the necessity of the cross . . . , and through the betrayal of Judas whom Satan actually 'entered.'"⁴¹⁸ However, Jesus was determined to fulfill the scriptural predictions about Him. Stott writes, "We see his kingdom advancing and Satan's retreating before it, as demons are dismissed, sicknesses are healed and disordered nature itself acknowledges its Lord."⁴¹⁹

The third stage occurred on the cross. Stott argues that Jesus referred to the devil as the "prince of this world" who would launch his last offensive against Him, but would be "driven out" and "condemned" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).⁴²⁰ He states that Jesus was clearly anticipating that at the time of His death the final contest would take place, in which the evil powers would be routed and the devil's captives set free.⁴²¹ After quoting

⁴¹⁷Ibid., 231, 232. He quotes 1 Chr 29:11 and Isa 9:6-7 as scriptural support for his point here.

⁴¹⁸Ibid., 232.

⁴¹⁹Ibid. Some reference Stott quotes or refer to include: Rev.12:1; John 13: 27; Mark 1:24; Luke 10:18.

⁴²⁰Ibid., 232.

⁴²¹Ibid. He cites Heb 2:14-15 as scriptural support for his argument here.

Col 2:13-15,⁴²² Stott notes that Paul brings together (in the last scriptural reference) “two different aspects of the saving work of Christ’s cross, namely the forgiveness of our sins and the cosmic overthrow of the principalities and powers.”⁴²³ He argues, “By his obedience, his love and his meekness he won a great moral victory over the powers of evil. He remained free, uncontaminated, uncompromised. The devil could gain no hold on him, and had to concede defeat.”⁴²⁴

The fourth stage was the resurrection in which the conquest was confirmed and announced. Whereas the cross was the victory won, the resurrection was the victory endorsed, proclaimed, and demonstrated. Stott writes, “The evil principalities and powers, which had been deprived of their weapons and their dignity at the cross, were now in consequence put under his feet and made subject to him.”⁴²⁵ The fifth stage is the extension of the conquest through the preaching of the gospel to people in order to call them to repent and believe in Christ. He argues that “every Christian conversion involves a power encounter in which the devil is obliged to relax his hold on somebody’s life and the superior power of Christ is demonstrated.”⁴²⁶ The sixth stage is the conquest consummated at the Parousia, that is, at the second coming of Christ. Although Christ is already reigning, “he is also waiting until his enemies become a footstool for his feet” at

⁴²²“Having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

⁴²³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 233. See also his *Ephesians*, 267-275.

⁴²⁴*Ibid.*, 235.

⁴²⁵*Ibid.*, 235-236.

⁴²⁶*Ibid.*, 236.

the time when “every knee will bow to him and every tongue confess him Lord.”⁴²⁷

Stott regards the book of Revelation as one that bears perhaps the strongest message about Christ’s victory over evil than all other biblical books. In Revelation, “the conflict between the church and the world is seen to be but an expression on the public stage of the invisible contest between Christ and Satan.”⁴²⁸ In the context of his discussion of Rev 12, he notes that though the devil has been defeated and dethroned, enraged by the knowledge of approaching doom, he has continued with his evil activities with renewed energy. Though victory over him has been won, nevertheless, painful conflict with him continues.⁴²⁹ However, the message of the book of Revelation is that Christ has vanquished Satan and will in the future destroy him completely. In light of “these certainties,” we must continue to confront the devil’s continuing malicious activities in the physical, intellectual, and moral realms of life by relying on the achievement of Christ on the cross.

Stott summarizes his discussion of the images of atonement thus:

So substitution is not a “theory of the atonement.” Nor is it even an additional image to take its place as an option alongside the others. It is rather the essence of each image and the heart of the atonement itself. . . . I am not of course saying that it is necessary to understand, let alone articulate, a substitutionary atonement before one can be saved. Yet the responsibility of Christian teachers, preachers and other witnesses is to seek grace to expound it with clarity and conviction. For the better people understand the glory of the divine substitution, the easier it will be for them to trust in the Substitute.⁴³⁰

⁴²⁷Ibid.

⁴²⁸Ibid., 247.

⁴²⁹Ibid., 248.

⁴³⁰Ibid., 202, 203.

The cross and the resurrection

Stott argues that, although it is true that the death and resurrection of Jesus belong together in the New Testament and that one is seldom mentioned without the other,⁴³¹ nevertheless, we must not ascribe saving efficacy to both equally. One very crucial reason Stott cites for insisting on this distinction is that it was by Christ's death and not by His resurrection that human sins were dealt with (Heb 2:14).⁴³² While the resurrection was essential to confirm the efficacy of His death, Stott insists that Christ's sin-bearing work was finished on the cross and the victory over the devil, sin, and death was won there.⁴³³

He asserts that what the resurrection did was to vindicate the Jesus who the people had rejected, declare with power that He is the Son of God, and publicly confirm that His sin-bearing sacrificial death had been effective for the forgiveness of sins.⁴³⁴ Due to the resurrection, "it is a living Christ who bestows on us the salvation he has won for us on the cross, who enables us by his Spirit not only to share in the merit of his death but also to live in the power of his resurrection."⁴³⁵ For Stott, the atonement includes both the death and resurrection of Jesus, "since nothing would have been accomplished by his

⁴³¹Ibid., 237. Some Bible texts he refers to include John 10:17-18; Acts 2:23-24; 1 Cor 15:1-8; and Rev 1:18. In fact, Stott is careful to note that we must never separate the crucifixion from the incarnation and the resurrection of Jesus, arguing that "his death would have no efficacy if it had not been preceded by his unique birth and followed by his unique resurrection." He adds that "only the God-man could die for our sins, and only the resurrection could validate his death" as confirmed by Paul in 1 Tim 2:5-6. He notes that Jesus "was incarnate as man, he died as a ransom, and he has been exalted as our heavenly mediator. The three are linked together inextricably." *Evangelical Truth*, 69.

⁴³²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 238.

⁴³³Ibid.

⁴³⁴Ibid.

⁴³⁵Ibid.

death if he had not been raised from it.”⁴³⁶ It was at the cross that our deliverance over sin and death was accomplished, but the resurrection is the assurance to us that Jesus did deliver us from sin and death.⁴³⁷

Scope of Atonement

The scope of atonement is an issue which lies at the heart of a systematic exposition of the gospel, and is “not merely a fascinating side show on the eschatological fringes of theological concern.”⁴³⁸ It potentially involves a discussion of such doctrines as Christology, atonement (both its necessity and its means), justification by faith, natural theology, the nature of biblical authority, human freedom in relation to divine sovereignty, and the doctrine of God itself.⁴³⁹ To some extent, this seems to be the case in John Stott’s presentation of the scope of atonement. His view of the extent of the atonement is closely related to his understanding of Christology, justification by faith, divine foreknowledge and predestination, election, and God’s eternal decrees which, Calvinists argue, guarantee

⁴³⁶Ibid., 239.

⁴³⁷Ibid. Stott argues that “although none [of the trio of incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection] is effective without the others, it is the death that is central.” He adds that “the birth looks forward to it and prepares for it, while the resurrection looks back to it and validates it.” *Evangelical Truth*, 69.

⁴³⁸Trevor Hart, “Universalism: Two Distinct Types,” in *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, ed. Nigel M. de S. Cameron (Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1992), 1-2. See also G. Michael Thomas, *The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to the Consensus (1536-1675)* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997). The question of the scope of the atonement is not only an issue between Arminians and Calvinists, it is also an issue among Calvinists as is shown by the differing positions on the issue at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) and the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* of 1675, a statement designed to exclude the view that Christ died for all. The crux of the disagreement is the question of the place of predestination in the thought of Calvin and his successors. See Thomas, 1. Concerning the Synod of Dort, P. White has recently written thus: “At perhaps no point were the tensions within international Calvinism more acute than on the extent of the atonement.” See P. White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 187, quoted in Thomas, *Extent of the Atonement*, 1.

⁴³⁹Thomas has also noted that “it is important to see the extent of the atonement not as an isolated doctrine, but in its relation to other doctrines within the thought of each theologian studied.” *Extent of the Atonement*, 3.

the “absolute security” or the “perseverance of the saints.”

While on the one hand Stott argues that “God’s gospel is for everybody, without exception and without distinction,”⁴⁴⁰ he at the same time upholds the ideas of the absolute security of Christians that arises from God’s foreknowledge, predestination, election, and effective call. The latter position is usually identified with Calvinism. While he generally presents his position in a manner that may lead one to conclude that he espouses an unlimited atonement, which is usually identified with Arminianism, a closer examination of his writings reveals a solid commitment to the critical tenets of Calvinism that formed the bedrock of his position on the extent of atonement, as will be shown below.⁴⁴¹

⁴⁴⁰Stott, *Romans*, 51-52. See also 60, 61, 67, 109, 120, 135. In his *Epistles of John*, 89, he argues that “Christ is still the propitiation . . . *not for ours* [that is, the Christian believer’s sins] *only, but also for the sins of the whole world*” and that through the propitiation offered by Christ, “a universal pardon is offered for (the sins of) the whole world and is enjoyed by those who embrace it.”

⁴⁴¹For a discussion of the extent of the atonement, see W. A. Elwell, “Extent of Atonement,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 114-116, and Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 841-858, 921-940. See also P. Helm, *Calvin and the Calvinists* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982); Roger Nicole, “John Calvin’s View of the Extent of the Atonement,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 47 (1985): 197-225; R. A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1986); B. Hall, “Calvin against the Calvinists,” in *John Calvin*, ed. G. E. Duffield (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966), 19-37; M. Jinkins, “Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 64 (1992): 333-355; and Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

In the view that is identified as limited atonement, God limited the effect of Christ’s death to a predetermined number of elect persons. This view is also identified as one which espouses “particular redemption.” This view is the one held by the Augustinian/Calvinist traditions of theology. Erickson has noted that since Augustine, limited atonement and election have been affirmed or denied together, even though the attempt to deduce limited atonement from the doctrine of election has not been successful. *Christian Theology*, 845, 850. The second view, also referred to as unlimited atonement or “general redemption,” holds that God did not limit Christ’s redemptive death to the elect but intended it for humankind in general. This is the viewpoint of the Arminian tradition in theology.

For references on Calvinism and the extent of the atonement, see John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., ed. J. T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960); Lorraine Boettner, *The Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941); L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1953); 118-125; W. S. Reid, “Calvinism,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 201-203; John T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford University, 1954); R. C. Reed, *The Gospel as Taught by Calvin* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979); Duane Edward Spencer, *The Five Points of Calvinism in the Light of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979); R. K. McGregor Wright, *No*

In a section titled “The scope of the gospel is all the nations,” Stott writes that Paul defines the scope of the gospel as encompassing “*all the gentiles*.” Quoting Rom 1:16, where Paul describes the gospel as the “power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes, first for the Jew, then for the Gentile,” Stott notes that what Paul is affirming is that the “the gospel is for everyone; its scope is universal.”⁴⁴² In his commentary on Rom 3:22, he writes that the *righteousness from God* “comes through faith in Jesus Christ to *all who believe*” and “it is offered to all because it is needed by all.”⁴⁴³ There is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles or between any other human groupings, “*for all have sinned . . . and fall short . . . of the glory of God*.”⁴⁴⁴

Stott justifies his argument that all have sinned in and through Adam by the use of the concept of “biblical solidarity.” He argues that “all sinned in and through Adam and therefore all died.”⁴⁴⁵ He presents three arguments in this respect. The first argument he gives is that “all died *because all sinned* in and through Adam, the representative or

Place for Sovereignty: What's Wrong with Freewill Theism (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996); and Thomas C. Schreiner and Bruce Ware, *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000).

For references on Arminianism, see Carl Bangs, *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Asbury, 1985); G. L. Curtiss, *Arminianism in History* (Cincinnati, OH: Cranston and Curts, 1894); A. W. Harrison, *Arminianism* (London: Duckworth, 1937); Clark H. Pinnock, ed., *The Grace of God and the Will of Man* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1989); David Bassinger and Randall Bassinger, eds., *Predestination and Freewill: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986); Robert Shank, *Life in the Son: A Study of the Doctrine of Perseverance* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1989), and Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

⁴⁴²Stott, *Romans*, 51.

⁴⁴³*Ibid.*, 109. See also his *Evangelical Essentials*, 328, where he writes: “We have to remember too that God does not *want* anybody to perish but *wants* everybody to be saved (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4) [emphasis his].”

⁴⁴⁴Stott, *Romans*, 109.

⁴⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 151.

federal head of the human race.”⁴⁴⁶ In the second argument, he refers to Rom 5:15-19 and argues that universal death is attributed by Paul to “a single, solitary sin.”⁴⁴⁷ In the third argument, he argues that just as we are condemned on account of what Adam did, so we are justified on account of what Christ did.⁴⁴⁸ In his view, these three arguments seem to decisively support the view that “all sinned in and through Adam.”⁴⁴⁹

In his comment on Rom 5:18-21, Stott points out that the structure employed by Paul of “just as . . . so also” points to the similarity between Adam and Christ, namely that the one act of one man determined the destiny of many.⁴⁵⁰ Furthermore, he wrote that “just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.”⁴⁵¹ With regard to v. 19, he notes that “the expressions ‘made sinners’ and ‘made righteous’ cannot mean that these people actually became morally good or evil, but rather that they were ‘constituted’ legally righteous or unrighteous in God’s sight.”⁴⁵² Stott also argues that not only have all humans sinned in and through Adam, but that they have also inherited guilt from Adam.⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁶Ibid., 152.

⁴⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸Ibid. See also Charles H. Hodge, *A Commentary on Romans* (Philadelphia: Grigg & Elliot, 1835), 142.

⁴⁴⁹Stott, *Romans*, 152, 153. In support of his position he quotes David Martyn Lloyd-Jones: “God has always dealt with mankind through a head and representative. The whole story of the human race can be summed up in terms of what has happened because of Adam, and what has happened and will yet happen because of Christ.” David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1985), 178.

⁴⁵⁰Stott, *Romans*, 156.

⁴⁵¹Ibid.

⁴⁵²Ibid. See also Stott, *Ephesians*, 78.

⁴⁵³Stott, *Ephesians*, 78.

Though Stott argues that the scope of atonement “will be extremely extensive,” nevertheless he argues that the “all men” of Rom 5:18 who are affected by the work of Christ cannot refer to absolutely everybody for a number of reasons.⁴⁵⁴ First, the two communities of people who are related to Adam and Christ are related to them in different ways. He argues: “We are ‘in Adam’ by birth, but ‘in Christ’ only by new birth and by faith. . . . The ‘all’ who in Christ are made alive are identified as ‘those who belong to him.’”⁴⁵⁵ Second, this is made clear in Rom 5:17, where those who “reign in life” through Christ are not everybody but those who receive God’s abundant grace.⁴⁵⁶ Third, since Paul emphasizes throughout Romans that justification is “by faith” (for example, 1:16ff; 3:21ff; 4:1ff), it is evident that not all people are justified without regard to whether they believe or not.⁴⁵⁷ Fourth, Romans also contains solemn warnings that on the last day God’s wrath will be poured out (Rom 2:5, 8), and that those who continue in their sinful self-seeking will perish (2:12).⁴⁵⁸

In light of all these arguments, Stott finds it difficult, if not impossible, to interpret Paul’s “all” as “everybody without exception” and to espouse universal salvation.⁴⁵⁹ Stott adds that in spite of the foregoing, Rom 5:12-21 “gives us solid

⁴⁵⁴Stott, *Romans*, 159-162. Paul wrote in Rom 5:18, “Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”

⁴⁵⁵Stott, *Romans*, 159. See 1 Cor 15:22.

⁴⁵⁶Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷Ibid. See also 60, 61.

⁴⁵⁸Ibid., 159. Elsewhere, Stott writes: “It is not a universal reconciliation that Christ achieved or that Paul proclaimed: it is rather a nearness to God and to each other gratefully experienced by those who are near Christ, indeed ‘in’ him in a vital, personal union.” *Ephesians*, 98.

⁴⁵⁹Stott, *Romans*, 159. For a full discussion of universal salvation, see the introduction to *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Parridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), xv-xxvii, in which they discuss a typology of universalisms including multiracial

grounds for confidence that a very large number will be saved and that the scope of Christ's redeeming work, although not universal, will be extremely extensive."⁴⁶⁰ Citing Calvin, he argues that the grace of Christ "belongs to a greater number than the condemnation contracted by the first man" and that if Adam's fall produced the ruin of many, "the grace of God is much more efficacious in benefitting many, since it is granted that Christ is much more powerful than Adam was to destroy."⁴⁶¹ The redeemed will include a great multitude which no one could number "from all the world's nations, peoples and languages."⁴⁶²

It is in Stott's discussion of "the absolute security" of Christians in relation to God's foreknowledge, predestination, election, and effective call that his Calvinistic theological orientation is most clearly depicted. In his comments on Rom 8:1-39, Stott notes that the overarching theme of Paul in the chapter is "the absolute security of the children of God."⁴⁶³ Commenting on Rom 8:28-39 in the subsection titled "The steadfastness of God's love," he wrote concerning Paul that "his great Spirit-directed mind now sweeps over the whole plan and purpose of God from a past eternity to an eternity still to come, from the divine foreknowledge and predestination to the divine love

universalism, Arminian universalism, and strong universalism. See also both Thomas Talbott, "Towards a Better Understanding of Universalism," and I. Howard Marshall, "The New Testament Does Not Teach Universal Salvation," both in *Universal Salvation? A Current Debate*, 3-14, and 55-76, respectively. See also Sven Hillert, *Limited and Universal Salvation: A Text-Oriented and Hermeneutical Study of Two Perspectives in Paul* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1999), 13-25, and Trevor Hart, "Universalism," 1-34.

⁴⁶⁰Stott, *Romans*, 159.

⁴⁶¹John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948), 114, quoted in Stott, *Romans*, 161.

⁴⁶²Stott, *Romans*, 162. See also 51-52. Stott quotes Rev 7:9 to buttress his point here.

⁴⁶³*Ibid.*, 216.

from which absolutely nothing will ever be able to separate us.”⁴⁶⁴ In spite of the sufferings and groans that we experience now, we have “a hope that is solidly grounded on the unwavering love of God.”⁴⁶⁵ Further, he argues that the burden of Paul’s climax in the passage under discussion is “the eternal security of God’s people, on account of the eternal unchangeability of God’s purpose, which is itself due to the eternal steadfastness of God’s love.”⁴⁶⁶

In his discussion of “the five unshakeable convictions” (which Paul expressed in his discussion of Rom 8:28-39), Stott notes that Paul lists five truths about God’s providence (v. 28). First, God is at work in our lives “ceaselessly, energetically and purposefully.”⁴⁶⁷ Second, God is at work for the ultimate good of His people, namely their final salvation (vv. 29-30). Third, God works for our good in all things. “Nothing is beyond the overruling, overriding scope of his providence.”⁴⁶⁸ Fourth, God works in all things for the good of those who love Him. The completed salvation that is promised in the above Bible passage is for those people who love Him.⁴⁶⁹ Fifth, “those who love God are also described as those *who have been called according to his purpose*.”⁴⁷⁰ He argues that their love for Him is a sign and token of His prior love for them which has found expression in His eternal purpose and His historical call. In his words, “God has a saving

⁴⁶⁴Ibid., 246.

⁴⁶⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷Ibid., 246-247.

⁴⁶⁸Ibid., 247.

⁴⁶⁹Ibid.

⁴⁷⁰Ibid., 248.

purpose, and is working in accordance with it. Life is not the random mess which it may sometimes appear.”⁴⁷¹

In his comments on Rom 8:29-30, Stott states that Paul depicts God’s good and saving purpose through five stages from its beginning in His mind to its consummation in the coming glory. The stages are foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification.⁴⁷² With regard to foreknowledge, Stott rejects the Arminian argument that God foresees who will believe and that this foreknowledge is the basis of His predestination.⁴⁷³ His first reason is that this argument states that God foreknows everybody and everything, whereas Paul is referring to a particular group.⁴⁷⁴ His second reason is that “if God predestines people because they are going to believe, then the ground of their salvation is in themselves and their merit, instead of in him and his mercy, whereas Paul’s whole emphasis is on God’s free initiative of grace.”⁴⁷⁵

Stott adds that the Hebrew verb “to know” expresses much more than mere intellectual cognition. The meaning of “foreknowledge” in the New Testament is similar. He interprets “whom he [God] foreknew” in Rom 11:2 as “whom he loved and chose.”⁴⁷⁶ It indicates a personal relationship of care and affection. He adds that “the only source of divine election and predestination is divine love.”⁴⁷⁷ In this connection, in his

⁴⁷¹Ibid.

⁴⁷²Ibid.

⁴⁷³Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵Ibid., 249.

⁴⁷⁶Ibid. Foreknowledge for him is a sovereign and distinguishing love, that is, a love that distinguishes the believers who are elected and the unbelievers who are not thus elected.

⁴⁷⁷Stott, *Romans*, 249. With regard to election see Stott, *Ephesians*, 1-39, where he discusses the doctrine in great detail. In the same commentary, Stott argues that we become the people of God by the will

commentary on Eph 1:4-5, he writes: “Paul could hardly have insisted more forcefully that our becoming members of God’s new community was due neither to chance nor to choice (if by that is meant our choice), but to God’s own sovereign will and pleasure. This was the decisive factor.”⁴⁷⁸ However, he adds that God’s sovereign will does not dispense of our own responsibility.⁴⁷⁹

With regard to predestination, Stott notes that “the verb *predestined* translates *proorizo*, which means ‘to decide beforehand’” and quotes Acts 4:28 in support of this understanding.⁴⁸⁰ He adds, “Clearly, then, a decision is involved in the process of becoming a Christian, but it is God’s decision before it can be ours. This is not to deny that we ‘decided for Christ’, and freely, but to affirm that we did so only because he had first ‘decided for us.’”⁴⁸¹ He quotes C. J. Vaughan in support of his position. Vaughan wrote:

Everyone who is eventually saved can only ascribe his salvation, from the first step to the last, to God’s favour and act. Human merit must be excluded; and this can only be by tracing back the work far beyond the obedience which evidences, or even the faith which appropriates, salvation; even to an act of spontaneous favour on the part of God who foresees and foreordains from eternity all his works.⁴⁸²

With regard to calling (v. 30a), he argues that the call of God is the application in time of his eternal predestination. In his commentary on 2 Thess 2:13, 14, Stott writes:

of God (47-48).

⁴⁷⁸Stott, *Ephesians*, 48.

⁴⁷⁹Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰Stott, *Romans*, 249. For a discussion of predestination and the different views of Calvinism and Arminianism, see Erickson, 921-940.

⁴⁸¹Stott, *Romans*, 249.

⁴⁸²C. J. Vaughan, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (London: Macmillan, 1885), 163, quoted in Stott, *Romans*, 249-250.

God chose you from the beginning for salvation. . . . God called you through the gospel for glory. . . . His [Paul's] horizons are bounded by nothing less than the eternities of the past and the future. In the eternity of the past God chose us to be saved. Then he called us in time, causing us to hear the gospel, believe the truth and be sanctified by the Spirit, with a view to our sharing Christ's glory in the eternity of the future. . . . There is no room in such a conviction for fears about Christian instability.⁴⁸³

The preaching of the gospel is therefore indispensable to divine predestination “because it is the very means God has ordained by which his call comes to his people and awaken their faith.”⁴⁸⁴ For him, what Paul means by God's call here “*is not the general gospel invitation but the divine summons which raises the spiritually dead to life. It is sometimes termed God's 'effective' or 'effectual' call. Those whom God thus calls (v. 30) are the same as those 'who have been called according to his purpose' (v. 28)*” [emphasis added].⁴⁸⁵ Thus, Stott accepts the idea of “the two calls” as espoused by Calvin.⁴⁸⁶

In relation to justification (v. 30b), Stott argues that “God's effective call enables those who hear it to believe, and those who believe are justified by faith.”⁴⁸⁷ Justification is more than forgiveness, acquittal, or even acceptance; “it is a declaration that we sinners are now righteous in God's sight, because of his conferment upon us of a righteous status, which is indeed the righteousness of Christ himself.”⁴⁸⁸ In relation to glorification, the

⁴⁸³John R. W. Stott, *The Message of 1 & 2nd Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 176-177. See also his *Romans*, 140, where Stott argues that the believer's justification is “not sporadic but continuous, not precarious but secure.” See also *ibid.*, 252.

⁴⁸⁴Stott, *Romans*, 252.

⁴⁸⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁶Calvin has written: “There are two kinds of call. There is the general call, by which God invites all equally to himself through the outward preaching of the word – even for those to whom he holds it out as a savor of death . . . , and as the occasion for severer condemnation. The other kind of call is special, which he deigns for the most part to give to the believers alone, while by the inward illumination of his Spirit he causes the preached Word to dwell in their hearts” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.24.8).

⁴⁸⁷Stott, *Romans*, 253.

⁴⁸⁸*Ibid.*

fifth stage (v. 30c), he wrote that our “destiny is to be given new bodies in a new world, both of which will be transfigured with the glory of God.”⁴⁸⁹ While it may seem that the process of sanctification has been omitted in v. 30, between justification and glorification, yet it is implicitly present “both in the allusion to our being conformed to the image of Christ and as the necessary preliminary to our glorification.”⁴⁹⁰

Regarding the five affirmations or stages discussed above, Stott summarizes his arguments thus: “*God is pictured as moving irresistibly from stage to stage*; from an eternal foreknowledge and predestination, through a historical call and justification, to a final glorification of his people in a future eternity. It resembles a chain of five links, each of which is unbreakable [emphasis added].”⁴⁹¹ It is thus evident that Stott’s arguments invest a preponderant premium on God’s sovereign decision or choice and human responsibility and choice are greatly discounted.⁴⁹²

In relation to the five questions that Paul asks in vv. 35-36, and the answers he provides in vv. 37-39, he states: “They are all about the kind of God we believe in. Together they affirm that *absolutely nothing can frustrate God’s purpose* (since he is for us), or quench his generosity (since he has not spared his Son), or accuse or condemn his elect (since he has justified them through Christ), *or sunder us from his love* (since he has revealed it in Christ) [emphasis added].”⁴⁹³ In light of the foregoing arguments, in Stott’s

⁴⁸⁹Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰Ibid. He quotes F. F. Bruce in this regard: “Sanctification is glory begun; glory is sanctification consummated.” *The Letter of Paul to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 171.

⁴⁹¹Stott, *Romans*, 253.

⁴⁹²Ibid., 249, where Stott argues that the decision involved in our salvation is primarily God’s decision and only secondarily ours.

⁴⁹³Ibid., 259. One may surmise that a reason why Stott argues that “absolutely nothing can frustrate God’s purpose” is that he believes that predestination, like providence, depends upon an absolute

view, the elect will ultimately be saved due entirely to divine predestination and election.

Stott argues further that the confidence of believers is not in our love for God, which is fickle and faltering, but in His love for us, which is steadfast and persevering.⁴⁹⁴ He adds that “the doctrine of ‘the perseverance of the saints’⁴⁹⁵ needs to be re-named the doctrine of the perseverance of God with the saints.”⁴⁹⁶ In view of the divine predestination of the believers and the effective call in time and subsequent justification in the light of the preceding arguments, it appears that Stott’s position seems to be that the justification of the believer is irrevocable.

In summing up Paul’s position in Rom 9, he approvingly quotes D. M. Lloyd-Jones: “In verses 6 to 29 he explains why anybody is saved; it is the sovereign election of God. In these verses (30-33) he is showing us why anybody is lost, and the explanation of that is their own responsibility.”⁴⁹⁷ But since he believes that God is “ceaselessly, energetically and purposefully active”⁴⁹⁸ for the final salvation of the believers (those who have experienced God’s effective call), and since nothing is beyond the overruling providence of God,⁴⁹⁹ the argument that the lost are responsible for their own loss is grossly unfair and shows an inconsistency in Stott’s position on the extent of the atonement. It appears unfair to blame the lost for being lost if, as Stott seems to teach,

and hidden will of God which is “the cause of all things.” See Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.18.2. For Calvin’s thoughts on the two wills of God, see his *Institutes*, 1.17.2.; 3.20.43.; 3.24.15.

⁴⁹⁴Stott, *Romans*, 259.

⁴⁹⁵Ibid., 259-260. Stott refers to D. M. Lloyd-Jones’s exposition on Rom 8:17-39 entitled *The Final Perseverance of the Saints* (London: Banner of Truth, 1975), 195-457.

⁴⁹⁶Stott, *Romans*, 260.

⁴⁹⁷Lloyd-Jones, *Romans*, 9:285, quoted in Stott, *Romans*, 278.

⁴⁹⁸Stott, *Romans*, 247.

⁴⁹⁹Ibid.

they did not receive God's effective call.

While in other places he seems to place a lot of emphasis on election and predestination (for instance, his discussion of God's "effective call" in his commentaries on Romans⁵⁰⁰ and Ephesians⁵⁰¹ which is only for the elect), in his commentary of 1 Timothy and Titus, he holds divine election and predestination of the elect in tension with the universal offer of atonement. In his commentary on the steadfastness of God's love in Rom 8:28-39, he argues, "Our Christian hope is solidly grounded on the unwavering love of God. So the burden of Paul's climax is the eternal security of God's people, on account of the eternal unchangeability of God's purpose, which is itself due to the eternal steadfastness of God's love."⁵⁰²

Whereas in his commentary on Romans he states that "absolutely nothing will ever be able to separate us" from God's steadfast love which guarantees the believers "eternal security,"⁵⁰³ he argues in his commentary on 1 Timothy and Titus that God "wants all men [people] to be saved" [emphasis his] and that "if some are excluded, it is because they exclude themselves by rejecting the gospel."⁵⁰⁴ It is possible for human beings to resist God's will.⁵⁰⁵ This being the case, he posits that the statement that "God wants all people to be saved" (1 Tim 2:4) cannot be pressed into meaning that it is his

⁵⁰⁰Ibid., 252.

⁵⁰¹Stott, *Ephesians*, 36. In this reference, Stott argues that in "pre-creation eternity" God determined definitely to make us (who did not yet exist) His own children through the redeeming work of Christ (which had not yet taken place) due solely to His unmerited favor.

⁵⁰²Stott, *Romans*, 246.

⁵⁰³Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴John R. W. Stott, *The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus* (Downers Grove, IL.: Inter-Varsity, 1996), 65.

⁵⁰⁵Ibid.

fixed intention that everybody will be. For alas! It is possible to resist his will.”⁵⁰⁶

This position is contradicted by his arguments already quoted above. In one such argument, he pictures God as moving “irresistibly” from the stage of His “eternal foreknowledge and predestination, through a historical call and justification, to a final glorification in a future eternity.”⁵⁰⁷ If it is true that “absolutely nothing can frustrate God’s purpose”⁵⁰⁸ and further if it is true that God wants all people to be saved and “does not *want* [emphasis his] anybody to perish but *wants* [emphasis his] everybody to be saved (2 Pet 3:9; 2 Tim 2:4),”⁵⁰⁹ then one can question Stott’s logic in asserting at the same breath that “it is possible to resist his [God’s] will.”⁵¹⁰

The approach adopted by Stott to attempt to resolve the apparent contradiction between the universal offer of the gospel and God’s particular election of the believers is to refer to it as an antinomy between the two which cannot be resolved.⁵¹¹ Though he acknowledges that “everybody finds the doctrine of election difficult” and that “Scripture nowhere dispels the mystery of election,”⁵¹² he nevertheless asserts that “the doctrine gives us a strong assurance of eternal security, since he who chose us and called us will surely keep us to the end.”⁵¹³

In his commentary *1 Timothy and Titus*, Stott argues that election is never

⁵⁰⁶Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷Stott, *Romans*, 253.

⁵⁰⁸Ibid., 259.

⁵⁰⁹Stott, *Essentials*, 328.

⁵¹⁰Stott, *1 Timothy and Titus*, 65.

⁵¹¹An antinomy is a contradiction between two true statements that cannot be resolved.

⁵¹²Stott, *Ephesians*, 37.

⁵¹³Ibid., 38.

introduced in Scripture in order to contradict the universal offer of the gospel. On God's part, He wants all people to be saved.⁵¹⁴ Having stated that one of the interpretations of the word "all" in 1 Tim 2:4 is that it is not a reference to "every single individual, but all kinds of peoples, classes, nationalities and ranks, and noting that "this is an important insight which needs to be affirmed," he nevertheless argues for "an antinomy between the universal offer of the gospel and God's purpose of election, between the 'all' and the 'some'."⁵¹⁵ He adds, "Wherever we look in Scripture we see this antinomy: divine sovereignty and human responsibility, universal offer and electing purpose, the all and the some, the cannot and the will not."⁵¹⁶

Stott argues that both positions (of the antinomy) are equally tenable. He states that it is probably better to concede that Scripture appears to affirm both positions in an antinomy which we are not able to resolve at this time. He concludes: "Whatever we may decide about the scope of atonement, we are absolutely forbidden to limit the scope of world mission. The gospel must be preached to all, and salvation must be offered to all."⁵¹⁷ In this connection, it very appropriate to note that, while Calvin did not deny the universality of the promise of the gospel, nevertheless, he asserted that "the Spirit of repentance and faith is not given to all" though "all are called to repentance and faith by

⁵¹⁴Stott, *1 Timothy and Titus*, 64, 65.

⁵¹⁵Ibid., 66. See also his reference to Calvin, whose commentary on 1 Tim 2:4 in reference to "all" he quotes: "The apostle's meaning here is simply that no nation of the earth and no rank of society is excluded from salvation, since God wills to offer the gospel to all without exception." John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), 208-209.

⁵¹⁶Stott, *1 Timothy and Titus*, 66.

⁵¹⁷Stott, *1 Timothy and Titus*, 71. Conceivably, one reason why he urges that "salvation must be offered to all" is revealed in a passage where he writes, "Scripture nowhere dispels the mystery of election, and we should be beware of any who try to systematize it too precisely or rigidly" (*Message of Ephesians*, 37).

outward preaching.”⁵¹⁸

It is relevant at this juncture to point out that Calvin also maintains the antinomy between a sincere universal promise and an unchangeable decree of particular election. He argues that the two are held together in Christ, “since he is the Christ of divine election and divine promise.”⁵¹⁹ Thus, like Calvin, Stott holds the position that God offers salvation to all, and at the same time holds the doctrine of particular election. Stott however does not go as far as Calvin in asserting that repentance and faith have not been given to all equally.⁵²⁰ While one agrees with Stott that God’s election and predestination of believers as a group will ultimately be fulfilled, it is theologically questionable to base the doctrine of the “eternal security” of the individual believer on what he himself acknowledges as “the mystery of election” as discussed by Paul (in Eph 1:4-6) and other Bible writers.

It may be observed that the difficulty is really not in the so-called antinomy in Scripture but in Stott’s presuppositions on God’s decrees, predestination, and particular election which overemphasizes God’s sovereignty and grossly undervalues the role of the human agent in the work of application of the atonement or redemption. The foregoing arguments show that Stott’s position on election and predestination is Calvinistic,⁵²¹

⁵¹⁸Calvin’s *Institutes*, 3.22.10; 3.24.17, and Thomas, *Extent of the Atonement*, 21-23.

⁵¹⁹Thomas, *Extent of the Atonement*, 20.

⁵²⁰See John Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, trans. J. K. Reid (London: J. Clarke, 1961), 103.

⁵²¹There are variations among Calvinists with regards to predestination and election. While some hold to double predestination (the belief that God chooses some to be saved and others to be lost), others hold that God actively chooses those who are to receive eternal life but leaves the others in their self-chosen sins. Stott’s position belongs to the latter category. See Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.21, “Eternal Election, By Which God Has Predestined Some to Salvation, Others to Destruction”; *Institutes*, 3.22, “Confirmation of This Doctrine from Scriptural Testimonies”; and Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 930-931. Erickson also highlights the other major variation among Calvinists which has to do with the logical order of God’s

though he apparently still struggles with the corollary of the election of the believers, that is, the rejection and condemnation of the damned. Perhaps, it is that struggle that explains why he embraced the concept of theological “antinomy.”

One may well argue that Stott’s position is best described as one that embraces “four-point Calvinism,” also referred to as “moderate Calvinism,” which was held by such theologians as Moyse Amyraut (1596-1664) and John Davenant (1576-1641). The position accepts four of the “five points of Calvinism” (that is, the concepts of total depravity, unconditional election, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the Saints), but rejects the concept of limited atonement.⁵²² However, the practical effect of the rejection does not make any difference to the extent of the atonement, since only the “elect” will be saved.⁵²³ His position may actually be classified as belonging to the sublapsarian variety of Calvinism which argues that, in the logical order of God’s decrees, He first provides an unlimited atonement that is sufficient for all, but limits its application to only the elect.⁵²⁴ A fuller analysis of Stott’s atonement theology will be presented in chapter 5, which analyzes the respective atonement theologies of Stott and White.

High Priestly Ministry of Christ

Stott has not written much on the issue of the high priestly ministry of Christ. Commenting on Heb 8:1-9:28 in relation to the sacrifice of Jesus, Stott notes that the

decrees, namely supralapsarianism, infralapsarianism, and sublapsarianism.

⁵²²Laurence M. Vance, *The Other Side of Calvinism* (Pensacola, FL: Vance Publications, 2002), 147-148, 412-414.

⁵²³Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*. 8 vols. (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), 3:186.

⁵²⁴Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 852, 931.

author of the book of Hebrews makes three contrasts. They are those “between the earthly and heavenly ‘tabernacle’ or ‘sanctuary’ (the place of ministry), between the old and new covenants (the basis of ministry), and between the old and new sacrifices (the function of ministry).”⁵²⁵ He adds:

Whereas the old High Priest entered the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle once a year, on the Day of Atonement, bearing sacrificial blood, Jesus has now entered the heavenly sanctuary, where God is, bearing his own blood, the evidence of a sacrifice that does not need to be repeated, and which does away with sin once and for all (9:26). The result is a whole ‘new covenant’: that is, the relationship between God and his people has been placed on a wholly different footing.⁵²⁶

Stott points out four ways in which Jesus overcomes the limitations of the “first covenant,” namely in the sphere of the sacrifice, the nature of the sacrifice, the uniqueness of the sacrifice, and the achievement of the sacrifice.⁵²⁷ With regard to the sphere of the sacrifice, he argues that the author of Hebrews lays emphasis on the fact that it is moral and not ceremonial. Whereas the old sacrifices were focused on the outward behavior of people, “but what is needed is a sacrifice able to ‘clear the conscience of the worshiper’ (9:9)—that is, to bring about real, personal and inner transformation.”⁵²⁸

With regard to the nature of the sacrifice, Stott writes: “It is not earthly, but heavenly. Jesus died on earth, but in fact he ‘offered himself unblemished to God through the eternal Spirit’ (9:14).”⁵²⁹ The sacrifice was perfect (Heb 8:26; 10:4). It was also

⁵²⁵Stott, *Men with a Message*, 112. Most of the discussion in this section will be from his comments on the Letter to the Hebrews found in this book unless otherwise indicated.

⁵²⁶Ibid.

⁵²⁷Ibid., 113-114.

⁵²⁸Ibid., 113.

⁵²⁹Ibid.

spiritual. Stott writes:

“Through the eternal Spirit” (9:14) probably means that Jesus offered himself in perfect spiritual harmony with God, anointed by the Spirit for his travail with sin and death. This means that by his sacrifice he has been able to ‘purify’ the heavenly sanctuary (9:23), that is to say, he has made it possible for sinners to draw near to God without defiling the sanctuary where he dwells.⁵³⁰

Stott notes that though the sacrifice was perfect and spiritual, the most basic point is that it was also vicarious. He writes:

Christ maintained such unblemished spiritual harmony with God, while passing through a full experience of temptation and trial, sin, and death, that he has been able to ‘take away the sins of many’ (9:28). Hebrews does not reveal how precisely the death of Christ is effective in making him a ‘source of eternal salvation’ (5:9) for others. But 9:28 clearly pictures his death as a vicarious sacrifice, bearing the sins of others, drawing on the prophecy of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53 (especially verse 11), and possibly also the ritual of the ‘scapegoat’ on the Day of Atonement. In the latter, the priest had to confess the sins of Israel, laying his hands on the head of the goat, and then the animal was banished into the desert, to ‘carry on itself all their sins’ (Lev 16:22).⁵³¹

With regard to the uniqueness of the sacrifice of Christ, Stott argues that “it is single, not repeated.”⁵³² He also observes that the writer of Hebrews contrasts “the one, unique, and unrepeatable sacrifice of Christ and the repeated sacrifices both of the annual Day of Atonement and of the daily Temple rituals.”⁵³³ Writing in the context of a discussion of the relationship between the cross and the Eucharist, and in opposition to the position that advocates a prolongation of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross into His heavenly ministry, he argues that the New Testament does not represent Christ as

⁵³⁰Ibid.

⁵³¹Ibid.

⁵³²Ibid., 114.

⁵³³Ibid.

eternally offering Himself to the Father.⁵³⁴ According to the teachings of Christ and His disciples, the climax of Jesus's incarnation and ministry was the giving of His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). Stott argues:

It is this historical act, involving his death for our sins, which Scripture calls his sin-bearing sacrifice and which was finished once for all. Not only can it not be repeated, but it cannot be extended or prolonged. 'It is finished,' he cried. That is why Christ does not have his altar in heaven, but only his throne. On it he sits, reigning, his atoning work done, and intercedes for us on the basis of what has been done and finished.⁵³⁵

Stott is careful to connect Christ's high priestly ministry to His divinity, righteous character, and propitiatory death on the cross. He writes:

Thus, the Father's provision for the sinning Christian is in his Son, who possesses a threefold qualification: his righteous character, his propitiatory death and his heavenly advocacy. Each depends on the others. He could not be our advocate in heaven today if he had not died to be the propitiation for our sins; and his propitiation would not have been effective if in his life and character he had not been Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.⁵³⁶

Nevertheless, Stott's emphasis is the achievement of the cross. For him, as for most evangelical scholars, the atonement was finished on the cross. The heavenly sanctuary ministry does not seem to have any real purpose that was not already achieved on the cross. He has also written elsewhere in his comment on Gal 3:1:

The force of the perfect tense of the participle (*estaurōmenos*) is that Christ's work was completed on the cross, and that the benefits of His crucifixion are for ever fresh, valid and available. Sinners may be justified before God and by God, not because of any works of their own, but because of the atoning work of Christ; not because of anything that they have done or could do, but because of what Christ did once, when He died.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 267.

⁵³⁵Ibid., 267-268.

⁵³⁶Stott, *The Epistles of John*, 89.

⁵³⁷Stott, *Message of Galatians*, 70. Emphasizing the same point, he wrote further that "the gospel is Christ crucified, His finished work on the cross." Ibid. See also 74-75, where he refers to Christ's

Stott brings the point home even more clearly when he writes:

Although his work of atonement has been accomplished [by his sacrifice on the cross], he still has a continuing heavenly ministry, however. This is not to ‘offer’ his sacrifice to God, since the offering was made once for all on the cross; nor to ‘present’ it to the Father, pleading that it may be accepted, since its acceptance was publicly demonstrated by the resurrection; but rather to ‘intercede’ for sinners on the basis of it, as our advocate.⁵³⁸

It is also evident from the arguments above that Stott distinguishes the work of the high priestly intercession in the heavenly sanctuary from the work of atonement, which he argues was completed on the cross. His views contrast sharply with the view of those like Donald Baillie who argued that the divine sin-bearing was not confined to one moment of time, but that there is ““an eternal atonement in the very being and life of God,””⁵³⁹ of which the cross was the incarnate part. In response to his own (Stott’s) rhetorical question, “Could Christ not be continuously offering in heaven, however, the sacrifice which he made once-for-all on earth?” his response is, “No. Eternal priesthood does not necessitate eternal sacrifice.”⁵⁴⁰

With regard to the achievement of the sacrifice, Stott argues:

It is permanent, not passing. Whereas the old sacrifices gave temporary, external purity, the sacrifice of Jesus prepares us to follow him into the sanctuary itself. He is not just our representative but also our forerunner (6:20). . . . Just as Aaron was prepared for his annual admission to the Most Holy Place, so we too have been prepared for entry, and stand on the threshold, waiting for the ‘Day’ to dawn when we may follow ‘our great High Priest’ through the veil (10:19-25).⁵⁴¹

sacrificial death on the cross as a “finished work.”

⁵³⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 263.

⁵³⁹Donald Baillie, *God Was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (New York: Scribner’s, 1948), 6, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 268.

⁵⁴⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 268. Stott also refers to the cross as “a once-for-all historical event, in which God in Christ bore our sins and died our death because of his love and justice.” *Ibid.*, 329, and *idem*, *Men with a Message*, 114.

⁵⁴¹Stott, *Men with a Message*, 114.

Exactly what it means for us to follow Jesus “our great High Priest” into the Most Holy Place is not clear. It is thus very evident that Stott’s emphasis is on the uniqueness, effectiveness, and the finality of the atonement effected by Christ on the cross which cannot be repeated. He has not written much on what Christ is doing in the heavenly sanctuary right now as our “advocate” who is interceding on our behalf.

Summary

The beginning point for Stott is that God must respond to the realities of human sin in a way that is perfectly in agreement with His character. He argues that the only way that God’s “holy love” can be satisfied is for “his holiness to be directed in judgment upon his appointed substitute, in order that his love may be directed towards us in forgiveness.”⁵⁴² In that case, the substitute bears the penalty so that the sinners may receive the pardon.⁵⁴³ However, Jesus Christ, our substitute, is not an independent third person, but the eternal Son of the Father who is one with the Father in His essential being. Therefore, we do not have three independent actors in the drama of the cross but two, ourselves on the one hand, and God on the other. However, it is “not God as he is in himself (the Father), but God nevertheless, God-made-man-in-Christ (the Son)”⁵⁴⁴ who is involved in the great work of atonement on the cross.

Stott argues further that in giving His Son, the Father was giving Himself. It is the “Judge himself who in holy love assumed the role of the innocent victim, for in and

⁵⁴²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 158.

⁵⁴³Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴Ibid. He cites such NT passages as John 3:16; Rom 8:32 and 5:10.

through the person of his Son he himself bore the penalty which he himself inflicted.”⁵⁴⁵ This is made possible through the mysterious unity of the Father and the Son.⁵⁴⁶ In this divine display of unfathomable love, in order to save us while being true to Himself, “God through Christ substituted himself for us” and “divine love triumphed over divine wrath by divine self-sacrifice.”⁵⁴⁷ He posits that “the cross was an act simultaneously of punishment and amnesty, severity and grace, justice and mercy.”⁵⁴⁸

He notes that substitutionary atonement is not immoral “since the substitute for the law-breakers is none other than the divine Lawmaker himself.”⁵⁴⁹ He rejects notions of mechanical transaction since “the sacrifice of love is the most personal of all actions.”⁵⁵⁰ Further, he rejects the notion of mere external change of legal status “since those who see God’s love there, and are united to Christ by his Spirit, become radically transformed in outlook and character.”⁵⁵¹

With regard to the heavenly high priesthood of Jesus, Stott argues that Jesus offers atonement to believers in the sense that He “is still the propitiation, not because in any sense he continues to offer His sacrifice, but because His one sacrifice once offered has an eternal virtue which is effective today in those who believe.”⁵⁵² Thus, Stott’s main

⁵⁴⁵Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶Ibid., 159. Stott quotes R. Dale thus: “The mysterious unity of the Father and the Son rendered it possible for God at once to endure and inflict penal suffering.” Dale, *The Atonement*, 393.

⁵⁴⁷Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 159.

⁵⁴⁸Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵⁵¹Ibid.

⁵⁵²Stott, *The Epistles of John*, 84.

emphasis is on the achievement of the cross. His thoughts on the high priestly heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ are apparently not well developed.

In light of the foregoing, Stott rejects any explanations of the death of Christ “which does not have at its center the principle of ‘satisfaction through substitution’” or what he referred to as “divine self-satisfaction through divine self-substitution.”⁵⁵³ While agreeing that the theological words “satisfaction” and “substitution” need to be carefully defined and safeguarded, he insists that they cannot be given up under any circumstances, for he asserts that “the biblical gospel of atonement is of God satisfying himself by substituting himself for us.”⁵⁵⁴ He summarizes his understanding of atonement thus:

The concept of substitution may be said, then, to lie at the heart of both sin and salvation. For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives which belong to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to man alone.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 159.

⁵⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 159-160.

⁵⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 160.

CHAPTER IV

THE ATONEMENT THEOLOGY OF ELLEN G. WHITE

This chapter examines the atonement theology of Ellen White. It begins with a discussion of her assumptions and presuppositions and proceeds to a discussion of her methodology. The central focus of the discussion of her methodology is the great controversy theme which is White's unique contribution to Christian theology. Next, her view on the centrality of the cross and her understanding of substitutionary atonement are discussed. The achievement of the cross and the scope of atonement are presented next, followed by the high priestly ministry of Jesus Christ and the judgment phase of atonement. Finally, a summary of her theology of atonement is presented.

Ellen White and Her Writings

Ellen G. White was one of the several founding personalities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Other prominent leaders include her husband James White and former sea captain Joseph Bates.¹ It has been asserted that she may be the most translated woman writer in the entire history of literature and the most translated American author of either gender. Seventh-day Adventists believe that White is more than a gifted writer. They believe that she is a prophet appointed by God as a special messenger to draw the world's

¹Herbert Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White* (Nampa: Pacific Press, 1998), 182-190; George R. Knight, *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004).

attention to the Holy Scriptures and help prepare people for the second coming of Jesus.² From the time she was seventeen until she died seventy years later, she received approximately 2,000 visions and dreams and wrote close to 100,000 pages and numerous books and articles.³

Though the Seventh-day Adventist Church fully supports the Reformation principle of *sola Scriptura* as the infallible standard of belief and practice, it also receives Ellen White's writings as "a secondary authoritative source of doctrinal truth," subject to Scripture, that provide the church with guidance and instruction.⁴ Her popular book *Steps to Christ* has been translated into more than 144 languages and has sold more than 15 million copies. Her greatest work is the five-volume Conflict of the Ages Series, which details the great controversy between Christ and Satan from the origin of sin until its eradication from the universe.⁵

White suffered a severe accident at the age of nine on her way home from school when a classmate threw a stone that hit her on the face, which resulted in a broken nose and concussion and made her unconscious for three weeks.⁶ The accident and subsequent

²E. White, "A Messenger," *Review and Herald*, July 26, 1906, 8.

³Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: Woman of Vision*, v. See also Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 108. Her literary output by the time of her death included twenty-four books in current circulation, two book manuscripts ready for publication, 5,000 periodical articles in the journals of the church; 200 or more out-of-print tracts and pamphlets; 6,000 typewritten manuscript documents consisting of letters and general manuscripts, aggregating approximately 35,000 typewritten pages; 2,000 handwritten letters and documents and diaries, journals, et cetera, when copied comprising 15,000 typewritten pages. See Don F. Neufeld, ed. *SDA Encyclopedia*, 2nd rev., 1996 ed., s.v. "Ellen G. White."

⁴*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 216; Fortin, 131.

⁵*Seventh-day Adventists Believe*, 226. See also Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White: Woman of Vision*, 5. The books in the Conflict of the Ages Series are *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890); *The Desire of Ages* (1898); *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (1911); *The Acts of the Apostles* (1911); *Prophets and Kings* (1917), published posthumously after her death in 1915.

⁶E. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1915), 17-19.

illness meant the end of her formal education.⁷ White's parents and family (the Harmons) were members of the Methodist Church until the time they accepted William Miller's views⁸ on the second advent after they listened to his lectures in Portland, Maine. Due to their acceptance of Miller's views, Ellen, her parents, and others were disfellowshipped from the Portland Methodist Church.⁹ She was deeply affected by the Millerite disappointment of October 1844, and, along with others, she sought God earnestly for light and guidance in the subsequent time of perplexity.¹⁰

In December 1844, White experienced her first vision during a ladies morning prayer meeting.¹¹ In the following years, she claimed that God spoke to her in a unique way through dreams and visions. In August 1846, she married James White, an Adventist preacher, and thereafter became known as Ellen G. White. In July 1851 James White published Ellen's first pamphlet of sixty-four pages, entitled *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White*. This was followed in 1854 by a forty-eight-page supplement. Both of these now form a part of the book *Early Writings*.

⁷Ibid., 19.

⁸William Miller, a Baptist lay-preacher, became convinced through a personal study of the Bible, especially the prophecy of Daniel that the second coming of Christ would occur in 1843. In 1831 he began giving public lectures. Soon others joined him and between 1840 and 1844 an interdenominational movement known as the Millerite movement flourished particularly in the United States. This development gave rise to a group of denominations classed as Adventist bodies, the largest of which, after 1844, developed into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For more information on William Miller and the Millerite movement, see *SDA Encyclopedia*, 2nd rev., 1996 ed., s.v. "William Miller," and "Millerite Movement," and *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book*, 1962 ed., s.v. "William Miller," and "Millerites."

⁹E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 9 vols. (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1948), 1:9-44. The *Testimonies* were originally published between 1855 and 1909. See also *SDA Encyclopedia*, 2nd rev., 1996 ed., s.v. "Ellen G. White."

¹⁰E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:45-58.

¹¹Ibid., 1:58-61; idem, *Early Writings* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945), 13-19, first published in 1882.

Fortin has argued that though White is not a trained theologian as it is usually understood, nevertheless, “she is an independent theological thinker in her own right, guided by the Holy Spirit.”¹² Richard Hammill has underlined the crucial role of Ellen White in the theological development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when he asserted that “although she never held an official position, was not an ordained minister, . . . [yet] her influence shaped the Seventh-day Adventist Church more than any other factor except the Holy Bible.”¹³ George R. Knight has referred to her as “undoubtedly the most influential Seventh-day Adventist in the history of the church.”¹⁴

It must be pointed out that White professed a very high regard for the Bible and held that her writings should be tested by faithfulness to the biblical norm.¹⁵ She argues that the canon of Scripture closed with the New Testament¹⁶ and that while her writings are given for the edification of the church, they do not form a part of the canon of

¹²Denis Fortin, “The Cross of Christ: Theological Differences between Joseph H. Waggoner and Ellen G. White,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 131.

¹³Richard Hammill, “Spiritual Gifts in the Church Today,” *Ministry*, July 1982, 17. Ingemar Linden has noted that “without her guidance and counsel the insignificant and individualistic group might very well have disappeared already in the 1840s” (*The Last Trump: An Historical-Genetical Study of Some Important Chapters in the Making and Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church* [Las Vegas, NV: Peter Lang, 1978], 280).

¹⁴George R. Knight, *Meeting Ellen White: A Fresh Look at Her Life, Writings, and Major Themes* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1996), 7. Herbert Douglass noted that “the ministry of Ellen White and the emergence of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are inseparable” and that “to try to understand one without the other would make each unintelligible and undiscoverable” (*Messenger of the Lord*, 182). See also Roy E. Graham, *Ellen G. White*, 29-33; 69-109, where he discusses her influence on and contributions to the church’s organization structure, publishing, health and educational ministries and Seventh-day Adventist theology.

¹⁵E. White, “A Missionary Appeal,” *Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885, 2. She wrote: “The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union.” *Ibid.*

¹⁶E. White, *The Great Controversy between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), v-xii. She wrote: “In like manner, after the close of the canon of the Scripture, the Holy Spirit was still to continue its work, to enlighten, warn, and comfort the children of God.” Subsequent references to this book will be to the 1911 edition, except where otherwise specified.

Scripture but are “a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light.”¹⁷ In view of the acknowledged unique and pivotal contributions of White to the development and growth of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the development of its doctrinal foundations, it remains to be demonstrated what a critical study of her theological writings on atonement will reveal.

