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# **Lifting up to Himself**

**John Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity and Its Implications  
for the Lord's Supper and Worship**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Theology & Religion,  
Durham University

2015

**Hyuksang Kwon**

## **Lifting up to Himself**

### **John Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity and Its Implications for the Lord's Supper and Worship**

#### **Abstract**

This study probes the eucharistic implications of the doctrine of the Trinity in the theology of John Calvin (1509-1564). Calvin scholarship has established that the doctrine of the Trinity is the key paradigm of divine-human relationship in Calvin's theology. Drawing upon this, this study explores how the doctrine affects Calvin's concept of divine-human interplay in worship and the Lord's Supper, and how it has liturgical implications for both disciplines. After a reflection on the connection between the doctrine of the Trinity and worship and the sacraments in Calvin's thought, this thesis shows that the doctrine of the Trinity is an underpinning paradigm for Calvin's distinctive understanding of the Lord's Supper as a *heavenly communion*, a concept by which a personal, experiential, and dynamic, nature of eucharistic communion is highlighted. It also provides surveys of the meaning of the eucharistic heaven, and of the actual mode of the heavenly communion in the ministry of the church, along with a consideration of how this Trinitarian doctrine of the Lord's Supper distinguishes Calvin's liturgical thought and practice from those of other reformers. From these surveys it is concluded that the doctrine of the Trinity is the essence of Calvin's theology and practice of the eucharist.

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## **Declaration**

This thesis is based on research solely undertaken by the author. No part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree at Durham University or at any other university.

## **Statement of Copyright**

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No quotation from it should be published without the prior written consent and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

## INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the eucharistic implications of John Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, which was originally prompted by a rather anachronistic concern. Modern scholarship emphasizes that Christian worship is - or should be - a Trinitarian event. Just as the object of our worship is God the Trinity, according to modern scholarship, the very nature and paradigm of our worship should be Trinitarian. This means that, our worship of God the Father is through the on-going presence and agency of the Son and the Holy Spirit. In worship there is Christ's own worship to the Father, and we are empowered to worship God by partaking of this worship by the gift of the Spirit. In other words, we worship God, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> This means that our worship, while it requires human acts of obedience and response, is fundamentally God's own work of worshipping Himself. This thesis explores whether and to what extent this essential correlation between the Trinity and worship is recognized and operating in the thought of Calvin.

According to modern scholarship, as shall be seen below, the doctrine of the Trinity is particularly relevant for the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. That we worship God *in the person of Christ* implies that worship is an ontological event, in which our whole being is involved. In this sense the Christian sacraments in which we commune with God in a fully embodied way, are a kind of epitome of our worship of God. Upon this reflection, this thesis was motivated to look into the Trinitarian nature and paradigm in Calvin's theology and practice of the Lord's Supper.

While Peter Leithart complains that reformed treatments of the Lord's Supper "do little more than rehash traditional debates about...the real presence,"<sup>2</sup> recent scholarship has been able to explore Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper in light of various themes other than Christ's real presence. For example, scholars have suggested the Lord's Supper is a place or locus of our union with Christ or participation in Him, as

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<sup>1</sup> The Trinitarian grammar of worship can be summed up in T. F. Torrance's following definition: "In our worship, the Holy Spirit comes forth from God, uniting us to the response and obedience and faith and prayer of Jesus, and returns to God, raising us up in Jesus to participate in the worship of heaven and in the eternal communion of the Holy Trinity." *Theology in Reconstruction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 250, quoted from John D. Witvliet, "Prism of Glory: Trinitarian Worship and Liturgical Piety in the Reformed Tradition," in *Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Pr, 2008), 279. Witvliet explains that our worship is based on the "ad(to)-per(through)-in(in)" pattern, in the sense that it is offered *to* the Father, the origin and object of worship, *through* the Son, the content, and *in* the Holy Spirit, the guide and power. Witvliet, "Prism of Glory," 270. Our worship, so to speak, is a reflection of the scriptural notion that "through Christ we...have access in one Spirit to the Father." (Ephesians 2:18)

<sup>2</sup> Peter J. Leithart, "Embracing Ritual: Sacraments as Rites," *Calvin Theological Journal* 40, no. 1 (Apr 2005): 6.

well as of the presence of Christ. However, since, for Calvin, our union with Christ is a foundational and enduring fact for all Christians in every context, many studies that simply suggest the Lord's Supper as a place for such a union have failed to reveal the characteristic value of the Lord's Supper as a liturgical act in Calvin's thought.

In fact, as this thesis will argue, Calvin conceived of the Lord's Supper primarily as a place of our active communion or mutual fellowship with God, as well as of the union, in which God really gives Himself to us in Christ and we receive him with a grateful response. This communion has an immediate and experiential nature, given Calvin's understanding that this is a *heavenly event*, for which we are *lifted up* to the Father in heaven which transcends our earthly realm. While we cannot say that this communion is exclusive to the public celebration of the Lord's Supper, it is true that it is intensively or ideally brought forth and experienced in the sacrament. And this notion of the eucharistic communion, as shall be seen below, is a Trinitarian concept, because it is grounded on our participation in Christ's own communion with the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, the aim of this thesis will be to articulate this view of the communion of the Lord's Supper in terms of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity. In other words, this study is an attempt to do justice to the characteristic value of the eucharistic celebration in Calvin's theology, through the lens of the doctrine of the Trinity.

This thesis also aims to trace the implications of this Trinitarian doctrine of the Lord's Supper. When Calvin speaks of the Lord's Supper as a heavenly event, his intention is not so much to make the sacrament an abstract event, as to argue that in our celebration of the sacrament we *actually*, though not straightforwardly, commune with the whole person of Christ in heaven, and experience the heavenly reality of communion, to which we are lifted up. This thesis explores the theological ground and specific mode of this experience in light of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, especially of his concept of the coordinated operation of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Calvin believes that the doctrine of the Trinity is fundamentally a practical doctrine, which shapes our worshipping experience and piety. This project aims to examine how and in what sense this doctrine is suggestive for the practice of worship and the sacraments.

While it deals with theological issues, this thesis is also a historical study, particularly as Calvin's eucharistic thought and practice have roots in the 16th century debates on the Lord's Supper and in pastoral circumstances which he experienced during his ministerial career in Geneva and Strasbourg. This thesis attempts to show that

Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper was not simply a *via media* between the doctrines of Luther and Zwingli, but was sufficiently a distinctive one in itself, which was established upon his distinctive doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>3</sup>

In order to grasp Calvin's thought on worship clearly, we need all three levels of analysis: studies of any particular element of worship (e.g. preaching, common prayer, baptism, etc.), studies of liturgy as a whole, and studies of worship broadly defined.<sup>4</sup> While being neither an exhaustive nor a decisive study, this study can be said to embrace all these three levels, in that it deals with how the doctrine of the Trinity penetrates Calvin's thinking of worship in general and his liturgical texts proper, with an emphasis on how it works on the specific element of worship, the Lord's Supper.

The doctrine of the Trinity in this thesis does not refer to the traditional Trinitarian formula of one *ousia* and three *hypostases*. Nor is it related to the social Trinitarianism which has been advanced in modern times. In this thesis, the doctrine of the Trinity refers to a doctrine that forms a paradigm of the divine-human relationship. In chapter 1, the definition and characteristics of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity will be suggested. In dialogue with some former studies that suggest the doctrine of the Trinity as a paradigm for Calvin's understanding of divine-human relationship, this chapter affirms that all divine-human relationship is made possible through God's Trinitarian economy, which makes us participate in the sonship of Christ in the power of the Spirit, and further highlights that the doctrine of the Trinity is the grammar for our *dynamic* communion with God in Calvin's theology, since it enables our immediate and intense experience of this relationship. According to Calvin, this chapter shows, the Holy Spirit is the power which draws humanity to a dynamic experience of heavenly communion with the Son and the Father, calling forth our grateful response to this experience. This chapter is particularly significant because the following chapters will examine how the doctrine of the Trinity as defined here affects and shapes Calvin's doctrine and liturgy of the Lord's Supper, and will explore possible practical implications of it.

Chapter 2 provides a chronological study which shows the connection between

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<sup>3</sup> This thesis will be dealing with the connections between Trinity, eucharist, and liturgy in John Calvin. For recent treatments looking more specifically at Calvin, Zwingli, Karlstadt, Luther and the eucharistic debates of the sixteenth century, see: Amy Nelson Burnett, *Karlstadt and the Origins of the Eucharistic Controversy: A Study in the Circulation of Ideas. Oxford Studies in Historical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Christopher Elwood, *The Body Broken: The Calvinist Doctrine of the Eucharist and the Symbolization of Power in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Lee Palmer Wandel (ed), *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> John D. Witvliet, "Image and Themes in John Calvin's Theology of Liturgy," in *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows into Christian Practice* (Baker Academic, 2003), 128, n.2.

the doctrine of Trinity and the sacraments in Calvin's thought. It first shows that the early development of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity became directly reflected in his exposition of the sacraments. As Calvin came to speak of the Holy Spirit as the bond between God and humanity in his doctrine of the Trinity, for example, he came to stress the *actuality* of our communion with the heavenly body and blood of Christ in the sacrament. It also reveals that even after his doctrine of the Trinity reached its mature form, Calvin consistently worked out the implication of the doctrine for his exposition of the sacraments; based on his Trinitarian understanding of Christ's heavenly residence and of the Holy Spirit as the bond, Calvin came to speak of the Lord's Supper essentially as our being drawn to heaven and to heavenly communion, through the bond of the Spirit. This means that Calvin now came to suggest heaven, rather than the earth, as the ultimate arena of our communion in the Supper. On the whole, this chapter shows that Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity makes the Lord's Supper fit into the paradigm of Trinitarian communion presented in chapter 1.

Chapter 3 examines how Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, which was embedded in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, distinguishes his doctrine of the sacrament from those of Luther and Zwingli. It first shows that unlike Luther and Zwingli, both of whom emphasize either God's presence (immanence) or absence (transcendence) in the Supper, Calvin holds fast to both the presence and absence of Christ with regard to the Lord's Supper, implying that while Christ is transcendent from the eucharistic materials of bread and wine, He is present with the *participants*. This means that the Lord's Supper is, for Calvin, chiefly personal, Trinitarian, communion between God and humanity, and this understanding differentiated Calvin's position from the conventional doctrines which had been preoccupied with the issue of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. This chapter also probes how Calvin's doctrine of Trinity, especially his distinctive understanding of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit's binding us to the whole Christ, enabled him to steer clear of the Zwinglian spiritualism and the Lutheran materialism. As a conclusion it is suggested that the concepts that have Trinitarian connotations form the core essence of Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, by looking into his *Consensus Tigurinus* (1549).

Chapter 4 examines how Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity filtered through into his liturgical thought and especially into the liturgy of the Lord's Supper. It first considers Calvin's doctrine of prayer, which he conceived of as the archetype of worship, suggesting that prayer is, for Calvin, the epitome of our Trinitarian communion

with God. Then, it shows that Calvin envisaged the service of worship as a reflection of this prayer pattern of communion, by observing both Calvin's liturgical text and his understanding behind it. This survey suggests that the pattern of Trinitarian communion is most adequately realized in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, in which there is an active response from humans towards God's initiating, Trinitarian economy. From this we can recognize the meaning of the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the whole picture of worship.

Chapter 5 offers a survey of various eucharistic liturgies of the Reformation, in order to propose the Trinitarian paradigm and quality as a distinctive mark of Calvin's eucharistic liturgy. After examining why the role of the Holy Spirit, which is pivotal in Calvin's doctrine of Lord's Supper, is only implicit in his eucharistic liturgy, this chapter suggests that the overall pattern of Calvin's liturgy, when compared to that of other Reformation liturgies, reveals that Calvin's liturgy is a reflection of his own Trinitarian doctrine of the Lord's Supper. A survey of the eucharistic liturgies of Calvin's predecessors and contemporaries reveals that unlike Calvin's liturgy, most of those liturgies lack the participatory quality and does not set forth the Trinitarian pattern of communion. A study of the later Protestant liturgies after Calvin suggests that the Trinitarian pattern and quality was a feature of the liturgy of Calvin and his successors.

The last part of this thesis considers the liturgical implications of this Trinitarian understanding of the Lord's Supper. This part explores what we can further say regarding the Lord's Supper on the foundation of its Trinitarian paradigm, even when it does not directly draw upon Calvin's own statement. Chapter 6 discusses how the notion that we communicate with the humanity of Christ through the pneumatological bond, if Calvin does not mean it to be a mere abstract concept, can be realized in the actual practice of the Lord's Supper, according to Calvin. Calvin's point was that while Christ's body and blood is absent on this earth, Christ's body and blood is *somehow substantially*, though not straightforwardly, present and communicated to believers by the bond of the Holy Spirit. It is rather Christ's being in heaven that enables our pneumatological communion with the body of Christ, which Calvin often dubs as "enigmatic" communion. The chapter focuses on how the ministerial acts of a human minister and congregation can be the medium for embodying this substantial communication with the body of Christ, in both preaching and the sacraments.

Chapter 7 probes Calvin's concept of the eucharistic ascent into heavenly communion. First it explores Calvin's notion of eucharistic heaven, showing that this

heaven is not merely space but a different order of reality. This implies that, according to Calvin, in the Lord's Supper believers enter into a kind of celestial reality. Second it examines the implications of Calvin's concept of the Holy Spirit as the bond for our understanding of the sacrament. While Calvin barely broached the concept of the Lord's Supper as the New Jerusalem, or as the final, eschatological banquet, this chapter suggests that if we apply the notion of the Holy Spirit as the bond horizontally, or apply the notion to time, the celebration of the Supper can potentially be understood as the temporal fulfillment of the eschatological banquet. Lastly it will explore what the nature of the Supper could become, in the case it is the realization of the eschatological day. This chapter goes beyond what Calvin himself said, trying to draw out conclusions from his work that he himself did not reach.

The main sources used for this thesis are Calvin's doctrinal writings that deal with the Trinity and sacraments, e.g. the *Institutes*, Catechisms, and ecclesiastical treatises. While it mostly refers to the final 1559 edition,<sup>5</sup> the 1536 and 1539 editions of the *Institutes* are of particular importance for this study, as it looks into the early development of Calvin's doctrines of the Trinity and sacraments, in particular in chapter 2. Since the standard English translation is unavailable for some parts of the 1539 edition, this thesis uses Elsie McKee's English translation of the 1541 edition of the *Institutes*,<sup>6</sup> which is the French translation of the 1539 original, for such parts. Among other ecclesiastical documents, it makes special use of the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549 in chapter 3, for understanding the core essentials of Calvin's doctrine, and looks into a rarely studied document, the *Summary of Doctrine concerning the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament*, for the practical ramifications of Calvin's Trinitarian doctrine of the Supper, in chapter 6.<sup>7</sup>

Since it often discusses the Lord's Supper as a part of the whole of a worship service,<sup>8</sup> this thesis also refers to Calvin's scriptural commentaries,<sup>9</sup> as well as his

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<sup>5</sup> *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeil and trans. Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols., Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960).

<sup>6</sup> *Institutes of the Christian Religion: The First English Version of the 1541 French Edition*, trans. Elsie Anne McKee (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), cited by page number. For the 1536 edition, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1536 Edition*, trans. and ann. by Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), cited by chapter and section.

<sup>7</sup> The texts for the theological documents other than the *Institutes* are mostly from Jean Calvin, *Theological Treatises*, The Library of Christian Classics, v. 22 (London: SCM Press, 1954) and *Tracts and Treatises*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958). Hereafter cited as *Theological Treatises* and *Tracts and Treatises* respectively.

<sup>8</sup> While Calvin deals with the sacraments as a unique or discrete topic in his *Institutes*, as nearly every catechism or theological system of the day did, Calvin writes about the worship service as a whole in his

sermons (especially on Ephesians),<sup>10</sup> and his liturgies (Geneva of 1542 and Strasbourg of 1545).<sup>11</sup> Since there is no available English translation for the 1540 version of Calvin's commentary on Romans, which is also important for understanding Calvin's early thought in chapter 2, I use the original Latin text in T.H.L Parker's recent critical edition of Calvin's commentary on Romans.<sup>12</sup>

This is a study only of *Calvin's* thought of the Trinity and sacramental worship, and does not look in any depth at the doctrines and practices of other early modern Reformed theologians. In other words, this is a thesis about Calvin, not about Calvinism. It would be worthwhile in future studies to explore how the Trinitarian quality of worship in Calvin's thought can be suggestive for modern understanding of worship in the Calvinist circle, which has often reduced worship to a didactic and cognitive event, by losing sight of the nature of worship as an active personal communion with God. It would also be meaningful to examine how Calvin's thinking as presented in this thesis can fit into the modern understanding of the Trinitarian nature of worship and the sacraments. Given that the Trinitarian nature and implications of worship have widely been recognized by most strands of Christian churches, if we can prove that the Calvinist tradition and the other churches share the Trinitarian ground and grammar of worship, this could be a cornerstone for further ecumenical dialogue and unity.

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commentaries, dealing with prayers, preaching, baptism, and the Lord's Supper as part of the whole scheme of worship. Witvliet, "Image and Themes in John Calvin's Theology of Liturgy," 129, n.4.

<sup>9</sup> *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries - A New Translation - 12 Volumes*, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. A. W. Morrison (Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972). And *Calvin's Commentaries, Old Testament Set - 30 Volumes*. (Eerdmans, 1950). Hereafter references from these volumes will be acknowledged in the footnotes in conventional format: (*Comm.* Romans 1:8.).

<sup>10</sup> *Sermons on The Epistle to the Ephesians* (London: Banner of Truth, 1974). Hereafter referred to as *Sermons on Ephesians*.

<sup>11</sup> Bard Thompson, ed., *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Augsburg Fortress, 1959), 185-224.

<sup>12</sup> *Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos. Series II. Opera exegetica*, ed. D. C. Parker and T. H. L. Parker, 1 edition (Librairie Droz, 1999).

## Context and Literature Review

Christian worship, as mentioned, is basically a Trinitarian event, not because God is referred to as Father, Son, and Spirit in a prayer or hymn of worship, but because it is the ritual celebration of the economy of the Triune God, and thus the purpose of it is to “glorify the God of the *oikonomia*, the very God who is revealed through Christ and the Spirit.”<sup>13</sup> Symbols, structures, and rhythms of worship should disclose the basic pattern of Christian faith: everything comes from the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit, and everything returns to the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. Whilst the theology of worship in general is bound up with the doctrine of the Trinity, the interplay between the Trinity and the sacraments is of particular importance because, to use Gordon Smith’s phrase, the doctrine of the Trinity is something that we cannot understand “unless and until it is embodied.”<sup>14</sup> Put another way, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper are given to worshippers so that the Trinitarian character of God might be formed in them.<sup>15</sup>

Though Calvin does not use the same language as this, it is obvious that Calvin’s theology of the eucharist is in a close relationship with his doctrine of the Trinity, given the observation that the eucharistic themes of “real presence, spiritual nourishment, union with Christ, and actual transfer of life-giving power from the flesh of Christ to believers”<sup>16</sup> are at the same time themes of the Trinitarian discourse. So far, however, the relationship between the two doctrines in his theology has hardly been thoroughly examined.<sup>17</sup>

As mentioned in the beginning, recent scholarship on Calvin’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper tends to explain it in light of his broader theological themes. Against those who deemed Calvin’s Lord’s Supper doctrine as “an uncongenial foreign

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<sup>13</sup> Catherine M. Lacugna, “Trinity and Liturgy,” in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, ed. Peter E. Fink (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1990), 1293-96

<sup>14</sup> Gordon T. Smith, “The Sacraments and the Embodiment of Our Trinitarian Faith,” in *Trinitarian Theology for the Church* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2009), 185.

<sup>15</sup> Smith, “The Sacraments and the Embodiment,” 185.

<sup>16</sup> Philip Walker Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin’s Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship* (OUP USA, 1995), 118.

<sup>17</sup> The recent survey of previous scholarship on Calvin’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper can be found in Sue A. Rozeboom, *The Provenance of John Calvin’s emphasis on the Role of the Holy Spirit regarding the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper* (PhD dissertation, University of Notre Dame, August 2010), 154-74. However, most of the works presented here do not actively engage with the study of Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity.

element”<sup>18</sup> in his theology, for example, recent scholarship has argued that his doctrine was a “crucial complement to his understanding of *union with Christ*,” which is in the center of Calvin's whole theological system.<sup>19</sup> Lee Palmer Wandel argues that for Calvin the Lord’s Supper is “not ‘external’ - a ceremony to be performed regularly - nor even ‘worship’ in the sense that other evangelicals...used: a mode of honoring God.”<sup>20</sup> For Calvin, according to Wandel, the Supper is a means of binding us to Christ until He “is made completely one with us and we with him.”<sup>21</sup>

While the claim that *unio cum Christo* is a central dogma of Calvin’s theology may require further discussion, there is no doubt that the union is the chief theme of Calvin’s eucharistic discourse and that he speaks of the sacrament as the place of the union.<sup>22</sup> However, this emphasis on the connection between the union and the Lord’s Supper cannot shed a full light on the significance and meaning of the public celebration of the eucharist as a liturgical act, especially because all believers are already united to Christ, for Calvin, and this union is thus rather a comprehensive event, which can and should be realized across the entire field of Christian life, that is, even out of the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. When we speak only of the Supper as a place for union, therefore, such a claim can hardly be relevant for our ritual *performing* or *doing* of the sacrament, which is what Christ originally commanded us at the Last Supper, and does little to affect the Calvinist tendency to consider the sacrament superfluous to the word or preaching.<sup>23</sup>

As shall be seen in the following chapters, Calvin highlights the character of Lord’s Supper as a *communion* with God, as well as a union with Christ, a concept by which the active character of the sacrament can be highlighted. In the Supper, Calvin

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<sup>18</sup> Charles Hodge, "Doctrine of the Reformed Church on the Lord's Supper," review of John Williamson Nevin, *The Mystical Presence: A Vindication of the Reformed or Calvinistic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, *Princeton Review* 20 (April 1848): 251, quoted from Ralph Cunnington, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper: A Blot upon His Labors as a Public Instructor?," *Westminster Theological Journal* 73, no. 2 (September 1, 2011): 215.

<sup>19</sup> Ralph Cunnington, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," 236. In jettisoning Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, according to Cunnington, "many Reformed churches have concurrently neglected or rejected the centrality of union with Christ." Cunnington, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," 235.

<sup>20</sup> Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 171.

<sup>21</sup> Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation*, 171.

<sup>22</sup> "We all confess...that, in receiving the sacrament in faith..., we are truly made partakers of the real substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ." Short treatise on the Lord's Supper, in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster Pr, 1954), 164-166.

<sup>23</sup> Canlis admits that in the reformed tradition the sacraments are often "observed merely out of obedience." Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 248.

believes, there is a mutual act of God's self-giving and our receiving and responding. He highlights that in the sacrament we are drawn to Christ in heaven and join the heavenly communion. While we cannot make a clear-cut distinction between the notions of union and communion, we can say that in Calvin's thought the communion is roughly understood as a fruit of the union or as the mode of the union. Therefore, it can be said that in the Supper, our union with Christ is *dynamically experienced* in the mode of communion through our concentrated corporate actions.

This thesis aims to articulate this eucharistic communion in terms of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, which, as shall be seen, is the key grammar and ground for this communion. It is upon this doctrine, this thesis will show, that the meaning of our embodied action and experience in this eucharistic communion is duly highlighted. In light of this doctrine, in other words, the ritual value of the sacrament can be better revealed.

**Previous Scholarship on the Trinity and Worship:** Though not an exclusive Calvin study, James B. Torrance's monumental work *Worship, Community, and the Triune God of Grace* sheds light on the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and worship from the Reformed perspective.<sup>24</sup> Regretting that the modern view of worship has become in practice unitarian, and has "no doctrine of the mediator or sole priesthood of Christ," has "no proper doctrine of the Holy Spirit,"<sup>25</sup> Torrance declares that worship is "our participation through the Spirit in the Son's communion with the Father, in his vicarious life of worship and intercession."<sup>26</sup> In worship, according to Torrance, God moves to humanity and *vice versa*, both in the person of Christ.<sup>27</sup> Here Torrance underscores that Christ's priesthood is not simply something completed, but is the sole ongoing basis for perpetual relationship to God in worship, and the sacraments are *post facto* signs of what has already happened in the work of Christ. While it does not do the

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<sup>24</sup> James B. Torrance, *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*, First Edition (IVP Academic, 2008). Torrance, in this work, insists on the centrality of the Trinitarian doctrine in theology and practice of worship, and stresses that worship is an event wherein people worship the Father through the Son in the Spirit and participate in the incarnate Son's communion with the Father through the Spirit.

<sup>25</sup> Torrance, *Worship*, 20.

<sup>26</sup> Torrance, *Worship*, 15. Also, Torrance says, it is "our response to our Father for all that He has done for us in Christ. It is our self-offering in body, mind, and spirit in response to the one true offering made for us in Christ, our response of gratitude (*eucharistia*) to God's grace (*charis*), our sharing by grace in the heavenly intercession of Christ."

<sup>27</sup> "Our response in faith and obedience is a response to the response already made for us by Christ to the Father's holy love, a response we are summoned to make in union with Christ." Torrance, *Worship*, 53-4.

same justice to the role of the Holy Spirit in worship as to that of Christ, this study by Torrance paved the way for this study of the Trinitarian quality of worship and the sacraments.

Fresh insights into the relationship between the doctrine of the Trinity and the sacraments in the Reformed perspective are suggested in Gordon Smith's short article.<sup>28</sup> According to Smith, the meaning of "three who are one" comes "not so much by critical reflection on the confession of the church," but is rather "embodied through the sacramental actions of the church,"<sup>29</sup> since in the sacraments worshippers are drawn to communion with the Father, through the two-fold offices of Christ and the Spirit.<sup>30</sup> Christ is the matter of the Lord's Supper, since the sacrament is the place where the Gospel, which has been embodied in the person of Christ, is "taken deeply into our bodies, as we eat and drink his body and blood."<sup>31</sup> In other words, the meaning of the tangible elements and actions of the Supper is safeguarded in the person of Christ. The Spirit's role is also crucial in the Supper, since the Spirit is the efficacy of the sacrament, who makes believers receive Christ so that they can be united to Him and have communion with God.<sup>32</sup> In practice, Smith notes, the celebration of the sacraments is the most effective way to accomplish clear catechetical instruction about the character and meaning of the Trinity, because these occasions are opportunities to signal the movement and work of God in our midst, rather than lectures or talks.

In his short article,<sup>33</sup> Peter Leithart borrows insights from the ecumenical circle for the Reformed discussion of the nature of the sacraments. Complaining that Reformed theology has almost left the sacraments as strange things that non-symbolic God has commanded *in spite of* who He is, Leithart introduces Karl Rahner's idea that just as the Son's relationship to the Father is defined through an expressed way in the incarnation and life of the Son, the relationship between the Triune God and human

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<sup>28</sup> Smith, "The Sacraments and the Embodiment." See footnote 13.

<sup>29</sup> Smith, "The Sacraments and the Embodiment," 1.

<sup>30</sup> Smith repeats the notion that "their Creator and the giver of all good gifts, who is revealed to them through the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Christ, and who by the Spirit." Smith, "The Sacraments and the Embodiment," 2.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, "The Sacraments and the Embodiment," 6.

<sup>32</sup> Smith, "The Sacraments and the Embodiment," 9. According to Smith, Calvin was well aware that God's grace is something found in Christ, being "appropriated through the ministry of the Spirit in the Sacraments." Smith, "The Sacraments and the Embodiment," 6.

<sup>33</sup> Peter J. Leithart, "'Framing' Sacramental Theology: Trinity and Symbol," *Westminster Theological Journal* 62, no. 1 (Spr 2000): 1-16.

beings must be expressed in a visible way, which is represented in the sacraments. Referring to Rahner, Leithart argues that since there “should be demonstrable consistency among various truths, in particular some consistency between the nature of God and how he makes himself known in the church,” there must be “some way to show the consistency of theology proper and sacramental theology in order to develop a Trinitarian theology of Christian symbols and rites.”<sup>34</sup> In other words, for Leithart, the sacraments are an inescapable expression of God’s triunity. Leithart believes that the view of Rahner is virtually applicable to the Reformed or Calvinist theology of the sacraments, which means that, even in the Reformed tradition, the sacraments and the sacramental life of the church should be understood in terms of the relationship of the Trinity.<sup>35</sup>

**Previous Scholarship on Calvin’s Trinitarian Understanding of Worship:** Dennis Ngien’s recent work shows that Torrance’s voice resonates in Calvin’s theology of worship.<sup>36</sup> Ngien says that Calvin’s Trinitarian understanding of worship incorporates the soteriological import of the vicarious humanity of Christ and the dynamic agency of the Spirit, who applies such an import to the present reality of worship. For Calvin, Ngien observes, believers must “enter into a saving relationship with him [God] in his incarnate Son, for it is only through reconciliation to God by the blood of Christ that they may have access to him,” in order to worship God aright. In other words, for Calvin, Christ is the one true worshipper, who through his representative humanity “gathers up all humanity in himself.”<sup>37</sup> Ngien also takes note of Calvin’s understanding of the Holy Spirit’s role in worship, which makes worshippers partake of Christ’s own act of worship. Though this study holds forth the possibility that Calvin’s theology could be a corrective to the Unitarian view of worship in the Reformed tradition, this is

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<sup>34</sup> Leithart, “Framing Sacramental Theology,” 5.

