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The Dualistic Nature of Christ: A Comparison Study of Herman Bavinck And Ellen White Thoughts

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***Abstract*:** *Christology has been a subject of wide discussion due the very heart of Christianity lays on this doctrine. Further, it relates directly to some core identity of believers such as soteriology, trinity and atonement. The intention of this treatise is to delve and offer alternative perspectives that may contribute to the discourse. However, the natures of Christ are one of the high attentions given. The divinity and humanity attributes participate consistently in dialogues. Herman Bavinck, a Dutch reformed background, and Ellen White with American Adventist tradition share insights to the topic. This essay goes to compare their thought in order to see the contribution that could be offered.*

Keywords: divinity-humanity, Christology, Herman Bavinck, Ellen White

Abstrak: Kristologi menjadi topik pembahasan luas karena menjadi dasar doktrin kekristenan. Lebih jauh, Kristologi memiliki korelasi langsung dengan inti keyakinan seperti soteriology, trinitas dan penebusan. Tujuan dari tulisan ini adalah untuk menggali dan menawarkan perspektif alternative yang dapat berkontribusi pada diskursus ini. Kodrat dari Kristus adalah atensi utama dalam pembahasan ini. Karakter ketuhanan dan kemanusiaan diulas secara konsisten. Herman Bavinck, latar belakang tradisi reformasi Belanda, dan Ellen White dengan tradisi Adventist di Amerika merefleksikan pengetahuan mengenai topik ini. Artikel ini mencoba memberikan perbandingan dengan tujuan untuk melihat kontribusi yang dapat ditawarkan.

Kata Kunci: keilahian-kemanusiaan, kristologi, Herman Bavinck, Ellen White

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1. Introduction

Throughout the centuries, intense discussion addressed to the discourse of Christology due it is the very heart of Christianity. Even more, Christology receives attention as a potential discourse that could contribute insight to modern science.[1]

[1] *See*, Christar A. Rumbay, "Christology in Digital Era: A Socio-Systematic Theology Contribution to the Sustainable Smart Society," (*PASCA: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, vol.2, no.1, 15-23,

However, it remains central problem concerning Christ's manhood and divinity. It opposites and attacks the fundamental belief of believers as it governs other doctrines such as; soteriology, ecclesiology, ecclesiology, and pneumatology. Therefore, the nature of Christ should be placed in a proper construction of discussion and dialogue in order to gain clear idea.

However, the main tension is addressed to the divinity of Christ since Christ is considered as God in humanity form, and this claiming of supreme being incarnation leads to unparalleled connection to other faiths, no other religious figures are alleged to be divine being in human appearance.[2] Certainly, the scripture offers sedative, but still remains extreme debates. Worstly, in the other side, pertaining Christ's humanity, in his work, John Knox raises provoking question to the tension, what is the role of Christ's humanity? Why the human nature is important?[3] A question follow, how fully or normally human was he?[4] Indeed, collections of perspectives to this tension are prepared widely, although remains further explanation where does not accommodate all intentions.

Therefore, a claiming that Christ contains of dual natures enforces further explanation from various perspective, grounding reflection to this account should be expressed in a very sensitive way since it potentially could disrupt other related dogma in the scripture where the Christian faith stand. The high tension, however, is addressed to the divinity of Christ, therefore, efforts of academic work directed to wrest with his deity instead of manhood. Furthermore, pieces of studies have been take place to this topic, but a certain satisfied reflection is not yet appearing since the dialogue to this topic continuously open new debates. Of course, it might be impossible to gain comprehensive knowledge that could accommodate all intentions, however, at least, new perspectives by a comparison study could contribute new meaningful insights. This treatise aims to investigate Dutch Reform and American Adventist tradition concerning the dual natures of Christ. Specific investigation falls to Herman Bavinck and Ellen White thought that expected would lead this study to new contribution.

The research question that leads this essay is; What contribution are possible concerning the comparison of Herman Bavinck and Ellen White pertaining the dualistic natures of Christ? What could be learned by the similarity or difference of those thinkers?