Assumptions, Presuppositions and Methodology

According to Woodrow Whidden, some of the formative influences on White’s theological system include the following: (a) the fervent Methodism of her childhood and conversion, (b) Millerite Adventism with its rational, common sense, fervently pietistic (and inherently perfectionistic) scriptural hermeneutic, (c) health reform writers of the day, (d) Protestant writers who primarily reflected the evangelical ethos of nineteenth-century America, and (e) Seventh-day Adventist writers such as Uriah Smith, J. N. Andrews, S. N. Haskell, and her husband, James White.¹⁸

Critical biblical studies or evolutionary philosophy made no inroads into White’s theological thoughts.¹⁹ In the book *Education*, White strongly countered the long-ages

¹⁷E. White, “An Open Letter from Mrs. E. G. White to All Who Love the Blessed Hope,” *Review and Herald*, January 20, 1903, 15.

¹⁸Woodrow Whidden III, “The Soteriology of Ellen G. White: The Persistent Path to Perfection, 1836-1902” (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1989), 92-93. See also Malcolm Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007), 101, where they argue that “the most important influences on the formation of Adventist theology were Millerism, Seventh-day Baptism, the Christian Connection, and Methodism.” In fact, Bull and Lockhart correctly point out that Methodism was so dominant in White’s theology that that fact is even reflected in her theological vocabulary. See Bull and Lockart, 102. See also George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 29-37.

¹⁹Whidden, 94.

geological theory.²⁰ She also vehemently opposed the pantheistic teachings of John Harvey Kellogg, which she believed will undermine faith in Seventh-day Adventist teachings.²¹ Whidden argues that her world was that of fervent, pre-critical Protestantism which was largely untainted by contemporary philosophies such as Darwinism, Spencerism, Transcendentalism, and Empiricism.²²

Whidden further points out that Ellen White felt that the human mind was incapable of perceiving God or His will independent of supernatural revelation and illumination by the Holy Spirit. However she had an optimistic view of what humanity could accomplish under direct divine work on the mind.²³ Whidden also argues that while there was a move towards a more Lutheran understanding of justification, the move always carried with it the sanctificationist emphasis of her American revivalistic background in both holiness/Methodism and Millerism.²⁴

In view of the fact that one's presuppositions in such doctrines as the nature of God, the status of the law, the human condition, Christ, and the Old Testament sacrificial system determines one's theology to a large extent, a proper understanding of the atonement theology of White demands an examination of her presuppositions, assumptions, and methodology.

²⁰E. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 129-130.

²¹R. W. Schwarz, *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1970), 174-192; White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958), 1:193-200.

²²Whidden, 94. Aspects of the pre-critical Protestantism of White's world include the Radical Reformation, Restorationism, and Puritanism. See Knight, *Search for Identity*, 30-35.

²³Whidden, 94, n. 2.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 96.

Assumptions and Presuppositions

Writing with reference to Wesley's understanding and practice of theology, Randy L. Maddox has argued that "the defining task of 'real' theologians was neither developing an elaborate System of Christian truth-claims nor defending these claims to their 'cultured despisers'; it was nurturing and shaping the worldview that frames the temperament and practice of believers' lives in the world."²⁵ Maddox adds that "the quintessential practitioner of theology was not the detached academic theologian," but "the pastor/theologian who was actively shepherding Christian disciples in the world."²⁶

In his discussion of theology as a practical discipline, he stated: "What gives consistency (if there is any) to particular theological traditions within a religion are not unchanging doctrinal summaries, or a theoretical Idea from which all truth is deduced or given order in a System; it is instead a basic orienting perspective or metaphor that guides their various particular theological activities."²⁷ Maddox's argument is relevant in the case of the discussion of the theological thought of White. Though not a theologian in the usual sense,²⁸ she is evidently a pastor/theologian who has a central theological theme that binds all her writings together into a coherent theological system.

However, one must take note that White's writings are not in the form of an organized scheme that could be regarded as constituting a theology in the usual sense. Her writings, especially in the early years of her ministry, were addressed either to individuals, churches, or institutions. In order to discover her underlying theological

²⁵Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 17.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 18.

²⁸Douglass, *The Messenger of the Lord*, 259.

system, it is necessary to gather her statements on particular theological issues or themes. Like Stott, White's central theological concept is the cross of Christ but she utilizes the theme of God's love as it is played out in the Great Controversy theme as its organizing concept. Her adoption of the theme of God's love as it is worked out within the cosmic conflict motif between God and Satan has far reaching implications for her thoughts on atonement. Let us first look at the theme of God's love.

The Love of God

The foundational theme of White's theology appears to be God's love for humanity, which is demonstrated in the life of Christ and especially in His death in our stead on Calvary. White argues, "What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. . . . He made known in his words, his character, his power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God."²⁹ God's love is one of the most important divine attributes that Christ has made known to humans. She writes that it was God's eternal "redeeming love" that "induced Christ to leave His honor and majesty in heaven, and come to a sinful world, to be neglected, despised, and rejected by those He came to save, and finally to suffer upon the cross."³⁰ George R. Knight has correctly pointed out that "perhaps the central and most comprehensive theme in the writings of Ellen White is that of the love of God."³¹

White's emphasis on the theme of God's love is illustrated at very strategic

²⁹E. White, MS 77, 1899, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, quoted in "Manifestation of the Father-White Comments on John 1:18," *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976-80), 5:1131.

³⁰E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:207.

³¹George R. Knight, *Meeting Ellen White: A Fresh Look at Her Life, Writings, and Major Themes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996), 109, 110. See also Fortin, "The Cross of Christ," 135.

portions of her writings. It is very significant that the phrase “God is love” is the first three words in the first volume of the Conflict of the Ages Series (*Patriarchs and Prophets*) and the last three words of the final volume of the series (*The Great Controversy*).³² Knight argues that the reason why she puts so much emphasis on God’s love is that she views God’s love as the central point of the great controversy between good and evil. It is evident that, for her, the phrase “God is love” provides the context for the depiction of the great controversy story.³³ Thus she links the theme of God’s love with the theme of the great controversy, another major theme in her theological writings.

Another significant illustration of the centrality of the theme of God’s love in White’s writings is that a discussion of that crucial topic provides the content of the first chapter (“God’s Love for Man”) of one of her greatest Christological books, *Steps to Christ*.³⁴ Her opening words in that book are “Nature and revelation alike testify of God’s love.”³⁵ She adds that nature speaks “to us of the Creator’s love” and that, in spite of the presence of sin, the message of God’s love still shines through. She asserts that “‘God is love’ is written upon every opening bud, upon every spire of springing grass.”³⁶

But due to the effects of sin, “the things of nature” “but imperfectly represent His love.”³⁷ The clearest and supreme illustration of God’s love for humanity is embodied in

³²E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1890), 33; idem, *Great Controversy*, 678.

³³Knight, *Meeting Ellen White*, 110.

³⁴E. White, *Steps to Christ* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1892), 9-15.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 9.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 9-10.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 10.

Jesus Christ, whom the Father sent to be our Savior from sin.³⁸ Commenting on what the Father has done in sending Jesus to redeem us from the stranglehold of sin, she concludes the first chapter of her classic on salvation by asserting that “such love is without a parallel.”³⁹ Thus, the fact that White uplifts the love of God first, last, and all through her writings proves beyond any doubt the centrality of the theme of God’s love in her theology.⁴⁰ It is evident that the theme of the love of God is the foundation for the other themes in her theological writings.⁴¹

The Great Controversy Theme

A second theme that undergirds White’s theology is the cosmic conflict between God and Satan, which she generally refers to as the “great controversy.” She claims divine revelation as the source of this theme.⁴² This focuses on the struggle between Christ and Satan and builds upon the theme of God’s love. In White’s view, the focal point of the great controversy is Satan’s attempt to misrepresent the loving character of God so that humans may look upon God with fear and think of Him as severe and unforgiving.⁴³

This theme is regarded by some as a unique contribution of White to Christian

³⁸E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 10-13.

³⁹Ibid., 15. In another book in the Conflict of the Ages Series, *Desire of Ages*, she points out right in the first paragraph that Jesus, as Immanuel, “came to reveal the light of God’s love” (19). On the next page, she writes, “In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which ‘seeketh not her own’ has its source in the heart of God” (20). Her conclusion on the last page of the book is that through Christ, “love has conquered” (835).

⁴⁰Knight, *Meeting Ellen White*, 111.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²E. White, *The Great Controversy*, x, xii.

⁴³E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 10-11.

theology. Indeed, many scholars of White have identified the great controversy theme as a unifying principle of her writings. Herbert Douglass has noted that this theme “provided a coherent framework for her theological thought as well as for her principles in education, health, missiology, social issues, and environmental topics.”⁴⁴ Also, Joseph Battistone identifies the theme of “the great controversy between Christ and Satan” as being central to White’s theological writings.⁴⁵ Another important scholar who has written extensively on White’s contributions to Adventist theology is Knight. He identifies the “grand central theme” of White’s writings that would help us to have a broad understanding of her writings as “the great controversy between good and evil” and “the cross of Christ.”⁴⁶

Battistone notes that the history of the literary and theological development of the great controversy theme was a gradual one that involves amplification and revision over a period of fifty-seven years. In the light of the gradual development of the great controversy theme, it is clear that a view of mechanical inspiration does not fit White’s writings.⁴⁷ The theme first appeared in 1858 in volume one of *Spiritual Gifts* and was expanded into a four-volume series by 1864. The second stage appears in another four-volume work, the *Spirit of Prophecy* (1870-1884). In this series, the great controversy is

⁴⁴Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 256. See also Gil Gutierrez Fernández, “Ellen G. White: The Doctrine of the Person of Christ” (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1978), 4, where he notes that the great controversy theme “runs as a golden thread through her writings and underlies her view of the entire historical process.” For an extended discussion of the great controversy, see Frank B. Holbrook, “The Great Controversy,” in Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 969-1009.

⁴⁵Joseph Battistone, *The Great Controversy Theme in E. G. White Writings* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1978), iii.

⁴⁶George R. Knight, *Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997), 49, 50. See also his *Meeting Ellen White: A Fresh Look at Her Life, Writings, and Major Themes* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996), 109-127.

⁴⁷Battistone, v.

more fully developed and the material is presented in a chronological scheme. The third and final stage is the Conflict of the Ages series, which includes *Patriarchs and Prophets*, *Prophets and Kings*, *Desire of Ages*, *Acts of the Apostles*, and *The Great Controversy*.

White explains the great controversy theme with the biblical narrative from Genesis to Revelation⁴⁸ and depicts the great controversy theme as the conceptual “key” for the understanding of the theological and philosophical questions confronting humanity today. She has written extensively on the theme, and a few examples are given here. In a chapter entitled “Bible Reading and Study” in the book *Education*, she presents what she considers a *sine qua non* for the faithful student of Scripture. She writes:

The student [of the Bible] should learn to view the word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God’s original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found.⁴⁹

Thus the great controversy theme provides the background for our understanding of the development of evil, specifically, how Lucifer (Satan) rebelled against God’s government. Satan’s core argument is that God cannot be trusted, that His law is severe and unfair, and by implication, that the Lawgiver is unfair, severe, and tyrannical and that the law needs to be changed.⁵⁰

What Satan began in heaven he has also continued on earth. She writes that

⁴⁸E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 761-763.

⁴⁹E. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903), 190.

⁵⁰E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 69; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 24; idem, “The Government of

“though he (Satan) was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth” in order “to deceive men, and thus lead them to transgress God’s law.”⁵¹ It must be pointed out, however, that in White’s thoughts, there is no real distinction between God’s character and the principle that lies at the core of the law of God. Divine love is at the heart of God’s law and is what defines God’s character.⁵² Therefore in White’s view, Satan’s intent in the great controversy is to discredit the love of God in all its manifestations. God’s demonstration of His love in the ongoing conflict with Satan forms the focus of the five-volume Conflict of the Ages Series and also provides the theological foundation for her other theological writings.

It is noteworthy to point out that the concluding paragraph of *The Great Controversy* ties the themes of God’s love and great controversy together into a harmonious whole. She writes:

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.⁵³

It is evident from the discussion above that the great controversy theme is an underlying presupposition in White’s theological writings. The concept of God’s love in interplay with the great controversy theme leads to another theme that permeates White’s writings and links all the various themes together, that is, what God has done and is still doing

God,” *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1886, 145, 146.

⁵¹E. White, *The Great Controversy*, 582.

⁵²E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 33; idem, *Steps to Christ*, 11; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 24, 26.

⁵³E. White, *Great Controversy*, 678.

through Jesus due to His unrelenting love for His sinful creatures, in order to reconcile them to Himself and bring an end to sin.

God and the Forgiveness of Human Sin

The center of White's theological thought is the divine soteriological initiative in sending Jesus Christ to redeem human beings from the stranglehold of satanic deception and power because of His love for us. As Whidden has argued, "Her work was always to exalt the goodness of God and to expose the lies of Satan in the practical, evangelistic interest of saving the lost."⁵⁴ God's strategy to counter Satan's malicious designs involves the setting in motion of the plan of redemption. In light of the fall, Jesus, the Son of God, chose to come to the rescue of humanity. White argues that "the broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner."⁵⁵ But "since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, [and] only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression,"⁵⁶ Christ chose to take "upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin—sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son"⁵⁷ in order to save humanity from the consequence of sin which is eternal death. Moreover, the divine law demanded perfect obedience which humans cannot render. Christ rendered the demanded perfect obedience for all who have faith in Him.⁵⁸

Thus in order to effect the atonement, Jesus gave up the purity, peace, joy, and

⁵⁴Whidden, 106.

⁵⁵E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 63.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸E. White, *Education*, 112. She writes that "the life of Christ is a perfect fulfillment of every precept of [God's] law." Ibid. See also idem, *Acts of the Apostles*, 425; idem, *Christ Object Lessons*, 391.

glory of heaven and took on the sorrow, shame, and death resulting from human sin. As our “substitute and surety,” “He was to stand between the sinner and the penalty of sin.”⁵⁹ Therefore, at the end of His earthly ministry, Christ “must die the cruelest of deaths, lifted up between the heavens and the earth as a guilty sinner. . . . He must endure anguish of soul, the hiding of His Father’s face, while the guilt of transgression—the weight of the sins of the whole world—should be upon Him.”⁶⁰ White views the cross as the means by which Christ transfers human guilt to Himself.⁶¹ No angel could have done this; “only He who created man had power to redeem him.”⁶² Therefore the identity of the Redeemer who has chosen to become our Substitute is very important in White’s theology of atonement.

The Gravity of Sin

White has defined sin as both acts of transgressing the law of God⁶³ and a condition of depravity that involves what she calls “the propensities of sin,” “inherent propensities of disobedience,” “inclinations,” or a natural “bent to evil.”⁶⁴ She states that “there is in his [human] nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided,” human beings

⁵⁹E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 64.

⁶⁰Ibid. See also E. White, “The Plan of Redemption,” *Signs of the Times*, November 4, 1908, 15-17.

⁶¹E. White, MS 84a, 1897, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, quoted in *Questions on Doctrine*, 666.

⁶²E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 64-65.

⁶³E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:320.

⁶⁴E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 52-62; idem, “Divine-Human Saviour--White Comments on John 1:1-3, 14,” *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. Francis D. Nichol (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1976-80), 5:1128; idem, *Education*, 29, and idem, *In Heavenly Places* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1967), 195. See also G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 235-322.

cannot resist.⁶⁵ Due to Adam's sin, "his posterity was born with inherent propensities of disobedience."⁶⁶ In a letter written originally in 1887, she writes that "bad habits are more easily formed than good habits, and the bad habits are given up with more difficulty. The natural depravity of the heart accounts for this well-known fact."⁶⁷ Her understanding of sinfulness embraces both the needs of the repentant sinner at the beginning of the Christian life and also the experience of the cooperating believer through life. She writes: "We must remember that our hearts are naturally depraved, and we are unable of ourselves to pursue a right course. It is only by the grace of God, combined with the most earnest effort on our part, that we can gain the victory."⁶⁸

White's position on the issue of human depravity and freewill is very close to the Wesleyan/Arminian tradition and is probably better expressed as "free grace" that emanates from the prevenient saving grace of God. She states that when sin entered the world, the will of humanity became enslaved to sin⁶⁹ and "through the will . . . sin retains its hold upon us."⁷⁰ Thus there is no power in the "unaided human will" to oppose sin, but through Jesus Christ the will of the human being is freed.⁷¹ Thus without divine help,

⁶⁵E. White, *Education*, 29.

⁶⁶E. White, "Divine-Human Saviour," *SDA Bible Commentary*, 5:1128.

⁶⁷E. White, *In Heavenly Places*, 195, 196, originally a letter from White to Brother Covert and the Indiana Conference, September 27, 1887, Letter 26d, 1887, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. See also idem, *Selected Messages*, 1:310, which appeared originally as an article, "A Divine Sin Bearer," *Signs of the Times*, September 30, 1903, 1.

⁶⁸E. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 29.

⁶⁹E. White, "The Love of God," *Signs of the Times*, November 19, 1896, 5.

⁷⁰E. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1896), 61.

⁷¹E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 48. She writes, "By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast." Ibid. See also p. 18; idem, *Testimonies*, 8:292.

human beings have no power to overcome sin.

Original sin

Though White agrees with the Reformers on the radical nature of human depravity, she does not subscribe to the doctrine of original sin as traditionally understood. She writes, “Sin is a tremendous evil. Through sin the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted. Sin has degraded the faculties of the soul. Temptations from without find an answering chord within the heart, and the feet turn imperceptibly toward evil.”⁷² Several Seventh-day Adventist theologians argue that though White agrees with the idea of an inherent natural depravity of humanity, she does not teach that humans inherit guilt from Adam.⁷³

In Christian thought, “original sin” is the theological designation for the state or condition of universal sinfulness in which mankind is found as the result of Adam’s sin.⁷⁴ For John Calvin, original sin is the “hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God’s wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls ‘works of the flesh (Gal 5:19).’”⁷⁵

⁷²E. White, *Testimonies*, 8:312; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 53. See also her “The Sinner’s Hope,” *Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1900, 1-2; *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 158-161, “Self Love or Self-Sacrifice,” *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1908, 8.

⁷³E. White to Brother Covert and the Indiana Conference, quoted in E. White, *Heavenly Places*, 195. See also idem, *Testimonies*, 8:312; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 53. See Edwin H. Zackrisson, “Seventh-day Adventists and Original Sin: A Study of the Early Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of the Effect of Adam’s Sin on His Posterity” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1984), especially 414-416; Gerhard Pfandl, “Some Thoughts on Original Sin” (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), 19-20.

⁷⁴See Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997). See also G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, 285-322, and Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 145-153. For other views on original sin, see also John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 201, and Paul King Jewett, “Original Sin and the Fall of Man,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 19 (Fall 1976): 18-30.

⁷⁵John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.1.8.

The traditional Christian understanding of original sin includes the notion of personal moral guilt for Adam's sin that every human being presumably inherits. In the Augustinian view, it is seen as a spiritual infection that in some mysterious way is transmitted through reproduction.⁷⁶

What seems to be the Seventh-day Adventist position on *original sin* is succinctly expressed by Edward Heppenstall when he writes that “the state of sin into which all men are born is called original sin—not in the sense of original guilt, but of an inherited disposition to sin” which goes back to the first parents of the human race.⁷⁷ Heppenstall ascribes the origin of sin to human alienation from God and asserts that “original sin is not per se wrong doing, but wrong being.”⁷⁸ The general consensus of Adventist scholars seems to regard sin as an act (1 John 3:4) and an inherited sinful state (Ps 51:5; Eph 2:3). Unless we are fully surrendered to the Holy Spirit, the sinful nature entices us to commit individual acts of sin.⁷⁹

But while it is true that Seventh-day Adventists generally do not teach that we inherit Adam's guilt, not all Adventist scholars agree on this position. Robert Olson, for example, writes, “We inherit guilt from Adam so that even a baby that dies a day after birth needs a Saviour though the child never committed a sin of his own.”⁸⁰ He bases his

⁷⁶Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 648-656; Donald G. Bloesch, “The Biblical Understanding of Sin,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 1103-1107; Sentis, “Original Sin,” *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, 3:1479-1482; *SDAE* s.v. “Sin.”

⁷⁷Edward Heppenstall, *The Man Who Is God* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1977), 107.

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 122.

⁷⁹*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, 89-90; Pfandl, *Some Thoughts on Original Sin*, 18. See also *SDAE*, s.v. “Sin.”

⁸⁰Robert Olson, “Outline Studies on Christian Perfection and Original Sin,” Insert in *Ministry*, October 1970, 28.

arguments on statements in White's writings. In the first one, she writes thus: "Adam sinned, and the children of Adam share his guilt and its consequences."⁸¹ In the second statement written about ten years later, she writes as follows:

The inheritance of children is that of sin. Sin has separated them from God. . . . As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death. . . . Christ's perfect example and the grace of God are given him to enable him to train his sons and daughters to be sons and daughters of God. It is by teaching them . . . how to give the heart and will up to Christ that Satan's power is broken.⁸²

A. L. Moore and John Wood deny that White teaches inherited guilt. Moore writes: "White's concern appears to relate to the consequences of separation from God and enslavement to Satan—which is inherited from Adam. A cause and effect chain is seen in which sin separates from God and leaves the soul with guilt."⁸³ Thus parents are unable to pass on to their children a nature united to God. But since children are unable to resist the pull of sin from within and without, they inevitably become entangled in sin and guilt.⁸⁴ White's references to inherited sin are generally in the context of individual sinful choices that spring up from inherited depravity.⁸⁵

It should be noted that though the term "original sin" (with its Augustinian/Calvinistic overtones) does not properly describe White's understanding of

⁸¹E. White, "Obedience Is Sanctification," *Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1890, 289-290.

⁸²E. White to Brother and Sister John Wessells, April 10, 1899, Letter 68, 1899 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in E. White, *Child Guidance* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954), 475-476.

⁸³ Arthur Leroy Moore. "Theology in Crisis" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1979), 109. See also John Wood, "The Mighty Opposites: The Atonement of Christ in the Writings of Ellen G. White, Part II," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, ed. Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshar (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1981), 716.

⁸⁴Moore, 109.

⁸⁵Ibid. See also E. White, "Offering of Strange Fire," *Signs of the Times*, July 1, 1880, 289, 290; idem, "Temptation—What Is It?" *Signs of the Times*, May 27, 1897, 5-6; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*,

human depravity,⁸⁶ nevertheless, in her view, the extent of human depravity is such that humans have no ability to originate a saving initiative. However, they are not so depraved that they are totally subject to a deterministic election on the part of the Redeeming God. While sinners cannot initiate their own salvation, they remain free to accept or reject God's offer of the same.⁸⁷ She employs the term "original sin" only once: "At its very source human nature was corrupted. And ever since then sin has continued its hateful work, reaching from mind to mind. Every sin committed awakens the echoes of the original sin."⁸⁸

It should be noted that the article from which the last quote is taken is entitled "The Warfare Between Good and Evil." In the article she discusses the result of human separation from God and self-centered living that originated with Satan and which led to Satan's rebellion against God and His law. She calls on all to exert their "influence," "power," and "talent" on Christ's side for good in the great controversy. "With all their energies human beings are to co-operate with the great Center of infinite love and infinite power" (that is, Jesus Christ) to assert the contemporary validity of God's law.⁸⁹ In context, White's focus was definitely not on the traditional understanding of "original sin," but was rather on her goal of calling Christians to choose to stand on God's side and uphold His law.

118. See also Moore, 112-125.

⁸⁶For a discussion of the different theories of original sin, see Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 648-652.

⁸⁷Whidden, *Soteriology of Ellen G. White*, 129, n. 1.

⁸⁸E. White, "The Warfare between God and Evil," *Review and Herald*, April 16, 1901, 241-242.

⁸⁹Ibid.

White's focus is not so much on Adam's guilt as it is on individual guilt that arises from particular sinful choices. She writes: "It is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrongdoing, but they are not punished for the parents' guilt, except as they participate in their sins. It is usually the case, however, that children walk in the steps of their parents."⁹⁰ Thus, she apparently believes that it is inevitable that the children will participate in the sins of their parents.⁹¹ All human beings are in a "helpless condition" in regard to obedience to the law "unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is our atonement—at-one-ment with God."⁹² It is clear that she believes in the inherent sinful condition of humans.⁹³

Therefore, it is only what originates from the "untainted" nature of the sinless Jesus that has saving merit. Human beings cannot do anything to earn God's favor, and even the Spirit-inspired works of love and obedience have no saving merit.⁹⁴ As a result of our sin and subsequent guilt, what we merit is the wrath of God. The reason is that human beings are responsible to God for the moral choices they make.

Human Moral Responsibility

An important emphasis in White's theology is the significance she attaches to human moral responsibility. Since God is fair, loving, and respectful of His created

⁹⁰E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 306.

⁹¹E. White, Manuscript 122, 1901, "The Law," in *Manuscript Releases*, 21 vols. (Washington, DC: E. G. White Estate, 1981-93), 8:98-100.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:344.

⁹⁴Whidden, *Ellen White on Salvation*, 44.

intelligent beings, He does not coerce, force, intimidate, or deceive them in order to obtain their submission and compliance, neither does He bypass the will.⁹⁵ He appeals to human reason and allows each person to decide for or against His revealed will based on the available evidence and their love for Him.⁹⁶ Because God is willing to wait until the whole evidence regarding Satan’s charges becomes apparent to all creatures, and because He will not force compliance with His will, “the principle of conditionality permeates His relationship with His created intelligences—He waits for people to respond.”⁹⁷

White argues that the divine work of salvation requires certain human conditions beyond mere mental assent to what Christ has already done. Saved people are transformed sinners, and transformation involves human decisions at every stage.⁹⁸ One aspect of the human response to the atonement provided on Calvary is character development. “It is character that decides destiny.”⁹⁹ One reason why character decides destiny is the fact that human beings are responsible beings who have the capacity for spiritual and moral growth.

Created in “the image of God,” human beings are created with freedom to make moral choices. They are not totally depraved and their destiny is not determined by a

⁹⁵E. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 22, 466; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 487, 759; idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1900), 74, 77, 101, 235; idem, *Steps to Christ*, 34; idem, *Mount of Blessing*, 142; idem, *Early Writings*, 221.

⁹⁶E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 43-47; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 458; idem, *Testimonies*, 3:255.

⁹⁷Douglass, *Messenger*, 258.

⁹⁸E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:378; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 535; idem, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 76. In her thought, even the timing of the second coming of Christ is dependent, in some sense, on the preparedness of God’s people to receive “the latter rain” that equips them in implementing the “loud cry” that brings the world to a final decision in the great controversy. See also idem, *Selected Messages* 1:67; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 297, 633-634; idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 69, 121.

⁹⁹E. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 74, and also, 84, 123, 260, 356, 388; idem, *Testimonies to Ministers*, 379, 430, 440-441.

sovereign God who arbitrarily “elects” some to be saved and others to be lost.¹⁰⁰ In view of the fact that human beings are responsible beings, God chooses to communicate with them in thought patterns that they can understand.¹⁰¹ Based on the principle of the incarnation, White writes that “our Saviour took humanity, with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation.”¹⁰² He did this so that humans may know that he identified with them in every way.

White highlights another principle in the fact that because God is love, he eagerly longs for a loving response from humans. Eternal life is promised only to those who choose to forsake their sins and gladly cooperate with the Holy Spirit in reconstructing their habit patterns so that they will love others spontaneously.¹⁰³ God permits the law of cause and effect with all his created beings, including humans, so that all can see the results of both obedience and disobedience to God’s revealed will.¹⁰⁴ The redeemed will be composed of those who have cooperated with God in developing a habitual attitude of love and obedience to God’s will and have demonstrated they can be trusted with eternal life, so that never again will the universe be placed in jeopardy.¹⁰⁵

White argues for the necessity of human cooperation with the divine initiative in the work of atonement. She argues that “everything depends on the right action of the

¹⁰⁰E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 207, 208. For an extended discussion on White’s anthropology, see Moore, *Theology Crisis*, 57-75.

¹⁰¹E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:19-22; idem, *Great Controversy*, v-vii.

¹⁰²E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 117, and also 119, 19, 24, 49; idem, *Ministry of Healing*, 418-419.

¹⁰³E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 672, 675, 678; idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 384.

¹⁰⁴E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 78, 79; idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 84; idem, *Great Controversy*, 28, 35-37, 614; idem, “Inexpressible Joy,” *Signs of the Times*, December 22, 1914, 787, 788.

¹⁰⁵E. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 96, 280, 315, 317.

will.”¹⁰⁶ When the human being yields his/her will to God, “God will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure.”¹⁰⁷ She adds: “By yielding up your will to Christ . . . you will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith.”¹⁰⁸ White does not see God as acting in a deterministic manner in His dealings with sinners,¹⁰⁹ but because the effects of sin are so pervasive, we need God’s saving grace throughout the process of atonement.¹¹⁰

The Wrath of God

In White’s view, God’s wrath is real and was fully incurred by Jesus as He experienced the full divine retributive judgment in our stead. With respect to Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane as our Substitute, she argues: “As man He must suffer the consequences of man’s sin. As man He must endure the wrath of God against transgression.”¹¹¹ She writes further on the enormity of the price Christ paid on the cross: “The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. . . . So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.”¹¹² But she is careful to note the unity of the Father and the Son even during Christ’s ordeal on the cross: “The power that inflicted retributive

¹⁰⁶E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 47.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 47-48; Whidden, *Salvation*, 46.

¹¹¹E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 686. See also idem, “Sufferings of Christ,” *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, August 1, 1892, 234.

¹¹²E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 753.

justice upon man's substitute and surety, was the power that sustained and upheld the suffering One under the tremendous weight of wrath that would have fallen upon a sinful world."¹¹³

White cites some examples of those who suffered the wrath of God due to sins that were not confessed and therefore were not forgiven. These include Ananias and Sapphira who pledged to give the proceeds of the sale of a property to the Lord but reneged and engaged in deception¹¹⁴ and were therefore struck dead in the presence of the Apostles, and King Herod Agrippa I who accepted the kind of praise that is due only to God and was therefore killed by an angel from heaven.¹¹⁵ The pouring out of God's wrath is the result of attachment to sin¹¹⁶ and the rejection of God's word and law. At the time of God's final executive judgment, the divine wrath will be poured out only after Jesus has finished His work in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary.¹¹⁷ In White's thought, the wrath of God is real. Jesus took the divine wrath upon Himself in order that the redeemed saints may not experience it in the time of the final judgment.

Methodology

Though a "quintessential practitioner of theology" as identified by Randy L. Maddox,¹¹⁸ White is not a systematic theologian in the usual sense. Hence a discussion of

¹¹³E. White, MS 35, 1895, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, quoted in *Seventh-day Adventists Answer Questions on Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), Appendix C, 667.

¹¹⁴E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 73.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 151-152.

¹¹⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 638.

¹¹⁷Ibid. See also idem, *Desire of Ages*, 743; idem, *Christian Experience and Teachings*, 100.

¹¹⁸Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 8.

White's theological methodology necessarily involves searching for ideas found scattered amongst her voluminous writings and organizing them in a way consistent with her thought. In discussing her methodology, it is necessary to begin with a discussion of the general hermeneutical principles among the early Seventh-day Adventist leaders because it is evident that those principles informed and guided White's theological understanding and presentation of different themes in her writings.

Having come out of the Millerite movement,¹¹⁹ the early Seventh-day Adventists faced the task of unifying their beliefs both in the areas of prophecy and of doctrine. The process went on from 1844 to 1860 during which the leaders of the embryonic denomination held private Bible studies and numerous conferences. After agreeing on what they considered the core beliefs for their organization, they formally organized themselves in 1860 when they took the name Seventh-day Adventists.¹²⁰ Although none of the early Seventh-day Adventist leaders embarked on the task of formulating a systematic hermeneutic by which scriptural interpretation was arrived at, it is clear that "certain principles were assumed or carried over from their Protestant denominational heritage."¹²¹ These principles became evident as doctrines were adopted and defended against their critics. The hermeneutical methodological principles include the

¹¹⁹For a discussion of the Millerite movement and its hermeneutical principles, see P. Gerard Damsteegt, *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1977), 3-56, and Everett N. Dick, "The Millerite Movement," in *Adventism in America: A History*, ed. Gary Land (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1998), 1-28.

¹²⁰Leroy Edwin Froom, *The Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 77-90; Damsteegt, *Foundations*, 103-164; Godfrey T. Anderson, "Sectarianism and Organization—1846-1864," in *Adventism in America*, 29-52, and Knight, *Search for Identity*, 55-89.

¹²¹Don F. Neufeld, "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement" in *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, ed. Gordon M. Hyde (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Committee, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974), 117.

following:¹²²

1. *Sola Scriptura*. James White (1821- 1881) wrote in the fifth issue of the earliest periodical of the church: “The Bible is our lamp, our guide. It is our rule of faith and practice.”¹²³ In 1851, J. N. Andrews (1829-1883), a prominent early Seventh-day Adventist minister and leader, in a rebuke to Protestants for adopting the Roman Catholic hermeneutic of “the Bible plus tradition,” wrote: “We answer, make the word of God your *only* rule, receive what is written therein, and reject all beside. That the Protestant world now cherish an institution without foundation in Scripture, which was established by the gradual development of the great apostasy, can only be accounted for by the fact that Protestants have adopted the rule of the Romanists in the place of their own.”¹²⁴ White herself writes, “The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience.”¹²⁵

2. *Unity of Scripture*. Early Adventist writings reveal the assumption of the unity of Scripture. Neufeld argues that the assumption of the unity of Scripture “is evident throughout these early Adventist writings, where one part of Scripture is constantly made to explain another,” since “unity of authorship is assumed.”¹²⁶

¹²²Ibid., 109-125.

¹²³James White, “Comments by James White,” *Present Truth*, December 1849, 40, quoted in Don Neufeld, “Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement,” in Hyde, *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, 117. *Present Truth* was the first periodical published by one of the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, James White.

¹²⁴J. N. Andrews, “Is the Bible Sufficient as a Rule of Faith and Practice?” *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1851, 88.

¹²⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, vii.

¹²⁶Neufeld, “Biblical Interpretation,” 118. E. White writes, “I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible” (*Selected Messages*, 1:17). She sees “one grand

3. *Scripture Explains Scripture*. This principle is a corollary of the principle of the unity of Scripture. James White appeals to this principle in an 1851 editorial in which he wrote: “Scripture must explain Scripture, then a harmony may be seen throughout the whole.”¹²⁷

4. *Literary Context*. The words of the Bible must be given their proper meaning.¹²⁸ An unsigned filler in an 1855 issue of the *Review and Herald* states, “To ascertain what any passage says, consider what the words mean, according to their common acceptation and according to their usage elsewhere in the Scriptures; if they have more meanings than one, consider their connection and subject of discourse.”¹²⁹ This rule was later expanded in practice to include the definition of words from the original languages (Greek and Hebrew). Those who were not competent in the original languages employed various translations in order to clarify the meaning of words.

5. *Historical Context*. Attention must be given to the context and historical backgrounds of Bible authors and texts. Leaders of the Advent Movement sought to answer the question “What was the Bible writer speaking about, what was he saying, and what did he mean by what he said?”¹³⁰

golden thread running through the whole” of Scripture. *Ibid.*, 1:20.

¹²⁷James White, “Editorial,” *Review and Herald*, April 7, 1851, quoted in Neufeld, “Biblical Interpretation,” 118. E. White argues that since we cannot obtain a true knowledge of God’s word “without earnest attention and prayerful study,” she suggests that “Scripture must be compared with scripture” by the diligent student of the Word (*Steps to Christ*, 90, 91). See also E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 231-232.

¹²⁸E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:20, 22.

¹²⁹Anonymous, “How to Interpret the Bible,” *Review and Herald*, September 4, 1855, 38. See also E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:20.

¹³⁰Neufeld, “Biblical Interpretation,” 119. E White has written, “The Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations, as God in His providence saw a fitting opportunity to impress man at sundry times and divers places” (*Selected Messages*, 1:19, 20).

6. *Plain Literal Meaning.* The Bible must be interpreted according to the plain, obvious, and literal import unless a symbol is used.¹³¹ This rule was a recurring theme among early Adventists at a time when their detractors were assailing their theological positions. Concerning this principle, J. N. Loughborough (1832-1924) argues against the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, “If words in the Bible are allowed to mean the same as when used in any other book, the doctrine of the immortality of the soul cannot be harmonized with the Bible.”¹³²

7. *Typological Principle.* This refers to the idea that persons, events, or institutions in Old Testament salvation history were designed by God to prefigure their antitypical eschatological fulfillment in Christ and the gospel He brought.¹³³ O. R. L. Crosier has argued that “the law” (laws of the sacrificial system) should be understood as “a simplified model of the great system of redemption” that Jesus initiated at His first advent and completes at the restoration of all things after the millennium.¹³⁴

Having discussed the broad principles of biblical interpretation that undergirded White’s theological thoughts, we can proceed to a discussion of her view of the authority of the Bible. Her view of the authority of Scripture is very foundational for her theological thought.

¹³¹Neufeld, “Biblical Interpretation,” 119-120.

¹³²J. N. Loughborough, “Is the Soul Immortal?” *Review and Herald*, September 4, 1855, 34. Concerning Christ’s explanations of the meaning of Scripture, E. White writes, “Christ reached the people where they were. He presented the plain truth to their minds in the most forcible, simple language” (*Gospel Workers*, 49, 50). E. White asserts that God desires that humans understand “the plain, simple meaning of the Scriptures” (*Great Controversy*, 69).

¹³³Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 83.

¹³⁴O. R. L. Crosier, “The Law of Moses,” *Day Star Extra*, February 7, 1846, 37. See also E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 23; idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 35; and idem, *Acts of the Apostles*, 227-228.

The Authority of the Bible

Within the Seventh-day Adventist church, White is accepted as a prophetess raised up and endorsed by God. Her claim for the authority of what she writes is based on her conviction that she received visions from God. However, such a conviction did not lead her to exalt her writings above the Bible. Roy E. Graham argues that “she stood clearly on the classic Protestant understanding of *Sola Scriptura* in which all other sources of revelation are subordinate to, and under the judgment of Scripture.”¹³⁵

White never entertained the notion that her writings should take the place of the Bible. In a response to the critics who doubted that God revealed His plans and purposes to her in visions and to others who accused her of holding views that are peculiar to spiritualism early in her ministry, she writes,

I recommend to you, dear reader, the word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the ‘last days’; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of his people, and to correct those who err from bible truth.¹³⁶

It is thus evident that early in her ministry (1851), she points to the Bible as the standard of testing the veracity of anyone who may lay claim to the prophetic office. She continued to do this to the end of her ministry. Thus for White, the authority of the Bible comes from its source, that is, God, who has inspired the writers of the Bible. She sees her primary role as that of God’s special messenger to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and her task as that of pointing people to the Bible as the inspired, authoritative Word of

¹³⁵Graham, *Ellen G. White*, 142. See also P. Gerard Damsteegt, “Ellen White on Theology, Its Methods, and the Use of Scripture,” *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 4, no. 2 (1993): 115-136, and Warren S. Ashworth, “The Lesser and the Greater Lights: A Re-examination of the Relationship of the Writings of Ellen White to the Bible,” *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 9, no. 1-2 (1998): 13-23.

¹³⁶E. White, *A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White* (Saratoga Springs, NY: James White, 1851), 64. By “visions” she means her prophetic revelations, ministry, and writings

God. Her objective is to help apply its principles to the experiences of the church and its members in the contemporary world and guide them in preparation for Christ's return.¹³⁷

Many of White's statements reflect her position on the primacy of Scripture. "The Bible is God's voice speaking to us, just as surely as though we could hear it with our ears."¹³⁸ "The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will."¹³⁹ "In our time there is a wide departure from their [the Scriptures'] doctrine and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty."¹⁴⁰ She writes elsewhere that though the Lord has sent us much instruction, "little heed is given to the Bible, and the Lord has given a lesser light to lead men and women to the greater light."¹⁴¹ The "lesser light" refers to her writings and the "greater light" is the Bible, thus underlying her view on the primacy of Scripture. White conceives of her mission as a fulfillment of Bible prophecy, particularly the promise of Joel 2:28, 29, which is repeated in Acts 2:17, 18.¹⁴²

A careful study of her writings indicates that throughout her life she maintained the position that the Bible is supreme. Her works, as with every other claimed revelation, must be tested by Scripture. "The Spirit was not given—nor can it ever be bestowed—to supersede the Bible; for the Scriptures explicitly state that the word of God is the

which she believes originated from the Holy Spirit.

¹³⁷Raymond F. Cottrell, "Ellen G. White's Evaluation and Use of the Bible," in Hyde, 143.

¹³⁸E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:393.

¹³⁹E. White, *Great Controversy*, ix.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 204, 205.

¹⁴¹E. White, "An Open Letter," *Review and Herald*, January 20, 1903, 15. See also her *Testimonies for the Church*, 2: 605.

¹⁴²E. White, *Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940), 242.

standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested.”¹⁴³ By “the Spirit” she means her writings. This means that her writings are neither to be considered as an addition to the Scriptures,¹⁴⁴ nor as a substitute for them.¹⁴⁵ The writings are not designed to provide a shortcut to the meaning of Scripture so that they make unnecessary the need for a careful and serious study of the same.¹⁴⁶ Thus, in White’s view, the Scriptures are their own interpreter and no other work or authority is to have hermeneutical control over them.¹⁴⁷

The purpose and range of her writings in relation to the Bible are positively defined. She writes: “The *Testimonies* are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all.”¹⁴⁸ In her opinion, the Bible is not only supreme and superior to all other writings, it is also sufficient.¹⁴⁹ It is thus clear that White claims that the purpose of her writings is to lead people back to what has been revealed in the Bible.

Though White acknowledges the primacy of the Bible, she nevertheless claims for her writings the same inspiration she attributes to the Bible and insists on a basic harmony between the two. “The Holy Ghost is the author of the Scriptures and the author

¹⁴³E. White, *Great Controversy*, vii.

¹⁴⁴E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 4:246.

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 2:604-609. When people came to her seeking guidance on some particular decisions they were about to take, she refused to become conscience for them but told them to study the Bible (*Testimonies for the Church*, 2:119).

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 8:157.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 5:665.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 2:454, 455.

of the Spirit of prophecy [i.e. her writings].”¹⁵⁰ Further, she asserts, “In ancient times God spoke to men by the mouth of prophets and apostles. In these days He speaks to them by the testimonies of His Spirit.”¹⁵¹ Writing in relation to the biblical basis of White’s writings, Cottrell has concluded that White’s writings are as so “thoroughly permeated with Scripture” that “whatever the subject, she thought—wrote—in the language and thought forms of Scripture.”¹⁵²

The method White adopts in giving counsel in the “testimonies” is to remind the readers or hearers of biblical principles which they are to apply in their individual lives and experiences.¹⁵³ Therefore, one may conclude from her writings that she considers her messages to have originated from the same Spirit who was responsible for the production of the Scriptures. She however candidly admits that whereas the Bible is essential for humankind, her writings are necessary because people have failed to appropriate biblical teachings.¹⁵⁴ White’s view of the Bible’s supremacy in Christian teaching leads naturally to an inquiry of her understanding of revelation and inspiration. “Revelation” generally refers to the process through which the contents of Scripture emerged in the minds of the Bible writers, while “inspiration” generally refers to the process through which the contents in the minds of Bible writers were communicated in oral or written forms.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰E. White to Dr. Kellogg, July 2, 1900, Letter 92, 1900 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in Cottrell, 145.

¹⁵¹E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:661.

¹⁵²Cottrell, 145.

¹⁵³E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:154; 4:323.

¹⁵⁴Graham, *Ellen G. White*, 144.

¹⁵⁵Fernando Canale, “Revelation and Inspiration,” in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 50. See also Peter M. van Bemmelen, “Revelation and Inspiration,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 22-57.

The process of revelation

Roy Graham points out that there are three significant sections on this topic in her writings.¹⁵⁶ An analysis of these more extended passages, in conjunction with other paragraphs scattered throughout her works, presents the following positions.¹⁵⁷ White believes in a God who reveals himself to man. One of the means that God has employed in revealing himself to humanity is nature. But due to the effects of sin, nature “cannot reveal the character of God in its moral perfection.”¹⁵⁸ Therefore, God has chosen to reveal himself to humanity in other ways, but supremely through His Son, Jesus Christ. “Christ came as a personal Saviour to the world. He represented a personal God.”¹⁵⁹ This revelation arises out of God’s initiative to reconcile human beings to Himself.¹⁶⁰

God’s revelation is a continuous process which is not limited to any particular time or method. God has communicated with human beings directly by his Spirit “and divine light has been imparted to the world by revelations to His chosen servants.”¹⁶¹ Beginning with Moses, the inspired revelations through the prophets and, finally, through Christ, were then put into writing in the Bible.¹⁶² The Bible was produced over a period of sixteen hundred years by “men who differed widely in rank and occupation, and in

¹⁵⁶Graham, 144. The three sections are *Great Controversy*, v-xii; *Selected Messages*, 1:15-23; *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:699-711. These were all written in the period 1886-1889.

¹⁵⁷The following are a summary of the sections noted above. Specific quotations are indicated and where points are taken from other passages, these are also footnoted.

¹⁵⁸E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:295.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰E. White, *Great Controversy*, v.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*

¹⁶²*Ibid.*

mental and spiritual endowments.”¹⁶³ In spite of the diversity in the personalities and backgrounds of the writers of the Bible, “in His word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation.”¹⁶⁴ Although there is a diversity in the styles employed as well as in the nature of the subjects unfolded, yet “the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the circumstances and experiences of life.”¹⁶⁵

Regarding the production of the Bible, White writes that though God had especially guarded the Bible, “yet when copies of it were few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition.”¹⁶⁶ But in spite of such minor changes, the Bible is “a perfect chain” which still constitutes the Word of God.¹⁶⁷ The production of the Scriptures has been under the direction of the Holy Spirit and that is the reason why she argues that “the Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³Ibid., vi.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., vii.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., vi.

¹⁶⁶White, *Early Writings*, 220-221.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., 221.

¹⁶⁸E. White, *Great Controversy*, vii. She quotes 2 Tim 3:16, 17 in support of her position.

The process of inspiration

White has written at some length on her understanding of how inspiration occurs. She does not hold a concept of a mechanical or verbal inspiration. She is also aware of copyists' errors and the alleged attempts of some people to make the Bible's meaning clearer by altering or adding to the manuscripts.¹⁶⁹ This obviously rules out the dictation concept of inspiration.¹⁷⁰ She argues that those to whom the revelations were given through the Holy Spirit "have themselves embodied the thought in human language."¹⁷¹ Each writer of Scripture brings out that aspect of the divine revelation as he is impressed by the Holy Spirit.¹⁷² She refers to the writers of the Scriptures as "God's penmen, not His pen"¹⁷³ who "selected the most expressive language through which to convey the truths of higher education."¹⁷⁴ Though "the testimony [of the Bible writers] is conveyed through the imperfect expression of human language," White insists that it is nevertheless "the testimony of God."¹⁷⁵

Writing on the humanity of the Bible writers and its implications for the

¹⁶⁹E. White, *Early Writings*, 220, 221, and idem, MS 24, 1886, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:16. This section on inspiration will rely heavily on *Selected Messages*, 1:15-23. This is chapter 1 of volume 1 of *Selected Messages* (in three volumes) published between 1958 and 1980. The chosen section contains "Objections to the Bible," written in 1886, and another, "The Inspiration of the Word of God," written in the autumn of 1888. The compilation of these and other volumes by the Ellen G. White Estate is in compliance with the instruction given in her will.

¹⁷⁰White makes an exception for the Ten Commandments as recorded in Exod 20.

¹⁷¹E. White, *Great Controversy*, v.

¹⁷²*Ibid.*, vi. See also E. White to S. N. Haskell, Letter 53, 1900, April 5, 1900 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:22.

¹⁷³E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:21.

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 1:22.

¹⁷⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, vi, vii.

interpretation of the biblical text, she argues that “the writers of the Bible had to express their ideas in human language. It was written by human men.”¹⁷⁶ But they “were inspired of the Holy Spirit.”¹⁷⁷ In her view, there is “a spiritual unity, one grand golden thread running through the whole [of the Bible], but it requires patience, thought, and prayer to trace out the precious golden thread.”¹⁷⁸ She writes that “the Bible is not given to us in grand superhuman language. . . . The Bible is written by inspired men, but it is not God’s mode of thought and expression. It is that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented.”¹⁷⁹

White asserts further that “the divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God.”¹⁸⁰ Emphasizing the individuality of the different writers, she states that “in the varied style of its [the Bible’s] different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers.”¹⁸¹ She elaborates further on inspiration by arguing that “the Infinite One by His Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of His servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures; and those to whom the truth was thus revealed, have themselves embodied the thought in human language.”¹⁸²

White’s position on inspiration as expressed in the passages quoted above shows

¹⁷⁶E. White, MS 24, 1886, quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:19-20.

¹⁷⁷E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:19-20.

¹⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 1:20.

¹⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 1:20-21.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁸¹*Ibid.*, 1:25.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*

that she recognizes the existence of a “wide contrast in style”¹⁸³ in the different books of the Bible. The personality and background of the Bible writers would naturally condition the expressions they employed in conveying the divine revelation.¹⁸⁴ In the process of communicating the truth through human agents, God “guided the mind in the selection of what to speak and what to write”¹⁸⁵ through the Holy Spirit. However, the fact that the writers were instruments whom God used did not make them omniscient. Therefore, “their inspiration extended only to the contents of the particular message they were asked to convey.”¹⁸⁶ Sometime a prophet might write on a common or personal matter without specific “inspiration.”¹⁸⁷ All these resulted in the composition of the Bible which contains some difficulties for those who study it, which might not be resolved by finite minds.¹⁸⁸

While White allows for all the factors mentioned above at a time when this was not the usual position in evangelical circles, nevertheless she still writes: “I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible.”¹⁸⁹ She does not believe that it is the Bible student’s duty to explain “every seeming difficulty in the Bible”¹⁹⁰ that skeptics may bring up. Rather we should provide clear teaching on “every

¹⁸³E. White, *Great Controversy*, vi.

¹⁸⁴E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:21, 22.

¹⁸⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, vi.

¹⁸⁶Graham, 149. This is borne out by her repudiation of the position that advocated that every word she has ever written whether public or private is as inspired as the Ten Commandments (White, *Selected Messages*, 1:24).

¹⁸⁷E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:38.

¹⁸⁸E. White, *Testimonies*, 5:705-706; idem, *Education*, 169-172.

¹⁸⁹E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:17.

¹⁹⁰E. White, *Testimonies*, 5:705-706.

point essential to the salvation of the soul.”¹⁹¹ With regard to the preservation of the text, White writes that “God had faithful witnesses, to whom He committed the truth, and who preserved the Word of God. The manuscripts of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures have been preserved through the ages by a miracle of God.”¹⁹² Thus, she also believes in the miraculous preservation of the Bible through divine providence.

White rejects the position that advocates “degrees of inspiration” of inspired portions of the Bible and regards it as an inappropriate view of inspiration. She regards those who hold such views as having “narrow” and “shortsighted views” of divine inspiration.¹⁹³ While she recognizes the full variety of materials in the Bible, she at the same time argues that their full significance could be understood only “when viewed in their relation to the grand central thought.”¹⁹⁴ She defined the central thought as “the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God.”¹⁹⁵ It is this central thought, which can only be properly understood by faith, that is critical in understanding Scripture.

Though White recognizes the importance of reason in understanding the plan of redemption, she adds that reason alone is not enough. Divine illumination is indispensable. Whereas faith and reason must work together, nevertheless human reason

¹⁹¹Ibid.

¹⁹²E. White to Mr. & Mrs. Muckersey, February 14, 1899, Letter 32, 1899 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI). See also idem, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students*, 52.

¹⁹³E. White to J. J. Wessels, February 6, 1899, Letter 22, 1899 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:23; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:709-711.

¹⁹⁴E. White, *Education*, 125.

¹⁹⁵Ibid.

must “bow” to the majesty of divine revelation.¹⁹⁶ However, she does not depreciate the use of reason. In fact she argues that it is the work of educators to “train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought.”¹⁹⁷ However, her concept of sin carries with it the conviction that human reason was adversely affected by sin and so is unable to cope adequately with the issues presented in Scripture.¹⁹⁸ Evidently, she places a high premium on the priority of faith over reason.

Interpretation of the Bible

An essential foundation of White’s interpretative framework is her view on the unity of the whole of Scripture. She holds the “conviction that the revelation of God, and so of truth, is progressive.”¹⁹⁹ White writes that “the Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations.”²⁰⁰ In her view, the whole revelation is summarized in Christ to whom all prior revelations point and to whom succeeding revelations refer. Her “Great Controversy” motif unites all the biblical themes and serves as the interpretative framework for post-biblical church history.²⁰¹ In these revelations, certain specific truths relevant to the respective historical periods in which the revelations were given have been

¹⁹⁶ E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 110.

¹⁹⁷ E. White, *Education*, 17.

¹⁹⁸ E. White, *Testimonies*, 5:703. She writes: “God desires man to exercise his reasoning powers; and the study of the Bible will strengthen and elevate the mind as no other study can do. It is the best mental as well as spiritual exercise for the human mind. Yet we are to beware of deifying reason, which is subject to the weakness and infirmity of humanity” (ibid.).

¹⁹⁹ Graham, 153-154.

²⁰⁰ E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:19-20.

²⁰¹ Graham, 154.

emphasized.²⁰² God's method has not changed and He will continue to reveal Himself and His teachings not only in time but also in eternity.²⁰³

White believes that what God has done in history He will do also in the life of the individual believer. She argues that "God intends that, even in this life, truth shall be ever unfolding to His people"²⁰⁴ and that "whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word."²⁰⁵ The continued flow of divine truth to people (the process of illumination) depends on the response to that which has already been received. But what is revealed in post-biblical times is not "new truth" but a "clearer understanding" of what is already revealed in Scripture.²⁰⁶

In view of the reason stated above, the believer is urged to respond positively to what he understands from God's word and to continue studying prayerfully for further illumination. This is God's purpose for his people.²⁰⁷ In order to "lead us to a diligent study of the Scriptures and a most critical examination of the positions which we hold," God may even permit heresies to come in among his people.²⁰⁸ Therefore, White warns that we are not to take an entrenched doctrinal position and manifest an unwillingness to give up or modify such a position or belief, since only God is infallible.²⁰⁹ We must be

²⁰²E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:692-693.

²⁰³E. White, *Great Controversy*, 677-678.

²⁰⁴E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:703, 706.

²⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 5:706.

²⁰⁶E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:401-402.

²⁰⁷E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:706-707.

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 5:707-708.

²⁰⁹E. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923), 105.

willing to study Scripture thoroughly and be open to the work of the Holy Spirit in teaching us God's word.²¹⁰

White sees her work and writings as a part of the continuing post-pentecostal ministry of the Holy Spirit which "will reach its full accomplishment in the manifestation of divine grace which will attend the closing work of the gospel."²¹¹ Further, she views herself as one who has received illumination from the Holy Spirit and whose task it is to bring renewed emphasis on specific biblical truths, especially the Great Controversy theme.²¹² Nevertheless, she is conscious of human weaknesses and inadequacies in the presentation of her messages²¹³ and disavows infallibility for herself.²¹⁴

White allows for inconsequential inaccuracies of expression as the prophet delivers his/her messages to the people, yet without the perversion of the divine message. By the same token, she admits the likelihood of the same type of mistakes in her works such as errors with regard to dates, distances, and inappropriate choice of words.²¹⁵ She denies verbal inspiration²¹⁶ and recognizes the development of ideas in her writings.²¹⁷

²¹⁰Ibid., 105-119; idem, *Great Controversy*, vii.