<sup>35</sup> Here Leithart states: “...it is only in and through symbols that knowledge of and fellowship with others can exist. Human beings are external to each other, and the doctrine of the Trinity implies that this differentiation is basic and will never be dissolved into an undifferentiated unity. Yet, the doctrine of the Trinity also implies that we are made for communion. Rahner’s argument suggests that the only way for a human to communicate what he thinks, feels, hopes and desires is through external means. If people are to be united in community, therefore, there must be common symbols. It follows that if there is to be a church, there must be sacraments. And since the triune nature of God implies the necessity of the church, the triune nature of God also implies, at a second remove, the necessity of sacraments.” Leithart, “Framing Sacramental Theology,” 16.

<sup>36</sup> Dennis Ngien, “The Trinitarian Dynamic of Worship in John Calvin’s *Institutes* (1559),” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 83, no. 1 (Ap 2007): 23–51. In this article, Ngien gives an outline of the Trinitarian dynamic of worship in Calvin’s thought, especially that which appears in his *Institutes* (1559).

<sup>37</sup> Ngien, *The Trinitarian Dynamic*, 50.

only a brief study of Calvin's understanding of worship in general, which does not dig into his theology of the Lord's Supper.<sup>38</sup>

John Witvliet's study of Reformed theology and practice of worship shows how the doctrine of the Trinity influences the practice of Calvinist worship. He notes that Calvin expresses a "vivid Trinitarian grammar"<sup>39</sup> in his vision of worship, in which both God's coming to us in Word and Sacrament and our coming to God in praise and petition happen "in Christ, through the Spirit."<sup>40</sup> According to Witvliet, Calvin was deeply concerned that "this Trinitarian vision might shape liturgical piety," and was worried that "worshippers would never perceive this Trinitarian activity, but have their attention instead fixed on concrete actions."<sup>41</sup> It was in order to help worshippers perceive the triune activity, in Witvliet's assessment, that Calvin's prayer for preaching and the sacraments concludes with a high Trinitarian doxology,<sup>42</sup> reflects a Trinitarian grammar of liturgical action, and pastorally insists that worshippers recognize themselves as part of that Trinitarian dynamic.<sup>43</sup> While Calvin's official liturgical texts might appear to be lean, and often do not reflect the full force of his theological writings,

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<sup>38</sup> In this work, Ngien does not take Calvin's commentaries, sermons, and letters into consideration.

<sup>39</sup> Witvliet, "Prism of Glory," 275. As Witvliet notes, Calvin's clear statements regarding the Trinitarian nature of worship come from his "Summary of Doctrine Concerning the Ministry of the Word and Sacrament," which reads: "(1) The end of the whole Gospel ministry is that God, the fountain of all felicity, communicates Christ to us who are disunited by sin and hence ruined, that we may from him enjoy eternal life; that in a word all heavenly treasures be so applied to us that they be no less ours than Christ's himself. (2) We believe the communication to be (a) mysterious, and incomprehensible to human reason, and (b) spiritual, since it is effected by the Holy Spirit; to whom, since he is the virtue of the living God, proceeding from the Father and the Son, we ascribe omnipotence, by which he joins us to Christ our Head, not in an imaginary way, but most powerfully and truly, so that we become flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, and from his vivifying flesh he transfuses eternal life to us. (3) That we believe the Holy Spirit to effect this union rests on a certain ground, namely this: Whatever (a) the Father [John 14:16] or (b) the Son does to bring the faithful to salvation, Holy Scripture testifies that each operates through the Holy Spirit [John 15:26. 16:7]; and that (c) Christ does not otherwise dwell in us than through his Spirit, nor in any other way communicate himself to us than through the same Spirit [Rom. 8:9] (4) To effect this union, the Holy Spirit uses a double instrument, the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments." See *Theological Treatises*, 171-2.

<sup>40</sup> Witvliet, "Prism of Glory," 276.

<sup>41</sup> Witvliet, "Prism of Glory," 277. For Calvin, Witvliet notes, superstition in worship is not just pagan reliance on a wooden god, but is "the failure to perceive the Trinitarian cartography of liturgical action." Witvliet, "Prism of Glory," 278.

<sup>42</sup> Here Witvliet provides two examples: 1) "When then God speaks to us, by the mouth of men, then he adjoins the inward grace of his Holy Spirit, to the end, that the doctrine be not unprofitable, but that it may bring forth fruit. See then how we hear the heavenly Father: that is to say, when he speaks secretly to us by his Holy Spirit, and then we come unto our Lord Jesus Christ." 2) "Heavenly father, we offer you eternal praise and thanks that you have granted such a great benefit to us poor sinners, having drawn us into the communion of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom you have delivered to death for us, and whom you give us as the meat and drink of eternal life. Now grant us also this additional benefit: that you will never allow us to forget these things; but that having them imprinted on our hearts, we may grow and increase daily in the faith which is at work in every good deed. And in this way, may we arrange and seek to live our whole life in the exaltation of your glory and edification of our neighbor, through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, who in the unity of the Holy Spirit lives and reigns with you, O God eternally. Amen." Witvliet, "Prism of Glory," 278-9.

<sup>43</sup> Witvliet, "Prism of Glory," 279.

Witvliet notes, his sermons, lectures, and extemporaneous prayers “would have represented a significant part of the experience of worship in Calvin’s Geneva,” wherein “references to the Trinitarian grammar of worship abound.”<sup>44</sup> These arguments by Witvliet are motivating enough to turn us to more thorough study of Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity in his theology of worship and the sacraments.

**Previous Scholarship on Calvin’s Trinitarian Doctrine of the Divine-Human Communion:** In his monumental work, *Revelation, Redemption, Response*, Butin contends that for Calvin, the doctrine of the Trinity is the pattern and paradigm for our relationship with God.<sup>45</sup> Affirming that Calvin’s concern regarding the doctrine of the Trinity is God’s economic-redemptive operations with human beings, rather than the Trinity in its internal essence and relations,<sup>46</sup> Butin shows that in Calvin’s theology humans relate to God, through the Son, the pattern, in the Spirit, the dynamic. According to Butin, the visible church is the embodied context of the Trinitarian relationship of God and humanity,<sup>47</sup> and especially the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, where Christ presents Himself to believers by means of visible elements, through the power of the Holy Spirit, entailing their response,<sup>48</sup> is the place wherein the “coherence of Calvin’s Trinitarian paradigm for divine-human relationship comes to its most concentrated and characteristic visible expression.”<sup>49</sup> While it gives salience to Calvin’s Trinitarian theology, the primary aim of this study by Butin is to suggest a framework into which to set Calvin’s overall theological work, and thus his treatment of Calvin’s doctrine of the eucharist is brief and focuses more on showing how the doctrine fits the Trinitarian framework of divine-human relationship in his overall theology.

More recently, studies have been made, which in varying degrees refer to the doctrine of the Trinity in order to illuminate Calvin’s understanding of the divine-

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<sup>44</sup> Witvliet, “Prism of Glory,” 278.

<sup>45</sup> Here Butin contends that “approaching Calvin’s thought from the standpoint of the Trinity enables the interpreter to discern an intrinsic coherence at both the level of form and the level of theological substance that is not otherwise evident.” Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 124.

<sup>46</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 41.

<sup>47</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 98.

<sup>48</sup> In this Trinitarian framework of Calvin, Butin maintains, the physical corporeality of human beings and that of Christ is appreciated with the utmost seriousness, because “in the incarnation, Christ, who is the source of believers’ life, affirms human flesh, thereby showing that it can become a suitable medium for the communication of divine life to human being.” Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 119.

<sup>49</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 120.

human relationship.<sup>50</sup> In his work *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, Todd Billings refutes the criticism that Calvin views humans merely as passive receptacles of God's grace, and contends that Calvin affirms the active role of believers and that their active participation in the relationship with God is a central rather than marginal feature of Calvin's thought. Billings observes that while believers are given the free pardon by God, in Calvin's thought, they are also actively incorporated into the Triune life, through the act of gratitude.<sup>51</sup> And this participatory life is empowered through our being made one with Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, in the power of the Holy Spirit. While Billings suggests the Lord's Supper is the place for this participation, Billings' study primarily aims to expound the reciprocal and participatory nature of the God-human relationship, rather than to consider the implications which the doctrine has on the sacrament as a liturgical act.

In her work *Calvin's Ladder*, Julie Canlis explains Calvin's notion of participation and communion in terms of the ascent. Noting that God's own differentiation in the Trinity makes room for humanity's participation in Him, Canlis explains that "the Spirit brings humans to participate 'indirectly' in the Triune communion, in a fully human manner in the Son,"<sup>52</sup> for Calvin, and our ascent into heaven is a mode of this communion. This ascent is a robustly Trinitarian event, since it is made possible through our participation in the ascending pattern of the Son to the Father, through the power of the Spirit. While Canlis' study has the merit of highlighting the human aspect of salvation, which is connected to the practice of the sacraments, it still does not aim to explore the implications such an understanding has on the theology and practice of worship itself.

**Recent Scholarship on Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper:** Over the past few decades a considerable number of studies have been made on Calvin's doctrine of the eucharist, paving the way for this thesis. In his recent study entitled "Calvin's doctrine

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<sup>50</sup> J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ*, 1st ed. (OUP Oxford, 2007); Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> Refuting the claim that Calvin's soteriology is not participationist, because it affirms the forensic imputation of Christ's righteousness, Billings argues that Calvin conceives of salvation as fundamentally union with Christ, a union that is a *duplex gratia*, a twofold yet single grace by which the believer first receives Christ's righteousness as a pure gift by forensic imputation and then, inseparably from the imputation, participates actively in the benefits of that righteousness through the Spirit who seals and sustains the believer's union with Christ. For the full discussion, see Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 106-121.

<sup>52</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 138. In Calvin, Canlis says, "Christ's participation in our condition allows us to participate in God in creaturely appropriate ways as well." Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 101.

of the Lord's Supper," Wim Janse shows that seeing it in light of his whole theological career, Calvin's eucharistic doctrine should be said to feature both Lutheran (Realistic and instrumentalist language) and Zwinglian (Separation between the sign and the reality signified) accents.<sup>53</sup> As shall be seen, this also implies that what is inherent in Calvin's doctrine is the dynamic of Christ's presence (Lutheran) and absence (Zwinglian), which should be explicated by the Trinitarian grammar. Janse also shows that Calvin's eucharistic doctrine is an extensive doctrine with which diverse doctrinal issues are tied up: it touches on the issue of God's transcendence and immanence, the nature of Christ, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the centrality of union with God and between participants. While these themes have the strong connotations of the doctrine of the Trinity, Janse does not adopt the doctrine as a lens for explaining these themes.<sup>54</sup>

We also should consider works by Thomas Davis and Keith Mathison,<sup>55</sup> both of which claim that Calvin had a much "higher" conception of the Supper than has been thought. Davis argues that even though Calvin initially denied the notion of substantial partaking of Christ in the eucharist, Calvin's thought underwent changes over the course of years in such a way that he came to maintain that that notion is "essential" for an understanding of the eucharist. According to Davis, it should be emphasized that for Calvin the eucharist is a "real instrument" through which the participants truly receive the body and blood of Christ, from which all benefits from Christ are given to believers.<sup>56</sup> Echoing Davis's thesis, Mathison attempts to relate such a view of Calvin to the human aspect of the eucharist.<sup>57</sup> Regretting that Calvin's view of Christ's eucharistic presence has often been named as a doctrine of "spiritual presence,"<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Wim Janse, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," *Perichoresis*, Volume 10. Issue 2(2012):137-163.

<sup>54</sup> Janse, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," 138-9.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas J. Davis, *The Clearest Promises of God: The Development of Calvin's Eucharistic Teaching* (New York: AMS Pr, 1995); Keith A. Mathison, *Given For You, Reclaiming Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*, First (Presbyterian and Reformed, 2002).

<sup>56</sup> According to Davis, in mature theology of Calvin, the notion of Christ's real presence, along with the idea of the instrumentality of eucharist and substantial partaking, is strongly affirmed, and the eucharist is understood as a *means* of grace.

<sup>57</sup> Mathison explains that the *Consensus* omits certain words and notions that had been a vital part of Calvin's own Eucharistic theology: actual presenting (exhibiting) of what is signified, sacrament as instruments, and as that 'through' which God confers grace. Mathison, *Given For You*, 62-8.

<sup>58</sup> According to Mathison, this term can be misunderstood to mean that it is only Christ's Spirit or His benefits, or divine nature that is received in the eucharist. Mathison, *Given For You*, 280. Mathison underlies that even though the body of Christ is locally in heaven, for Calvin, the body is truly exhibited in the eucharist through the power of the Holy Spirit so that the participants can truly partake of the substance of Christ's body. Mathison, *Given For You*, 15-29.

Mathison emphasizes that the Lord's Supper is an objective event, for Calvin, since in it there is the real, actual participation in the humanity of Christ in the eucharist.<sup>59</sup> Mathison also gives prominence to the dynamic nature of the eucharist by highlighting Calvin's recognition of the importance of the "action of eating," which is distinguished from believing or faith as a mental state, for this participation.<sup>60</sup> These studies need a more Trinitarian articulation, in that, as shall be seen, what safeguards the actual and embodied dimension of the sacrament, in Calvin's theology, is the Trinitarian conception of our partaking of the person of Christ by the efficacy of the Spirit. However, these studies do not refer to the doctrine of the Trinity itself in order to shed light on those notions.

Recently Sue Rozeboom has explored the provenance of Calvin's pneumatological doctrine of the Lord's Supper, pointing to Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity as one of the provenances of the former.<sup>61</sup> She shows that it was as the notion of the Holy Spirit as *the bond* between Christ and humans, first presented in Calvin's Trinitarian discourse, was increasingly incorporated into his doctrine of the Lord's Supper that Calvin came to affirm his characteristic teaching of our true partaking of the whole – not only divine but also human – person of Christ in the Supper. From this, Rozeboom concludes that Calvin's robustly pneumatological doctrine of the eucharist resulted from his robustly pneumatological doctrine of the Trinity. Rozeboom also discovers that while Calvin's doctrine of the eucharist is pneumatologically rich in his *Institutes* and in his incidental theological treatises, his liturgy exhibits failures to assimilate his theological emphasis liturgically, given that there is no trace of an invocation of the Spirit in Calvin's liturgical documents.<sup>62</sup> While Rozeboom's study is very suggestive for this thesis, as it directly touches on the relationship between Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity and the eucharist, it is fundamentally a study of the

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<sup>59</sup> Here Mathison quotes Calvin's statement in the *Clear Explanation of Sound Doctrine Concerning the True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper*, which reads: "I do not restrict this union to the divine essence, but affirm that it belongs to the flesh and blood, inasmuch as it was not simply said, My Spirit, but, My flesh is meat indeed; nor was it simply said, My Divinity, but, My blood is drink indeed." Mathison, *Given For You*, 18. For Calvin the human body of Christ, through which He has "complete obedience to God, is a 'channel' or 'conduit' through which the divine life is poured into those who are in union with him." Mathison, *Given For You*, 21.

<sup>60</sup> Mathison stresses that while some sixteenth century Reformers identify eating in the eucharist with believing, Calvin believes that eating is the result of believing, not believing itself. This implies that Calvin recognizes the unique role of the act of eucharistic eating, which is distinguished from believing. Mathison, *Given For You*, 29-39.

<sup>61</sup> Sue. A. Rozeboom, "The Provenance of John Calvin's emphasis on the Role of the Holy Spirit regarding the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" (PhD dissertation, University of Notre Dame, August 2010).

<sup>62</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 342.

origin or provenance of Calvin's eucharistic doctrine, rather than of its implications, as this thesis is.

More recently, Richard Muller, in an article entitled "Calvin on Sacramental Presence, in the Shadow of Marburg and Zurich," examines the role of both Christ and the Holy Spirit in Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper.<sup>63</sup> Highlighting that Calvin valued both Lutheran stress on Christ's presence and Zwinglian stress on the Spirit, Muller suggests Melancthon's eucharistic doctrine as an influence on Calvin, through which Calvin kept himself from reducing the Lord's Supper to a work of the Holy Spirit, despite his understanding of the Spirit as the main agency of the sacrament. Muller posits that while the Supper is a pneumatological event, for Calvin, it is also a highly Christological one, in which Christ Himself, rather than the Spirit, holds forth Himself in the Supper, in the power of the Spirit.<sup>64</sup> The merit of Muller's study is to highlight the Trinitarian nature of the Lord's Supper, speaking of it as the fruit of the cooperated work by Christ and the Holy Spirit. However, this is a brief study which focuses primarily on Calvin's position on Christ's real presence, rather than exploring this Trinitarian doctrine of the Supper.

In her work *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, Martha Moore-Keish searches for the ritual implications of Calvin's doctrine of the eucharist,<sup>65</sup> based on his affirmation of the objectivity of the eucharist, and his appreciation of the human and the experiential nature of it. Moore-Keish argues that in Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the ritual dimension of the sacrament can be highlighted, since it is an objective and effective event, like a ritual in general, in which the Holy Spirit actually unites the

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<sup>63</sup> Richard A Muller, "Calvin on Sacramental Presence, in the Shadow of Marburg and Zurich," *Lutheran Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (2009): 147–67.

<sup>64</sup> For Calvin, according to Muller, the Spirit's role is to 1) give faith in the believers so that they can receive Christ and His benefits, and 2) finalize the union and communion with Christ. Muller, "Calvin on Sacramental Presence," 159-60.

<sup>65</sup> Martha L. Moore-Keish, *Do This in Remembrance of Me: A Ritual Approach to Reformed Eucharistic Theology* (William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2008). Her study more or less echoes Peter Leithart's claim at his short article "Embracing Ritual: Sacraments as Rites," *Calvin Theological Journal* 40, no. 1 (Ap 2005): 6–20. Here Leithart asserts that Reformed and evangelical sacramentology must be revised at a fundamental level," not least by "conceiving the sacraments as rituals or rites." Pointing out that the notions such as "means of grace," "symbols and signs," or "visible word," which Reformed tradition has usually used for understanding the sacraments, cannot fully capture and reflect the nature of the sacraments, Leithart quotes Richard Muller's definition of Reformed orthodoxy sacraments. According to Muller, Reformed sacraments are constituted by three components: 1) A visible element (bread, wine, water), which is sign, 2) an action ordained by God, which is called *action ritualis*, and 3) the saving benefit of the covenant. Muller also points out that the "rite," at times, is defined as the whole action of the sacraments. Leithart, "Embracing Ritual," 17, n.31. Based on Muller's definition, Leithart argues that conceiving of the sacraments as "rituals or rites" provides a "more philosophically and theologically coherent account of sacrament," in that sacraments include corporate, active, and effective dimensions which rituals and rites have. (A ritual is an event which is celebrated through bodily actions in a corporate and stylized manner.) Leithart, "Embracing Ritual," 8.

worshippers to Christ and makes them truly benefit from the union. Noting that Calvin appreciates the role of the human body of believers as well as that of Christ, Moore-Keish observes that it is because the eucharist appeals to all of the bodily senses, for Calvin, that it conveys the clearest promises of God.<sup>66</sup> Here Moore-Keish gives prominence to the physical and experiential nature of the eucharist in Calvin's theology. Also, by noting Calvin's appreciation of the significant role of the assembled congregation in the celebration of the eucharist, she underlies the corporate nature of the eucharist in Calvin's theology.<sup>67</sup>

Though this observation is tinged with Trinitarian connotations, especially as it highlights the bodily dimension of the sacrament, which is based on Christ's humanity and our partaking of it, Moore-Keish does not consider Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, but rather rushes to garner insights from ritual theory. Claiming that the Calvinist tradition has too often "regarded liturgy as simply the acting out of prior doctrine," she introduces the ancient notion "*Lex orandi, lex credendi* (The law of praying establishes the law of believing)" as a corrective to the problem of the Calvinist Eucharistic tradition, and suggests that according to Calvin's thought the formative character of the celebration of the eucharist be more fully appreciated. Moore-Keish argues that the Calvinist tradition should be sympathetic to contemporary ritual theory from which it can gain a "helpful lens for retrieving Calvin's emphasis on the real activity of God in the eucharist."<sup>68</sup> Even though it is convincing that some points in Calvin's eucharistic understanding support the ritual nature of the sacraments and as such Calvin scholarship can benefit from ritual theory, Moore-Keish's approach, especially given Calvin's own voice that *lex credendi* usually shapes *lex orandi*,<sup>69</sup> rather than *vice versa*, appears to

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<sup>66</sup> In this sense, Moore-Keish believes, Calvin understands the physical elements of the eucharist to be an indispensable part of the celebration of the sacrament. She adds that for Calvin, while God is free from involvement with any kinds of earthly elements God also is free to make use of such elements, in order to benefit human beings. For a full discussion of this point, see Moore-Keish, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, 39-40.

<sup>67</sup> Moore-Keish, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, 42.

<sup>68</sup> Moore-Keish, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, 77-85.

<sup>69</sup> Elsie Anne McKee, "Context, Contours, Contents: Towards a Description of the Classical Reformed Teaching on Worship," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 16, no. 2 (1995): 177. In the *Necessity of Reforming the Church*, Calvin states: "If it be inquired, then, by what things chiefly the Christian religion has a standing existence amongst us, and maintains its truth, it will be found that the following two not only occupy the principal place, but comprehend under them all the other parts, and consequently the whole substance of Christianity, viz., a knowledge, first, of the mode in which God is duly worshipped; and, secondly, of the source from which salvation is to be obtained. When these are kept out of view, though we may glory in the name of Christians, our profession is empty and vain. After these come the Sacraments and the Government of the Church, which, as they were instituted for the preservation of these branches of doctrine, ought not to be employed for any other purpose; and, indeed, the only means of ascertaining whether they are administered purely and in due form, or otherwise, is to bring them to this test. If anyone is desirous of a clearer and more familiar illustration, I would say that the rule in the Church, the pastoral office, and all other matters of order, resemble the body, whereas the doctrine which regulates the due worship of God,

need to go hand in hand with the study of a more doctrinal basis of the liturgical insights: the doctrine of the Trinity.

It is now possible to summarize the state of research on Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Even though Calvin scholarship has made significant progress in study of his eucharistic doctrine, there have rarely been attempts to understand it in relation to his doctrine of the Trinity, and if any, they are not exhaustive studies, inasmuch as they do little more than recognize the relationship between the two doctrines, which is not sufficient to account for the fullness of the implications of the doctrine of the Trinity. As shall be seen in the following chapters, for Calvin, the doctrine of the Trinity is an encompassing theme to which most eucharistic themes, such as Christ's real presence, and our participation in and communion with God, are in varying degrees connected. Therefore, the first aim of this thesis will be to delve into how Calvin's theology and liturgy of the Lord's Supper are affected and shaped by his doctrine of the Trinity, both formally and substantially. Calvin believes that the doctrine of the Trinity is a practical doctrine which is most relevant to our experience of worship and life. Therefore, this thesis also aims to explore how the doctrine of the Trinity, which finds its way into his eucharistic thinking, is relevant for our ritual celebration of the sacrament.

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*and points out the ground on which the conscience of men must rest their hope of salvation, is the soul which animates the body, renders it lively and active, and, in short, makes it not to be a dead and useless carcase."* *Tracts and Treatises*, 1:12-27. My emphasis.

## Chapter 1

### The Trinity and the Divine-Human Communion

In this chapter we will identify some kernel, inter-related characteristics of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, which are instructive for our purpose of understanding his theology of worship and the sacrament. Philip W. Butin, in his monumental work *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin's Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship*, suggests that the doctrine of the Trinity is the source of coherence for Calvin's whole theological system.<sup>70</sup> Maintaining that Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity has a strong “redemptive-economic” focus, Butin argues that this economic doctrine of the Trinity is the “basis, pattern, and dynamic” of divine-human relationship in Calvin's theology.<sup>71</sup> According to Butin, this Trinitarian paradigm of divine human relationship “reflected the practical, relational concern that motivated every aspect of his theology.”<sup>72</sup> More recently, Todd Billings and Julie Canlis, drawing upon Butin's study in varying degrees, explore Calvin's concept of participation in the divine life. Both Billings and Canlis, as well as Butin, relate the Trinitarian doctrine of the divine-human relationship to ecclesiastical theology, especially the theology of the Lord's Supper. Through conversations with these voices, it will be argued that for Calvin the doctrine of the Trinity is the basis for our personal, experiential, and tight-knit interplay with God. In the subsequent chapters it will be shown that for Calvin worship is the ideal matrix for the experience of this interplay between God and believers.

#### 1.1. Calvin's economic doctrine of the Trinity

It has been established that Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity is marked by his soteriological concern for human redemption rather than concern for the inner-ontological nature of the Triune God. Charles Partee, for example, points out that throughout the whole of his theology Calvin focuses more on God as he is for us (*Deus*

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<sup>70</sup> Philip W. Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin's Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship* (OUP USA, 1995).

<sup>71</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 16.

<sup>72</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 39.

*pro nobis*) than God as he is in himself (*Deus in se*).<sup>73</sup> Timothy George likewise says that the reason why the doctrine of the Trinity was crucial for Calvin was because “it was a witness to the deity of Jesus Christ and thus to the certainty of salvation procured by *Him*.”<sup>74</sup> In modern terminology, Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity is not so much the immanent-ontological doctrine as the economic-redemptive one.

Perhaps the most exhaustive advocacy for the economic-redemptive character of Calvin’s Trinitarian doctrine comes from Philip Butin’s vast and far-ranging study, where it is convincingly argued that Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity is rooted in his soteriological concern rather than any speculative, deductive logic, and that only this redemptive-perichoretic economy of the three Persons initiates and accomplishes revelation, redemption, and human response in Calvin’s theology.<sup>75</sup> Throughout the study, Butin maintains that Calvin regarded the doctrine of the Trinity as fundamentally a “paradigm for understanding the relationship of God and humanity,” and thus Calvin’s principal concern regarding the doctrine is “God’s gracious redemptive relationship with believers.”<sup>76</sup> In Calvin’s overall theology, according to Butin, “the Trinity in its external operations’ received a great deal more emphasis in Calvin’s understanding of the divine human relationship than did ‘the Trinity in its internal relations.’”<sup>77</sup> This focus on the external economy of God in Calvin’s Trinitarian discussion, for Butin, is a natural consequence of the centrality of divine-human relationship in Calvin’s theology, which certainly is the arena of God operations *ad extra*.

Perhaps Butin is under no illusion when he argues that Calvin’s concern relating the doctrine of the Trinity is not so much to speculate about the inner-being of the Trinity as to look for knowledge about God’s economy, which is suggestive for the church and the life of the believers. As Butin rightly notes, when discussing the deity of Christ in his thematic exposition of the Trinity, Calvin describes the knowledge of the Trinity as a matter of “*practica notitia*,” a knowledge that “consists in practice and

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<sup>73</sup> Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville; London: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 66.

<sup>74</sup> Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Leicester, England; Nashville: Apollos; Broadman Pr, 1988), 200. See also, e.g., Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology and Worship* (Phillipsburg, N.J: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2004), 252.

<sup>75</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 26-49.

<sup>76</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 38

<sup>77</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 39.

experience,” which is a great deal more certain than any “*otiosa speculatio*.”<sup>78</sup> Elsewhere, Calvin even describes that the Trinity is disclosed in “the very experience of godliness,” as well as in scripture.<sup>79</sup> To be sure, these passages corroborate Butin’s assertion that Calvin’s Trinitarian concern is committed to the explication of “how God as Father, Son, and Spirit” is “related to human beings,” particularly those who constitute the church, rather than to “speculation about God’s essential nature”<sup>80</sup> which for Calvin is basically incomprehensible to human beings.<sup>81</sup> For Calvin, God’s being *per se* is fundamentally beyond human reasoning, and hence he makes efforts to base our Trinitarian discourse on the biblical witness of God’s words and works towards His creation.

However, the mere emphasis of Calvin’s concern for the economic Trinity over immanent or ontological Trinity is open to misconstruction, since he in fact does not consider those two notions as altogether separable. Granted that Calvin endeavors to base his Trinitarian discussion on the words and works of God, it is also true that he deals with diverse aspects of the immanent Trinity, viz. the inner being and relationship of the Triune God, in his thematic consideration of the doctrine of the Trinity, especially in the *Institutes* book 1, chapter 13, where the inseparable link between the economic and immanent Trinity comes to light. In the discussion of the personal properties, for example, when Calvin ascribes to the Father the Source (*fons*), to the Son Wisdom (*sapientia*), and to the Holy Spirit the Power (*virtus*),<sup>82</sup> he does not understand such distinctions “as merely adjectives that refer to God in different ways on the basis of his works,”<sup>83</sup> but rather identifies the Father with the Source, the Son the Wisdom, and the

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<sup>78</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.13. I. John Hesselink maintains that for Calvin the doctrine of the Trinity is “a source of strength and comfort for faith and practice, rather than “a matter of speculation and debate.” I John Hesselink, “Calvin, the Holy Spirit, and Mystical Union,” *Perspectives* 13, no. 1 (Ja 1998): 15.

<sup>79</sup> “When we name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are not fashioning three Gods, but in the simplest unity of God, Scripture and the very experience of godliness disclose to us the Father, his Son, and the Spirit.” Catechism of 1538, section 20, in Jean Calvin and I John Hesselink, *Calvin’s First Catechism: A Commentary: Featuring Ford Lewis Battles’ Translation of the 1538 Catechism*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Pr, 1997), 21.

<sup>80</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 16.

<sup>81</sup> “Our understanding is not capable of comprehending his essence.” *Institutes* (1559), 1.5.1.

<sup>82</sup> “[T]o the Father is attributed the effective principle of what is done, and the fountain and wellspring of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel, and the ordered arrangement of what is done; but to the Spirit is assigned the power and efficacy of the action.” *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.18.

<sup>83</sup> Arie Baars, “The Trinity,” in Herman J. Selderhuis, ed., *The Calvin Handbook*, First Edition (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 252.