2. Methodology

2020, DOI: 10.46494/psc.v16i1.70) and "The Knowledge of Hospitality in the Redemption of Christ," (*DIEGESIS: Jurnal Teologi Kharismatika*, vol.2, no.2, 66-75, 2019).

[2] Dean L. Overman, *A Case for the Divinity of Jesus: Examining the Earliest Evidence*, (Plymouth: UK, 2010), 1-2.

[3] John Knox, *The Humanity and Divinity of Christ: A Study of Pattern in Christology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 1.

[4] O.R Buckwalter, *Nature and Significance of the Humanity of Jesus in the New Testament*, (unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Columbia University, 1953).

This treatise is a qualitative study, attempts to evaluate critically the works of Herman Bavinck and Ellen White. The main intention of this essay is to describe their thought on christology and see the possibilities of similarities and differences. Their works will receive strict and sensitive interpretation approach by description analysis. Afterwards, their thinking will be re-construct and re-structure in order to grasp the main insights concerning the dual nature of Christ. Conversation and dialogue between Herman and Bavinck will be presented to gain general displays and then narrow down to specific knowledge that could be donate alternative contributions to the tension. In the last stage, comparison will be grounded based on their thoughts.

3. Result and Discussion

Herman Bavinck

Bavinck is the younger contemporary of Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)[5] who intended to revitalise Dutch Reformed theology, furthermore, he always judged the diversity in justice and see the common with his opponents. The general tension in his time relates to the pietism groups who resist the development of sciences, politics and arts, and combine it into church tradition.[6] By this background, Bavinck expressed his knowledge and investigation to the topic of Christ, which made him well known as a Christocentric thinker.[7] Clearly, he rejects the idea of Son's initiative since the redemption plan came from the Father, and not the Son.[8] It is the participation of the Father to redeem sinful man. Moreover, as he gives large portion of attention to Christology, he organizes the sequence of Christian doctrines in order to gain clear notion. It is performed in his work which start with revelation and scripture, doctrine of God, creation and fall, person and work of Christ, covenant grace, church and end to eschatology.

With this in mind, it expresses the domination of Christology in his work. He argues that the doctrine of Christ is the central point of the whole systems of dogmatic. The entire history of the world is laid down in this central theme, Christology.[9] However, efforts to break down the secret is vain. All attempts to unfold are not equal due the mystery of godliness is not adequate for human knowledge.[10] As this topic is deep, rich and complicated, a pessimistic tone was presented by Bavinck in order to collect proper formula to accommodate all the conflicts and against all errors. Although effort and faith

[5] Abraham Kuyper is a public theologian, he engaged in political and education environment. His major contribution relates to Christianity and politics and the development of Christian education system. His works less of Christology attention, therefore, Herman Bavinck as his successor is more qualified and merit the condition of comparison study with Ellen White. See, Jan de Bruijn*, Abraham Kuyper: A Pictorial Biography*, translated by Dagmare Houniet (Amsterdam: Wm. B. Eerdmands Publishing, 2014).

[6] Hans Burger, *Being in Christ: A Biblical and Systematic Investigation in a Reformed*, (Eugene, Oregon: WIPF & STOCK, 2009), 87-88.

[7] Ibid, 89.

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Volume 3: Sin and Salvation in Christ*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2006), 235.

[10] *Ibid*, 308.

have been played roles significantly, it still cannot serve the tensions around.[11] Therefore, an optimistic outcome cannot be expected due the pith that leads his work is uncertainty. What could be offered here is; idea that may help believer to see clearly Christ's dual natures, or even, discovered any perspectives to discern the role of its natures toward Christ. The contribution, however, will not satisfied the opposites but sufficient to accommodate fundamental faith.