²¹¹E. White, *Great Controversy*, ix.

²¹²Ibid., xi.

²¹³E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:40. She refers to herself (in a statement made in 1849) as "the worm—the feeble instrument that God spake through." Ibid.

²¹⁴Ibid., 37.

²¹⁵E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:38. See also the action of the 1883 General Conference Session in *Review and Herald*, November 27, 1883, 744, which recognizes the presence of grammatical imperfections in the writings (testimonies) of White.

²¹⁶E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:24-31.

²¹⁷E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:686. She acknowledges that she has received training and discipline as she has worked as a messenger of the Lord. Ibid.

She also distinguishes between the “sacred” and the “common.”²¹⁸ She candidly states that the counsels contained in her writings are based on her study of the Bible, what God has revealed to her through the years of her ministry, and specific knowledge of issues faced by individuals and the church.²¹⁹

It is clearly evident that White acknowledges that there has been a steady development in her ideas and experience over the years which is reflected in her writings. It is also clear that White wants her readers to understand that her writings must be tested by the Scriptures and that the function of these writings, in relation to the Bible, is that of an illuminated commentary. The Scriptures are always to be regarded as the norm of belief and doctrine. Further, since the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures shares in the unchangeableness of God’s nature, His later progressive illuminations will complement, not contradict, the earlier ones.²²⁰

White’s approach to the study of the Bible is very practical. Among the qualities of mind she commends in those seeking for biblical truth are sincerity of purpose,

²¹⁸E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:38-39. The “sacred” relates to divine truths that are revealed to her and the “common” has to do with mundane things that are the concerns of everyday living such as statements of common facts that she gathers from human sources.

²¹⁹E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:686. The progressive development in White’s writings has long been recognized by Seventh-day Adventist leaders. A. G. Daniells wrote: “We should bear in mind that Christian experience is progressive, and that the Testimonies have taught advanced principles year by year as the work has progressed and as the people have been prepared to receive new light. If you examine the first volumes of the Testimonies, you will find that only the A.B.C. of many principles and truths were at first presented. These have been developed from time to time since” (A. G. Daniells, President of the General Conference, to a young minister, June 23, 1910 [Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI]).

²²⁰E. White, *Great Controversy*, vii, viii. See also idem, *Desire of Ages*, 670, 671; idem, *Evangelism*, 167; and idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 408-411. For further discussion of theological development in White’s thought, see Graeme S. Bradford, *More Than a Prophet: How We Lost and Found Again the Real Ellen White* (Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2006), 121-129. See also Denis Fortin, “Ellen G. White’s Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church” (Biblical Research Institute, August 2007), 2, <http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents.htm> (accessed May 1, 2010), and Gerhard Pfandl, *The Gift of Prophecy: The Role of Ellen White in God’s Remnant Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2008), 75-80.

dedication of mind and life to the task, willingness to live in harmony with it, an earnest desire for it, a willingness to learn, and an open mind. In addition she commends a diligent and persevering systematic study combined with a patient reflection and, where necessary, suspension of judgment.²²¹

Scriptural typology

White's adoption of scriptural typology is very important for an adequate understanding of her interpretative approach to Scripture, especially as it relates to her views on the relation of the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament to Christ's high priestly ministry. F. F. Bruce has defined typology as "a way of setting forth the biblical history of salvation so that some of its earlier phases are seen as anticipations of later phases, or some later phase as the recapitulation or fulfilment of an earlier one."²²²

Theologically, the "type" depicted in words, descriptions, events, actions, institutions, and persons becomes fully apparent through the antitype that comes later.²²³ Alberto R. Timm has argued that the hermeneutical principles of typology and analogy of Scripture were foundational to the development of the doctrinal system of early Seventh-day Adventists.²²⁴

²²¹E. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers* (Mountain View: Pacific Press, 1923), 108. See also idem, *Desire of Ages*, 455-456; idem, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 463; and idem, *Testimonies to Ministers*, 476.

²²²F. F. Bruce, "Typology," *New Bible Dictionary* (1982), 1226.

²²³Gerhard F. Hasel, "General Principles of Biblical Interpretation," in Hyde, 187.

²²⁴Alberto R. Timm, "Historical Background of Adventist Biblical Interpretation," in *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, ed. George W. Reid (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005), 7. Timm writes further, "Believing that the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments was one of typological interrelationship rather than opposition, the Sabbatarians applied the analogy-of-Scripture principle consistently to the whole content of the Bible. The sanctuary in the OT was treated as a *typical* shadow of the sacrifice and of the priestly ministry of Christ in the NT. . . . This all-encompassing typological interrelationship provided a solid overall pattern of consistency to the

White's position, based on the *Sola Scriptura* principle, is that theological method must be derived from the Bible. Two methods of doing theology resulted from this position. The first is the analogy of Scripture. In this method, the Bible student collects all Scripture passages on a certain subject, and then comparing Scripture with Scripture, he/she then endeavors to formulate doctrine without the contradiction. She endorses Miller's method of the analogy of Scripture.²²⁵ The second method is typology. It is intended to reveal the true meaning of the type and the fulfillment of its antitype. White illustrates its importance by the experience of Christ's disciples whose faith was founded on the testimony about Christ in "the types and prophecies of the Old Testament."²²⁶ She argues that the typical (that is, Old Testament sacrificial) services taught "important truths concerning the atonement."²²⁷ The ritual of the sacrificial system was "the gospel in symbol."²²⁸

She writes elsewhere, "In the records of sacred history were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. The great truths set forth by the types were brought to view, and faith grasped the central object of all that system—the Lamb of God that was to take away the sin of the world."²²⁹ White argues that the Old Testament sacrifices prefigured the death of

understanding of Scripture. Ibid. See also Damsteegt, "Ellen White on Theology, Its Methods, and the Use of Scripture," 130-131.

²²⁵E. White, "Notes of Travel," *Review and Herald*, November 25, 1884, 738; idem, "Search the Scriptures," *Review and Herald*, October 9, 1883, 625; idem, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 437.

²²⁶E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 799.

²²⁷E. White, *Great Controversy*, 420.

²²⁸E. White, *Prophets and Kings*, 489.

²²⁹E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 594

Christ in which “type met antitype” and were therefore no longer binding.²³⁰ The scope of the typological method includes not only Christ’s sacrifice at the cross but also His heavenly high priesthood.²³¹ White’s view of scriptural typology is not only foundational for her views on Christ’s high priestly ministry, but it is also the basis of her understanding of both the sanctuary referred to in Dan 8:14 and what the “cleansing” of the same means.²³²

Centrality of the Cross

The cross of Christ is the center of all White’s theological writings. However, White utilizes the great controversy theme as the organizing concept. Writing on what she thinks should be the main focus for diligent ministers of the gospel, she writes:

The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation must be studied in the light which streams from the cross of Calvary and in connection with the wondrous central truth of the Saviour’s atonement.²³³

About two years before the statement above, she had written on the centrality of the cross as follows:

The cross of Calvary challenges, and will finally vanquish every earthly and Hellish power. In the cross all influence centers, and from it all influence goes forth. It is the great center of attraction; for on it Christ gave up His life for the human race. This sacrifice was offered for the purpose of restoring man to his

²³⁰ E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 189. See also idem, *Desire of Ages*, 54, 757; idem, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 1:201, 2:122, 123.

²³¹ E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 365.

²³² E. White, *Great Controversy*, 417, 418.

²³³ E. White, “What Is the Chaff to the Wheat?” MS 70, July 30, 1901, in *Manuscript Releases*, 20:336. See also idem, *Gospel Workers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1915), 315.

original perfection; yea, more. It was offered to give him an entire transformation of character, making him more than a conqueror.²³⁴

She argues that divine mercy and divine truth are revealed simultaneously on the cross.

“Christ on the cross was the medium whereby mercy and truth met together, and righteousness and peace kissed each other. This is the means that is to move the world.”²³⁵

In White’s view, every other doctrine receives its influence and power from the achievement of Christ on the cross. The cross also reveals to us the critical importance of the law of God in the atonement. She writes:

There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of the Scriptures—Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme. It is only in the light of the cross that we can discern the exalted character of the law of God.²³⁶

She argues that the cross presents the law and the gospel as being essential to the atonement. She writes: “Christ and Him crucified, is the message God would have His servants sound through the length and breadth of the world. The law and the gospel will then be presented as a perfect whole.”²³⁷ Thus, she views the cross as the evidence that the law and gospel are in harmony with regard to human redemption.

For White, genuine Christian doctrine must focus on the work of Christ on the

²³⁴E. White, “Following Christ,” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1899, 33. See also idem, “To Sister Caro,” August 19, 1900, Letter 124, 1900 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Seventh-day Adventists Answers Questions on Doctrine*, 661.

²³⁵E. White, “Following Christ,” 33.

²³⁶E. White, “Circulation of Great Controversy,” MS 31, 1890 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in Ellen G. White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 806. See also E. White, MS 49, 1898 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in “The Atonement-Centrality of the Atoning Cross,” *SDA Bible Commentary Supplement*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 7A:458.

²³⁷E. White, “The Uplifted Savior,” *Review and Herald*, September 29, 1896, 613.

cross and the *raison d'être*—the transgression of the law of God. She writes, “Keep before the people the cross of Calvary. Show what caused the death of Christ—the transgression of the law. Let not sin be cloaked or treated as a matter of little consequence. It is to be presented as guilt against the Son of God.”²³⁸ It is in the light of the cross that we can truly begin to have some appreciation for the atonement Christ provides for us. Without the cross, there would be no reconciliation of humanity to God. “To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting out the sun from the sky. The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him. . . . Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope.”²³⁹ From the above, it is evident that for White, the center of a genuine Christian theology is the cross of Christ.

Atonement as Penal Substitution

In White’s view, the need for atonement arises because of humanity’s fall into sin. She writes in 1890 as follows: “The fall of man filled all heaven with sorrow. The world that God had made was blighted with the curse of sin and inhabited by beings doomed to misery and death. There appeared no escape for those who had transgressed the law. . . . Throughout the heavenly courts there was mourning for the ruin that sin had wrought.”²⁴⁰ The human need for atonement is what gave rise to the substitutionary atonement that Christ offered to humans.

White published a pamphlet in 1869 titled “The Sufferings of Christ” and also

²³⁸E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:54.

²³⁹E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 209-210. Elsewhere, she writes that without the atoning death of Christ on the cross, “sin would have been immortalized” (“The Great Standard of Righteousness,” *Review and Herald*, April 23, 1901, 1).

²⁴⁰E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 63.

published it in *Testimonies for the Church*, number 17.²⁴¹ Her view on atonement is clearly depicted in this pamphlet and other writings in which she explains the need for atonement and what God has done to atone for human sins. White's overall view of atonement includes the life, sufferings, and death of Jesus, and also His high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. However, in this pamphlet, she refers to atonement only in reference to Christ's life, suffering and death. In "The Sufferings of Christ," she depicts the sufferings of Christ during His life and ministry and the events that culminated in His death on the cross in order to save humanity and, in that context, uses the word "atonement" three times.²⁴² In her first reference to atonement, which occurs in the first paragraph, she emphasizes its importance by pointing out that the motivation for atonement is the love of God. She writes,

In order to fully realize the value of salvation, it is necessary to understand what it cost. In consequence of limited ideas of the sufferings of Christ, many place a low estimate upon the great work of the atonement. The glorious plan of man's salvation was brought about through the infinite love of God and Father. In this divine plan is seen the most marvelous manifestation of the love of God to the fallen race.²⁴³

Stressing the importance of divine love as a motivation for atonement, Fortin has argued that "the most basic aspect of Ellen White's theology centers on the death of Christ as a demonstration of the love of God for lost humanity."²⁴⁴

White states that a contemplation of Calvary will stir up sacred emotions within

²⁴¹The same material is now in *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:200-215. All subsequent references to this pamphlet will be from this edition.

²⁴²E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:200, 213, 215.

²⁴³*Ibid.*, 2:200.

²⁴⁴Fortin, "The Cross of Christ," 135.

the Christian and remove pride and self-importance and help humans to do right.²⁴⁵ The display of such divine love at the cross was the means for implementing “the great plan of redemption.”²⁴⁶ The plan demands that Christ make a satisfaction for the claims of the broken law of God. She states that “none but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven.”²⁴⁷ The reason why Christ is the only one qualified is that only One who is equal with God could effect the plan. Though the plan of salvation had been laid before the creation of the earth, nevertheless, “it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race.”²⁴⁸ Only divine love can explain “the mystery of that incomprehensible love.”²⁴⁹ Human knowledge and logic cannot.

Wood argues that most nineteenth-century Seventh-day Adventist thinkers, with their focus on the heavenly ministry of Christ, denied completely (implicitly or explicitly) the atonement of Christ on the cross. This denial, coupled with the Arian and Semi-Arian views of Christ held by some of these leaders,²⁵⁰ inevitably led to incomplete conceptions of atonement.²⁵¹ However, unlike other Seventh-day Adventist leaders and writers who were her contemporaries, White’s understanding of atonement is not limited to the

²⁴⁵E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:212-213.

²⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 2:211-212.

²⁴⁷E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 63, *idem*, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:200.

²⁴⁸E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 63.

²⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 64.

²⁵⁰Erwin R. Gane, “The Arian and Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer” (M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1963); Russell Holt, “The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance” (Unpublished paper, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, 1969).

²⁵¹Wood, “Mighty Opposites,” 694-695.

intercessory high priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. It incorporates His life and sufferings, His death as our Substitute on the cross, His high priestly ministry, and the final disposition of sin and sinners.²⁵²

Froom points out a notable development in 1883 that reflects the breadth and depth of White's view of the atonement. In 1876, James White developed and distributed a copyrighted panoramic portrayal of the plan of salvation titled, "The Way of Life," with the subtitle, "From Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored." The law of God was the dominant feature of the 1876 pictorial aid, but the cross was placed to the right of center. Before his death in 1881, James re-designed both the picture and the caption, which were republished in 1883 by Ellen White. The new caption was "CHRIST, the Way of Life." Instead of a tree near the center of the pictorial aid with the two tables of the law overshadowing everything else, a giant cross was now central in the picture.²⁵³ Subsequent years would witness further developments in White's presentation of atonement.

Though the major elements of White's concept of atonement as an aspect of the great controversy were crystallized between 1848 and 1874, the richest period of the articulation of the concept came after the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference

²⁵²E. White, *Early Writings*, 253; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357, 358; idem, *Great Controversy*, 480. Such contemporary Seventh-day Adventist leaders include Joseph H. Waggoner (1820-1889) and Uriah Smith (1832-1903). For a discussion of the views of these two early Seventh-day Adventist authors and leaders, see Leroy Edwin Froom, *Movement of Destiny* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971), 159-175. Waggoner argued that the atonement is made only during the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Jesus and not on the cross. See his book, *The Atonement: An Examination of A Remedial System in the Light of Nature and Revelation* (Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1884), 180-199, particularly, 181-183. Similarly, Uriah Smith separates the death of Jesus on the cross from the atonement. See his book, *The Sanctuary and Its Cleansing* (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1877), 276-280.

²⁵³Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 180-187. See also *Signs of the Times*, June 5, 1884, 350, and Denis Fortin and Jerry Moon, eds, *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald,

Session.²⁵⁴ It must also be pointed out that the 1890s was the “decade of Christ” for White. It was during this time that she published *Steps to Christ* (1892), *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (1896), *Christ Our Saviour* (1896), *The Desire of Ages* (1898), *Christ’s Object Lessons* (1900), and scores of periodical articles. In these publications White elaborated her earlier theological thought on different aspects of atonement.²⁵⁵

Satisfaction of Divine Justice

In White’s view, the Old Testament sacrificial system was instituted by Christ and it pointed to his sacrificial life, death on the cross, resurrection, and heavenly intercession. She writes: “In the sacrificial offerings, type was to meet antitype in his life in the world, and in his death upon the cross for the sins of men.”²⁵⁶ It is the need for the satisfaction of divine justice, brought about by the breaking of the law of God, that necessitated the introduction of the sacrificial system. Writing eight years before the quote above (1890) in a chapter entitled “The Law and the Covenants” in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, White asserts that “had the law of God never been transgressed, there would have been no death, and no need of a Saviour; consequently there would have been no need of sacrifices.”²⁵⁷

forthcoming), s.v. “Christ, the Way of Life Prints.”

²⁵⁴Wood, “Mighty Opposites,” 695. The session’s highlights, according to available records, concern issues related to the atonement, such as justification by faith, the law in Galatians, and other issues. For some discussion of the importance of 1888 General Conference Session, see Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 187, and Whidden, *Ellen White on Salvation*, 87-98. For a more extended discussion of 1888, see A. V. Olson, *Thirteen Crisis Years, 1888-1901: From the Minneapolis Meeting to the Reorganization of the General Conference* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1981); George R. Knight, *Angry Saints: Tensions and Possibilities in the Adventist Struggle Over Righteousness by Faith* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1989).

²⁵⁵Wood, “Mighty Opposites,” 696.

²⁵⁶E. White, “The Law Exalted by Christ,” *Review and Herald*, May 23, 1899, 321. See also *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 126. See also *ibid.*, 127; *idem*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 365; *idem*, *Desire of Ages*, 165.

²⁵⁷E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 363; *idem*, *Testimonies*, 6:54.

In the same chapter, White argues that “the law of God is as immutable as His throne”²⁵⁸ and “will maintain its claims upon mankind in all ages.”²⁵⁹

She writes further: “While the Saviour’s death brought to an end the law of types and shadows, it did not in the least detract from the obligation of the moral law. On the contrary, the very fact that it was necessary for Christ to die in order to atone for the transgression of that law, proves it to be immutable.”²⁶⁰ It was Christ who communicated to the patriarchs the plan of atonement by our “substitute and surety”²⁶¹ through the sacrificial system.²⁶² Elements of the sacrificial system symbolized different aspects of the atoning ministry of Jesus.²⁶³

In White’s view, there is no sharp discontinuity in God’s method of saving people under the old covenant and His method for doing the same in the new covenant. In this connection White writes:

God’s work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages. Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. The

²⁵⁸E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 365.

²⁵⁹Ibid.

²⁶⁰E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 365. See also idem, “The Law and the Gospel,” *Signs of the Times*, March 14, 1878, 81 (also published in *Selected Messages*, 1:230).

²⁶¹The phrase “substitute and surety” refers to Jesus Christ and His work of atonement. As used by White, “substitute” refers to the fact that Jesus took our place and died the death we should have died as sinners and “surety” that He guaranteed that all the debts and obligation we owe to God would be met. He did just that on the cross and in His high priestly ministry.

²⁶²E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 366. See also idem, *Great Controversy*, 352, 420.

²⁶³E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 367. For a fuller discussion of the sacrificial system, see *ibid.*, 343-358, 363-373. See also idem, “Sacrificial Offerings,” *Signs of the Times*, July 15, 1880, 313; idem, *Prophets and Kings*, 684, 685; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 68, 373;

Saviour typified in the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law is the very same that is revealed in the gospel.²⁶⁴

In White's thought, the sacrificial atonement provided by Jesus was perfect because He was untainted by sin or any imperfection throughout His incarnation and earthly ministry. He gave a perfect righteousness in our stead.²⁶⁵ She adds, "Had one stain of sin rested upon our Redeemer, his sacrifice would not have secured the salvation of man."²⁶⁶ Just like the clean animals that were "without spot or blemish" which were utilized for sacrifices, so Jesus our Savior constituted a perfect atoning sacrifice. White shares the concept of Christ's substitutionary atonement with the Reformers, though she goes beyond their position as will be shown later. She writes: "Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. 'With His stripes we are healed.'"²⁶⁷

White's position on Christ's substitutionary atonement means that she also believes in the transferal of sin from the penitent sinner to the sacrificial victim. White writes,

By the act of bringing the offering to the sanctuary, the individual confessed himself a sinner, deserving the wrath of God, and signified his repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, whose blood would remove the guilt of the transgressor. By placing his hands upon the head of the victim the sin of the individual was transferred to the victim, and his suffering the sinner saw Christ typified, when he

²⁶⁴E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 373.

²⁶⁵Ibid.

²⁶⁶E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 373.

²⁶⁷E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 25.

should give himself as a sacrifice for our sins. The Lord signified his acceptance of the offering by causing it to be consumed upon the altar.²⁶⁸

In a clear elaboration on her concept of substitutionary atonement, White comments on the significance of the blood of the sacrificial victim in the context of her discussion of the divine prohibition of the Israelites from eating blood (Lev 17:12): “The blood of the Son of God was symbolized by the blood of the slain victim. . . . Blood was sacred, inasmuch as through the shedding of the blood of the Son of God alone could there be atonement for sin.”²⁶⁹ She argues that when Jesus died on the cross, the Old Testament sacrificial system met its fulfillment. She writes, “Here [at the cross] type met antitype. The ceremonies of the Jewish worship were then no longer needed; for the great Sacrifice to whom all other sacrifices pointed had now been offered.”²⁷⁰

Divine Justice and Divine Mercy

In White’s view, as our Substitute, Jesus bore the full weight of the divine wrath. She writes: “As the substitute and surety for sinful man, Christ was to suffer under divine justice. He was to understand what justice meant. He was to know what it means for sinners to stand before God without an intercessor.”²⁷¹ On the cross “Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty

²⁶⁸E. White, “Sacrificial Offerings,” 313. For some extended discussion of the idea of transfer of sin through laying on of hands in Adventist theology, see Angel M. Rodriguez, “Salvation by Sacrificial Substitution,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 3, no. 2 (Autumn 1992): 49-77, and his book *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1982), 193, 224. For Rodriguez’s extended discussion of atonement, see his *Spanning the Abyss: How the Atonement Brings Humanity and God Together* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2008).

²⁶⁹E. White, “Sacrificial Offerings,” 313.

²⁷⁰*Ibid.*

²⁷¹E. White, *Prophets and Kings*, 691.

race,²⁷² that is, at the time of God's final judgment. With respect to what Jesus experienced at the time He died on the cross as our substitute, she argues:

The wrath of God against sin, the terrible manifestation of His displeasure because of iniquity, filled the soul of His Son with consternation. . . . Now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father's reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man.²⁷³

But why must Jesus suffer under the full weight of His Father's wrath in our stead? White responds: "Justice demands that sin be not merely pardoned, but the death penalty must be executed. God, in the gift of His only-begotten Son, met both these requirements. By dying in man's stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon."²⁷⁴ So Christ can forgive our sins because He bore them on the cross. Therefore, through the cross of Christ, God could put forgiveness on a moral foundation since "the Divine Lawgiver and Divine Forgiver was also the Divine Victim."²⁷⁵

These familiar passages from White rest on her definition of both the nature of human beings and eternal death. She does not believe in what she calls the "natural immortality" of the soul, which she regards as a deception of Satan.²⁷⁶ She regards the death Jesus experienced as eternal. She writes:

The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father's

²⁷²E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 753.

²⁷³Ibid.

²⁷⁴E. White, "Christ Our High Priest," MS 50, 1900 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), published in *Selected Messages*, 1:340. In a similar vein, Brunner has noted that "the cross is the only possible way in which the absolute holiness and the absolute mercy of God are revealed together" (*Mediator*, 472).

²⁷⁵George R. Knight, *My Gripe with God* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1990), 57.

²⁷⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 58.

acceptance of the sacrifice. He feared that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. Christ felt the anguish which the sinner will feel when mercy shall no longer plead for the guilty race.²⁷⁷

According to White, it was Christ's human nature that died on the cross, not His divinity. She writes, "When Christ was crucified, it was His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die; that would have been impossible."²⁷⁸ Elsewhere she also argues, "When Christ bowed his head and died, he bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom with him to the earth. He vanquished Satan in the same nature over which in Eden Satan obtained the victory. The enemy was overcome by Christ in his human nature. The power of the Savior's Godhead was hidden. He overcame in human nature, relying upon God for power."²⁷⁹ In fact, she asserts that Christ could not have died for our atonement as God,²⁸⁰ but only by taking on human nature, even though a sinless human nature.²⁸¹ A possible reason for why it is important for White that it was the human nature of Christ that died on the cross and not the divine nature is her theology of the Godhead, for as she argued above, it was "impossible" for the divinity of Christ to die on the cross.

In becoming our Substitute, Christ combines divine holiness (justice) with divine love (mercy). The oneness of justice and mercy as two sides of the same coin has a major consequence for White's soteriology. Lucifer had argued that the imposition of an

²⁷⁷E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 753.

²⁷⁸E. White, "To Ministers, Physicians, and Teachers," September 3, 1904, Letter 280, 1904 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in "Deity Did Not Die—E. White Comments on Mark 16:6," *SDA Bible Commentary*, 5:1113.

²⁷⁹E. White, "After the Crucifixion," *Youth Instructor*, April 25, 1901, 130.

²⁸⁰E. White, "To My Brethren in North Fitzroy," November 18, 1898, Letter 97, 1898 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Questions on Doctrine*, 666.

²⁸¹E. White, MS 165, 1899 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI).

absolute divine law showed that God was a tyrant. He had argued further that if the law is just, it cannot be relaxed, in which case justice makes mercy impossible.²⁸² It is evident that Lucifer had not foreseen the implications of Christ's death in regard to his charges against God's character and law. Through His death on the cross, Jesus brought God's justice and mercy together into a unity that only One who is God Himself could have accomplished.²⁸³

White argues that "Christ shows that in God's plan they [justice and mercy] are indissolubly joined together; the one cannot exist without the other."²⁸⁴ In her view, the law of God was not abrogated when Jesus died on the cross. It endures to the present time and is to be obeyed by contemporary Christians.²⁸⁵ Edward Heppenstall agrees with White when he argues that "a true interpretation of Calvary must reveal the moral character of God in His attributes of love and justice."²⁸⁶ He adds that the moral necessity for the sacrificial atonement of the cross is based not only on God's love but also on His justice. The cross vindicates God's character and government.²⁸⁷

Thus, in White's view, the issue is not God's love versus His justice. Divine love is a combination of infinite justice and infinite mercy and justice is a component of love, not a quality distinct from it. Both are aspects of God's love, which are mutually

²⁸²E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 761.

²⁸³E. White, MS 128, 1897 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Questions on Doctrine*, 674.

²⁸⁴E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 762.

²⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 762-763.

²⁸⁶Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 40.

²⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 42, 44.

interdependent.²⁸⁸ The law's role, not as savior, but as a standard for human moral behavior is crucial to White's view. She writes: "Those only who have a just regard for the law of God can rightly estimate the atonement of Christ."²⁸⁹ Atonement on the cross goes beyond merely fulfilling the forensic demands of the law; it also upholds the sanctity and validity of the divine law and government.²⁹⁰

In White's view of the cross, she combines gospel (the cross) and law (as standard of human moral behavior) in a manner that produces a dynamic tension that must not be destroyed. It is this dynamic tension that Douglass has referred to as the "ellipse of truth" or the correlation of paradoxical truth.²⁹¹ She writes: "Christ and him crucified, is the message God would have his servants sound through the length and breadth of the world. The law and the gospel will then be presented as a perfect whole."²⁹² Thus through utilizing the "ellipse of truth," White conjoins the two components of truth in her discussion of the law and the gospel, God's work, and human response in atonement.²⁹³ In connection with Douglass's idea of the correlation of paradoxical truth, Wood has argued that in White's theology, "the Deity is eternally a 'one-ness' of opposites, infinite and personal—infinite, therefore incomprehensible to finite minds, yet personal and finite in the form of a Trinity."²⁹⁴

²⁸⁸Wood, "Mighty Opposites," 711.

²⁸⁹E. White, "The Law and the Gospel," 81.

²⁹⁰E. White, MS 163, 1897 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Questions on Doctrine*, 675; idem, *Great Controversy*, 503.

²⁹¹Douglass, *Messenger*, 260.

²⁹²E. White, "The Uplifted Savior," 613.

²⁹³Douglass, *Messenger*, 261-263. See also Whidden, *Salvation*, 70-71.

²⁹⁴Wood, "Mighty Opposites: The Atonement of Christ in the Writings of Ellen G. White, Part I," 697. For a discussion of the oneness of opposites as the structure of all reality, see Eli Siegel, "Is Beauty the

A prominent conclusion in White's theology is that atonement does not mean that sin must be tolerated since she upholds the continuing validity of the law in Christian life and theology. Neither does her concept of atonement merely cover sin. It destroys it. Thus in White's theological writings, atonement on the cross does not invalidate the law of God. In fact, her position is, in some respects, akin to that of Hugo Grotius's governmental theory of atonement.²⁹⁵ In White's thought, the attack on the validity and endurance of God's law will be "the last great deception" that the devil will utilize in the closing scenes of the great controversy. She links the final deliverance of God's people (the ultimate goal of atonement) to the enduring validity of God's law.²⁹⁶ From the above, it is evident that the law is very central to her understanding of atonement.

How White resolves the apparent conflict between God's justice and love fits her great controversy thematic structure. It brings out an aspect of atonement that is unique to her, that is, the effect of Christ's atoning life and death on angels and the unfallen worlds. She writes, "To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, 'It is finished,' had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory."²⁹⁷ She states that "without the cross they [the unfallen angels] would be no more secure against evil than

Making One of Opposites?" Aesthetic Realism Online Library, <http://www.aestheticrealism.net/books/contents> (accessed April 5, 2007); and also "The Aesthetic Method in Self-Conflict," Aesthetic Realism Online Library, <http://www.aestheticrealism.net/books/aesthetic-method.html> (accessed March 27, 2007). For another view of the "oneness" of opposites, see Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 11-13, where they discussed the paradoxical nature of the relationship between divine transcendence and divine immanence in Christian theology.

²⁹⁵See chapter 2 of this dissertation, for a discussion of Hugo Grotius's theory of atonement.

²⁹⁶E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 763.

²⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 758.

were the angels before the fall of Satan.”²⁹⁸ Thus Christ’s atonement has salvific repercussions for human believers on earth as well as angels and other dwellers of the unfallen worlds in the sense that it confirms them in their loyalty to God.

Identity of the Substitute

In White’s thought, the reason why Christ is the One who alone is qualified to atone for our sins is because He is divine, perfect, and sinless.²⁹⁹ But in order to offer Himself in sacrificial atonement, he had to take up human nature.³⁰⁰ In a lengthy passage (1900), she argues that the reason He could be our Redeemer who guarantees our salvation is that He is “equal with God, infinite and omnipotent,” and “is the eternal, self-existing Son.”³⁰¹ Therefore, Jesus could provide the atonement for us because of who He is; He is God. Since He is divine, He is perfect and sinless. She writes, “Christ could not have done this work had He not been personally spotless. Only One who was Himself perfection could be at once the sin bearer and the sin pardoner. He stands before the congregation of His redeemed as their sin-burdened, sin-stained surety, but it is their sins He is bearing.”³⁰²

White believes that our substitute who died for us is fully God. Advancing her

²⁹⁸E. White, “What Was Secured by the Death of Christ,” *Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1889, 786. See also idem, “Bible Study,” *Review and Herald*, January 11, 1881, 18.

²⁹⁹E. White, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 2:10.

³⁰⁰E. White, MS 92, 1899 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in “The Atonement-Incarnation Prerequisite to Atoning Sacrifice,” *SDA Bible Commentary Supplement*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 7A:460.

³⁰¹E. White, “The Price of Our Redemption,” *Youth Instructor*, June 21, 1900, 195. See also idem, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 2:9, where she argues that “man could not atone for man.”

³⁰²E. White, MS 165, 1899 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in “The Atonement-Spotless Christ Was Perfect Offering,” *SDA Bible Commentary Supplement*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 7A:461.

position on the Trinity, She writes:

The Father is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and is invisible to mortal sight. The Son is all the fullness of the Godhead manifested. The Word of God declares Him to be 'the express image of His person.' . . . The Comforter that Christ promised to send after He ascended to heaven, is the Spirit in all the fullness of the Godhead, making manifest the power of divine grace to all who receive and believe in Christ as a personal Saviour. There are three living persons of the heavenly trio.³⁰³

In what is probably her greatest book on the life of Christ, she writes (1898) that "in Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived."³⁰⁴ Thus it is clear that for her, the only one who could be our Savior is one who is equal with the Father and is thus fully divine.

White warns against a false dichotomy between the members of the Godhead. While Christ "suffers under divine justice," and the Father frequently represents that justice, nevertheless, "God himself was crucified with Christ, for Christ was one with the Father."³⁰⁵ So solid is her stand on the full deity of Christ that she calls the denial of the full deity of Christ and His eternal pre-existence a "dangerous error."³⁰⁶ With reference to those who hold this error, she asserts, "None who hold this error can have a true conception of the character or the mission of Christ, or of the great plan of God for man's redemption."³⁰⁷ Therefore to understand atonement is to understand that in the incarnation, Jesus was fully divine. Jesus was able to do the work of atonement because

³⁰³E. White, *Evangelism*, 614-615. See also idem, *Great Controversy*, 493; idem, "Christ Our Only Hope," *Signs of the Times*, August 2, 1905, 10; idem, "Imperative Necessity of Searching for Truth," *Review and Herald*, November 8, 1892, 690.

³⁰⁴E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 530.

³⁰⁵E. White, "Christ's Victory Gained through Pain and Death," *Signs of the Times*, March 26, 1894, 323. In 1898, in her book *Desire of Ages*, she writes that in executing the atonement through Christ, "God did not change His law, but He sacrificed Himself, in Christ, for man's redemption" (762).

³⁰⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 524.

³⁰⁷*Ibid.*

of who He is.

However it does appear that there was a development in White's presentation of her understanding of the Trinity. Eric Webster argues that, over the period from 1858 to 1915, there is a progressive clarity in her presentation of the nature and person of Christ.³⁰⁸ This is contrary to Erwin Gane who has contended that there was no such development in her writings.³⁰⁹ Webster has convincingly shown that there is a discernible development in her Trinitarian thought over time which he divides into three major periods: (1)1850-1870; (2)1870-1890; and (3)1890-1915.³¹⁰ Webster notes that though White's writings show evidence of development in the clarity of the presentation of her Christology, she does not contradict herself. Her earlier writings contain the germinal thought, which she expanded and further refined over the years.³¹¹

Achievement of the Cross and Scope of Atonement

Before discussing the images of atonement that White employs and her view of the extent of atonement, it is important to point out one particular aspect of her atonement thought which distinguishes her from other Protestant and evangelical writers on atonement. This relates to her view of atonement in phases.

³⁰⁸Webster, 142.

³⁰⁹Erwin Gane, "Arian or Anti-Trinitarian Views," 67.

³¹⁰Webster, 142. Though surrounded within Seventh-day Adventist ranks by many leaders who held some form of semi-Arian theological position, she avoided that pitfall. Some of such people include John M. Stephenson, Uriah Smith, Joseph Waggoner, and James White (Ellen White's husband) (Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 152-166; 175-176; see also Whidden, *Soteriology*, 160-161).

³¹¹Webster, 71. Similarly, Erwin Gane writes with regard to White's Christology, "The profound statements of her later period do not contradict anything she wrote in the earlier period" (Gane, *Arian and Anti-Trinitarian Views*, 67).

Four Phases³¹² of Atonement

Wood has rightly argued that the key element in White's presentation of the atonement is the idea that "the entire incarnation is one phase (among several) of the atonement."³¹³ Heppenstall presents atonement in three stages, namely at the cross, in the High Priestly ministry of Jesus, and through judgment.³¹⁴ In a similar vein, Fortin has pointed out that White uses the term atonement in three different ways which ranged "from a specific, focused meaning to a broad meaning,"³¹⁵ including Calvary as a complete atonement, His high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, and His entire life of suffering.³¹⁶ In light of the foregoing arguments, it thus appears that White presents atonement in four phases, as will be discussed below. It must be pointed out that the phases overlap and, therefore, are not strictly chronological.

In the first phase, she uses the term to describe Calvary as a complete atonement. Writing in reference to Abel's action in bringing a sacrificial animal to offer to God, she writes, "He brought the slain victim, the sacrificed life, thus acknowledging the claims of the law that had been transgressed. Through the shed blood he looked to the future sacrifice, Christ dying on the cross of Calvary; and trusting in the atonement that was there to be made, he had the witness that he was righteous, and his offering accepted."³¹⁷

³¹²The word "phase" as used here refers to a stage within a process that develops over time. The key idea is that atonement is a process in time which encompasses several stages until the final reconciliation of the world back to God is achieved.

³¹³Wood, "Mighty Opposites," 701. See also Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 327-328.

³¹⁴Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 31.

³¹⁵Fortin, "The Cross of Christ," 138.

³¹⁶Ibid.

³¹⁷E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 72.

In connection with the idea that the atonement of Christ on Calvary is a fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrificial system and a confirmation of the continuing validity of the Law of God, White writes, “The brightness of the Father’s glory, and the excellence and perfection of his sacred law, are only understood through the atonement made upon Calvary by his dear Son; but even the atonement loses its significance when the law of God is rejected.”³¹⁸ A year after the 1888 General Conference, she asserted: “The great sacrifice of the Son of God was neither too great nor too small to accomplish the work. In the wisdom of God it was complete; and the atonement made testifies to every son and daughter of Adam the immutability of God’s law.”³¹⁹ So White views the atonement on the cross as “complete.”

In White’s view, Christ’s death on the cross makes certain the eventual destruction of Satan and ensures that “the atonement will never need to be repeated.”³²⁰ In reference to Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, she writes, “He planted the cross between heaven and earth, and when the Father beheld the sacrifice of His Son, He bowed before it in recognition of its perfection. ‘It is enough,’ He said. ‘The atonement is complete.’”³²¹ It is very clear that in the references above and similar ones, the meaning of atonement is focused on the event of the cross.

In the second phase, White expands the concept of atonement to include the high priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. In these instances, she refers to

³¹⁸E. White, “Christ and the Law,” *Signs of the Times*, August 25, 1887, 513.

³¹⁹E. White, “What Was Secured by the Death of Christ,” 786.

³²⁰*Ibid.*

³²¹E. White, “Without Excuse,” *Review and Herald*, September 24, 1901, 615. White states that at the cross, Christ’s “atonement for the sins of his people had been full and ample.” *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4 vols. (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publication, 1870-1884), 3:202-203.

Christ as ministering the benefits of the complete atoning sacrifice made at the cross on behalf of repentant sinners. She writes, “The great Sacrifice had been offered and had been accepted, and the Holy Spirit which descended on the day of Pentecost carried the minds of the disciples from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly, where Jesus had entered by His own blood, to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement.”³²²

Further she argues that “it is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement [that is, in the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary] who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf.”³²³ Thus, it is clear that in some instances, she refers to the high priestly ministry of Christ as atonement, and not just a means of granting the benefits of atonement to the believers. She argues that Christ “is making intercession and atonement for his people who believe in Him” in the heavenly sanctuary.³²⁴ It is thus evident that she sees Christ’s heavenly ministry as an essential part of His work of redemption. Due to the importance that is attached to this phase of atonement in White’s thought, it will be discussed in more detail later on.

In the third phase, White employs the term “atonement” in a broader sense and embraces Christ’s life of suffering and the entire work of redemption. She argues, “We should take broader and deeper views of the life, sufferings, and death of God’s dear Son. When the atonement is viewed correctly, the salvation of souls will be felt to be of

³²²E. White, *Early Writings*, 260.

³²³E. White, *Great Controversy*, 430. See also idem, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:269, 270; idem, *Spiritual Gifts* (1858), 1:170;

³²⁴E. White, “The Remnant Church Not Babylon,” *Review and Herald*, August 22, 1893, 531. See also idem, “Believers Christ’s Representatives,” *Review and Herald*, May 6, 1884, 289; idem, “The Heavenly Guest,” *Review and Herald*, November 24, 1885, 722; and idem, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 37.

infinite value.”³²⁵ In addition, “his whole life was a preface to His death on the cross.”³²⁶ Therefore, for White, “atonement is a process in time whose parts cannot be divorced”³²⁷ from one another.

One of White’s common phrases for the incarnation is the “sufferings of Christ.” She displays a highly developed sense of the cause of His lifelong suffering. She writes, “The suffering of Christ was in correspondence with his spotless purity; his depth of agony, proportionate to the dignity and grandeur of his character.”³²⁸ In a more extended passage on the sufferings of Christ, she writes: “The finite can only endure the finite measure, and human nature succumbs; but the nature of Christ had a greater capacity for suffering; for the human existed in the divine nature, and created a capacity for suffering to endure that which resulted from the sins of a lost world.”³²⁹

But while Christ’s suffering in the presence of sin was unmitigated throughout His life, His suffering “under the weight of sins of the whole world constituted atonement in a special sense.”³³⁰ The atonement on the cross was thus unique. White argues that Christ bore on the cross the divine wrath against all sin and suffered eternal separation from God. She states further that “by every act of humiliation or suffering Christ was

³²⁵ E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:215. See also *Desire of Ages*, 494-495; *Education*, 80. It is important to note here that unlike some of her fellow leaders in Seventh-day Adventism, White does not distinguish between sacrifice and atonement. See Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 333-334, 338.

³²⁶E. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), 382.

³²⁷Fortin, “The Cross of Christ,” 139.

³²⁸E. White, “Christ Our Sacrifice,” *Review and Herald*, September 21, 1886, 593; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:422.

³²⁹E. White, MS 35, 1895 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in “Satan Sought to Crush Christ—White Comments on Matthew 26:36-46,” *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976-80), 5:1103.

³³⁰Wood, “Mighty Opposites,” 702.

bruising the head of His adversary. . . . While Christ endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, He was paying the debt for sinful man and breaking the bondage in which humanity had been held.”³³¹

In the wilderness of temptation, in the garden of Gethsemane, and on the cross, the destiny of the world hung in the balance and in each instance Christ faced eternal separation from God. In each event His human nature was nearly destroyed and He nearly died. However, He was victorious in behalf of humankind in each of the events.³³² Furthermore, she writes,

The humiliation and agonizing sufferings of Christ in the wilderness of temptation were for the race. . . . Man had separated himself at such distance from God by transgression of His law that he could not humiliate himself before God in any degree proportionate to the magnitude of his sin. The Son of God could fully understand the aggravating sins of the transgressor, and in His sinless character He alone could make an acceptable atonement for man in suffering the agonizing sense of His Father’s displeasure.³³³

In White’s view, Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane was real, vicarious, and substitutionary.³³⁴ The suffering emanating from His decision to bear human sin and its consequences was so much that in both the wilderness temptation and in Gethsemane, it was divine intervention that revived Christ and prevented His death. However, such intervention was not present at the cross. On the cross, Christ experienced the second death in place of sinful humans.

³³¹E. White, *Prophets and Kings* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1917), 701; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:202.

³³²E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:206.

³³³E. White, *Confrontation* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1970), 50. This book is a compilation from a series of thirteen articles originally published in 1874 and 1875 in the *Review and Herald* and later republished in a 96-page pamphlet in 1878.

³³⁴E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 131.

From the above, it is clear that White uses the term “atonement” in different ways. Many times she uses it to refer to the transaction of the cross. At other instances she employs it to refer to either the high priestly ministry of Christ or His life of suffering during the incarnation for our redemption and His entire work of human redemption. The fourth phase of atonement will be discussed later on under the different phases of judgment in White’s thought. It is evident that White views atonement as a process in phases. In expressing her thought on atonement, she employs certain theological images.

Images of Atonement

Paul R. Eddy and James Beilby have argued that theories of the atonement that fall within the objective paradigm generally emphasize such New Testament motives as vicarious suffering, sacrifice, justification, and propitiation/expiation.³³⁵ This is true in the case of White’s atonement theology. She presents her understanding of the salvific results of the life, death, resurrection, and heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ under images of atonement, which combines the different New Testament motives.

In this connection, Fritz Guy suggests that there is not one classical theory under which White’s thought on atonement can be exclusively categorized.³³⁶ He adds that her “view of atonement is a more adequate expression of the Biblical witness and its interpretation” than is any of the historic views of atonement.³³⁷ Further, he suggests that

³³⁵Paul R. Eddy and James Beilby, “The Atonement: An Introduction,” in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 14-15.

³³⁶Fritz Guy, “The Ultimate Triumph of Love: A View of Atonement” (Center for Adventist Research, Berrien Springs, MI, n.d.). The discussion in this section of the chapter is informed by materials from Guy (*ibid.*); Whidden, *Soteriology*, 117-126; Webster, 102-108; and Wood, “Mighty Opposites,” 694-726.

³³⁷Guy, “Ultimate Triumph of Love,” 9.

her position has some important similarities to, as well as differences from, the distinctive ingredients in all the classical theories of atonement.³³⁸

It has been noted that the person and work of Christ are closely linked together and, therefore, should not be separated.³³⁹ Hence it is clear that who Jesus Christ is determines his work in atonement. This close link between the person and work of Christ is very evident in White's thought. Webster suggests that White emphasizes at least five main aspects of the work of Christ. They are (1) Christ's substitutionary work of obedience and atonement, (2) His revelation of the character of the Father, (3) His vindication of God's law and government, (4) His example which serves as a pattern and model, and (5) His empowerment in the life of the redeemed.³⁴⁰ Fortin has also suggested other areas of Christ's work that White emphasizes, some of which will also be discussed below.³⁴¹

Christ as Substitute and Surety

White's presentation of Christ as our "substitute and surety" will be discussed in three aspects: penal substitution, satisfaction, and imputation of justification inasmuch as her presentation of Christ's substitutionary death incorporates these three aspects.

³³⁸Ibid.

³³⁹G. C. Berkouwer, *The Person of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954), 109; P. T. Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1909), 6.

³⁴⁰Webster, 102. The discussion of the different aspects of the work of Christ will largely follow Webster's presentation (102-108). For another presentation of how White and Seventh-day Adventists view the atonement, see Fritz Guy, "The Ultimate Triumph of Love," 1-34.

³⁴¹Fortin, "Cross of Christ," 135, 136. The areas of Christ's work that he suggests include the cross as a demonstration of God's love, moral influence, governmental view, victory over the powers of evil and Satan, and the penal substitutionary view.

Penal substitution

Of all the different aspects of the work of Christ, the one White emphasizes most prominently is His penal substitutional work of atonement.³⁴² She writes that “Christ consented to die in the sinner's stead, that man, by a life of obedience, might escape the penalty of the law of God.”³⁴³ In reference to the cross, she argues that “the glorious Redeemer of a lost world was suffering the penalty of man’s transgression of the Father’s law.”³⁴⁴ Elsewhere, she writes, “Upon Christ as our substitute and surety was laid the iniquity of us all. He was counted a transgressor, that He might redeem us from the condemnation of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam was pressing upon His heart.”³⁴⁵

In her classic on the life of Christ, she writes, “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. ‘With His stripes we are healed.’”³⁴⁶ White also believes that in order to be our Substitute, in addition to being fully divine,³⁴⁷ Christ also had to possess human nature.³⁴⁸

³⁴²Some selected references include the following: E. White, “Redemption—No. 1,” *Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874, 82-83; idem, “The Temptation of Christ,” *Review and Herald*, August 18, 1874, idem, “Conditions for Obtaining Eternal Riches,” *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1890, 353-354.

³⁴³E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:200-201.

³⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 2:209. See also 2:203.

³⁴⁵E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 753. See also idem, MS 84a, 1897 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), and idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:203.

³⁴⁶E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 25.

³⁴⁷E. White, “Laboring in the Spirit of Christ,” *Review and Herald*, October 20, 1896, 662. See also her article, “The Keeping Power of God’s Love,” *Review and Herald*, September 15, 1896, 581.

³⁴⁸She argues that our “substitute and surety must have man’s nature, a connection with the human

She uses the term “Substitute and Surety” primarily to refer to Christ’s atoning death on Calvary on behalf of sinners. As “substitute,” He suffered the punishment for sin in our stead and as “surety,” He guaranteed that all our debts and obligations to God and His law would be met.³⁴⁹ Because He was guiltless and innocent, His death was substitutionary.³⁵⁰ She also asserts, “Guiltless, he [Christ] bore the punishment of the guilty; innocent, yet offering himself to bear the penalty of the transgression of the law of God.”³⁵¹ The punishment of the sins of every soul was borne by the Son of the infinite God. It is thus very clear that she subscribes to a penal-substitution view of atonement.³⁵²

Satisfaction of divine justice

The satisfaction model of atonement is closely linked to that of penal-substitution in White’s thought.³⁵³ It emphasizes that Christ’s death satisfied a principle in the very nature of God the Father³⁵⁴ and His law which is a reflection of His character. She writes that “by His perfect obedience He [Christ] has satisfied the claims of the law, and my only hope is found in looking to Him as my substitute and surety, who obeyed the law

family whom he was to represent, and, as God’s ambassador, he must partake of the divine nature, have a connection with the Infinite, in order to manifest God to the world, and be a mediator between God and man” (“No Caste in Christ,” *Review and Herald*, December 22, 1891, 785). See also idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:201.

³⁴⁹Writing in connection with Christ work of redemption, White writes of Christ that “He was the surety for man, the ambassador for God, – the surety for man to satisfy by his righteousness in man’s behalf the demands of the law, and the representative of God to make manifest his character to a fallen race” (“No Caste in Christ,” 785).

³⁵⁰E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 741.

³⁵¹E. White, “Christ Our Hope,” *Review and Herald*, December 20, 1892, 787.

³⁵²For a discussion of the penal substitution theory of atonement, see Erickson, 830-837.

³⁵³See chapter 2 of this dissertation for a discussion of the satisfaction theory.

³⁵⁴Erickson, 813.

perfectly for me.”³⁵⁵ She also argues that “Christ made satisfaction for the guilt of the whole world, and all who will come to God in faith, will receive the righteousness of Christ.”³⁵⁶ White adds that in the death of Christ, divine justice is “satisfied in the righteous substitute.”³⁵⁷ In the death of Christ, the law of God and His justice are “satisfied.”³⁵⁸

Writing of the uniqueness of Christ to provide satisfaction for the broken law, White writes, “The divine Son of God was the only sacrifice of sufficient value to fully satisfy the claims of God’s perfect law.”³⁵⁹ In view of its value, the Father “is satisfied with the atonement made”³⁶⁰ on Calvary.

Imputation of justification

In White’s thought, “justification is a full, complete pardon of sin.”³⁶¹ She states that at the very moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, he is pardoned and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him.³⁶² All that the sinner needs to do is to “simply grasp by faith the free and ample provision made in the blood of Christ.”³⁶³ The sinner

³⁵⁵E. White, “Christ Our Hope,” 787; idem, “The Bible Students’ Library Series,” April 1893, quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:396;

³⁵⁶E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:392.

³⁵⁷E. White, “Christ Our Complete Salvation,” *Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895, 329.

³⁵⁸E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 834; idem, *Selected Messages*, 1:307; idem, “The Cost of Salvation,” *The Bible Echo*, November 20, 1899, 378. She also writes, “No sin can be committed by man for which satisfaction has not been met on Calvary” (“Christ Our High Priest,” MS 50, 1900 [Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI]).

³⁵⁹E. White, “The First Advent of Christ,” *Review and Herald*, December 17, 1872, 2.

³⁶⁰E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:364.

³⁶¹E. White, “Faith and Good Works,” *Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1898, 3.

³⁶²Ibid.

³⁶³Ibid.

must personally accept the atonement provided on Calvary if Christ's righteousness is to be imputed to the sinner's account.³⁶⁴

Writing further on imputation of justification, she writes, "Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal."³⁶⁵ Thus the exercise of the will depicted in the personal faith of the sinner in Christ is critical for the appropriation of Christ's atonement for the sinner's justification.

However, White does not stop at the momentary justification of the sinner, but equally emphasizes spiritual growth of the justified sinner when she argues that "justification by faith in Christ will be made manifest in transformation of character."³⁶⁶ She adds that "Christ bore the penalty that would have fallen upon the transgressor; and through faith the helpless, hopeless sinner becomes a partaker of the divine nature."³⁶⁷ Therefore as our "Substitute and Surety," Jesus not only died in our stead on Calvary and satisfied the claims of God's holy law, he also justifies us by imputing His perfect righteousness to us, while He takes the consequences of our sins on Himself.

³⁶⁴E. White, MS 21, 1891 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Faith and Works* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1979), 103.

³⁶⁵E. White, quoted in *Faith and Works*, 104.

³⁶⁶Ellen G. White Estate, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1987), 1532.

³⁶⁷E. White, "The Law Exalted by Christ," 321.

Christ's Revelation of the Character of the Father

White also believes Christ came to reveal the character of the Father. She writes, "It was to give in his own life a revelation of his Father's character, that Christ came in the form of humanity."³⁶⁸ The reason why Jesus could represent the Father and reveal His character was that Jesus was one with God in nature and character.³⁶⁹ In a succinct statement on the importance of the divinity of Christ to atonement, White asserts, "In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. . . . The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life."³⁷⁰ It is clear that for White, Christ must be of the same nature as the Father if He is to truly reveal Him to humans. She argues that there is no other way for us to fully know God, except through Christ. Since nature is imperfect, it cannot by itself give us a perfect knowledge of God.³⁷¹ Therefore, Jesus Christ came to the world to reveal the character of God to humanity.

However, in White's view, the sacrificial offering of Jesus on the cross is the greatest demonstration of the self-giving and holy love of God for sinful humans.³⁷² In that connection, she writes, "Oh what love, what wondrous love the Father has shown in the gift of his beloved Son for this fallen race! And this Sacrifice is a channel for the outflow of his infinite love, that all who believe on Jesus Christ may . . . receive full and

³⁶⁸E. White, "Lessons from the Life of Solomon," *Review and Herald*, December 7, 1905, 10. See also idem, "Search the Scriptures," *Review and Herald*, July 26, 1892, 465.

³⁶⁹E. White, "Even So Send I You," *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1895, 401; idem, "A Habitation of the Spirit," *Review and Herald*, December 31, 1908, 8.

³⁷⁰E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 530.

³⁷¹E. White, "The Revelation of God," *Review and Herald*, March 17, 1904, 8.

³⁷²E. White, "Christ Our Sacrifice," 593; idem, "The High Calling of God in Christ Jesus," *Review and Herald*, October 7, 1890, 609; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 22; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:207.

free restoration to the favor of Heaven.”³⁷³ In another place, she writes, “His [Christ’s] death on the cross was an exhibition of the unselfishness of God. Infinite benevolence poured out all heaven’s treasures in this one gift to rescue man from Satan’s power. Through the revelation of the love of God on the cross of Calvary the real character of the work of Satan and his agencies was demonstrated.”³⁷⁴ She asserts that the “broader and deeper purpose” of atonement “was to vindicate the character of God before the universe.”³⁷⁵ Such a demonstration of God’s love morally influences humanity to do right.³⁷⁶

Vindication of God’s Law and Government

White argues that another important reason for Christ’s coming to the world was that He might vindicate God’s law and government. Satan won some of the angels to his side by “suggesting thoughts of criticism regarding the government of God” among them.³⁷⁷ For this reason, Christ came to demonstrate through a life of obedience the justice of God’s law and requirements to both humans and angels. A vindication of God’s law is also a vindication of His character of selfless love. She writes further, “The act of

³⁷³E. White, “Christ Our Sacrifice,” 593. See also her MS 28, 1897, quoted in “No Outbreaking Sin—White Comments on Matthew 26:14-16,” *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976-80), 5:1101.