Holy Spirit the Power,<sup>84</sup> which is evident in Calvin's expression, regarding the order between the triune persons, that "the wisdom (the Son)" comes from God the Father, and the power (the Spirit) from both the Father and the Wisdom."<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, for Calvin, the Father is the source from which all good and blessing flow towards believers, but also the source of the Godhead; Christ is the Wisdom which governs divine works and grants wisdom to people, but also the eternally begotten Son dwelling with the Father; the Spirit is the Power which makes the divine works effectual in the word, but also the One who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

As for the Word, Calvin writes that "when God's word is set before us in Scripture," the Word means not only "both the oracles announced to the patriarchs and all prophecies," but "the everlasting Wisdom, residing with God, from which both all oracles and all prophecies go forth."<sup>86</sup> For Calvin, the Word of God is the "the order or mandate of the Son, who is himself the eternal and essential *Word* of the Father."<sup>87</sup> In Calvin's thinking, in sum, the work of the Trinity is never separate from the being of the Trinity. Though Calvin does not place the inner being of the Trinity at the center of his Trinitarian discussion, he is never apathetic towards it; rather, he discusses the external economy of the Triune Persons in connection with their inner being and relationship with each other.<sup>88</sup>

Note that the above-mentioned passage by Calvin, in which the knowledge of the Trinity is depicted as "*practica notitia*," was written in his efforts to explicate the ontological aspect of the Trinity (deity of the Son), which implies that it is the very being of God that Calvin believes is the matter of our knowledge and practice. Through

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<sup>84</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.18. Baars notes that "the result of all of this is that the name Wisdom in Calvin's oeuvre is used regularly as a synonym for the Son and the name Power for the Holy Spirit. Baars, "The Trinity," 252.

<sup>85</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.18.

<sup>86</sup> *Institutes* (1559) 1.13.7.

<sup>87</sup> *Institutes* (1559) 1.13.7. My emphasis. Referring to John, Calvin concludes the section saying: "that Word, God from the beginning with God, was at the same time the cause of all things, together with God the Father...the Word abides everlastingly one and the same with God, and is God himself." See *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.7. When Calvin discusses the divinity of the Son, for example, he makes an effort to begin with the explanation of *Logos asarkos* before discussing 'the Word endued with flesh,' saying "because Christ had not yet been manifested, it is necessary to understand the Word as begotten of the Father before time." See *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.7.

<sup>88</sup> Only after revealing the deity and eternity of the Son and His relationship with the Father this way, as Seung-Goo Lee observes, Calvin goes on to discuss "the deity of Christ in the Old Testament (1.13.9)," "the divinity of Christ in the New Testament: the witness of the Apostles (1.13.11)," "the divinity of Christ...in his works (1.13.12)," and "in his miracles (1.13.13)." Seung-Goo Lee, "The Relationship between the Ontological Trinity and the Economic Trinity," *Journal of Reformed Theology* 3, no. 1 (2009): 95. Regarding the divinity of the Holy Spirit, in a similar vein, Calvin's discussion begins with the biblical expressions which identify the relationship of the Spirit with God the Father. (1.13.14-15) See Lee, "The Relationship between the Ontological Trinity and the Economic Trinity," 95.

this knowledge of the Trinity, the passage continues, “the faithful soul undeniably recognizes, and, in a manner of speaking, touches with the hand, the very presence of God when it feels itself quickened, illuminated, saved, justified, and sanctified.”<sup>89</sup> It should also be remembered that what Calvin says “scripture and the very experience of God disclose” is not merely *works* of the Trinity, but “the Father, his Son, and the Spirit.”<sup>90</sup> From these it can be assumed that for Calvin the *raison d’être* of the doctrine of the Trinity is to lead believers to the experience of the personal presence of God the Trinity.<sup>91</sup> When Calvin guarded against speculation on the being of the Trinity, his intent was not so much to foil any attempt to know the being of the Trinity as to exhort believers to *experience* it, rather than to contemplate it.<sup>92</sup> In other words, while Calvin was concerned with God’s economy towards humans rather than contemplation on the inner being of God, he understood that the goal of such economy of God is to lead us to the very being and essence of God Himself.

We shall expand upon how this point is suggestive for Calvin’s theology of worship later, but for the present suffice it to stress that for Calvin the knowledge of the Trinity is first and foremost for discerning the right object of worship. Beginning his thematic exposition of the Trinity, Calvin defines God’s Triunity as a “special mark to distinguish himself more precisely from idols.”<sup>93</sup> Given that for Calvin idols are the result of human temptation to create and worship God based upon their needs and ideas, it is evident here that Calvin’s aim of discussing of the Trinity is to make the Trinity known as a personal entity who is the object of our faith and worship. Only in the

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<sup>89</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.13. This is a part of discussion about the divinity of Christ. Here Calvin presents Christ’s works and miracles as evidence for His divine being. In his discussion about the divinity of the Holy Spirit, Calvin also conjoins the Spirit’s office with His divine being and majesty. (3.13.14)

<sup>90</sup> See footnote 76 above. In this comment, separation of the economic and ontological Trinity is not perceived.

<sup>91</sup> Calvin teaches that “we must be led by the Spirit, and thus stimulated to seek Christ, so must we also remember that the invisible Father is to be sought nowhere but in this image.” *Institutes* (1559), 3.2.1. This is to say, when God exerts His wisdom and power towards humans, this wisdom and power, that is the Son and Spirit, deliver them back towards the Source, the Father. The fundamental aim of the Triune economy that operates on humans is to lead them to the very presence of God Himself. In this sense, it would be possible to argue, along with Baars, that for Calvin the doctrine of the Trinity bears an “existential character,” in that it “comes into being through the influence of Word and Spirit upon the heart.” Selderhuis, *The Calvin Handbook*. 256-7. There are some others who note the “existential aspect” of the knowledge of God in Calvin’s theology. Carlos M. N Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 250. See also Edward A. Dowey, Jr. *The Knowledge of God in Calvin’s Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 28.

<sup>92</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.32.

<sup>93</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.2.

Trinity God reveals Himself to humans in the Son through the Holy Spirit so that they can worship God in right manner. Here God's economy and His Being are tied up with each other.

Apart from the trace of undue separation between the Trinity's being and external economy, Butin's thesis that our relationship with God hinges upon the Trinitarian economy of God towards us in Calvin's theology can be fully endorsed. As Butin establishes in the beginning of his book, Calvin, from his first edition of the *Institutes* onward, holds fast to his idea of *Distinction of Properties* in the Trinity, an understanding that "to the Father is attributed the effective principle of what is done, and the fountain and wellspring of all things; to the Son, wisdom, counsel, and the ordered arrangement of what is done; but to the Spirit is assigned the power and efficacy of the action."<sup>94</sup> Elsewhere, the Father is depicted as the creator and preserver of all things, the Son the "way" to the Father, the origin, and the Spirit "guide and leader" to the Father.<sup>95</sup> In sum, according to Calvin, the essence of God's Trinitarian economy is to lead us to the relationship with God Himself, through the roles of each Trinitarian person.<sup>96</sup> Here again the economic Trinity is being linked to the ontological Trinity. The role of God's "economy" or "working" towards humanity is pivotal in Calvin's understanding of divine-human relationship, since, due to the total depravity of humanity, this relationship should be initiated only by God's activity towards humans.

For Calvin, our relationship with God is an arena where the doctrine of the Trinity comes to the fore, because it is enabled by the unified, undivided work of all three Persons. While Calvin grounds his doctrine of the Trinity in the written witness of scripture about God's redemptive history, he at the same time highlights that the Trinitarian economy is fundamentally what continues on in the life and experience of believers, a point which we will look into below.

## 1.2. Divine Economy: Dialectical or Trinitarian?

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<sup>94</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.18.

<sup>95</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.20. "We are persuaded that there is for us no other *guide and leader* to the Father than the Holy Spirit, just as there is no other *way* than Christ; and that there is no grace from God, save through the Holy Spirit. Grace is itself the *power and action* of the Spirit: through grace, God the Father, in the Son, accomplishes whatever good there is; through grace He justifies, sanctifies, and cleanses us, calls and draws us to himself, that we may attain salvation...Therefore, we believe in the Holy Spirit, acknowledging him, with the Father and the Son, to be our one God, holding as sure and firm that the *work and power* are his." My emphasis.

<sup>96</sup> Elsewhere, Calvin applies the Aristotelian principle of four causes to the distinction of the Trinity and explains the Father as the "originator" of our redemption, the Son the "material cause," and the Holy Spirit the "formal cause." *Comm. Acts* 22:16.

It should be noted that Butin's study of Calvin's Trinitarian understanding of the divine-human relationship was brought forward as an objection against what Butin terms the "dialectical" tendency that he finds in Calvin scholars such as F. Wendel, A. Ganoczy, and E. Dowey, in which Calvin's theology is construed in terms of "bipolar counterparts," the one being God and the other humans, "who are dialectically synthesized in the mediation of Christ."<sup>97</sup> According to the advocates for this dialectical approach, Butin explains, Calvin is a heir of the tendency that respects the "infinite and radical distinction between the divine and the human," given that he places all his theology under the principle of "absolute transcendence of God and his total otherness in relation to man."<sup>98</sup> Butin argues that in Calvin this sharp antithesis between God and humans is overcome by his more central principle of *humanitas capax divinitas per accommodationem*, a Trinitarian principle in that it focuses around "God's gracious will to reveal the divine nature to human beings in Christ, for the purpose of uniting believers to God in Christ, through the faith that is given by the Spirit."<sup>99</sup> Butin then, as noted, endeavors to show how this Trinitarian paradigm of divine-human relationship appears in the issue of revelation, redemption, and human response.<sup>100</sup>

Indeed, Calvin is not content to maintain the divine-human antithesis which is often summarized in the formula *finitium non capax infiniti*, and as has been recognized by Butin, the Trinitarian grammar of mediation between God and humans is pervasive throughout Calvin's whole oeuvre. For example, in his treatise on the ministry of the Word, Calvin writes that "the end of the whole gospel ministry" is that "God, the fountain of all felicity," communicates Christ to "humans who are disunited by sin and hence ruined" so that when they "believe the Holy Spirit to effect this union"

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<sup>97</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 16.

<sup>98</sup> Francois Wendel, *Calvin: the Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*. (Michigan: Collins, 1972), 150. See Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 16. For the discussion of Calvin's view of God's transcendence, see Thomas J Davis, *This Is My Body: The Presence of Christ in Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 91.

<sup>99</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 17. While admitting the existence of such an idea of divine-human opposition in some parts of Calvin's thinking, Butin considers it as only a provisional depiction of Calvin's understanding of the relationship, since for Calvin an "adequate theology of the relationship reflects the direct relationship of human good and divine glory that existed before the fall and now exists through God's restoration of it." See Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 18.

<sup>100</sup> As Butin notes, Alister McGrath suggests that "Calvin's Christological emphasis on the distinction in unity of Christ's divine and human natures constitutes his normative paradigm for the relation of God and humanity." Butin views this approach as flawed because it "overlooks the pervasive role of the Spirit in Calvin's understanding of the divine-human relationship." Butin asserts that Calvin's Christology should be construed "as firmly rooted in an overarching Trinitarian paradigm." Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 141 n. 58.

all heavenly treasures can be applied to them so that they be no less theirs than Christ's himself.<sup>101</sup> Regarding the mediating economy of Christ, Calvin also states:

To comprehend aright what it meant that Christ and the Father are one, take care not to deprive Christ of His person as Mediator. But consider Him rather as He is the Head of the Church, and join Him to His members...if the unity of the Son with the Father is not to be fruitless and useless, its power must be diffused through the whole body of believers. From this, too, we infer that we are one with Christ; not because He transfuses his substance into us, but because by the power of His Spirit He communicates to us His life and all the blessings He has received from the Father.<sup>102</sup>

What is remarkable here, as Butin notes, is that Christ's oneness with the Father is described as aimed at humans' participation in this relationship so that they can also boldly be included in the relationship of the Father and the Son as members of Christ's body.<sup>103</sup> Perhaps this idea of divine mediation culminates in Calvin's doctrine of "adoption," which teaches that though we were hateful to God due to our iniquity, we are now adopted into the sonship of Christ, the only-begotten Son, becoming able to cry freely and confidently, "Abba! Father!"<sup>104</sup> This adoption in Calvin's thinking is indeed a "Trinitarian" concept, given that it is enabled and witnessed by the Holy Spirit,<sup>105</sup> in the pattern of the Son, leading humans to address the Father. For Calvin this adoption, a fruit of divine mediation, is also an ecclesiastical notion since it aims not only to encourage individual pietism but to help "the church" to be brought into its filial identity.<sup>106</sup> Now we have a general account of Calvin's Trinitarian grammar of the divine-human mediation: humanity, though enormously different from God, enters into

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<sup>101</sup> *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, trans. J.K.S. Reid (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 171-2.

<sup>102</sup> *Comm. John 17:21*.

<sup>103</sup> In his analysis of the baptism narrative, Calvin teaches that God's declaration of Christ's being His beloved Son is aimed to give us a "pledge of our adoption" whereby we, while the "title of the Son truly and by nature belongs to Christ alone," can obtain grace in the beloved Son, and also "boldly call God himself our Father." *Comm. Matthew 3:17*. Here we can see that for Calvin the mediating work of God is intended for all baptized Christians who constitute the church.

<sup>104</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 2.14.5.

<sup>105</sup> "First, he[the Holy Spirit] is called the 'spirit of adoption' because he is the witness to us of the free benevolence of God with which God the Father has embraced us in his beloved only-begotten Son to become a Father to us; and he encourages us to have trust in prayer. In fact, he supplies the very words so that we may fearlessly cry, 'Abba, Father!'" *Institutes* (1559), 3.1.3. See also 3.20.37.

<sup>106</sup> Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2010), 148, n. 74.

an intimate relationship with God, through participating in the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>107</sup>

However, it might be questioned whether the “dialectical” and “Trinitarian” approaches to Calvin’s theology are as mutually exclusive as Butin seems to assume,<sup>108</sup> inasmuch as the former also claims the synthesis of God and humanity through the mediation of Christ, and considering that Calvin does not always use the explicitly Trinitarian language when he is expected to, often by omitting the direct reference to the Holy Spirit who he understands as the intrinsic power or efficacy.<sup>109</sup> Butin argues that the divine-human opposition is “only a provisional - not ultimate – depiction” of divine-human relationship which was only caused by the fall and this opposition need “no longer be dialectically opposed in redeemed humanity.”<sup>110</sup> Granted, however, expressions that denote the radical distinction – even if not an opposition - between God and humanity, caused by the quality of the two, is found pervasively even in passages where Calvin deals with the faithful life of believers.<sup>111</sup> In commenting on 1 John 3:2, for instance, Calvin recognizes that even in heaven, the “*longa distantia proportionis*” between God and humans will be tremendous.<sup>112</sup> This implies that in Calvin’s thought there still is a “wide difference [*diversa ratio*] between God and creatures,”<sup>113</sup> both in quality and in being, and thus he never fails to maintain the sense of the

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<sup>107</sup> Building on this, Butin goes on to argue that in Calvin’s theological system the divine image is “renewed in humanity according to the pattern of Christ by the dynamic of the Holy Spirit” so that human action can become “an authentically human and genuinely free response to God.” Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 85.

<sup>108</sup> Not surprisingly, Calvin’s Trinitarian conception of various theological themes has been a topic of those who Butin deems are a cohort for the dialectical approach. For example, Alexandre Ganoczy, “Observations on Calvin’s Trinitarian Doctrine of Grace,” in *Probing the Reformed Tradition* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Pr, 1989), 96–107.

<sup>109</sup> Eugene F Rogers, “The Mystery of the Spirit in Three Traditions: Calvin, Rahner, Florensky Or, You Keep Wondering Where the Spirit Went,” *Modern Theology* 19, no. 2 (Ap 2003): 243–60. Fuller discussion of this issue will be presented in chapter 5.

<sup>110</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 85.

<sup>111</sup> While Butin himself acknowledges the existence of the sharpest statements contrasting the divine and the human in Calvin’s oeuvre, particularly in the context of Christology, Butin argues that “such statements have a primarily rhetorical purpose of heightening appreciation for the dramatic paradox and the wonder of the incarnation of Christ, in whom the divine and the human – far from being intrinsically opposed – were hypostatically united.” See Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 85, 173, n. 13. However, to my mind, there is o ground for assuming such statements merely as a rhetorical tool. Not only that, the statements which highlight the wide difference between God and humanity are found in most areas of Calvin’s theology, not only in his Christology.

<sup>112</sup> *Comm.* 1 John 3:2.

<sup>113</sup> *Comm.* 1 John 3:8. Calvin makes it clear that even before the fall the divine-human relationship was that which cannot be established without the mediation of *Logos asarkos*. *Institutes* (1559), 4.8.5.

incommensurability of the divine and human.<sup>114</sup> Accordingly, even when Calvin deals with the idea of our communion with God, which is in principle enabled by the Trinitarian economy of mediation, he does not cease to stress the sharp distinction between God and humans. For example, in his commentary on Romans 8, where he teaches that we may fearlessly call God “Abba,” based on His Trinitarian grace of adopting us as sons, Calvin relentlessly contrasts the “glory of God” with “everyone of us” who should “acknowledge himself to be...the servant of sin”<sup>115</sup> and are in “not simply a slight weakness, but impotence.”<sup>116</sup> In his commentary on Romans 8:23, where believers are exhorted to wait for adoption with groaning, Calvin continues to emphasize that we should have “a sense of our wretchedness” and “a sense of...present misery” for this,<sup>117</sup> denoting the ontological gap from us to the glorious God. Here Calvin seemingly takes the notion of wide disparity between God and humans as a sort of substructure or stepping-stone on which the Trinitarian economy of connecting the two poles is unfolded. In other words, the adoption is not simply a static condition of believers, for Calvin, but that which is perceived and experienced by them based upon their sense of difference from God.

As noted, the strength of Butin’s work is that he highlights the significance of the present-tense dimension of the Triune economy which operates on the life of Christians who constitute the church.<sup>118</sup> However, by losing sight of the meaning of Calvin’s continuing emphasis on the divine-human bipolarity, Butin fails to give sufficient prominence to the experiential dynamic of the Triune economy in Calvin’s theology. By incessantly insisting on the stark difference between God and humanity, Calvin safeguards the temporal dimension of the Triune economy, highlighting its

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<sup>114</sup> In Calvin’s usage, heaven may also denote the eschatological reality. In the eschatological reality, where God will be all in all and Christ thus does no longer act as a mediator between God and men, there is, we can say, overcoming of this gap. See Randall C. Zachman, *Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin* (Notre Dame, Ind: Univ of Notre Dame Pr, 2007), 434.

<sup>115</sup> *Comm.* Romans 8:7.

<sup>116</sup> *Comm.* Romans 8:3.

<sup>117</sup> *Comm.* Romans 8:23.

<sup>118</sup> As for the believers’ on-going experience of the Triune operations, Butin quotes this statement by Calvin: “[We] cannot know by idle speculation what is the sacred and mystic union between us and Him and again between Him and the Father, but...the only way to know it is when He pours His life into us by the secret efficacy of the Spirit. And this is the experience of faith...As the Father has placed in the Son all the fullness of blessings, so on the other hand the Son has given himself to us. We are said to be in him because, grafted into his body, we are partakers of all his righteousness and all His blessings. He is said to be in us because He plainly shows by the efficacy of His Spirit that He is the author and cause of our life.” *Comm.* John 14:19-20, quoted from Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 99.

potential immediate character: even those who are already believers have a sense of estrangement from the exalted God, due to their sinfulness and wretchedness. In that very situation, however, they experience the divine grace which empowers them to address God as the merciful Father, by way of the Trinitarian economy. Here Calvin's sharp perception of human finitude and divine majesty serves to magnify the significance of the Trinitarian economy of mediation: the clearer the gap between God's majesty and human wretchedness, the greater the role of the divine mediation which is required to establish the divine-human relationship.

According to Calvin, again, it is in the very experience of the godly that the Trinity is disclosed.<sup>119</sup> While it might be wrongheaded to request a precise description of what is reckoned to fall under the area of experience, this experience of godliness is probably that of the saving acts of the Trinity, or more precisely of God's being mediated to His people through the on-going, Trinitarian economy. Given that the Triune economy is tied together with the very being of the Trinity, as suggested, what believers experience can also be said to be the being of the Triune God, who is mediated by his own economy. Again, the fundamental, ontological, and qualitative distance between God and humanity is the ground for this experience of the Trinity. In this respect, Calvin's tenacious admonition to admit our impotence and wretchedness, which is diffused throughout his theological and liturgical writings, is possibly the other side of the expectation of the Trinitarian working which empowers us.

### **1.3. Participation: Trinitarian Framework for Divine-Human Communion**

In order to fathom the nature of divine-human relationship in Calvin's thought, which is enabled by the Trinitarian economy, we should look into Calvin's doctrine of participation, especially as it has recently been articulated by Julie Canlis and Todd Billings, in response to those who advocates a deep metaphysics of ontological participation between God and humanity and blames Calvin's theological system for

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<sup>119</sup> Catechism of 1538, section 20, in *Calvin's First Catechism*, 21. Calvin's emphasis on the significance of experience in understanding the Trinity is in line with his understanding of our knowledge of God. Whilst Calvin associates God's being with the divine economy, as noted, Calvin at the same time holds fast to his belief that all human knowledge of God is incomplete since the Being of God *per se* is far loftier than what he has revealed, and thus is incomprehensible to human beings. This is why we need to *experience* God Himself rather than contemplate Him. For Calvin, this is why humans need God's economy of accommodation and of drawing us to the experience of Himself. See J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology And Ministry For The Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2011), 63-75.

lacking the concept of participation.<sup>120</sup> Against the claim that Calvin's soteriology is not participationist, due to its affirmation of the forensic imputation of Christ's righteousness, Todd Billings argues that Calvin conceives of salvation as fundamentally a *union* with Christ, who has a *duplex gratia*, by which believers not only receive Christ's righteousness through forensic imputation (the first grace), but also actively participate in the fruits of that righteousness (the second grace), through the Holy Spirit who sustains the believers' union with Christ.<sup>121</sup> According to Billings, while imputation of righteousness is a primary gift from God, such a gift gives believers the assurance and confidence that empowers them to make the participatory response to God's grace. In a similar vein, Julie Canlis explores Calvin's understanding of participation in light of his theology of ascent.<sup>122</sup> According to Canlis, Calvin understands that "the purpose of anthropology" or "the telos toward which all creation strains" is a full participation in God, and the way for humans to have this participation is to ascend into heaven. For Calvin, according to Canlis, this ascent is possible only through participating in the ascending pattern of Christ, who has already ascended into heaven,<sup>123</sup> and this participation is achieved only through the power of the Spirit.<sup>124</sup> Both Billings and Canlis, so to speak, are maintaining that Calvin has his own way of sketching participation, even if his concept is not identical with the typical participatory ontology.<sup>125</sup>

Both Canlis and Billings point out that the controversy between Calvin and Osiander should not be considered as a debate about the external pardoning (Calvin) *versus* the internal, substantial infusion of righteousness (Osiander), given that both Calvin and Osiander were opposed to "an abstract, forensic view of righteousness" and emphasized the mutual indwelling of God and believers.<sup>126</sup> According to Billings and

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<sup>120</sup> For example, Radical Orthodoxy school is one of these groups. See John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, *Radical Orthodoxy a New Theology* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>121</sup> J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed.(OUP Oxford, 2007).

<sup>122</sup> Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2010).

<sup>123</sup> While in Greek metaphysics and medieval Christianity participation is understood as the individual soul's ascending to the divine essence for the sake of union with it, according to Canlis, Calvin understands that humanity's ascent is possible only through participation in Christ's own ascent. See Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 1-17.

<sup>124</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 99.

<sup>125</sup> For example, see Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 6-14.

<sup>126</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 139.

Canlis, it is a controversy between two concepts of participation: while Osiander envisions believers' union with Christ as a "possession of Christ's divine righteousness by the infusion of the divine into the believer,"<sup>127</sup> and thus in his theology humanity becomes overwhelmed by the divinity of Christ "by the infusion both of his essence and of his quality,"<sup>128</sup> Calvin understands that the only bond of our union with Christ is the Holy Spirit, only through whom believers participate in Christ. According to Billings and Canlis, for Calvin, humanity's participation in God is possible when humanity is "brought by the Spirit to share in the Son, to the glory of the Father."<sup>129</sup>

What is remarkable in Calvin's scheme of participation is that light is shed equally upon the whole person of Christ and the Holy Spirit. Whereas in Osiander's scheme Christ's humanity is virtually irrelevant for believers' participation in God, since it is enabled only through the infusion of his divinity,<sup>130</sup> Calvin appreciates the role of Christ's humanity, as well as his divinity, for our life of faith, since it is only through the humanity He shares with us that we can participate in Him.<sup>131</sup> Accordingly, for Calvin, we need to be put into the whole person of Christ, who is truly and eternally both divine and human in terms of the Chalcedonian formula, in order to have access to the Father in our on-going faithful life. However, it is not only because Christ is human but also because the Spirit unites us with Christ that we can participate in Christ. Calvin writes, "[W]e are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh' (Gen 2:23); not because, like ourselves, he has a human nature, but because, by the power of his Spirit, he makes us a part of his body, so that from him we derive our life."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 57.

<sup>128</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 140.

<sup>129</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 143. This exposition corresponds to the Trinitarian paradigm of divine-human relationship stated previously: humanity, through participating in the pattern of Christ, the ascent, in the power of the Spirit, can be drawn to the Father, the ultimate source.

<sup>130</sup> Calvin's fullest refutation of Osiander's doctrine of justification is found in *Institutes* (1559), 3.11.5-12. See also Calvin, "Contra Osiandrum," the English translation of which is available in *Cabin's Ecclesiastical Advice* (trans. Mary Beatty and Benjamin W. Farley; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 32-4.

<sup>131</sup> "There is no other way in which He can become ours than by our faith being directed to His flesh. For no one will ever come to Christ as God who despises Him as man; and therefore, if you wish to have any interest in Christ, you must take care, above all things, that you do not disdain His flesh." *Comm.* John 6:56. For Calvin the humanity of Christ is the channel through which His divinity, including His power, righteousness, and life, are communicated to us. *Comm.* Romans 1:3.

<sup>132</sup> *Comm.* Ephesians 5:30-31. Calvin explains this concept of participation by the example of sanctification. He maintains that believers are not autonomously sanctified by Christ, but become "the person in Christ" through the "power of the Spirit," by which "we are born again in Christ, and become new creatures." *Comm.* John 7:39. In this scheme, as Canlis notes, Christ sanctifies himself, instead of sanctifying believers, and makes them partake of Himself, through the Spirit, and finally leads them to the Father. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself..."

In this Trinitarian scheme of divine-human participation, the distinction between the Creator and creature is preserved.<sup>133</sup> Unlike Osiander, who Calvin says “forces gross mingling of Christ with believers...by an inflowing of substance,” Calvin makes it clear that the Spirit “works in us without rendering us consubstantial with God.”<sup>134</sup> That is to say, even as we participate in the relationship with God, our creaturely integrity is preserved, and we are not directly ushered into the divine substance. This should not be understood to decrease the reality of participation in God<sup>135</sup>: rather, as Canlis notes, it has a strong advantage of highlighting the concept of communion or *koinonia* between God and humanity in Calvin’s scheme of participation.<sup>136</sup> While Osiander’s doctrine of participation “could in no way be an instance of communion...but rather of sameness,” Canlis explains, participation in Calvin’s thought is that which brings together two “unlikes...in a relationship of mutual indwelling” in the Spirit.<sup>137</sup> In this scheme, humans can be viewed as an active subject of communion to the extent that they participate in Christ. Granted, while Canlis describes this participation in Christ by the Holy Spirit as a “non-substantial” participation, Calvin himself, as Billings points out, often speaks about our participating in the substance of Christ,<sup>138</sup> and never designates this as a “non-substantial” participation.<sup>139</sup> As Billings notes, what Calvin means by our participation in Christ’s substance is not that we receive Christ’s substance by transfusion or inflowing, but that we receive it through being oneness with Christ and members of His Body, the church,

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It is, because he consecrated himself to the Father, that his holiness might come to us; for as the blessing on the first fruits is spread over the whole harvest, so the Spirit of God cleanses us by the holiness of Christ, and makes us partakers of it. Nor is this done by imputation only, for in that respect he is said to have been made to us righteousness; but he is likewise said to have been made to us sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30), because he has, so to speak, presented us to his Father in his own person, that we may be renewed to true holiness by his Spirit.” *Comm. John 17:19*.

<sup>133</sup> As Canlis notes, the concept of adoption is the model of this participation. Expounding the meaning of Christ’s baptism, Calvin teaches that the declaration of Christ as God’s “beloved Son” looks to our participation in the Sonship. *Comm. John 15:9*. See Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 135. In this scheme, while humans can become the sons of God “by adoption,” they are distinguished from the Son, for only he is the Son of God “by nature.” *Comm. John 20:18*. Also see *Institutes* (1559), 2.14.5.

<sup>134</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.15.5.

<sup>135</sup> *Comm. John 17:10*. See also Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 138.

<sup>136</sup> Canlis notes that the pitfalls of the word of participation can be avoided by the notion of ascent which she explains in a thoroughly Trinitarian language. Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 4. We will come back to this issue below.

<sup>137</sup> Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 142. According to Canlis, Calvin’s Trinitarian scheme renders his concept a “participation-as-koinonia” rather than “participation-as-infusion.”

<sup>138</sup> For example, see *comm. Corinthians 11:24*.