Moreover, with all the condition, Bavinck strictly discuss the dualistic natures of Christ. Even more saying that phenomenon of multiple nature in single person is common in religious sense. He employs the term mediator and incarnation in order to describe Christ's natures, argues that regarding to reach human being, divine intention only possible applied by a mediator. It is not strange, since mediator or incarnation is grounded in human knowledge and religious communities.[12] With this in mind, tensions and doubting concerning *mediatorship*[13] are incorrectly addressed to the natures of Christ. Furthermore, salvation is related to the dual natures, due it requires repentance, faith and rebirth, the reality of eschatology only possible by dualistic attribute of the mediator.[14] The loss of certain or one nature of Christ will consequence the future expectation of better life, post-sinful period, vanished. Therefore, Bavinck says that, confessing the divinity of Christ is the only way to maintain the communication between God and human.[15] As the tension in the deity of Christ, Bavinck gives more attention to the divinity of Christ, extremely saying that there is only one single way to connect human being to the creator, a mutual-relation, in which by the deity of Christ. However, this idea is suitable to Karl Bart, as he argues that in order to gain the knowledge of God, human being need to receive His revelation through Christ, even more, extremely, he rejects other sources that claiming have the possibility as in Christ.[16] In sum, Bavinck regards the dual natures of Christ is not strange, specifically speaking, it should not receive excited attention. God employs human reality to reach sinner. However, the personality of Christ bears divine enigma where probably does not quench curiosity but sufficient for man to believe. In this sense, cosmological knowledge and the nature of

[11] *Ibid*, 233-234.

[12] *Ibid*, 233.

[13] The biblical image of mediatorship acts as a negotiator between two parties, more specifically, in the time of disagreement. The mediator performs negotiation, interpretation, arbitration, and avocations. In biblical term, Moses was known as the greatest human mediator. The mediatorship of Christ, however, attempts to connect and link the divinity of God and humanity of sinful man. Both in Hebrew books and New Testament, the mediatorship of Christ is portrayed as the heart of soteriology. See, Neil Ferguson, 'God's Mediator' (*The Expository Times*, 119(4):186-186, 2008, DOI: 10.1177/0014524608119004070 2) and William Brownsberger, *Jesus the Mediator* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013).

[14] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 233.

[15] *Ibid*, 236.

[16] R.T te Velde, *The Doctrine of God in Reformed Orthodoxy, Karl Barth, and the Utrecht School: A Study in Method and Content*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), 761.

anthropocentrism should be avoided, invisible authority is required in order to gain this knowledge.

Redemption portrays Christ's divinity where he performed an authority to forgive sin, as he was known that he is the apocalyptic son of man in Daniel 7, further, for his Father's love, sent him for a great universe mission, called redemption.[17] Resurrection is the fact of his deity,[18] performing God's authority, and forgive sins, reflects divine authority in which exist due the bible mentions that this is the work and authority of God. However, this mystery, requires effort to be unfolded, Bavinck proposes that Christ is truly the person of Son who became flesh in human appearance, not the divine nature itself.[19] However, to assume this concept as in the sense of incarnation need more clarification. It depends on how we judge the sense of incarnation. But he intends to explain a '*transformation*', and if we agree to this, it has clear meaning that Christ is truly man since the Son transformed himself in human flesh, but the divine attribute still alive in him. Here Bavinck offers formula to gain clear insight by making clear distinction between the nature and person of Christ.

Bavinck makes a weight distinction between nature and person, God is one nature with three persons, while Christ is one person with two natures. Nature is substratum, presupposition, person is what exist, the owner, professor, master of the nature, the subject that lives, thinks, wills, and acts through natures.[20] In contrast, Barend Kamphius goes further by suggesting to start identification with Christ.[21] Unfortunately, Bavinck has nothing concerning the starting point in examine the natures of Christ. But clearly, he insists the existence of dual natures, agree with the pronunciation of Chalcedon which is against the separation of Christ' natures, and believing the same personal subject, one person, with two natures.[22]

Furthermore, in order to reach common ground, and make this mystery possible to others, non believers, Bavinck develops the divine nature of Christ by describing the paganism concept of saviours and kings.[23] As the earthly emperor employs kings as gods and human at the same time, this could imply to Christ, a single person with two natures. Worldly king or emperor is considered as the descendent of gods, and mediatorship relates to a single being who maintained plural identity, specifically speaking, divine attribute. According to Bavinck, mediator only possible to a being who have two natures.[24] Furthermore, unexpectedly, he goes beyond than simply using the term mediator. Bavinck draws a pluralistic soteriology attribute to his understanding of Christology by saying that the reflection of dualistic natures of Christ reach beyond, not only limited to believers, but further, encompasses desire of all nations, including