³⁷⁴E. White, “To My Brethren and Sisters in the Southern Union Conference,” *The Watchman*, September 5, 1905, Ellen G. White Writings, Comprehensive Research Edition [CD ROM] (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008).

³⁷⁵E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 68.

³⁷⁶She writes that “the contemplation of the matchless depths of a Saviour’s love should fill the mind, touch and melt the soul, refine and elevate the affections, and completely transform the whole character” (*Testimonies for the Church*, 2:213).

³⁷⁷E. White “To Brother and Sister Kress,” May 29, 1906, Letter 162, 1906 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI). See also idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 33-43; idem, *Great Controversy*, 492-504.

Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan.”³⁷⁸ Therefore, the cross is a vindication of the divine government.

In White’s view, the cross convincingly demonstrates that the divine government is based on selfless-love.³⁷⁹ She argues that though the life of Christ was a vindication of God’s law, character, and government, His death was a more powerful vindication of the same. She argues that “the flowing blood [of the sacrificial victim] also signified an atonement, and pointed forward to a Redeemer who would one day come to the world and die for the sins of man, thus fully vindicating his Father’s law.”³⁸⁰ In her view, the event of the cross guarantees the redemption of humankind, makes certain the destruction of sin and Satan, and ensures that God’s universe is eternally secure.³⁸¹ Thus, White views both the life and atoning death of Christ as a complete vindication of God’s character, law, and government.

Pattern

White also regards Christ as our example in all things, especially in His obedience to the Father. She writes: “As the Son of man, He gave us an example of obedience; as the Son of God, He gives us power to obey.”³⁸² She refers to Christ as Model, Exemplar,

³⁷⁸E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 69.

³⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 70.

³⁸⁰E. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1877), 2:86.

³⁸¹E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 764.

³⁸²*Ibid.*, 24.

and Pattern.³⁸³ For her, it is our privilege to live as Christ lived and follow the pattern set by Him.³⁸⁴ She presents a paradoxical thought when she argues that we may receive divine power as Christ did while also indicating that though we are to follow the pattern, we will never equal it.³⁸⁵

For her, Christ is the pattern we are to imitate. Writing in connection with the need for regular Bible study through which we become increasingly acquainted with Jesus, White writes, “The Pattern must be inspected often and closely in order to imitate it. As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself defects of character; his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees he cannot be a follower without a very great change in his life. Still he studies, with a desire to be like his great Exemplar.”³⁸⁶ He is the “pattern man” who was as certainly fulfilling His mission when He was working as a carpenter as when He was dying on the cross in our stead.³⁸⁷

³⁸³E. White, “Search the Scriptures,” *Review and Herald*, November 28, 1878, 169.

³⁸⁴E. White, “The Primal Object of Education,” *Review and Herald*, July 11, 1882, 433; idem, “The Need of Trained Workers,” *Review and Herald*, February 14, 1893, 97. She writes in respect of the law, “The only perfect example of obedience to its precepts, is found in the Son of God” (“Nothing Is Hidden,” *Review and Herald*, March 27, 1888, 194).

³⁸⁵Though White has written that “divine power was not given to Him in a different way to what it will be given to us” (MS 21, 1895 [Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI], quoted in “Christ Met Man as Man—White Comments on Heb 2:14-18,” *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol [Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976-80], 7:925), she puts that statement in perspective when she writes elsewhere, “Christ is our pattern, the perfect and holy example that has been given us to follow. We can never equal the pattern; but we may imitate and resemble it according to our ability.” E. White, “Conquer through the Conqueror,” *Review and Herald*, February 5, 1895, 81.

³⁸⁶E. White, “Search the Scriptures,” *Review and Herald*, November 28, 1878, 169. She argues that “the character of Christ is the one perfect pattern which we are to copy.” Idem, “The Primal Object of Education,” 433. See also idem, *Desire of Ages*, 417; idem, *Early Writings*, 113, 114; idem, *Fundamentals of Education*, 136; idem, *Testimonies for the Church*, 1:286; and idem, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 161-162.

³⁸⁷E. White, *Selected Messages*, 2:163, 164. See also idem, “You Are My Witnesses,” *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, July 19, 1905, 321; idem, “The Fight of Faith,” *The Bible Echo*, January 1, 1893, 2.

White has also argued that Christ came to this world to make available to us the power to live a new life so we can follow His example. Through Christ, we become partakers of the divine nature,³⁸⁸ overcome hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil³⁸⁹ and have the moral image of God restored in us.³⁹⁰ In her view, as Christ imparts His righteousness to humans, they are enabled to keep the law.³⁹¹ As human beings become partakers of the divine nature, they grow increasingly more like the Savior until they reach perfection.³⁹² White clearly emphasizes the exemplary function of Christ's work and His continuous provision of power for humans to live sanctified lives through His grace.

Christ's Ultimate Victory Over Evil and Satan

White agrees with the so-called "classical theory" of atonement which affirms that Calvary was the sign of Christ's ultimate victory over the powers of evil and Satan himself. Writing of the crucifixion of Jesus and its meaning, she writes, "He was about to ransom His people with His own blood. He was paying the just claims of God's holy law.

³⁸⁸White writes that Christ "clothed his divinity with humanity, that humanity might take hold of divinity, and become a partaker of the divine nature." "God Loveth a Cheerful Giver," *Review and Herald*, May 15, 1900, 305.

³⁸⁹E. White, "Christian Perfection," *Review and Herald*, April 24, 1900, 257.

³⁹⁰E. White, "True Christianity," *Review and Herald*, March 1, 1898, 133.

³⁹¹E. White, MS 126, 1901 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in "Sinner Given a Second Trial—White Comments on 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45," *SDA Bible Commentary*, 6:1092.

³⁹²E. White, "The Righteousness of Christ in the Law," *Review and Herald*, April 22, 1902, 9. It is noteworthy however that human perfection of character can only be obtained through the merits of Christ and the imputation of his righteousness (idem, "Obedience the Fruit of Union with Christ—No.2," *Review and Herald*, September 3, 1901, 567). For a discussion of perfection in Adventist theology, see Herbert E. Douglass et al., *Perfection: The Impossible Possibility* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1975), and Herbert E. Douglass and Leo Van Dolson, *Jesus—The Benchmark of Humanity* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1977), 121-128. For an extended discussion of perfection in White's

This was the means through which an end was to be finally made of sin and Satan, and his host to be vanquished.”³⁹³ Elsewhere she writes, “In the death of Christ upon the cross, angels had seen the pledge of final victory over the powers of darkness. In the slain Saviour sleeping in Joseph’s tomb, angels beheld the mighty Conqueror.”³⁹⁴

Summary of Images of Atonement

Though she employs different images to present her understanding of the atonement, nevertheless, it is the penal-substitution theory that seemed to predominate in the writings of White on atonement. In her thought, this view is closely related to the satisfaction theory. Christ is the sinner’s substitute who bore the penalty in order to satisfy the holy requirements of God’s justice. It is usually in the context of penal-substitution that she discusses the theme of justification by faith. Essentially her position is that God can justify sinners because Jesus has satisfied God’s just requirement by both His perfect obedience to the law and by bearing the penalty of the broken law as the sinner’s substitute.³⁹⁵ In this regard, White has written:

Christ bore the penalty that would have fallen upon the transgressor; and through faith the helpless, hopeless sinner becomes a partaker of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust. . . . Christ rendered perfect obedience to the law, and man could not possibly obey the holy precepts had it not been for the provision that was made for the salvation of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam.³⁹⁶

Christ’s substitutionary atonement originates in God’s love for us. White argues

thought, see Whidden, *Soteriology*, 328-396.

³⁹³E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:209. See also *ibid.*, 211.

³⁹⁴E. White, “The Sufferings of Christ,” *Present Truth*, February 18, 1886, 25.

³⁹⁵E. White, “The Law and the Gospel,” *Signs of the Times*, March 14, 1878, 81; *idem*, “The Law Exalted by Christ,” *Review and Herald*, May 23, 1899, 321.

³⁹⁶E. White, “The Law Exalted by Christ,” 321.

that “the atonement of Christ was not made in order to induce God to love those whom he otherwise hated; it was not made to produce a love that was not in existence; but it was made as a manifestation of the love that was already in God’s heart.”³⁹⁷ In her classic on the life of Christ, *Desire of Ages*, White has written on what Christ’s substitutionary atonement involves. She writes, “Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His.”³⁹⁸ Therefore, the atonement originates from the love of God; God does not love us because of the atonement provided on the cross.

In light of her argument presented above, it is clear that White employs the different images of atonement (theories) in mutually complementary, but not contradictory, ways. Nevertheless, one must point out that the heart of her atonement thought centers in the concepts of penalty, substitution, and satisfaction. For the believer, the concepts of penalty, substitution, and satisfaction become the foundation of all significant victory over sin and sinfulness.³⁹⁹ Whidden concludes that “the heart of her atonement thought revolved around the dialectic of law and grace, justice and mercy and the demonstration of this right relationship in the life of Christ—and ultimately—in the believer.”⁴⁰⁰ In this way, the death of Christ becomes the basis of a universal vindication

³⁹⁷E. White, “Christ Our Complete Salvation,” *Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895, 9; idem, *Steps to Christ*, 13.

³⁹⁸E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 25.

³⁹⁹Whidden, *Soteriology*, 125.

⁴⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 126.

of God. The dialectic of justice and mercy permeates all that God does in the process of atonement.

Cross and Resurrection

In White's writings, the resurrection is the public expression of the Father's "satisfaction in the atoning work" of Christ on behalf of humans and "was the Father's seal to the mission of Christ."⁴⁰¹ But the resurrection is not only a public expression of the Father's satisfaction with the atonement on the cross, but it is also seen as the gateway from the atonement on the cross to the continuing atonement in the heavenly sanctuary. White writes: "The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. *By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven.*"⁴⁰²

In His resurrection, Christ, as "the first fruits," "represented the great spiritual harvest to be gathered for the kingdom of God. His resurrection is the type and pledge of the resurrection of all the righteous dead."⁴⁰³ Thus, in His resurrection, He represented all those who would benefit from His work of atonement on the cross and who are thus qualified by Him to be raised to eternal life at His second coming.

Scope of Atonement

According to White, the atonement of Christ is not limited to the "elect" only but

⁴⁰¹E. White, "The Grace of God Manifested in Good Works," *Review and Herald*, January 29, 1895, 65.

⁴⁰²E. White, *Great Controversy*, 498, emphasis added.

⁴⁰³E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 786.

embraces everyone who has ever lived. Though all humans are sinners by nature, yet all are potential candidates for salvation by virtue of Christ's atonement provided on the cross for all who will have faith in Him.⁴⁰⁴ She writes,

But the atonement for a lost world was to be full, abundant, and complete. Christ's offering was exceedingly abundant to reach every soul that God had created. It could not be restricted so as not to exceed the number who would accept the great Gift. All men are not saved; yet the plan of redemption is not a waste because it does not accomplish all that its liberality has provided for. There must be enough and to spare.⁴⁰⁵

Thus, White believes that Christ's death was for all humanity, and the provision of atonement exceeds the number of those who would accept the divine gift. Her position is contrary to the Calvinistic position of a restricted atonement for only those who have been divinely predestined to accept salvation. In her comment on Christ's prayer for God's forgiveness for those who crucified Him, White comments thus, "That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that had lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God. To all, forgiveness is freely offered. 'Whosoever will' may have peace with God, and inherit eternal life."⁴⁰⁶

Thus in White's view and, in agreement with Arminian theology, she argues that while God offers salvation to all, it is still left to the human being to accept or reject the offer of salvation. While provision for salvation of all has been achieved at the cross, people are saved only when the provision is accepted. Thus it is clear that White clearly

⁴⁰⁴E. White "To Those Whom It May Concern," July 17, 1900, Letter 106, 1900 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Questions on Doctrine*, 668.

⁴⁰⁵E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 565, 566. See also idem, "Mary's Offering II," *Youth's Instructor*, July 19, 1900, 227.

⁴⁰⁶E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 745.

rejects Calvinism, though she did not name that system in her writings. William G. McLoughlin argues that the “larger view” of the atonement held by White is characteristic of the revivalism of the period between 1800 and 1860 during which there was a doctrinal shift in American Christian thought from Calvinism to Arminianism.⁴⁰⁷

McLoughlin adds that during this period (1800-1860), “Americans ceased to believe . . . in the doctrines of predestination and election preached by Edwards and Whitefield; they could no longer accept the notion that men were too depraved to play any part in their own salvation.”⁴⁰⁸ In this connection, White writes:

The doctrine of the divine decrees, unalterably fixing the character of men, had led many to a virtual rejection of the law of God. Wesley steadfastly opposed the errors of the antinomian teachers and showed that this doctrine which led to antinomianism was contrary to the Scriptures. . . . The Spirit of God is freely bestowed to enable every man to lay hold upon the means of salvation. . . . Men fail of salvation through their own willful refusal of the gift of life.⁴⁰⁹

Twenty-one years before the statement above, she articulates a synergistic position on atonement, “All who hope to be saved by the merits of the blood of Christ should realize that they themselves have something to do in securing their salvation. While it is Christ alone that can redeem us from the penalty of transgression, we are to turn from sin to obedience. Man is to be saved by faith, not by works; yet his faith must be shown by his works.”⁴¹⁰ It is therefore in line with her understanding of Scripture that she rejects the Calvinistic doctrine of divine decrees but instead emphasizes the human response to the offer of divine atonement. It is clear that while White argues for a

⁴⁰⁷William G. McLoughlin, “Revivalism,” in *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, ed. Edwin S. Gaustad (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 142.

⁴⁰⁸Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 261-262.

⁴¹⁰E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 279; idem, *Early Writings*, 218-221.

universal scope of atonement, she clearly does not subscribe to universalism.⁴¹¹

High Priestly Ministry of Christ

As discussed above, White views atonement as progressing through different phases as God works out His plan for our salvation. She uses the term “atonement” in three different senses, hence the first three phases discussed earlier. She sometimes specifically employs the term as a reference to the result of Christ’s death on the cross. At other times, she uses it to refer to the high priestly ministry of Christ. Also, she employs the term to refer to the whole plan of redemption.⁴¹² The fourth phase is implicit in her treatment of judgment as the culmination of atonement and will be treated separately. In her use of the term as a reference to the high priestly ministry of Christ and its salvific result, she writes, “Now Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary. And what is He doing? Making atonement for us,⁴¹³ cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people.”⁴¹⁴ Thus, she links the “cleansing” of the sanctuary (Dan 8:14) to the ongoing work of atonement.

Viewing atonement on the cross as the necessary prelude to atonement through the high priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, White argues that Christ ascended to His Father after He fulfilled “the condition of the atonement,” wrested the

⁴¹¹White holds that God desires to save all and offers salvation to all. However, only those who choose to accept the offer are actually saved. For a brief overview of an Arminian view of the scope of atonement, see I. Howard Marshall, “The New Testament Does Not Teach Universal Salvation,” in *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*, ed. Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Partridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 55-76.

⁴¹²Fortin, “Cross of Christ,” 138-139.

⁴¹³Her statement here is an echo of Heb 2:17.

⁴¹⁴E. White, “Advancing in Christian Experience,” MS 8, 1888 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), in E. White, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, 127. See also “Christ Spans the Guilt of Sin,” MS 21, 1895 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI).

kingdom from Satan and thus became the heir of all things.⁴¹⁵ Upon His ascension to the right hand of the Father, certain significant events took place. He “was enthroned amidst the adoration of the angels”⁴¹⁶ and was glorified with the glory which He had with the Father from all eternity. Once the inauguration ceremony was accomplished, the Holy Spirit descended in rich currents and in power upon the waiting disciples in Jerusalem. This was the signal to the waiting disciples on earth that Jesus Christ had been enthroned as both Priest and King.⁴¹⁷

White graphically depicts Christ in His offices of Priest and King in a sitting mode at the right hand of the Father while ministering in the heavenly sanctuary as our High Priest. She sees Christ serving as both Advocate and Judge throughout the Christian dispensation. Christ introduces the redeemed to His Father as His friends through the merits of His blood and from the heavenly sanctuary, He bestows on His followers the “benefits of His atonement.”⁴¹⁸ Emphasizing the necessity of faith on the part of believers, she asserts that “it is those who by faith follow Jesus in the great work of the atonement who receive the benefits of His mediation in their behalf, while those who reject the light which brings to view this work of ministration are not benefited thereby.”⁴¹⁹ She also writes that the Holy Spirit also is intimately connected with the work of atonement since

⁴¹⁵E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 29. See also idem, “To Iowa Conference,” August 28, 1902, Letter 136, 1902 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Questions on Doctrine*, 670.

⁴¹⁶E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 38.

⁴¹⁷*Ibid.*, 39.

⁴¹⁸E. White, *Early Writings*, 260; idem, *Great Controversy*, 42.

⁴¹⁹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 430.

He intercedes for us.⁴²⁰ Thus it is evident that she believes that all the members of the Trinity are involved in atonement.

White writes, “The intercession of Christ in man’s behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven.”⁴²¹ The high priestly intercession of Christ is essential to her view of atonement because, as shown earlier, she rejects the doctrine of divine decrees. In her view, the benefits of the atoning sacrifice must be personally applied to the believer for it to be effective.

Commenting on the Passover event (Exod 12), she writes, “It was not enough that the paschal lamb be slain; its blood must be sprinkled upon the doorposts; so the merits of Christ’s blood must be applied to the soul. We must believe, not only that He died for the world, but that He died for us individually. We must appropriate to ourselves the virtue of the atoning sacrifice.”⁴²² Christ applies the benefits of the atonement He provided on the cross to the believer through His high priestly ministry.

White presents Christ as fulfilling the type of both the daily and the yearly Levitical priestly ministration in two consecutive periods from His inauguration until the consummation of all things. Thus she sees Christ as fulfilling the first apartment (Holy Place) phase of His heavenly ministry from His ascension to 1844, and as fulfilling the second apartment (Most Holy Place) phase from 1844 to the close of human probation. While the first apartment ministry is focused on His intercession, the second apartment

⁴²⁰White writes that the Spirit “works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving” (MS 50, 1900, quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:344). See also *idem*, *Evangelism*, 187.

⁴²¹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 489.

⁴²²E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 277.

ministry is focused on His work of judgment or what is also referred to as the final atonement.⁴²³ Christ's ministry in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary consists of His heavenly intercessory mediation in which He pleads His blood on behalf of repentant sinners before the Father.⁴²⁴ This intercession continues during His ministry in the second apartment.

Heavenly Mediation

White carefully outlines the earthly sanctuary services as types of the heavenly priestly ministry of Christ. She writes, "The ministration of the earthly sanctuary consisted of two divisions; the priests ministered daily in the holy place, while once a year the high priest performed a special work of atonement in the most holy, for the cleansing of the sanctuary."⁴²⁵ In the first division, each day, "the repentant sinner brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle and, placing his hand upon the victim's head, confessed his sins, thus in figure transferring them from himself to the innocent sacrifice. The animal was then slain."⁴²⁶

In the light of Lev 17:11⁴²⁷ (which she quotes), White writes further,

The broken law of God demanded the life of the transgressor. The blood, representing the forfeited life of the sinner, whose guilt the victim bore, was carried by the priest into the holy place and sprinkled before the veil, behind which was the ark containing the law that the sinner had transgressed. By this ceremony the sin was, through the blood, transferred in figure to the sanctuary. In some cases the blood was not taken into the holy place; but the flesh was then to

⁴²³E. White, *Great Controversy*, 409-432; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 343-358.

⁴²⁴E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357; Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 49-61.

⁴²⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, 418.

⁴²⁶Ibid.

⁴²⁷"For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul" (Lev 17:11).

be eaten by the priest, as Moses directed the sons of Aaron, saying: “God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation.” Lev 10:17. Both ceremonies alike symbolized the transfer of the sin from the penitent to the sanctuary.⁴²⁸

Clearly underlining the crucial importance of the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ for Seventh-day Adventist theology, White writes, “The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith.”⁴²⁹ But in order to understand White’s doctrine of the high priestly ministry of Christ, one must note that she bases her position on a literal understanding of Scripture, especially with regard to the parallels between the earthly sanctuary and its services and the heavenly sanctuary and its ministration. In this connection, she writes, “The holy places of the sanctuary in heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth.”⁴³⁰ For her, the heavenly sanctuary is the greater reality of which the earthly sanctuary was a type.⁴³¹

Christ’s heavenly ministry begins with His mediation following His ascension. He entered upon this phase of atonement in the power of His sacrificial offering. Whereas atonement took place at the cross, its application in the life of the believer comes to fruition through Christ’s mediatorial work.⁴³² White writes, “As Christ at His ascension appeared in the presence of God to plead His blood in behalf of penitent believers, so the priest in the daily ministration sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice in the holy place in the

⁴²⁸E. White, *Great Controversy*, 418.

⁴²⁹E. White “To Geo. C. Tenney,” July 2, 1906, Letter 208, 1906 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI).

⁴³⁰E. White, *Great Controversy*, 414. See also idem, “To Brother and Sister Palmer,” July 8, 1904, Letter 233, 1904 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in *Questions on Doctrines*, 686; and Fortin, “Ellen G. White’s Conceptual Understanding of the Sanctuary and Hermeneutics,” 160-166.

⁴³¹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 414; idem, “To Brother and Sister Palmer,” quoted in *Questions on Doctrine*, 686.

⁴³²Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 55. See also *Questions on Doctrine*, 369-390.

sinner's behalf."⁴³³ This mediation is so powerful that nothing can negate it except the individual's own rejection of the wonderful provision.⁴³⁴ White argues that though "Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him in faith," and "will cleanse them from all defilement if they will let Him," but those who "cling to their sins" "can not possibly be saved."⁴³⁵

In His office as our intercessor Christ "executes His self-appointed work, holding before God the censer containing His own spotless merits and the prayers, confessions, and thanksgiving of His people. Perfumed with the fragrance of His righteousness, these ascend to God as a sweet savor. The offering is wholly acceptable, and pardon covers all transgression."⁴³⁶ It is the presence of the wholly deserving Christ that wins for us the forgiveness of sins that we request. White writes, "[Christ] places the whole virtue of His righteousness on the side of the suppliant. He pleads for man; and man, in need of divine help, pleads for himself in the presence of God, using the influence of the One who gave His life for the life of the world. As we acknowledge before God our appreciation of Christ's merits, fragrance is given to our intercessions."⁴³⁷ Thus, human cooperation is still necessary in order that the heavenly priestly ministry of Christ may be effective for the repentant sinner.⁴³⁸

Just as White has argued that, in one sense, Christ died for all humans, so also she

⁴³³E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357. See also idem, *Steps to Christ*, 73-74.

⁴³⁴E. White, "God's Care of His Church," *Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1900, par. 12.

⁴³⁵Ibid.

⁴³⁶Ibid.; idem, *Early Writings*, 344.

⁴³⁷E. White, "Christ: The Medium of Prayer and Blessing," *Signs of the Times*, April 14, 1909, 3.

⁴³⁸E. White, "God's Care for His Church," *Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1900.

argues that Christ “stands before God as the representative of our race.”⁴³⁹ The atonement provided by Christ on the cross includes “the whole human family” and therefore, “no one, high or low, rich or poor, free or bond, has been left out of the plan of redemption.”⁴⁴⁰ Potentially, all humans are candidates for His heavenly intercession. But in another sense, “*In the courts above, Christ is pleading for His church—pleading for those for whom He has paid the redemption price of His blood.*”⁴⁴¹ Again it is evident that she combines the opposites, the universal and the particular, in her presentation of the atonement.

In relation to the link of the cross to the heavenly intercession, White writes: “A daily and yearly typical atonement is no longer to be made, but the atoning sacrifice through a mediator is essential because of the constant commission of sin. Jesus is officiating in the presence of God, offering up his shed blood.”⁴⁴² Wood argues that in the light of the points above, “Christ’s mediation continues as long as there are sinners committing sins, and subsequently, truly repenting.”⁴⁴³ This does not counter White’s consistent view that sinners must in the long run be conformed to the law of God. She writes, “Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and,

⁴³⁹E. White, “Have You the Wedding Garment? II,” *Youth Instructor*, October 28, 1897, 338.

⁴⁴⁰E. White to “To Whom It May Concern,” “Sunnyside,” Cooranbong, 1900, quoted in *Battle Creek Letters* (Payson, AZ: Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1984), 39; idem, “Uplifted Savior,” *Review and Herald*, September 29, 1896, 613-614.

⁴⁴¹E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 552, 553; idem, *Special Testimony to Battle Creek Church* (Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1896); “The Atonement—Ministry Applies and Completes Transaction of Cross,” White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol, vol. 7A., 479.

⁴⁴²E. White, MS 50, 1900, quoted in “Intercession of Chris and His Spirit—White Comments on Romans 8:26, 34,” *SDA Bible Commentary*, 6:1077.

⁴⁴³Wood, “Investigative Judgment,” 643.

claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father and the holy angels, saying: I know them by name.”⁴⁴⁴

While White accepts that we need to be cleansed from all earthliness, till we reflect the image of Christ, she nevertheless argues that “we cannot say, ‘I am sinless,’ till this vile body is changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body.”⁴⁴⁵ She adds, “But if we constantly seek to follow Jesus, the blessed hope is ours of standing before the throne of God without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; complete in Christ, robed in his righteousness and perfection.”⁴⁴⁶ In the context of the main thrust of her theological thoughts, it is clearly evident that for White, the human will and its freedom of choice are critical elements in the human response to Christ’s work of salvation. However, that does not mean that they earn any merit which makes them deserve atonement.⁴⁴⁷

In White’s thought, the heavenly intercession of Christ does not mean an endless continuation of sin in the life of the repentant sinner. Its goal is to bring the sinner into a state of repentance in which his/her character takes on the likeness of Christ and he/she stops sinning in preparation for the final eradication of sin at the second coming of Christ. This leads us to a discussion of the concept of the eschatological phase of Christ’s heavenly ministry which brings every living person to a final choice about God’s

⁴⁴⁴E. White, *Great Controversy*, 484. See also her article, “Abide in Me,” *Signs of the Times*, March 23, 1888, 178, where she wrote that “We cannot say, ‘I am sinless,’ till this vile body is changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body.”

⁴⁴⁵E. White, “Abide in Me,” *Signs of the Times*, 178.

⁴⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁷E. White, MS 50, 1900, quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:342-343. For a discussion of White’s doctrine of perfection, see Whidden, *Soteriology of Ellen G. White*, 328-396. For a broad discussion of the doctrine of perfection in Seventh-day Adventist theology, see Herbert E. Douglass, et al., *Perfection: The Impossible Possibility* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1975). In White’s thought, penitent sinners will retain their sinful natures until glorification, and thus there will never be a time when their sanctification will ever be perfect enough to become meritorious.

authority and law and thus assures the resolution of the great controversy between Christ and Satan.

Atonement as Judgment

As discussed above, White views atonement in phases beginning with the life, suffering, death, and high priestly ministry of Christ. However, atonement is only fully achieved when the different phases of the judgment take place and the peace and harmony that existed between creation and God is fully restored. The judgment is the means to that final restoration. White presents the judgment in four phases, namely, judgment on sin at the cross, the pre-advent investigative judgment, post-advent millennial judgment, and post-millennial executive judgment.

Judgment on Sin at the Cross

In White's view, Jesus endured the "wrath of divine justice" when He became "sin itself" as our Substitute on Calvary.⁴⁴⁸ Judgment against sin was accomplished in the experience of Jesus on Calvary and the immutability of God's law was established.⁴⁴⁹ White writes, "The death of Christ proclaimed the justice of His Father's law in punishing the transgressor, in that He consented to suffer the penalty of the law Himself in order to save fallen man from its curse. The death of God's beloved Son on the cross shows the immutability of the law of God."⁴⁵⁰ The cross is a public judgment on sin

⁴⁴⁸E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 755-756.

⁴⁴⁹E. White, "The Law from Sinai," *Signs of the Times*, March 7, 1878, 73; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 686, 753.

⁴⁵⁰E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:201.

before the universe.⁴⁵¹ It is God's answer to the sin problem. For White, Christ's agony on the cross was not something caused by wicked men, but was an action initiated by the Father and voluntarily accepted by Jesus. It is a manifestation of the judgment of the Godhead on sin.⁴⁵²

Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment

This is the second phase of the judgment. The death of Christ, His post-ascension mediation, and the pre-advent investigative judgment are phases of the atonement that are likened to the priestly work that transpired in the earthly sanctuary.⁴⁵³ The word "pre-Advent" in this aspect of the atonement refers to the timing of this part of the final judgment. It pertains to the last period of history referred to as the "time of the end"⁴⁵⁴ and takes place before the second advent of Jesus. It refers to God's investigation, in the presence of heavenly beings, of the life-records of all of God's faithful people.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵¹Heppenstall, "Subjective and Objective Aspects of the Atonement," in *Sanctuary and Atonement*, 688.

⁴⁵²*Ibid.*, 689.

⁴⁵³Wood, "Investigative Judgment," 645.

⁴⁵⁴The prophetic "time of the end" refers to the time period between the end of the 1260 years prophecy (of Dan 7, Rev 12 and 13) and the Second Advent of Christ. For a discussion of the pre-advent judgment, see Gerhard F. Hasel, "Divine Judgment," in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 833-846, and Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 107-129; William H. Shea, "Theological Importance of the PreAdvent Judgment," in *70 Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Hagerstown, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 323-332. For a discussion of the development and the importance of the pre-advent investigative judgment in Adventist theology, see C. Mervyn Maxwell, "Sanctuary and Atonement in SDA Theology: An Historical Survey," and "The Investigative Judgment: Its Early Development," in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, 516-544, 545-581; and Paul A. Gordon, *The Sanctuary, 1844, and the Pioneers* (Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of SDA, 2000), 115-134.

⁴⁵⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, 480; Hasel, "Divine Judgment," 833.

Day of Atonement Imagery

The Day of Atonement ritual is very important to White's understanding of this phase of the atonement. Due to the transference of the record of forgiven sins into the sanctuary in the daily services, something special was to happen on the of Day of Atonement or the yearly service. White identifies the special activity as follows: "God commanded that an atonement be made for each of the sacred apartments"⁴⁵⁶ of the earthly sanctuary (Lev 16:16) on the Day of Atonement.⁴⁵⁷ Therefore, "once a year, on the great Day of Atonement, the priest entered the most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary."⁴⁵⁸

Closely following the biblical account (found in Lev 16:16), White writes that on that day, "two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were cast upon them, 'one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.' Verse 8. The goat upon which fell the lot for the Lord was to be slain as a sin offering for the people."⁴⁵⁹ In the light of Heb 9:22, 23, White argues that "the cleansing, both in the typical and in the real service, must be accomplished with blood: in the former, with the blood of animals; in the latter, with the blood of Christ."⁴⁶⁰ In the earthly cleansing, the blood of the Lord's goat suffices, but in the heavenly, only the blood of Christ is effective

⁴⁵⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 418-419.

⁴⁵⁷"So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness" (NKJV).

⁴⁵⁸E. White, *Great Controversy*, 419.

⁴⁵⁹Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰Ibid., 417-418.

for the cleansing.

It is important to note that no “sin-laden” blood was transferred into the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement. The Lord’s goat is not “laden with sin” though it is a sin offering. There was no transfer of sin from the priest to the Lord’s goat and therefore the sprinkling of its blood serves as a confirmation of the daily forgiveness that God has already granted to the believers in the first-apartment mediatorial ministry (Lev 16:9, 15-16: “And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD’s lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. . . . Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering . . . bring its blood inside the veil, . . . and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place . . . for all their sins”).

However, the biblical record clearly states that there was transfer of sins of the Israelites from the priest to the scape goat who bears them into the wilderness (Lev 16:21-22: “Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat”). This suggests that the Day of Atonement ministry is dealing with cases that have been closed either through death or the acceptance of forgiveness obtained through repentance, that is, sealed cases.⁴⁶¹

White states further that the priest was to bring the blood of the slain goat into the Most Holy Place “and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. The

⁴⁶¹In this regard, Roy E. Gane has argued that “unlike the purification offerings that remedy moral faults throughout the year (Lev.4-5, etc), the special sacrifices on the Day of Purgation that primarily accomplish purification of the sanctuary and secondarily achieve the moral cleansing of God’s people are not prerequisite to direct divine forgiveness” (*Leviticus, Numbers, The NIV Application Commentary* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004], 278). See also S. Y. Agnon, *Days of Awe* (New York: Schocken, 1948), 212.

blood was also to be sprinkled upon the altar of incense that was before the veil.”⁴⁶² She adds, “The whole ceremony was designed to impress the Israelites with the holiness of God and His abhorrence of sin; and, further, to show them that they could not come in contact with sin without becoming polluted. Every man was required to afflict his soul while this work of atonement was going forward.”⁴⁶³ Explaining the typological meaning of the daily ministration, she writes,

Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner’s stead; but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. By the offering of blood the sinner acknowledged the authority of the law, confessed his guilt in transgression, and expressed his desire for pardon through faith in a Redeemer to come; but he was not yet entirely released from the condemnation of the law.⁴⁶⁴

The “sin was not canceled” in the sense that the record of sin is kept in the heavenly sanctuary. It is this record of sin that defiles the sanctuary and makes its cleansing necessary.

White writes concerning the antitypical service of Christ following His ascension:

For eighteen centuries this work of ministration [mediation] continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ’s work for the redemption of men is completed there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2300 days [Dan 8:14] ended. At that time, as foretold by Daniel the prophet, our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶²E. White, *Great Controversy*, 419.

⁴⁶³Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴Ibid., 420. See also idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357.

⁴⁶⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, 421. See also idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357, 358.

Since the sins of the believers “still remained upon the books of record,” and were “not canceled,” at the time forgiveness was extended to the believers in the daily ministrations, so also in the Christian dispensation following the atonement on the cross, the sins of Christian believers, though forgiven, are still recorded in the heavenly sanctuary. A final disposition has not yet been made of the sins. That will happen in the antitypical Day of Atonement during the cleansing of the sanctuary which began in 1844. Thus she counters the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election and perseverance of the saints. The salvation of believers is confirmed only after the cleansing of the sanctuary. She writes, “Since the dead are to be judged out of the things written in the books, it is impossible that the sins of men should be blotted out until after the judgment at which their cases are to be investigated.”⁴⁶⁶

Still drawing further parallels from the type to the antitype, she writes further,

As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin offering and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary, so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded.⁴⁶⁷

White points out that the cleansing of record of forgiven sins in the heavenly sanctuary involves the “investigative judgment” in order “to determine who, through repentance of sin and faith in Christ, are entitled to the benefits of His atonement.”⁴⁶⁸ She arrives at the doctrine of the investigative judgment through a solid and biblically based

⁴⁶⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 485.

⁴⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 421-422.

⁴⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 422.

argument. She states that “in Heb 9 [vv. 22-23], the cleansing of both the earthly and heavenly sanctuary is plainly taught.”⁴⁶⁹ She writes, “The cleansing of the sanctuary therefore involves a work of investigation—a work of judgment. This work must be performed prior to the coming of Christ to redeem His people; for when He comes, His reward is with Him to give to every man according to his works. Revelation 22:12.”⁴⁷⁰ Thus, the investigative judgment commences before the second coming of Christ.

White argues further that the “cleansing of the sanctuary” (Dan 8:14) and the First Angel’s Message (Rev 14:7) that announces that “the hour of His judgment has come,” refer to the same event, the investigative judgment that commences at the end of the 2300 days.⁴⁷¹ Employing historicist hermeneutical principles of interpretation, she argues that the investigative judgment began in 1844.⁴⁷² White’s views on the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment have been criticized over the years both from within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and outside of the church.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁹Ibid., 417.

⁴⁷⁰Ibid., 422.

⁴⁷¹Ibid., 424.

⁴⁷²E. White, *Great Controversy*, 422-424, 480.

⁴⁷³Critics of White’s views on heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment have come both from within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and from without the church. Critics from within the church include O. R. L. Crosier (1820-1913); Dudley M. Canright (1840-1919), *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced* (Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1894); Albion Fox Ballenger (1861-1921), *An Examination of Forty Fatal Errors Regarding the Atonement* (Riverside, CA: A. F. Ballenger, n.d.); Louis Richard Conradi (1856-1939); and Desmond Ford, *Daniel 8:14: The Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment*, 2 vols. (Escondido, CA: Operation Glacier View, 1980). External critics include Donald G. Barnhouse, “Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?” *Eternity* 7 (September 1956): 44; Walter R. Martin, *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1960); Norman F. Douty, *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1962); Anthony H. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963); Walter Rea, *The White Lie* (Turlock, CA: M & R Publications, 1982); Dale Ratzlaff, *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists* (Sedona, AZ: Life Assurance Ministries, 1996); and Malcom Bull and Keith Lockhart, *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007). Another important critic of White is Ronald L. Numbers, and his major critique of White’s writings on health issues is found in his *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008).

The purpose of the pre-advent judgment is to secure a universal verdict in favor of the saints prior to the second coming of Christ. The all-knowing God does not need an investigative judgment in order to decide on who will be finally saved or lost. The purpose of the investigative judgment is the vindication of the saints who have been often maligned and condemned by worldly powers. Judgment from the heavenly sanctuary also reveals that only God knows who the saved really are.⁴⁷⁴ The focus in this judgment is the professed people of God. White writes, “In the typical service only those who had come before God with confession and repentance, and whose sins, through the blood of the sin offering, were transferred to the sanctuary, had a part in the service of the Day of Atonement. So in the great day of final atonement and investigative judgment the only cases considered are those of the professed people of God.”⁴⁷⁵ God the Father is the judge and Jesus is the mediator.⁴⁷⁶ The Moral Law of God (the Ten Commandments) is the standard by which people are judged.⁴⁷⁷ The evidence that will constitute the basis of the judgment is the life records of God’s professed people.⁴⁷⁸

In this phase of Christ’s high priestly ministry, White pictures Jesus as coming to the Father for the work of the pre-advent judgment which will continue until He is about to come back to earth. Following the imagery of Dan 7, she writes, “Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest enters the holy of holies and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man—to

⁴⁷⁴Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 114, 117.

⁴⁷⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, 480.

⁴⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 480, 482.

⁴⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 482.

⁴⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 483; Hasel, “Divine Judgment,” 841.

perform the work of investigative judgment and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.”⁴⁷⁹ She is however careful to avoid replacing intercession by judgment. What she does is to add eschatological judgment to the ongoing work of intercession (mediation).

When in the typical service the high priest left the holy on the Day of Atonement, he went in before God to present the blood of the sin offering in behalf of all Israel who truly repented of their sins. So Christ had only completed one part of His work as our intercessor, to enter upon another portion of the work, and He still pleaded His blood before the Father in behalf of sinners.⁴⁸⁰

The investigative judgment is general as well as specific and proceeds chronologically. White writes: “As the books of record are opened in the judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected.”⁴⁸¹ The acceptance or rejection of names is a “work of examination of character,” that is, that “of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God.”⁴⁸² The work is efficacious in the sense that it counters the deception of Satan that the law cannot be kept. Rather the law is demonstrated to be just and that humans can keep it if they are empowered by divine grace.

The new covenant promise is fulfilled in that the repentant believers have the law written in their hearts. Consequently, character judgment is a basis for analyzing genuine faith. She writes that since the characters of such believers, who “have become partakers

⁴⁷⁹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 480.

⁴⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 429.

⁴⁸¹*Ibid.*, 483; *idem*, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:309.

⁴⁸²E. White, *Great Controversy*, 428; *idem*, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 448.

of the righteousness of Christ [by faith],”⁴⁸³ “are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life.”⁴⁸⁴ She clearly teaches conditional immortality based on obedience to God’s law.⁴⁸⁵ It is important to point out that though White advocates character perfection (achieved through a faith union with Christ) for the redeemed before glorification, she never taught that the redeemed possess perfection of nature before glorification.⁴⁸⁶ In her thought, “nature” usually refers to a person’s natural inheritance, while “Character” generally refers to the moral qualities a person develops due to or in spite of the natural inheritance.⁴⁸⁷

“Blotting Out” of Sin

Wood has noted that character perfection in White’s thought is a process which takes place within an ongoing relationship with God and is the opposite of the “unpardonable sin.”⁴⁸⁸ Since human sinning and repenting are subject to change of mind, depending on human response to God’s call to repentance, and in accord with the

⁴⁸³E. White, *Great Controversy*, 483.

⁴⁸⁴*Ibid.* White also cites the parable of the wedding feast in Matt 22 as biblical support for the idea that the investigative judgment involves judging the character of professed believers in Christ for determining who is eventually accepted or rejected to reign with Christ (*Great Controversy*, 428).

⁴⁸⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, 533, 588; *idem*, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Company, 1890), 149.

⁴⁸⁶E. White, *In Heavenly Places*, 195, 196, (originally from Letter 26d 1887); *idem*, “Abide in Me,” *Signs of the Times*, March 23, 1888, 178. For a discussion that emphasizes the importance of the character development of God’s last-day people, see Herbert E. Douglass, *Why Jesus Waits* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2001), 85-96. See also General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “Jesus The Model Man,” *Adult Sabbath School Lessons* (April-June 1977), 104-111, written by Douglass.

⁴⁸⁷Woodrow W. Whidden, *Ellen White on the Humanity of Christ* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Institute for Theological Advancement, 1997), 30, footnote 2.

⁴⁸⁸Wood, “Investigative Judgment,” 653. For White’s thoughts on the “unpardonable sin,” see “Our Words—No.1,” *Review and Herald*, January 18, 1898, 37; “Mrs. E. G. White to H. T. Nelson,”

sanctuary typology, the record of sin is not blotted out of the heavenly records. She puts the point across clearly in this passage: “The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the Day of Atonement.”⁴⁸⁹

White argues that the investigative judgment precedes the “blotting” out of sins spoken of in Acts 3:19 and that it is after both of these interrelated events that Christ comes the second time to reward His people.⁴⁹⁰ But while Jesus is in the Most Holy Place pleading for us before the Father, “we are complete in him, accepted in the Beloved, only as we abide in him by faith.”⁴⁹¹ Thus the blotting out of sin is the just and merciful reaction of God to the voluntary rejection of sin in believers. Here as in other critical areas of her atonement theology, her Arminian theological position comes out in bold relief. While God is the One who blots out sin in the lives of His people, everything about their moral state and salvation is not solely and sovereignly predetermined by an all-powerful God. In the investigative judgment, our choices count and are respected by God.

In the investigative judgment only those who have responded to the work of Christ are considered. Their names are written in the book of life. However, not every candidate for salvation remains faithful. White writes, “The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. If any of these depart from Him,

Review and Herald, July 30, 1901, 495, 496; *Desire of Ages*, 324.

⁴⁸⁹E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357.

⁴⁹⁰E. White, *Great Controversy*, 485-486.

⁴⁹¹E. White, “Accepted in Christ,” *Signs of the Times*, July 4, 1892, 534.

and by stubborn persistence in sin become finally hardened against the influences of His Holy Spirit, their names will in the judgment be blotted from the book of life, and they themselves will be devoted to destruction.”⁴⁹² Her position on the investigative judgment makes it clear that Christ’s death will not automatically save all and also denies that Christ’s death was only for those predestined to be saved. One must also take note of the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding and empowering God’s people throughout their Christian experiences, especially in the time of the investigative judgment, as this is very critical to the final atonement.

White writes that “sins that have not been repented of and forsaken will not be pardoned and blotted out of the books of record, but will stand to witness against the sinner in the day of God.”⁴⁹³ In her view, the judgment involves both actions and motives and as such only the infinite God can make such a judgment: “No value is attached to a mere profession of faith in Christ; only the love which is shown by works is counted genuine. Yet it is love alone which in the sight of Heaven makes any act of value.”⁴⁹⁴

In the light of the evidence of Scripture, the Christian has a definite work to do, that is, to “enter” the heavenly sanctuary with Christ: “Unless we enter the sanctuary above, and unite with Christ in working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, we shall be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and shall be pronounced wanting.”⁴⁹⁵ The “entering with Christ” into the heavenly sanctuary (in repentance and

⁴⁹²E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 326.

⁴⁹³E. White, *Great Controversy*, 486. See also idem, “The Power of the Truth,” *Signs of the Times*, August 6, 1885, 466.

⁴⁹⁴E. White, *Great Controversy*, 487.

⁴⁹⁵E. White, MS 168, 1898 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI), quoted in “Entering the Sanctuary with Christ,” *SDA Bible Commentary*, 7:933-934.

faith) must be done before the investigative judgment closes, otherwise it will be too late.⁴⁹⁶

Since White views the investigative judgment as essentially chronological, it is to be expected that the work which begins with “those who first lived upon the earth” will close with the cases of those still living.⁴⁹⁷ She writes: “Now, when the great work of judging the living is about to begin, shall we allow unsanctified ambition to take possession of the heart?”⁴⁹⁸ The key eschatological issue in her view is “whether we shall receive the mark of the beast or his image, or the seal of the living God.”⁴⁹⁹ White sees the beast or his image as an external political-economic-religious authority apart from God, which stands in opposition to the sealing of the character of God’s last-day people.⁵⁰⁰

When the high priestly ministry of Christ ends, then the stage is set for the second coming of Christ, His millennial reign, the post-advent millennial judgment, and the post-millennial executive judgment. But before all these events will take place, God’s remnant people will preach the last warning message to people living on earth.⁵⁰¹

Post-Advent Millennial Judgment

This is the third phase of the judgment. White states that after Christ takes the redeemed to heaven at His second advent, the millennial judgment begins. Whereas the

⁴⁹⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 620-621.

⁴⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 483, 490.

⁴⁹⁸E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:130.

⁴⁹⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁰Wood, “Investigative Judgment,” 655.

⁵⁰¹E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:206-207.

focus of the investigative judgment is on the professed believers in Christ, the focus of the millennial judgment is on the wicked. This judgment is totally separate from the investigative judgment.⁵⁰² She writes:

Then I saw thrones, and Jesus and the redeemed saints sat upon them; and the saints reigned as kings and priests unto God. Christ, in union with His people, judged the wicked dead, comparing their acts with the statute book, the Word of God, and deciding every case according to the deeds done in the body. . . . Satan also and his angels were judged by Jesus and the saints.⁵⁰³

This judgment begins and ends with the millennial reign of Christ with His redeemed people, just before the second resurrection and the descent of the New Jerusalem.⁵⁰⁴

Evidence is provided by the books of heaven, specifically “the book of life and the book of death,” and the Bible serves as a statute book.⁵⁰⁵

White regards the devil as the antitype of the scapegoat in the typical service.

Jesus is not the scapegoat. She writes,

As the priest, in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the scapegoat, so Christ will place all these sins upon Satan, the originator and instigator of sin. The scapegoat, bearing the sins of Israel, was sent away ‘unto a land not inhabited’ (Leviticus 16:22); so Satan, bearing the guilt of all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit, will be for a thousand years confined to the earth, which will then be desolate, without inhabitant.⁵⁰⁶

The purpose of this judgment is to determine the punishment that is due the wicked according to their works.

⁵⁰²E. White, *Great Controversy*, 479-481.

⁵⁰³E. White, *Early Writings*, 290, 291. See also idem, *Great Controversy*, 660, 661.

⁵⁰⁴E. White, *Early Writings*, 290, 291.

⁵⁰⁵Ibid., 52.

⁵⁰⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 485, 658.

Post-Millennial Executive Judgment

This is the fourth phase of the judgment. Following the millennial judgment, the second resurrection (that is, the resurrection of the wicked) takes place at the time that Christ returns to earth with His redeemed saints at the end of the millennium. At that time, Satan prepares to attack the New Jerusalem as it comes down from heaven. It is at this time that Jesus is crowned, in the presence of all those who have ever lived on earth, both the redeemed and the condemned wicked, as well as Satan and his evil angels.⁵⁰⁷

White asserts, “And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people.”⁵⁰⁸ She states further that like the scapegoat that is led to “an uninhabited land” (Lev 16:22), Satan “will at last suffer the full penalty of sin in the fires that shall destroy all the wicked” at the time when “the great plan of redemption will reach its accomplishment in the final eradication of sin and the deliverance of all who have been willing to renounce evil.”⁵⁰⁹

White states the charge against the wicked and the sentence against them: “The whole wicked world stands arraigned at the bar of God on the charge of high treason against the government of heaven. They have none to plead their cause; they are without excuse; and the sentence of eternal death is pronounced against them.”⁵¹⁰ Satan’s true character stands exposed and it is now evident to all that “the wages of sin is not noble

⁵⁰⁷E. White, *Great Controversy*, 663-666.

⁵⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 666.

⁵⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 485-486. See also *idem*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 358.

⁵¹⁰E. White, *Great Controversy*, 668.

independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death”⁵¹¹ and that “no cause for sin exists.”⁵¹² In the light of these realities, the impenitent, along with all other created beings, finally acknowledge God’s truthfulness and justice in the great controversy.⁵¹³ At this time, Satan himself “bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence.”⁵¹⁴ At last, “God’s wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully vindicated,”⁵¹⁵ as well as His government and law.⁵¹⁶

At that time, fire then “comes down from God out of heaven. The earth is broken up. The weapons concealed in its depths are drawn forth. Devouring flames burst from every yawning chasm. The very rocks are on fire.”⁵¹⁷ In a vivid depiction of the end of sin and sinners, White writes,

All are punished “according to their deeds.” The sins of the righteous having been transferred to Satan, he is made to suffer not only for his own rebellion, but for all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit. His punishment is to be far greater than that of those whom he has deceived. . . . In the cleansing flames the wicked are at last destroyed, root and branch. . . . The full penalty of the law has been visited; the demands of justice have been met; and heaven and earth, beholding, declare the righteousness of Jehovah. Satan’s work of ruin is forever ended.⁵¹⁸

Thus, it is clear that following the final judgment, God’s character of love and His government will be vindicated and Satan will be fully revealed as the villain that he really

⁵¹¹Ibid.

⁵¹²Ibid., 503.

⁵¹³Ibid., 671.

⁵¹⁴Ibid., 670.

⁵¹⁵Ibid.

⁵¹⁶Ibid., 670-671; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 338-340; idem, “The Great Standard of Righteousness,” *Review and Herald*, May 7, 1901, 289.

⁵¹⁷E. White, *Great Controversy*, 672.

⁵¹⁸Ibid., 673.

is. In the light of the above, it is not surprising that White views atonement unfolding in phases, which includes His sacrificial death on the cross, His high priestly ministry, His life of suffering for our redemption, and judgment.

Summary

White's concept of atonement is much broader than that of most other theologians. For her, atonement is linear and not punctiliar. In her view, Christ's atoning ministry has four major phases. The first is the earthly phase which begins with His incarnation and sufferings and the entire work of redemption. The second is the atoning work of Christ on the cross. The third phase is the heavenly high priestly ministry that began at the ascension in a real heavenly sanctuary. She upholds both a full and complete atonement at the cross and a continuing atonement in the heavenly sanctuary. The fourth phase is the judgment (in four phases) when the whole universe will be fully reconciled to God and everything will be restored to their original state before sin.

A key phrase for the atoning work of Christ in White's writings is the "sufferings of Christ"—a suffering that He endured throughout His life. "Justice demanded the sufferings of a man. . . . The suffering of Christ was in correspondence with His spotless purity, His depth of agony, proportionate to the dignity and grandeur of His character."⁵¹⁹ She depicts Christ's suffering under the weight of sins of the whole world as constituting atonement in a special sense.

White's understanding of the atonement is implicit, at least to some extent, in her great controversy theme. Her understanding of the atonement is essentially an elaboration

⁵¹⁹E. White, MS 42, 1901 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI).

of the theme of the relationship of justice and mercy as the two essential sides to the coin of God's character of love. White's concept of the atonement could be defined as what God has done, is doing, and will do in order to reconcile repentant sinners to Himself. The great controversy theme itself is White's theological solution to the problem of evil and is a basic presupposition for White's theology of atonement, perhaps next to the theme of God's love.

White's understanding of freewill has an important role to play in her conception of atonement. She views the provision of the atonement on the cross as "a ransom for all" (1 Tim 2:6), even though it is only efficient for believers who respond to God's offer of salvation. The atonement on the cross is a display of the prevenient grace of God which makes provision for the salvation of all human beings. Though all humans are sinners by nature, yet all are candidates for salvation by virtue of Christ's atonement. She emphasizes the need for human cooperation in the work of salvation. Though she argues that provision for salvation of all humans has been made by Christ, she denies universalism.

White argues that atonement vindicates the fact that God's law is changeless and also enhances in all created beings a deeper appreciation of the nature, role, and holiness of the law of God. Atonement on the cross also provides security against defection into sin not just by redeemed humans, but among the holy angels and other unfallen beings in other worlds. Also in White's theology, divine love is a combination of infinite justice and infinite mercy, and justice is a component of love, not a quality distinct from it. Both justice and mercy are mutually interdependent aspects of God's love. For White, it is at the last judgment that the atonement is truly completed. At this time, all, especially the

unrepentant humans and angels, will see God's justice in saving the redeemed and condemning the lost and will acknowledge His justice and mercy. Judgment and atonement are therefore two facets of the same theme in both the Bible and White's thought.

The discussion must now turn to a comparative analysis of the atonement theologies of both Stott and White in order to highlight their common elements and their differences. The goal is to offer possible theological and historical explanations for such common elements and differences.

CHAPTER V

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ATONEMENT THEOLOGIES OF STOTT AND WHITE

Introduction

The atonement theologies of John Stott and Ellen White share many commonalities due to their common commitment to evangelical Protestantism. But there are also differences that are very prominent which need to be accounted for, especially in view of the fact that both writers have articulated their positions from an evangelical Christian viewpoint that is committed to a penal-substitutionary view of atonement. The areas of agreement include some of their assumptions, presuppositions, aspects of their respective methodologies, the centrality of the cross, and a penal-substitutionary view of atonement.

Some of the critical differences also arise in their respective presentations of the above-mentioned concepts. The more prominent differences arise in their presentations of the achievement of the cross and scope of atonement, the high priestly ministry of Christ, and the judgment. On the basis of the discussion of their respective theologies (in chapters 3 and 4), it is evident that they both belong to the conservative wing of the evangelical movement.

Methodology, Assumptions, and Presuppositions

In order to clearly delineate the similarities and differences between the

atonement theologies of Stott and White, the discussion under this section will begin with methodology and later expand to include assumptions and presuppositions.

Methodology

Stott's methodology includes three considerations, namely, Scripture, tradition, and reason.¹ However, he asserts that Scripture is the "supreme and infallible rule which determines the beliefs and practices of the church."² While arguing for the supremacy of the Scriptures in doing theology, nevertheless he acknowledges the influential role of tradition in his theology of atonement. He writes: "In seeking to understand the cross, one cannot ignore the great works of the past. To be disrespectful of tradition and of historical theology is to be disrespectful of the Holy Spirit who has been actively enlightening the church in every century."³ Stott, however, insists that tradition, creeds, and confessions are subordinate to Scripture, and "being the composition of men, are fallible documents."⁴

White's methodology includes the principle of *sola Scriptura*, biblical typology, and the associated hermeneutical principles of the unity of Scripture, the use of Scripture to explain Scripture, use of the plain literal meaning of Scripture, and consideration for the literary and historical contexts in biblical hermeneutics.⁵ Her emphasis on *sola Scriptura* and typology is perhaps the most critical difference between her methodology

¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 11.

²Stott, "Authority and Power of the Bible," 38.

³Stott, *Cross*, 12. See also his "Authority and Power of the Bible," 46-47.

⁴Stott, "Authority and Power of the Bible," 37.