<sup>139</sup> Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 62-3.

in power of the Holy Spirit. For Calvin, in other words, our participation in Christ is that which is substantiated in the ecclesial context. As noted, our participation in Christ is not merely His divinity but in His humanity. This implies that while our substance does not mingle with that of Christ, there is a sort of human, or substantial, dimension in our participation in and communion with Christ.<sup>140</sup>

To sum up, what the doctrine of the Trinity enables in Calvin's theology is this participating relationship between God and humanity, which is in its nature a communion. This relationship of communion accords with Calvin's concept of adoption presented earlier, in which he, while describing the goal of our adoption as being partakers of the divine nature,<sup>141</sup> insists on a difference between Christ who is "the Son of God by nature" and human believers who are the sons "by adoption."<sup>142</sup> While adoption instills the familial intimacy into Calvin's understanding of the divine-human relationship, as it were, it also works as a guard against the loss of distinction between Creator/creature.

This Trinitarian conception of participation is instructive for our living relationship with God. In order to address God as our Father, or to have communion with Him, we do not need to cover or obscure our humanness, which includes, for Calvin, our sinfulness and depravity. What we need, while confessing and revealing our being and sin as they are, is to seek Christ, who, in the power of the Holy Spirit, make us participants in Himself and in His communion with the Father.

If we note that the divine-human relationship hinges upon the living role of Christ, we can say that the role of the Son is to make us partake of Himself and to the on-going communion He has with the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence, those who are to commune with God should first look up to Christ, who is currently in heaven, and seek Him there.<sup>143</sup> In that our communion with the Father is through participation in Christ's communion with the Father, it is Christ who should first be deemed the very subject of this communion. Seeing that the Spirit is the efficacy of our relationship with God, we can assume that the concrete role of the Spirit for this

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<sup>140</sup> "Just as the Spirit preserved the humanity of Christ, enabling all that he did to be a truly human expression and experience...so the Spirit brings humans to participate...in a fully human manner in the Son." Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 138.

<sup>141</sup> *Comm.* 2 Peter 1:4.

<sup>142</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 2.14.5.

<sup>143</sup> "[I]f we ought to think of nothing but what is heavenly, because Christ is in heaven, how much less right would it be to seek Christ on earth!" *Comm.* Colossians 3:1.

communion is to join us to this living person of Christ. All the other benefits of Christ come from this personal joining to Christ.<sup>144</sup>

Calvin's exposition of the Trinity begins with the exhortation of *Sursum Corda*, which is commonly known as the eucharistic exhortation.<sup>145</sup> At the very outset of his thematic consideration of the Trinity, Calvin highlights that due to God's infinity and incomprehensibility, we should *be raised up* above this world, in order to experience God the Trinity.<sup>146</sup> Given the personal character of the knowledge of the Trinity, this is no less than an admonition to expect to be drawn to the presence of Christ, that is, to the right hand of the Father, for which the Holy Spirit must be invoked.

#### **1.4. Heavenly Communion: Significance of Human Ascent**

The uniqueness of Canlis' study is that it explicates the divine-human communion in a dynamic way through the concept of the ascent. According to Canlis, as noted, the purpose of all creation, for Calvin, is communion with God, and though Adam lost this communion in the Fall, the access to it was restored by the coming of Christ, whose mission is "bringing humanity back into the communion that he enjoys with the Father."<sup>147</sup> And this communion is enabled when we partake of Christ's own ascent to the heavenly communion with the Father. According to Canlis, a feature of Calvin's doctrine of the ascent and communion is that, unlike the Greek or medieval metaphysics which teaches the individual soul's ascending to God for the sake of participation in the divine essence, it teaches that our ascent hinges upon participation in Christ's own ascent to heaven and the Father. In this sense, according to Canlis, what governs the ascent is the doctrine of the Trinity, in Calvin's theology, since the ascent is "initiated by the love of the Father, enacted by the Son, and enabled by the Spirit."<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> This is evocative of Calvin's description of Christ as the very goal of the eucharist: "I do not see how anyone can trust that he has...redemption, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal life, and all other benefits Christ gives to us...unless he relies chiefly upon a true participation in Christ himself." All those benefits of Christ, according to Calvin, "would not come to us unless Christ first made himself ours." *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.11.

<sup>145</sup> "Lift up your hearts." This is the first mention of this crucial theme of this thesis, which will propose the *Sursum Corda* and our ascent into heaven as the essence of the eucharistic communion. I shall try to give an account of this in relation to the Lord's Supper in chapters 2, 3, and 7.

<sup>146</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.1. "Indeed his spiritual nature forbids our imagining anything earthly or carnal of him. For the same reason, he quite often assigns to himself a dwelling place in heaven...because he sees that our slow minds sink down upon the earth...in order to shake off our sluggishness and inertia he raises us above the world."

<sup>147</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 125.

<sup>148</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 127.

Indeed, Calvin set forth an idea of our ascent as a way for communion with the heavenly Father, suggesting it as a Trinitarian event, which is accomplished in the pattern of Christ. Calvin teaches that when Christ said “I go up to the Father,” it is in order to gather “believers into participation in the Father,” and for this reason “Christ descended to us, to bear us up to the Father, and at the same time to bear us up to himself, inasmuch as he is one with the Father.”<sup>149</sup> Calvin also writes: “if we are members of Christ we must ascend into heaven, because He...was received up into heaven that He might draw us with Him.”<sup>150</sup> In this ascent, therefore, Christ is both the “destination to which we move” and “the path by which we go.”<sup>151</sup> Christ is also referred to as the “ladder” through which “ministering angels, righteousness and life, with all the graces of the Holy Spirit, descend to us step by step” and we also “ascend even unto God.”<sup>152</sup> This notion of ascent corresponds to the typical conception of the Trinitarian communion, in which we are drawn to the Father, the fountain and object, through the Son, the way, in the efficacy of the Holy Spirit.

While Canlis’ study has the merit of restoring the theme of ascent in Calvin’s theology, and thus of illuminating Calvin’s distinctive concept of *koinonia*, her study leaves out of account Calvin’s understanding of the ascent as more an immediate event, which happens in the real life of the godly, just as one Calvin confessed he himself had experienced. He says: “[T]hat abundant sweetness which God has stored up for those who fear him cannot be known without at the same time powerfully moving us. And once anyone has been moved by it, it utterly ravishes him and draws him to itself. Therefore, it is no wonder if a perverse and wicked heart never experiences that emotion by which, borne up to heaven itself, we are admitted to the most hidden treasures of God and to the most hallowed precincts of his Kingdom...”<sup>153</sup> As for our celebration of the Lord’s Supper, Calvin also teaches that “we must rise up to heaven” in the sacrament,<sup>154</sup> as [Christ] raises us to Himself by his Spirit.<sup>155</sup> This implies that, for the

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<sup>149</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.13.26.

<sup>150</sup> *Comm.* Colossians 3:1.

<sup>151</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.2.1.

<sup>152</sup> *Comm.* Genesis 28:12.

<sup>153</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.2.41.

<sup>154</sup> *Comm.* Corinthians 11:24.

<sup>155</sup> *Exposition of the Heads of Agreement*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:240.

reformer, our Trinitarian ascent is not just an eschatological end of all creatures, through which we enter the eternal communion with God, but is also a present-time event that all believers can or should experience. While the meaning and substance of this ascent is not totally clear, we can assume that this is a moment of our condensed experience of communion with God. While we are basically in communion with God, through Christ in heaven,<sup>156</sup> we at times intensively experience being drawn to this Christ and to the heavenly communion He has with the Father.

We cannot posit that the ascent in Calvin's usage is a physical movement, since what he means by heaven here is not a physical place above the spheres. While Calvin admits that "spatial distance is clearly indicated...when Christ is said to be taken up to heaven," he qualifies it as follows: "But there is no reason why He may not be absent from us, and that by this word 'heaven' there may not be meant a separation from the world...it is evident that 'heaven' into which Christ was received is set over against the fabric of the world." For Calvin Christ's being in heaven only means that "He is outside of the world."<sup>157</sup> Granted that Calvin does not understand heaven in a physical sense, it is beyond doubt that by using the notion of ascent Calvin intends to mean a sort of change-of-reality. Just as Christ has entered into the heaven by way of death and many afflictions, or as He "was raised on high after he placed himself so low," humans, who are "in the depths of the curse," or "in hell itself,"<sup>158</sup> ascend unto God, and unto the glorious heaven.

Calvin portrays Christ's own descent to the earth as the basis of our ascent, highlighting the bi-directionality of our communion with God. The incarnation is the original descending movement, in which the "only Mediator...reaches from heaven to earth," and "through which we, in turn, ascend to God."<sup>159</sup> In order to lead us to ascend to God, Calvin says, Christ "descended to us to take on our flesh, which he joined to his divinity."<sup>160</sup> Without the Son of God who had descended to them and now draws them

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<sup>156</sup> *Comm.* John 16:10. Also see sermon on Acts 1:6-8.

<sup>157</sup> *Comm.* Acts 1:11.

<sup>158</sup> *Comm.* Genesis 28:12.

<sup>159</sup> *Comm.* Genesis 28:12. "Descending to earth," Calvin also expresses, "he[Christ] has prepared an ascent to heaven for us; that, becoming Son of man with us, he has made us sons of God with him." *Institutes* (1536), 4.24. Calvin speaks of Christ as One who "connects heaven and earth" or who "reaches from heaven down to earth," as "the medium through which the fullness of all celestial blessings flows down to us, and through which we, in turn, ascend to God." See *Comm. Gen.* 28:12.

<sup>160</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.12.

to heaven, Calvin says, there is no other way for humans to aspire to what is on high.<sup>161</sup> This is to say, our present time ascent is also based on this descent of Christ, who, while currently in heaven, reaches down to humans, and lifts them up into heaven.<sup>162</sup> This descent of Christ is often depicted as Christ's "stretching out his hand" to raise humanity.<sup>163</sup> This idea of Christ's descent should not be taken literally, because Calvin believes that the whole person of Christ now remains in heaven. For our ascent, however, God still gives a "token of his [Christ's] presence,"<sup>164</sup> in the power of the Holy Spirit, upon which our participation in Christ and in the ascending pattern of Him is based.<sup>165</sup> In sum, our ascent into heaven is a dynamic event, which hinges upon Christ's descending movement of presence. We can say that Christ's own ascension and subsequent residence in heaven from us grants a temporal and experiential dimension to our communion with God.<sup>166</sup>

While Canlis holds that this Trinitarian notion of ascent would have "far-reaching implications" for Christian discipleship,<sup>167</sup> the nature of this notion is not altogether clear. Seeing that Calvin considers our participation in Christ as the "highest

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<sup>161</sup> *Comm.* Ephesians 4:10. The aim of the descending pattern of Christ, for Calvin, is the upward movement of humanity: "[A]s it has not been granted to us to reach the height of God, Christ descended to us to raise us to it. 'You ought to have rejoiced,' he says, 'because I return to the Father'; for this is the ultimate object at which you ought to aim. By these words he does not show in what respect he differs in himself from the Father, but why he descended to us; and that was that he might unite us to God; for until we have reached that point, we are, as it were, in the middle of the course. We too imagine to ourselves but a half-Christ, and a mutilated Christ, if he do not lead us to God." *Comm.* John 14:28. Here Calvin goes so far as to call Christ a "semi-Christ" or "mutilated Christ" if his descent to humans does not lead their ascent back to the Father and their participating relationship with Him.

<sup>162</sup> For Calvin, as Canlis notes, this descent of Christ is also the Trinitarian event, which is "initiated by the love of the Father, enacted by the Son, and enabled by the Spirit." Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 127.

<sup>163</sup> "For how shall any mortal man ascend to the height of God, unless he be raised on high by the hand of his Son? God in Christ condescended to the mean condition of men, so as to stretch out his hand..." *Comm.* John 8:19.

<sup>164</sup> *Comm.* Genesis 35:13. "For God, who fills the heavens and earth, is yet said to descend to us, though he changes not his place, whenever he gives us any token of presence; a mode of expression adopted in accommodation to our littleness."

<sup>165</sup> The notion of ascent is instructive in that it gives salience to a temporal sense, which permeates Calvin's understanding of divine-human relationship. In a general sense, for Calvin, Christ's ascent itself is the basis for believers to have the eschatological faith which is oriented "toward the goal of the upward call." Calvin exhorts believers to have eyes fixed on heaven, where the ascended Christ dwells, since our *koinonia* with God, the goal of our salvation, will be fulfilled only in heaven in the final day. At the same time, however, it is also true that believers, in their on-going Christian life, can be exalted into heaven, due to the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, through participation in Christ, and experience communion with God, though not yet *koinonia* of a fulfilled sense. In this sense, the upward call is also relevant for believers who hope to experience this *koinonia* in their on-going faithful life.

<sup>166</sup> According to Calvin, true Christian "faith" or "to believe in God" is to know that "God has sent us Jesus Christ to lead us up higher." In this sense, Christ is "the very mark or target" of our faith. *Sermons on Ephesians*, 4:11-14, p. 380.

<sup>167</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 127.

honour of the church,”<sup>168</sup> we can say with fair certainty that this ascent is basically a model for the church, and especially for the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, in which, as will be seen in the following chapters, Calvin believes there our ascent into heaven and our heavenly communion is found.<sup>169</sup> A. M. Hunter holds that Calvin’s notion of our eucharistic ascent is merely a matter of “imagining that we are mysteriously transported to heaven.”<sup>170</sup> However, as Brian Gerrish and Christopher Kaiser argue, we do not have any substantial ground for dismissing Calvin’s notion of ascent as merely a “figure of speech to describe a mental attitude.”<sup>171</sup> We will return to this issue in succeeding chapters.

Perhaps one cannot readily concur with Canlis’ view that the way for believers to have communion with God is through “participation in” Christ, *rather than* through a “response to” God. She says that without participation in Christ, “the Christian life could never be a matter of mere grateful response to Christ’s descent.”<sup>172</sup> Here Canlis’ emphasis on “participation” rather than “response” gives an impression that she dilutes the meaning of human reaction to God.<sup>173</sup> While Calvin, as Canlis argues, underlines the necessity of believers’ conforming to the likeness of Christ, rather than “commendation of virtue,”<sup>174</sup> this emphasis is accompanied by exhortation to “give and devote” themselves to righteousness, which is the “one condition” for their being engrafted into Him. “Ever since he engrafted us into his body,” Calvin further says, “we

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<sup>168</sup> “This is the highest honour of the church, that, unless He is united to us, the Son of God reckons Himself in some measure imperfect. What an encouragement it is for us to hear, that, not until He has us as one with Himself, is He complete in all His parts, or does He wish to be regarded as whole! Hence in 1 Corinthians, when Paul uses the metaphor of the human body, he includes under the single name of Christ the whole Church.” *Comm. Ephesians* 1:23.

<sup>169</sup> Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 159. See also Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 129-141.

<sup>170</sup> A Mitchell Hunter, *The Teaching of Calvin: A Modern Interpretation*, vol. 2nd rev ed (London: James Clarke & Co, 1950), 187.

<sup>171</sup> Christopher B. Kaiser, “Climbing Jacob’s Ladder: John Calvin and the Early Church on Our Eucharistic Ascent to Heaven,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56, no. 3 (2003): 252. While Gerrish considers the possibility that Calvin’s spatial language concerning the eucharistic feeding on Christ’s body stands for a purely “mental or cognitive operation”, he concludes that there is no ground for such an assumption. B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 175.

<sup>172</sup> Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 128.

<sup>173</sup> For example, quoting the passage from the *Institutes* (1559), 3.6.3, where Calvin disputes moral philosophers who exhort believers “to virtue” and “to live in accordance with nature,” Canlis concludes that for Calvin “humanity’s ascent to the Father is not as the moral philosophers envisioned, by ‘virtue’ and ‘nature,’ but could only be framed in terms of the Spirit bringing humanity to participate in Christ’s ascent,” which is the “first fruits of the human return to communion with the Father,” and without such participation in Christ’s ascent, we shall leave “the human-to-God trajectory to the realm of human *response*.” Canlis, *Calvin’s Ladder*, 128. My emphasis.

<sup>174</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.6.3.

must take special care not to disfigure ourselves” and “ought to strive manfully to keep...our bodies and souls...pure and uncorrupted.”<sup>175</sup> According to Calvin, this is our response to God’s act of making us partakers of Christ, and also the mode of our aspiring heavenward and rising above the nature of man.<sup>176</sup>

Billings has indicated that in Calvin’s terminology, believers’ ascent can be understood as believers’ act of response to God’s foregoing grace, signified by His descent.<sup>177</sup> Given all this, perhaps when we understand the human reaction as a form of human ascent to God, though not exactly the same as it, it would better correspond to the above-mentioned scheme of Trinitarian adoption in which, when the Father becomes a Father to us, in his beloved only-begotten Son, humans are supplied “the very words,” by the Spirit, so that they can cry, “Abba, Father!”<sup>178</sup> Given the role of the “Spirit of adoption,” crying “Abba” here is a confirmation of the filial or familial relationship into which we are ushered, and the “Spirit of adoption” leads the “children of God” to resemble “their Heavenly Father in righteousness and holiness,”<sup>179</sup> to serve Him with a firm trust that will be approved by Him, however small, rude, and imperfect it may be,<sup>180</sup> and to “taste the fatherly favour of God and the beneficence of Christ.”<sup>181</sup> We can see here that this ascent of response is in no sense humanity’s autonomous reaction towards God, but something empowered by the Triune economy. While this upward human response does not make the divine-human correspondence a sort of one-to-one transaction, in that it is consistently initiated by the activity of the Triune God, it is obvious that it comprises an integral part of the divine-human relationship.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.6.3.

<sup>176</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.6.3.

<sup>177</sup> Having pointed out that Calvin’s concept of participation is interwoven with *koinonia* such that it involves a “communion of mutual interpenetration and indwelling,” Billings explicates Calvin’s notion of participation in terms of both descent and ascent: while God’s gracious act of Incarnation and death is represented by His descent, “participation in the resurrection and ascension of Christ,” which entails the duties of love and a life consecrated to God is represented by the ascent. Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift*, 103 and 136.

<sup>178</sup> See footnote 105.

<sup>179</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.18.1.

<sup>180</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.19.5.

<sup>181</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.1.2.

<sup>182</sup> Butin has argued that in Calvin’s theology of worship his theocentric view is balanced by the bi-directional movement between God and humans. He writes: “The initiatory ‘downward’ movement of Christian worship begins in the Father’s gracious and free revelation of the divine nature to the church through the Son, by means of the Spirit. In more concrete terms, this takes place in the proclamation of the Word according to scripture, by the empowerment and illumination of the Spirit...The ‘upward’ movement of human response in worship... is also fundamentally motivated by God. Human response – the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving – arises from the

## 1.5. Conclusion

So far we have attempted to capture the essence of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, with an emphasis on its role in his understanding of divine-human relationship. For Calvin the doctrine of the Trinity is by no means a mere speculation, because its fundamental aim is to call forth a personal communion between God and human believers, that is, the church. Whereas Calvin's thinking consistently presupposes a dichotomy between the transcendent God and humble humans, even in case the humans are already believers, this dichotomy is overcome by the Trinitarian economy which empowers humans to have communion with God, through partaking of the Son, in the efficacy of the Holy Spirit.

This divine-human communion is a dynamic concept. Calvin's discourse on the divine-human communion is permeated with the language of downward and upward movement, both of which are thoroughly enabled by the economy of the Trinity. In the power of the Spirit, the Son reaches down to humans, and hoists them up to heaven so that they can have fellowship with the Father. And the ascent of believers consists in their response towards the downward economy of God. In this scheme, while it is the Triune God who initiates this communion, humans can also be recognized as a true subject of the experience, given that their reaction to God's economy comprises the integral part of the relationship. The essential point of our communion with God is that it hinges upon Christ's present-tense involvement in it: Christ is not one for whose death we should give thanks or praise, but one in whose present being we should participate, in the power of the Spirit.

Given all this, in sum, Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity is what enables our relationship with God, safeguarding the personal, experiential, and interactive dimension of the relationship. In the subsequent chapters, it will be shown that for Calvin public worship and the sacraments are an arena where this relationship between God and humanity is enacted.

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faith that has its source in the indwelling Holy Spirit. In that Spirit, prayer, devotion, and obedience are offered to God the Father, who is the proper object of worship, through the Son Jesus Christ, who being fully divine and fully human is the mediator of the church's worship." See Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 102. This is indeed a Trinitarian vision in which each Person of the Trinity is depicted as having a specific role in the intrinsic movement of worship: the Father is origin and initiator, the Son is mediator, and the Spirit is enabler. In this scheme, God is not merely the One to whom worship is directed, but is also active in worship. While being an event charged with Trinitarian activity, however, this activity also entails a human reaction to God, which is described as an upward movement by humanity.

## Chapter 2

### The Trinity and the Lord's Supper

In the foregoing chapter we explored the core features of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, particularly those which form the paradigm of the divine-human relationship. Prior to examining their implications for the Lord's Supper, we shall go through a chronological study of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity and sacraments, with the purpose of showing the connection between the two doctrines.

Recently Sue Rozeboom demonstrated that Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity was one of the sources of his robustly pneumatological doctrine of the Lord's Supper.<sup>183</sup> It was with the emergence of his Trinitarian understanding of the Holy Spirit as the "bond" between Christ and humanity, according to Rozeboom, that Calvin came to assert boldly the reality of our partaking of the true body and blood of Christ.<sup>184</sup> Drawing upon Rozeboom's study, this chapter attempts to reveal that Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity was a consistent basis of his doctrine of Lord's Supper, upon which the sacrament came to be conceived of as the vessel for the divine-human communion presented in the previous chapter.

For this, we will first consider the period 1536-1539, when, as Rozeboom showed, Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity underwent significant refinement,<sup>185</sup> in order to see how directly and robustly the refinement was carried forward to shape the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. This section will be an expansion and adaptation of Rozeboom's

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<sup>183</sup> Sue A. Rozeboom, "The Provenance of John Calvin's Emphasis on the Role of the Holy Spirit Regarding the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" (University of Notre Dame, 2010).

<sup>184</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 175-212.

<sup>185</sup> Only few attempts have so far been made to trace the development of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity. In dealing briefly with the Trinitarian controversies that Calvin was involved with throughout his theological career, Butin simply concludes that what constituted the focus of Calvin's Trinitarian concern was a "commitment to uphold the biblical economy of redemption," and that "through the many Trinitarian controversies of his ministry, Calvin's commitment to the orthodox Trinitarian doctrine was motivated by his sense that it was the immediate theological implication of the New Testament teaching of God's gracious redemption of believers in Christ." See Philip Walker Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin's Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship* (OUP USA, 1995), 38. However, Butin's approach seems so preoccupied with this thesis as to intimate that Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity did not undergo any change or development. According to Butin, it is his first edition of the *Institutes* (1536) that reveals Calvin's Trinitarian thinking with more clarity, since in the later versions "patristic citation, polemical discussion, and dogmatic detail make the basic structure and movement of Calvin's theology of redemption less immediately evident." Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 27. Given that the significant passages on the Trinity in the first edition of the *Institutes* found their way into the later versions, although they became scattered, it can be agreed that the keynote of Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity was maintained even after the first *Institutes*. As shall be seen in this chapter, however, Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity underwent a kind of refinement, though not a substantial change, during the early stage of his career. His language regarding the doctrine became more sophisticated with time, and with these refinements, the doctrine became carried forward to enrich his theology of worship and the sacraments more directly.

study. Secondly, we will look into the period after 1539, when, while his doctrine of the Trinity seemingly did not undergo further significant refinement, Calvin still increasingly worked out the Trinitarian concepts which had been previously established.

## 2.1. The *Institutes* of 1536

### 2.1.1. The Trinity

While Calvin wrote his first 1536 edition of the *Institutes* as an apologetic defence of the French evangelicals against King Francis I, who equated the evangelicals with Anabaptist agitators,<sup>186</sup> the initial *Institutes* was primarily a catechetical work,<sup>187</sup> which, like most antecedent catechetical writings, includes expositions of the Decalogue, the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments.<sup>188</sup> Calvin's explication of the doctrine of the Trinity is given in the exposition of the Apostle's Creed, which is located in the second chapter on *Faith*, and particularly in a lengthy preamble to the exposition, where he affirms the traditional position of the ancient orthodox fathers, regarding the one *ousia* and the three *hypostaseis*, and rejects "the heretical alternative extremes of Arianism and Sabellianism."<sup>189</sup>

Even in this initial *Institutes* the characteristics of Calvin's Trinitarian doctrine, which are presented in the foregoing chapter, are extensively recognized and captured in this exposition of the Trinity. Admitting that the Trinity is a "deep and hidden" mystery, which cannot be fully apprehended by human intelligence and reasoning,<sup>190</sup> Calvin wrestles with the roles attributed to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in the scriptural story of creation, humankind, and their salvation.<sup>191</sup> Even in his exposition of the

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<sup>186</sup> W. de Greef, *The writings of John Calvin: an introductory guide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 195-8.

<sup>187</sup> According to Richard Muller, Calvin "had begun to compose the *Institutes* as a catechetical manual some time before his decision to address the volume to Francis I" and thus "the apologetic thrust of the address was in fact secondary to the original intention of the document." Richard A Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 26.

<sup>188</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 179.

<sup>189</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 27, See *Institutes* (1536), 2.9.

<sup>190</sup> "For there are three distinct persons, but one essence, as has been said. As these are deep and hidden mysteries, they ought rather to be adored than investigated, inasmuch as neither our intelligence nor our tongue – by nature or capacity – ought, or is able to encompass these mysteries." *Institutes* (1536), 2.20.

<sup>191</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 179. Calvin's soteriological concern is evident in his exposition of the second part of the Creed, where he expands on Jesus Christ who, being a mediator between God and men, reconciles humanity, who "in all respect differs from God's majesty," to divinity. Not surprisingly, Calvin's explication of Christ's mediatorship, and God's dwelling with humans through the Son, is built on the dialectical ground between the transcendent God and lowly humans. See *Institutes* (1536), 2.12.

confession “*I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth,*” where he says the Father created all things “by his word” and “by his Power,” Calvin’s focus is not merely on God’s past-tense economy of creation but on His present act of sustaining and nourishing the life of the faithful who are created by Him.<sup>192</sup> In the exposition of the second article of the creed, Calvin’s affirmation of Christ as the only begotten Son of the Father, who has “the same nature and substance or essence,”<sup>193</sup> directly switches over to the Son’s salvific mission of making humans beings “children of God out of children of men.”<sup>194</sup> At the same time, Calvin’s expressions seemingly demonstrate an innate realization that the economic Trinity cannot be extricated from the ontological Trinity, particularly when he says that through this economy God Himself, in Christ, is near humans, dwells with them, and is present with them.<sup>195</sup> While it is governed by the soteriological concern, Calvin’s exposition does not smack of a functional theism, since it highlights the significance of the personal and existential dimension of the soteriological relationship between God and His people.

Already in this initial *Institutes*, Calvin proposes “the distinction of properties,”<sup>196</sup> while it is not always explicitly applied to his statements.<sup>197</sup> Also, by depicting the Son as “way” and the Holy Spirit “guide and leader” to the Father,<sup>198</sup> Calvin affirms the Trinitarian formula of the divine-human communication in which the Holy Spirit, the effect, unites human believers to the Son, the pattern, for their communion with the Father, the fountain.

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<sup>192</sup> “As he once established, so now he sustains, nourishes, activates, preserves, by his goodness and power, apart from which all things would immediately collapse and fall into nothingness...by his protection we are kept safe, defended, and preserved from any unfriendly force causing us harm.” *Institutes* (1536), 2.10.

<sup>193</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.11.

<sup>194</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.12.

<sup>195</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.12.

<sup>196</sup> “When we hear ‘three’ we are to distinguish in this one essence, nevertheless, three properties. Indeed Scripture so distinguishes these as to attribute to the Father the beginning of acting and the fountain and source of all things; to assign to the Son the wisdom and plan of acting; to refer to the Spirit the power and effective working of action.” *Institutes* (1536), 2.9.

<sup>197</sup> Some roles that are in one passage attributed to the office of the Holy Spirit are sometimes attributed to the office of the Son. See *Institutes* (1536), 2.17. Even when connecting the office of the Son with that of the Holy Spirit, a detailed account on the Spirit’s role is usually omitted. For example, see *Institutes* (1536), 2.10; 2.14; 2.17.

<sup>198</sup> “We are persuaded that there is for us no other guide and leader to the Father than the Holy Spirit, just as there is no other way than Christ; and that there is no grace from God, save through the Holy Spirit. Grace is itself the power and action of the Spirit: through grace God the Father, in the Son, accomplishes whatever good there is; [through grace, He empowers and sustains all things, causes them to grow, and quickens them:] through grace, He justifies, sanctifies, and cleanses us, calls and draws us to himself, that we may attain to salvation.” *Institutes* (1536), 2.20.

Given the centrality of the present-tense life of the godly in Calvin's discussion of God's economy, we may say that the Holy Spirit plays a pivotal part in Calvin's Trinitarian discourse. Calvin accentuates the role of the Holy Spirit particularly with respect to benefits believers receive from Christ: the work of the Spirit, in Calvin's exposition, is basically linked to our "receiving."<sup>199</sup> Therefore, even when Calvin exhorts believers to depend upon Christ alone, since the whole sum of their salvation and all the heavenly treasures are laid in him and come from him,<sup>200</sup> Calvin stresses that all receiving from Christ is effectuated only by the Holy Spirit. Since "there is no grace from God, save through the Holy Spirit," Calvin says, "grace is itself the power and action of the Spirit," and it is only through this Spirit's empowering grace that "God the Father, in the Son, accomplishes whatever good there is."<sup>201</sup> This exposition corresponds with Calvin's overall Trinitarian scheme in which any divine-human relationship is effectuated by the Holy Spirit.

Calvin explains Christ's act of salvation in terms of Christ's descent and ascent. Christ "descended to us to take on our flesh," and to join it to his divinity, "since it was not in us to ascend to God."<sup>202</sup> The purpose of the preceding descent of Christ towards us is to "make us the heirs of the heavenly Kingdom."<sup>203</sup> All this is possible since the Son of God, by descending to us, "had taken what was ours as to impart what was his to us, and to make what was his by nature ours by grace."<sup>204</sup> These notions of Christ's descent and ascent, and of the soteriological exchange - "all that is Christ's becoming ours, and all that is ours becoming Christ's" - is the basis for the pattern of our dynamic communion with God.