[17] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 233.
[18] *Ibid*, 238.
[19] *Ibid*, 234.
[20] *Ibid*, 306.
[21] R.T te Velde, *The Doctrine of God in Reformed Orthodoxy*, 764.
[22] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 237.
[23] *Ibid*, 242.
[24] *Ibid*, 235.

gentiles.[25] It not hostile to culture, certain period and group, or even isolated by its organic and original context, but extends to the whole dimensions, because Christ is considered as the centre of history.[26]

Besides the divinity, the earth appearance of Christ receives conflicts as well. By saying the deity exist within the person of Christ, his humanity should be proved that it stays together. The virginity of Mary is important aspect to prove the divinity of Christ since he was born in from the virgin lady, a very human nature, and the will of Holy Spirit, furthermore, the Spirit who gave power to be free from sin.[27] The relation with the Spirit is an evidence of his divinity, because only supreme being who could free from sins. Therefore, as discussed above, Christology relates significantly to soteriology and plan of redemption, an undivided chain that must collected together. Even more, as a person of the triune God, Christ consistently connects to his Father and the Spirit. Within the Trinitarian concept and soteriological purpose, Christological dimension of Bavinck becomes clear.[28] Here we see, a dramatic scene of a divine picture, an initiative came from the Father, the willingness of the Son and support from the spirit. An unclear math concept of trinity but sufficient for human knowledge to grasp the mystery.

Furthermore, although Christ was free from sin, because the role of his divinity and the help of the Spirit, he experienced the consequence of sin and sensed sin's suffering. In the other side, the intervention of the Spirit is an evidence that he was truly human being. Even more saying, biblically, the scripture presents adequate information concerning his humanity, growing up, hunger, anger, suffer, and dying. Acknowledging the mediator, God-human Jesus Christ, is the heart of the Gospel.[29] The Spirit proves the dualistic attribute of Christ and applied to the Father as well. No one in the earth would live free from sins and survive without violate God's will. The involvement and support of the Spirit becomes essential to Christ since he owns human nature. The Father gives support to His beloved son who lives as a human being by an incarnation.

The human nature of Christ cannot be separated as he stays alongside with the communion with Holy spirit. Because of his union with Logos make it possible to be a representation of the entire human race, further, could be the mediator of God for all human races, times, age groups, and places.[30] The character of mediatorship is applied cross the sin world boundaries and possible to all the historic person and future. However, Logos doctrine is important for Bavinck, since the Son is the incarnation of Logos, it leads to soteriological motivation.[31] The humanity of Christ has the intention to

[25] *Ibid*, 240.

[26] Jan Veenhof, *Nature and Grace in Bavinck, A.M Wolters, transl., Revelatie en Inspiratie,* (Amsterdam, 1968, 345-368), Pro Rege, Vol 34, no. 4 (10-31), June 2006), 20.

[27] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 236.

[28] Jan Veenhof, *Nature and Grace in Bavinck*, 19.

[29] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 236-237.

[30] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 306.

[31] Hans Burger, *Being in Christ*, 93.

the salvation of the entire human being. Furtermore, in his works, Bavinck gives his reflection on the humanity of Christ connected to Logos:

> "The human nature in Christ is not coordinated with the Logos by a personality of its own but subordinated to the logos. The two natures, indeed, are and remain, one thing and (then) another. It is always the same person, the same subject, the same "I", who lives and thinks, speaks and acts through the divine and the human nature. The human nature is the tent in which the Son assumes residence; the garment that he himself prepared and put on; the form in which he has appeared to us; the instrument and organ that he has consecrated for himself and that, with divine wisdom, he employs for his office and work."[32]

Consistently, Bavinck maintains the single person of Christ who owns two natures. But here he expresses the superiority of Logos. In the other word, the essence of Christ is Logos but the cover and appearance is humanity. Certainly, it implies to Christ that he may experience the consequences of sins. "*Christ's human nature is united with the person of the Son, the Son does not just become a person in and through human nature, for he was that from eternity*."[33] In order to grasp this knowledge, a biological metaphor is used by saying, the deity of the Son uses human organ to reach sinful world,[34] make the salvation possible, and leads human being back to the Creator. In conclusion, Christ is invisible as true God and visible as true man, God who become human and human who exalted to God.[35] Bavink expresses the dual nature of Christ in the reality human academic word. He shifts the mystery of Christ into sinful words that merit the literation of human being. Christ is the representation of two natures in a single person, a very mystery ever of incarnation in which only happen once and will not be repeated.