⁵See chapter 4, 201-205, of this dissertation.

and that of Stott. However, whereas Stott's methodology and presuppositions are clearly articulated in a systematic manner, White's methodology and presuppositions are not systematically stated by her and have to be gathered both from her writings and the writings of other Seventh-day Adventist authors of her time and beyond.

The Authority of the Bible

According to Stott, "supreme authority resides neither in the church nor in the individual, but in Christ and the biblical witness to him."⁶ He refers to the Bible as his first "teacher."⁷ Authority resides in Scripture supremely over and beyond tradition, reason, and experience.⁸ He argues that the "church stands or falls by its loyal dependence on the foundation truths which God revealed to his apostles and prophets, and which are now preserved in the New Testament Scriptures."⁹ Nevertheless, Stott still calls for a deeper respect for tradition "since it is the church's interpretation of Scripture down the ages, as the Holy Spirit has enlightened it."¹⁰ It is important to note that though Scripture occupies the pre-eminent place in his theology, it is nevertheless not the only source of theology. Tradition and reason still play a major role.

White agrees with Stott on the crucial importance of the Bible as the prime source of theological authority, but goes further to assert more forcefully the Bible as the only source of theological authority. In agreement with the Reformation principle of *sola*

⁶Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 35.

⁷See chapter 3, 95-109, of this dissertation.

⁸Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 56-57.

⁹Stott, *Ephesians*, 107.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 107. See also Stott's article, "Manufacturing Truth," *In Touch*, no. 2 (1992): 5, quoted in *Authentic Christianity from the Writings of John Stott*, comp. Timothy Dudley-Smith (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1995), 96.

Scriptura, she writes, “The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union. . . . Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, ‘It is written.’ Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.”¹¹ In relation to the necessity of holding to only what is taught in the Bible in order to avoid theological deceptions and errors, especially that of spiritualism, she writes, “I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice.”¹² Elsewhere, she writes, “In His word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience.”¹³

In presenting her argument for faithful Sabbath keepers to hold only to what can be theologically established from the Bible in the face of coming opposition, she argues that though “the multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love,”¹⁴ they are not to follow those who depart from the Bible. She argues that “God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms”¹⁵ even in opposition to the opinions of theologians, arguments of scientists, or the “creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils.”¹⁶ Her

¹¹E. White, “A Missionary Appeal,” *Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885, 770; also quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:416.

¹²E. White, *Early Writings*, 78.

¹³E. White, *Great Controversy*, vii.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 595.

¹⁵*Ibid.* See also *idem*, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 126, 200.

¹⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 595.

reason for advocating the *sola Scriptura* position is clearly stated: “In our time there is a wide departure from their [the Scriptures] doctrines and precepts, and there is need of a return to the great Protestant principle—the Bible, and the Bible only, as the rule of faith and duty.”¹⁷

While for Stott, Scripture is only the prime source of theological authority among the threefold cord of Scripture, tradition, and reason, Scripture is the only source in the case of White. Whereas Stott makes sure to emphasize that Christian theology must not depreciate tradition, White earnestly disapproves all beliefs and practices that are not clearly taught by or supportable from Scripture.¹⁸ In fact, she argues that the distinguishing characteristic of authentic Christianity in the last days will be adherence to the principle of *sola Scriptura* in contrast to “the religions of fable and tradition.”¹⁹ If there is to be “a revival and a reformation” in contemporary Christianity, “the words of the Bible and the Bible alone, should be heard from the pulpit.”²⁰

In White’s view, her writings are not an addition to, neither are they to supercede the Scriptures, but are in fact to be tested by them. They are an aid in the understanding of the Bible. She writes: “The *Testimonies*²¹ are not to belittle the word of God, but to exalt it and attract minds to it, that the beautiful simplicity of truth may impress all.”²² In her opinion, the Bible is not only supreme and superior to all other writings, it is also

¹⁷Ibid., 204-205.

¹⁸E. White, *Christian Education*, 118.

¹⁹E. White, *Prophets and Kings*, 625.

²⁰Ibid., 626.

²¹“Testimonies” refers to her writings.

²²E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:665.

sufficient.²³ White clearly states that the purpose of her writings is to lead people back to what has been revealed in the Bible.²⁴

Revelation and Inspiration

A discussion of the authority of the Bible necessitates a discussion of the concepts of revelation and inspiration in both Stott and White. Their views on both concepts are largely identical. According to Stott, God is our Creator who is infinite in His being and is altogether holy and cannot tolerate sin. We, being finite creatures limited by time and space and also fallen and sinful, can only know Him if He chooses to make Himself known to us. This is the basic premise for divine revelation.²⁵ In Stott's view, inspiration is the process through which God has made Himself known, especially in special revelation, by speaking to and through human authors.²⁶

Stott argues that the process of inspiration was not a mechanical one. "God did not treat the human authors as dictating machines or tape recorders, but as living and responsible persons."²⁷ Sometimes He spoke to them in dreams and visions, other times by audible voice or through angels. At other times we are not told how the word of God came to them. It is possible that the prophets were not even conscious of what was happening to them.²⁸ However, whatever means of communication God employed in

²³Ibid., 2:454-455.

²⁴Ibid., 2:205.

²⁵Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 35-36; idem, *Bible*, 157. God has chosen to reveal Himself to us in general revelation (nature) and special revelation (Scripture), and more importantly through the incarnation of His Son). See *ibid.*, 37-42.

²⁶Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 46.

²⁷Stott, *Bible*, 158. See also his *Evangelical Essentials*, 91.

²⁸Stott, *Bible*, 158.

speaking to the Bible writers, their personalities were never obliterated. On the contrary, their literary style and vocabulary remained distinctively their own.²⁹

Stott adds that the internal evidence, “gathered from reading the biblical text, is that God made full use of the personality, temperament, background and experience of the biblical authors, in order to convey through each an appropriate and distinctive message.”³⁰ Therefore, Scripture is equally the word of God and the word of human beings. For while the Scripture asserts that “the mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isa 1:20), it also says that God spoke “by the mouth of all his holy prophets” (Acts 3:21).³¹ Scripture is the word of God through the words of human beings.³²

Stott argues further that although Scripture as God’s Word is true, this does not mean that every single word of the Bible is literally true. Every word of the Bible is only true in its context and taken out of that context, it may be quite untrue.³³ The key principle (well expressed in the Lausanne Covenant of 1974) is that Scripture is “without error in all that it affirms.”³⁴ Therefore, “whatever Scripture affirms is true, whether in

²⁹Ibid., 158, 159.

³⁰Ibid., 159. See also Stott, “The Power and Authority of the Bible,” in *The New Face of Evangelicalism*, 36-37, and his *Evangelical Truth*, 48-49.

³¹Stott, *Bible*, 159. See also Stott’s introduction in Donald Lewis and Alister McGrath, eds., *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honor of J. I. Packer* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 4, where he writes that the “double authorship” of Scripture is what has given rise to the diversity that is observable in Scripture in spite of the underlying unity.

³²Stott, “The Anglican Communion and Scripture,” in John Stott et al., *The Anglican Communion and Scripture: Papers from the First International Consultation of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion, Canterbury, UK, June 1993* (Oxford: Regnum, 1996), 25.

³³Stott, *Bible*, 159-160. He cites the example of the discussion between Job and his friends that constitutes the bulk of chaps. 1-37 in the book of Job.

³⁴Ibid., 160. See John Stott, ed., *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*, 13-14.

the field of religion or ethics, history or science, its own nature or origins.”³⁵ Clearly, Stott endorses propositional revelation. But if his argument above is really true, it is theologically inconsistent with his position on evolution as already shown in chapter 3. Stott notes that much of Scripture is deliberately presented in a highly figurative language.³⁶

In the case of White, she believes that it is God who has taken the initiative to reveal Himself to humanity. One of the means that He has employed in doing this is nature. But due to the effects of sin, nature “cannot reveal the character of God in its moral perfection.”³⁷ Therefore, God has chosen to reveal Himself to humanity in other ways, but supremely through His Son, Jesus Christ.³⁸ This revelation arises out of God’s initiative to reconcile human beings to Himself.³⁹ God’s revelation is a continuous process which is not limited to any particular time or method.⁴⁰ In spite of the diversity in the personalities and backgrounds of the writers of the Bible, “in His word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation.”⁴¹ Although there is a diversity in the styles employed as well as in the nature of the subjects unfolded, yet “the truths thus revealed unite to form a perfect whole, adapted to meet the wants of men in all the

³⁵Stott, *Bible*, 160. Stott argues that the Scriptures are without error “(1) as originally given, and (2) as correctly interpreted” (Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 101).

³⁶Stott, *Bible*, 161.

³⁷E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:295.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹E. White, *Great Controversy*, v.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., vii.

circumstances and experiences of life.”⁴²

White argues that though God had specially guarded the work of the production of the Bible, “yet when copies of it were few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition.”⁴³ But in spite of such minor changes, the Bible is “a perfect chain” which still constitutes the Word of God.⁴⁴ The production of the Scriptures has been under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and has therefore remained an authoritative guide for Christians.

The Interpretation of the Bible

Stott’s first “teacher” (principle) is Scripture. In order to aid in biblical interpretation, he has proposed some principles. The first one is “the principle of simplicity” or the natural sense of the biblical text. The natural meaning may be literal, figurative, or even allegorical.⁴⁵ The second principle is to look for the “original” sense of Scripture, which he also called “the principle of history.”⁴⁶ This “grammatico-historical” method of interpretation involves using literary and historical criticism to reconstruct the setting.⁴⁷ The third principle is the “general sense” of Scripture or the principle of harmony. It looks for organic unity in the writings of the different contributors to the

⁴²Ibid., vi.

⁴³E. White, *Early Writings*, 220-221.

⁴⁴Ibid., 221.

⁴⁵Stott, *Bible*, 190-191.

⁴⁶Ibid., 192.

⁴⁷Ibid., 193.

biblical message.⁴⁸ The approach leads “us to interpret Scripture by Scripture, especially what is obscure by what is plain.”⁴⁹

As an example of the need for contextual considerations in biblical interpretation, Stott gives the example of the early chapters of Genesis. He argues that the chapters are easily misinterpreted if they are isolated from the rest of Scripture. He accepts the historicity of Adam and Eve, but he believes that we cannot know the precise details of the story.⁵⁰ Like Stott, White, in common with other contemporary Seventh-day Adventist leaders, assumed some hermeneutical principles which “were carried over from their Protestant denominational heritage”⁵¹ as pointed out at the beginning of this chapter. Typology and the related principle of the analogy of Scripture⁵² were foundational to the development of the doctrinal system of Seventh-day Adventists including White’s theology.⁵³ In relation to scriptural typology, Alberto R. Timm has argued,

Believing that the relationship between the Old and the New Testaments was one of typological interrelationship rather than opposition, the Sabbatarians applied the analogy-of-Scripture principle consistently to the whole content of the Bible. The sanctuary in the OT was treated as a *typical* shadow of the sacrifice and of the priestly ministry of Christ.⁵⁴

⁴⁸Ibid., 198.

⁴⁹Ibid., 199.

⁵⁰Stott, *Bible*, 200.

⁵¹Neufeld, “Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement,” 117.

⁵²The analogy of Scripture principle refers to the idea of fundamental unity and harmony among the various parts of Scripture since all of it is inspired by the Holy Spirit and possesses equal divine authority. The principle has three main parts, viz, Scripture as its own interpreter, the consistency of Scripture, and the clarity of Scripture. See Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, ed. Raoul Dederen (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Asso., 2000), 64.

⁵³Alberto R. Timm, “Historical Background of Adventist Biblical Interpretation,” 7.

⁵⁴Ibid. See also P. Gerard Damsteegt, “Ellen White on Theology, Its Methods, and the Use of Scripture,” 130-131.

The scope and interpretation of typology constitute a major difference in the presuppositions that are foundational for White and Stott. White illustrates its importance by the experience of Christ's disciples whose faith was founded on the testimony about Christ in "the types and prophecies of the Old Testament."⁵⁵ She argues that the typical (that is, Old Testament sacrificial) services taught "important truths concerning the atonement."⁵⁶ The ritual of the sacrificial system was "the gospel in symbol."⁵⁷

White argues that the Old Testament sacrifices prefigured the death of Christ in which "type met antitype" and were therefore no longer binding.⁵⁸ The scope of the typological method includes not only Christ's sacrifice at the cross but also His heavenly high priesthood.⁵⁹ Her view of scriptural typology is not only foundational for her views on Christ's high priestly ministry, but it is also the basis of her understanding of both the sanctuary referred to in Dan 8:14 and what the "cleansing" of the sanctuary means.⁶⁰ Stott does not have such a highly developed typological understanding of the atonement, especially as it relates to the high priestly ministry of Jesus and the judgment.⁶¹ Though he refers "to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as having perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament 'shadows,'"⁶² his main emphasis in the discussion of the significance of sacrifice in the

⁵⁵E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 799.

⁵⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 420.

⁵⁷E. White, *Prophets and Kings*, 489. See also idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 594.

⁵⁸E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 189. See also idem, *Desire of Ages*, 54, 757; idem, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 1:201, 2:122, 123.

⁵⁹E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 365.

⁶⁰E. White, *Great Controversy*, 417-418.

⁶¹See chapter 3, 129-137 of this dissertation.

⁶²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 135.

Old Testament remains the substitutionary nature of that sacrifice.⁶³

Both Stott and White agree on the unity of the whole Scripture.⁶⁴ White writes that “the Scriptures were given to men, not in a continuous chain of unbroken utterances, but piece by piece through successive generations.”⁶⁵ In her view, the whole revelation is summarized in Christ to whom all prior revelations point and to whom succeeding revelations refer. Her great controversy motif unites all the biblical themes and serves as the interpretative framework for post-biblical church history.⁶⁶ In these revelations certain specific truths relevant to the respective historical periods in which the revelations were given have been emphasized.⁶⁷ Also both Stott and White believe that God progressively reveals more of the truth to His people as they become ready to receive it.⁶⁸

Stott’s second “teacher” (next to Scripture) is reason combined with dependence on the Holy Spirit. It is possible for us to engage reason because we are made in the image of God, and one of the qualities which constitute the image of God in humans is intelligence and the capacity for introspection.⁶⁹ He adds, however, that our disciplined use of the mind must be subject to a humble attitude of submission to the revelation of

⁶³Ibid., 149.

⁶⁴For a discussion of the different ways of viewing the unity of the Scripture, see John J. Davis, “Unity of the Bible,” in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, ed. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 646-650. Davis mentions some examples of the ways in which the unity of the Scriptures has been shown.

⁶⁵E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:19, 20; Stott, “The Great Commission,” in *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, ed. C.F. Henry and W. S. Mooneyham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), 48, quoted in Stott, *Authentic Christianity*, 97; idem, *The Bible: Book for Today* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 24, 29; idem, *Bible*, 137-139.

⁶⁶Graham, 154.

⁶⁷E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:692-693.

⁶⁸Ibid., 5:703, 706; idem, *Selected Messages*, 1:401-402; Stott, *Bible*, 138, 203.

⁶⁹Stott, *Reverence for Human Life*, Fellowship Paper 278, 1972.

God in His Word.⁷⁰ He further argues that faith and reason are not opposed to each other and faith is not an alternative to human thought.⁷¹

Like Stott, White recognizes the importance of reason in understanding God's revelation. In her view, reason alone is not enough. Divine illumination is indispensable. Whereas faith and reason must work together, nevertheless human reason must "bow" to the majesty of divine revelation.⁷² However, she does not depreciate the use of reason. In fact, she argues that it is the work of educators to "train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thought."⁷³ Her use of reason, in conjunction with Scripture, is evident in her presentation of healthful living principles which she promoted as fundamental practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Such recommended practices for faithful Seventh-day Adventists are not based on biblical arguments alone.

Assumptions and Presuppositions

In this sub-section, there will be a focus on some specific areas of differences in the assumptions and presuppositions of both Stott and White which may help in explaining the differences in their respective atonement theologies. In this area, Stott and White share many similarities and some differences. The similarities are in respect of their presuppositions on the love of God, forgiveness of sins, the gravity of sin, human moral responsibility, and the wrath of God as previously discussed in chapters 3 and 4. In this chapter, only the areas of differences will be discussed for the purposes of analysis.

⁷⁰Stott, *Preacher's Portrait*, 99.

⁷¹Stott, *Contemporary Christian*, 116.

⁷²E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 110.

⁷³E. White, *Education*, 17.

The principal areas of differences include the issue of creation versus evolution, the great controversy theme, the concept of original sin (under the rubric of gravity of sin), and Calvinistic theological determinism versus Arminian freewill Theism (under the rubric of human moral responsibility). Similarities are to be expected inasmuch as they both belong to the evangelical wing of Protestantism and share a common stand on the penal substitutionary view of atonement. The differences that are found have to be explained in light of the similarities already noted and their common evangelical commitment.

Creation and Evolution

A major difference between Stott and White in how they employ reason is evident in their divergent positions on creation and evolution. Stott rejects the position that argues for a young earth (between 6,000 and 10,000 years old) held by those he refers to as “six-day creationists” by arguing that “they have misunderstood the *genre* of Genesis 1, which is evidently a highly stylized literary and theological, not scientific, statement.”⁷⁴ With respect to the days of creation, he writes: “Not many Christians today find it necessary to defend the concept of a literal six-day creation, for the text does not demand it, and scientific discovery appears to contradict it.”⁷⁵ But if, as he himself argues, God has written His commandments on stone tablets on Sinai and on human hearts,⁷⁶ one can only wonder how he can interpret the “six days” of creation in any other way than six literal days. This point is crucial in view of the fact that God rested on the seventh-day,⁷⁷

⁷⁴Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 96; *Bible*, 54; idem, *Romans*, 162-166.

⁷⁵Stott, *Bible*, 54.

⁷⁶Stott, “The Messenger and God: Studies in Romans 1-5,” in *Believing and Obeying Jesus Christ*, ed. J. W. Alexander (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1980), 57.

⁷⁷Gen 2:1-3.

and commanded the Israelites to do the same when He gave them the Ten Commandments as a memorial of His creative acts.⁷⁸ The biblical context makes it clear that God rested on a literal seventh day, and commanded the Israelites to do the same.

In fact, Stott endorses evolutionary theory when he argues further that “the geological evidence for a gradual development over thousands of millions of years seems conclusive.”⁷⁹ He argues that the several forms of hominids, “which date from hundreds of thousands of years earlier” than Adam and Eve “were not fully human in the biblical sense, but pre-Adamic creatures.”⁸⁰ Stott writes, “These hominids began to advance culturally. They made their cave drawings and buried their dead.” He adds, “It is conceivable that God created Adam out of one of them.”⁸¹ But if there was death before sin, then death is not the wages of sin, contrary to the scriptural assertion that death would be the consequence of sin (Gen 2:17). His position destroys the sin-death causality necessary for substitutionary atonement. One also wonders how creation of Adam could have happened through death, which is part of the evolutionary process.

In Stott’s view, though Adam probably evolved from the so-called hominids, advancing from the so-called hominid *homo erectus* to what he called *homo divinus*, yet “he enjoyed a radical discontinuity, owing to his having been created in God’s image.”⁸² How God employed evolution is left unexplained. This position reveals a very grave weakness in his apparent effort to accommodate theology to evolutionary science and

⁷⁸Exod 20:8-11.

⁷⁹Stott, *Bible*, 54.

⁸⁰Ibid., 54; idem, *Romans*, 164.

⁸¹Stott, *Bible*, 55. See also idem, *Romans*, 164.

⁸²Stott, *Bible*, 55.

contradicts his position on the authority of Scripture. It has been pointed out that he believes that Scripture is “without error in all that it affirms”⁸³ and that “whatever Scripture affirms is true, whether in the field of religion or ethics, history or science, its own nature or origins.”⁸⁴ Clearly, Stott endorses propositional revelation.

In the light of the foregoing arguments, it is difficult to understand how he can argue that Scripture is without error in all that it affirms and also that God created Adam out of the so-called hominids, creatures which supposedly existed several hundreds of thousands of years earlier.⁸⁵ Stott’s argument that God possibly created Adam out of a hominid is contradicted in Scripture (Gen 2:7). The biblical account does not give room for hundreds of thousands or millions of years of evolutionary processes that eventually led to the development of Adam into the full image of God.

The position he has taken is referred to as theistic evolution.⁸⁶ His assertion that “there does not seem to be any biblical reason for denying that some kind of purposive evolutionary development may have been the mode which God employed in creating”⁸⁷

⁸³Ibid., 160. See also John Stott, ed., *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*, 13-14.

⁸⁴Stott, *Bible*, 160. Stott argues that the Scriptures are without error “(1) as originally given, and (2) as correctly interpreted” (Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 101).

⁸⁵Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 97.

⁸⁶Theistic evolution is the view that God, while keeping discretely in the background, used the process of macroevolution to create every living thing. For theological arguments in favor of six literal days of creation and its implications for contemporary understanding of atonement, see John T. Baldwin, “Revelation 14:7: An Angel’s Worldview,” in *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood Is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement*, ed. John Templeton Baldwin (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 19-39, and G. F. Hasel, “The ‘Days’ of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal ‘Days’ or Figurative ‘Periods/EPOCHS’ of Time?” in Baldwin, *Creation*, 40-68. For arguments against evolution and that instead uphold creation in “six days” according to the Bible account, see Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible* (Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1983); Ariel A. Roth, *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998); and Harold G. Coffin, Robert H. Brown, and James Gibson, *Origin by Design*, rev. ed. (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005).

⁸⁷Stott, *Bible*, 55.

is not consistent with the biblical account that after creating for six literal days (evening and mornings),⁸⁸ God rested on, blessed, and sanctified the seventh day of creation week.⁸⁹ Instead, the Bible affirms that God “finished” the creation of “the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them” in six days and rested on the seventh, just like Christ “finished” His sacrifice on the cross on the sixth day of the week (Friday) and rested in the grave on the seventh (Saturday).⁹⁰ Though he writes that he presents the evolutionary viewpoint “tentatively,” Stott does not present any biblical evidence for his position on the possibility of God employing evolution in His work of creation. However, in spite of the preceding arguments, it is important to note that strange as it may sound, Stott, along with many evangelical writers, affirms *Sola Scriptura* but rejects a recent six-day creation.

White is opposed to both evolutionary theory and its corollary of long-ages geological theory. She writes,

Inferences erroneously drawn from facts observed in nature have, however, led to supposed conflict between science and revelation; and in the effort to restore harmony, interpretations of Scripture have been adopted that undermine and destroy the force of the word of God. Geology has been thought to contradict the literal interpretation of the Mosaic record of the creation. Millions of years, it is claimed, were required for the evolution of the earth from chaos; and in order to accommodate the Bible to this supposed revelation of science, the days of creation are assumed to have been vast, indefinite periods, covering thousands or even millions of years. Such a conclusion is wholly uncalled for.⁹¹

Such interpretations of Scripture that “undermine and destroy the force of the word of God” would presumably include the position that rejects the six-day creation week, and accepts evolution as the method God used in the creation of the universe, otherwise

⁸⁸Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31.

⁸⁹Gen 2:1-3.

⁹⁰John 19:30.

⁹¹E. White, *Education*, 128-129.

referred to as theistic evolution.

Based on the hermeneutical principles already referred to (such as *sola Scriptura*, Scripture explaining Scripture, and plain literal meaning of Scripture), White argues that the days of creation were six literal twenty-four-hour days, each day consisting of “the evening and the morning” (Gen 1:5).⁹² Contrary to Stott’s position on theistic evolution, White asserts fiat creation. She quotes Ps 33:9, ““He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”” Having asserted the biblical truth that God “could thus call into existence unnumbered worlds,” she rhetorically raises the question, “How long a time would be required for the evolution of the earth from chaos? In order to account for His works, must we do violence to His word?”⁹³ She accounts for the fossil deposits in terms of the global flood.⁹⁴

There are several theological problems with theistic evolution that ought to make it unattractive to an evangelical theologian who is committed to *sola Scriptura*. Lane points out that conservative theologians (like Stott) “fail to provide a consistent theological understanding of the Fall.”⁹⁵ Theistic evolution accepts death in the animal world before human sin. Stott’s advocacy of that theory reveals that he does not show an appreciation for the theological implications of a theory that advocates death before human sin. This position is not scriptural since it contradicts the clear scriptural position that sin and death came into God’s perfect creation as a consequence of human sin

⁹²Ibid., 129.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵David H. Lane, “Theological Problems with Theistic Evolution,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (April-June 1994): 161.

(Gen 1-3). Nigel M. de S. Cameron comments,

The threat made against man in the garden was a specific one: it was the threat of *death*. Death would follow from his sin. It is a simple connexion which underlines what we learn later in Scripture about both death and sin. It is a fundamental presupposition of our evangelical understanding of the atonement, such that if the sin-death causality be undermined, the efficacy and indeed the rationale of blood atonement is destroyed.⁹⁶

Highlighting further the serious theological errors inherent in theistic evolution, Lane writes, “If the general theory of evolution and a historical Fall of some kind are both historical facts . . . then human death preceded the entrance of sin into the human race, and cannot be its penalty. This claim is a serious theological error.”⁹⁷ Also Stott’s position on the so-called “pre-Adamites” implies that the development of moral consciousness was not implanted by God but occurred in gradual steps by natural selection. Such a view plays down the seriousness of the problem of sin and depravity and attacks the evangelical faith at its core by denying the sin-death causality taught in Scripture.⁹⁸

Clearly, theistic evolution is incompatible with a stance that upholds the preeminent authority of Scripture over and above reason (science) and tradition. It denies the doctrine of sin as the cause of physical death, a theological position which undermines the doctrines of Christ’s substitutionary atonement and redemption of sinners.⁹⁹ Stott’s position here is more a pandering to the claims of science than a faithful

⁹⁶Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*, 51-52.

⁹⁷Lane, “Theological Problems,” 170.

⁹⁸Ibid., 171.

⁹⁹Ibid., 174. See also Maria Boccia, “Creation and Evolution: Opposing Worldviews,” *Searching Together* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 7-19; L. J. Gibson, “Theistic Evolution: Is It for Adventists?” *Ministry*, January 1992, 22-25; John T. Baldwin, “Progressive Creationism and Biblical Revelation: Some Theological Implications,” *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 105-119; and

adherence to Scripture. Stott fails to realize, as do Lane and Cameron, that his substitutionary atonement theory is undermined by his acceptance of death before human sin.

Great Controversy Theme

Though Stott discusses the idea of a conflict between Christ and Satan, nevertheless it is evident that the cosmic conflict theme is not well developed in his writings. Also the theme is not utilized as an undergirding theme for his theological thought. He agrees with the view of Gustav Aulén who “sees the atonement as a cosmic drama in which God in Christ does battle with the powers of evil and gains the victory over them.”¹⁰⁰ He argues that by His death, “Jesus saved us not only from sin and guilt, but from death and the devil, in fact all evil powers, as well.”¹⁰¹

Stott discusses Christ’s victory over the devil in six stages.¹⁰² The first stage is the conquest predicted as recorded in Gen 3:15 and other old Testament texts.¹⁰³ The second stage was the conquest begun in the ministry of Jesus. Since he knew Him as his future conqueror, “Satan made many different attempts to get rid of him, for example, through the wilderness temptations to avoid the way of the cross . . . through the crowd’s resolve to force him into a politico-military kingship, through Peter’s contradiction of the necessity of the cross . . . , and through the betrayal of Judas whom Satan actually

Fernando Canale, *Creation, Evolution, and Theology: The Role of Method in Theological Accommodation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Fernando Canale, 2005).

¹⁰⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 228. See also Aulén, *Christus Victor*.

¹⁰¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 229.

¹⁰²See chapter 3, 154-158.

¹⁰³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 231-232. He quotes 1 Chr 29:11 and Isa 9:6-7 as scriptural support for his point here.

‘entered.’”¹⁰⁴ However, Stott notes, “We see his kingdom advancing and Satan’s retreating before it, as demons are dismissed, sicknesses are healed and disordered nature itself acknowledges its Lord.”¹⁰⁵

The third stage occurred on the cross. Stott argues that Jesus referred to the devil as the “prince of this world” who would launch his last offensive against Him, but would be “driven out” and “condemned” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).¹⁰⁶ He states that Jesus was clearly anticipating that at the time of His death the final contest would take place, in which the evil powers would be routed and the devil’s captives set free.¹⁰⁷ He argues, “By his obedience, his love and his meekness he won a great moral victory over the powers of evil. He remained free, uncontaminated, uncompromised. The devil could gain no hold on him, and had to concede defeat.”¹⁰⁸

The fourth stage was the resurrection in which the conquest was confirmed and announced. Whereas the cross was the victory won, the resurrection was the victory endorsed, proclaimed, and demonstrated.¹⁰⁹ The fifth stage is the extension of the conquest through the preaching of the gospel to people in order to call them to repent and believe in Christ. He argues that “every Christian conversion involves a power encounter in which the devil is obliged to relax his hold on somebody’s life and the superior power

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 232.

¹⁰⁵Ibid. Some references Stott quotes or refers to include: Rev 12:1; John 13:27; Mark 1:24; Luke 10:18.

¹⁰⁶Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 232.

¹⁰⁷Ibid. He cites Heb 2:14-15 as scriptural support for his argument here.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 235.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 235-236.

of Christ is demonstrated.”¹¹⁰ The sixth stage is the conquest consummated at the Parousia, that is, at the second coming of Christ. Although Christ is already reigning, “he is also waiting until his enemies become a footstool for his feet” at the time when “every knee will bow to him and every tongue confess him Lord.”¹¹¹

On her part, White utilizes the cosmic conflict theme as a basic and undergirding theme that provided a coherent theological framework for her writings. She employs the great controversy (or cosmic conflict) theme in close relationship to the theme of divine love. It focuses on the spiritual confrontation between Christ and Satan and builds upon the theme of God’s love. In White’s view, the focal point of the great controversy is Satan’s attempt to misrepresent the loving character of God so that humans may look upon God with fear and think of Him as severe and unforgiving.¹¹² This theme is regarded by some as a unique contribution of White to Christian theology. Indeed, many scholars have identified the great controversy theme as a unifying principle of her writings.

Herbert Douglass has noted that this theme “provided a coherent framework for her theological thought as well as for her principles in education, health, missiology, social issues, and environmental topics.”¹¹³ White explains the great controversy theme

¹¹⁰Ibid., 236.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 10-11.

¹¹³Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 256. See also his *The Heartbeat of Adventism: The Great Controversy Theme in the writings of Ellen G. White* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010). See also Fernández, *Ellen G. White: The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, 4, where he notes that the great controversy theme “runs as a golden thread through her writings and underlies her view of the entire historical process.” See also Frank B. Holbrook, “The Great Controversy,” in Dederen, ed., *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 969-1009, Battistone, *The Great Controversy Theme in E. G. White Writings*, iii.

with the biblical narrative from Genesis to Revelation¹¹⁴ and depicts the great controversy theme as the conceptual “key” for the understanding of the theological and philosophical questions confronting humanity today. In a chapter entitled “Bible Reading and Study” in the book *Education*, she presents what she considers a sine qua non for the faithful student of Scripture. She encourages serious Bible students to study in order to understand the rise of the great controversy and the nature and work of the two principles that are contending for supremacy in relation to the divine work of redemption.¹¹⁵

Thus the great controversy theme provides the background for our understanding of the development of evil, specifically, how Lucifer (Satan) rebelled against God’s government. Satan’s core argument is that God cannot be trusted, that His law is severe and unfair, and by implication, that the Lawgiver is unfair, severe, and tyrannical and that the law needs to be changed.¹¹⁶ What Satan began in heaven he has also continued on earth. She writes that “though he [Satan] was cast out of heaven he has continued the same warfare upon the earth” in order “to deceive men, and thus lead them to transgress God’s law.”¹¹⁷

It must be pointed out, however, that in White’s thoughts, there is no real distinction between God’s character and the principle that lies at the core of the law of God. Divine love is at the heart of God’s law and is what defines God’s character.¹¹⁸ Therefore in White’s view, Satan’s intent in the great controversy is to discredit the love

¹¹⁴E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 761-763.

¹¹⁵E. White, *Education*, 190.

¹¹⁶E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 69; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 24.

¹¹⁷E. White, *The Great Controversy*, 582.

¹¹⁸E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 33; idem, *Steps to Christ*, 11; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 24, 26.

of God in all its manifestations. God's demonstration of His love in the ongoing conflict with Satan forms the focus of the five-volume Conflict of the Ages Series and also provides the theological foundation for her other theological writings. White ties the themes of God's love and the great controversy together into a harmonious whole. She writes:

The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.¹¹⁹

Whereas Stott presents God's undeserved love as the theological rationale for atonement, White focuses on divine love as it is manifested in the great controversy as the rationale. Thus she broadens the scope of the rationale for atonement from a focus on human salvation to the resolution of the cosmic controversy that started with Satan in heaven. However, it has been pointed out that the great (or cosmic) controversy theme is not unique to White. Others who have written about this theme include, among others, Origen,¹²⁰ Augustine,¹²¹ John Milton,¹²² H. L. Hastings,¹²³ C. S. Lewis,¹²⁴ and Gregory A. Boyd.¹²⁵

¹¹⁹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 678.

¹²⁰Origen, *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, 1966).

¹²¹Augustine, *City of God* (New York: Modern Library, 1950).

¹²²John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (Boston: Ginn, 1891).

¹²³H. L. Hastings, *The Controversy between God and Man: Its Origin, Progress, and End* (Rochester, NY: H.L. Hastings, 1858).

¹²⁴C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (New York: Macmillan, 1950); idem, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* (New York: HarperCollins, 1994).

¹²⁵Gregory A. Boyd, *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997).

Regarding the issue of the originality of White's thoughts, Douglass has argued that "the uniqueness of Ellen White's contribution lies not in total originality of thought but in her synthesis of divinely revealed insights and the results of her own reading and observation."¹²⁶ While she selected specific expressions from some contemporary writers that helped her present more fully the broad principles of truth that were divinely revealed to her, she avoided ideas from those same authors who were not in agreement with those principles.¹²⁷ Unlike other authors who also discussed the cosmic (great) controversy theme in their writings, White is unique in making it the organizing theme of all her theological writings, especially in regard to the need for, the progress, and culmination of atonement.

Gravity of Sin

According to Stott, the objective criterion which defines sin is the moral law which expresses God's righteous character and which He has laid down for us to follow (Rom 2:15). By sinning we commit "lawlessness" (1 John 3:4) and offend against our own highest welfare and the authority and love of God.¹²⁸ He states that Scripture emphasizes the godless self-centeredness of sin which rejects the position of dependence and which we occupy as creatures and, instead, leads us to make a bid for autonomy. For Stott, "sin is not a regrettable lapse from conventional standards; its essence is hostility to God (Rom 8:7), issuing in active rebellion against him."¹²⁹

¹²⁶Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord*, 256.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 90.

¹²⁹Ibid. To drive the point home, Stott quotes Emil Brunner thus: "Sin is defiance, arrogance, the desire to be equal with God, . . . the assertion of human independence over against God, . . . the constitution

The concept of “original sin” reveals the gravity of the human sinful condition. In Christian thought, “original sin” is the theological designation for the state or condition of universal sinfulness in which mankind is found as the result of Adam’s sin.¹³⁰ The traditional Christian understanding of original sin includes the notion of personal moral guilt for Adam’s sin that every human being presumably inherits.¹³¹ In Stott’s view, the concept of “original sin” means that the very nature that is passed on to us from our parents is “tainted and twisted with self-centredness.”¹³² In his commentary on Eph 2:1-10, he quotes the Anglican Article 9 as follows:

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (that is, in imitating him) . . . but it is the fault or corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is ingendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation.¹³³

Stott adds that what Paul seems to be teaching in Ephesians is that “our inherited human nature itself deserves God’s wrath and judgment.”¹³⁴ Utilizing the concept of biblical solidarity, he argues that “it may truly be said that we sinned in Adam, and that in and

of the autonomous reason, morality and culture.” *Man in Revolt* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1947), 129.

¹³⁰See Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997). See also G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, 285-322, and Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*, 145-153; Paul King Jewett, “Original Sin and the Fall of Man,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 19 (Fall 1976): 18-30.

¹³¹Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 648-656; D. G. Bloesch, “Sin,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 1104; Sentis, “Original Sin,” *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*, 3:1479-1482; Don F. Neufeld, ed., *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996 ed., s.v. “Sin.”

¹³²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 94, 95.

¹³³The Thirty Nine Articles, Article 9, quoted in Stott, *Ephesians*, 77-78.

¹³⁴Stott, *Ephesians*, 78.

with him, we incurred guilt and died.”¹³⁵

According to Stott, human “slavery” to sin is captured by the concept of “total depravity.” For Stott, “total depravity” means “that no part of any human person (mind, emotions, conscience, will, etc.) has remained untainted by the fall.”¹³⁶ Though in Stott’s view we inherit a fallen sinful nature and guilt, which makes us deserving of divine judgment,¹³⁷ nevertheless, he argues that we are morally responsible agents who must make a choice between life and death and good and evil (Deut 30:15-20; Josh 24:15; Matt 23:37). Stott places a high premium on God’s sovereignty in human salvation, while at the same time he upholds human freedom to choose to come to Christ for salvation. In his view, both divine sovereignty and human freedom must be held in tension.¹³⁸

White has defined sin as both acts of transgressing the law of God¹³⁹ and a condition of depravity that involves what she calls “the propensities of sin,” “inherent propensities of disobedience,” “inclinations,” or a natural “bent to evil.”¹⁴⁰ She states that “there is in his [human] nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided,” human beings cannot resist.¹⁴¹ Due to Adam’s sin, “his posterity was born with inherent propensities of

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid., 79.

¹³⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 95, 96. He notes that “our responsibility before God is an inalienable part of our human dignity” whose final expression will be on “the day of judgment” when all people will stand before God’s throne.

¹³⁹E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:320

¹⁴⁰E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 52-62; idem, “Divine-Human Savior-White’s comments on John 1:1-3, 14,” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 5:1128; idem, *Education*, 29, and idem, *In Heavenly Places*, 195.

¹⁴¹E. White, *Education*, 29.

disobedience.”¹⁴² In a letter written in 1887, she argues that the natural depravity of human nature is what accounts for the fact that bad habits are more easily formed than good habits, and the bad habits are given up with more difficulty.¹⁴³ Victory over our natural human depravity involves the working of the grace of God “combined with the most earnest effort on our part.”¹⁴⁴

White’s position on the issue of human depravity and freewill is very close to the Arminian/Wesleyan tradition¹⁴⁵ and is probably better expressed as “free grace” that emanates from the prevenient saving grace of God. She states that when sin entered the world, the will of humanity became enslaved to sin¹⁴⁶ and “through the will . . . sin retains its hold upon us.”¹⁴⁷ Thus there is no power in the “unaided human will” to oppose sin, but through Jesus Christ the will of the human being is freed.¹⁴⁸ Thus without

¹⁴²E. White, “Divine-Human Savior,” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 5:1128.

¹⁴³E. White, *In Heavenly Places*, 195-196, originally from Letter 26d, 1887. See also *Selected Messages*, 1:310, which appeared originally as an article, “A Divine Sin Bearer,” *Signs of the Times*, September 30, 1903.

¹⁴⁴E. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 544. Elsewhere she writes, “There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. That power is Christ. Co-operation with that power is man's greatest need” (*Education*, 29).

¹⁴⁵In the broad sense, the Wesleyan tradition identifies the theological impetus for those movements and denominations who trace their roots to the theology of John Wesley. Though its primary legacy remains within the various Methodist denominations, the Wesleyan tradition has been refined and reinterpreted by other movements and denominations as well. See R.G. Tuttle, Jr., “Wesleyan Tradition,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 1268-1270; Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley’s Scriptural Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994); Erickson, 650, 651; 931-934, 937, 938; Olson, *Story of Christian Theology*, 454-472; and Olson, *Arminian Theology*. See also chapter 4, 215-217, of this dissertation.

¹⁴⁶E. White, “The Love of God,” *Signs of the Times*, November 19, 1896.

¹⁴⁷E. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1896), 61.

¹⁴⁸E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 48. She writes, “By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast.” See also *ibid.*, 18; *idem*, *Testimonies*, 8:292.

divine help, human beings have no power to overcome sin. But true to her Arminian theological leaning, she does not overemphasize divine sovereignty, but still gives appropriate weight to human cooperation with God in the work of salvation. As argued above, she asserts that God's grace must be combined with the most earnest effort on our part in order for us to gain victory over sin.

Though White agrees with the Reformers on the radical nature of human depravity, she does not subscribe to the doctrine of original sin as traditionally understood. This is a major difference between her and Stott. She writes, "Sin is a tremendous evil. Through sin the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted. Sin has degraded the faculties of the soul. Temptations from without find an answering chord within the heart, and the feet turn imperceptibly toward evil."¹⁴⁹ Several Seventh-day Adventist theologians argue that though White agrees with the idea of an inherent natural depravity of humanity, she does not teach that humans inherit guilt from Adam.¹⁵⁰ It has already been shown that Stott is in full agreement with the traditional understanding of original sin as taught by the Anglican Church.

One leading representative of the Adventist theological position on original sin (and as a corollary, of White's position) is Edward Heppenstall. He writes that "the state of sin into which all men are born is called original sin—not in the sense of original guilt,

¹⁴⁹E. White, *Testimonies*, 8:312; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 53. See also idem, "The Sinner's Hope," *Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1900; idem, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 158-161, idem, "Self Love or Self-Sacrifice," *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1908.

¹⁵⁰E. White, Letter 26d, 1887, quoted in *Heavenly Places*, 195. See also idem, *Testimonies*, 8:312; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 53. See also Zackrison, *Seventh-day Adventists and Original Sin*, especially 414-416; Pfandl, *Some Thoughts on Original Sin*, 19, 20, and J. R. Zurcher, *Touched with Our Feelings: A Historical Survey of Adventist Thought on the Human Nature of Christ*, trans. Edward W. White

but of an inherited disposition to sin” which goes back to the first parents of the human race.¹⁵¹ Heppenstall ascribes the origin of sin to human alienation from God and asserts that “original sin is not per se wrong doing, but wrong being.”¹⁵² The general consensus of Adventist scholars seems to regard sin as an act (1 John 3:4) and an inherited sinful state (Ps 51:5; Eph 2:3). Unless we are fully surrendered to the Holy Spirit, the sinful nature entices us to commit individual acts of sin.¹⁵³

White’s focus is not so much on Adam’s guilt, which is supposedly passed on to us, as it is on individual guilt that arises from particular sinful choices. She writes: “It is inevitable that children should suffer from the consequences of parental wrongdoing, but they are not punished for the parents' guilt, except as they participate in their sins. It is usually the case, however, that children walk in the steps of their parents.”¹⁵⁴ Her

(Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1999), 290-292.

¹⁵¹Edward Heppenstall, *The Man Who Is God* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1977), 107.

¹⁵²*Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁵³*Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . .*, 89-90; Pfandl, “Some Thoughts on Original Sin,” 18. See also *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1996 ed.), s.v. “Sin.”

¹⁵⁴E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 306. A survey of some of her writings on the issue of the possibility of inherited guilt in relation to human choices reveals her overall viewpoint. In May 1890, White writes, “Adam sinned, and the children of Adam share his guilt and its consequences” (“Obedience Is Sanctification,” *Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1890), 289. About a decade later, she writes, “Parents have a more serious charge than they imagine. The inheritance of children is that of sin. Sin has separated them from God. Jesus gave His life that He might unite the broken links to God. As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death” (“To Brother and Sister John Wessels,” Letter 68, April 10, 1899 [Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI]). Neither of these statements refers to guilt as imputed by God on account of inheritance from Adam. The reception from Adam of “nothing but guilt and the sentence of death” is linked to separation from God. I agree with Leroy Moore who has argued that “White’s concern appears to relate to the consequence of separation from God and enslavement to Satan—which is inherited from Adam” (*Theology Crisis*, 109). It appears that White sees a cause and effect relationship in which sin separates humans from God and leaves them with guilt.

In 1903, she writes: “Christ volunteered to come to this earth and stand at the head of fallen human beings, who were heirs of guilt, under sentence of eternal death. We must have perished had He not borne our guilt and the wrath of God” (“To Dr. J. H. Kellogg,” Letter 257, November 26, 1903, in *Manuscript Release*, 12:61). Her emphasis here appears to be on the divine condescension in the work of saving humans. It does not appear that she is setting forth a forensically imputed guilt through the “original

orientation seems to move in a way that contrasts with Stott's in relation to the alleged inheritance of guilt through Adam.

However, because White believes in the inherent sinful condition of humans,¹⁵⁵ she also believes that all human beings are in a "helpless condition" in regard to obedience to the law "unless they accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who is our atonement—at-one-ment with God."¹⁵⁶ But they are not so depraved that they are totally subject to a deterministic election on the part of the redeeming God. While sinners cannot initiate their own salvation, God's grace permits them to exercise the free choice that enables them to accept or reject God's offer of salvation.¹⁵⁷

Human Moral Responsibility

Despite the fact that Stott subscribes to the idea of original sin as traditionally understood, he nevertheless still believes unequivocally that humans are responsible for both the choices they make and their actions. A human being is not an automaton that is programmed to perform and respond, nor is he an animal who functions at the level of

sin" of Adam. Her references to inherited sin are generally in the context of the results of human choices as they relate to family relationships and biological inheritance. See "The Offering of Strange Fire," *Signs of the Times*, July 1, 1880, p. 289; idem, "Temptation—What Is It?" *Signs of the Times*, May 27, 1897, 5. It is especially important to point out that in her discussion of the curse of Canaan's sons by Noah, White does not espouse the idea of inherited guilt, but instead reveals the result of the participation of children in parental guilt through their own choices (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 117-118). In the light of the arguments above, it is more theologically consistent with the general tenor of White's writings to state that she does not espouse the idea of inherited guilt nor its corollary doctrine of original sin. As already pointed out above, most Adventist scholars interpret these two references to our inheriting guilt from Adam in the light of her more theologically consistent position that parents do not pass on guilt to their children.

¹⁵⁵E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:344.

¹⁵⁶E. White, "The Law," Manuscript 122, November 23, 1901 (Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI).

¹⁵⁷Whidden, *Soteriology of Ellen G. White*, 129, n. 1.

instincts.¹⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Stott argues that the concept of “original sin” means that the very nature that is passed on to us from our parents is “tainted and twisted with self-centeredness.”¹⁵⁹ Jesus taught that evil thoughts and actions come from within the hearts of human beings (Mark 7:21-23) and that the sinner is a “slave of sin” (John 8:34). In the words of Stott, we are “enslaved to the world (public fashion and opinion), the flesh (our fallen nature) and the devil (demonic forces).”¹⁶⁰ Even after Christ liberates us, “we are not entirely rid of the insidious power of our fallenness” (Rom 7:25).¹⁶¹

Stott argues that the reality of the original sin and the attendant human depravity diminishes but does not destroy our responsibility. It is in recognition of our weakness that God is patient toward us and slow to anger and has not dealt with us according to our sins (Ps 103:10, 14). Nevertheless, Scripture regards us as morally responsible agents who must make a choice between life and death and good and evil (Deut 30:15-20; Josh 24:15; Matt 23:37). Stott acknowledges the place of God’s sovereignty in human salvation, while at the same time upholding human freedom to choose to come to Christ for salvation.¹⁶² However, it is evident that Stott’s atonement theology is Calvinistic as

¹⁵⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 93. See also idem, *The Contemporary Christian*, 36.

¹⁵⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 94-95.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 95.

¹⁶¹Ibid. See also his *Basic Christianity*, 62, and *Contemporary Christian*, 41.

¹⁶²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 95-96. For the contending positions on divine sovereignty and human freewill see Bruce A. Ware, “Effectual Calling and Grace,” in *Still Sovereign*, ed. Thomas R. Screiner and Bruce A. Ware, 203-227; R.K. McGregor, *No Place for Sovereignty: What’s Wrong with Freewill Theism?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 43-62; David Basinger, *The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 21-55; David Basinger and Randall Basinger, *Predestination and Freewill*; Pinnock, *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*. Ware focuses on the twin Calvinistic doctrines of God’s effectual calling of sinners and irresistible grace, both of which entail the doctrine of unconditional election in order to establish the determining role of divine sovereignty in human salvation. McGregor proposes arguments that he thinks show the incoherence of “Freewill Theism” in order to emphasize the Calvinistic theological position. David Basinger argues that though God sometimes interferes unilaterally in human affairs, He has voluntarily given up complete control of earthly

his emphasis on God's unconditional election of the elect shows.¹⁶³ In view of his emphasis on God's unconditional election, while he still holds humans responsible for their decision to accept or reject Christ's offer of salvation, it is manifest that he is a compatibilist theological determinist.¹⁶⁴

Like Stott, White also places a high premium on human moral responsibility. Since God is fair, loving, and respectful of His created intelligent beings, He does not coerce, force, intimidate, or deceive them in order to obtain their submission and compliance, neither does He bypass the will.¹⁶⁵ He appeals to human reason and allows each person to decide for or against His revealed will based on the available evidence and their love for Him.¹⁶⁶ Because God is willing to wait until the whole evidence regarding Satan's charges in the great controversy becomes apparent to all creatures, and because He will not force compliance with His will, "the principle of conditionality permeates His relationship with His created intelligences—He waits for people to respond."¹⁶⁷

White argues that the divine work of salvation requires certain human responses beyond mere mental assent to what Christ has already done. Saved people are

affairs since He has voluntarily given humans freedom of choice with regard to the same. Like David Basinger, Pinnock and some other evangelical scholars support the Arminian position that God expresses His love not by controlling everything, but grants humans freedom to choose contrary to His will.

¹⁶³See chapter 3 of this dissertation, pp. 152-153, 163-164, 168-176, 178-180.

¹⁶⁴Basinger, *Case for Freewill Theism*, 27. A compatibilist theological determinist believes that God can always ensure that humans voluntarily make the decisions He would have them make (and thus do what He would have them do), and that God is able at every moment to influence a person's beliefs and desires in such a way that this person will voluntarily make the choice God would have him or her make.

¹⁶⁵E. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, 22, 466; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 487, 759; idem, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 74, 77, 101, 235; idem, *Steps to Christ*, 34; idem, *Mount of Blessing*, 142; idem, *Early Writings*, 221.

¹⁶⁶E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 43-47; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 458; idem, *Testimonies*, 3:255.

¹⁶⁷Douglass, *Messenger*, 258.

transformed sinners, and transformation involves human decisions at every stage.¹⁶⁸ One aspect of the human response to atonement provided on Calvary is character development. “It is character that decides destiny.”¹⁶⁹ One reason why character decides destiny is the fact that human beings are responsible beings who have the capacity for spiritual and moral growth. Created in “the image of God,” human beings are created with freedom to make moral choices. Evidently, White’s atonement theology is clearly Arminian in orientation.

In White’s theology, humans are totally depraved but prevenient grace creates in them the capacity to choose. Also, their destiny is not determined by a sovereign God who arbitrarily “elects” some to be saved and others to be lost.¹⁷⁰ White highlights the fact that because God is love, He eagerly longs for a loving response from humans. Eternal life is promised only to those who choose to forsake their sins and gladly cooperate with the Holy Spirit in reconstructing their habit patterns.¹⁷¹ God permits the law of cause and effect with all His created beings, including humans, so that all can see the results of both obedience and disobedience to God’s revealed will.¹⁷²

According to White, the redeemed will be composed of those who have submitted themselves to the control of the Holy Spirit and have been enabled to cooperate with God

¹⁶⁸E. White, *Selected Messages*, 1:378; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 535; idem, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 76.

¹⁶⁹E. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 74, and also, 84, 123, 260, 356, 388; idem, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 379, 430, 440-441.

¹⁷⁰E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 207-208. For an extended discussion on White’s anthropology, see Leroy Moore, *The Theology Crisis*, 57-75.

¹⁷¹E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 672, 675, 678; idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 384.

¹⁷²E. White, *Patriarchs and Prohets*, 78-79; idem, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, 84; idem, *Great Controversy*, 28, 35-37, 614; idem, “Inexpressible Joy,” *Signs of the Times*, December 22, 1914.

in developing a habitual attitude of love and obedience to God's will and have demonstrated they can be trusted with eternal life, so that never again will the universe be placed in jeopardy.¹⁷³ In light of the arguments above, White is a freewill theist¹⁷⁴ because she maintains that God has given humans freedom to make life choices and has voluntarily given up complete control over the decisions they make.

Centrality of the Cross

Having examined their similarities and differences regarding their respective assumptions, presuppositions, and methodology, it is clear that both Stott and White share a lot of similarities and some prominent differences in their respective atonement theologies as already pointed out. With regard to the centrality of the cross in atonement, their positions are very similar. John Stott views the death of Christ as very central to His mission. He writes: "From Jesus' youth, indeed from his birth, the cross casts its shadow ahead of him. His death was central to his mission."¹⁷⁵ The fact that the church has always recognized the centrality of the cross underlines the importance of this argument.¹⁷⁶

The strongest reason that Stott adduces for his assertion that the death of Christ was central to His mission is because it originated in the mind of Jesus Himself. "The centrality of the cross originated in the mind of Jesus himself" and "it was out of loyalty

¹⁷³E. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, 96, 280, 315, 317.

¹⁷⁴Freewill theism is the theological position that holds that since God has granted humans freedom to choose between what is compatible and what is incompatible with God's will for us, He has given up complete control over human life decisions. See Basinger, 33.

¹⁷⁵Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 17. See also his *Evangelical Truth*, 68, and *Basic Christianity*, 82-86.

¹⁷⁶Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 17-18.

to him that his followers clung so doggedly to this sign.”¹⁷⁷ He emphasized that the most important reason for the death of Jesus on the cross was His own deliberate choice. In his view, Jesus died not because He believed He was fated¹⁷⁸ nor because He chose to be a martyr,¹⁷⁹ but because “he believed Old Testament Scripture to be his Father’s revelation and that he was totally resolved to do his Father’s will and finish his Father’s work.”¹⁸⁰

Stott notes that despite the great importance of the teaching and example of Jesus, and of His compassion and power, none of these was central to His mission. He opines that “what dominated his mind was not the living but the giving of his life.”¹⁸¹ He adds that the four evangelists who bore witness to Jesus in the Gospels reveal that they understand this “by the disproportionate amount of space which they give to the story of his last days on earth, his death and resurrection.”¹⁸² To emphasize the centrality of the cross, he quotes Emil Brunner who argues that “faith in the Mediator—in the event which took place once for all, a revealed atonement” is “the substance and kernel” of the Christian religion.¹⁸³

The cross of Christ is also the center of all White’s theological writings. Writing on what she thinks should be the main focus for diligent ministers of the gospel, she writes that “the sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 24. Stott argues that the cross was central to the mind of Paul because “it had been central to the mind of Christ” (*Evangelical Truth*, 68). See also idem, *Why I Am a Christian*, 50.

¹⁷⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 31.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 60.

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 31.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 32.

¹⁸²Ibid. See also his *Basic Christianity*, 84.