While Calvin brings forth major Trinitarian concepts which continue to appear in his subsequent editions of the *Institutes* already in this initial exposition of the Trinity, however, we cannot yet say that Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity presented in this initial exposition is matured enough to convey the Trinitarian paradigm of divine-human relationship discussed in the previous chapter. In this initial exposition, as Sue

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<sup>199</sup> According to Calvin, "the Spirit has rested upon him[Christ], and has poured itself out wholly upon him" in order to make believers "receive from him [Christ]." *Institutes* (1536), 2.14.

<sup>200</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.19.

<sup>201</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.20.

<sup>202</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.12.

<sup>203</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.12.

<sup>204</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.12.

Rozeboom notes, while Calvin’s depiction of “wonderful exchange” figures prominently, the soteriological notion of “union with Christ,” a notion that is prominent as the basis for the exchange in Calvin’s mature theology, is not so prominent.<sup>205</sup> This implies that while the true humanity of Christ and His mediatorship based on that humanity stand out in Calvin’s discussion,<sup>206</sup> Christ is conceived of not so much as One to be personally encountered and participated in as One from whom believers receive benefits. Moreover, even when there are glimpses of the concept of union with Christ, “most often suggested with the words *communio* and *participatio*,”<sup>207</sup> Calvin mostly does not mention the work of the Holy Spirit, which is noticeable given Calvin’s understanding of the Spirit’s “power” and “efficacy.”<sup>208</sup> As shall be seen below, this is presumably due to the fact that at this stage, despite his overall emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit is not yet further understood as an “agent” of our personal union or communion with Christ, but more as an agent of our receiving or recognizing benefits from Christ.<sup>209</sup> Even when there is a glimpse of the concept of “participation,” Calvin describes the Spirit as one of the benefits of participation in Christ, but not as an agent of that participation.<sup>210</sup>

Perhaps by the same token, in the passages where he is expected to teach Christ’s presence with us, Calvin stops short of asserting the reality of His personal being with us, only saying that Christ, although he was lifted up into heaven, “does not refuse to be present with his believers *in help and might*, and to show the *manifest power of his presence*.”<sup>211</sup> Here again, there is no mention of the Holy Spirit as the agent of this presence of Christ. Note that just before the discussion of Christ’s ascension, Calvin underscores that His humanity is a genuine humanity. Calvin’s relatively passive manner of emphasizing believers’ union with Christ is probably due to

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<sup>205</sup> Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 183.

<sup>206</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.12.

<sup>207</sup> Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 184. In the footnote 612, Rozeboom specifies where Calvin brings forth the concepts of communion and participation in the 1536 *Institutes*.

<sup>208</sup> Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 184.

<sup>209</sup> “[D]welling in us,” the Spirit “illuminates us with his light, in order that we may learn and plainly recognize what an enormous wealth of divine goodness we possess in Christ.” *Institutes* (1536), 2. 20.

<sup>210</sup> “If we partake of Christ, in Him we shall possess all the heavenly treasures and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which lead us into life and salvation.” See *Institutes* (1536), 1.6.

<sup>211</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.17. My emphasis. This is a part of Calvin’s exposition on the confession “he ascended into heaven.” Here Calvin attributes some works that are previously attributed to the office of the Holy Spirit to the office of the Son.

the physical limits of those who have humanity. Despite Calvin's emphasis on the ontological nature of our relationship with God, this makes his whole exposition smack of a functional Christology.

### 2.1.2. Trinity in Sacraments

Already in his exposition of the creed, Calvin had argued that the Trinity is not an object of "human understanding" but of "worship."<sup>212</sup> In his exposition of the sacraments, we can easily recognize the Trinitarian concepts that are based upon his exposition of the creed. At this stage, however, we cannot say that such notions have been fully enriched by his doctrine of the Trinity.

While Calvin's early doctrine of the sacraments is sometimes understood as showing Zwinglian accents, by reason of its lacking thoroughly realistic expressions, e.g. instrumentalist language,<sup>213</sup> Calvin's nuance even in his first *Institutes* is far from that of those who understand the sacraments as *signa nuda*, empty and meaningless signs, or as man's pledge to God. This is perhaps because of Calvin's understanding that the sacraments are the occasions of God's working, though Calvin's language is not always clear about whether it is an actual working or a pledge of that working. Saying that baptism must be taken "as if it were from the very hand of God, from whom it doubtless is sent," Calvin argues that "we ought to deem it certain and proved" that in baptism God "speaks to us through the sign," and also "purifies, washes away and wipes out the remembrance of sins," making us sharers in the death of the Son, and clothing us with the Son.<sup>214</sup>

Calvin's emphasis on God's economy is by no means that of a functional theism, since he puts forward the idea of Christ's real presence in the sacraments. While Calvin, following Zwingli, is convinced that Christ is in heaven, where He will remain until he comes again, this does not prevent him from asserting that the purpose of the sacraments is to "direct and almost lead men by the hand to Christ" who is shown forth in the sacraments. While attributing the attestation of our being washed and cleansed to

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<sup>212</sup> "It is fitting that anything that is of human wisdom be here submitted and as it were held captive. And neither prattling inquisitively nor hesitating will advance the worship of such mysteries at all, which far surpass all the captivity of human understanding." *Institutes* (1536), 2.11. This is evocative of Calvin's confession of the mystery of what transpires in the sacraments, which appeared in his 1539 *Institutes* and was maintained to the final edition of the *Institutes*. See *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.7.

<sup>213</sup> Wim Janse, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," *Perichoresis* v.10. Issue 2 (2012), 155.

<sup>214</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.21.

the sacrament of baptism, and our redemption to the Lord's Supper, Calvin also places those two graces in the "person" of the Son, and teaches that just as the Son came in water and blood, to wash and redeem, He is presented to us in the sacraments.<sup>215</sup>

The category of Christ's presence is particularly prominent in his discussion of the Eucharist. "All these things are so perfectly promised in this sacrament, that we must certainly consider him truly shown to us, just as if Christ himself present were set before our gaze and touch by our hands."<sup>216</sup> Though Calvin is using "as if" language regarding Christ's presence, given Calvin's explanation that Christ's body becomes "one substance with us" in the Supper,<sup>217</sup> it would be misleading to deem Calvin's insistence on Christ's presence as a mere rhetoric even at this early stage.

The concept of the wonderful exchange which was broached in his discussion of the Trinity now appears in his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. "[B]ecause we recognize Christ to have been so engrafted in us as we, in turn, have been engrafted in him," in the sacraments, "whatever is his we are permitted to call ours, whatever is ours to reckon as his...we cannot be condemned for our sins any more than can he, because they are not now ours, but his."<sup>218</sup> This exchange is not a transaction of qualities but a personal communion with Christ based on our being one with Him. And this exchange is based upon Christ's act of descent, or of "becoming Son of man with us," with the purpose of making us "sons of God with Him."<sup>219</sup>

As in his exposition of the Trinity in the creed, however, these concepts of Christ's presence and our union with Him, lack a realistic quality, and therefore an ontological quality. In the initial *Institutes*, that which is granted in the sacraments is preeminently a "testimony or attestation of God's good will toward us"<sup>220</sup> or "witness

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<sup>215</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.10. "As for our sacraments, the more closely Christ has been revealed to men, the more clearly do the sacraments present him to us from the time when he was truly revealed by the Father as he had been promised. For baptism attests to us that we have been cleansed and washed; the Eucharistic Supper, that we have been redeemed. In water, washing is represented; in blood, satisfaction. These two are found in Christ "...who," as John says, "came in water and blood"[1 John 5:6]; that is, to wash and to redeem."

<sup>216</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.25.

<sup>217</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.25. "By bidding us take he points out that it is ours. By bidding us eat he points out that it becomes one substance with us."

<sup>218</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.24.

<sup>219</sup> "This is the exchange which out of his measureless goodness he has made with us: that, receiving our poverty unto himself, he has transferred his wealth; that taking our weakness unto himself he has strengthened us by his power; that having received our mortality he has given us his immortality; that, descending to earth, he has prepared an ascent to heaven for us; that, becoming Son of man with us, he has made us sons of God with him." *Institutes* (1536), 4.24. For the concept of union with Christ in baptism, see *Institutes* (1536), 4.19. In the Lord's Supper, 4.24.

<sup>220</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 185.

and proof of the promise of our engrafting in Christ.”<sup>221</sup> At this stage, this is to say, the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is understood as metaphor or analogy<sup>222</sup> of that which “transpires apart from the celebration of the sacrament,”<sup>223</sup> that is, the nourishment of our souls by Christ’s body and blood, but not as an instrument which offers what it represents. The same is true of Calvin’s exposition of baptism, in which the sacrament is described as a “sure testimony” that “we are not only engrafted into the death and life of Christ, but so united and joined to Christ himself that we become sharers in all his blessing.”<sup>224</sup> Accordingly, even though he advocates the presence of Christ in the sacraments, the actuality of such a presence cannot be fully put forth. Indeed, though Calvin insists on the true presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, whether this is the presence of Christ Himself or of His benefits is not altogether clear.<sup>225</sup> In a similar vein, while he teaches that “the body of Christ is offered to us in the sacraments” and that “the Lord so communicates his body to us there that he is made completely one with us and we with him,”<sup>226</sup> this communion lacks the actual and ontological quality.

We might say, along with Rozeboom, that at this stage, Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity, particularly his notion of the Holy Spirit as an “power” or “efficacy” of the sacrament, is “not carried forward to enrich” his exposition of the sacraments.<sup>227</sup> We have seen that Calvin has already taught the distinction of properties, according to which he attributed to the Holy Spirit “power and effective working of action.”<sup>228</sup> However, in the exposition of the sacraments, he tends not to refer to the Holy Spirit, even in dealing with theological concepts for which the power of the Spirit should be considered as pivotal. For example, when saying that the Son, even after His ascension into heaven,<sup>229</sup> can still “exert his power wherever he pleases, in heaven and on earth;

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<sup>221</sup> Zachmann, *Image and Word*, 332.

<sup>222</sup> For example, see *Institutes* (1536), 4.25.

<sup>223</sup> Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 185.

<sup>224</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.19.

<sup>225</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.45. See Thomas J. Davis, *The Clearest Promises of God: The Development of Calvin’s Eucharistic Teaching* (New York: AMS Pr, 1995), 79.

<sup>226</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.34.

<sup>227</sup> Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 184.

<sup>228</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 2.10

<sup>229</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.29. Calvin says that the Son has true humanity which consists in true flesh and bones, and therefore His having ascended into heaven does not “merely signify giving the appearance of one ascending and departing,” but actually “doing what the words state.”

he can show his presence in power and strength; he is always able to be among his own people to live in them, sustain them, strengthen, quicken, keep them, as if he were present in the body,”<sup>230</sup> Calvin does not refer to the work of the Holy Spirit here.

Unlike in his mature works, when he discusses the idea of our communion with Christ in the sacrament, Calvin does not refer to the role of the Holy Spirit.<sup>231</sup> Perhaps this is a consequence of Calvin’s Trinitarian doctrine presented in the exposition of the creed, according to which the Holy Spirit is not yet understood as the “agent” or “bond” of the personal communion with Christ.<sup>232</sup> As in the exposition of the Trinity, he speaks of the Spirit primarily as the One who “brings the graces of God with him, gives a place for the sacraments among us, to make them bear fruit,” and who, opening our minds and hearts, makes us receptive to this benefit.<sup>233</sup> It gives an impression that the Spirit is mainly conceived of as an epistemological power, which illumines our minds so that we can recognize God and His treasures.<sup>234</sup>

It was Calvin’s recognition of Christ’s true humanity, or His whole personality, that led him to speak of Christ’s residence in heaven after His ascension. Since at this point of his career he possibly lacked an understanding of the Spirit as the bond between Christ and the earthly,<sup>235</sup> he seems to have trouble in insisting on the reality of Christ’s presence and our communion with His whole person in the sacraments. In this scheme, accordingly, such concepts cannot help but be understood as an abstract and impersonal notion. Here again, while Calvin insists on the presence of Christ in the Supper, he refers to the Spirit not as One who empowers this presence, but merely as One who witnesses this presence.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.29.

<sup>231</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.34.

<sup>232</sup> For example, Calvin says that “if we partake of Christ, in Him we shall possess all the heavenly treasures and gifts of the Holy Spirit, which lead us into life and salvation.” *Institutes* (1536), 1.6.

<sup>233</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.7.

<sup>234</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.4. “[F]aith is the proper and entire work of the Holy Spirit, illumined by whom we recognize God and the treasures of his kindness, and without whose light our mind is so blinded that it can see nothing; so dull that it can sense nothing of spiritual things.”

<sup>235</sup> As Rozeboom points out, we cannot be certain whether the omission is a genuine demonstration of Calvin’s understanding or it simply did not come to expression. However, given the prominence of his appeal to the office of the Holy Spirit in his later discussions regarding the Lord’s Supper, as Rozeboom suggests, it is probable that Calvin’s thought actually developed in this area in the mid-late 1530s. See Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 184, n. 613.

<sup>236</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.10.

## 2.2. Traces of Development

After the first edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin went through years of turbulence, which were fraught with various events and experiences that could have influenced his theology: he began his first ministry at Geneva, became involved with diverse theological conversations, and read through writings of his predecessors and contemporaries. Now we shall look into the development of Calvin's Trinitarian thought and its engagement with the sacraments in this period, especially as it is expressed in the *Lausanne Disputation* (1536), *Confession of Faith concerning the Eucharist* (1537), the *First Catechism* (1537/8), and the *First commentary on Romans* (1538).

### 2.2.1. The *Lausanne Disputation and Confession of Faith concerning the Eucharist*

In October 1536, during his first ministry in Geneva, Calvin attended the Colloquy at Lausanne, along with Farel and Viret, where some evangelical ministers and the Roman Catholic spokesmen were convened to discuss ten articles drawn up by Farel regarding justification, the mediation of Christ, the nature of the Church, the ministry, and the sacraments.<sup>237</sup> Calvin spoke on some occasions to defend the evangelical view of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper in the course of the Colloquy, and produced his own "Two Discourses on the Articles."<sup>238</sup> While it does not deal with the doctrinal locus of the Trinity itself, this document is the first occasion which denotes development or transition in Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity. What is particularly instructive for our purpose is that here Calvin first referred to the Holy Spirit as the "bond" through whom believers are made participants in Christ's body and blood.<sup>239</sup>

Against the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, in the discourse, Calvin declares that Christ's body cannot appear on the altars, because the whole person

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<sup>237</sup> Alexandre Ganoczy, *The Young Calvin* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark; Westminster Pr, 1987), 109. Though Calvin was unofficially invited and thus expected merely to observe, when someone from the Roman Catholic side accused the evangelical ministers of despising the authority of the church fathers concerning the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, he stung himself into action and defended the evangelical position, citing from memory a number of passages in works of the fathers, such as Cyprian, Tertullian, Chrysostom, and Augustine.

<sup>238</sup> Calvin, *Theological Treatises*, The Library of Christian Classics v. 22 (London: SCM Press, 1954), 38-46.

<sup>239</sup> This is a point which has been already recognized by scholars, though none of them have explored it in the direction of this thesis. For example, see Daniel Y. K. Lee, *The Holy Spirit as Bond in Calvin's Thought: Its Functions in Connection with the Extra Calvinisticum*, 1st New edition edition (Oxford ; New York: Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2011). See also Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 198-9.

of Christ “is in heaven.”<sup>240</sup> While thus saying that neither the natural body of Christ nor His natural blood is given to us in the Supper, however, Calvin affirms:

...it is a spiritual communication, by which in virtue and power he makes us participant of all that we are able to receive of grace in his body and blood; or again, to declare better the dignity of this mystery, it is spiritual communication by which he makes us truly participant of his body and his blood, but wholly spiritually, that is by *the bond of his Spirit*.<sup>241</sup>

While here Calvin calls the Supper a “spiritual communication,” he also makes it clear that it is a pneumatological communication in which we can truly partake of Christ’s body and blood by the bond of the Holy Spirit. Whereas in his first exposition of the eucharist Calvin speaks of the Spirit almost exclusively with respect to “reception,” that is, as the one who illumines minds and softens hearts in order that the sacraments might “enter in,” here Calvin speaks of Christ’s Spirit as the agent of *connection*, between Christ Himself and his own.

Apart from the fact that the Spirit is spoken of as the bond between Christ and us, this passage is remarkable in that, as Rozeboom notes, it is “packed densely with notions previously presented in the 1536 *Institutes* in relation to the Father and the Son, all centered upon the activity of the Spirit: *virtus*, *efficacia*, and *gratia*, to which is now added *bond*, i.e. *lien* or *vinculum*.”<sup>242</sup> Otherwise put, though Calvin does not, in this brief discussion, invite the explicitly theological category of the Trinity, it can be easily noticed that here Calvin attempts to explicate the sacramental concepts with rigorously Trinitarian terms. This shows that, with the concept of pneumatological bond added, the Trinitarian notion of the “distinction of properties” became more rigorously applied to Calvin’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper.

This development in Trinitarian thinking immediately finds its way into his further exposition of the Lord’s Supper of the same year, *Confession of Faith concerning the Eucharist*, a consensus statement which was written by Calvin, Farel and Viret, and then signed by Bucer and Capito.<sup>243</sup> The confession begins by noting that “the spiritual life which Christ bestows upon us does not rest on the fact that he

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<sup>240</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 42.

<sup>241</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 44. My emphasis.

<sup>242</sup> Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 199.

<sup>243</sup> They wrote with the purpose of allaying the suspicion that the Strasbourg reformers, including Bucer and Capito, had conceded too much to the Lutherans. *Theological Treatises*, 167. It was embraced “as right doctrine” by Bucer and Capito. *Theological Treatises*, 169.

vivifies us with his Spirit, but that his Spirit makes us participants in the virtue of his vivifying body, by which participation we are fed on eternal life.”<sup>244</sup> “When we speak of the communion which we have with Christ,” it continues, “we understand the faithful to communicate not less in his body and blood than in his Spirit, so that thus they *possess the whole Christ.*”<sup>245</sup> Here Calvin explains the essence of spiritual life in a thoroughly Trinitarian concept, in which our communion with the whole person of Christ comes to the fore; it is not merely being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, but being made participate in and commune with the whole person of Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

This essence of the spiritual life is shown forth in the eucharist. Highlighting the physical separation between Christ and us, and speaking of the Spirit as One who “is able to unite and bring together into one things that are disjoined in local space,” the document says that God “feeds us with the substance of the body and blood of the Lord to everlasting life, and vivifies us by participation in them,” through the Spirit who is “the bond of our participation in him [Christ].”<sup>246</sup> Here we can clearly recognize Calvin’s understanding of the Spirit as the bond between Christ and us, which was first broached in the Lausanne articles. Depending on his notion of the Spirit as the bond, Calvin, along with other authors of the document, boldly argues for both Christ’s residence in heaven and our participation in the true body and blood of Christ.

The Supper, according to the document, is an event which truly offers this communion between Christ and us through “the efficacy of the Spirit.” “This communion of his own body and blood Christ offers in his blessed Supper under the symbols of bread and wine, presenting them to all who rightly celebrate it according to his own proper institution.”<sup>247</sup> This statement indicates that what is being offered in the sacrament is more than a testimony or pledge of Christ’s presence and our communion with Him. With the concept of the Spirit as the bond, in other words, Calvin applies his understanding of the Spirit as the “efficacy” or “power” more rigorously to the Lord’s Supper,<sup>248</sup> portraying the sacrament as a real communion with the whole person of

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<sup>244</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 168.

<sup>245</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 168. My emphasis.

<sup>246</sup> *Theological Treatises* 168.

<sup>247</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 168.

<sup>248</sup> We can also assume that this concept perhaps made Calvin, along with other authors, feel more unreserved in advocating the significance of Christ’s having a true human body and of our feeding on that body. “Now scripture manifestly declares the body of Christ to be verily food for us and his blod verily drick. It thereby affirms that we ought to be truly nourished by them, if we seek life in Christ. *Theological Treatises*, 168.

Christ.

The fuller discussion of *why* Calvin had this pneumatological breakthrough, and why it happened at this point in his career, lies beyond the scope of this chapter. Perhaps we cannot say for certain whether the pneumatological breakthrough at Lausanne permitted this fuller development of the doctrine of the Supper or whether Calvin's realization of what his doctrine of the Supper had always *implied* about the role of the Spirit permitted the broader pneumatological breakthrough. However, we can at least recognize here the close link between Calvin's pneumatological thinking and his doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

### 2.2.2. 1537/8 Catechism

In early 1537, again during his ministry at Geneva, Calvin presented *the Instruction and Confession of Faith*, which was later published in Latin in 1538, and became dubbed as *Institute: Catechismus, sive Christianae Religionis Institutio*<sup>249</sup> or simply the Catechism. It consists of 33 brief articles, and among these, Calvin deals with the Trinity in article 20, which is an exposition of the apostle's Creed.

While the structure and content of the Catechism are very similar to that presented in the 1536 *Institutes*,<sup>250</sup> there are some indications of the transition in Calvin's Trinitarian thinking.<sup>251</sup> Above all, in this Catechism, the office of the Holy Spirit is explained as being more closely related to the Son and His ascension. In the 1536 exposition of the phrase "he sits there at the Father's right hand," as noted, Calvin simply explained that though Christ has ascended into heaven, He does not refuse to be present with his believers, and sanctifies, cleanses, governs, and leads them. Now in the Catechism, after saying that Christ "was endowed with all the graces of the Holy Spirit,"<sup>252</sup> Calvin extrapolates this understanding into the exposition of Christ's

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<sup>249</sup> The later edition of 1538 was produced primarily for ecumenical purposes, which is evident in the first letter, addressed to "all who devotedly honor the Gospel of Christ, the ministers of the church at Geneva pray grace and peace and the increase of true godliness from the Lord." I John Hesselink, "Calvin's Use of Doctrina in His Catechisms," in *Calvinus Sacrarum Literarum Interpres* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 1.

<sup>250</sup> It is fairly obvious that this catechism, while having some contents of its own, is a sort of abridged version of the *Institutes of 1536*. For the relationship between the two documents, see Hesselink, "Calvin's Use of Doctrina in His Catechisms," 80.

<sup>251</sup> In a manner evocative of his discourse about the Lord's Supper, Calvin depicts the Spirit as One who "establishes in our hearts the assurance of divine truth, and a seal whereby our hearts will be sealed unto the day of the Lord" and who "testifies to our spirit that God is the *Father* to us and we in turn are his children." Jean Calvin and I John Hesselink, *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary: Featuring Ford Lewis Battles' Translation of the 1538 Catechism*, Columbia Series in Reformed Theology (Louisville, Ky: Westminster/John Knox Pr, 1997), 18.

<sup>252</sup> *Calvin's First Catechism*, 22.

ascension, as follows:

The statement that ‘He sits at the Father’s right hand’ means that he has been appointed and declared King, Judge, and Lord over all, in order that by his power he may preserve and govern us...*he has received all the gifts of the Holy Spirit to bestow them, so as by them to enrich those who believe in him.* Therefore, although lifted up into heaven, he has removed his bodily presence from our sight; yet he does not refuse to be present with his believers in help and might, and to show the manifest power of his presence.<sup>253</sup>

This connection between the Son and the Spirit is further appropriated into his exposition of the confession “*I believe in the Holy Spirit,*” which follows his teaching on Christ’s ascension. The passage reads:

While we are taught to believe in the Holy Spirit, we are also enjoined to await from him whatever is attributed to him in the Scriptures. For Christ accomplishes whatever good there is through the power of his Spirit. Through that power he empowers and sustains all things, causes them to grow and quickens them; through it he justifies, sanctifies, and cleanses us, calls and draws us to himself, that we may attain salvation.<sup>254</sup>

Whilst Calvin’s comments on what is accomplished remain the same as those found in the exposition on the 1536 *Institutes*, as Rozeboom observes, here it is not God the Father in the Son who accomplishes all that is good, but rather Christ Himself, through the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>255</sup> Based upon the distinction of properties, this passage highlights the coordination of the Son and the Holy Spirit for the life of the faithful.

It is probably due to this rigorously Trinitarian thinking that Calvin is now able to highlight the humanity or whole personality of Christ. In the beginning of this section, Calvin declares concerning each Person of the Trinity: “Our understanding cannot conceive of the Father without including the Son at that same time, in whom *his living image shines*; and the Spirit in whom his might and power are visible. Let us cleave with the total concentration of our mind upon the one God; yet in the meantime let us contemplate the Father with his Son and Spirit.”<sup>256</sup> Given that visibility is a condition of true humanity, this implies that as his understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit

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<sup>253</sup> *Calvin’s First Catechism*, 24. My emphasis.

<sup>254</sup> *Calvin’s First Catechism*, 25.

<sup>255</sup> Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 201.

<sup>256</sup> *Calvin’s First Catechism*, 22. My emphasis.

became clearer, Calvin became able to stress the whole personality of Christ more boldly, despite his same emphasis on Christ's residence in heaven.

This Trinitarian understanding of Calvin, which now became more rigorous, bears fruit in his exposition of the Lord's Supper, which states, "although Christ, having ascended into heaven, ceases to reside on earth (on which we are as yet wayfarers) still no distance can prevent his power of feeding his believers on himself and bringing it about that they still enjoy an ever-present communication with him, though he is absent from that place."<sup>257</sup> Under the symbols of bread and wine, "the Lord exhibits true communication of his body and blood," a communication "obviously content with the bond (*vinculo*) of the Spirit."<sup>258</sup> Here we can see the traces of his refined Trinitarian understanding, in which the office of the Holy Spirit offsets the absence of the Son in the place of the Lord's Supper. It is Christ in heaven, according to the Catechism, who, as the source and agent of the Supper, communicates Himself to the earthly, in cooperation with the Spirit. Based on the Trinitarian conception, the Supper is now highlighted as the actual, dynamic communion with the whole person of Christ, who is in heaven.

We cannot say that Calvin sets out his full-fledged Trinitarian concept in this exposition of the sacraments. First, as I. John Hesselink points out, Calvin's emphasis concerning the Supper still falls not so much on participation in or communion with Christ as on receiving the benefits from Him.<sup>259</sup> Moreover, there is still no reference to the role of the Holy Spirit in the treatment of baptism,<sup>260</sup> which, as shall be seen below, will take up the thoroughly Trinitarian framework in his mature exposition. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that traces of his Trinitarian thinking are found concerning the sacrament in his first Catechism.

### **2.2.3. Commentary on Romans**

After the 1537/8 Catechism Calvin went through some turbulent years of his life. His request to subscribe to the catechism offended many citizens in Geneva, and

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<sup>257</sup> Calvin's *First Catechism*, 35.

<sup>258</sup> Calvin's *First Catechism*, 35.

<sup>259</sup> Hesselink, "Calvin's Use of Doctrina in His Catechisms," 81. As this stage, as Hesselink observes, there is no mention of our partaking of Christ's "substance" in the Lord's Supper.

<sup>260</sup> Hesselink points out that the Holy Spirit is not mentioned with regard to baptism in both the 1536 *Institutes* and the 1537/8 Catechism. Hesselink, "Calvin's Use of Doctrina in His Catechisms," 85.

before long Calvin was forced to leave the city in April 1538, when the Genevan Council wanted to introduce Bernese liturgical rites into Geneva.<sup>261</sup> In September 1538 Calvin happened to settle in Strasbourg, where the Protestant Church had already been firmly established under the leadership of Bucer, and there came to minister the city's French congregation, celebrating the Lord's Supper for the first time in October 1538. Apart from his ministry at the French congregation, during these years in Strasbourg, Calvin gave some of the lectures of the New Testament at a school,<sup>262</sup> and participated in the religious colloquies held by Protestants and Roman Catholics, the issues of which were mostly over the doctrine of the church and the Lord's Supper,<sup>263</sup> In March 1540, when he was in Strasbourg, Calvin published his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, which was his first biblical commentary, and the contents of which are "probably a revised summary of lectures he had given in Geneva from 1536 to 1538."<sup>264</sup> According to the introductory letter for the 1539 *Institutes*, this commentary was formulated in the period when he prepared his second edition of the *Institutes*, and therefore these two documents "must be read and studied as unique companion pieces, not least because in their respective prefaces Calvin explains their relation and reveals his intended, lifelong program of writing."<sup>265</sup>

What marks this commentary is, among other things, the explicitly Trinitarian expressions Calvin uses to explain the themes of participation, adoption, and engrafting in Romans.<sup>266</sup> In the prefatory chapter of the commentary, Calvin, summarizing the theme of chapter 8 of Romans, portrays the Son as the "pattern to which we must all be

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<sup>261</sup> Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven [Conn.]; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 78-81.

<sup>262</sup> Calvin taught three hours per week on the interpretation of the Gospel of John and the Pauline epistles, particularly the Romans.

<sup>263</sup> Throughout these meetings Calvin was accompanied by his Strasbourg colleagues, such as Bucer, Caipo, and Strum, and struck up a lifelong relationship with Philip Melancthon, who strongly insisted on Calvin's presence at the meeting of Regensburg, due to his great name among scholars. Given these circumstances, it is entirely likely that Calvin consulted intensely with his Protestant colleagues on these matters. Greef, *The writings of John Calvin*, 155.

<sup>264</sup> Greef, *The writings of John Calvin*, 94.

<sup>265</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 142.