Ellen White

Ellen White is the central figure in Adventism. She is considered as the prominent contributor to Adventist doctrines since she discusses large range of Christian beliefs.[36] As she was born in United States, her thought was shaped by American culture combined with Adventist tradition in which leads to Adventist American tradition. Furthermore, she is known as a Christocentric figure due she offers wide perspective to the doctrine of Christology.

In her work, White insist that Christ is the imitation of God, but in mystery sense, since she argues that Christ is the same God as the Father.[37] It implies to the divine

[32] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 307.
[33] *Ibid*, 306-307.
[34] *Ibid*, 307.
[35] Donald G. Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord*, (Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 56.
[36] The nature of Ellen's writing has been placed massively in debate. The fluctuation among Adventist scholars, setting of local church, influence of cultural context participate in the dissenting point on how her account should be reflected. Indeed, General Conference of Seventh Day Adventist church affirms her works divinely inspired, truly Christ-center and bible-based. See, the official website of Adventist church world headquarter, https://www.adventist.org/articles/statement-of-confidence-in-the-writings-of-ellen-g-white/, also Michael W. Champbell, *Why Ellen White?* (Lake Union Herald, 6-7, October 2003) and Alberto R. Timm, 'Inspiration of Ellen G. White' (*Perspective Digest*, vol.15, issue.3, article.8, 2010).
[37] Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, 8.

nature of God due the Father only belongs a single nature, his deity. In the other word, White claims the divine nature of Christ exists within him as well as to the Father. In order to know God, the Father, Christ offers help as a mediator to reach a comprehensive knowledge about God (John 1:18, Matt 11:27). However, this idea leads to a conclusion that identifying God only possible through a mediator, Christ. His works during his incarnation period in the earth; love, mercy, and pity, express the heavenly nature.[38] But his divine attribute does not mean that he was absent in human nature. White says that the Son, Christ, became human being.[39] However, it is unclear, because being a human or earth appearance or man in essence need more clarification. Unfortunately, she does not share more insight on this. Being human in appearance and essence, or in both, however, have significant differences. Manhood appearance, but consist of divine nature have consequence to the redemption work, as he did not experience the suffering of human being. In the other side, if the sinful nature of man exists within Christ, he will not able to redeem sins. Both options remain mystery.

In order to response the complex term of Christ, White explains the intention of Christ being human. The Father aims to show his character through his Son, suffer, became a man of sorrow, and died to save sinful world.[40] Here the redemption plan only possible by the Son who become human either in flesh, essence or outlook. Furthermore, the existence of Christ is strongly related to soteriology. Concerning the human nature of Christ, White discusses the pain in which experienced by the Son in the Cross.[41] Divine beings have no fear of suffer and pain because they cannot fell the consequences of sins, proves the heaven nature remains within Christ.

White employs John 1 in order to describes the deity of Christ, starting by assuming the eternal existence of Christ,[42] she argues that the Word, or Christ existed as a divine being, eternal Son of God, and in union with the eternal Father.[43] By saying this, White insists the pre-existence of Christ, that goes through dateless ages, and still in close fellowship with God without any missed.[44] A historical approach plays in her assessment, she equips the fact that since in the beginning Christ had exists together with the other divine beings, even more, she states the equality of the Son and Father. With this in mind, White tries to share two hypotheses, firstly, historically, Christ contains divinity, and secondly, Christ is not subordinate to God, the father. However, this kind of incarnation is not able to be measured by figures,[45] because Christ is from

[38] Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, 9.
[39] *Ibid*, 9.
[40] *Ibid*.
[41] *Ibid*, 10.
[42] Ellen White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 615.
[43] Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, Book One (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 247.
[44] Ellen White, *Evangelism*, 615.
[45] *Ibid*, 616.