¹⁸³Emil Brunner, *The Mediator*, 40, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 44.

all other truths cluster.”¹⁸⁴ In White’s view, every other doctrine receives its influence and power from the achievement of Christ on the cross. The cross also reveals to us the critical importance of the law of God in atonement.¹⁸⁵

White argues that the cross presents the law and the gospel as being essential to atonement. She writes: “Christ and Him crucified, is the message God would have His servants sound through the length and breadth of the world. The law and the gospel will then be presented as a perfect whole.”¹⁸⁶ Thus, she views the cross as the evidence that the law and gospel are in harmony with regard to human redemption. For White, genuine Christian doctrine must focus on the work of Christ on the cross and the *raison d’être*—the transgression of the law of God.¹⁸⁷ Stott agrees with White on the essential unity of the law and the gospel. He argues that “the law must be allowed to do its God-given duty today. . . . We must never bypass the law and come straight to the gospel. To do so is to contradict the plan of God in biblical history.”¹⁸⁸

According to Stott, the salvation that atonement brings leads to obedience to the law,¹⁸⁹ though not in a legalistic or antinomian manner.¹⁹⁰ In his view, the redeemed

¹⁸⁴E. White, “What Is the Chaff to the Wheat?” Manuscript 70, July 5, 1901, in Manuscript Release 1490. See also idem, Gospel *Workers*, 315, and idem, “Following Christ,” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1899.

¹⁸⁵E. White, “Circulation of Great Controversy,” Manuscript 31, 1890, quoted in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 806. See also Manuscript 49, 1898, quoted in *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:458.

¹⁸⁶E. White, “The Uplifted Savior,” *Review and Herald*, September 29, 1896, 613.

¹⁸⁷E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 6:54.

¹⁸⁸Stott, *Message of Galatians*, 92, 93.

¹⁸⁹John R. W. Stott, *Men Made New* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966), 65.

¹⁹⁰Stott, *Galatians*, 109; idem, *Romans*, 191.

delights in the law as the revelation of God's will and also recognize "that the power to fulfill it is not in the law but in the Spirit."¹⁹¹ Thus in Stott's and White's respective theologies, the cross remains very central. Both emphasize the continuing validity of the law of God and the necessity for Christians to keep it not as a means of salvation, but as free expression of obedience to Jesus who died as our substitute to bring us salvation.

For both Stott and White, the Father and the divine Son suffered when Christ was dying as our Substitute on the cross. Stott argues that in the event of the cross, contrary to the traditional view of divine impassibility, "God in Christ bore our sins and died our death because of his love and justice."¹⁹² He argues further, "If God's full and final self-revelation was given in Jesus, moreover, then his feelings and sufferings are an authentic reflection of the feelings and sufferings of God himself."¹⁹³ Similarly White writes: "The righteous One must suffer the condemnation and wrath of God, not in vindictiveness; for the heart of God yearned with greatest sorrow when His Son, the guiltless, was suffering the penalty of sin."¹⁹⁴ In reference to Christ's crucifixion, she writes, "There are many who have thought that the Father had no part in the sufferings of the Son; but this is a mistake. The Father suffered with the Son."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ Stott, *Romans*, 191.

¹⁹² Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 329, 332, 335. See also *ibid.*, 156.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 331.

¹⁹⁴ E. White, Manuscript 93, 1899, quoted in "Sundering of the Divine Powers—White's comments on Hebrews 2:10," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:924.

¹⁹⁵ E. White, "The Love of God," *Signs of the Times*, November 25, 1889, 706. See also *idem*, *Fundamentals of Education*, 280; *idem*, "Christ Victorious Through Pain and Death," *Bible Echo*, August 6, 1894, 244.

Atonement as Penal Substitution

In Stott's view, the reason for atonement arises from the human need for forgiveness which arose from the gravity of sin and the majesty of God. The question that arose was how the holy God, acting in consistency with His character, could express both His holiness in judgment and His love in pardon of human sin.¹⁹⁶ His answer is given: "Only by providing a divine substitute for the sinner, so that the substitute would receive the judgment and the sinner the pardon."¹⁹⁷ He also adds that "the penal consequence, the deserved penalty of alienation from God, has been borne by Another in our place, so that we may be spared it."¹⁹⁸

Stott argues that though the essence of atonement is substitution, nevertheless, he emphasizes that the incarnation is indispensable to the atonement. He writes,

Neither Christ alone as man nor the Father alone as God could be our substitute. Only God in Christ, God the Father's own and only Son made man, could take our place. . . . The incarnation is indispensable to the atonement. In particular, it is essential to affirm that the love, the holiness and the will of the Father are identical with the love, the holiness and the will of the Son. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.¹⁹⁹

According to Stott, God imputes Christ's righteousness to us and at the same time imputes our sins to Christ. In explaining how Isa 53 shows that Christ died a substitutionary death for us, Stott quotes two NT references (2 Cor 5:21 and Gal 3:13) and then writes concerning the Pauline concept of "imputation": "When we are united to Christ a mysterious exchange takes place: he took our curse, so that we may receive his

¹⁹⁶Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 133-134.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 134. Also see Stott in "Was It Necessary for Christ to Die on the Cross?" in *Hard Questions*, ed. Frank Colquhoun (London: Falcon, 1967), 50.

¹⁹⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 134.

¹⁹⁹Ibid.

blessing; he became sin with our sin, so that we may become righteous with his righteousness.”²⁰⁰ Stott argues that imputation does not mean the transfer of one person’s moral qualities to another. He asserts, “What was transferred to Christ was not moral qualities but legal consequences. He voluntarily accepted liability for our sins. That is what the expression ‘made sin’ and ‘made a curse’ mean. Similarly, ‘the righteousness of God’ which we become when we are ‘in Christ’ is not here righteousness of character and conduct (although that grows within us by the working of the Holy Spirit), but rather a righteous standing before God.”²⁰¹

White holds a similar view with Stott on penal substitution. She writes,

Christ bore the penalty that would have fallen upon the transgressor; and through faith the helpless, hopeless sinner becomes a partaker of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust. Christ imputes his perfection and righteousness to the believing sinner when he does not continue in sin, but turns from transgression to obedience of the commandments. Christ rendered perfect obedience to the law, and man could not possibly obey the holy precepts had it not been for the provision that was made for the salvation of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam.²⁰²

She also writes, “Christ receives upon him the guilt of man's transgression, while he lays upon all who receive him by faith, who return to their allegiance to God, his own spotless righteousness.”²⁰³ Thus in White’s view, Christ’s perfect obedience to the law and righteousness are imputed to the repentant believer. It is the perfect obedience and righteousness of Christ which are the basis of our justification by God.

According to Stott, penal substitution not only takes care of the need for the

²⁰⁰Ibid., 148, 200.

²⁰¹Ibid., 148.

²⁰²E. White, “The Law Exalted By Christ,” *Review and Herald*, May 23, 1899, 321.

²⁰³Ibid., 322.

“satisfaction” of God’s law, his honor, his justice, or the moral order, but it “insists on the satisfaction of God Himself in every aspect of his being, including both his justice and his love.”²⁰⁴ For Stott, that means that “an actual and dreadful separation took place between the Father and the Son.”²⁰⁵ However, the separation was only momentary,²⁰⁶ because, “at once, emerging from that outer darkness, he [Christ] cried in triumph, ‘It is finished,’”²⁰⁷ indicating that “the salvation he had come to win was accomplished.”²⁰⁸ White makes a similar statement with regard to the separation of the Father and the Son. She writes that “the awful darkness” gathered around Christ “because of the withdrawal of the Father’s love and favor” since He was “standing in the sinner’s place” by suffering “the condemnation and wrath of God,” even though not in vindictiveness.²⁰⁹

Substitution and Sacrifice

As discussed earlier in chapter 3,²¹⁰ Stott states that sacrificial language and idioms are widely used in the New Testament. Sometimes the reference is unambiguous (Eph 5:2) and at other times, the reference is less direct (Gal 1:4; Heb 9:14). However, the background of thought is still the Old Testament sacrificial system. The letter to the Hebrews portrayed the sacrifice of Christ as having perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament

²⁰⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 129.

²⁰⁵Ibid., 81.

²⁰⁶Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 99.

²⁰⁷Ibid.

²⁰⁸Ibid.

²⁰⁹E. White, Manuscript 93, 1899, quoted in “Sundering of the Divine Powers,” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 7:924.

²¹⁰See chapter 3, the section on Substitution and Sacrifice in Scripture, 126-135.

“shadows” (Heb 8:3, 5). It also depicts Christ as having sacrificed Himself (9:11-12) once for all (9:23-26) in order to restore us into fellowship with God.²¹¹ In the book of Revelation, Jesus is seen in heaven as both “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” and as a Lamb which appears “as though it had been slain” (Rev 5:5, 6, 12).²¹² Stott argues that “from the early chapters of Genesis to the final chapters of the Revelation we can trace what some writers have called a scarlet thread.”²¹³ In short, both the Old and New Testaments testify to the fact that forgiveness and atonement are possible only through the death of Jesus Christ.²¹⁴

In the context of the Old Testament sacrificial system, Stott argues that “the notion of substitution is that one person takes the place of another, especially in order to bear his pain and to save him from it.”²¹⁵ He notes that the idea of substitution was applied by God Himself to the sacrifices. Abraham sacrificed a ram which God had provided “as a burnt offering instead of his son” (Gen 22:13).²¹⁶ Though Stott notes that some scholars see the laying-on of hands as a symbol of the transfer of the sins of the worshiper to the animal, he interprets the act as a means for the worshiper to solemnly declare that the victim was standing in his place as a sinner.²¹⁷ He adds that having taken

²¹¹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 135. See also his *Evangelical Essentials*, 164.

²¹²Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 85.

²¹³Ibid. Some of the Bible writers he cited include Moses (Leviticus), Isaiah (53), Daniel (9:25), Zechariah (13:7), Luke (24:46), Paul (Gal 2:20; 6:14; 1 Cor 1:22-24; 15:3; Heb 9:22, 26), and John (Rev 5:5, 6, 12).

²¹⁴Ibid., 82-86.

²¹⁵Stott, *Cross*, 136.

²¹⁶Ibid., 136-137.

²¹⁷ Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 137. See also Kidner, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, 14, and Wenham, *Numbers*, 202-205.

the place of the worshiper, the substitute animal was killed “in recognition that the penalty for sin was death, its blood (symbolizing that the death has been accomplished) was sprinkled, and the life of the offerer was spared.”²¹⁸

In Stott’s view, “what makes atonement ‘on the altar’ is the shedding of substitutionary lifeblood.”²¹⁹ Referring to Lev 17:11, Stott argues that “we are to think of the sacrificial system as God-given, not man-made, and of the individual sacrifices not as a human device to placate God but as a means of atonement provided by God himself.”²²⁰ God has done this in the person of the second person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ. In his view, the message of the Day of Atonement is that “reconciliation was possible only through substitutionary sin-bearing.”²²¹

Both Stott and White see Christ as both the victim and the High Priest,²²² but they disagree on the interpretation of the two goats that played a central role on the Day of Atonement. While Stott sees Christ as the One symbolized by both the sacrificed goat whose blood was taken into the inner sanctuary and the scapegoat which carried away the people’s sins,²²³ White sees the sacrificed goat as the symbol of Christ and the scapegoat as the symbol of Satan.²²⁴ This is a crucial difference between the two theologies.²²⁵

²¹⁸Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 137. For a fuller discussion of the theological meaning of laying of hands on the sacrificial victim, see Angel M. Rodriguez, *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus*, and Morris, *The Atonement*, 45, 47.

²¹⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 138.

²²⁰Ibid.

²²¹Ibid., 144.

²²²Ibid., 179; White, *Desire of Ages*, 25.

²²³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 144.

²²⁴E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 33; idem, *Great Controversy*, 422.

²²⁵See *Questions on Doctrine*, 391-401, for a defense of White’s interpretations of the two victims.

White's view on penal substitution agrees essentially with that of Stott, even though she apparently attaches more importance to the law of God than does Stott. It is the need for the satisfaction of divine justice that necessitated the introduction of the sacrificial system. She writes, "Notwithstanding the justice of God, and the guilt of the transgressor of his holy law, a way was devised whereby satisfaction could be made to the law by the infinite sacrifice of the Son of God."²²⁶ In 1890 White asserts that "had the law of God never been transgressed, there would have been no death, and no need of a Saviour; consequently there would have been no need of sacrifices."²²⁷ She argues that while the death of Jesus brought an end to the types in the Old Testament that were pointing forward to the Savior and His death, it did not in the least detract from our obligation to keep the moral law. She writes, "On the contrary, the very fact that it was necessary for Christ to die in order to atone for the transgression of that law, proves it to be immutable."²²⁸

In White's view, there is no sharp discontinuity in God's method of saving people under the old covenant and His method for doing the same in the new covenant. Therefore, the moral law remains valid under both covenants.²²⁹ Stott also points out the validity of the moral law by arguing that on the cross, God (in Christ) paid the penalty for

²²⁶E. White, "The Gospel for both Jews and Gentiles," *Signs of the Times*, August 5, 1889, 466. She also defines righteousness as "the satisfaction that Christ gave the divine law in our behalf" by being "tempted in all points as we are tempted" without yielding "in the least degree to the power of the enemy" ("We Shall Reap as We Sow," *Review and Herald*, August 21, 1894, 529).

²²⁷E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 363; idem, *Testimonies*, 6:54.

²²⁸E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 365. See also idem, "The Law and the Gospel," *Signs of the Times*, March 14, 1878, 81 (also published in *Selected Messages*, 1:230).

²²⁹E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 373.

the broken law and vindicated its sanctity.²³⁰ He writes, “The law is the expression of his [God’s] own moral being, and his [God’s] moral being is always self-consistent.”²³¹ But, as has been shown earlier in this chapter, he contradicts his own stand on the validity of the law when he dismisses the idea of a literal six-day creation, thus also invalidating the idea of the seventh-day Sabbath (as contained in the Decalogue) which is clearly predicated on the idea of a literal six-day period of the divine creation of our world.

In light of this argument, White apparently puts more emphasis on the importance of the law than does Stott. Like Stott, White presents Christ in His work of atonement as taking the penalty of our sins on Himself as our Substitute.²³² She clearly states that sin is transferred from the penitent sinner to the sacrificial victim. Stott merely refers to the views of other scholars on the act of laying-on of hands as a symbol of the transfer of sin from the sinner to the victim and interprets the act as means for the worshiper to solemnly declare that the victim was standing in his place as a sinner.²³³

This issue of the possibility of transfer of sins from sinner to victim is significant for the understanding of whether the heavenly sanctuary would need cleansing as a result of the record of the confessed sins of believers that would be transferred there, as will be shown below. White’s position on this is probably due to her typological hermeneutics. White writes, “By placing his hands upon the head of the victim the sin of the individual was transferred to the victim, and in his [*in its*] suffering the sinner saw Christ typified,

²³⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 115.

²³¹*Ibid.*, 117.

²³²E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 25.

²³³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 137.

when he should give himself as a sacrifice for our sins.”²³⁴

Justice, Mercy, Synergism²³⁵ and the Role of Law

White explains the need for penal substitution as follows: “Justice demands that sin be not merely pardoned, but the death penalty must be executed. God, in the gift of His only-begotten Son, met both these requirements. By dying in man's stead, Christ exhausted the penalty and provided a pardon.”²³⁶ Concerning Christ’s substitutionary death, White writes, “As the substitute and surety for sinful man, Christ was to suffer under divine justice. He was to understand what justice meant. He was to know what it means for sinners to stand before God without an intercessor.”²³⁷ Therefore, through the cross of Christ, God could put forgiveness on a moral foundation since “the Divine Lawgiver and Divine Forgiver was also the Divine Victim.”²³⁸ She clearly agrees with Stott on the unity of the Father and the Son in atonement on the cross.²³⁹

White also agrees with Stott on the unity of God’s mercy and justice, but takes this even further. She presents the unity of the two concepts in the context of the great controversy. She points out that Lucifer had argued that the imposition of an absolute divine law showed that God was a tyrant, and that if the law is just, it cannot be relaxed,

²³⁴E. White, “Sacrificial Offerings,” *Signs of the Times*, July 15, 1880, 313. For some extended discussion of the idea of transferal of sin through laying on of hands in Adventist theology, see Angel M. Rodriguez, “Salvation by Sacrificial Substitution,” 49-77, and his book *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus*, 193, 224.

²³⁵Synergism is the doctrine that states that salvation is achieved through the combination of divine grace working in cooperation with the human will.

²³⁶E. White, “Christ Our High Priest,” Manuscript 50, 1900, published in *Selected Messages*, 1:340.

²³⁷E. White, *Prophet and Kings*, 691; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 753.

²³⁸Knight, *My Gripe with God*, 57.

²³⁹E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 693, 754.

in which case justice makes mercy impossible.²⁴⁰ It is evident that Lucifer had not foreseen the implications of Christ's death in regard to his charges against God's character and law. Through His death on the cross, Jesus brought God's justice and mercy together into a unity that only One who is God Himself could have accomplished.²⁴¹

The law's role, not as savior, but as a standard for human moral behavior, is crucial to White's view. She writes: "Those only who have a just regard for the law of God can rightly estimate the atonement of Christ."²⁴² In broad terms, Stott agrees with White's position on the importance of Christian moral behavior. He asserts, "Good works are indispensable to salvation --- not as its ground or means, . . . but as its consequence and evidence."²⁴³ This assertion is in accord with his stand on the continuing validity of the moral law, even though he undermines his own argument in this regard, as earlier shown in this chapter. Stott's position on the importance of good works is undermined by his Calvinistic presuppositions, namely, total depravity, unconditional election and irresistible grace, which ensures the final salvation of the elect.

It has been argued earlier that Stott denies synergism between God's grace and the human response of faith. The only conclusion one is left with is that his theological position is definitely Calvinist, a position which affirms monergism.²⁴⁴ In White's view,

²⁴⁰Ibid., 761.

²⁴¹E. White, Manuscript 128, 1897, cited in *Questions on Doctrine*, 674; "General Conference Bulletin," Fourth Quarter, 1899, vol. 3, 102. See also idem, *Desire of Ages*, 762.

²⁴²E. White, "The Law and the Gospel," *Signs of the Times*, March 14, 1878, 81.

²⁴³Stott, *Ephesians*, 84, 85.

²⁴⁴Monergism is the doctrinal position that argues that God's grace is the only efficient cause in beginning and effecting human salvation without the need for the cooperation of the individual believer(s).

atonement on the cross goes beyond merely fulfilling the forensic demands of the law; it also upholds the sanctity and validity of the divine law and government.²⁴⁵ Therefore, obedience to the law is crucial for the redeemed.

In an aspect of atonement theology that is unique to her, she argues that Christ's death as our Substitute has a cosmic "redemptive" dimension with regard to the heavenly angels who share with us "the fruits of Christ's victory."²⁴⁶ She states that "without the cross they [the unfallen angels] would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan."²⁴⁷ Thus Christ's atonement has salvific repercussions for human believers on earth as well as angels and other dwellers of the unfallen worlds in the sense that it confirms them in their loyalty to God. Therefore in White's view, atonement has cosmic dimensions beyond the salvation of human beings. The flow of the biblical metanarrative, beginning with creation and culminating in the second coming of Christ and the final white throne judgment, viewed in light of the cosmic controversy, vindicates God's love and justice.

Four Phases²⁴⁸ of Atonement

The idea of atonement as a process in different phases is unique to White and Seventh-day Adventist theology. Wood has rightly argued that the key element in White's presentation of the atonement is the idea that "the entire incarnation is one phase

²⁴⁵E. White, Manuscript 163, 1897, cited in *Questions on Doctrine*, 675; idem, *Great Controversy*, 503.

²⁴⁶E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 758.

²⁴⁷E. White, "What Was Secured by the Death of Christ," *Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1889, 786. See also idem, "Bible Study," *Review and Herald*, January 11, 1881, 18.

²⁴⁸The word "phase" as used here refers to a stage within a process that develops over time. The key idea is that atonement is a process in time which encompasses several stages until the final

(among several) of the atonement.”²⁴⁹ Heppenstall’s presentation of atonement in three stages, that is, atonement at the cross, atonement through the high priestly ministry of Christ, and atonement through judgment,²⁵⁰ captures three of the meanings of atonement as presented by White. She also discusses a fourth phase of atonement, that is, Christ’s life of suffering and entire work of redemption. In a similar vein, Fortin has pointed out that White uses the term atonement in three different ways which ranged “from a specific, focused meaning to a broad meaning,”²⁵¹ including Calvary as a complete atonement, His high priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary, and His entire life of suffering.²⁵²

White presents atonement in four stages, namely, the incarnation, the cross, high priestly ministry, and judgment. However, the phases overlap and are not strictly chronological. White’s presentation of atonement in four phases brings out clearly her broader view of atonement in contrast to the narrower view of Stott, which focuses mainly on the cross. As already discussed in chapter 4, White’s view of atonement in phases not only focuses on the human need for salvation, and the provision made at the cross, it also broadens the scope of atonement to include the cosmic dimension of the vindication of God’s character and government in light of the accusation of Satan against God, and His law in the great controversy.²⁵³

Stott discusses the cross not just as a revelation of God’s justice, but also as a

reconciliation of the world back to God is achieved.

²⁴⁹Wood, “Mighty Opposites,” 701. See also Froom, *Movement of Destiny*, 327-328.

²⁵⁰Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 31.

²⁵¹Fortin, “The Cross of Christ,” 138.

²⁵²*Ibid.*, 138-139.

²⁵³See chapter 4, 247-254, and 278-292, of this dissertation.

revelation of His love.²⁵⁴ He also sees the atonement as a cosmic drama in which God in Christ does battle with the powers of evil and gains the victory over them.²⁵⁵ He argues that by His death, “Jesus saved us not only from sin and guilt, but from death and the devil, in fact all evil powers, as well.”²⁵⁶ He discusses the victory of Christ over the devil in six stages, namely, the conquest predicted in Eden (Gen 3:15), the conquest begun in Christ’s ministry (as we see His kingdom advancing and Satan’s retreating), the conquest achieved at the cross (the decisive stage), the conquest confirmed and announced (the resurrection), the conquest extended (through the preaching of the gospel and conversion of sinners), and the conquest consummated (at the second coming of Christ).²⁵⁷

However, it is important to point out that though Stott discusses both the issue of the cross as the vindication of God’s love and justice, and the victory of Christ over the devil in six stages, he does not have “cosmic controversy” as a major theme, and does not employ it as an undergirding principle for the presentation of his theological thought. On the other hand, as already shown in chapter 4, White utilizes the cosmic controversy theme as an undergirding theme for her theological thought. The theme runs through her Conflict of the Ages series and other books as well.²⁵⁸

In the case of White, though the idea of atonement in stages is clearly indicated in White’s writings, it is not systematically organized and presented. The systematization of her theological thoughts has been criticized on the basis of the argument that her

²⁵⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 212, and chapter 3, 152-154, of this dissertation.

²⁵⁵Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 228.

²⁵⁶Ibid., 229.

²⁵⁷Ibid., 231-237. See also chapter 3, 154-158, of this dissertation.

²⁵⁸See chapter 4, 214-217, of this dissertation.

theological writings are mainly a “thorough going narrative,” with “propositions” interspersed in between large portions of narrative and expansive exhortations given for the spiritual formation of believers.²⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the idea of atonement in phases is so clearly depicted in her writings that it cannot be missed by an objective researcher who takes into consideration the totality of her writings and her foundational theological presuppositions.

Achievement of the Cross and Scope of Atonement

The achievement of the cross will be examined in terms of the different theological concepts both Stott and White employ in the discussion of the achievement of the cross in order to lay out in clear terms what Jesus achieved for our atonement by His life, death, resurrection, and high priestly ministry. The scope of atonement will discuss how “universal” or “particular” their different conceptions of atonement are.

The Achievement of the Cross

It has already been shown that the basic concept of atonement employed by both Stott and White is penal substitution. However, regarding the possibility of the revocation of a believer’s justification, they hold divergent views. While Stott holds to the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (which implies irrevocable justification), White holds to the Arminian viewpoint that only those who choose to continue to be faithful will continue to be justified. Their major difference, in the area of the scope of atonement, is perhaps due to their presuppositions on the concept of divine

²⁵⁹Sigve Tonstad, “The Cross and the Sanctuary in the Writings of Ellen G. White: A Response to Denis Fortin,” page 1, an unpublished paper given in response to Denis Fortin, “The Cross and the Sanctuary: Ellen G. White’s Thought on Atonement,” an unpublished paper presented at Loma Linda

sovereignty and human free will.

Stott notes that the salvation offered by Christ is presented in theological terms like “propitiation,” “redemption,” “justification,” and “reconciliation.” For him, the underlying idea that the images reveal “is the truth that God in Christ has borne our sin and died our death to set us free from sin and death.”²⁶⁰ He also argues that ‘substitution’ is not another ‘theory’ or ‘image’ of atonement among the others but is, in fact, the foundation of all of them. In other words, substitution is a reality. In his words, “if God in Christ did not die in our place, there could be neither propitiation, nor redemption, nor justification, nor reconciliation.”²⁶¹

According to Stott, God’s wrath against sin and sinners is what is propitiated, but it is the love of God which did the propitiating.²⁶² The propitiatory sacrifice was not a thing or an animal but God Himself in the person of His son.²⁶³ Redemption focuses on our enslavement by sin which made the divine rescue necessary. We have been ransomed by the payment of a price, that is, “the atoning death of God’s Son.”²⁶⁴ Reconciliation is fully the work of God which follows and is the result of justification.²⁶⁵

White employs such expressions as “substitute and surety” (penal substitution), revelation of the character of the Father, vindication of God’s law and government,

University School of Religion, April 14, 2009.

²⁶⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 167.

²⁶¹Ibid. He notes that all the images beginning in the Old Testament are elaborated and enriched in the New especially by being related to Christ and His cross. See also *Evangelical Essentials*, 165.

²⁶²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 167.

²⁶³Ibid., 174-175.

²⁶⁴He quotes Mark 10:45; Gal 3:13; 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:14 in support of this assertion.

²⁶⁵Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 194.

pattern for believers, and ultimate victory over Satan to describe Christ's work of atonement. However, the concept she emphasizes most is penal substitution.²⁶⁶ In reference to the cross, she argues that "the glorious Redeemer of a lost world was suffering the penalty of man's transgression of the Father's law."²⁶⁷ She uses the expression "Substitute and Surety" primarily to refer to Christ's atoning death on Calvary on behalf of sinners. As "substitute," He suffered the punishment for sin in our stead, and as "surety," He guaranteed that all our debts would be paid and our obligations to God and His law would be met.²⁶⁸

Justification

Stott distinguishes justification from condemnation and sees justification as an anticipation of the last judgment with respect to the Christian believer. He writes:

Justification is a legal or forensic term, belonging to the law courts. Its opposite is condemnation and both are the pronouncements of a judge. In a Christian context they are the alternative eschatological verdicts which God may pass on judgment day. So when God justifies sinners today, he anticipates his own final judgment by bringing into the present what belongs properly to the last day.²⁶⁹

White may well agree with the above statement by Stott. However, Stott's idea of irrevocable justification, as an anticipation of the last judgment, renders particularly a pre-Advent judgment of the believers superfluous and is a major difference between his

²⁶⁶Some selected references from White's writings include the following: "Redemption--No. 1," *Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874; idem, "The Temptation of Christ," August 18, 1874; July 11, 1882; idem, "Conditions for Obtaining Eternal Riches," *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1890, 353, 354.

²⁶⁷E. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 2:209. See also *ibid.*, 200-203.

²⁶⁸Writing in connection with Christ's work of redemption, White writes of Christ that "He was the surety for man, the ambassador for God, --the surety for man to satisfy by his righteousness in man's behalf the demands of the law, and the representative of God to make manifest his character to a fallen race" ("No Cast in Christ," *Review and Herald*, December 22, 1891, 785).

²⁶⁹Stott, *Message of Romans*, 110.

atonement theology and that of White. According to Stott, justification takes place in an instant,²⁷⁰ whereas sanctification describes the process by which justified Christians are changed into the likeness of Christ.²⁷¹ Like many evangelicals, Stott believed in the “total depravity” of humanity, which he defines as the position that asserts that “every part of our humanness has been twisted by the Fall.”²⁷² This, he argues, is the reason why he insists on “the need both for a radical salvation and for non-contributory grace.”²⁷³

Consistent with his understanding of divine predestination, God’s eternal decree and the effective call of the believer (as will be shown below in the discussion of the scope of atonement), Stott argues that justification cannot be lost. He argues that our justification “is not sporadic but continuous, not precarious but secure.”²⁷⁴ A justification that cannot be lost, based on divine predestination and unconditional election, has no room for a final judgment of the justified believer.

White agrees with Stott on his basic concept of justification. In White’s thought, “justification is a full, complete pardon of sin.”²⁷⁵ She states that at the very moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, he/she is pardoned and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him/her.²⁷⁶ All that the sinner needs to do is to “simply grasp by faith the free

²⁷⁰Stott, *Men with a Message*, 96.

²⁷¹John R. W. Stott, *Christian Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 38.

²⁷²Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 187. See also his *Message of Ephesians*, 79.

²⁷³Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 187.

²⁷⁴Stott, *Message of Romans*, 140. However, a consideration of the scriptural evidence does not support his conclusion here. See Matt 24:4, 5, 11-13; Luke 12:42-46; John 15:1-6; Rom 11:20-22; Gal 6:7-9; Heb 3:6-19, 4:1-16; 1 John 2:15-28; Rev 22:18, 19, among many others scriptural references.

²⁷⁵Ellen White, “Faith and Good Works,” *Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1898.

²⁷⁶*Ibid.*

and ample provision made in the blood of Christ.”²⁷⁷ Elsewhere she has written: “Justification is wholly of grace and not procured by any works that fallen man can do.”²⁷⁸ Like Stott who argues that “justification is by grace alone, in Christ alone, through faith alone,”²⁷⁹ White also argues that justification “is wholly a free gift,” and humans cannot merit salvation by anything we may do.²⁸⁰

Nevertheless, White argues for the crucial role of the believer’s free will in both justification and sanctification.²⁸¹ White asserts that “there are conditions to receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness of Christ.”²⁸² The conditions include obedience to Christ’s words,²⁸³ and His law,²⁸⁴ and genuine repentance.²⁸⁵ Stott agrees with White that there are conditions to receiving justification.²⁸⁶ A crucial difference is that in White’s view, justification can be lost. The redeemed are secure as long as they are focusing on Christ, our heavenly High Priest, by faith. He is the source of our justification and sanctification unto perfection.²⁸⁷

Apart from the differences already pointed out, their respective understanding and

²⁷⁷Ibid.

²⁷⁸E. White, Manuscript 36, 1890, published in *Faith and Works*, 20.

²⁷⁹Stott, *Message of Romans*, 117.

²⁸⁰E. White, *Faith and Works*, 20.

²⁸¹Ibid.

²⁸²Ibid., 111.

²⁸³Ibid., 113, 116.

²⁸⁴Ibid., 117-118.

²⁸⁵Ibid.

²⁸⁶Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 167.

²⁸⁷E. White, “Accepted in Christ,” *Signs of the Times*, July 4, 1892, quoted in *Faith and Works*, 107.

presentations of justification are very similar. Stott denies that justification and forgiveness are synonymous. He argues, “Pardon is negative, the remission of a penalty or debt; justification is positive, the bestowal of a righteous status, the sinner’s reinstatement in the favour and fellowship of God.”²⁸⁸ White writes that “God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.”²⁸⁹

Scope of Atonement

Trevor Hart has argued that the scope of atonement is an issue which lies at the heart of a systematic exposition of the gospel, and is “not merely a fascinating side show on the eschatological fringes of theological concern.”²⁹⁰ Hart’s argument highlights a crucial difference between Stott’s atonement theology and that of White. A discussion of the scope of atonement in Stott and White potentially involves a discussion of their position on doctrines like Christology, atonement (both its necessity and its means), justification by faith, the nature of biblical authority, human freedom in relation to divine sovereignty, and the doctrine of God itself.²⁹¹

Stott’s view of the extent of the atonement is closely related to his understanding of Christology, justification by faith, divine foreknowledge and predestination,

²⁸⁸Stott, *Romans*, 110.

²⁸⁹E. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1955), 114.

²⁹⁰Hart, “Universalism,” 1-2.

²⁹¹*Ibid.*, 2. Thomas has also noted that “it is important to see the extent of the atonement not as an isolated doctrine, but in its relation to other doctrines within the thought of each theologian studied.” *Extent of the Atonement*, 3.

unconditional election and God's eternal decrees which, Calvinists argue, guarantee the eternal security or "perseverance of the saints."²⁹² While on the one hand Stott argues that "God's gospel is for everybody, without exception and without distinction,"²⁹³ he at the same time upholds the ideas of the eternal security of Christians that arises from God's foreknowledge, predestination, unconditional election, and effective call. The latter position is usually identified with Calvinism. While he generally presents his position in a manner that may lead one to conclude that he espouses an unlimited atonement, which is usually identified with Arminianism, a closer examination of his writings reveals a solid commitment to the critical tenets of Calvinism that form the bedrock of his position on the extent of atonement.²⁹⁴

Stott's position on the scope of atonement is one usually associated with limited or "particular" atonement. It holds that the purpose of Christ's coming was not to make possible the salvation of all humans, but to render certain the salvation of the elect.²⁹⁵ This view is the one held by the Augustinian/Calvinist traditions of theology. Erickson has noted that since Augustine, limited atonement and election have been affirmed or denied together.²⁹⁶ Like the theologies of most Calvinists, Stott's atonement theology

²⁹²For a full discussion of Stott's view of the Scope of atonement, see chapter 3, section on Scope of Atonement, 159-175.

²⁹³Stott, *Message of Romans*, 51, 52. See also *ibid.*, 60, 61, 67, 109, 120, 135. In his *Epistles of John*, 89, he argues that "Christ is still the propitiation . . . *not for ours* [that is, the Christian believer's sins] *only, but also for the sins of the whole world*" and that through the propitiation offered by Christ, "a universal pardon is offered for (the sins of) the whole world and is enjoyed by those who embrace it."

²⁹⁴See chapter 3, 159-175, section on Scope of Atonement, in this dissertation. For a discussion of the extent of the atonement, see W. A. Elwell, "Extent of Atonement," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 114-116, and Erickson, 841-858, 921-940.

²⁹⁵Erickson, 843.

²⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 845.

affirms unconditional election, and as will be shown below, limited atonement also, when the practical effect of God's eternal predestination and unconditional election of the believers are seen in perspective. The second view, also referred to as unlimited atonement or universal atonement, holds that God intended Christ's atoning death to provide salvation for all persons, but the provision becomes effective only when accepted by the individual believer.²⁹⁷ This is the viewpoint of the Arminian tradition in theology.²⁹⁸ White subscribes to this Arminian viewpoint.

In his commentary on Rom 3:22, Stott writes that the *righteousness from God* "comes through faith in Jesus Christ to *all who believe*" and "it is offered to all because it is needed by all."²⁹⁹ There is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles or between any other human groupings, "*for all have sinned . . . and fall short . . . of the glory of God.*"³⁰⁰ Stott justifies his argument that all have sinned in and through Adam by the use of the concept of "biblical solidarity." He argues that "all sinned in and through Adam and therefore all died."³⁰¹ He adds that not only have we sinned in and through Adam, but we have also inherited guilt from Adam.³⁰²

Stott presents his viewpoint of a limited atonement by arguing that though the scope of atonement "will be extremely extensive," nevertheless the "all men" of Rom

²⁹⁷Ibid., 846.

²⁹⁸Strong, *Systematic Theology*, 777; Erickson, 846.

²⁹⁹Stott, *Romans*, 109. See also his *Evangelical Essentials*, 328, where he writes: "We have to remember too that God does not *want* anybody to perish but *wants* everybody to be saved (2 Peter 3:9; 1 Timothy 2:4) [Emphasis his]."

³⁰⁰Stott, *Romans*, 109.

³⁰¹Ibid., 151.

³⁰²Stott, *Ephesians*, 78.

5:18 who are affected by the work of Christ cannot refer to absolutely everybody, as has been already presented.³⁰³ In his comments on Rom 8:1-39, he argues that the burden of Paul's climax in this passage under discussion is "the eternal security of God's people, on account of the eternal unchangeability of God's purpose, which is itself due to the eternal steadfastness of God's love."³⁰⁴ In his discussion of "the five unshakeable convictions" (which Paul expressed in his discussion of Rom 8:28-39), Stott notes that Paul lists five truths about God's providence (v. 28). First, God is at work in our lives "ceaselessly, energetically and purposefully."³⁰⁵ Second, God is at work for the ultimate good of His people, namely their final salvation (vv. 29-30).

Third, God works for our good in all things. "Nothing is beyond the overruling, overriding scope of his providence."³⁰⁶ Fourth, the completed salvation that is promised in the above Bible passage is for those people who love Him.³⁰⁷ Fifth, "those who love God are also described as those *who have been called according to his purpose*."³⁰⁸ He argues that their love for Him is a sign and token of His prior love for them, which has found expression in His eternal purpose and His historical call. In his words, "God has a saving purpose, and is working in accordance with it. Life is not the random mess which

³⁰³See chapter 3, section on Scope of Atonement, 164-166, of this dissertation. See also Stott, *Romans*, 159-162. Paul wrote in Rom.5: 18, "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life."

³⁰⁴Stott, *Romans*, 246.

³⁰⁵Ibid., 246-247.

³⁰⁶Ibid., 247.

³⁰⁷Ibid.

³⁰⁸Ibid., 248.

it may sometimes appear.”³⁰⁹

In his comments on Rom 8:29-30, Stott states that Paul depicts God’s saving purpose as moving through the five stages, namely divine foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification.³¹⁰ He rejects the Arminian argument that God foresees who will believe and that this foreknowledge is the basis of His election.³¹¹ In Stott’s commentary on Eph 1:4, 5, he writes: “Paul could hardly have insisted more forcefully that our becoming members of God’s new community was due neither to chance nor to choice (if by that is meant our choice), but to God’s own sovereign will and pleasure. This was the decisive factor.”³¹²

Clearly, Stott is a theological determinist of the compatibilist variety.³¹³ Consistent with this theological position, he adds that God’s sovereign will does not dispense with our own responsibility.³¹⁴ With regard to predestination, Stott notes that “the verb *predestined* translates *proorizo*, which means ‘to decide beforehand’” and quotes Acts 4:28 in support of this understanding.³¹⁵ He adds, “Clearly, then, a decision is involved in the process of becoming a Christian, but it is God’s decision before it can be ours. This is not to deny that we ‘decided for Christ’, and freely, but to affirm that we did

³⁰⁹Ibid.

³¹⁰Ibid.

³¹¹Ibid.

³¹²Stott, *Ephesians*, 48.

³¹³Basinger, 27.

³¹⁴Stott, *Ephesians*, 48.

³¹⁵Stott, *Romans*, 249. For a discussion of predestination and the different views of Calvinism and Arminianism, see Erickson, 921-940.

so only because he had first ‘decided for us.’³¹⁶ Clearly, divine sovereignty completely overrules human freedom and choice. In his view, human “choice” is only apparent and not real. God foresees and foreordains human “choices” from all eternity.³¹⁷

In relation to the “calling” (Rom 8:30a), Stott argues that it is the application in time of God’s eternal predestination. He writes, “In the eternity of the past God chose us to be saved. Then he called us in time, causing us to hear the gospel, believe the truth and be sanctified by the Spirit, with a view to our sharing Christ’s glory in the eternity of the future.”³¹⁸ For him, the “call” in this verse is not the general gospel invitation but the divine summons which raises the spiritually dead to life. It is sometimes termed God’s ‘effective’ or ‘effectual’ call. Those whom God thus calls (v. 30) are the same as those ‘who have been called according to his purpose’(v. 28).³¹⁹ Thus, Stott accepts the idea of “the two calls” as espoused by Calvin.³²⁰

³¹⁶Stott, *Romans*, 249.

³¹⁷C. J. Vaughan, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (London: Macmillan, 1885), 163, quoted in Stott, *Romans*, 249, 250.

³¹⁸Stott, *The Message of 1 & 2nd Thessalonians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991), 176, 177. See also his *Romans*, 140, where Stott argues that the believer’s justification is irrevocable. See also *Romans*, 252.

³¹⁹Stott, *Romans*, 252.

³²⁰Calvin has written: “There are two species of calling;--for there is a universal call, by which God, through the external preaching of the word, invites all men alike, even those for whom he designs the call to be a savour of death, and the ground of a severer condemnation. Besides this there is a special call, which, for the most part, God bestows on believers only, when by the internal illumination of the Spirit he causes the word preached to take root in their hearts” (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3.24.8).

The Calvinistic doctrines of divine predestination and election have been greatly influenced by the theologies of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Stott, like some other evangelical theologians, have been influenced, even if unconsciously, by the Thomistic epistemological theological approach. Thomistic theology has its sources in Scripture, reason, and tradition and views reality and God within the framework of Greek Aristotelian metaphysical timelessness. However, Scripture does not depict reality in an Aristotelian timeless manner, but in a historical temporal manner. The timelessness of God and the associated unchangeableness makes no room for the notion of a succession of divine actions. The God of Scripture is not the God of timeless eternity. He actually interacts with His people in real historical time. See Fernando Canale, “Toward an Epistemological Approach to the Theological Disagreement on Atonement within the Seventh-day Adventist Theology” (Center of Adventist Research, Andrews

Stott summarizes his discussion of the five stages discussed above by depicting God “as moving irresistibly from stage to stage; from an eternal foreknowledge and predestination, through a historical call and justification, to a final glorification of his people in a future eternity.”³²¹ He describes God’s work of salvation as resembling “a chain of five links, each of which is unbreakable.”³²² It is thus evident that Stott invests a preponderant premium on God’s sovereign decision or choice but greatly discounts human responsibility and choice.³²³ Stott’s conception of God is such that His omnipotence is so unassailable that “absolutely nothing can frustrate God’s purpose (since He is for us), or quench His generosity (since He has not spared his Son), or accuse or condemn His elect (since He has justified them through Christ), or sunder us from His love (since He has revealed it in Christ).”³²⁴ His theology of atonement can only accommodate monergism since God not only ordains but also irresistibly effects the final salvation of the chosen believers.

Stott tries to resolve the apparent contradiction between the universal offer of salvation and particular atonement by referring to it as an antinomy which cannot be

University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1979), 14-17, 34; idem, *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1984); idem, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 35-44; Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Unqualified Divine Temporality,” in *Four Views: God and Time*, ed. Gregory E. Ganssle (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 187-213; Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003), 3-11; Olsen, *Story of Christian Theology*, 455-457.

³²¹Stott, *Romans*, 253.

³²²Ibid.

³²³Ibid., 249, where Stott argues that the decision involved in our salvation is primarily God’s decision and only secondarily ours.

³²⁴Ibid., 259. It appears that, for Stott, predestination, like providence, depends upon an absolute and hidden will of God which is “the cause of all things.” See Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.18.2. For Calvin’s thoughts on the two wills of God, see his *Institutes*, 1.17.2. 3.20.43.; 3.24.15.

resolved.³²⁵ He sees “an antinomy between the universal offer of the gospel and God’s purpose of election, between the ‘all’ and the ‘some’.”³²⁶ He adds, “Wherever we look in Scripture we see this antinomy: divine sovereignty and human responsibility, universal offer and electing purpose, the all and the some, the cannot and the will not.”³²⁷

It may be observed that the difficulty is really not in the so-called antinomy in Scripture but in his presuppositions on God’s decrees, predestination, and unconditional election which overemphasizes God’s sovereignty and grossly undervalues the role of the human agent in the work of application of the atonement. As already argued,³²⁸ Stott accepts the key doctrines of Calvinism, except the third in the “five points of Calvinism,” that is, limited atonement. His position may actually be classified as belonging to the sublapsarian variety of Calvinism which argues that, in the logical order of God’s decrees, He first provides an unlimited atonement that is sufficient for all, but limits its application to only the elect.³²⁹

However, the practical effect of the “rejection” of the doctrine of limited atonement does not make any difference to the extent of the atonement, since it is only the “elect” according to divine predestination who will be saved.³³⁰ Robert Shank, in

³²⁵An antinomy is a contradiction between two true statements that cannot be resolved.

³²⁶Stott, *1 Timothy and Titus*, 66. See also John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus* (1548-50) (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964), 208-209.

³²⁷Stott, *1 Timothy and Titus*, 66. Conceivably, one reason why he urges that “salvation must be offered to all” is revealed in a passage where he writes, “Scripture nowhere dispels the mystery of election, and we should be beware of any who try to systematize it too precisely or rigidly” (*Message of Ephesians*, 37). Though it seems apparent that he is struggling with the doctrine of election, nevertheless, the idea of an antinomy does not give proper weight to the response of the human agent in the divine work of atonement nor is it consistent with the biblical data.

³²⁸Chapter 3, 175, in the discussion of Scope of Atonement.

³²⁹Erickson, 852, 931.

³³⁰Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*. 8 vols. (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press,

commenting on the illogicality of the so-called “four-point Calvinists,” or “moderate Calvinists,” referred to them as being “quite inconsistent,” and rhetorically asks, “Why should Jesus bear the sins of men who have no prospect of forgiveness and whose inevitable destiny, by decree of God, is eternal perdition? Why should God sacrifice His Son for men whom He does not desire to save and whom He does not love?”³³¹

In White’s view, the atonement of Christ is not limited to the “elect” only but embraces everyone who has ever lived. Though all humans are sinners by nature, yet all are potential candidates for salvation by virtue of Christ’s atonement provided on the cross for all who will have faith in Him.³³² She writes,

But the atonement for a lost world was to be full, abundant, and complete. Christ’s offering was exceedingly abundant to reach every soul that God had created. It could not be restricted so as not to exceed the number who would accept the great Gift. All men are not saved; yet the plan of redemption is not a waste because it does not accomplish all that its liberality has provided for. There must be enough and to spare.³³³

It is evident that White believes that Christ’s death was for all humanity and the provision of atonement exceeds the number of those who would accept the divine gift. Her position is contrary to what seems to be Stott’s Calvinistic position of a restricted atonement for only those who have been divinely predestined to accept salvation,³³⁴ in

194), 3:186.

³³¹Robert Shank, *Life in the Son: A Study of the Doctrine of Perseverance* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1989), 354.

³³²E. White, Letter 106, 1900, cited in *Questions on Doctrine*, 668.

³³³E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 565, 566. See also idem, *The Watchman*, September 4, 1906, cited in *Questions on Doctrine*, 668.

³³⁴There are variations among Calvinists with regard to predestination and election. While some hold to double predestination (the belief that God chooses some to be saved and others to be lost), others hold that God actively chooses those who are to receive eternal life but leaves the others in their self-chosen sins. Stott’s position belongs to the latter category. See Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.21, “Eternal Election, By Which God Has Predestined Some to Salvation, Others to Destruction”; *Institutes*, 3.22, “Confirmation

view of the practical effect of his apparent rejection of the doctrine of limited atonement discussed above. In her comment on Christ's prayer for God's forgiveness for those who crucified Him, White writes, "That prayer of Christ for His enemies embraced the world. It took in every sinner that had lived or should live, from the beginning of the world to the end of time. Upon all rests the guilt of crucifying the Son of God. To all, forgiveness is freely offered. 'Whosoever will' may have peace with God, and inherit eternal life."³³⁵

Thus in White's view and, in agreement with Arminian theology, she argues that while God offers salvation to all, it is still left to the human being to accept or reject the offer of salvation. While provision for salvation of all has been achieved at the cross, people are saved only when the provision is accepted. Thus it is clear that White clearly rejects Calvinism, though she did not explicitly name that system in her writings. William G. McLoughlin argues that the "larger view" of the atonement held by White is characteristic of the revivalism of the period between 1800 and 1860 during which there was a doctrinal shift in American Christian thought from Calvinism to Arminianism.³³⁶ McLoughlin adds that during this period (1800-1860), "Americans ceased to believe . . . in the doctrines of predestination and election preached by Edwards and Whitefield; they could no longer accept the notion that men were too depraved to play any part in their own salvation."³³⁷

In opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of the divine decrees, White writes:

of This Doctrine from Scriptural Testimonies"; and Erickson, 930, 931. Erickson also highlights the other major variation concerning predestination and election among Calvinists, which has to do with the logical order of God's decrees, namely supralapsarianism, infralapsarianism, and sublapsarianism.

³³⁵E. White, *Desire of Ages*, 745.

³³⁶McLoughlin, 142.

³³⁷*Ibid.*

The doctrine of the divine decrees, unalterably fixing the character of men, had led many to a virtual rejection of the law of God. Wesley steadfastly opposed the errors of the antinomian teachers and showed that this doctrine which led to antinomianism was contrary to the Scriptures. . . . The Spirit of God is freely bestowed to enable every man to lay hold upon the means of salvation. . . . Men fail of salvation through their own willful refusal of the gift of life.³³⁸

Twenty-one years before the statement above, White articulates a synergistic position on atonement when she writes,

All who hope to be saved by the merits of the blood of Christ should realize that they themselves have something to do in securing their salvation. While it is Christ alone that can redeem us from the penalty of transgression, we are to turn from sin to obedience. Man is to be saved by faith, not by works; yet his faith must be shown by his works.³³⁹

White rejects the Calvinistic doctrine of divine decrees but instead emphasizes the human response to the divine offer of atonement. While she argues for a universal scope of salvation, she however does not subscribe to universalism.³⁴⁰

High Priestly Ministry of Christ

Stott has not written much on the issue of the high priestly ministry of Christ. Commenting on Heb 8:1-9:28 in relation to the sacrifice of Jesus, Stott notes that the author of the book of Hebrews makes three contrasts. They are those “between the earthly and heavenly ‘tabernacle’ or ‘sanctuary’ (the place of ministry), between the old and new covenants (the basis of ministry), and between the old and new sacrifices (the

³³⁸E. White, *Great Controversy*, 261, 262. She refers to Titus 2:11, 1 Tim 2:3-6, and John 1:9 in support of her arguments here.

³³⁹E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 279; idem, *Early Writings*, 218-221.

³⁴⁰White holds that God desires to save all and offers salvation to all. However, only those who choose to accept the offer are actually saved. For a brief overview of an Arminian view of the scope of atonement, see I. Howard Marshall, “The New Testament Does Not Teach Universal Salvation,” in *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*, 55-76.

function of ministry).”³⁴¹ He adds:

Whereas the old High Priest entered the Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle once a year, on the Day of Atonement, bearing sacrificial blood, Jesus has now entered the heavenly sanctuary, where God is, bearing his own blood, the evidence of a sacrifice that does not need to be repeated, and which does away with sin once and for all (Heb 9:26). The result is a whole ‘new covenant’: that is, the relationship between God and his people has been placed on a wholly different footing.³⁴²

With respect to the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Jesus, Stott writes, “By his sacrifice he has been able to ‘purify’ the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 9:23), that is to say, he has made it possible for sinners to draw near to God without defiling the sanctuary where he dwells.”³⁴³ He does not explain how the sanctuary where God “dwells” might be defiled. Concerning Christ’s heavenly intercession, he argues,

Although his work of atonement has been accomplished [by his sacrifice on the cross], he still has a continuing heavenly ministry, however. This is not to ‘offer’ his sacrifice to God, since the offering was made once for all on the cross; nor to ‘present’ it to the Father, pleading that it may be accepted, since its acceptance was publicly demonstrated by the resurrection; but rather to ‘intercede’ for sinners on the basis of it, as our advocate.³⁴⁴

It is also evident from the arguments above that Stott distinguishes the work of the high priestly intercession in the heavenly sanctuary from the work of atonement, which he argues was completed on the cross. His view contrasts sharply with the view of those like Donald Baillie who argued that the divine sin-bearing was not confined to one moment of time, but that there is “an eternal atonement in the very being and life of

³⁴¹Stott, *Men with a Message*, 112. Most of the discussion in this section will be from his comments on the Letter to the Hebrews found in this book unless otherwise indicated.

³⁴²Ibid.

³⁴³Ibid., 113.

³⁴⁴Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 263.

God,”³⁴⁵ of which the cross was the incarnate part. Stott’s approach to the high priesthood of Jesus and the heavenly sanctuary reveals the abiding influence of Thomistic theological heritage of most Protestants.³⁴⁶

As already discussed (under the phases of atonement), White views atonement as progressing through different phases as God works out the whole plan of redemption in Christ’s life of suffering, on the cross, in the high priestly ministry of Jesus, and judgment. In her use of atonement as a reference to the high priestly ministry of Christ and its salvific result, she writes, “Now Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary. And what is He doing? Making atonement for us,³⁴⁷ cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people.”³⁴⁸ Thus, she links the “cleansing of the sanctuary” (Dan 8:14) to the ongoing work of atonement.

White views Christ serving as both Advocate and Judge throughout the Christian dispensation. Christ introduces the redeemed to His Father as His friends through the merits of His blood, and from the heavenly sanctuary, He bestows on His followers the “benefits of His atonement”³⁴⁹ in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.³⁵⁰ Therefore the Holy Spirit is also intimately connected with the work of atonement since

³⁴⁵Donald Baillie, *God Was in Christ*, 6, quoted in Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 268.

³⁴⁶See Fernando L. Canale, “Philosophical Foundations and the Biblical Sanctuary,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 36 (Autumn 1998): 183-206, where he argues convincingly that despite Protestantism’s efforts to make Scripture play a greater role in its theological formulations, it could not divest itself of the enduring legacy of Thomistic theology due largely to the application of the principles of divine timelessness and spacelessness in the theological task.

³⁴⁷Her statement here is an echo of Heb 2:17.

³⁴⁸E. White, “Advancing in Christian Experience,” October 20, 1888, *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials* (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987), 127. See also idem, “Christ’s Work in the Sanctuary,” Manuscript 15, 1886, in Manuscript Releases, 11:54-55.

³⁴⁹E. White, *Early Writings*, 260; idem, *Great Controversy*, 422.

³⁵⁰E. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, 38-39.

He intercedes for us.³⁵¹ White writes, “The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven.”³⁵²

The high priestly intercession of Christ is essential to White’s view of atonement because of her biblical hermeneutics. As shown earlier, unlike Stott, she holds a literal understanding of the biblical sanctuary texts. Instead of the classical notion of a spaceless and timeless God,³⁵³ she holds that God relates freely, personally, and directly, with human beings in time, history, and space. Her typological understanding of the Old Testament sanctuary is also important at this point. In her view, the benefits of the atoning sacrifice must be personally applied to the believer for it to be effective. In her comment on the Passover event (Exod 12), White writes, “It was not enough that the paschal lamb be slain; its blood must be sprinkled upon the doorposts; so the merits of Christ's blood must be applied to the soul. We must believe, not only that He died for the world, but that He died for us individually. We must appropriate to ourselves the virtue of the atoning sacrifice.”³⁵⁴ Christ applies the benefits of atonement He provided on the cross to the believer through His high priestly ministry.

White presents Christ as fulfilling the type of both the daily and the yearly Levitical priestly ministrations in two consecutive periods from His inauguration until the

³⁵¹White writes that the Spirit “works upon our hearts, drawing out prayers and penitence, praise and thanksgiving” (Manuscript 50, 1900, quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:344). See also idem, *Evangelism*, 187.

³⁵²E. White, *Great Controversy*, 489.

³⁵³Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae.102. Article 4, Reply 1.

³⁵⁴E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 277.

consummation of all things. Thus she sees Christ as fulfilling the first apartment (Holy Place) phase of His heavenly ministry from His ascension to 1844, and as fulfilling the second apartment (Most Holy Place) phase from 1844 to the close of human probation. While the first apartment ministry is focused on His intercession, the second apartment ministry is focused on His work of judgment or what is also referred to as the final atonement.³⁵⁵ Christ's ministry in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary consists of His heavenly intercessory mediation in which He pleads His blood on behalf of repentant sinners before the Father.³⁵⁶ This intercession continues during His ministry in the second apartment.³⁵⁷

Clearly underlining the crucial importance of the heavenly sanctuary ministry of Christ for Seventh-day Adventist theology, White writes, "The correct understanding of the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary is the foundation of our faith."³⁵⁸ But in order to understand White's doctrine of the high priestly ministry of Christ, one must note that she bases her position on a literal understanding of Scripture, especially with regard to the parallels between the earthly sanctuary and its services and the heavenly sanctuary and its ministration. In this connection, she writes, "The holy places of the sanctuary in heaven are represented by the two apartments in the sanctuary on earth."³⁵⁹ For her, the heavenly sanctuary is the greater reality from which the earthly sanctuary borrowed.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, 409-432; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 343-358.