<sup>266</sup> Todd Billings observes as follows: "Thus, just as the book of Romans becomes crucial for the development of the *Institutes* and the commentaries, so the themes of participation, adoption, and engrafting, in Romans become crucial for Calvin's theology. Drawing upon Romans 6:1-11, Calvin develops the theme of union with Christ in his death and resurrection, and the life of the baptized as participation in Christ. Working from Romans 8:12-17, 26-7, Calvin emphasizes that believers are adopted as children of God, given access to the Father through the Spirit, who prays through believers." J. Todd Billings, *Calvin, Participation, and the Gift: The Activity of Believers in Union with Christ*, 1st ed. (OUP Oxford, 2007), 51.

conformed” and the Spirit as One by whom “we have been engrafted into Christ.”<sup>267</sup> After that, in his commentary on the theme of our righteousness in Romans chapter 8, Calvin states:

Iustitiam vocat, obedientiam Christi: quae in carne nostra exhibita, nobis imputatur: ut, eius beneficio, pro iustis censeamur. Sed eam obtinemus tum demum, cum in Christi consortium recepti sumus: vinculo Spiritus, illi sociati. Ubi autem Spiritus, illic regeneration. Ideoque addit particulam: Qui non secundum carem, etc. Qua designat, ut prius, effectum eius societatis perpetuum: ac finem simul indicat, cur Christo coniungamur...<sup>268</sup>

[He calls for justice, the obedience of Christ, which was exhibited in the flesh, and was imputed to us, so that, through His favour, we are accounted just. However it is only when we are received in communion with Christ, by the bond of the Spirit, that God imparts righteousness to us. Where the Spirit is, there is also our regeneration. Therefore we ought not to add anything that is according to the flesh (for our righteousness and regeneration). So that thus, the effect of the perpetual or lasting association (societas) is understood as our being conjoined to Christ...]

In this passage Calvin brings forth the idea that “Christ communicates His righteousness only to those whom He joins to Himself by the bond of His Spirit.”<sup>269</sup> This implies that our righteousness, or justification by faith, is not merely a forensic, speculative notion, but rather a personal one, since it is based on participation in the person of Christ, through the bond of the Spirit. Here we can recognize Calvin’s doctrine of *duplex gratia*, which is broached in the 1539 edition of the *Institutes*: our justification and sanctification are inseparable, though distinguishable, for “Christ contains both of them inseparably in himself.”<sup>270</sup> In the Romans commentary also, Calvin says that we “cannot receive righteousness in Christ without at the same time laying hold on sanctification,” since both graces are given to those who “are admitted into fellowship with Christ.”<sup>271</sup> Under this doctrine, in that both aspects of salvation are a fruit of our being engrafted to Christ, our salvation is a somewhat personal concept, which hinges upon our communication with the person of Christ.

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<sup>267</sup> *The Theme of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, in *Comm. Romans*, p. 8-9.

<sup>268</sup> *Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romanos*, ed. T.H.L. Parker, 156, apparatus note j-k. Calvin wrote two further editions of the commentary (1551, 1556), and in the critical one, he rewrote the comment on Romans 8:4, dropping what he had in the 1540 edition and replacing it. As no English translation is available for the present text, it is presented in its original language, with my own translation.

<sup>269</sup> This is the phrase that Calvin uses in the final, 1556 edition of the commentary. *Comm. Romans* 8:4.

<sup>270</sup> *Institutes* (1539), as in *Institutes* (1559), 3.16.1.

<sup>271</sup> *The Theme of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, in *Comm. Romans*, p. 8.

Accordingly, in this commentary, Calvin tends to depict our faith and salvation in personal and relational terms. In the commentary on 1:17 (“*For therein is revealed a righteousness of God by faith unto faith*”), for example, Calvin states: “when we first taste the Gospel we do indeed see the countenance of God turned graciously toward us, but at a distance. The more our knowledge of true religion increases, we see the grace of God with greater clarity and more familiarity, as though He were coming nearer to us.”<sup>272</sup> This God who comes to us and is seen by us is God the Son, the image of the Father, in whose person our righteousness and sanctification are contained.<sup>273</sup> Our faith and salvation are in line with our tasting of the gospel, which is exhibited in the person of Christ. The eucharistic allusion of these notions come to light in Calvin’s 1539 edition of the *Institutes*.

### 2.3. The *Institutes* of 1539

In this Strasbourg years, as is well known, Calvin kept company with Bucer, whose influence on Calvin’s theology and practice of worship was exceptional. It may be worth mentioning that Bucer’s doctrine of the Trinity has something in common with that of Calvin’s mature theology. Willem van’t Spijker says: “while in the work of Zwingli one sometimes gets the idea of a spiritualized Christology, in which the historical work of Christ seems to vanish, in the works of Bucer and Calvin we find a strong emphasis on the elevation of Christ. His kingship at the right hand of God is nothing but the way he exercises his rule of reconciliation by the power of the Holy Spirit. By these means the historical work of Christ to bring about the atonement has been harmonized with the work of the Spirit in history.” According to Spijker, Bucer gives their pneumatology a christological colour, just as Calvin does, accentuating that the Holy Spirit is the *Spirit of Christ*.<sup>274</sup> It is probable that Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity was influenced by that of Bucer in that period.

In the midst of these circumstances in Strasbourg, Calvin produced several important works which display the development of his theological and pastoral thinking.

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<sup>272</sup> *Comm.* Romans 1:17. Calvin’s emphasis on the personal nature of salvation is evident when Calvin expresses righteousness as that which makes us “live in the presence of God.” *Comm.* Romans 1:17. In this commentary, the righteousness of God is explained as what launches the Christian on a lifelong journey towards the Lord.

<sup>273</sup> *Comm.* Romans 5:24-5.

<sup>274</sup> Willem van ’t Spijker, “The Influence of Bucer on Calvin as Becomes Evident from the *Institutes*,” *John Calvin’s Institutes*, 1986, 118.

One is the second, 1539, edition of the *Institutes*, which was transformed from a lay Christian's catechetical manual now to the "repository of the loci communes and disputations that might otherwise [appear] in the commentaries."<sup>275</sup> While it has the same basic catechetical structure as the 1536 *Institutes* (law, faith, prayer, sacraments, and civil duty), now they are further dispersed and interspersed with supplemental chapters.<sup>276</sup> The marginal references to Romans indicate that Calvin's exegetical labors on the epistle had enriched his reflection,<sup>277</sup> and that, again, this edition of the *Institutes* should be read and studied together with the commentary.

As in the first edition of the *Institutes*, the discourse of the doctrine of the Trinity falls at the beginning of the exposition of the Apostle's Creed in the chapter entitled *De Fide*, but more than doubled in length.<sup>278</sup> While the doctrine was "previously implicit" in the initial edition of the *Institutes*, it now becomes, as Butin points out, more "clearly explicit,"<sup>279</sup> still being motivated and governed by soteriological concern.<sup>280</sup> In his expanded preamble on the creed, Calvin reasserts the formulation of the distinction of properties, with slight alteration,<sup>281</sup> applying it to the overall discussion of the creed. In his explanation of the construction of the creed, for example, Calvin writes: "For all the good we have comes from the love/charity of God, and it is given and offered to us in Jesus Christ as the sole fountain of grace, and we are made participants of all the goods which God's goodness presents to us by the power of the Spirit."<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*, 119. See page 119-120 and 106 for a full description of this shift in genre.

<sup>276</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 186.

<sup>277</sup> For the 1539 edition of the *Institutes*, I will use the recently published Jean Calvin and Elsie Anne McKee, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1541 French Edition* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2009), which is the translation of the 1541 French version of the 1539 *Institutes*. As is well known, Calvin translated the 1539 edition into French for the benefit of those who could not read Latin. Greef, *The writings of John Calvin*, 200.

<sup>278</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 186.

<sup>279</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 32.

<sup>280</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 187.

<sup>281</sup> "It is not fitting to pretend not to see the distinction which is expressed in scripture: that the beginning of every action and the source and origin of everything is ascribed to the Father; that wisdom, counsel, and the ordering and arranging of everything is ascribed to the Son; that the power and effectiveness of every action is ascribed to the Holy Spirit." *Institutes* (1541), 210.

<sup>282</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 199. Now faith is explained in a thoroughly Trinitarian way. "Now we have a full definition of faith, if we resolve that it is a firm and certain knowledge of God's good will toward us which, being founded on the promise freely given in Jesus Christ, is revealed to our understanding and sealed in our heart by the Holy Spirit." *Institutes* (1541), 179. Calvin also says "faith is located in the knowledge of Christ, and Christ cannot be known without the sanctification of His Spirit." *Institutes* (1541), 193. Compare these to the 1536 description of the

In the long preamble to the creed, Calvin explains our faith and salvation in personal and relational terms, as in the Romans commentary. Stressing that faith is more than human knowledge, Calvin says that having faith is to begin to “regard God’s face as being kind and favorable to us,” and to “approach God’s face more closely so as to have a more certain sight.”<sup>283</sup> Faith is not abstract knowledge, but is being put into a personal relationship with God, which is attained through partaking of the Son’s relationship to the Father.<sup>284</sup> In other words, faith is all about the relationship and communion with the personal being, who is the object of our embodied act of worship.<sup>285</sup> Perhaps what underlies this concept of faith is Calvin’s understanding of the Trinity, which is now explicitly affected by the distinction of properties. According to Calvin, the origin and fountain of eternal salvation and all good things is God’s love and favor towards us, which is expressed in Psalm 80:3: “Let Him show His face...and we will be saved.”<sup>286</sup> But “the way” and “door” to this fountain is Christ, the living image of His [the Father’s] substance, in whom all grace and benefits of the Father are included and shown forth.<sup>287</sup> The Holy Spirit is the One who draws us to Christ, and makes us see what we received through our ears with a new eye, and taste the things that are included in Christ.<sup>288</sup> What has been said is summarized as follows:

“So if we seek access to the Father, we must return by means of the One who alone can reveal Him to us. When He calls Himself “the way” He shows that it belongs to Him alone to direct us. When He calls Himself “the door” He declares that it is His office to give us the entrée...For as it has been said that we must be drawn by the Spirit of the Father to be incited to seek and receive Jesus Christ, so on the other hand it must be understood that we should not seek

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“sum” of faith: “[T]his is not only to adjudge true all that has been written or is said of God and Christ: but to put all hope and trust in one God and Christ, and to be so strengthened by this thought, that we have no doubt about God’s good will toward us. Consequently, we have been persuaded that whatever we need, either for the use of the soul or of the body, He will give us; we await with assurance whatever the Scriptures promise concerning him; we do not doubt Jesus is our Christ, that is, Savior. But as we obtain through him forgiveness of sins and sanctification, so also salvation has been given, in order that we may at last be led into God’s kingdom, which will be revealed on the last day.” *Institutes* (1536), 2.2.

<sup>283</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 182.

<sup>284</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 216.

<sup>285</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 184-5.

<sup>286</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 186.

<sup>287</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 187,196. “God is not the Father of people except by means of His only Son to whom alone this honor is properly due and by whose kindness sonship is communicated to us. Now since God has always wanted to be invoked as Father, it follows then that the Son by whom this relationship was established already existed then.” *Institutes* (1541), 202.

<sup>288</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 189, 197.

the Father, who is invisible, in any way except in Jesus Christ who is His image.”<sup>289</sup>

While not being explicitly referred to as the bond, the Holy Spirit is here conceived of as the bonding agent who draws us to the person of Christ and to His communion with the Father. Here we can see that the Trinitarian notion of distinction of properties is shaping the economy of salvation.<sup>290</sup>

As in the 1537/8 Catechism, the connection between Christ’s ascension and the office of the Spirit stands out, this time more prominently. Referring to Ephesians 4:10, “He ascended to fulfill all things,” Calvin asserts that through this ascension, Christ “much more widely poured out the graces of the Spirit,” “much more fully expands His majesty,” in order “to govern the world by a power more present than before.”<sup>291</sup> Here Calvin explains the Spirit as one of the benefits of Christ’s ascension for our faith.<sup>292</sup> Now a shift, which comes from his developed understanding of the work of the Spirit, is perceptible in Calvin’s tone: Christ’s ascension is no longer an obstacle to His presence with the godly. It is rather a facilitator for it.

As Rozeboom observes, Calvin’s refined doctrine of the Trinity, with its due emphasis on the effectuating role of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s cooperation with the Son, is clearly brought into his discourse of the sacraments in the 1539/1541 edition of the *Institutes*, which is first found in his discussion of baptism. After declaring Christ as “the proper object and goal” of baptism, since “all God’s gifts that are offered in baptism are found in Christ alone,”<sup>293</sup> Calvin brings forth a firmly Trinitarian formulation which summarizes his previous discourse of the triune God:

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<sup>289</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 197.

<sup>290</sup> Calvin’s attempt to apply the distinction of properties more explicitly to his exposition of the Trinity is evident in his exposition of the third part of the creed (on the Holy Spirit), which reads: “Now when we hear the name “Spirit” we must remember all the offices which scripture ascribes to Him, and expect from Him the benefits which come from Him according to the testimony of scripture. For it teaches us that all God’s grace is the work of His Spirit, since the Father does all things in the Son by Him. By the Spirit He creates, maintains, gives life, and preserves all His works. By the Spirit He calls and draws to Himself all the faithful, justifies them, sanctifies them in new life, enriches them with different kinds of graces, strengthens them with His heavenly power until they have arrived at their goal.” *Institutes* (1541), 240. While explicating the work of God the Father with regard to the life of the faithful, as in the 1536 *Institutes*, Calvin now specifies that to the Father the work of creation is attributed, and that what the Father does is the preservation of His creation. Here we can recognize that Calvin is emphatically attributing the office of creation and the role of the fountain of all things to the Father.

<sup>291</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 236.

<sup>292</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 237.

<sup>293</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 512.

...Nevertheless it is not possible for one who baptizes in Christ's name not to invoke likewise the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, for the reason we have our purification in Christ's blood is because the Father, wanting to pour out His goodness and mercy, reconciled us to Himself by Him. Then we obtain our regeneration in His death and His life if, by the sanctification of the Spirit, there is a new spiritual nature built up in us. That is *why the cause of our purification as well as our regeneration ought to be recognized to be in God the Father, the ground or matter of it in the Son, and the efficacy in the Holy Spirit.*<sup>294</sup>

In this passage, the Trinitarian economy of the sacraments is much parallel to that of the Trinitarian economy of salvation presented in his exposition of the creed that the two are said by Butin to be in "explicit continuity."<sup>295</sup> Even though there is no mention of the Holy Spirit as the bond, we can notice Calvin's dense expression of the Triune God, which perfectly corresponds to the typical Trinitarian formulation.

What reveals Calvin's enriched doctrine of the Trinity even more clearly and concretely, however, is his discussion of the Lord's Supper. As in his exposition of the creed, Calvin spells out the meaning of our faith in personal and relational terms. According to Calvin, God the Father is "the Fountain and origin of life," who communicates life and vigor to all His creatures. As humans came to lose this communication due to their sin, however, the life in God "was then manifested when, having taken our flesh, the Son of God gave Himself to be seen and touched."<sup>296</sup> Since this fullness of life in Christ can hardly be the grounds for hope, "if we are distanced and alienated from it,"<sup>297</sup> the Son of God descended from heaven, in order that the communication of His body "might reach us" and might dwell in us.<sup>298</sup> After His ascension into heaven, however, the whole person of Christ is now only in heaven, since as a true human body it has its own limits. However, the "bond" of the Holy Spirit still unites us to Christ and serves as the channel by which all that Christ is and possesses

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<sup>294</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 513. My emphasis.

<sup>295</sup> Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response*, 80.

<sup>296</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 554. According to Calvin, the body of Christ was endowed with the life which is originally only in God the Father. So endowed, the very body of Christ becomes an instrument by which the divine life is communicated to human believers. Calvin uses a metaphor for this: "We can better explain this by a familiar example. For the water of a fountain suffices for us to drink, to water plants, and to apply to other uses, and nevertheless the fountain does not have such an abundance in itself but receives it from the source, from which the water perpetually flows to fill the fountain so that it never dry up. In the same way Christ's flesh is like a fountain, since it receives the life flowing down from the divinity in order to transfer it to us." *Institutes* (1541), 555. Calvin's metaphor here is that the Father is the source or font of the water, the Son the water itself, and the Holy Spirit the channel or canal through which that water flows.

<sup>297</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 554.

<sup>298</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 555.

comes down to us.<sup>299</sup> What Calvin declares here is that which he affirmed previously with regard to baptism: “the cause...ought to be recognized to be in God the Father, the ground or matter of it in the Son, and the efficacy in the Holy Spirit.”<sup>300</sup>

In the 1536 exposition of the Lord’s Supper, where he highlights Christ’s ascension and the subsequent absence of His body on earth, Calvin qualifies his insistence of Christ’s presence in the Supper with the statement that such a presence is a “presence in power and strength.” In his 1539 discussion on the Supper, Calvin inserts in the midst of the same passage a comment that “He can nourish them with His own body; He makes them participate in it by the power of the Spirit.”<sup>301</sup> Here the coordination between Christ and the Holy Spirit for our communion with the body of Christ comes to the fore. While insisting on Christ’s residence in heaven, Calvin now became able to advocate boldly the reality of our communion with the true body of Christ in the Lord’s Supper, through the notion of the Holy Spirit as the bonding power, which connects Christ and us together.

This underlying Trinitarian concept makes the Lord’s Supper basically a personal communion between God and us. The aim of the sacrament is basically God Himself or our personal communion with Him. This communion is possible only through the person of Christ, who is now with the Father. The Holy Spirit is the power which unites us to this whole person of Christ. And our communion with Christ is not merely a communion in power and strength but a communion with the true and whole body of Christ. While this economy of the eucharistic communion is in explicit continuity with the economy of salvation and divine-human communion in the exposition of the creed, this time the personal and ontological aspect of the divine-human communion can be highlighted in the exposition of the Lord’s Supper, due to Calvin’s explicit use of the term “bond” of the Spirit between Christ and us. That is, the

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<sup>299</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 556. “[W]e do not doubt that it [the body of Christ] has its limits as the nature of a human body requires, and that body is contained in heaven where it was received until He will come for judgment... in order for us to participate in His body...the Lord Jesus richly pours out by His Spirit the benefit that we are made one with Him in body, spirit, and soul. Therefore the bond of this joining is the Holy Spirit, by whom we are united together, and He is like a canal by which all that Christ is and possesses comes down to us...That is why when scripture speaks of the participation which we have with Christ it brings all the power of that participation back to His Spirit...St. Paul declares that Christ dwells in us in no other way that by His Spirit.(Rom. 8[9]) Nevertheless in doing that he does not destroy this communication with Jesus Christ’s body and blood which is the question we are discussing now, but he shows that the Spirit is the sole means by which we possess Christ and have Him living in us.”

<sup>300</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 513. Rozeboom also recognized this point. See Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 194.

<sup>301</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 560.

sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the place where we experience the trinitarian communion with God in an intensive and ontological manner.

#### 2.4. After 1539

So far we have seen that the development in the doctrine of the Trinity was immediately and directly carried over to Calvin's doctrine of the sacrament, making the latter take up a more explicitly Trinitarian shape. We may say that since the second, 1539, edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity seemingly did not make significant advance either formally or substantially. Even if there was some refinement, what had been established before the 1539 *Institutes* did not significantly change. As shall be seen below, however, Calvin did not stop working out on his so-far-developed doctrine of the Trinity, in which Christ is our pattern and the Holy Spirit our efficacious bond to Christ, for his doctrine of the sacraments.

What shows Calvin's tendency to continuously work out his Trinitarian doctrine for the doctrine of the sacraments is his increasing understanding that "the Supper is a heavenly act,"<sup>302</sup> which hinges upon our ascent into heaven and to Christ there. In other words, as Randall Zachmann points out, the most remarkable development that takes place in Calvin's understanding of the Lord's Supper after the 1539 edition of the *Institutes* regards "his increasing emphasis on the Supper as a means by which to elevate the faithful from earth to heaven where Christ dwells in glory."<sup>303</sup> In the first, 1536, edition of the *Institutes*, as mentioned, Calvin had already brought up the notion of our being raised up to heaven in the Lord's Supper.<sup>304</sup> At that stage, however, the notion is referred to almost exclusively as a protective measure against the adoration of the eucharistic material, and thus does not have any positive function in itself.<sup>305</sup> Also, by expressing the subject of the rising simply as "our faith and our confession"<sup>306</sup> or

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<sup>302</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 11:24.

<sup>303</sup> Randall C. Zachman, *Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin* (Notre Dame, Ind: Univ of Notre Dame Pr, 2007), 339. Already by 1543, as Zachmann observes, Calvin conceived of lifting our minds up to heaven, rather than presenting Christ's body and blood, as the chief purpose of the sacrament. Zachmann, *Image and Word*, 339.

<sup>304</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.4 and 4.32.

<sup>305</sup> "Moreover, inasmuch as Scripture carefully recounted to us the ascension of Christ, by which he withdrew the presence of his body from our sight and company, to shake from us all carnal thinking of him and, whenever it recalls Christ, to warn our minds to be raised up, and seek him in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, we ought rather to have adored him spiritually in heavenly glory than to have devised some dangerous kind of adoration, replete with a carnal and crass conception of God and Christ." *Institutes* (1536) 4.32.

<sup>306</sup> "Rather, laying aside all things, both our faith and our confession *ought to rise up to him* who is the

“our minds,” Calvin gave an impression that this is a mere figure of speech which indicates a redirection of our mental attitude. After around 1540, however, Calvin increasingly boldly insisted on the eucharistic ascent of believers in the Supper, based on his belief in the power of the Spirit, denoting that the notion is more than figurative speech.

Calvin does not always explicitly refer to the Holy Spirit as the agent of our eucharistic ascent. However, we have observed that by the 1539 edition of the *Institutes* Calvin came to speak clearly of, based upon the distinction of properties, God the Father as the object of our faith, the Son the way to the Father, and the Holy Spirit the bond which draws believers to the Son. Also, as we have seen, Calvin held fast to Christ’s residence in heaven with respect to the Lord’s Supper, especially from the 1539 edition of the *Institutes* onwards. In this case, the idea that the Holy Spirit is the efficacy of the Supper, that is, of Christ’s presence and our communion with Him, potentially implies that the Spirit draws us to where Christ remains with the Father, that is, heaven. Furthermore, even though Calvin did not always explicitly refer to the role of the Holy Spirit in his exposition of our eucharistic ascent, he, as Kaiser pointed out, placed the ascent on the same footing as the real presence and our receiving of Him.<sup>307</sup> This means that, as long as our communion with Christ is carried out by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, our ascent into heaven should also be said to be carried out by the same power, which binds us to the whole person of Christ preserved in heaven. In sum, Calvin’s teaching of our eucharistic ascent is a notion which hinges upon his doctrine of the Trinity: to the Father, through the pattern of Christ, in the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Ever since the 1539 edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin consistently and increasingly expressed the eucharistic ascent to heaven and to Christ, often mentioning that it is the work of the Holy Spirit.

In the second, 1539, edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin brings up the notion only once in passing, which means that at this stage the notion is by no means prominent compared to his later expositions. Remarkably, however, Calvin here speaks of our being raised up to heaven in connection with the ascent of Christ Himself to heaven:

[I]f we direct our regard and thoughts to heaven, and are transported there to seek Christ there in the glory of His Kingdom, in this way we will be separately

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author of the sacraments and of all things.” *Institutes* (1536), 4.4.

<sup>307</sup> Christopher B. Kaiser, “Climbing Jacob’s Ladder: John Calvin and the Early Church on Our Eucharistic Ascent to Heaven,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56, no. 3 (2003): 255-7.

fed by His flesh under the sign of the bread and nourished by His blood under the sign of the wine, to enjoy Him fully. For although He took His flesh away from us and ascended into heaven in body, nevertheless He is seated at the right hand of the Father, that is, He reigns in the power, majesty, and glory of the Father.<sup>308</sup>

This passage shows that for Calvin our being lifted up to heaven in the Supper is patterned on Christ's own ascent into heaven, which implies, as Christopher Kaiser notes, that in Calvin's thinking our eucharistic ascent is not merely a figure of speech, but a real, albeit spiritual, ascent.<sup>309</sup>

In the *Short Treatise on the Holy Supper of Our Lord and Only Savior Jesus Christ* of 1541, Calvin first expresses the eucharistic bread and wine as "the instruments" by which God not only represents Christ's body and blood, but also really distributes them.<sup>310</sup> Calvin notes that we should "raise our hearts on high to heaven" lest Christ is thought of as "so absurd as to be enclosed under corruptible elements."<sup>311</sup> Even so, Calvin teaches, Christ's body and blood is made present to the earthly believers, and "we are truly made partakers of the real substance of the body and blood," since "the Spirit of God is the bond of participation."<sup>312</sup> Here Calvin first brings up the notion of our being raised up to heaven in the form of exhortation towards the people, claiming that the exhortation is firmly rooted in the practice of the ancient church.<sup>313</sup>

In the *Manner of Celebrating the Lord's Supper* of 1542, Calvin notes that the "reality" of the Lord's Supper is offered in heaven, encouraging the idea that when we lift up our minds and hearts to heaven, then our souls are "raised above all the terrestrial objects and carried as high as heaven,"<sup>314</sup> and seek the reality that the word of God promises we shall find.<sup>315</sup> Here, lifting up our hearts means that our souls "enter the kingdom of God," or enter a celestial reality, where we seek the heavenly body and blood of Christ. In the third, 1543, edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin suggests Christ's

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<sup>308</sup> *Institutes* (1541), 560.

<sup>309</sup> Kaiser, "Climbing Jacob's Ladder," 254.

<sup>310</sup> *Theological Treatises* 147.

<sup>311</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 166.

<sup>312</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 166.

<sup>313</sup> "[T]he practice always observed in the ancient church was that, before celebrating the Supper, the people were solemnly exhorted to lift their hearts on high, to show that we must not stop at the visible sign, to adore Christ rightly." *Theological Treatises*, 159.

<sup>314</sup> *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:121-2.

<sup>315</sup> *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:121-2.

being in heaven as the most fundamental underlying point of the Lord's Supper.<sup>316</sup> Reiterating his point in the 1539 *Institutes* that he is incapable of explaining the reality of our partaking of Christ in words, Calvin teaches that this reality should be experienced rather than understood.<sup>317</sup> However, integral to this experience of the reality is the need to seek the body and blood of Christ in heaven. "For in order that pious minds may duly apprehend Christ in the Supper, they must be raised up to heaven."<sup>318</sup> As in the *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, Calvin stresses that this exhortation of the *Sursum Corda* is rooted in the ancient practice of worship in which "people should be told in a loud voice to lift up their hearts."<sup>319</sup> Calvin's idea of the *Sursum Corda* was carried forward into his liturgy the *Form of Church Prayer and Hymns* of 1542, which was written around the same period when Calvin was preparing this edition of the *Institutes*. This shows that Calvin now conceived of the *Sursum Corda* not only as a protective measure against the adoration of the materials, but also as a positive and essential element which grounds our ritual experience of sacramental worship.

In the *Catechism of the Church of Geneva* of 1545, Calvin states that our minds' ascent to heaven is essential for our enjoyment of the Lord's Supper. "I think that in order to enjoy the reality of the signs our minds must be raised to heaven where Christ is and whence we expect him to come as judge and redeemer."<sup>320</sup> After saying that God makes us partakers of Christ's body in heaven by the miraculous and secret virtue of his Spirit, Calvin places the notion of the ascent of our minds on the same footing as this participation.<sup>321</sup>

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians of 1546, Calvin declares that "the Lord's Supper is a heavenly act" and that from this view there is nothing absurd about our receiving Christ who remains in heaven.<sup>322</sup> Calvin reiterates the point that while Christ

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<sup>316</sup> As long as the body and blood of Christ is understood as being only in heaven, and as not being dragged down to be enclosed under the earthly symbols, Calvin allows for various ways of expressing the eucharistic reality of "the true and substantial partaking" of the body and blood of Christ. *Institutes* (1543), 17.22, quoted from Zachmann, *Image and Word*, 337.

<sup>317</sup> *Institutes* (1543), 17.30, as in *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.32.

<sup>318</sup> *Institutes* (1543), 17.32. as in *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.36.

<sup>319</sup> *Institutes* (1543), 17.32. as in *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.36.

<sup>320</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 137.

<sup>321</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 137.

<sup>322</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 11:24.

is in heaven, He imparts Himself to us by the secret power of the Holy Spirit, a power which is able not only to bring together, but also to join together, things which are separated by distance. And Calvin suggests our ascent as a necessary condition for this receiving of Christ in the Supper. “[T]o be capable of this impartation, we must rise up to heaven.”<sup>323</sup> The fact that our ascent is prerequisite for our receiving of Christ, the aim of the Supper, means that like the receiving, our ascent is carried out by the power of the Spirit. “Let us remember that it is a secret and wonderful work done by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>324</sup>

In the *True Method of Giving Peace, and of Reforming the Church* of 1549, Calvin speaks of the Lord’s Supper as a ladder which Christ grants to us so that we can climb to heaven and to Him. “Christ invites us to himself. As we cannot climb so high, he himself lends us his hand, and assists us with the helps which he knows to be suited to us, and even lifts us to heaven, as it is very appropriately expressed by those who compare the sacraments to ladders.”<sup>325</sup> Again, Calvin says that the Supper is where we “enjoy” Christ’s self-giving in heaven.<sup>326</sup> In his commentary on the *Mutual Consent between the Churches of Zurich and Geneva* of 1549 (the *Consensus Tigurinus*), Calvin writes: “Christ then is absent from us in respect of his body, but dwelling in us by his Spirit, he raises us to heaven to himself, transfusing into us the vivifying vigor of his flesh...”<sup>327</sup> As Kaiser observes, this is sure evidence that in Calvin’s thinking the eucharistic ascent is on the same footing as our union with Christ.<sup>328</sup> That is, just as our union with Christ in the Lord’s Supper is effectuated by the Holy Spirit, our eucharistic ascent is also the work of the Spirit.