eternity to eternity.[46] He goes throughout the space and time, in which these attributes are not possible for manhood. Here we see, the superiority which is addressed by White to Christ makes him unique, special and different. A hyperbola expression is consistently used by White to offers knowledge concerning the natures of Christ. Therefore, White clearly states that the life and natures of Christ was un-borrowed, original and underived.[47] In the other word, she proposes that the nature of Christ contains of divine mystery where the world reality and science could not literate it in human language. She occupies poetics language in order to describe the very nature of Christ, it is incomparable.

Furthermore, her analysis lays in the pre-redemption work, because before he was sent to the sinful world, the Son was equal to the Father and sovereign in the heaven, he was one in power and authority with the Father.[48] Through Christ, who posses dual natures, the attribute of God and human nature, the very unique person, the fallen race could be restored, and this is the only way to give salvation to sinful world.[49] In this way, Christ could work on behalf of man and expresses the love initiative of his Father, performs the heaven environment to the earth. But his human appearance does not degrade his equality with the Father or his divinity power, because Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. From all eternity, he was God, equal with God, and cannot be changed and repeated by another person.

However, as Christ was equal with the Father before incarnation, the main tension is in his staying with human appearance during the redemption work. Concerning this issue, White states:

"How wide is the contrast between the divinity of Christ and the helpless infant in Bethlehem's manger! How can we span the distance between the mighty God and a helpless child? And yet the Creator of worlds, He in whom was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was manifest in the helpless babe in the manger. Far higher than any of the angels, equal with the Father in dignity and glory and yet wearing the garb of humanity! Divinity and humanity were mysteriously combined, and man and God became one."[50]

The significant event was given to us in the Bethlehem where the Son who was equal to the Father came to a very contemptible place. This story shares a distance between the helpless infant and divinity nature, even far higher than angels. But White

[46] Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. IX (Mountain View, Cal.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1909), 220.

[47] Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, Book One (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, l958), 296.

[48] Ellen White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Cal.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1888), 495.

[49] Ellen White, "Imperative Necessity of Searching for Truth," *Review and Herald*, LXIX (November 8, 1892), 690.

[50] Ellen White, "Child Life of Jesus," *The Signs of the Times*, (July 30, 1896), 5.

insists that it is the mystery of Creator. Certainly, the poor child was the Son in which combined with complexity, and by saying this, her argument is, the divine nature is still attached to the baby. Therefore, the mighty God, yet the helpless child, often suffer by hungry and weary, in which White use to formulate in a term '*a divinity clothed with humanity*'.[51] With this in mind, White aims to use simple metaphor and expect could give knowledge concerning this mystery. The essence of Christ, however, is divine being, while his appearance is humanity. By saying this, the attributes of divinity are still attached to Christ, he could experience the consequences of sins but far to commit with sins since the deity causes him to ignore any action against the Ruler.

The role of his divine power leads to another puzzle, if he used his heaven power during the incarnation period, he may not experience any temptations and difficulties. Here arguing dual natures of Christ being complicated. Speaking the tribulations he experienced, Christ overcome in human nature, but relying upon God for power.[52] He never used the special power for his sake, rather, remains as a man who entirely dependent on his Father. It seems that Christ had options to response temptations surround him, and proves the existence of his dual natures. Even more, in her work, White states on how Christ consistently in cooperating with with his Father, he never works independently, but through faith and pray he performed miracles.[53] The intervention of other person of Trinity was running to Christ due the initiative to sent the Son was came by the Father. His independency does not make him exclusive, superior or inferior to God. But still, during the incarnation, he was equal to God, but openly for discussion and interaction in order to save the sinful world and maintaining his sinless as the sacrifice.

A crucial dialogue emerges after the resurrection. The existence of human being in which isolated the divine person of Christ is unclear, specifically speaking, after the cross. But here White gives undoubted statement that humanity died, divinity did not die.[54] The crucifying in the cross led the human appearance sink and die, but the deity resurrect from the death. The deity did not back to heaven but stay together with the human body in the tomb, the human appearance of Christ was still a combination of God-man, there was no any separation of natures during the sleep or death of Christ.[55] With this in mind, it proves the duality of Christ, because his deity still exists while the sinful body death. The death of Christ provides a great evidence concerning the tension.