³⁵⁶E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357; Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 49-61.

³⁵⁷E. White, *Great Controversy*, 429, 430.

³⁵⁸E. White, "To G.C. Tenney," Letter 208, June 29, 1906, in Manuscript Releases, 8:245.

³⁵⁹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 414. See also idem, Letter 233, 1904, cited in *Questions on Doctrines*, 686, and Fortin, "Ellen G. White's Conceptual Understanding," 160-166.

³⁶⁰E. White, *Great Controversy*, 414; idem, Letter 233, 1904, cited in *Questions on Doctrine*, 686.

Christ's heavenly ministry begins with His mediation following His ascension. He entered upon this phase of atonement in the power of His sacrificial offering. Whereas atonement took place at the cross, its application in the life of the believer comes to fruition through Christ's mediatorial work.³⁶¹ This mediation is so powerful that nothing can negate it except the individual's own rejection of the wonderful provision.³⁶² White argues that though "Christ is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him in faith," and "will cleanse them from all defilement if they will let Him," but those who "cling to their sins" "can not possibly be saved."³⁶³

Concerning Christ's work as our intercessor, White writes, "[Christ] places the whole virtue of His righteousness on the side of the suppliant. He pleads for man; and man, in need of divine help, pleads for himself in the presence of God, using the influence of the One who gave His life for the life of the world. As we acknowledge before God our appreciation of Christ's merits, fragrance is given to our intercessions."³⁶⁴ Clearly, in White's view, human cooperation is still necessary in order that the heavenly priestly ministry of Christ may be effective for the repentant sinner.³⁶⁵ In her thought, the heavenly intercession of Christ does not mean an endless continuation of sin in the life of the repentant sinner. Its goal is to bring the sinner into a state of repentance in which his/her character takes on the likeness of Christ and he/she stops sinning in preparation

³⁶¹E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357; idem, *Steps to Christ*, 73-74. See also *Questions on Doctrine*, 369-390; Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 55.

³⁶²E. White, "God's Care of His Church," *Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1900, 631.

³⁶³Ibid.

³⁶⁴E. White, "Christ: The Medium of Prayer and Blessing," *Signs of the Times*, April 14, 1909, 205.

³⁶⁵E. White, "God's Care for His Church," *Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1900, 301.

for the final eradication of sin at the second coming of Christ. Before the second coming of Christ, the judgment begins, with its different phases reaching to the end of the millennium.

However, White's atonement theology has been criticized for some imprecisions that have been evident in its presentation. Concerning Christ's heavenly priestly ministry, she writes, "Our Saviour is in the sanctuary pleading in our behalf. He is our interceding High Priest, making an atoning sacrifice for us, pleading in our behalf the efficacy of His blood."³⁶⁶ In another instance, she refers to Jesus, after His ascension, ministering in the heavenly sanctuary in order "to shed upon His disciples the benefits of His atonement."³⁶⁷ However, despite these imprecisions, it is clear from her writings that Jesus is not now in the process of "making an atoning sacrifice" for believers. That had already been done and accepted by the Father.³⁶⁸

Judgment Phase(s) of Atonement

Marius Reiser has noted that while scholars of Jesus' eschatology generally restrict themselves to the aspect of salvation in His message, there has been a remarkable silence regarding Jesus' proclamation of judgment.³⁶⁹ Stott's approach to eschatological

³⁶⁶E. White, *Special Testimonies on Education* (n.p., 1897), 224; idem, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, 370.

³⁶⁷E. White, *Early Writings*, 260.

³⁶⁸E. White, "Without Excuse," *Review and Herald*, September 24, 1901, 615; idem, *Ministry of Healing*, 451.

³⁶⁹Marius Reiser, *Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in Its Jewish Context* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 1-2. One exception, noted by Reiser, is Stephen H. Travis's book, *Christ and the Judgment of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2008). Another book that focuses on the judgment is the monograph by Justyn Charles Terry, *The Justifying Judgment of God: A Reassessment of the Place of Judgment in the Saving Work of Christ* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2007). It is noteworthy that in the monograph, Terry argues that the doctrine of atonement may be presented more coherently by recognizing judgment as the principle

judgment seems to highlight this argument. He does not have a lot to say about the judgment. He writes that the Bible responds to the need for the vindication of God's justice in two ways, namely the final judgment and "the decisive judgment that took place at the cross."³⁷⁰ Elsewhere, he has written, "Since the judgment day will be a public occasion, it will be necessary for public evidence to be produced, namely the outworking of our faith in . . . our works."³⁷¹ Not only has he not written much on judgment, but what he has written does not address in an adequate manner how judgment in its different ramifications relates to atonement.

Gunnar Pedersen has argued that it is noteworthy that the Protestant confessions contain little or no discussion of the biblical dimension of the final judgment according to works.³⁷² James P. Martin, in his historical study of the place and meaning of final judgment in the Protestant tradition, has argued that the Protestant orthodoxy's "emphasis on justification and its benefits was so great as to really make the Last Judgment and good works appear unnecessary."³⁷³ Martin notes further that "the possibility of a real loss for believers in the judgment could not be seriously entertained" since "the benefits of justification took care of this, and also the Canons of Dort."³⁷⁴

metaphor of the reconciling work of Christ and that judgment, understood not only as condemnation but as the whole process of bringing about justice, provides the pattern to which victory, redemption, and sacrifice may be compared and to which they should be related. This approach to judgment appears to vindicate White's broader view of atonement, which has a vital role for divine judgment.

³⁷⁰Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 207.

³⁷¹John R. W. Stott, *Life in Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1991), 82.

³⁷²Pedersen, 70.

³⁷³James P. Martin, *The Last Judgment in Protestant Theology from Orthodoxy to Ritschl* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 14-15.

³⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 17-18.

Martin also writes that “the last Things with the exception of death were not really necessary for Orthodox soteriology.”³⁷⁵ Along the same lines, Pedersen argues, “Justification seen as a presently complete forensic reality logically implies that at least as long as true faith remains, the believer will remain fully justified; hence their status at the moment of death will not only be existentially fixed but it will also remain forensically complete before God and thus not subject to any future changes, additions or qualifications.”³⁷⁶ He adds, “Thus no contributory or determinative soteriological significance may be assigned to sanctification in terms of the Last Judgment without infringement upon the principle of the believer’s present possession of complete salvation.”³⁷⁷ It appears that the principle of the timelessness of God as depicted in His eternal decrees and the unconditional election of the saints makes the judgment superfluous in Stott’s theology.

Judgment as the Fourth Phase of Atonement

In White’s thought, judgment is the fourth phase of atonement.³⁷⁸ Her discussion of judgment is much more elaborate and detailed than Stott’s and is in full agreement with the biblical teachings on the judgment, as will be shown below. As discussed earlier, White views atonement in phases beginning with the life, suffering, death, and high priestly ministry of Christ. However, atonement is only fully achieved when the different phases of the judgment take place and the peace and harmony that existed between

³⁷⁵Ibid., 27.

³⁷⁶Pedersen, 71.

³⁷⁷Ibid.

³⁷⁸See chapter 4, 275-293, of this dissertation, for a fuller discussion of the four phases of atonement in White’s theology.

creation and God is fully restored. The judgment is the means to that final restoration. White presents judgment in four phases, namely: judgment on sin at the cross, the pre-advent investigative judgment, the post-advent millennial judgment, and the post-millennial executive judgment.

The cross is a public and universal judgment on sin and a confirmation of the immutability of God's law.³⁷⁹ It is God's answer to the sin problem. The next phase is the pre-advent investigative judgment. This phase is crucial in White's presentation of the judgment and will therefore be given an extended treatment for the sake of clarity. The word "pre-advent" in this aspect of the atonement refers to the timing of this part of the final judgment. It pertains to the last period of history referred to as the prophetic "time of the end,"³⁸⁰ which began from the end of the 1260 years prophecy (A.D. 1798), and takes place before the second advent of Jesus. It refers to God's investigation, in the presence of heavenly beings, of the life-records of all of God's faithful people.³⁸¹ The Day of Atonement ritual is very important to White's understanding of this phase of the atonement.

Closely following the biblical account (found in Lev 16:16), White writes that on that day, "two kids of the goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle, and lots were

³⁷⁹E. White, "The Law from Sinai," *Signs of the Times*, March 7, 1878, 73; idem, *Desire of Ages*, 686, 753; Heppenstall, "Subjective and Objective Aspects of the Atonement," in *Sanctuary and Atonement*, 688.

³⁸⁰The prophetic "time of the end" refers to the time period between the end of the 1260 years prophecy (of Dan 7, Rev 12 and 13) in 1798 and the Second Advent of Christ. For a discussion of the pre-advent judgment, see Gerhard F. Hasel, "Divine Judgment," 833- 846, and Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 107-129; William H. Shea, "Theological Importance of the PreAdvent Judgment," in *70 Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Hagerstown, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 323-332.

³⁸¹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 480; Hasel, "Divine Judgment," 833.

cast upon them, ‘one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat.’ Verse 8. The goat upon which fell the lot for the Lord was to be slain as a sin offering for the people.”³⁸² White argues that “the cleansing, both in the typical and in the real service, must be accomplished with blood: in the former, with the blood of animals; in the latter, with the blood of Christ.”³⁸³ In the earthly cleansing, the blood of the Lord’s goat suffices, but in the heavenly, only the blood of Christ is effective for the cleansing. White does not explain precisely how Christ’s blood is applied for cleansing.

It is important to note that no blood laden with the record of sins originally confessed during the Day of Atonement service was transferred into the sanctuary. The Lord’s goat is not “laden with sin,” though it is a sin offering. There was no transfer of sin from the priest to the Lord’s goat and therefore the sprinkling of its blood serves as a confirmation of the daily forgiveness that God has already granted to the believers in the first apartment mediatorial ministry (Lev.16:9, 15-16). The Day of Atonement is about cleansing the sanctuary of the record of sins that were deposited there during the mediatorial ministry, and not about making original forgiveness for sins committed on that day.

However, the biblical record clearly states that there was transfer of sins of the Israelites from the priest to the scapegoat who bears them into the wilderness (Lev 16:21-22). This suggests that the Day of Atonement ministry is dealing with cases that have been closed either through death or the acceptance of forgiveness obtained through repentance, that is, sealed cases. This is made clear from the fact that an Israelite who had

³⁸²E. White, *Great Controversy*, 480.

³⁸³*Ibid.*, 417-418.

sinned or had a severe ritual impurity received through sacrifice atonement of forgiveness or purification (Lev 4-5, 12, 14-15). Nevertheless, there was a further stage of atonement once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16; 23:26-32) during which all persons who had already been forgiven for sins at various times during the year would receive cleansing from all of them at once (Lev 16:30).³⁸⁴

White states further that the priest was to bring the blood of the slain goat into the Most Holy Place “and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. The blood was also to be sprinkled upon the altar of incense that was before the veil.”³⁸⁵ Explaining the typological meaning of the daily ministration, she writes, “A substitute was accepted in the sinner's stead; but the sin was not canceled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary.”³⁸⁶ The “sin was not canceled” in the sense that the record of sin is kept in the heavenly sanctuary. It is this record of sin that defiles the sanctuary and makes its cleansing necessary.

Since the sins of the believers “still remained upon the books of record,” and were “not canceled” at the time forgiveness was extended to the believers in the daily ministration, so also in the Christian dispensation, following atonement on the cross, the sins of Christian believers, though forgiven, are still recorded in the heavenly sanctuary. A final disposition has not yet been made of the sins. That will happen in the antitypical Day of Atonement during the cleansing of the sanctuary which began in 1844. Thus God protects the human freedom to either love Him till their death or sealing or reject Him

³⁸⁴Gane, *Altar Call*, 186.

³⁸⁵E. White, *Great Controversy*, 419.

³⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 420; *idem*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 357.

forever. In this way, she counters the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election and perseverance of the saints. Unlike in Stott's theology, the justification of believers is confirmed only after the cleansing of the sanctuary.³⁸⁷ The pre-advent or investigative judgment commences before the second coming of Christ (Rev 22:12).³⁸⁸

White argues further that the "cleansing of the sanctuary" (Dan 8:14) and the First Angel's Message (Rev 14:7) that announces that "the hour of His judgment has come" refer to the same event, the investigative judgment that commences at the end of the 2300 days.³⁸⁹ Employing historicist hermeneutical principles of interpretation, she argues that the investigative judgment began in 1844.³⁹⁰ White's views on the heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment have been criticized over the years both from within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and from outside of the church.³⁹¹ However, her views have been shown by others to have a strong biblical basis.³⁹²

The purpose of the investigative judgment is the vindication of the saints who have been often maligned and condemned by worldly powers. Judgment from the

³⁸⁷E. White, *Great Controversy*, 485.

³⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 422.

³⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 424.

³⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 422-424, 480.

³⁹¹Critics of White's views on heavenly sanctuary and the investigative judgment have come both from within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and from without the church. See chapter 4, 281, for a list of some of her critics.

³⁹²An assessment of White's views on judgment is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Others have given what may be regarded as the biblical basis of her position (and as a corollary, Seventh-day Adventist position) on the judgment. See Gerhard F. Hasel, "Divine Judgment," 815- 855; Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 107-129; William H. Shea, "Theological Importance of the PreAdvent Judgment," 323-332; Marvin Moore, *The Case for the Investigative Judgment: Its Biblical Foundation* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010); and Jud Lake, *Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2010).

heavenly sanctuary also reveals that only God knows who the saved really are.³⁹³ The focus in this judgment is the professed people of God.³⁹⁴ God the Father is the judge, Jesus is the mediator,³⁹⁵ and the holy angels are present “as ministers and witnesses.”³⁹⁶ The Moral Law of God (the Ten Commandments) is the standard by which people are judged.³⁹⁷ The evidence that will constitute the basis of the judgment is the life record of God’s professed people.³⁹⁸ The work of eschatological judgment is carried on concurrently with the ongoing intercession.³⁹⁹

In the pre-advent judgment, “our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected.”⁴⁰⁰ The acceptance or rejection of names is a “work of examination of character,” that is, that “of determining who are prepared for the kingdom of God.”⁴⁰¹ The work is efficacious in the sense that it counters the deception of Satan that the law cannot be kept. Rather the law is demonstrated to be just and that humans can keep it as they are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, character judgment is a basis for analyzing genuine faith. White writes that since the characters of such believers, who “have become partakers of the

³⁹³Heppenstall, *Our High Priest*, 114, 117.

³⁹⁴E. White, *Great Controversy*, 480.

³⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 480, 482.

³⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 479. See also *ibid.*, 484, 486.

³⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 482.

³⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 483; Hasel, “Divine Judgment,” 841.

³⁹⁹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 429.

⁴⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 483; *idem*, *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:309.

⁴⁰¹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 428; *idem*, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, 448.

righteousness of Christ [by faith],”⁴⁰² “are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life.”⁴⁰³ She clearly teaches conditional immortality based on obedience to God’s law.⁴⁰⁴ The blotting out of sin is the just and merciful reaction of God to the voluntary rejection of sin by believers.

At this point, as in other critical areas of her atonement theology, her Arminian theological position comes out in bold relief. While God is the One who blots out sin in the lives of His people, everything about their moral state and salvation is not solely and sovereignly predetermined by an all-powerful God. In the investigative judgment, our choices count and are respected by God. Those among the faithful who “by stubborn persistence in sin become finally hardened against the influences of His Holy Spirit” will have their names blotted from the book of life, and be destroyed.⁴⁰⁵ Her position on the investigative judgment makes it clear that Christ’s death will not automatically save all and also denies that Christ’s death was only for those predestined to be saved.

The focus of the post-advent millennial judgment is on the wicked and is separate from the pre-advent investigative judgment.⁴⁰⁶ Its purpose is to determine their punishment according to their works (Rev 20:12). The saints join with Jesus in this

⁴⁰²E. White, *Great Controversy*, 483.

⁴⁰³Ibid. White also cites the parable of the wedding feast in Matt 22 as biblical support for the idea that the investigative judgment involves judging the character of professed believers in Christ for determining who is eventually accepted or rejected to reign with Christ (*Great Controversy*, 428).

⁴⁰⁴E. White, *Great Controversy*, 533, 588; idem, *Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene* (Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Company, 1890), 149.

⁴⁰⁵E. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 326.

⁴⁰⁶E. White, *Great Controversy*, 479-481.

work.⁴⁰⁷ This judgment begins and ends with the millennial reign of Christ with His redeemed people, just before the second resurrection and the descent of the New Jerusalem.⁴⁰⁸ Evidence is provided by the books of heaven, specifically “the book of life and the book of death,” and the Bible serves as a statute book.⁴⁰⁹

The fourth phase of judgment is the post-millennial executive judgment. It comes after the millennial judgment, the second resurrection (of the wicked), and Christ’s return to earth with His redeemed saints at the end of the millennium.⁴¹⁰ It is during this phase that Jesus “executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people.”⁴¹¹ As the antitypical scapegoat that is led to “an uninhabited land” (Lev 16:22), Satan “will at last suffer the full penalty of sin in the fires that shall destroy all the wicked” at the time when “the great plan of redemption will reach its accomplishment in the final eradication of sin and the deliverance of all who have been willing to renounce evil.”⁴¹²

With Satan’s true character exposed,⁴¹³ the impenitent, along with all other created beings, finally acknowledge God’s truthfulness and justice in the great controversy.⁴¹⁴ At last, “God’s wisdom, His justice, and His goodness stand fully

⁴⁰⁷E. White, *Early Writings*, 290, 291. See also idem, *Great Controversy*, 660-661.

⁴⁰⁸E. White, *Early Writings*, 290-291.

⁴⁰⁹Ibid., 52.

⁴¹⁰E. White, *Great Controversy*, 663-666.

⁴¹¹Ibid., 666.

⁴¹²Ibid., 485, 486. See also idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 358.

⁴¹³E. White, *Great Controversy*, 668, 503.

⁴¹⁴Ibid., 671.

vindicated,”⁴¹⁵ along with His government and law.⁴¹⁶ At that time, fire comes down from God out of heaven,⁴¹⁷ the devouring flames annihilate the wicked “root and branch,” and “the full penalty of the law” is visited on the unrepentant ones.⁴¹⁸ In White’s view, the final executive phase of the judgment bears out the justice of God and the necessity of obedience to His law. The law still remains central in her eschatology.

Stott’s discussion of judgment focuses only on the judgment at the cross (as already shown in the presentation of his atonement theology) and the final judgment. At the cross God judged sin in Christ who died as our Substitute. It is because of this judgment that was to come that God kept back His judgment in OT times till Jesus would die on the cross.⁴¹⁹ With regard to the final judgment, he quotes Ps 73 in reference to the time when the seeming imbalances of justice will be redressed and sin and evil punished.⁴²⁰ He has nothing to say on pre-advent judgment and the post-advent millennial judgment. As already indicated above, he does not even consider the judgment as a part of atonement. His whole emphasis is on the cross consistent with the general Protestant understanding that focuses on justification to the detriment of the relevance of eschatological judgment.

⁴¹⁵Ibid.

⁴¹⁶Ibid., 670, 671; idem, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 338-340; idem, “The Great Standard of Righteousness,” *Review and Herald*, May 7, 1901, 289.

⁴¹⁷E. White, *Great Controversy*, 672.

⁴¹⁸Ibid., 673.

⁴¹⁹Stott, *Cross of Christ*, 208.

⁴²⁰Stott refers to Acts 17:30; Rom 2:4; 2 Pet 3:3-9 to support his argument.

Having identified the similarities and differences between the respective atonement theologies of Stott and White, we can now proceed to the conclusion of the comparative study where an evaluation of their respective contributions to evangelical theology will be considered.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This chapter offers concluding assessments of the atonement theologies of Stott and White and also discusses their respective contributions to evangelical theology. This comparative study has shown that the atonement theologies of John Stott and Ellen White share many commonalities due to their common commitment to evangelical Protestantism.

Areas of Agreement

In previous chapters, it has been shown that both Stott and White agree on some of their assumptions and presuppositions, and on some aspects of their respective methodologies. Also, both theologies avow a commitment to what has been seen as the two cardinal pillars of evangelicalism, namely the supreme authority of Scripture and the penal-substitutionary view of atonement.¹ Due to its critical importance in Christian theology, this dissertation has focused on the doctrine of atonement in the two authors. It has also shown that atonement is not a dispensable doctrine, but is the core of Christianity,

¹See the relevant sections in chapters 3, 4 and 5. See also Smail, 75. For a discussion of identifying characteristics of evangelicalism, see Robert K. Johnston, "American Evangelicalism: An Extended Family," in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, 252-272; Timothy Dudley-Smith, "John Stott: An Introduction," in *The Gospel in the Modern World*, 21. See also Roger E. Olson, "Arminianism Is Evangelical Theology," unpublished paper presented at the Symposium on "Arminianism and Adventism," October 14-16, 2010, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1-17, in which he refutes the arguments of those evangelicals who limit their definition of evangelicalism to only Calvinism and exclude Arminianism by insisting on strict monergism in the work of salvation.

which is therefore central to Christian theology.² Both Stott and White concur that the atonement is completely Christ's work for us (*pro nobis*) in order to reconcile sinful humans to a holy God due entirely to God's grace. Other areas of agreement include some of their assumptions and presuppositions, like the authority of the Bible, revelation and inspiration, and the interpretation of the Bible, at least in broad terms.³

This study has revealed that the writings of both Stott and White have exerted a wide influence within their respective evangelical theological communities. Our examination of Stott's theology has shown that it is marked by "a clarity of thought" which enhances its presentation to the contemporary world.⁴ Indeed, the present study has confirmed that Stott is a distinguished evangelical theologian who possesses a deep and broad grasp of the theological issues that pertain to atonement.⁵ J. I. Packer has argued that the publication of the book *The Cross of Christ* has finally established the fact that John Stott is "a first-class biblical theologian with an unusually systematic mind, great power of analysis, great clarity of expression, a superb command of his material, and a preacher's passion to proclaim truth that will change lives."⁶ His lucid and systematic presentation of atonement stands out in evangelical theology, a fact that is borne out both by the popular acceptance of the book in the evangelical world, and by Stott's general acceptability in global evangelicalism.

²Culpepper, 11; Brunner, 40.

³See relevant sections of chapters 3, 4, and 5.

⁴Eden and Wells, 7.

⁵See chapters 3 and 5 of this dissertation.

⁶J. I. Packer, review of *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott, 35. Robert L. Reymond has described John Stott as "a mature pastor-theologian—and a practiced craftsman in the art of communication" (review of *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott, 280-285).

On the part of White, it has been noted that it is impossible to understand and evaluate the Seventh-day Adventist Church without a good understanding of her ministry and theological writings.⁷ Though her voluminous writings cover a wide range of personal, social, spiritual, and theological issues, the central focus of her theological writings is atonement depicted in different phases.⁸ Some of her popular books that relate to the concept of atonement include, among many others, *The Desire of Ages*, *The Great Controversy*, *The Story of Redemption*, and a pamphlet—*The Sufferings of Christ*, along with a very large number of periodical articles.⁹ Her writings and theological insights have continued to enrich Seventh-day Adventist theological discourse. Richard Hammill has underlined the crucial role of Ellen White in the theological development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church when he asserted that “although she never held an official position, was not an ordained minister, . . . [yet] her influence shaped the Seventh-day Adventist Church more than any other factor except the Holy Bible.”¹⁰

Areas of Disagreement

Though Stott’s standing as a leader and theologian of international standing within the world-wide evangelical movement is evident in his contribution to a better articulation and presentation of atonement as penal substitution, his atonement theology contains some internal theological contradictions. Two of these include his acceptance of theistic evolution as God’s method in creation and his stance on inerrancy. In chapter 5,

⁷Graham, 13.

⁸See chapters 4 and 5 of this dissertation.

⁹See chapter 1, pp. 10-11, of this dissertation.

¹⁰Hammill, 17.

the implications of his acceptance of theistic evolution on one's understanding of biblical atonement have already been pointed out. Some relevant questions that Stott still needs to answer in regard to evolution include the following: Is it really true that the process of inspiration extends to the very words used by the authors of the Bible?¹¹ If what Scriptures say is what God says, how can he justify his position on the issue of Creation versus evolution?

Stott's acceptance of evolution and refusal to endorse the position of "six-day creationists" on the issue of origins and the age of the earth are inconsistent with his claims that the Bible is true in all it affirms.¹² In this regard, he fails to heed his own warning not to replace divine revelation with human reason.¹³ It is noteworthy that on the question of the possibility of an "eternal conscious torment" of the wicked in the fires of hell following the last judgment, Stott rightly argues that the idea is "a tradition which has to yield to the supreme authority of Scripture."¹⁴ Stott and White agree that Scripture does not teach an eternally burning hell.¹⁵

With regard to inerrancy, Stott argues that the Scriptures are without error as originally given and rightly interpreted. The verbal-plenary model of inspiration seems to be closest to his view of inspiration. But the original autographs are not available to us. This position is problematic due to its implication that we cannot trust the Bible as we

¹¹Stott, *Bible*, 157. See also chapter 3, pp. 87-90.

¹²Chapter 3, p. 104, n. 140 of this dissertation.

¹³Chapter 3, pp. 107-108 of this dissertation.

¹⁴Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 315. For White's position on annihilation of the wicked, see her *Early Writings*, 294-295, and *Great Controversy*, 673.

¹⁵Stott, *Evangelical Essentials*, 315; White, *Great Controversy*, 673.

currently have it because it contains potential errors, thus placing our belief in the clarity of Scripture in jeopardy.¹⁶ White adopts a more realistic view of Scripture in allowing for both a greater role for the human element in the production of Scriptures and the possibility of minor errors in the work of translators and interpreters in years past.¹⁷

One fundamental area of disagreement between Stott and White concerns the doctrine of God and His intentions for creation as reflected in their respective theological positions on atonement. On her part, White rejects the Augustinian worldview of Calvinism and instead embraces the Arminian worldview that she inherited from Methodism, but which is also shaped by theological discourse with fellow leaders within the Adventist church of her time. According to Russell Staples, “the cluster of doctrines relating to the Fall and sin and salvation [in Seventh-day Adventist beliefs] constitute a thoroughgoing Arminianism.”¹⁸ Indeed, White’s great (cosmic) controversy theme constitutes a theological framework which is dependent on an Arminian understanding of God’s relationship with humans and the human need to respond to the divine work of atonement, that is, soteriological synergism.

It has already been pointed out that the foundational theme of White’s theology is God’s love for humanity which is demonstrated in the life of Christ and especially in His death in our stead on Calvary.¹⁹ White believes that the core of God’s character is a

¹⁶Clark H. Pinnock, with Barry L. Callen, *The Scripture Principle: Reclaiming the Full Authority of the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 102.

¹⁷See the section on Methodology, Assumptions and Presuppositions in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

¹⁸Russell L. Staples, “Adventism,” in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, ed. Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, 63.

¹⁹Chapter 4, pp. 207- 210 of this dissertation.

selfless love for all His creation that guides all His actions to all humans and all creation. Further, she believes that the creation of the universe and particularly human beings and angels was an act of divine love. Unfortunately, rebellion and sin started in heaven and spread to this earth and the great (cosmic) controversy raged on. Lucifer challenged God's authority and accused God of tyranny and arbitrariness.

As already argued in chapters 4 and 5, and in line with her Arminian roots, White's position on the problem of sin and the divine work of atonement is based on core Arminian presuppositions. These include God's character of love, the creation of humans in His image with freedom of choice, the break in human relationship with God through the entrance of sin, and God's provision of prevenient grace to all. Others include God's intention to save all humans through Christ's sacrificial death and the foreknowledge of God concerning those who will be ultimately saved or lost, which preserves human freedom of choice and God's election to salvation of those He foreknows will make the right choice.²⁰

From the foregoing, White's atonement theology with its emphasis on the vital role of the human "freed will" protects and defends God's character of love, and makes evident human responsibility for sin and evil in the world.²¹ These presuppositions logically support a pre-Advent judgment as espoused by White. According to White, preordaining any one's salvation would give credence to the accusations of Satan against

²⁰Denis Fortin, "Historical and Theological Perspectives on the Rise of Arminianism and the Place of Seventh-day Adventism in the Calvinist-Arminian Debate," unpublished paper presented at the Symposium on Arminianism and Adventism, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, October 14-16, 2010, 11.

²¹For the reference to the "freed will," see Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 164. See also idem, "Arminianism Is God-centered Theology," in Symposium on Arminianism and Adventism, 8.

God's character and government. It is therefore in harmony with her overall theological stance that she adopts synergism as God's method in atonement.

In contrast, Stott rejects synergism and instead emphasizes the monergistic work of God in atonement. As already argued in chapter 5, since he also holds the Calvinistic doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace, the extent of the atonement is limited only to the elect. Also, inasmuch as he adopts the concept of total depravity, it is logically defensible for Stott to argue that human beings are incapable, even with divine assistance, of cooperating with God's grace in the work of atonement. Therefore, for Stott, grace is not only non-contributory, but it is also irresistible. God's grace is the source of the believer's justification, but the only means to receive it is by faith which unites us to Christ. God determines everything in relation to atonement. Therefore in Stott's view, any thought of human cooperation or contribution must be totally excluded in the work of atonement.

Like White, Stott argues that divine love is foundational to his atonement theology. But this study has demonstrated from his writings that divine love is not extended to everyone, but only to a predetermined number who are called according to God's grace. The emphasis of his atonement theology seems to place God's all-determining power and glory above His love for human beings. There is really nothing like human choice in atonement; everything concerning our salvation is decided by God in the absolute sense.²² On the one hand, Stott argues that "as God's image-bearers, we are rational, responsible, moral and spiritual beings, able to converse with God," who must not engage in a "grovelling denial of our human dignity and responsibility before

²²Stott, *Romans*, 268. See also chapters 3 and 5 of this dissertation.

him.”²³ But on the other hand, when his presuppositions and arguments are taken to their logical conclusion, the God of love is contradicted by the God who determines everything concerning human salvation for His own glory.

Inasmuch as the extent of atonement is not an isolated doctrine, but is best understood in its relation to other doctrines in the thought of the theologian being discussed,²⁴ it follows that Stott’s view of the scope of atonement is closely related to his understanding of the doctrines of God, divine foreknowledge and human freewill, predestination, election, and God’s eternal decrees. It is his stance on these presuppositions that seems to be determinative of his position on the scope of atonement. Though he presents his atonement theology in a manner that might superficially indicate that he embraces unlimited atonement as espoused in Arminianism, a closer examination of his writings reveals that he believes that atonement is really only for those who have been “effectually” called according to God’s divine purpose. He presents God as irresistibly working for the salvation of only those He called through His foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and finally, glorification.

Evidently, Stott struggles to be faithful to the scriptural evidence as shown in his argument that “the gospel is for everyone” and that “its scope is universal.” But it appears that the presuppositions mentioned above limit his ability to adhere to the scriptural evidence.²⁵ Perhaps due to his adopted presuppositions, he struggles to find an equilibrium between God’s sovereign power in predestination and election on the one

²³Stott, *Romans*, 271. See also chapters 3 and 5 of this dissertation.

²⁴Thomas, *Extent of the Atonement*, 3.

²⁵Stott, *Romans*, 263-278.

hand, and human choice and responsibility on the other. Labeling the theological tension arising from the effort to find an equilibrium as an “antinomy” does not do justice to the biblical evidence.²⁶

In Stott’s theology, the equilibrium is clearly in favor of divine sovereignty and power which trumps human choice and responsibility. In his theology, God has determined everything from eternity past and is irresistibly working out His atonement for those unconditionally elected and eternally predestined by Him to salvation. Though he wisely notes that “many mysteries surround the doctrine of election” and warns that “theologians are unwise to systematize it in such a way that no puzzles, enigmas or loose ends are left,”²⁷ he fails to heed his own warning when he presents God as irresistibly effecting the salvation of the elect through His foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and, finally, glorification. But from the biblical evidence, it is clear that though atonement is wholly and solely the work of God, salvation requires human response and choice.

In contrast, White does not limit atonement to only the elect. This position agrees with her presuppositions. To begin with, God’s love is extended to all humans, and Christ’s atonement provided on the cross is for everyone who will have faith in Him. God does this by extending prevenient grace to everyone. It is prevenient grace that works in a person’s heart that enables him/her to accept God’s saving grace.²⁸ But she rejects unconditional election and irresistible grace and instead argues that biblical

²⁶See chapters 3 and 5 of this dissertation and also Stott’s *Romans*, 270, 273, 278.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 268.

²⁸E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 18, 47; *idem*, *Selected Messages*, 1:390-391.

predestination or election includes “all who will accept Christ as a personal Savior” and subject themselves to obedience to all of God’s commandments.²⁹ Clearly her understanding of God based on His love for all humans, in conjunction with her understanding of divine foreknowledge, predestination, and election all together account for a different understanding of the scope of atonement.

Though both Stott and White agree that atonement has a cosmic scope, Stott does not employ the concept of a cosmic controversy and its resolution to any appreciable extent in his theology of atonement. In the case of White, the cosmic dimension of atonement is very foundational for a proper understanding of her atonement theology. For her, both the divine and the human contributions to the work of salvation have cosmic connections and consequences. Her great controversy theme constitutes a foundational concept of her theology of atonement and has a great bearing on her understanding and presentation of both the origin of the problem of sin and its eventual resolution. The resolution of the great controversy involves the final vindication of God’s love and justice in contrast to the accusations of Satan.

Another area of crucial difference between Stott and White that has been identified in this study is that of justification. Justification in Stott’s atonement theology is irrevocable. It is apparent that this position is based on his doctrine of God. In Stott’s view, the divine work of atonement is monergistic. Therefore he depicts God as “moving irresistibly from stage to stage”³⁰ in the work of salvation. If there is absolutely nothing that can frustrate God’s purpose for the salvation of believers, then it follows that their

²⁹E. White, “The Abiding Trust,” *Gospel Herald*, June 11, 1902, 178.

³⁰Stott, *Romans*, 253.

justification is irrevocable. In Stott's theological scheme, the believers will persevere because the God who predestines them to salvation will also grant perseverance in order for the theological scheme to be internally self-consistent.

The God who ordains a deterministic and unconditional election and irresistible grace also has to grant perseverance so that His work will not be frustrated by human weaknesses or uncooperative attitude. This position is in full accord with Stott's stand on total depravity. God does not need human cooperation, and at any rate, since humans are totally depraved, there is nothing they can do to cooperate with God. God does everything that concerns our salvation. Therefore, God has to impose a "radical salvation" that completely dispenses of the need for human cooperation.

In White's view, justification is revocable. It is granted by faith alone, and is wholly a free gift that is based exclusively on Christ's righteousness which is imputed to the believer. Consistent with her Arminian theological tendency, the security of the believers is centered on their faith union with Christ who is the source of their justification and sanctification unto perfection. The role of the believer's free will is also given a prominent place, even though free will itself is a gift of God's grace. Since God does not force humans, there is the possibility that human beings may resist His work within us, including justification.³¹ It needs to be pointed out that contrary to Stott who makes total depravity the grounds for monergistic atonement, White believes that humans are able to respond to God's prevenient grace³² when the Holy Spirit gives life to the

³¹E. White, *Faith and Works*, 107, 111-118; idem, "Words to the Young," *Youth's Instructor*, November 30, 1893; idem, *Great Controversy*, 261-262.

³²E. White, *Education*, 15, 29.

lifeless faculties of the mind.³³ Thus prevenient grace is the ground for her synergistic position on human salvation.

From the overall biblical picture of God, it is evident that a God of persuasive love will not resort to a forced affection that emanates from an all-controlling determinism. Since “the way of God is the way of love,”³⁴ God is not the all-determining power who is the sole actor in the work of human salvation. The words of Jesus Himself indicate that it is possible for justification to be reversed in case a believer falls into apostasy.³⁵ Numerous other biblical texts warn of the possibility of falling into apostasy, indicating that justification can be revoked.³⁶ Continuation in justification depends on having a continuing relationship with Jesus, not on the decree of an all-determining God.

Also, White has invoked and discussed an array of biblical passages and themes which suggest that the Bible teaches a pre-Advent judgment. A pre-Advent judgment implies synergism in the work of salvation. That being the case, justification is only irrevocable after the pre-Advent judgment. In light of the arguments above, it appears that White’s position is more faithful to the biblical evidence than Stott’s with respect to the revocability of justification.³⁷ However, some critics have argued that White’s position on justification results in a lack of assurance of salvation for believers. Viewed

³³E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 18; idem, “Spiritual Warfare,” *Review and Herald*, July 19, 1887, 451; idem, “Divine Wisdom,” *Review and Herald*, April 17, 1888, 242.

³⁴John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (Downers Grove, IL: InerVarsity Press, 1998), 116.

³⁵See John 15: 1-11.

³⁶1 Tim 1:18-20; Heb 3:12-14, 10: 26-29; 2 Pet 2:20-21; Rev 2:5, 3:3-5.

³⁷Stephen H. Travis has argued, “Justification is not an irreversible verdict which renders the final judgement unnecessary. It is a provisional, anticipatory verdict of acquittal, given in response to faith, and it will be confirmed at the final judgement.” *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 158.

narrowly, some of her writings pertaining to the relationship of good works to salvation could be construed that way. However, a broader study of her theological position reveals that our assurance is based on what Christ has already done for us and that we retain the assurance of salvation by our faith union with Christ.

In view of their basic agreement on the meaning of justification as pardon and acceptance, the major differences between Stott's and White's atonement theologies become apparent with the elaboration of the sanctuary doctrine by White and the related themes of atonement and judgment in phases. The sanctuary doctrine broadens the scope of atonement by providing a dual temporal perspective for viewing the atonement; that is, either from its existential reception in justification or its eschatological judicial ratification in the judgment.³⁸ Stott focuses on the existential dimension and neglects the eschatological dimension, like most evangelical Protestants have done. The evangelical Protestant view does not have a real temporal distinction between existential reception and final ratification of justification, since it views both aspects as a present reality due to its Calvinistic presuppositions. Also, an irreversible justification undermines the need for a last judgment. It is therefore not really a surprise that Stott does not have a well-developed doctrine of judgment.

White's atonement theology incorporates both the existential and eschatological dimensions of atonement in order to provide a fuller and more biblically accurate picture. Her understanding of the biblical sanctuary doctrine includes the eschatological dimension in her atonement theology without denying the reality of present justification in the experience of the believer. As Hans K. LaRondelle has argued, "the ongoing

³⁸Pedersen, 198.

mediatorial work of Christ during the last judgment resolves the seeming paradox and tension that Protestant theology experiences when it faces the twofold revelation that humanity is saved by faith as a present reality, while judged ultimately according to works as future reality.”³⁹ If one grants that God has graciously given to humans free-will, it is precisely that admission that constitutes the basis for a judgment according to works. From the biblical perspective, it is apparent that White’s position is a more adequate presentation of the relationship of present justification and future vindication in the experience of the faithful believer.⁴⁰

It has already been shown that contrary to Stott, whose position is that God is the only real actor in the work of salvation, White espouses synergism in which God has chosen to effect salvation through the active cooperation of human beings enabled by divine grace.⁴¹ Some critics have argued that White’s position on synergism could lead believers into Pelagianism or semi-Pelagianism.⁴² But that criticism misses the point. She consistently makes it clear in her writings that our salvation, from its inception to its final

³⁹Hans K. LaRondelle, “The Seventh-day Adventist View of the Relationship of Justification-Sanctification-the Final Judgment,” appendix D, in Woodrow W. Whidden, *E. J. Waggoner: From the Physician of Good News to Agent of Division* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2008), 395.

⁴⁰In a position that supports White’s emphasis on the theme of judgment in relation to atonement, Justyn Terry has argued that the theme of judgment should be adopted as the paradigmatic image of biblical atonement, while the images of victory, redemption and sacrifice should be treated as subordinate to it. *The Justifying Judgement of God*, 2, 15. See also Stephen H. Travis who argues that justification is not an irreversible verdict which renders the final judgment unnecessary (*Christ and the Judgement of God*, 158).

⁴¹E. White, *Great Controversy*, 425.

⁴²For some thoughts on synergism and related concepts, see Barry L. Callen, “Soteriological Synergism and Its Surrounding Seductions,” unpublished paper presented at the Symposium on Arminianism and Adventism, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, October 14-16, 2010, 1-12; George R. Knight, “Seventh-day Adventism, Semi-Pelagianism, and Overlooked Topics in Adventist Soteriology: Moving Beyond Missing Links and Toward a More Explicit Understanding,” unpublished paper presented at the Symposium on Arminianism and Adventism, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, October 14-16, 2010, 1-27.

consummation, depends wholly on divine grace and unmerited favor, not human works, though humans must accept the divine offer.⁴³ According to White, God's decision regarding the believers in the final judgment only ratifies their prior experience of justification and sanctification.⁴⁴ The acceptance and exposition of the biblical idea of a final ratification of justification and sanctification in the last judgment represents one of White's unique contributions to evangelical theology.

Overall, this study has shown that both Stott and White have made major contributions towards the enrichment of the evangelical theology of atonement. One is hopeful that their common commitment to core evangelical essentials would make it more probable that evangelical scholars would undertake more studies on atonement in a manner that engages the broader view of White on atonement. The probability that the expectation will become a reality is strengthened by the renewed interest of some evangelical scholars in the judgment aspect of atonement in recent times.

⁴³See chapter 4 of this dissertation. See also E. White, *Steps to Christ*, 18, and idem, *Selected Messages*, 1:390-391.

⁴⁴See chapter 5, section on Judgment as the Fourth Phase of Atonement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

John Stott

Primary Sources

Books

- The Authentic Jesus: A Response to Current Scepticism in the Church.* London: Marshalls, 1985.
- The Authority and Relevance of the Bible in the Modern World.* Canberra: The Bible Society in Australia, 1979.
- Baptism and Fullness: The Work of the Holy Spirit Today.* London: InterVarsity, 1975.
- Basic Christianity.* London: InterVarsity, 1971.
- Basic Christianity: Six Studies for Individuals or Groups.* Bramcote: Grove Books, 1994.
- Becoming a Christian.* London: InterVarsity, 1950.
- Beginning a New Life with Christ.* London: Falcon, 1963.
- The Bible and the Crisis of Authority.* London: Falcon, 1972.
- The Bible: Book for Today.* Leicester: InterVarsity, 1982.
- The Canticles and Selected Psalms.* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1966.
- Christ the Controversialist: A Study in Some Essentials of Evangelical Religion.* London: Tyndale, 1970.
- Christian Basics: A Handbook of Beginnings, Beliefs and Behaviour.* Grand Rapids: 1991.
- Christian Counter-Culture: The Message of the Sermon on the Mount.* Leicester: InterVarsity, 1978.
- Christian Mission in the Modern World.* London: Falcon, 1975.
- Confess Your Sin.* Christian Foundations. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1964.

Culture and the Bible. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981.

The Contemporary Christian: An Urgent Plea for Double Listening. Leicester: InterVarsity, 1992.

The Cross of Christ. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1986.

Evangelical Anglicans and the ARCIC Final Report. Nottingham: Grove Books, 1982.

Evangelical Truth: A Personal Plea for Unity, Integrity and Faithfulness. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.

The Epistles of John: An Introduction and Commentary. London: Tyndale, 1964.

Focus on Christ: An Enquiry into the Theology of Prepositions. London: Collins, 1979.

Fundamentalism and Evangelism. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959.

God's Book for God's People. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983.

God's New Society: The Message of Ephesians. Leicester: InterVarsity, 1979.

Guard the Gospel: The Message of 2 Timothy. London: InterVarsity, 1973.

In Christ: The Meaning and Implications of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Washington, DC: National Prayer Breakfast, 1983.

The Incomparable Christ. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001.

Issues Facing Christians Today. London: Marshalls, 1984.

The Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary. Charlotte: Worldwide Publications, 1975.

The Letters of John. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988.

Life in Christ. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1991.

Men with a Message: An Introduction to New Testament and Its Writers. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

Men Made New: An Exposition of Romans 5-8. London: InterVarsity, 1966.

The Message of Acts: To the Ends of the Earth. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1990.

The Message of Ephesians. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979.

- The Message of Galatians*. London: InterVarsity, 1968.
- The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994.
- The Message of 1st and 2nd Thessalonians: Preparing for the Coming King*. Leicester: InterVarsity, 1991.
- The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.
- The Message to Trust*. London: Scripture Union, 1978.
- One People: Clergy and Laity in God's Church*. London: Falcon, 1969.
- Only One Way*. Leicester: InterVarsity, 1973.
- Our Guilty Silence*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969.
- The Preacher's Portrait: Some New Testament Word Studies*. London: Tyndale, 1961.
- The Purpose and the Place*. London: Scripture Union, 1978.
- Salvation Yesterday and Today*. Melbourne: Ridley College, 1974.
- The Story of the New Testament*. London: Scripture Union, 1978.
- The Story of the Old Testament*. London: Scripture Union, 1978.
- Understanding the Bible*. Expanded ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.
- Your Mind Matters: The Place of the Mind in the Christian Life*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1973.
- What Christ Thinks of the Church*. Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1990.
- Why I Am Christian*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Your Confirmation*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1958.
- Editor. *Obedying Christ in a Changing World*. Glasgow: Collins, 1977.
- Editor. *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1997.
- Editor. *The Year 2000*. London: Marshalls, 1983.

Chapters in Books

- “The Authority and Power of the Bible.” In *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant*, edited by René C. Padilla. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976.
- "The Bible in World Evangelization." In *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, edited by Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981.
- “The Biblical Basis of Evangelism." In *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, edited by J. D. Douglas. Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975.
- "The Biblical Basis for Declaring God's Glory." In *Declare His Glory Among the Nations*, edited by David M. Howard. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1977.
- “Dialogue, Encounter, even Confrontation.” In *Faith Meets Faith*, edited by Gerald H. Anderson, Thomas F. Stransky. New York: Paulist Press, 1981.
- "The Evangelical Doctrine of Baptism." In *The Anglican Synthesis: Essays by Catholics and Evangelicals*, edited by W. R. F. Browning. Derby: Peter Smith, 1964.
- "Evangelism through the Local Church." In *One Gospel-Many Clothes*, edited by Christopher Wright and Christopher Sugden. Oxford: Regnum Books, 1990.
- “God in Christ” in *Christian Faith and Practice in the Modern World: Theology from an Evangelical Point of View*, edited by Mark A. Noll and David F. Wells. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- "The Gospel and the Kingdom." In *Agenda for the Biblical Church*, vol. 2, edited by Alan Nichols and John W. Williams. Vol. 2. Sydney: Anglican Information Office, 1981.
- "The Gospel and the Nations." In *Prophecy in the Making*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry. Carol Stream: Creation House, 1971.
- “The Gospel of the Epiphany.” In *Special-day Sermons for Evangelicals: Thirty-Eight Representative Examples of Bible Preaching on Red-Letter days of the Christian Year and the Calendar Year*, edited by Andrew Watterson Blackwood. Great Neck, NY: Channel Press, 1961.
- "The Great Commision." In *One Race, One Gospel, One Task: World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry and W. Stanley Mooneyham, 1: 37-56. Minneapolis, MN: World Wide Publications, 1967: 37-56.

- "I Believe in the Church of England." In *Hope for the Church of England?* edited by Gavin Reid. Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1986.
- "Jesus Christ and the Authority of the Word of God." In *Jesus Christ: Lord of the Universe, Hope of the World*, edited by David M. Howard. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1974.
- "The Messenger and God: Romans 1-5." In *Believing and Obeying Jesus Christ: The Urbana 79 Compendium*, edited by John W. Alexander, 27-107. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1980.
- "The Privileges of the Justified: Studies in Romans 5-8." In *The Keswick Week: Addresses from the 1965 Keswick Convention*, ed. H. F. Stevenson. London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1965.
- "The Sovereignty of God the Son." In *Our Sovereign God*, edited by James M. Boice. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977.
- "Theological Tension Points in Ecumenical-Evangelical Relationships." In *Facing the New Challenges*. Kisumu: Kenya: Evangel Publishing House, 1978.
- "Was It Necessary for Jesus to Die on the Cross?" In *Hard Questions*, edited by Frank Colquhoun. London: Falcon, 1967.
- "World-wide Evangelical Anglicanism." In *Evangelicals Today*, ed. John C. King. London: Lutterworth, 1973.
- With David L. Edwards. *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1989.
- With James Robertson. "Mission Agenda for the People of God." In *Stepping Stones: Joint Essays on Anglican Catholic and Evangelical Unity*, edited by Christina Baxter. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987.
- With others. *The Anglican Communion and Scripture: Papers from the First International Consultation of the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion*. Oxford, Regnum, 1996.
- With others. "The Upper Room Discourse: John's Gospel, 13-17." In *Christ the Liberator*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1971.

Booklets, Pamphlets and Magazines

“The Meat of the Gospel.” *Decision*, January 1962, 4. Quoted in John Stott, *Authentic Christianity*, introduction by Timothy Dudley Smith (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1995).

“Manufacturing Truth.” *In Touch*, no. 2 (1992), 5. Quoted in *Authentic Christianity*, 96.

“*Reverence for Human Life*.” Fellowship Paper 278. London: Church Pastoral Aid Society, 1972.

What Is an Evangelical? London: Falcon, 1977.

What Is Man? London: National Prayer Breakfast Committee, 1989.

Secondary Sources

Becton, Mark Duane. “An Analysis of John Stott’s Preaching as Bridge-Building as Compared to the Preaching of Martyn David Lloyd Jones.” Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, 1995.

Catherwood, Christopher. *Five Evangelical Leaders*. Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1985.

Dudley-Smith, Timothy. *John Stott: A Comprehensive Bibliography*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995.

_____. *John Stott: A Global Ministry—A Biography of Later Years*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001.

_____. *John Stott: The Making of a Leader—A Biography of the Early Years*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.

_____, comp. *Authentic Christianity from the Writings of John Stott*. Leicester, UK: Inter-Varsity, 1995.

Eden, Martyn, and David F. Wells, eds. *The Gospel in the Modern World: A Tribute to John Stott*. Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1991.

Groover, William Arthur. “The Theology and Methodology of John R. W. Stott as a Model for Pastoral Evangelism.” Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1988.

Lightner, Robert P. Review of *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145 (April-June 1988): 220.

Packer, J. I. Review of *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott. *Christianity Today* 31, no. 2 (1987): 35.

Reymond, Robert L. Review of *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott. *Evangelical Review of Theology* 13 (July 1989): 280-285.

Sverker, Per-Axel. "‘Bible’ and ‘Gospel’ in John Stott’s Theology." Diss. for Theol. D., Lunds Universitet, Sweden, 1999.

Williams, Peter. "John R. W. Stott." In *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, 338-352. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993.

Ellen White

Primary Sources

Books

Acts of the Apostles. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911.

Child Guidance. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954.

Christ's Object Lessons. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1941.

Christian Education. Battle Creek, MI: International Tract Society, 1894.

Christian Experience and Teachings of Ellen G. White. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1940.

Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene. Battle Creek, MI: Good Health Publishing Company, 1890.

Confrontation. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1970.

Counsel to Parents, Teachers, and Students. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1913.

The Desire of Ages. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898.

Early Writings of Ellen G. White. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1945.

Education. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903.

Evangelism. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1970.

Faith and Works. Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1979.

The Faith I Live By. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1973.

Fundamentals of Christian Education. Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1923.

God's Amazing Grace. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1973.

Gospel Workers. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948.

The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911.

In Heavenly Places. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1967.

Last Day Events. Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1992.

Life Sketches of Ellen G. White. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1915.

Lift Him Up. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1988.

Manuscript Releases. 21 vols. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981, 1987, 1990, 1993.

Maranatha: The Lord Is Coming. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976.

Messages to Young People. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1930.

Mind, Character, and Personality. 2 vols. Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1977.

The Ministry of Healing. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1942.

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1955.

My Life Today. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952.

Our High Calling. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1961.

Pastoral Ministry. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference Ministerial Association, 1995.

Patriarchs and Prophets. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1890.

Prophets and Kings. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1917.

Reflecting Christ. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1985.

The Sanctified Life. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1956.

Selected Messages. 3 vols. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1958.

Sermons and Talks. 2 vols. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 1994.

Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary: Ellen G. White Comments. 7 vols. plus supplement (vol. 7A). Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1976-1980.

A Sketch of the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White. Saratoga Springs, NY: James White, 1851.

Sketches from the Life of Paul. Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1883.

A Solemn Appeal. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1870.

Sons and Daughters of God. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1955.

The Southern Work. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1966.

The Spirit of Prophecy. 4 vols. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1870, 1877, 1878, 1884.

Spiritual Gifts. 4 vols. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1858, 1860, 1864.

Steps to Christ. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1892.

Story of Jesus. Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1900.

The Story of Redemption. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1947.

The Sufferings of Christ. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, c. 1869.

Supplement to the Christian Experience and Views of Ellen G. White. Rochester, NY: James White, 1854.

Temperance. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1949.

Testimonies for the Church. 9 vols. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948.

Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923.

Testimonies to Southern Africa. Cape Town: South African Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1977.

That I May Know Him. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1964.

This Day with God. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1979.

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1896.

The Upward Look. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982.

Welfare Ministry. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952.

A Word to the "Little Flock." Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1847.

Ye Shall Receive Power. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995.

Pamphlets

A Call to Service in the Master's Harvest Field. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1907.

A Call to the Watchmen. 1910.

Address to Ministers. c. 1892.

And Their Cry Came Up Unto God. c. 1904.

An Appeal. 1882.

Appeal and Suggestions to Conference Officers. c. 1893.

An Appeal for Missions. 1898.

An Appeal to Ministers and Church Officers. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1908.

An Appeal to Our Churches in Behalf of Home Missionary Work. International Tract Society, 1896.

An Appeal to Seventh-day Adventists to Fulfil Their Duty to the South. c. 1909.

Appeal to the Battle Creek Church. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1870.

Appeal to the Young. 1874.

The Enlargement of Our Work. c. 1893.

The Judgment. 1879.

Knowing and Obeying the Lord. Oakland, CA: International Tract Society, 1895.

The Redemption Series. 8 nos. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1877-1878.

Special Testimony for our Ministers. Series A, No. 1.

Special Testimony to our Ministers. Series A, No. 2.

Special Testimonies to Ministers and Workers. Series A, No. 3.

Special Testimonies for Ministers and Workers. Series A, Nos. 4-11.

The Sufferings of Christ. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, c. 1870.

Testimony to the Church (No. 21, private.) 1872.

A Call to Service in the Master's Field, Pamphlet 019, 1907.

Redemption. Pamphlet 6, p. 78, 1877.

Articles

A large number of Ellen White's periodical articles have been made available by the Ellen G. White Estate. The publications include the following: *Present Truth and Review and Herald Articles*. 6 vols. (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1962); *Signs of the Times Articles*. 4 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1974); *Ellen G. White Periodical Resource Collection*. 2 vols. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1990); and *The Youth's Instructor Articles 1852-1914* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1986). All of her published articles are in *The Ellen G. White Writings* in CD-Rom Comprehensive Research Edition (Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008), or online at www.whiteestate.org. Some of the more important articles have been listed here. Some of her comments on Scripture are also included here.