In his 1552 commentary on the sermon of Stephen in Acts, Calvin, suggesting that the Old Testament tabernacle was coined after the heavenly archetype seen by Moses on Mount Sinai, likens the Lord’s Supper to the Tabernacle, which was aimed at lifting the Jews from the earthly sign of God’s presence to the heavenly reality it signifies. Calvin speaks of Christ’s presence as a preliminary downward thrust of Christ,

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<sup>323</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 11:24.

<sup>324</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 11:24.

<sup>325</sup> *Tracts and Treatises*, 3: 279-80.

<sup>326</sup> *Tracts and Treatises*, 3: 280.

<sup>327</sup> *Exposition of the Heads of Agreement*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:240. We will make a closer look into the document in a more detail in the next chapter.

<sup>328</sup> Kaiser, “Climbing Jacob’s Ladder,” 255-6.

who lifts us up into heavenly reality. “God does indeed come down to us...but for the purpose, that he might lift us up to heaven.”<sup>329</sup> Just as our ascent into heaven was explained as a condition for our communion with Christ, here Christ’s presence is explained as a condition for our ascent. “If we do not reach up to him in faith, he will not be present for us.”<sup>330</sup>

In his commentary on Genesis of 1554, Calvin compares the sacraments to Bethel where he believes Jacob “had penetrated into heaven.”<sup>331</sup> Just as Jacob called that place “the gate of heaven,” Calvin says, the sacraments may be called the gate of heaven, which shall “admit us into the presence of God.”<sup>332</sup> This means that through this gate of heaven, “God raises us to himself.”<sup>333</sup> According to Kaiser, this vivid language by which Calvin portrayed the eucharistic ascent assures us that our ascent into heaven in the Supper is not merely turning our thoughts but being actually transported there.<sup>334</sup>

In his *Second Defense of the Orthodox Faith concerning the Sacraments against Westphal* of 1556, Calvin writes that the Lord’s Supper is a sign of Christ’s flesh and blood, through which we climb to heaven stepwise. “For to what end does Christ hold forth a pledge of his flesh and blood under earthly elements, *unless it be to raise us upwards?* If they are helps to our weakness, no man will ever attain to the reality, but he who thus assisted shall *climb, as it were, step by step from earth to heaven.* Those, therefore, who deny that the body of Christ is represented to us under the symbol of bread, not only pervert the whole order of Christ, but deprive the Spirit of God of his wonted mode of speech.”<sup>335</sup> Here Calvin explains that our eucharistic ascent is a corollary of the whole order of Christ and the office of the Holy Spirit.

In the final, 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin qualifies the notion of Christ’s descent in the Supper with that of our eucharistic ascent to heaven. While saying that “Christ descends to us both by the outward symbol and by his Spirit” in the Supper,<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>329</sup> *Comm.* Acts 7:40

<sup>330</sup> *Comm.* Acts 7:49.

<sup>331</sup> *Comm.* Genesis 28:17.

<sup>332</sup> *Comm.* Genesis 28:17.

<sup>333</sup> *Comm.* Genesis 28:17.

<sup>334</sup> Christopher B. Kaiser, “John Calvin Climbing Jacob’s Ladder,” *Perspectives* 13, no. 4 (Ap 1998): 11.

<sup>335</sup> *Tracts and Treatises*, 2: 250.

<sup>336</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.24.

Calvin declares that the purpose of this descent of Christ is to “lift us up himself.”<sup>337</sup> Here the Spirit is understood as the bond, not simply because it ties Christ and us, but because it effectuates our being lifted up to heaven.

In the *True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper* of 1561, Calvin says that in order to commune with “Christ entire,” we should “raise our hearts upwards,” where “Christ invites us to eat” his body and blood. For this, “there is no necessity to bring him down from heaven,” according to Calvin, since the secret agent of this union is the Holy Spirit, who is the “sacred bond” between Christ and us. According to this document, Christ’s being in heaven is no longer an obstacle for our communion with Christ. Rather, the body and blood of Christ “*must remain in heaven in order that believers may share it among themselves.*”<sup>338</sup>

So far we have observed that Calvin consistently worked out his Trinitarian understanding of Christ’s session in heaven and the pneumatological efficacy for this eucharistic discussion throughout almost his whole theological career, even so far as to suggest our ascent into heaven as a condition for our communion with God and to speak of heaven as the main locus for the Lord’s Supper. We can say that by being a matrix for our ascent into heaven, the Lord’s Supper in Calvin’s theology became a more immediate, experiential, and participatory event. Without changing his key concepts concerning the Lord’s Supper, Calvin fits his notion of our eucharistic communion more and more into the framework of divine-human communion as presented in chapter 1.

## 2.5. Conclusion

So far we have explored the connection between Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity and the sacraments, by looking into how the developed doctrine of the Trinity came to be filtered into his doctrine of the sacraments during 1536-1539, and how after 1539 Calvin consistently worked out his developed doctrine of the Trinity closely for his sacramental discourse.

While even in the 1536 *Institutes* Calvin broached Trinitarian themes and categories, such as participation and union, it was after 1536 that he articulated those notions in an explicitly Trinitarian manner. Since he came to conceive of the Spirit as the *bond* between Christ and humans, Calvin came to apply his Trinitarian principle of

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<sup>337</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.15.

<sup>338</sup> *Tracts and Treatises*, 2: 287. My emphasis.

the Distinction of the Properties more explicitly to those concepts. And this refined Trinitarian conception became directly filtered into his explication of the sacraments, making the Lord's Supper more as our real communion with the Father, a fountain or source of life, through the Son, the way to the Father, in the Holy Spirit, the efficacy of this communion. Even after his doctrine of the Trinity reached this mature form, Calvin consistently availed himself of his refined doctrine of the Trinity for this eucharistic exposition. Based upon his Trinitarian understanding of Christ's heavenly residence and the bonding efficacy of the Spirit, the reformer increasingly stressed heaven, rather than the earth, as the locus of our eucharistic communion with God. From all this, we can recognize that the doctrine of the Trinity is the key grammar and paradigm of the Lord's Supper in Calvin's theology.

## Chapter 3

### Calvin's Distinctive Doctrine of the Lord's Supper

Whilst recent studies have shown that Calvin's doctrine of the sacraments was not a coherent and unified doctrine from the beginning, and underwent development of thought, or at least development of expression,<sup>339</sup> it is certain that Calvin's eucharistic position basically emerged from the ground of the sixteenth-century eucharistic debate between Lutheranism and Zwinglianism.<sup>340</sup> His position towards Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, which came to be known as the doctrine of "spiritual presence," was a *via media* between the Lutheran notion of Christ's corporeal presence and Zwinglian symbolism. As has been seen, however, Christ's presence is not the end of the Lord's Supper, for Calvin, but only a condition for the end, that is, our communion with God. This means that we need a more holistic lens, which encompasses the category of Christ's presence, in order to do justice to Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

While the previous chapter discussed the engagement between Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity and his doctrine of the sacraments, the present chapter examines how the doctrine of the Trinity substantially characterizes Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper from Lutheranism and Zwinglianism. Unlike these positions that were preoccupied with the issue of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, and advocated either Christ's presence or absence in the sacrament, Calvin conceives of the Supper basically as a dynamic communion, that is, Trinitarian communion, a notion which safeguards both Christ's presence and absence. By this Trinitarian scheme Calvin's Eucharistic position also overcomes both Lutheran materialism and Zwinglian

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<sup>339</sup> Wim Janse, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," *Perichoresis* volume 10. Issue 2(2012), 155. Thomas Davis demonstrates that while in his 1536 *Institutes* Calvin denied substantial partaking of Christ in the sacrament, he did not think of the eucharist as an instrument of grace, and delineated no clear eucharistic gift, his eucharistic doctrine gradually developed in such a way that Calvin claimed those very elements as essential: he gradually goes on to affirm substantial partaking, claims for the eucharist as an instrument of grace, and asserts on the sacrament's being a gift. Echoing Davis' general conclusion, Wim Janse argues that Calvin's eucharistic theology was influenced by changing battle positions, discussion partners, friendship, and political perspectives and subsequently fluctuates between Zwinglianizing and Lutheranizing positions, even until 1561, the year when he finally issued a defense contra Heshusius. Herman J. Selderhuis, ed., *The Calvin Handbook*, trans. Henry J. Baron, Judith J. Guder, and Randi H. Lundell, First Edition (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 345. While it is beyond the scope of this project to ensure the validity of the details of these arguments, we can safely assume from them that Calvin's view of the sacrament does not constitute a monotonous and fixed system, of which the 1559 *Institutes* is a representative rendition. These studies commonly suggest that an unhistorical reading of Calvin's eucharistic doctrine risks misinterpretation. For example, both Janse and Davis refuse the commonly cited characterization of Calvin's view of the sacraments as "symbolic instrumentalism," in distinction from Zwingli's "symbolic memorialism" or Bullinger's "symbolic parallelism", by reason that Calvin did not admit any "instrumental" language in regard to the sacraments in his early works.

<sup>340</sup> B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 7. This debate is generally represented by the fateful Marburg Colloquy of 1529 between the Lutherans and the Zwinglians.

spiritualism. In a sense, it is based upon the doctrine of the Trinity that Calvin set forth his own doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The last section suggests that the Trinitarian conception and quality, which marks Calvin's eucharistic position, forms the core essence of his doctrine of the Lord's Supper, by shedding light on the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549.

### 3.1. The Issue of Christ's Presence: Immanence or Transcendence?

As Wim Janse has recently noted,<sup>341</sup> the eucharistic debate in the Reformation is related to the medieval problem of reconciling the freedom of God's will with His act of creation. In the thirteenth century, the Dominican Thomas Aquinas tried to protect the idea of "necessity of creation," by grounding God's will in the divine nature, which is based on the divine essence and necessarily knows all possible beings and events.<sup>342</sup> The Franciscan Duns Scotus, on the contrary, decoupled God's action from the necessities of His being, and placed greater stress on the freedom of God, the willful side of God's being. According to Scotus, the will of God "moves itself and freely chooses those beings and events that actually exist."<sup>343</sup> For Thomas, put otherwise, God's will is subordinate to, or immanent in His being, while for Scotus God's will transcends any being.<sup>344</sup> These views were applied to their sacramental theology. As Wim Janse points out, Thomas, based on his emphasis on God's immanence, stressed that "the sacraments *contain* God's grace." On the contrary, Scotus, who emphasized God's transcendence, held that the sacraments only *accompany* God's grace – that is, "grace is conferred by the sacraments, but does not coincide with them, and is also

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<sup>341</sup> Wim Janse, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," *Perichoresis* volume 10. Issue 2(2012): 139-142.

<sup>342</sup> Christopher Kaiser, *The Doctrine of God* (Westchester, Ill: Crossway Books, 1982), 91.

<sup>343</sup> Kaiser, *The Doctrine of God*, 92.

<sup>344</sup> This is obviously an issue of the Trinitarian discourse. Anachronically speaking, the doctrine of the Trinity was an answer to the modern tendency to swing between two extremes, divine transcendence and divine immanence. Relevant to this point is Philip Butin's following remark: "where God's transcendence (exalted above and beyond created reality) was emphasized, the possibility of any genuine, dependable knowledge of God was typically undermined. Such an utterly ineffable God often seemed remote, inaccessible, and uncaring. The other extreme was to see God as so involved with – or even tied to – world processes (often called divine immanence) that God's sovereignty as Creator over the created world was compromised. . . . Belief in the Trinity enables Christian faith to appropriately acknowledge both God's transcendence and God's immanence: As the eternal and almighty Father, God is indeed utterly above and beyond all human comprehension and created reality. But in Jesus Christ, God has come near to human beings, entering our history. As the Holy Spirit, God governs, moves, and sustains the created world and lives in the church and within human beings. Thus, Trinitarian faith enables Christians to affirm both divine transcendence and divine immanence. In the Trinity, Christians can embrace both of these poles of divine reality together without theological contradiction." Philip Walker Butin, *The Trinity* (Westminster/John Knox Press, U.S., 2001), 56-57.

available outside the sacraments.”<sup>345</sup> As Brian Gerrish put it, “whereas for Thomas a sacrament was an instrumental cause by which God, the principal cause or agent, imparted grace to the soul, Scotus could only understand a sacrament as a sure sign that, by a concomitant divine act, grace was simultaneously being imparted.”<sup>346</sup> These notions flowed into the sixteenth-century eucharistic debate between Luther and Zwingli.

### 3.1.1. Luther

While it is often assumed that the issues of Christ’s real presence and ubiquity are the centre of Luther’s eucharistic thought, what stands behind these concepts and what is really central to his eucharistic teaching is his understanding of the Word of God.<sup>347</sup> The Word of God is the first thing to consider in the Eucharist, and everything in the Supper is dependent upon the Word.<sup>348</sup> Accordingly, when the Word of God, especially the Words of Institution, which were spoken by Christ Himself, is uttered, it by itself effects and brings forth the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the place of the sacrament.<sup>349</sup> “For as soon as Christ says, ‘This is my body,’ his body is present through the Word and the power of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>350</sup> It is only through “his Word, promise, command and order” that the sacrament is Christ’s body and blood.<sup>351</sup> Luther’s concept of ubiquity is not so much the cornerstone of Luther’s thought, but a protective measure for this insistence on Christ’s presence according to the Word of God.<sup>352</sup>

As recent studies of Luther have shown, and as the notion of ubiquity implies, Luther’s thought hints that God’s presence can be found all around the created world, as

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<sup>345</sup> Janse, “Calvin’s Doctrine of Lord’s Supper,” 140.

<sup>346</sup> Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 168.

<sup>347</sup> Thomas J Davis, *This Is My Body: The Presence of Christ in Reformation Thought* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 42-4.

<sup>348</sup> Davis, *This is My Body*, 47. “You must depend on the Word and consider it more than the bread.” Weimarer Ausgabe: Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1883-), 30. 1:53, quoted from Davis, *This is My Body*, 47.

<sup>349</sup> Davis, *This is My Body*, 46-7.

<sup>350</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, ed. Helmut T. Lehman and Jaroslav Pelikan, 55 vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-76), 36:341, quoted from Davis, *This is My Body*, 46.

<sup>351</sup> *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, 30.1:23. 34-35, quoted from Davis, *This is My Body*, 47.

<sup>352</sup> Davis, *This is My Body*, 43. In order to be communicated in the supper, for Luther, the risen, ascended Christ needs to be ubiquitous in both his divine and human natures at all time everywhere.

well as in the place of the Lord's Supper. For Luther, according to David Steinmetz, the transcendence of God does not mean that He is absent in creation, but that "while God is present in every creature that surrounds me, his presence is inaccessible to me apart from his Word." Thus, God is "not merely present in eucharistic bread," but is "present in all common bread and the wheat from which bread is made."<sup>353</sup> In a sense, accordingly, God's word does not *achieve* the presence of Christ in the sacrament, but it "simply *points to* a place where God already is and to a place where God is to be accessible to humanity, a place that God has designated."<sup>354</sup>

Given all this, it is adequate that Luther's position has come to be known as "consubstantiation" that, by means of the power of God's Word, Christ is really present in (*in*), with (*cum*), and under (*sub*) the elements of the Lord's Supper. According to Janse, this doctrine of Luther's reflects Aquinas's emphasis on God's immanence, in that it held that the eucharistic bread and wine, while retaining their original substance, carry the real presence of Christ's body and blood in their substance.<sup>355</sup> As is well known, Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper is an extension of his doctrine of Christ and of the Incarnation. This means that Luther believes that as God became a human being, so God dwells in and under the elements of the bread and wine in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.<sup>356</sup>

For Luther the bread and wine is God's instrument which substantially bears the body of Christ. Like Calvin's, Luther's view of the eucharist underwent development in accents until the eucharistic controversy became a major issue around 1529. While the sacrament is stressed as "the sign of the benefits of the Word of God" and "the sign of the benefits given along with the Word" in the early stage, it then came to be spoken of as "vehicle" "or "vessel" through which the Word achieves the benefit.<sup>357</sup> It is during this same time that Luther came to be convinced about the objectivity of God's presence

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<sup>353</sup> David C Steinmetz, *Luther in Context* (Grand Rapids: Baker Bk House, 1995), 24, quoted from Davis, *This is My Body*, 60, n.74.

<sup>354</sup> Davis, *This is My Body*, 60. My emphasis.

<sup>355</sup> While Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper is known for its teaching of corporeal ubiquity of Christ's body and Luther himself vehemently defended the notion, the central issue for Luther, as Davis says, is "not the ubiquity of Christ's body but the power of the word." Thomas J Davis, *This Is My Body*, 15. For Luther, in other words, Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper is simply a corollary of the consecration words in Matthew chapter 26: "Dominus dixit." See Janse, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," 140.

<sup>356</sup> Accordingly, asserts Luther, "what is true in regard to Christ is also true in regard to the sacrament." Donald K McKim, *Theological Turning Points: Major Issues in Christian Thought* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 145.

<sup>357</sup> McKim, *Theological Turning Points*, 143.

and gift in the Lord's Supper.<sup>358</sup> For Luther, we can say, the notion of the Lord's Supper as vessel or instrument of God is tied up with his belief in the objectivity or realism of the sacrament.

### 3.1.2. Zwingli

Opposed to Luther, Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper begins with his belief that the body of Christ is absent in the communion. His doctrine of the Supper is also recognizably the extension of his Christology. For Zwingli, the ascension of Christ is a literal and historical event, and thus is a token that Christ's body is now in heaven at God's right hand. Since the humanity of Christ is a true humanity, and it has been preserved even after His resurrection and ascension, Zwingli believes, it should be circumscribed by a specific place, and therefore now by heaven.<sup>359</sup> While he can affirm that Christ can be present in the supper according to his divinity,<sup>360</sup> accordingly, Zwingli insists that there cannot be the presence of Christ's real body in the communion and that we can speak of the bodily presence of Christ only figuratively.<sup>361</sup>

Given this, Zwingli's doctrine of the Lord's Supper can be said to be a reflection of Scotus's notion of God's transcendence. The whole person of Christ is absent not only from the eucharistic elements, but from all earthly realities. In a sense, as Janse put it, the crux of the sacrament for Zwingli was Christ's real absence rather than His real presence.<sup>362</sup> The bread and wine only signify or represent the body and blood of Christ, which is now only absent on earth, and call Christ's death on the cross to the minds of believers. Lacking any trace of an objective character, the Lord's Supper, for Zwingli, is a nominal and commemorative event, in which people are reminded of Christ's work of grace, make a response of thanksgiving, and prove their faith to the

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<sup>358</sup> In his early years, Luther emphasized the subjective character of the Supper even so far as to declare, like Zwingli, that the eating and drinking in the Supper is "nothing else but believing on the Lord Jesus Christ." George, *Theology of the Reformers*, 156.

<sup>359</sup> George, *Theology of the Reformers*, 154. Questioning Luther's Christology and particularly his notion of Christ's corporeal ubiquity, Zwingli claimed that since a human body can occupy only one place, Christ's body, after ascension, should remain only in heaven. Otherwise, in Zwingli's thinking, the idea of Christ's ubiquity is what robs Christ of the true humanity and thus contradicts the gospel.

<sup>360</sup> George, *Theology of the Reformers*, 153.

<sup>361</sup> "We, too, speak of a sacramental presence of the body of Christ, which means that the body of Christ is in the Supper representatively." Moore-Keish, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, 19.

<sup>362</sup> Janse, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," 140.

whole church.<sup>363</sup> The sacrament confers neither the presence of nor our communion with the true body and blood of Christ.

In a sense, for Zwingli, the whole person of Christ, which includes His humanity, does not even need to be present in worship and the sacrament. For Zwingli, what is to be worshipped is Christ as His divinity, not His flesh and blood, and since the divinity of Christ is everywhere, He can be worshipped everywhere, even outside the place of worship and the sacraments.<sup>364</sup> The Lord's Supper is essentially a response of thanksgiving for Christ's work of grace, which He had already finished in the past, and which had already been received by faith. For Zwingli, the humanity of Christ bears actually no significance for our present life of faith.<sup>365</sup> And this is why he conceived of the Supper as no more than "the thanksgiving and common rejoicing of those who declare the death of Christ."<sup>366</sup>

Based upon his favoured text, John 6:63, "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail," Zwingli denied that any material, visible things can be the bearer of God's grace. For Zwingli, as Brian Gerrish put it, "the Spirit has no need of vehicles by which to impart grace," and thus the role of the sacrament is not to give God's grace but to testify to the grace that already has been given.<sup>367</sup> The Lord's Supper, in other words, is not a vehicle or vessel of God's grace, as in Luther's thought, but merely a sign of that grace. Given that "the flesh is of no avail," Zwingli believed that God's grace comes directly by the Holy Spirit, who does not depend on any externals. Zwingli argues that when Jesus speaks of "eating his flesh and drinking his blood he simply means believing in the worth of that suffering which he bore for our sake."<sup>368</sup>

Naturally, in this scheme, the Lord's Supper becomes a spiritualized or nominal event, which hinges upon the inner faith of the believers, which Zwingli also locates in the work of the Holy Spirit. "When you partake of the two elements of bread and wine,

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<sup>363</sup> For Zwingli, according to Janse, the Holy Supper was, in order, "a commemorative meal, an emphasizing of the brotherly communion, and a pledge or oath of faith, and allegiance to Christ." Janse, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," 141.

<sup>364</sup> George, *Theology of the Reformers*, 156.

<sup>365</sup> George, *Theology of the Reformers*, 156.

<sup>366</sup> S. M. Jackson, *The Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 3 vols. (1972; rpt. Philadelphia, 1901), 3:214, 205, quoted from Mckim, *Theological Turning Points*, 145.

<sup>367</sup> Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 142.

<sup>368</sup> S.M. Jackson, *The Selected Works of Huldreich Zwingli*, 3 vols. (1972; rpt. Philadelphia, 1901), 3:214, quoted from Mckim, *Theological Turning Points*, 146.

all that you do is to confess publicly that you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>369</sup> Christ is not understood as the subject of the Supper, but rather One to whom the church should pledge their allegiance. For Zwingli, the active subject of the sacrament of the Supper is the believing congregation, rather than Christ Himself. Zwingli believes that “the sacrament merely testifies in public that grace has been received.”<sup>370</sup> For him, in short, the Supper is a memorial or sign of past grace, which has no place for the living person of Christ.

Zwingli’s understanding of the Holy Spirit, as is presented in his exposition of the Lord’s Supper, foreshadows the shift of emphasis in the understanding of the Holy Spirit in a rationalist direction, “from the unifying power of the Holy Spirit to the cognitive, commemorative power of the human spirit or ratio,” which has been taking place since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>371</sup> In that there is virtually no place for Christ, this view of Zwingli runs counter to Luther’s eucharistic doctrine, which hinges upon Christology.

### 3.1.3. Calvin

Defining the Thomist view as that which understands the sacraments as having an instrumental cause by which God imparts grace to believers, Gerrish implies that Calvin’s sacramental theology is closer to that of Thomas than of Scotus. Gerrish explains:

Calvin not only reaffirmed his view of the sacraments as instruments through which God distributes his grace, but also defended the scholastic expressions that they ‘confer’ and ‘contain’ grace. He made it clear, moreover, that when he said that Christ ‘exhibits’ his body and blood in the Supper, he meant nothing less than ‘gives his body to be enjoyed’...Calvin, we might say, took more seriously than the Schoolmen themselves the scholastic principle that the sacraments cause grace by the communication of meaning.<sup>372</sup>

As is well known, Calvin admitted an objective nature of the Lord’s Supper, saying that the sacrament not only signifies a thing, but exhibits and presents the thing signified. Like Zwingli, Calvin believed that in the present time, the whole person of Christ is only in heaven. However, God really presents the body of Christ to believers,

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<sup>369</sup> Zwingli, *A Clear Instruction About the Lord’s Supper 1*, quoted from Mckim, *Theological Turning Points*, 146.

<sup>370</sup> Brian A. Gerrish, “Lord’s Supper in the Reformed Confessions,” *Theology Today*, July 1, 1966, 226.

<sup>371</sup> Janse, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper,” 151.

<sup>372</sup> Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 168, n.33.

and confers the grace of salvation to them, using the Supper as an instrument. For Calvin, in this sense, the sacrament has an “instrumental cause” by which God imparts His grace of presence and salvation. However, this notion of instrument is not simply intended to advocate an objective or realistic character of the sacrament. That the sacrament is an instrument of God does not necessarily lead to the understanding that God is present and immanent in and with the eucharistic elements.

As Randall Zachmann has aptly shown in his chronological exposition of Calvin’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, Calvin, from the second edition of the *Institutes* (1539) onwards, began to explain his doctrine of the Lord’s Supper with increasingly realistic language. In the first edition of the *Institutes* (1536), Calvin was not that bold in saying that “the signs of bread and wine actually offer the body and blood of Christ to us in the Supper,”<sup>373</sup> and even if he sometimes described the Supper as offering the body of Christ truly and efficaciously, Calvin was still more inclined to view the Supper as witness, proof, or remembrance of grace.<sup>374</sup> However, in the 1539 edition, Calvin clearly declares that the Supper not only represents the life-giving body of Christ, but also really presents it, so that believers have a participation in it. “Therefore if the Lord truly represents the participation in his body through the breaking of bread, there ought not to be the least doubt that he truly presents and shows his body.”<sup>375</sup> This realistic tone continued and culminated when Calvin, in the *Short Treatise on the Holy Supper* of 1541, expresses “the bread and the wine” as “the instruments,” by which Christ truly distributes to us the reality of His body and blood,<sup>376</sup> an expression which finds its way into the final edition of the *Institutes*. While it is in the *Short Treatise* that Calvin calls the Lord’s Supper God’s instrument, the sacraments in general had been dubbed as *instruments* since the 1539 *Institutes*.<sup>377</sup> Given this, indeed, the notion of the sacraments as instruments goes hand in hand with the realistic explanation in Calvin’s thinking.

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<sup>373</sup> Randall C. Zachman, *Image and Word in the Theology of John Calvin* (Notre Dame, Ind: Univ of Notre Dame Pr, 2007), 331.

<sup>374</sup> *Institutes* (1536), 4.26. Therefore, even when Calvin says that Christ is shown forth in the Supper, what it actually means is that Christ shows his presence in power, strength, and effectiveness. See Zachman, *Image and Word*, 332.

<sup>375</sup> *Institutes 1539*, 12.18, as in *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.10.

<sup>376</sup> Calvin, *Theological Treatises*, The Library of Christian Classics, v. 22 (London: SCM Press, 1954), 147.

<sup>377</sup> See *Institutes* (1559), 4.14.12. Also see *Institutes* (1541), 499-504.

In Calvin's theology, however, eucharistic realism, viz. the teaching of the real efficacy of the sacrament, never mitigates his belief that the sacrament is a "sign" that differs from the reality signified. Note that it is also around 1540, when Calvin wrote both the 1539 *Institutes* and the *Short Treatise*, that Calvin came to distinguish sharply between the sign and the thing signified, or between the exterior sign and the interior or spiritual reality.<sup>378</sup> Though the realist cast is tenuous, in the first 1536 edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin had not bluntly declared the disparity between the sign, that is, the sacrament, and the reality signified by the sign. In the 1539 *Institutes*, however, Calvin came to clarify that the breaking of the bread is a symbol and is not the thing itself,<sup>379</sup> even when he insists that the reality is really exhibited through this symbol. Similarly, in the *Short Treatise*, Calvin portrays the bread and wine as "visible signs," which differ from the invisible reality they signify, and through which the invisible reality of our communion with Christ is set forth.<sup>380</sup> Conversely, the *Consensus Tigurinus*, which has been regarded as showing Zwinglianizing accents of Calvin's eucharistic theology due to its strong differentiation between sign and reality,<sup>381</sup> declares the instrumentality of the Lord's Supper, speaking of it as an instrument or implement of God.<sup>382</sup> In short, while Calvin increasingly recognized the realistic nature of the Lord's Supper, as noted, he also increasingly and continuously held fast to the distinction between the sign and the reality.<sup>383</sup>

For Calvin, that the Supper is an instrument is not a notion which merely corroborates the realistic dimension of the sacrament. In fact, he understands that the celebration of the Supper is by no means requisite for our receiving the body and blood of Christ. Even in calling the bread and wine instruments for our communion with Christ, Calvin believes that the communion is available beyond the eucharistic

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<sup>378</sup> This point has already been observed by Bryan D. Spinks, "Calvin's Baptismal Theology and the Making of the Strasbourg and Genevan Baptismal Liturgies 1540 and 1542," *Scottish Journal of Theology*, January 1, 1995.

<sup>379</sup> Zachman, *Image and Word*, 332.

<sup>380</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 147-9.

<sup>381</sup> For example, article 17, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:217.