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[51] Ellen White, "God Manifest in the Flesh," *The Signs of the Times* (April 26, 1905), 8.

[52] Ellen White, "After the Crucifixion," *The Youth's Instructor*, XLIX (April 25, 1901), 130.

[53] Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, Cal.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898), 536.

[54] Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, Book One (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, l958), 301.

[55] Ellen White, *The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. III (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1878), 203, 204.

The human body, who was dead, and the divine nature in which eternal and resurrect from the grave.

In conclusion, White interest to describe the natures of Christ periodically. She makes distinction in the pre-redemption work, during the incarnation, and after the death or resurrection. In this way, she maintains the divine nature in Christ, before the cross, and the moment he was sent by the Father to saved the sinful man, still Christ attributes the deity, even more saying, equal with God. During his work in the earth, such divine attribute still attached in his human appearance, continue in the cross when he was being crucified and until the resurrection. As the divinity of Christ is eternal, it is never separated from him even when he was isolated by human body. Christ, who was in redemption ministry, contains of two natures.

Conversation

Bavinck and White come with different motivation in discussing the natures of Christ. Social, politics, arts and ecclesiology have significant effect on how Bavinck expressed his thought, further, as he was the extension of Abraham Kuyper, his structure of thinking, however, influenced by his successor. It is not proved if the tension behind Bavinck has role over his thinking, but he shared positive contributions to Dutch Reformed tradition. In the other side, White had no pressure to demonstrate her knowledge and could consider more objective in giving assessment and sharing notions.

Bavinck builds his arguments by organizing the topic systematically. He starts with revelation and ends to eschatology. This systematic approach is known as crescendo in music term, in which begin with a narrow theme and developed broader until reach its climax, salvation. The work of Christ, in his mind, discussed after the fall of human being and before the covenant grace. Here we see the art of Bavinck on how he goes gradually to gain clear knowledge. In the other side, White has different approach. She goes to Christology historically and periodically. She splits the even of before, during and after redemption. She insists that the divinity of Christ exist before the plan of salvation and still remain along his ministry in the earth, and even more, still remain after the resurrection. But they are agree concerning the initiator of cross event. Bavinck says that Father's love applied by sending his Son for a great purpose.[56] Furthermore, White argues that Christ depends to his Father, who belongs the initiative for save the sinful world.[57] Both thinkers, argue that the Father is one who has initiative to saved the sinful world, it was God's intention to send his beloved Son. With this in mind, love belongs to the Father, and willingness and sacrifice belong to Christ. Attributes of submission and obedience are attached to Christ.

Bavinck, however, has pessimistic attitude while White is more confidence. In his mind, Bavinck doubts any efforts of human being to discover God's knowledge. There is a wide gap exist between divinity and humanity. He demonstrates the un-equal position,

[56] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 233.
[57] White, *The Desire of Ages*, 536.

superiority and inferiority, creator and creature, in which has no meeting point.[58] All errors will come to every arguments of God's mystery. However, the possibility exists, to give sufficient reasons of human belief to Christ, on how he deals with two natures. White comes with confidence, explaining the natures of Christ doubtless. Her expectation is, clarification on the dual natures of Christ is sufficient for human being to gain the general knowledge of the plan of salvation, because White consistently relates the natures of Christ to soteriology. Although Bavinck did the same investigation, but White goes strictly and reliance.