"Abide in Me." *Signs of the Times*, March 23, 1888, 178.

"The Abiding Trust." *Gospel Herald*, June 11, 1902, 178.

"Accepted in Christ." *Signs of the Times*, July 4, 1892.

"Advancing in Christian Experience." October 20, 1888. Quoted in *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*. Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987, 127.

"A Divine Sin Bearer." *Signs of the Times*, September 30, 1903. Quoted in Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages from the Writings of Ellen G. White*, 1: 309.

"After the Crucifixion." *The Youth's Instructor*, April 25, 1901, 130.

"Believers Christ's Representatives." *Review and Herald*, May 6, 1884, 289.

"The Bible Students' Library Series." April 1893, quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:396.

"Bible Study." *Review and Herald*, January 11, 1881, 18.

"Christ and the Law." *Signs of the Times*, August 25, 1887, 513.

"Christ Our Complete Salvation." *Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895, 9.

“Christ Our Hope.” *Review and Herald*, December 20, 1892, 787.

“Christ Our Only Hope.” *Signs of the Times*, August 2, 1905, 10.

“Christ Our Sacrifice.” *Review and Herald*, September 21, 1886, 593.

“Christ Tempted as We Are.” *Bible Echoes*, November 1, 15; December 1, 1892; January 1, 1893.

“Christ: The Medium of Prayer and Blessing.” *Signs of the Times*, April 14, 1909.

“Christ’s Victory Gained through Pain and Death.” *Signs of the Times*, March 26, 1894, 323.

“Christian Perfection.” *Review and Herald*, April 24, 1900, 257.

“Conditions for Obtaining Eternal Riches.” *Review and Herald*, June 10, 1890, 353-354.

“Conquer through the Conqueror.” *Review and Herald*, February 5, 1895, 81.

“The Cost of Salvation.” *The Bible Echo*, November 20, 1899, 378.

“The Crucified and Risen Saviour.” *Bible Echo*, May 22, 1899.

“Divine-Human Saviour.” *SDA Bible Commentary*, edited by Francis D. Nichol. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1980. 5:1128.

“Divine Wisdom.” *Review and Herald*, April 17, 1888, 242.

“Even So Send I You.” *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1895, 401.

“Faith and Good Works.” *Signs of the Time*, May 19, 1898.

“The Fight of Faith.” *The Bible Echo*, January 1, 1893, 2.

“The First Advent of Christ.” *Review and Herald*, December 17, 1872.

“Following Christ.” *General Conference Bulletin*, April 1, 1899, 33.

“God Loveth a Cheerful Giver.” *Review and Herald*, May 15, 1900, 305.

“God’s Care for His Church.” *Signs of the Times*, February 14, 1900.

“The Gospel for Both Jews and Gentiles.” *Signs of the Times*, August 5, 1889, 466.

“The Government of God.” *Review and Herald*, March 9, 1886, 145, 146.

“The Grace of God Manifested in Good Works.” *Review and Herald*, January 29, 1895, 65.

“The Great Sacrifice.” *The Bible Echo*, September 15, 1892.

“The Great Standard of Righteousness.” *Review and Herald*, April 23, 1901, 1.

“The Great Standard of Righteousness.” *Review and Herald*, May 7, 1901, 289.

“A Habitation of the Spirit.” *Review and Herald*, December 31, 1908, 8.

“Have You the Wedding Garment? II.” *Youth’s Instructor*, October 28, 1897.

“The High Calling of God in Christ Jesus.” *Review and Herald*, October 7, 1890, 609.

“The Heavenly Guest.” *Review and Herald*, November 24, 1885, 722.

“Imperative Necessity of Searching for Truth.” *Review and Herald*, November 8, 1892, 690.

“Inexpressible Joy.” *Signs of the Times*, December 22, 1914, 787, 788.

“The Keeping Power of God’s Love.” *Review and Herald*, September 15, 1896, 581.

“Laboring in the Spirit of Christ.” *Review and Herald*, October 20, 1896, 662.

“The Law and the Gospel.” *Signs of the Times*, March 14, 1878, 81.

“The Law Exalted by Christ.” *Review and Herald*, May 23, 1899, 321.

“The Law from Sinai.” *Signs of the Times*, March 7, 1878, 73.

“Lessons from the Life of Solomon.” *Review and Herald*, December 7, 1905, 10.

“The Love of God.” *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, January 1, 1887.

“The Love of God.” *Signs of the Times*, November 19, 1896, 5.

“The Love of God.” *Signs of the Times*, November 25, 1889, 706.

“Mary’s Offering II.” *Youth’s Instructor*, July 19, 1900, 227.

“A Messenger.” *Review and Herald*, July 26, 1906, 8.

“A Missionary Appeal.” *Review and Herald*, December 15, 1885, 2.

“Mrs. E. G. White to H. T. Nelson.” *Review and Herald*, July 30, 1901, 495, 496.

“To My Brethren and Sisters in the Southern Union Conference.” *The Watchman*, September 5, 1905.

“The Need of Trained Workers.” *Review and Herald*, February 14, 1893, 97.

“No Caste in Christ.” *Review and Herald*, December 22, 1891, 785.

“Nothing Is Hidden.” *Review and Herald*, March 27, 1888, 194.

“Notes of Travel.” *Review and Herald*, November 25, 1884, 738.

“Obedience Is Sanctification.” *Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1890, 289-290.

“Obedience the Fruit of Union with Christ—No. 2.” *Review and Herald*, September 3, 1901, 567.

“Offering of Strange Fire.” *Signs of the Times*, July 1, 1880, 289, 290.

“The Only True Mediator.” *The Bible Echo*, May 1, 1899.

“An Open Letter from Mrs. E. G. White to All Who Love the Blessed Hope.” *Review and Herald*, January 20, 1903, 15.

“Our Words—No. 1.” *Review and Herald*, January 18, 1898, 37.

“A Perfect Law.” *The Signs of the Times*, July 31, 1901.

“The Plan of Redemption,” *Signs of the Times*, November 4, 1908, 15-17.

“Power of the Truth.” *Signs of the Times*, August 6, 1885, 466.

“The Price of Our Redemption.” *Youth’s Instructor*, June 21, 1900, 195.

“The Primal Object of Education.” *Review and Herald*, July 11, 1882, 433.

“Redemption—No.1.” *Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874, 82-83.

“The Remnant Church Not Babylon.” *Review and Herald*, August 22, 1893, 531.

“The Revelation of God.” *Review and Herald*, March 17, 1904, 8.

“The Righteousness of Christ in the Law.” *Review and Herald*, April 22, 1902, 9.

“Sacrificial Offerings.” *Signs of the Times*, July 15, 1880, 313.

“Search the Scriptures.” *Review and Herald*, November 28, 1878, 169.

“Search the Scriptures.” *Review and Herald*, October 9, 1883, 625.

“Search the Scriptures.” *Review and Herald*, July 26, 1892, 465.

“Self Love or Self-Sacrifice.” *Review and Herald*, June 25, 1908, 8.

“The Sinner’s Hope.” *Signs of the Times*, June 27, 1900, 1-2.

“Spiritual Warfare.” *Review and Herald*, July 19, 1887, 451.

“The Sufferings of Christ.” *Present Truth*, February 18, 1886, 25.

“Sufferings of Christ.” *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, August 1, 1892, 234.

“The Temptation of Christ.” *Review and Herald*, August 18, 1874.

“Temptation—What Is It?” *Signs of the Times*, May 27, 1897, 5-6.

“True Christianity.” *Review and Herald*, March 1, 1898, 133.

“The Uplifted Savior.” *Review and Herald*, September 29, 1896, 613-614.

“The Warfare between God and Evil.” *Review and Herald*, April 16, 1901, 241-242.

“The Way to Christ.” *The Bible Echo*, March 15, 1893.

“We Shall Reap as We Sow.” *Review and Herald*, August 21, 1894, 529.

“What Was Secured by the Death of Christ?” *Signs of the Times*, December 30, 1889, 786.

“Without Excuse.” *Review and Herald*, September 24, 1901, 615.

“Words to the Young.” *Youth’s Instructor*, November 30, 1893, 261-262.

“You Are My Witnesses.” *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, July 19, 1905, 321.

Letters

Letter 26d, 1887. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

- Letter 97, November 18, 1898. "To My Brethren in North Fitzroy." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 22, February 6, 1899. "To J. J. Wessels." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 68, April 10, 1899. "To Brother and Sister John Wessels." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 32, February 14, 1899. "To Mr. & Mrs. Muckersey." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 53, April 5, 1900. "To S. N. Haskell." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 92, July 2, 1900. "To Dr. Kellogg." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 106, July 17, 1900. "To Those Whom It May Concern." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 124, August 19, 1900. "To Sister Caro." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 136, August 28, 1902. "To Iowa Conference." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 233, July 8, 1904. "To Brother and Sister Palmer." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 280, September 3, 1904. "To Ministers, Physicians, and Teachers." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 162, May 29, 1906. "To Brother and Sister Kress." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Letter 208, July 2, 1906. "To Geo C. Tenney." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- "To Whom It May Concern." "Sunnyside." Cooranbong, 1900, quoted in *Battle Creek Letters*. Payson, AZ: Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1984, 39.

Manuscripts

MS 15, 1886. "Christ's Work in the Sanctuary." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 24, 1886. Quoted in *Selected Messages*, 1:19-20.

MS 8, 1888. "Advancing in Christian Experience." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 31, 1890. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 21, 1891. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 21, 1895. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 35, 1895. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 128, 1897. Quoted in *Questions on Doctrine*, 674.

MS 28, 1897. Quoted in "No Outbreaking Sin." White's Comments on Matthew 26:14-16." *SDA Bible Commentary*, 5:1101.

MS 84a, 1897. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 128, 1897. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 163, 1897. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 49, 1898. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 168, 1898. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 77, 1899. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 92, 1899. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 93, 1899. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 165, 1899. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 50, 1900. "Christ Our High Priest." Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS 42, 1901. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

MS122, 1901. "The Law." In *Manuscript Releases*, 21 vols. Washington, DC: E. G. White Estate, 1981-93. 8:98-100.

MS 126, 1901. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

"What Is the Chaff to the Wheat?" MS 70, July 30, 1901. In *Manuscript Releases*, 20:336.

Miscellaneous Collections

Ellen G. White Writings. Comprehensive Research Edition, CD-Rom. Silver Spring, MD: Ellen G. White Estate, 2008.

General Conference Bulletin, Fourth Quarter, 1899.

The Kress Collection. Payson, AZ: Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1985.

Loma Linda Messages. Payson, AZ: Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1981.

The Paulson Collection of Ellen G. White Letters. Payson, AZ: Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1985.

Spalding and Magan's Unpublished Manuscript Testimonies of Ellen G. White. 1915-1916. Payson, AZ: Leaves-Of-Autumn Books, 1985.

Special Testimony to Battle Creek Church. Battle Creek, MI: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1896.

Special Testimonies on Education. c. 1897.

Secondary Sources

Adams, Roy. *The Sanctuary Doctrine: Three Approaches in the Seventh-Adventist Church*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1981.

_____. *The Sanctuary: Understanding the Heart of Adventist Theology*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1993.

Andrews, J. N. "Is the Bible Sufficient as a Rule of Faith and Practice?" *Review and Herald*, May 19, 1851, 88.

Anonymous. "How to Interpret the Bible." *Review and Herald*, September 4, 1855, 38.

- Ashworth, Warren S. "The Lesser and the Greater Lights: A Re-examination of the Relationship of the Writings of Ellen White to the Bible." *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 9, no. 1-2 (1998): 13-23.
- Atkins, Adrian L. "Ellen G. White: Her Theological Method." Term Paper, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI: 1979.
- Ballenger, Albion Fox. *An Examination of Forty Fatal Errors Regarding the Atonement*. Riverside, CA: A. F. Ballenger, n.d.
- Barnhouse, Donald G. "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" *Eternity* 7 (September 1956): 44.
- Battistone, Joseph J. *The Great Controversy Theme in the Writings of Ellen G. White*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1978.
- Bird, Herbert S. *Theology of Seventh-Day Adventism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961.
- Bissell, Ronald D. "The Background, Formation, Development, and Presentation of Ellen White's Concept of Forgiveness From Her Childhood to 1864." Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI: 1990.
- Bradford, Graeme S. *More Than a Prophet: How We Lost and Found Again the Real Ellen White*. Berrien Springs, MI: Biblical Perspectives, 2006.
- Bull, Malcolm, and Keith Lockhart. *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*. 2nd ed. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Bunch, Taylor G. "The Atonement and the Cross." In *Our Firm Foundation*. Vol. 1. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1953.
- Burchfield, Lee Swafford. "Adventist Religious Experience, 1816-1868: A Comparison of William Miller and Ellen White." Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1996.
- Burgeson, Ruth Elizabeth. "A Comparative Study of the Fall of Man as Treated by John Milton and Ellen G. White." M.A. thesis, Pacific Union College, 1957.
- Burt, Merlin D. "The Historical Background, Interconnected Development, and Integration of the Doctrines of the Sanctuary, the Sabbath, and Ellen G. White's Role in Sabbatarian Adventism from 1844 to 1849." Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2002.
- Canright Dudley M. *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1894.

- Carley, Glen Milton. "A Rhetorical Study of Selected Sermons of Ellen G. White on Righteousness by Faith." M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1954.
- Cleveland, Sydney. *White-Washed: Uncovering the Myths of Ellen G. White*. Greenwood, IN: Sydney Cleveland, 1999.
- Cottrell, Raymond F. "Ellen G. White's Evaluation and Use of the Bible." In *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, edited by Gordon M. Hyde, 143-161. Washington, D.C.: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974.
- Crosier, O. R. L. "The Law of Moses." *Day Star Extra*, February 7, 1846, 37.
- Damsteegt, P. Gerard. *Foundations of the Seventh-day Adventist Message and Mission*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1977.
- _____. *Relationship of the Ellen G. White Writings to the Bible on the Sanctuary Issue*. Sanctuary Review Committee, Glacier View, 1980.
- _____. "Ellen White on Theology, Its Methods, and the Use of Scripture." *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 4, no. 2 (1993): 115-136.
- Daniells, A. G. Letter to a young minister, June 23, 1910. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Davidson, Richard M. "Biblical Interpretation." In *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, edited by Raoul Dederen, 58-104. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- Davis, M. J. "A Study of Major Declarations on the Doctrine of the Atonement in Seventh-day Adventist Literature." M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1962.
- Douglass, Herbert. "Jesus The Model Man." *Adult Sabbath School Lessons* (April-June 1977): 104-111.
- _____. *Messenger of the Lord: The Prophetic Ministry of Ellen G. White*. Nampa: Pacific Press, 1998.
- _____. *The Heartbeat of Adventism: The Great Controversy Theme in the Writings of Ellen G. White*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010.
- _____. *Why Jesus Waits*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2001.
- Douglass, Herbert, and Leo Van Dolson. *Jesus—The Benchmark of Humanity*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1977.

- Douglass, Herbert, et al. *Perfection: The Impossible Possibility*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1975.
- Ellen G. White Estate. *Comprehensive Index to the Writings of Ellen G. White*. 4 vols. Omaha, NE: Pacific Press, 1962-1992.
- _____. *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*. 4 vols. Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1987.
- _____. *The Integrity of the Sanctuary Truth*. Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981.
- _____. *A Scripture Index to the Review and Herald Articles by Ellen G. White*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1978.
- _____. *A Subject Index to the Review and Herald Articles by Ellen G. White*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1978.
- Fernández, Gil Gutierrez. *Ellen G. White: The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*. Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1978.
- Fortin, Denis. "The Cross of Christ: Theological Differences between Joseph H. Waggoner and Ellen G. White." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2003): 131-140.
- _____. "The Cross and the Sanctuary: Ellen G. White's Thought on Atonement." Unpublished paper, Loma Linda University School of Religion, April 14, 2009.
- _____. "Ellen G. White's Conceptual Understanding of the Sanctuary and Hermeneutics." *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 9, no. 1-2 (1998): 160-166.
- _____. "Ellen G. White's Ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church." Biblical Research Institute, August 2007: 1-22.
<http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents.htm> (accessed May 1, 2010).
- Fortin, Denis, and Jerry Moon, eds. *Ellen G. White Encyclopedia*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, forthcoming.
- Froom, Leroy Edwin. *Movement of Destiny*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1971.
- Gane, Erwin R. "The Arian and Anti-Trinitarian Views Presented in Seventh-day Adventist Literature and the Ellen G. White Answer." M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1963.

- _____. *Heaven's Open Door: The Seven Seals of Revelation and Christ Our Heavenly High Priest*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1989.
- Gane, Roy E. *Altar Call*. Berrien Springs, MI: Diadem, 1999.
- _____. *Leviticus, Numbers, The NIV Application Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004.
- General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. *Seventh-day Adventists Believe: A Biblical Exposition of Fundamental Doctrines*. Washington, DC: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988.
- Goldstein, Clifford. *Between the Lamb and the Lion: A New View of Jesus in the Book of Revelation—From the Cross to His Coming*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1995.
- Gordon, Paul A. *The Sanctuary, 1844 and the Pioneers*. Silver Spring, MD: Ministerial Association, General Conference of SDA, 2000.
- Graham, Roy E. *Ellen G. White: Co-Founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. New York: Peter Lang, 1985.
- Graybill, Ron. "Ellen White's Role in Doctrine Formation." *Ministry*, October 1981, 7-11.
- Hammill, Richard. "Spiritual Gifts in the Church Today." *Ministry*, July 1982, 17.
- Heppenstall, Edward. *The Man Who Is God: A Study of the Person and Nature of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1977.
- _____. *Our High Priest: Jesus Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1972.
- _____. "Subjective and Objective Aspects of the Atonement." In *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, edited by Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshner, 667-693. Washington D.C.: Review and Herald, 1981.
- Hoekema, Anthony A. *Seventh-day Adventism*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1963.
- Holbrook, Frank B. *The Atoning Priesthood of Jesus Christ*. Berrien Springs: Adventist Theological Society, 1996.
- _____. *Doctrine of the Sanctuary: A Historical Survey*. Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989.

- _____. "The Great Controversy." In *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, edited by Raoul Dederen, 969-1009. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- Holt, Russell B. "A Comparative Study of the Sanctuary and Its Implications for Atonement in Seventh-day Adventist Theology from Uriah Smith to the Present." Term Paper, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1969. Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University.
- _____. "The Doctrine of the Trinity in the Seventh-day Adventist Denomination: Its Rejection and Acceptance." Term Paper, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, 1969. Adventist Heritage Center, James White Library, Andrews University.
- Hyde, Gordon M., ed. *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*. Washington, DC: Biblical Research Committee, General Conference of SDA, 1974.
- Irwin, Bernardine L. "A Psychohistory of of the Young Ellen White: A Founder of the SDA Church." Ph.D. dissertation. San Diego, CA: U.S. International University, 1984.
- Japp, Johan Adriaan. "A Study of the Atonement in Seventh-day Adventism." M.Th. thesis, University of South Africa, Capetown, South Africa, 1994.
- Knight, George R. *Angry Saints: Tensions and Possibilities in the Adventist Struggle Over Righteousness by Faith*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1989.
- _____. *Ellen White: A Fascinating Look at the Times in Which She Lived*. Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1998.
- _____. *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004.
- _____. *Meeting Ellen White: A Fresh Look at Her Life, Writings, and Major Themes*. Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 1996.
- _____. *My Gripe with God: A Study in Divine Justice and the Problem of the Cross*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1990.
- _____. *Reading Ellen White: How to Understand and Apply Her Writings*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1997.
- _____. *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- _____. *Sin and Salvation: God's Work for and in Us*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2008.

- Koranteng-Pipim, Samuel. "Ellen G. White and Her Concept of Theological System." Term paper, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1988.
- Lake, Jud. *Ellen White under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010.
- Land, Gary, ed. *Adventism in America: A History*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1998.
- Lee, Jairyong. "Faith and Works in Ellen G. White's Doctrine of the Last Judgment." Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1985.
- Leshner, W. R. "Ellen G. White's Concept of Sanctification." Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1970.
- Lindén, Ingemar. *The Last Trump: An Historico-Genetical Study of Some Important Chapters in the Making and Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1978.
- Loughborough, J. N. "Is the Soul Immortal?" *Review and Herald*, September 4, 1855, 34.
- McLoughlin, William G. "Revivalism." In *The Rise of Adventism: Religion and Society in Mid-Nineteenth Century America*, edited by Edwin S. Gaustad, 119-153. New York: Harper & Row, 1974.
- Marshall, I. Howard. "The New Testament Does Not Teach Universal Salvation." In *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*, edited by Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Partridge, 55-76. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Martin, Walter R. *The Truth About Seventh-day Adventism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1960.
- Moore, Arthur Leroy. "Theology in Crisis." Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1979.
- Moore, Marvin. *The Case for the Investigative Judgment: Its Biblical Foundation*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010.
- Murakami, Yoshio. "Ellen G. White's Views of the Sabbath in the Historical, Religious, and Social Context of Nineteenth-Century America." Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1994.
- Neufeld, Don F. "Biblical Interpretation in the Advent Movement." In *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, edited by Gordon M. Hyde, 109-125. Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974.

- Neufeld, Don F., and Julia Neuffer, eds. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Students' Source Book*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1962. S.v. "William Miller," "Millerites."
- _____. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. 2nd rev. ed. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996. S.v. "White, Ellen Gould."
- Newborn, Craig H. "Articulating and Illustrating a Dialogical Hermeneutic for Interpreting the Writings of Ellen White." Ph.D. diss., Claremont School of Theology, 1997.
- Numbers, Ronald L. *Ellen G. White and the Origins of Seventh-Day Adventist Health Reform*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992.
- _____. *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Nichol, Francis D., ed. "Appendix C—The Atonement." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*. Vol. 7A. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1970.
- Olson, A. V. *Thirteen Crisis Years, 1888-1901: From the Minneapolis Meeting to the Reorganization of the General Conference*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1981.
- Olson, Robert. "Outline Studies on Christian Perfection and Original Sin." Insert in *Ministry*, October 1970, 28.
- Pedersen, Gunnar. "The Soteriology of Ellen G. White Compared with the Lutheran Formula of Concord: A Study of the Adventist Doctrine of the Final Judgment of the Saints and Their Justification Before God." Th.D. diss., Andrews University, 1995.
- Pfandl, Gerhard. *The Gift of Prophecy: The Role of Ellen White in God's Remnant Church*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2008.
- _____. *Some Thoughts on Original Sin*. Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.
- Pöhler, Rolf J. "Change in Seventh-day Adventist Theology: A Study of the Problem of Doctrinal Development." Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1995.
- Rea, Walter. *The White Lie*. Turlock, CA: M & R Publications, 1982.
- Reid, George W., ed. *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005.

- Smith, Uriah. *The Sanctuary and Its Cleansing*. Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1877.
- Timm, Alberto Ronald. "Historical Background of Adventist Biblical Interpretation." In *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, edited by George W. Reid, 1-14. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005.
- _____. "The Sanctuary and the Three Angels' Messages, 1844- 1863: Integrating Factors in the Development of Seventh-day Adventist Doctrines." Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1995.
- Tkachuk, Perry. "What Did God Have to Do to Save Sinners? An Investigation of Ellen White's Doctrine of the Atonement as Developed From 1886-1892, Through the Signs of the Times." Term paper, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1978.
- Tonstad, Sigve. "The Cross and the Sanctuary in the Writings of Ellen G. White: A Response to Denis Fortin." Loma Linda University School of Religion, April 14, 2009.
- Van Dolson, Bobbie Jane, and Leo R. Van Dolson. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. 2nd rev. ed. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1996.
- Waggoner, J. H. *The Atonement: An Examination of a Remedial System in the Light of Nature and Revelation*. Oakland, CA: Pacific Press, 1884.
- Wallenkampf, Arnold V., and W. Richard Leshner, eds. *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*. Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1981.
- Whidden, Woodrow W., II. *Ellen G. White on Salvation: A Chronological Study*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1995.
- _____. "The Soteriology of Ellen G. White: The Persistent Path to Perfection, 1836-1902." Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1989.
- _____. *Ellen White on the Humanity of Christ*. Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Institute for Theological Advancement, 1997.
- White, Arthur L. *Ellen G. White*. 6 vols. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1981-1986.
- _____. *Ellen G. White: Woman of Vision*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- White, James. "Editorial." *Review and Herald*, April 7, 1851.

- Winslow, Guy Herbert. "Ellen Gould White and Seventh-day Adventists." Ph.D. dissertation, Clark University, 1932.
- Wood, John W. "The Mighty Opposites: The Atonement of Christ in the Writings of Ellen G. White, Part I." In *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, edited by Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshner, 694-709. Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1981.
- _____. "The Mighty Opposites: The Atonement of Christ in the Writings of Ellen G. White, Part II." In *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, edited by Arnold V. Wallenkampf and W. Richard Leshner, 710-730. Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1981.
- Zackrisson, Edwin H. "Seventh-day Adventists and Original Sin: A Study of the Early Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of the Effect of Adam's Sin on His Posterity." Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University, 1984.
- Zvandasara, Nkosiyo Zhou. "The Concept of Sin in the Theologies of Ellen G. White and Leonardo Boff: A Comparative Study." Th.D. thesis, University of South Africa, 1997.

General Secondary Sources

- Abelard, Peter. "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans." In *Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, 276-287. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956.
- Agnon, S. Y. *Days of Awe*. New York: Schocken, 1948.
- Anders, Nygren. *Commentary on Romans*. Translated by Carl C. Rasmussen. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949.
- Andreasen, M. L. *The Book of Hebrews*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1948.
- _____. *The Sanctuary Service*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1937.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*. Cambridge, England: Blackfriars, 1963-1981.
- Anselm of Canterbury. *Why God Became Man and the Virgin Conception and Original Sin*. Translated by Joseph M. Colleran. Albany, NY: Magi Books, 1969.
- Augustine. *City of God*. New York: Modern Library, 1950.
- Aulén, Gustaf. *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*. Translated by A. G. Herbert. New York: Macmillan, 1951.

- _____. *The Drama and the Symbols: A Book on Images of God and the Problems They Raise*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970.
- _____. *The Faith of the Christian Church*. Translated by Eric H. Wahlstrom and G. Everett Arden. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948.
- Baillie, Donald. *God Was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement*. New York: Scribner, 1948.
- Baldwin, John T., ed. *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood Is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- _____. "Progressive Creationism and Biblical Revelation: Some Theological Implications." *Journal of Adventist Theological Society* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 105-119.
- _____. "Revelation 14:7: An Angel's Worldview." In *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood Is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement*, edited by John T. Baldwin, 19-39. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- Ballenger, Albion Fox. *An Examination of Forty Fatal Errors Regarding the Atonement*. Riverside, CA: A. F. Ballenger, n.d.
- Banks, Robert, ed. *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology*. Exeter: Paternoster, 1974.
- Bangs, Carl. *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Asbury, 1985.
- Barnhouse, Donald G. "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" *Eternity* 7 (September 1956): 44.
- Barr, James, "The Authority of the Bible." *The Ecumenical Review*, 51 no. 2 (April 1969): 135-150.
- Barry, F. R. *The Atonement*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1968.
- Barth, M. *Was Christ's Death a Sacrifice?* London: Oliver and Boyd, 1961.
- Barth, Karl. *Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Romans 5*. Translated by T. A. Smail. New York: Harper, 1957.
- _____. *Church Dogmatics. The Doctrine of Reconciliation*. Vol. IV.1. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.

- _____. *Church Dogmatics. The Doctrine of God*. Vol. II.1. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936.
- Basinger, David. *The Case for Freewill Theism: A Philosophical Assessment*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.
- Basinger, David, and Randall Basinger, eds. *Predestination and Freewill: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986.
- Baxter, Christina. "The Cursed Beloved: A Reconsideration of Penal Substitution." In *Atonement Today*, edited by John Goldingay. London: SPCK, 1995.
- _____, ed. *Stepping Stones: Joint Essays on Anglican Catholic and Evangelical Unity*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1987.
- Beckwith, R. T., G. E. Duffield, and J. I. Packer. *Across the Divide*. Basingstoke, England: Lyttelton, 1977.
- Beilby, James, and Paul R. Eddy, eds. *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006.
- Bethune-Baker, J. F. *An Introduction to the Early History of Christian Doctrine*. London: Methuen, 1949.
- Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959.
- Berkouwer, G. C. *Sin*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971.
- _____. *The Person of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1954.
- _____. *Work of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965.
- Bird, Herbert S. *Theology of Seventh-day Adventism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1961.
- Blanco, Jack. "A Critical Analysis of the Doctrine of Reconciliation in Evangelical Theology and the Teachings of the Seventh-day Adventist Church." Th.D diss., University of South Africa, Captown, South Africa: 1970.
- _____. "The Sanctuary and the Mission of the Church." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 9 no. 1-2 (1998): 243-259.
- Blocher, Henri. "Agnus Victor: The Atonement as Victory and Vicarious Punishment." In *What Does It Mean to Be Saved? Broadening Evangelical Horizons on Salvation*, edited by John G. Stackhouse, 67-91. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002.

- _____. "Biblical Metaphors and the Doctrine of the Atonement." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 no. 4 (2004): 629-645.
- _____. *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.
- Bloesch, D. G. "Sin." In Walter A. Elwell, ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Theology*. Edited by Walter A. Elwell. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Boccia, Maria. "Creation and Evolution: Opposing Worldviews." *Searching Together* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 7-19.
- Boettner, Lorraine. *The Atonement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941.
- Boyd, Gregory A. *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997.
- _____. *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001.
- Bromiley, Geoffrey W., ed. "Substitution." *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: 1979-1988. 4:645-646.
- Brook, V. J. K. "The Atonement in Reformation Theology." In *The Atonement in History and Life*, edited by L. W. Grensted, 214-235. New York: Macmillan, 1920.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985.
- _____. "Typology." *New Bible Dictionary* (1982), 1226.
- Brümmer, Vincent. *Atonement, Christology and the Trinity: Making Sense of Christian Doctrine*. Aldershot, England, 2005.
- _____. "Atonement and Reconciliation." *Religious Studies* 28 (December 1992): 435-452.
- Brunner, Emil. *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*. Translated by Olive Wyon. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947.
- _____. *The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith*. Translated by Olive Wyon. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947.
- _____. *The Divine-Human Encounter*. Translated by Amandus W. Loos. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1943.
- Bryant, M. Darrol, ed. *The Future of Anglican Theology*. New York: Mellen, 1984.

- Bull, Malcolm, and Keith Lockhart. *Seeking a Sanctuary: Seventh-day Adventism and the American Dream*. 2nd ed. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007.
- Bultmann, Rudolf. *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*. New York: Harper & Row, 1961.
- _____. *New Testament and Mythology*. Translated by Schubert M. Ogden. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1984.
- Callen, Barry L. "Soteriological Synergism and Its Surrounding Seductions." Unpublished paper presented at the Symposium on Arminianism and Adventism, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, October 14-16, 2010, 1-12
- Calvin, John. *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948.
- _____. *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*. Translated by J. K. Reid. London: J. Clarke, 1961.
- _____. *The Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1964.
- _____. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by J. T. McNeil. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
- Campbell, McLeod. *The Nature of the Atonement*. London: James Clarke, 1886.
- Cameron, Nigel M. de S. *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*. Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1983.
- _____, ed. *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1992.
- Canale, Fernando. *Back to Revelation-Inspiration*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001.
- _____. *Creation, Evolution and Theology: The Role of Method in Theological Accommodation*. Berrien Springs, MI: Fernando Canale, 2005.
- _____. *A Criticism of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1984.
- _____. "Philosophical Foundations and the Biblical Sanctuary." *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 36 (Autumn 1998): 183-206.

- _____. "Revelation and Inspiration." In *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, edited by George W. Reid, 47-74. Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2005.
- _____. "Toward an Epistemological Approach to the Theological Disagreement on Atonement within the Seventh-day Adventist Theology." Center of Adventist Research, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI, 1979.
- Canright, Dudley M. *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*. Chicago: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1894.
- Catherwood, Christopher. *Five Evangelical Leaders*. Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, 1985.
- Cave, Sydney. *The Doctrine of the Work of Christ*. Nashville: Cokesbury, 1937.
- Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology*. 8 vols. Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947.
- Church of England. *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*. Oxford: J. Abrams, 1840.
- Clifford, Alan C. *Atonement and Justification*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1990.
- Coffin, Harold G., Robert H. Brown, and James Gibson. *Origin by Design*. Rev. ed. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005.
- Connel, J. Clement. "The Propitiation Element in the Atonement." *Vox Evangelica* 4 (1965): 28-42.
- Conner, Walter Thomas. *The Cross in the New Testament*. Nashville: Broadman, 1954.
- Cranfield, C. E. B. "On Some Problems in the Interpretation of Romans 5:12." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 22 (1969): 324– 341.
- _____. *Romans*. 2 vols. The International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975.
- Crawford, Thomas J. *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures Respecting the Atonement*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1874.
- Culpepper, Robert H. *Interpreting the Atonement*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966.
- Curtiss, G. L. *Arminianism in History*. Cincinnati, OH: Cranston and Curts, 1894.
- Dale, R.W. *The Atonement*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875.

- Davis, John J. "Unity of the Bible." In *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*, edited by Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus, 646-650. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984.
- Dayton, Donald W., and R. K. Johnston, eds. *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991.
- Denney, James. *The Atonement and the Modern Mind*. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903.
- _____. *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation*. London: James Clarke. 1959.
- _____. *The Death of Christ*. London: Tyndale, 1911.
- Dick, Everett N. "The Millerite Movement." In *Adventism in America: A History*, edited by Gary Land, 1-28. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, 1998.
- Dillistone, F. W. *The Christian Understanding of Atonement*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968.
- Dodd, C. H. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. New York: Harper, 1932.
- Dorrien, Gary. *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1998.
- Douty, Norman F. *Another Look at Seventh-day Adventism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1962.
- Dulles, Avery. *Models of Revelation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992.
- Eden, Martyn, and David F. Wells, eds. *The Gospel in the Modern World: A Tribute to John Stott*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991.
- Erickson, Millard J. *Christian Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998.
- Ellen G. White Estate. *The Integrity of the Sanctuary Truth*. Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1981.
- Elwell, Walter A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.
- _____. *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- Evans, G. R, and J. Robert Wright, eds. *The Anglican Tradition: A Handbook of Sources*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991.

- Fairweather, Eugene R. *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1956.
- Fiddes, Paul. *The Creative Suffering of God*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1988.
- _____. *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement*. Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1989.
- Ford, Desmond. *Daniel 8:14: The Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment*. 2 vols. Escondido, CA: Operation Glacier View, 1980.
- Forsyth, P.T. *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*. Boston, MA: Pilgrim Press, 1909.
- _____. *The Work of Christ*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910.
- Fortin, Denis. "Historical and Theological Perspectives on the Rise of Arminianism and the Place of Seventh-day Adventism in the Calvinist-Arminian Debate." Unpublished paper presented at the Symposium on Arminianism and Adventism, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, October 14-16, 2010, 1-12.
- France, R. T., and A. E. McGrath. *Evangelical Anglicans: Their Role and Influence in the Church Today*. London: SPCK, 1993.
- Franks, R.S. *The Atonement*. London: Oxford, 1934.
- Gibson, L. J. "Theistic Evolution: Is It for Adventists?" *Ministry*, January, 1992, 22-25.
- Girard, René. *Violence and the Sacred*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1977.
- Godbey, John Charles. "A Study of Faustus Socinus' De Jesu Christo Servatore." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago Divinity School, 1968.
- Goldingay, John, ed. *Atonement Today*. London: SPCK, 1995.
- Gorringe, Timothy. *God's Just Vengeance: Crime, Violence, and the Rhetoric of Salvation*. Cambridge, UK: University Press, 1996.
- Green, Joel B., and Mark D. Baker. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Grensted, L. W., ed. *The Atonement in History and Life*. New York: Macmillan, 1929.
- _____. *A Short History of the Atonement*. Manchester, UK: University Press, 1920.

- Grenz, Stanley J., and Roger E. Olson. *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992.
- Grotius, Hugo. *A Defence of the Catholic Faith Concerning the Satisfaction of Christ Against Faustus Socinus*. Translated by Frank Hugh Foster. Andover, MA: Warren F. Draper, 1889.
- Gulley, Norman R. *Christ Is Coming! A Christ-centered Approach to Last-Day Events*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998.
- _____. "A Look at the Larger View of the Cross: An Evaluation of the Debate in the Seventh-day Adventist Church." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 3 (Spring 1992): 66-96.
- _____. *Systematic Theology: Prolegomena*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2003.
- Gunton, Colin E. *The Actuality of Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality, and the Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989.
- _____. *The Theology of Reconciliation*. London: T & T Clark, 2003.
- Guy, Fritz. *The Ministry of Christ as High Priest in Heaven: Some Suggestions Toward a Theology of the Sanctuary*. Glacier View, CO: Sanctuary Review Committee, 1980.
- _____. "The Ultimate Triumph of Love: A View of Atonement." Center for Adventist Research, Berrien Springs, MI: n.d.
- Hanson, A. T. *The Wrath of the Lamb*. London: S.P.C.K, 1957.
- Hall, B. "Calvin against the Calvinists." In *John Calvin*, edited by G. E. Duffield, 19-37. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1966.
- Hardy, Alister. *The Divine Flame*. London: Collins, 1966.
- Harrison, A. W. *Arminianism*. London: Duckworth, 1937.
- Hart, Trevor. "Universalism: Two Distinct Types." In *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, edited by Nigel M. de S. Cameron, 1-2. Carlisle, England: Paternoster, 1992.
- Harnack, Adolf. *History of Dogma*. London: Williams and Norgate, 1958.

- Hasel, Gerhard F. "The 'Days' of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal 'Days' or Figurative 'Periods/Epochs' of Time?" In *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary: Why a Global Flood is Vital to the Doctrine of Atonement*, edited by John T. Baldwin, 40-68. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- _____. "Divine Judgment." In *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, edited by Raoul Dederen, 833-846. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- _____. "General Principles of Interpretation." In *A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics*, edited by Gordon M. Hyde, 163-193. Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974.
- _____. "Salvation in Scripture." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 3 (Spring 1992): 17-48.
- Hastings, H. L. *The Controversy between God and Man: Its Origin, Progress, and End*. Rochester, NY: H.L. Hastings, 1858.
- Hengel, Martin. *The Atonement: The Origins of the Doctrine in the New Testament*. Translated by John Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981.
- Helm, P. *Calvin and the Calvinists*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982.
- _____. *The Man Who Is God*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1977.
- Hick, John. *God and the Universe of Faiths: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*. London: Macmillan, 1973.
- _____. *Evil and the God of Love*. London: Macmillan, 1977.
- Hicks, F. C. N. *The Fullness of Sacrifice*. London: SPCK, 1946.
- Hillert, Sven. *Limited and Universal Salvation: A Text-Oriented and Hermeneutical Study of Two Perspectives in Paul*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1999.
- Hodge, Charles. *A Commentary on Romans*. Philadelphia: Grigg & Elliot, 1835.
- _____. *Systematic Theology*. 3 vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1871.
- Hoekema, Anthony. *The Four Major Cults*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963.
- Holloway, David. "What Is Anglican Evangelical?" In *Restoring the Vision: Anglican Evangelicals Speak Out*, edited by Melvin Tinker. 15-37. Eastbourne, UK: MARC, 1999.

- Holloway, Richard, ed. *The Anglican Tradition*. Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1984.
- Holmes, Urban T., III. *What Is Anglicanism?* Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1982.
- Hooker, Richard. *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. 2 vols. London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1907.
- Hunter, J. D. *American Evangelicalism: Conservative Religion and the Quandry of Modernity*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1983.
- Irenaeus of Lyons. *Against the Heresies (Adversus Haereses)*. Translated by Dominic J. Unger. New York: Paulist Press, 1992.
- Jeremias, Joachim. *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*. New York: Scribner, 1966.
- Jewett, Paul King. "Original Sin and the Fall of Man." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 19 (Fall 1976): 18-30.
- Jenkins, M. "Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement." *Evangelical Quarterly* 64 (1992): 333-355.
- Johnson, Harry. *The Humanity of the Saviour*. London: Epworth Press, 1962.
- Johnston, Robert K. "American Evangelicalism: An Extended Family." In *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, edited by Donald W. Dayton and R.K. Johnston, 252-272. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991.
- Kidner, Frank Derek. *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*. London: Tyndale, 1952.
- Kistler, Don, ed. *Sola Scriptura! The Protestant Position on the Bible*. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1995.
- Knight, George R. *Joseph Bates: The Real Founder of Seventh-day Adventism*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004.
- Knight, George R. "Seventh-day Adventism, Semi-Pelagianism, and Overlooked Topics in Adventist Soteriology: Moving Beyond Missing Links and Toward a More Explicit Understanding." Unpublished paper presented at the Symposium on Arminianism and Adventism, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, October 14-16, 2010, 1-27.
- Lake, Jud. *Ellen White Under Fire: Identifying the Mistakes of Her Critics*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2010.
- Lane, David H. "Special Creation or Evolution: No Middle Ground." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (January-March 1994): 11-31.

- _____. "Theological Problems with Theistic Evolution," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 150 (April-June, 1994): 155-174.
- Lewis, C. S. *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle*. New York: HarperCollins, 1994.
- _____. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. New York: Macmillan, 1950.
- LaRondelle, Hans K. *Our Creator Redeemer: An Introduction to Biblical Covenant Theology*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2005.
- _____. "Salvation and Atonement: A Biblical-Exegetical Approach." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 3 (Spring 1992): 22-51.
- _____. "The Seventh-day Adventist View of the Relationship of Justification-Sanctification-the Final Judgment." In *E. J. Waggoner: From the Physician of Good News to Agent of Division*, edited by Woodrow W. Whidden, 395-401. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2008.
- Letham, Robert. *The Work of Christ*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.
- Lewis, Donald, and Alister McGrath, eds. *Doing Theology for the People of God: Studies in Honor of J. I. Packer*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.
- Lidgett, J. Scott. *The Spiritual Principle of the Atonement* London: Kelly, 1901.
- Linden, Ingemar. *The Last Trump: An Historico-genetic Study of Some Important Chapters in the Making and Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1978.
- Litton E. A. *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*. London: James Clarke & Co., 1960.
- Luther, Martin. *Lectures on Galatians (1535)*. *Luther's Works*. 55 vols. Translated by Jaroslav Pelikan. St. Louis: Concordia, 1955.
- _____. *On the Bondage of the Will: A New Translation of De Servo Arbitrio (1525)*, Martin Luther's Reply to Erasmus of Rotterdam. Translated by J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnson. London: J. Clarke, 1957.
- Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *Romans*. 7 vols. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1970-1985.
- Manwaring, Randle. *From Controversy to Co-Existence: Evangelicals in the Church of England 1914-1980*. New York: Cambridge University, 1985.
- Macquarrie, John. *Principles of Christian Theology*. New York: Scribner, 1977.

- Maddox, Randy L. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994.
- Manson, William. *Jesus the Messiah*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1944.
- Marsden, George, ed. *Evangelicalism and Modern America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984.
- _____. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Marshall, I. Howard. "The New Testament Does Not Teach Universal Salvation." In *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*, edited by Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Partridge, 55-76. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003.
- Martin, James P. *The Last Judgment in Protestant Theology from Orthodoxy to Ritschl*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963.
- Martin, Walter R. *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1960.
- Maxwell, C. Mervyn. "Sanctuary and Atonement in SDA Theology: An Historical Survey." In *The Sanctuary and the Atonement: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, edited by Arnold V. Wallenkampf and Richard Leshar, 516-544. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1981.
- _____. "The Investigative Judgment: Its Early Development." In *The Sanctuary and the Atonement, Biblical, Historical, and Theological Studies*, edited by Arnold V. Wallenkampf and Richard Leshar, 545-581. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1981.
- McDonald, H. D. *The Atonement of the Death of Christ: In Faith, Revelation and History*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1985.
- _____. *New Testament Concept of Atonement: The Gospel of the Calvary Event*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994.
- McGrath, Alister E. *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993.
- _____. *What Was God Doing on the Cross?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992.
- Wright, R. K. McGregor. *No Place for Sovereignty: What's Wrong with Freewill Theism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996.
- McIntyre, John. *The Shape of Soteriology*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992.

- _____. *St. Anselm and His Critics: A Reinterpretation of the Cur Deus Homo*.
Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1954.
- McNeill, John T. *The History and Character of Calvinism*. New York: Oxford
University, 1954.
- Menninger, Karl. *Whatever Became of Sin?* New York: Hawthorn, 1973.
- Meredith, Anthony. *Gregory of Nyssa*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Boston: Ginn, 1891.
- Moberly, R. C. *Atonement and Personality*. London: Murray, 1901.
- Morris, Leon. *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965.
- _____. *The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance*. Downers Grove, IL:
InterVarsity, 1983.
- _____. *The Cross in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965.
- _____. "Theories of Atonement." *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2d ed. Grand
Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.
- Moule, C. F. D. *The Origin of Christology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1977.
- Mouw, Richard J. *Violence and the Atonement: Must Christianity Be Violent?* Edited by
Kenneth R. Chase and Alan Jacobs. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2003.
- Mozley, J.K. *The Doctrine of the Atonement*. London: Duckworth, 1915.
- Muller, R. A. *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed
Theology from Calvin to Perkins*. Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1986.
- Murray, John. *The Atonement*. Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1962.
- _____. *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955.
- Neill, Stephen. *Anglicanism*. London: Penguin Books, 1960.
- Newman, John Henry. *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. New York:
Green, 1891.
- Nicole, Roger. "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation." *Westminster Theological
Journal* 17 (1955): 115-157.

- _____. "John Calvin's View of the Extent of the Atonement." *Westminster Theological Journal* 47 (1985): 197-225
- Noll, Mark A. *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.
- _____. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.
- _____. "Thirty-nine Articles." *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Theology*. 2d ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.
- Noll, Mark A, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk. *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, The British Isles, and Beyond 1700-1990*. New York: Oxford, 1994.
- Numbers, Ronald L. *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Nygren, Anders. *Essence of Christianity*. Translated by Philip S. Watson. Philadelphia, PA: Muhlenberg Press, 1960.
- Oden, Thomas C. *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.
- Olson, Roger E. *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006.
- _____. "Arminianism Is Evangelical Theology." Unpublished paper presented at the Symposium on "Arminianism and Adventism," October 14-16, 2010, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1-17.
- _____. "Arminianism Is God-centered Theology." Unpublished paper presented at the Symposium on "Arminianism and Adventism," October 14-16, 2010, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, 1-16.
- _____. *Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.
- Origen. *On First Principles*. Translated by G. W. Butterworth. Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, 1966.
- Packer, J. I. "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution." *Tyndale Bulletin* 25 (1974): 3-45.
- Padilla, René C., ed. *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976.

- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Jesus— God and Man*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968.
- Parry, Robin A., and Christopher H. Parridge. *Universal Salvation? The Current Debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.
- Paul, Robert S. *The Atonement and the Sacraments: The Relation of the Atonement to the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper*. New York: Abingdon, 1960.
- Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. 4 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1971-1989.
- Peterson, Robert A. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1983.
- Pierard, R. V., and W. A. Elwell. "Evangelicalism." *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.
- Pinnock, Clark H., ed. *The Grace of God and the Will of Man*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1989.
- Pinnock, Clark, and Barry L. Callen. *The Scripture Principle: Reclaiming the Full Authority of the Bible*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006.
- Platten, Stephen. *Augustine's Legacy: Authority and Leadership in the Anglican Communion*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997.
- Radmacher, Earl D., and Robert D. Preus, eds. *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984.
- Rashdall, Hastings. *The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1919.
- Ratzlaff, Dale. *The Cultic Doctrine of Seventh-day Adventists*. Sedona, AZ: Life Assurance Ministries, 1996.
- Rea, Walter. *The White Lie*. Turlock, CA: M & R Publications, 1982.
- Reed, R. C. *The Gospel as Taught by Calvin*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979.
- Reid, W. S., and G. W. Bromiley. "Atone; Atonement." *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids, MI: 1979-88. 1:352-360.
- Reid, W. S. "Calvinism." *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Rees, Thomas. *The Racovian Catechism*. London: Longmans, 1818.

- Reiner, Edwin. *The Atonement*. Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing, 1971.
- Reiser, Marius. *Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in Its Jewish Context*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Remensnyder, Junius B. *The Atonement and Modern Thought*. Philadelphia, PA: Lutheran Publication Society, 1905.
- Riddell, J. G. *Why Did Jesus Die?* New York: Abingdon, 1938.
- Rodriguez, Angel Manuel. "Salvation by Sacrificial Substitution." *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 3 (Spring 1992): 49-77.
- _____. *Spanning the Abyss: How the Atonement Brings Humanity and God Together*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2008.
- _____. *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus*. Berrien Springs: Andrews University, 1979.
- Roth, Ariel A. *Origins: Linking Science and Scripture*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998.
- Schaff, P., ed. *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996.
- Sanday, W., and A. C. Headlam. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902.
- Sanders, John. *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998.
- Schwarz, R. W. *John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.* Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1970.
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *The Christian Faith*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928.
- Schreiner, Thomas C., and Bruce Ware. *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000.
- Scriven, Charles. "God's Justice, Yes; Penal Substitution, No." *Spectrum* 23 (October 1993): 31-38.
- Sentis, Laurent S.V. "Original Sin." *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology*. Edited by JeanYves Lacoste. New York: Routledge, 2005. 3:1479-1482.

- Shank, Robert. *Life in the Son: A Study of the Doctrine of Perseverance*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1989.
- Shea, William H. "Theological Importance of the PreAdvent Judgment." In *70 Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy*, edited by Frank B. Holbrook, 323-332. Hagerstown, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1986.
- Shedd, William. G. T. *Dogmatic Theology*. 2 vols. New York: Scribner's, 1889.
- _____. *A History of Christian Doctrine*. 2 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1888.
- Sherry, Patrick. *Images of Redemption*. London: T & T Clark, 2003.
- Simpson, Patrick C. *The Fact of Christ*. New York: Revel, 1901.
- Smail, Tom. "Can One Man Die for the People?" In *Atonement Today*, edited by John Goldingay. London: SPCK, 1995.
- Smalley, Stephen S. "Thirty-Nine Articles," In *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by J. D. Douglas. Exeter, UK: Paternoster, 1974.
- Smith, Uriah. *The Sanctuary and Its Cleansing*. Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1877.
- Spalding, Aurthur W. *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1961.
- Spencer, Duane Edward. *The Five Points of Calvinism in the Light of Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979.
- Staples, Russell, L. "Adventism." In *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, edited by Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, 57-71. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991.
- Stevens, G. B. *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*. London: T. & T. Clark, 1909.
- Stibbs, Alan Marshall. *So Great Salvation: The Meaning and Message of the Letter to the Hebrews*. Exeter: Paternoster, 1970.
- Strong, A. H. *Systematic Theology*. 3 vols. Philadelphia, PA: Griffith and Rowland, 1907.
- Sweet, L. I., ed. *The Evangelical Tradition in America*. Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1984.
- Sykes, Stephen W. *The Integrity of Anglicanism*. Oxford: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1978.

- _____. *Sacrifice and Redemption*. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991.
- _____. *The Story of Atonement*. London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1997.
- Sykes, Stephen, John Booty, and Jonathan Knight, eds. *The Study of Anglicanism*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1998.
- Tasker, R.V.G. *The Biblical Doctrine of the Wrath of God*. London: Tyndale, 1951.
- Taylor, Vincent. *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*. London: Epworth, 1958.
- _____. *Jesus and His Sacrifice*. London: McMillan, 1959.
- Terry, Justyn Charles. *The Justifying Judgment of God: A Reassessment of the Place of Judgment in the Saving Work of Christ*. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2007.
- Thomas, G. Michael. *The Extent of the Atonement: A Dilemma for Reformed Theology from Calvin to the Consensus*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997.
- Torrance, Thomas Forsyth. *The Mediation of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Travis, Stephen H. *Christ and the Judgment of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2008.
- Troeltsch, Ernst. *The Absoluteness of Christianity and the History of Religions*. Translated by David Reid. Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1971.
- Troeltsch, Ernst. *Christian Thought, Its History and Application*. London: University of London Press, 1923.
- Turner, H. E. W. *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption: A Study of the Development of Doctrine During the First Five Centuries*. London: Mowbray, 1952.
- van Bemmelen, Peter M. "The Authority of Scripture." In *Understanding Scripture: An Adventist Approach*, edited by George W. Reid, 75-89. Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2005.
- _____. *Issues in Biblical Inspiration: Sanday and Warfield*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987.
- _____. "Revelation and Inspiration." In *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, edited by Raoul Dederen, 22-57. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000.
- Van Buren, Paul. *Christ in Our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

- Van Dyck, Marian J. *Growing Closer Together: Rome and Canterbury—A Relationship of Hope*. Middlegreen, UK: St. Paul Publications, 1992.
- Vance, Laurence M. *The Other Side of Calvinism*. Pensacola, FL: Vance Publications, 2002.
- Vaughan, C. J. *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. London: Macmillan, 1885.
- Vogel, Arthur A., ed. *Theology in Anglicanism*. Wilton, CT: Morehouse-Barlow, 1984.
- Wand, J.W. C. *Anglicanism in History and Today*. New York: Nelson, 1962.
- Waggoner, Joseph H. *The Atonement: An Examination of a Remedial System in the Light of Nature and Revelation*. Battle Creek, MI: Review and Herald, 1884.
- Walls, Jerry L. and Joseph R. Dongell. *Why I Am Not a Calvinist*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.
- Ware, Bruce A. "Effectual Calling and Grace." In *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, edited by Thomas C. Schreiner and Bruce Ware, 43-62. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000.
- Watson, Charles H. *The Atoning Work of Christ: His Sacrifice and Priestly Ministry*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1934.
- Weaver, J. Denny. *Keeping Salvation Ethical: Mennonite and Amish Atonement Theology in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Scottdale, PA: Herald, 1997,
- Weber, Martin. *Who's Got the Truth? Making Sense out of Five Different Adventist Gospels*. Columbia, MD: Calvary Connections, 1994.
- Webber, Robert, and Donald Bloesch. *Orthodox Evangelicals*. Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1978.
- Weborg, John. "Pietism: Theology in Service of Living Toward God." In *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, edited by Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, 161-183. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991.
- Webster, Eric. *Crosscurrents in Adventist Christology*. New York: Peter Lang, 1984.
- Wells, David F. "Collision of Views on the Atonement." *Bibliotheca Sacra* 144 (October-December 1987): 363-376.
- _____. *The Search for Salvation*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1978.

- Wenham, G. J. *Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1981.
- Westcott, B. F. *Commentary on the Epistles of John*. London: Macmillan, 1883.
- Whale, J. S. *Victor and Victim: The Christian Doctrine of Redemption*. Cambridge: University Press, 1960.
- Wheeler, David L. *A Relational View of the Atonement*. New York: Peter Lang, 1989.
- White, P. *Predestination, Policy and Polemic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Wilkinson, John, ed. *Catholic Anglicans Today*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968.
- Winter, Michael. *The Atonement*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1995.
- Wolf, William J. *No Cross, No Crown: A Study of the Atonement*. Hamden: Archon, 1962.
- Wolsterstorff, Nicholas. "Unqualified Divine Temporality." In *Four Views: God and Time*, edited by Gregory E. Ganssle, 187-213. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001.
- Wright, R. K. McGregor. *No Place for Sovereignty: What's Wrong with Freewill Theism?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Zurcher, J. R. *Touched with Our Feelings: A Historical Survey of Adventist Thought on the Human Nature of Christ*. Translated by Edward W. White. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1999.