Moreover, they are agree concerning the mediatorship of Christ. The role of Christ as a mediator is dominantly connected to the event of his death, resurrection and ascension.[59] While Bavinck motivated by secular emperor, White insists that through Christ the attributes of God will be reliable for man. For Bavinck, worldly kingdom is the best metaphor in order to describe the urgency of a mediator,[60] even more, he argues, that mediatorship is common in religious community.[61] Reaching human being is possibly only by a person who consist more than a single nature, as a king usually consider as a god's descendant, Christ who belongs dual nature open the opportunity to send God's intention toward sinful man. Even more, Bavinck adds and gives more attention the capacity of its soteriology effect in which encompasses all nations rather than the live, death and resurrection.[62] Ellen demonstrates in extreme way by saying that the only way to reach comprehensive knowledge of the Father is only by the incarnation of his Son, in which the heavenly nature could be shared to human being.[63] In conclusion, incarnation or mediator is possible only by a special being, divine being would not able to reach sinful world, in the other side, human being has no capacity to gain heaven mystery. Therefore, both Bavinck and White, maintain the dual natures of Christ by suggesting explanation through mediatorship in humanity sense to help sinners gain a complete notion on this.

However, the way they express the dual natures is quite different. Here Bavinck is more clear that White. Undoubtedly, he claims that Christ is a single person who contains two natures,[64] and against the separation of two contrast attributes of Christ.[65] White maintains the divine nature of Christ by arguing the equality of the Son and Father,[66] furthermore, the his deity is inherent and eternal,[67] exist before the creation and still remain until the salvation project in the future, it is a nature which is limitless

[58] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics,* 308.

[59] Robert Owusu Agyarko, *God's Unique Priest (Nyamesofopreko): Christology in the Akan Context*, Ph.D dissertation of University of the Western Cape, November 2009, 200.

[60] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 242.

[61] *Ibid*, 233.

[62] *Ibid*, 240.

[63] White, *Steps to Christ*, 9

[64] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 306.

[65] *Ibid*, 237.

[66] White, *Evangelism*, 616.

[67] White, *Testimonies for the Church*, 220.

and endless. Certainly, Bavinck's thought has been influenced by reformed tradition environment in which more or less play any role to his thinking. But the way he identifies the natures of Christ is more down and simple for human thought while White strongly maintains the equality of Christ and the Father. These two options, however, still benefits believers in order to gain knowledge of Christ's natures. Further explanation offered by them by the picture of John chapter 1.

The word Logos is *dabar* in Old Testament, brings the connotation of Creator, Revelator, a divine attribute.[68] It existed from the beginning and created all things, known as God. Further, Logos was with God, one nature, but different person.[69] However, Bavinck agrees the same nature of God and Christ, three persons with single nature, divinity. Logos, the Word, is superior than the human flesh itself. But as the Logos was covered and isolated by human appearance, it owns sin consequences. This idea against the transformation of Christ to sinful man, rather, shares a knowledge that the eternal Logos was united with human nature.[70] White maintains the same concept as well as Bavinck concerning the eternal nature of Christ, exists as a divine being in before the world created, and equal with the Fathers.[71] Consequently, the Logos contains of unique nature and impossible to be measured and borrowed by other kind of incarnation.[72] Therefore, as they share the same concept to the Logos, they agree the divine nature of Christ as it was embedded since the beginning, and was covered by human body to make the work of medioatorship running well according to the Father's intention.

4. Conclusion

Both Bavinck and White agree that the dual natures of Christ relate to the intention of mediatorship. Christ is equal with the Father and Spirit. Clearly saying, they confidence to say Christ is a single person with two natures; Bavinck insists the distinction of nature and person while Ellen express this account with the term of a person clothed by divine power. Bavinck is clear by saying that Christ is a single person with two natures, while White persistently maintains the equality of Christ with the Father and Spirit. Further, the soteriology and atonement have direct connection to the natures of Christ. The doubtness of his nature consequences the chaos of the salvation of human being and redemption event in the cross has no significance to sins. In order to convince the divinity of Christ, they equip the term of Logos to demonstrate how a divine being isolated and covered by human flesh. The disagreement is, however, does not relate to the nature itself, but on how they reflect and express it. Bavinck approach the nature of

[68] Soek-Il Yoon, *The Meaning of Logos in John 1:1-8*, Master Thesis in Liberty Baptist Theological University (Virginia: Lynchburg, July 2008), 93.

[69] *Ibid*, 94.

[70] Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 306-307.

[71] White, *Evangelism*, 615.

[72] Ellen White, *Selected Messages*, Book One (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, l958), 296.

Christ in systematic and academic way where White displays periodically and historically.

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