<sup>382</sup> For example, see article 12 and 13, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:216. "They are indeed instruments by which God acts efficaciously..." (article 13)

<sup>383</sup> From the first edition of the *Institutes*, Calvin insists that just as the whole nature of Christ is preserved even after His ascension, the nature of the bread and wine should be wholly as they were originally created. "Flesh must therefore be flesh; spirit, spirit – each thing in the state and condition wherein God created it." *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.24.

celebration,<sup>384</sup> as in Scotus's understanding. As in the general usage of the term 'instrument,' when Calvin expresses the sacrament as an "instrument," it strongly connotes that there is an agent or user of that instrument, who has control over the instrument. "We do not put any power in the creatures but only say that God uses such means and instruments as He Himself sees are suitable."<sup>385</sup> And it is especially the Holy Spirit who uses the sacrament "as an instrument by which he will do his work in us."<sup>386</sup>

...if any good is conferred upon us by the sacraments, it is not owing to any proper virtue in them, even though in this you should include the promise by which they are distinguished. For it is God alone who acts by his Spirit. When he uses the instrumentality of the sacraments, he neither infuses his own virtue into them nor derogates in any respect from the effectual working of his Spirit, but, in adaptation to our weakness, uses them as helps; in such manner, however, that the whole power of acting remains with him alone.<sup>387</sup>

The concept that the sacrament is an instrument of the Holy Spirit both safeguards sacramental objectivity and reality, and dismisses sacramental mechanistic.<sup>388</sup> While the Holy Spirit gives the sacrament a real efficacy, the Spirit can do the same thing outside the external celebration of the sacrament. That is, the virtue of the sacraments is wholly up to the free will of the Spirit.<sup>389</sup> Calvin's points are aptly summarized in the following passage:

In receiving the sacrament in faith, according to the ordinance of the Lord, we are truly made partakers of the real substance of the body and blood of Jesus

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<sup>384</sup> While there are our receiving of Christ and our union and communion with God in the Lord's Supper, they are not given exclusively in the sacrament, for Calvin, which is evident from his letter to Peter Martyr Vermigli and his discourse on the bread of life in John 6, which he believes talks about speak of "the uninterrupted communication that we have apart from the use of the Supper," and about "uninterrupted eating by faith." *Comm.* John 6:53-56. See Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 128-130. Gerrish argues that "it is in fact the function of the gospel, according to Calvin, to make Christ ours, so that we might be engrafted into his body." Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 128.

<sup>385</sup> *Institutes* (1539) as in *Institutes* (1541), 501.

<sup>386</sup> *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, in *Theological Treatises*, 149.

<sup>387</sup> *Consensus Tigurinus*, article 12, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:216.

<sup>388</sup> "Now we do not deny that the Lord is present at His institution by the very present power of His Spirit, so that the administration of the sacraments which He has ordained may not be vain and fruitless. Nevertheless we teach that the integral grace of the Spirit, since it is distinct from the external ministry, also ought to be considered separately from the latter. When such a teaching of the sacraments is offered, their value is efficiently clarified and their use shown and their usefulness commanded. Meanwhile a good moderation is kept, not to accord the sacraments more respect that one ought and not to take away anything which is suitable to them." *Institutes* (1539) as in *Institutes* (1541), 504.

<sup>389</sup> It is also because the efficacy hinges upon the Spirit that the sacrament might bear no fruits in the participants: Only when the Spirit gives faith to the participants, can we benefit from the sacrament.

Christ...[O]n the one hand we must, to shut out all carnal fancies, raise our hearts on high to heaven, not thinking that our Lord Jesus Christ is so abased as to be enclosed under any corruptible elements. On the other hand, not to diminish the efficacy of this sacred mystery, we must hold that it is accomplished by the secret and miraculous virtue of God, and that the Spirit of God is the bond of participation, for which reason it is called spiritual.<sup>390</sup>

Note that the Holy Spirit is referred to as the “bond of participation” in this passage: it is the Spirit who, as the bond of participation, achieves our participation in Christ in the Supper. This means that since the Holy Spirit is the agent of the Lord’s Supper, and the Spirit is who draws us to Christ, the sacrament is also something which binds us to the person of Christ. While Calvin speaks of the real presence of Christ in the Supper, as noted, the main issue of the sacrament for him is not the presence itself but our participation in and communion with Christ. As a bond, the Holy Spirit binds believers to the heavenly body of Christ, and effects our communion with Him. Indeed, for Calvin, the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is not so much an instrument for the presence of Christ in the place of sacrament as for our personal communion with Him. Since the Spirit as the bond is the agent, Christ does not need to be immanent in the eucharistic bread and wine for this communion.

Concerning the question whether God indwells or transcends the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, in Calvin’s understanding, there is no simple answer. As for the eucharistic elements, we may say that Calvin’s view reflects, as Zwingli’s, Scotism (transcendence), given his acceptance of Zwingli’s argument for Christ’s bodily absence, based on His ascension, and for the impossibility of our carnal eating of Christ.<sup>391</sup> At the same time, however, the Holy Spirit as a bond binds the believers to the ascended Christ so that they can partake of the true body and blood of Christ, according to Calvin. Perhaps we can say that, while God transcends the materials, for Calvin, Christ is immanent with the human participants, or, in their act of communion with Himself. Even though Calvin advocates Christ’s absence, the absence is, for him, rather what enables Christ’s dynamic presence with the believers.

While Calvin approved Zwingli’s understanding of a sacrament at some points, e.g. Christ’s bodily absence, Calvin also believed that Zwingli was wrong about the principal agent of the sacrament<sup>392</sup> and degenerated the Supper into the act of humans

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<sup>390</sup> *Short Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*, in *Theological Treatises*, 166.

<sup>391</sup> Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 9. Killian McDonnell argues that, considering Calvin’s emphasis on Christ’s transcendence in the Supper, Calvin’s position is Scotistic or Zwinglian. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 7.

and of the church. Even if Christ remains exclusively in heaven, Calvin believed, the sacrament is an act of Christ, who, in the power of the Holy Spirit, is enigmatically present in the Supper, and enables our participation in and communion with Himself. In the Supper, Christ is truly present, and God truly works for our faith.

### **3.2. Against Spiritualization: Significance of Body**

That the Lord's Supper is not simply the Holy Spirit's work but the Spirit's work of making us commune with Christ's whole person, both divine, and human, has far-reaching implications for our understanding and practice of the sacrament, even though Calvin himself does not work them out.

It was their different conceptions of the Holy Spirit that thwarted the Reformers' efforts to reach agreement on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper at the Marburg Colloquy of 1529. Luther's confrontations in the 1520s with the radical spiritualists, such as Karlstadt and Müntzer led him to understand the word "spirit" in a spiritualist sense, in which the spirit implies roughly "contra-physicality" and "contra-carnality."<sup>393</sup> Accordingly, Luther understood the concept of "Christ's real presence through the Spirit" only in a spiritualized sense, that is, as the absence of the whole person of Christ, and at the Colloquy, he rejected an agreement with Bucer, who had been speaking of a real presence through the Spirit, saying "You are always talking about the spirit, the spirit, the spirit." However, Bucer's concept of the Holy Spirit differs from a spiritualist view as found with the radical reformers, for whom "spirit" is deemed as contrasted with flesh or earthly matters. He used *Spiritus* to refer to the Holy Spirit, who fulfilled creation, and is involved in God's providence in the created world.<sup>394</sup> This view of Bucer's flowed into Calvin's pneumatological doctrine in which the Holy Spirit is by no means an anti-physical principle, but rather is One who made us members of Christ's body, of his flesh and of his bones.<sup>395</sup>

We have observed that Calvin's concept of the Holy Spirit as a bond led him to describe the Lord's Supper as a more personal event. For Calvin it is the whole person of Christ, including His full humanity, to whom the Holy Spirit binds the believers.

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<sup>392</sup> Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 8.

<sup>393</sup> Janse, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*, 150.

<sup>394</sup> Janse, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*, 150.

<sup>395</sup> Ephesians 5:30.

Unlike those who simply put more weight on the role of the Spirit concerning Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper, Calvin, especially after the Lausanne Disputation, boldly declares that the spiritual life which Christ bestows upon us in the sacrament "does not rest on the fact that He vivifies us with Spirit, but that his Spirit makes us participants in the virtue of his vivifying body, by which participation we are fed on eternal life."<sup>396</sup> In this scheme, the meaning of Christ's whole humanity for our communion with Him is safeguarded and highlighted.

Calvin's appreciation for Christ's body is originally found in his doctrine of union with Christ, for which his eucharistic doctrine is most relevant. Calvin believes that the body of Christ not only accomplished our salvation, but also is now communicated to us through our union with Him.<sup>397</sup> Only when we are united to the body of Christ and have communion with it, according to Calvin, is the relationship we have with Christ "full and complete."<sup>398</sup> This is what it means when Calvin says that, owing to the bond of the Spirit, we possess Christ wholly and have communion with his flesh and blood.<sup>399</sup> Otherwise put, the role of the Spirit is to make us one with Christ "in body, spirit, and soul," and to make "all that Christ himself is" is conveyed to us.<sup>400</sup> That the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the place where this union with Christ is set forth<sup>401</sup> implies that the eucharistic communion is what involves the bodies of Christ and worshippers, and that these bodies can play a pivotal role in this embodied celebration of the sacrament.<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>396</sup> *Confession of Faith concerning the Eucharist*, in *Theological Treatises*, 168.

<sup>397</sup> "The flesh of Christ gives life, not only because we once obtained salvation by it, but because now, while we are made one with Christ by a sacred union, the same flesh breathes life into us, or to express it more briefly, because ingrafted into the body of Christ by the secret agency of the Spirit, we have life in common with Him. For from the hidden fountain of the Godhead, life was miraculously infused into the body of Christ, that it might flow from thence to us." *Corpus Reformatorium*, 9:30-1, quoted from Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Pr, 1995), 146.

<sup>398</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 6:15.

<sup>399</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.12. Calvin also teaches that "when we speak of the communion which believers have with Christ, we mean that they communicate with His flesh not less than with His Spirit, so as to possess thus the whole Christ." *Confession of Faith concerning the Eucharist*, in *Theological Treatises*, 168.

<sup>400</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.12. "...the Lord bestows this benefit upon us through his Spirit so that we may be made one in body, spirit, and soul with him. The bond of this connection is therefore the Spirit of Christ, with whom we are joined in unity, and is like a channel through which all that Christ himself is and has is conveyed to us."

<sup>401</sup> "Observe, that the spiritual connection which we have with Christ belongs not merely to the soul, but also to the body, so that we are flesh of His flesh..." *Comm.* Ephesians 5:30.

<sup>402</sup> Calvin speaks of the sacrament as a seal of the salvation of our bodies, as well as of our souls, which assures us of the immortality of our flesh. *Calvin's First Catechism*, 35. By this is implied that our bodies are involved in the eucharistic communion, preventing the sacrament from degenerating into a spiritualized event.

Calvin believes that Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper has "too little regard for signs, thus divorcing them from their mysteries," while Luther's view has "too much regard for signs, thus obscuring the mysteries themselves."<sup>403</sup> This means that while in Zwingli's view the signs of the sacrament are separated from the reality they signify, (e.g. Christ's body and our participation in it), in Luther's view they are simply identified with the body. Since the substantial body of Christ is absent in the place of the Supper, for Calvin it is impossible that, as in Lutheran doctrine, the bread and wine are plainly equated with Christ's body, or the body is presented overtly in and under the elements. However, Calvin's statement also implies that there is a kind of substantial link between the signs and the body, by the power of the Holy Spirit who uses the signs. This understanding means that the sign of the Lord's Supper is in a manner substantially, although not blatantly, linked to the body of Christ, and thus that there is a kind of human, or bodily, dimension in our eucharistic communion. It is in this sense that Calvin speaks of the sacrament as a "mystery."<sup>404</sup>

We will explore in detail in chapter 6 how this communion with the body of Christ is achieved in the church's ministry of the sacraments in Calvin's thinking. For now, suffice it to note that the embodied and tangible character of the Lord's Supper is related to the fact that the sacrament is our true communion with the body of Christ. Calvin understands the visible forms of God's accommodation, such as the incarnation of the Word, as a proof that the essence of God is hidden and incomprehensible.<sup>405</sup> Likewise, the visible celebration of the sacrament is what *demonstrates* our communion with Christ's body, which cannot be explicated in words. "As the communion which we have with the body of Christ is a thing incomprehensible not only to the eye but to our natural sense, it is there visibly demonstrated to us."<sup>406</sup> For Calvin, the Lord's Supper is a place where Christ, who "was shadowed forth only in rude and imperfect" forms

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<sup>403</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.15.

<sup>404</sup> For example, see *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.5 and 4.17.32.

<sup>405</sup> For Calvin, God's act of accommodation reflects that all human knowledge of God is incomplete and partial, and accommodated to limited human capacity. For example, the incarnation of the Word, a form of divine accommodation, denotes that the essence of God is hidden and inexplicable. Christ's becoming flesh implies that the divine essence is mystery, which is to be experienced by humans, rather than comprehended. See J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology And Ministry For The Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2011), 71-2.

<sup>406</sup> *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, in *Theological Treatises*, 147. "It is no small or common thing that the apostle teaches, when he asserts that we are flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of his bone. Rather he points out the great *mystery* of our communion with his body, whose sublimity no one is able to explain adequately in words." *Confession of Faith concerning the Eucharist*, in *Theological Treatises*, 168. My emphasis.

under the law, is now “set forth in living colours and graphically distinct” in the sacrament.<sup>407</sup> By this emphasis on the visibility of Christ is meant that the communion with the true body of Christ is brought forth in the Lord’s Supper.

Calvin’s emphasis on the meaning of our bodily senses and actions in the Supper can be understood in a similar vein. From the 1539 edition of the *Institutes* onward, Calvin teaches that “the clearer anything is, the fitter it is to support faith. But *the sacraments bring the clearest promises*; and they have this characteristic over and above the word.”<sup>408</sup> According to Calvin, it is because the sacraments appeal to all of the bodily senses: sight, feeling, smell, taste, and hearing.<sup>409</sup> “[I]t is our interest to have all our senses exercised in the promises of God, that they may be the better confirmed to us.”<sup>410</sup> In this sense, the physical materials of the bread and wine, which act upon the bodily sense of the participants, are also an indispensable part of the Lord’s Supper. “[H]e condescends to lead us to himself... by *these earthly elements*, and to set before us in the flesh a mirror of spiritual blessings... because we have souls engrafted in bodies, he imparts spiritual things under visible ones.”<sup>411</sup> According to Calvin, the bread and the cup of the Lord’s Supper are meaningful only when they are “seen by the eyes, handled by the hands and perceived by the taste.”<sup>412</sup> Here Calvin also appreciates the significance of our act of eating in the celebration of the Supper.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> *Comm.* Hebrew 10:1. “As painters do not in the first draught bring out the likeness in vivid colours and expressively but in the first instance draw rude and obscure lines, so the representation of Christ under the law was unpolished – a first sketch, but in our sacraments it is seen drawn out to the life.” *Comm.* Colossians 2:18. Since Christ’s heavenly body is still “in the dimensions of a human body,” according to Calvin, it is visible, as visibility is a “proper and inseparable quality of body.” *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.30. Also see the *Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal*, in *Tracts and Treatises* 2:466.

<sup>408</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.14.5. My emphasis.

<sup>409</sup> “Because we are of flesh,” Calvin says, the sacraments are “shown us under things of flesh, to instruct us according to our dull capacity, and to lead us by the hand as tutors lead children.” In other words, God puts on a bodily form in the sacraments, “so that he may be known by us according to our own measure.” *Comm.* John 5:7. This means that our fleshly senses should be involved in the celebration of the sacraments.

<sup>410</sup> Catechism of 1545, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:84. Since our body is involved, according to Calvin, God “manifests himself to us as far as our dullness is given to perceive, and attests his good will and love toward us more expressly than by word.” *Institutes* (1559), 4.14.6.

<sup>411</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.14.3. For a similar statement, see the *Short Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*, in *Theological Treatises*, 144.

<sup>412</sup> Catechism of 1545, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:91.

<sup>413</sup> Against those who claimed that all that is meant by “eating Christ’s flesh and blood” is “to believe in Christ,” Calvin distinguished eating from believing, and teaches that if we believe in Christ, we should also receive Him, and this receiving of Christ is achieved through the action of eating at the Lord’s Supper. “[W]e are quickened by the true partaking of him; and he has therefore designated this partaking by the words ‘eating’ and ‘drinking,’ in order that no one should think that the life that we receive from him is received by mere knowledge... I say that we eat Christ’s flesh in believing, because it is made ours by faith, and that this eating is the result and effect of faith... In this way the Lord intended, by calling himself the ‘bread of life,’ to teach not only that salvation for us rests in faith

These are statements which underline the need of physical elements and actions as the means of God's accommodation to our earthly situation. However, Calvin also takes these notions to signify that our communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper is a substantial communion, though it is not like the Lutheran substantialism, which is based upon our being one with the substance of His body. "In bidding us take, He intimates that it is ours. In bidding us eat, He intimates that it becomes one *substance* with us."<sup>414</sup> Here we can notice that Calvin's emphasis on our bodily celebration of the Lord's Supper has a thread of connection with the notion of our communion with the true body of Christ in the bond of the Spirit.

### 3.3. Against Materialism: the Doctrine of Eucharistic Ascent

Indeed, this communication of Christ's body is also a main theme in the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, which is predicated on the notion of Christ's ubiquity. Calvin, however, deems such a doctrine to be a corruption of the doctrine of Christ, and explains it in a different way: As Christ is in heaven, we can have communion with Christ's body and blood, not because Christ is brought down to us under the elements of bread and wine, but because we are lifted up to heaven where Christ resides. This is the point where Calvin would appeal to the doctrine of the eucharistic ascent.

Against the doctrine of Christ's corporeal presence in the eucharist, Calvin holds that Christ, having ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will not return to the earth until the Last Day.<sup>415</sup> Accordingly, Calvin, though he insists that God truly exhibits and presents Himself in the Supper, cautions worshippers not to look for Christ and all his benefits on the eucharistic table, but to lift up their hearts (*Sursum Corda*) to heaven and seek Christ there.<sup>416</sup> The sacrament of the eucharist, for Calvin, is "steps of a ladder,"<sup>417</sup> which enables this ascending movement

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in his death and resurrection, but also that, by true partaking of him, his life passes into us and is made ours – just as bread when taken as food imparts vigor to the body." Calvin, *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.5.

<sup>414</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.3. My emphasis.

<sup>415</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.31. "To them Christ does not seem present unless he comes down to us. As though, if he should lift us to himself, we should not just as much enjoy his presence! The question is therefore only of manner, for they place Christ in the bread, while we do not think it lawful for us to drag him from heaven."

<sup>416</sup> *Institutes* (1539), 12. 29, quoted from Zachman, *Image and Word*, 334.

<sup>417</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 11:24.

of worshippers, and which leads them to Christ who is located in heaven. Calvin believes that while people seek God in the earthly place of the temple and its forms of worship, in the Old Testament times, these forms and places were not intended to bind God to such forms, but rather to lift the faithful to God in heaven. In this sense, the symbols such as the sanctuary, the Ark of the Covenant, and the altar, were “vehicles and ladders” to heaven.<sup>418</sup> In these days, Calvin believes, the sacrament plays the same function as these symbols, by making us climb to heaven through.<sup>419</sup> This description of the sacrament makes it clear that for him the end of our eucharistic celebration is heaven.

Given that Calvin does not view heaven in spatial terms, it should not be assumed that this “upward movement” in Calvin’s expression refers to a physical movement from one location to another. For Calvin, as is already mentioned, heaven is “not a place” above the spheres but a “different order of reality” or something “set over against the fabric of the world.”<sup>420</sup> Therefore, it is obviously not the physical body of worshipers that needs to be raised in the Supper. However, it also should be noted that the eucharistic ascent is not just, as Christopher Kaiser expresses, “a change in the believer’s mental attitude,”<sup>421</sup> but a “real event,” based upon God’s objective works.<sup>422</sup> Calvin says that “as we cannot climb so high, he (Christ) himself lends us his hand” and “lifts us to heaven, as it is very appropriately expressed by those who compare the sacraments to ladders.”<sup>423</sup> When we “are carried to heaven with our eyes and minds,” Calvin also states, we behold Christ who exerts his energy, manifests his presence, breathes into his people his own life, sustains, confirms, and invigorates them, and preserves them safe, feeds them with his own body, a communion with which he transfuses into them, just as if he were with them in the body.<sup>424</sup> Here the Spirit plays a

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<sup>418</sup> *Comm.* Genesis 3:23.

<sup>419</sup> *Second Defence of the Faith concerning the Sacraments in answer to Joachim Westphal*, in *Tracts and Treatises* 2:296.

<sup>420</sup> *Comm.* Acts 1:11.

<sup>421</sup> Kaiser, “Climbing Jacob’s Ladder.”

<sup>422</sup> This point was also mentioned in chapter 2.

<sup>423</sup> *The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom and of Reforming the Church*, in *Tracts and Treatises* 3:279-80.

<sup>424</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.18.

role as a bridge which overcomes the separation between Christ in heaven and believers on earth.<sup>425</sup> For Calvin, in sum, the believers' ascent in the Supper is grounded upon this leading activity of Christ, which, in coordination with that of the Spirit, "raises us to heaven to himself, transfusing into us the vivifying vigor of his flesh."<sup>426</sup>

As mentioned, the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation teaches that the natural body and blood of Christ are present in the Lord's Supper, in, with, and under the eucharistic bread and wine. This doctrine has something in common with that of Roman Catholic transubstantiation, in that, by binding Christ's presence with the physical elements of the bread and wine, it opens the possibility that they are adored as Christ Himself. While the eucharistic materials have their own significance in Calvin's doctrine, as noted, his doctrine excludes any possibility of the adoration of the materials, because, according to the doctrine, the materials are not a vessel of Christ's presence. While there is the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, this presence is set forth not in and with the bread and wine, but in heaven, to which He lifts the believers up, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

As noted, the exhortation of the eucharistic ascent first functions as an antidote to the idolatry of the eucharistic materials. "For as we do not doubt that Christ's body is limited by the general characteristics common to all human bodies, and is contained in heaven (where it was received once for all) until Christ returns in judgment, so we deem it utterly unlawful to draw it back under these corruptible elements or to imagine it to be present everywhere."<sup>427</sup> Since Christ took humanity on earth, and has not changed its nature even after he was exalted into heaven, for Calvin, to assume "the body of Christ is enclosed within the signs or is joined locally to it" and "abase him under the corruptible elements of this world" is "subverting what Scripture declares concerning his human nature, we annihilate the glory of his ascension."<sup>428</sup> In other words, the way for worshippers to "adore Christ rightly"<sup>429</sup> in the Lord's Supper is to be lifted up into

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<sup>425</sup> Douglas Farrow, "Between the Rock and a Hard Place: In Support of (something Like) a Reformed View of the Eucharist," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3, no. 2 (Jl 2001): 167–86.

<sup>426</sup> *The Mutual Consensus between the Churches of Zurich and Geneva* (the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549), quoted from Kaiser, "Climbing Jacob's Ladder," 255. According to Kaiser, the activity of God in the people's ascent in the eucharist is so crucial to Calvin that when he defended his own position against the charge that it ruled out a real presence of Christ in the sacrament, he argued that the direct activity of Christ in coordination with that of the Spirit in the eucharistic elevation was sufficient to ensure the presence of the risen Christ in the Supper. Kaiser, "Climbing Jacob's Ladder," 256.

<sup>427</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.12.

<sup>428</sup> *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, in *Theological Treatises*, 159.

heaven and to possess the whole Christ, who remains there in His wholeness, both divine and human.

Accordingly, while he recognizes the significance of our bodily senses for communion, as mentioned, Calvin also says that “we must not cling to any earthly thing, but must *elevate our senses above the world*, and lift ourselves up by faith to his eternal glory.”<sup>430</sup> This means that in our eating of the bread and wine, we need spiritual senses, through which we can experience a higher reality, which transcends the reality of eating. This reality is the heavenly presence of Christ and our communion with the Father through being joined to this Christ. For Calvin, the reason why we need the whole person of Christ, in both divinity and humanity, is to be led to His divinity, through uniting with His humanity. “[B]y Christ-human we are led to Christ-God...in which shines His divine majesty.”<sup>431</sup> This is also the way to the Father, who is the origin and fullness of the divinity majesty. Given this, the Lord’s Supper, in which we are drawn to the Father through the person of Christ, is fundamentally a divine event, though it uses earthly means. In sum, the doctrine of the eucharist as the Trinitarian communion distinguishes Calvin’s eucharistic doctrine from that of Lutheran materialism.

### 3.4. The *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549

We may say that the notion of our personal communion with God, that is, the Trinitarian communion so far mentioned, forms the bare essential of Calvin’s eucharistic doctrine, when we consider the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549, a doctrinal agreement on the Lord’s Supper between Calvin and Bullinger.<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>429</sup> “Moreover, the practice always observed in the ancient Church was that, before celebrating the Supper, the people were solemnly exhorted to lift their hearts on high, to show that we must not stop at the visible sign, to adore Christ rightly.” *Short Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*, in *Theological Treatises*, 159.

<sup>430</sup> “Thus, we must note that when God declares himself to us, we must not cling to any earthly thing, but must elevate our senses above the world, and lift ourselves up by faith to his eternal glory. In sum, God comes down to us so that then we might go up to him. That is why the sacraments are compared to the steps of a ladder. For as I have said, if we want to go there – alas, we who do not have wings – we are so small that we cannot make it. God, therefore must come down to seek us. But when he has come down, it is not to make us dull-witted; it is not to make us imagine that he is like us. Rather, it is so that we might go up little by little, by degrees, as we climb up a ladder one rung at the time.” Sermon on 2 Samuel 6:1-7, quoted from John D. Witvliet, *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows into Christian Practice* (Baker Academic, 2003), 135.

<sup>431</sup> *Comm.* John 20:28. “The Jews saw nothing higher than the human nature in him. And so he insists that it was not his humanity which healed the sick man but his divine power hidden under his visible flesh. The issue revolved around this: they fixed on the sight of the flesh and despised Christ; and so he commands them to rise higher and look at God.” *Comm.* John 5:19.

<sup>432</sup> As the Lutherans and Catholics had reached a settlement in the Augsburg Interim, and Catholic armies were near Zurich, unity among the Swiss churches became necessary, and Bullinger and Calvin decided to compromise their positions, in order for doctrinal agreement among the Swiss churches.

It has been often argued that the *Consensus Tigurinus*, even though Calvin consented to it, that cannot be a representative statement of Calvin's eucharistic doctrine.<sup>433</sup> Paul Rorem, for example, observes that the Consensus "omits the crucial component of his [Calvin's] position," since both Calvin and Bullinger "compromised considerably" in it.<sup>434</sup> According to Rorem, while the concept that the sacrament is an instrument "through" which "we are truly offered what it signifies" is crucial in Calvin's doctrine,<sup>435</sup> such a concept is completely missing in the Consensus.<sup>436</sup> For similar reasons, Thomas Davis also argues that the *Consensus Tigurinus* is "not Calvin's document, not even a finely balanced juxtaposition of theologies." The ties that were knit by the Consensus between Geneva and Zurich, according to Davis, were "by and large political ties, not theological ones."<sup>437</sup>

Indeed, Calvin himself admitted that the Consensus was not a full explication of his position. In his personal letter to Bucer, Calvin states, "You devoutly and prudently desire that the effect of the sacraments and what the Lord confers to us through them be explicated more clearly and more fully than many allow. Indeed it was not my fault that these items were not fuller. Let us therefore bear with a sigh that which cannot be corrected."<sup>438</sup> Obviously, statements which emphasize the distinction between the sign and the reality signified, and attribute all efficacy of the sacrament to God alone, give the impression that the Consensus is closer to the Zurich position than to Calvin's.

Nevertheless, it is also true that Calvin expressed himself as an ardent defender

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<sup>433</sup> For example, see Mathison, *Given For You, Reclaiming Calvin's Doctrine of the Lord's Supper*. Mathison understands that the document is significantly affected by the position of Bullinger, which came to be the ground of what is called "eucharistic parallelism." We may note, in passing, that there are three concepts of eucharistic sign and reality within the reformed camp: symbolic memorialism (Zwingli), symbolic parallelism (Bullinger), and symbolic instrumentalism (Calvin). According to Gerrish, they differ in that "the reality pointed to is variously thought of as a happening in the past (memorialism), a happening that occurs simultaneously in the present (parallelism), or a present happening that is actually brought about through the signs (instrumentalism)." Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 167. Elsewhere, Gerrish admits that these three types are not mutually exclusive, and that each does not coincide completely with the thought of the Reformer who provides the confessional model. See Gerrish, "The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," Donald K McKim, *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 245.

<sup>434</sup> Paul Rorem, "The Consensus Tigurinus (1549): Did Calvin Compromise?," in *Calvinus Sacrae Scripturae Professor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 87-90.

<sup>435</sup> Rorem, "The Consensus Tigurinus (1549)," 85.

<sup>436</sup> Rorem, "The Consensus Tigurinus (1549)," 88.

<sup>437</sup> Davis, *The Clearest Promises of God*, 56. The reason for this, Davis assumes, is that Calvin was willing to bend on his doctrine of the Lord's Supper in order to establish concord among Swiss churches.

<sup>438</sup> Rorem, "The Consensus Tigurinus (1549)," 89. In his original preface of the joint document, Calvin also wrote that this document "does not contain everything which could usefully and aptly be said, and which otherwise perfectly fits their true understanding." Rorem, "The Consensus Tigurinus (1549)," 88.

of the Consensus. In the Exposition of the Heads of Agreement, he declares that in the document “nothing has been stated by us obscurely...nothing craftily concealed, in short, nothing essentially omitted.”<sup>439</sup> Even considering that the Consensus is a political statement, it is significant that Calvin even stated that “neither Zwingli nor Oecolampadius would have changed a word in it, and that even Luther himself would have agreed to it.”<sup>440</sup> Accordingly, even if the Consensus might not be a full explication of Calvin’s own doctrine, and thus cannot be a representative statement of it, we cannot rashly assume that the Consensus is not Calvin’s document; rather, it might be the case that the document has some indispensable points of Calvin’s beliefs,<sup>441</sup> which he could not give up even in a compromise document.

According to Rorem, as noted, the notion that the Lord’s Supper is an instrument through which grace is truly conferred is missing in the Consensus.<sup>442</sup> However, this argument is misleading because the Consensus brings up the understanding of the sacrament as an instrument or implement of God. To be sure, the Consensus repeatedly highlights the distinction between the sign and the reality signified, and accordingly the sign of bread and wine itself cannot be an instrument which it itself contains or conveys the reality it signifies,<sup>443</sup> as Rorem claims. The Consensus describes, however, the Lord’s Supper as an instrument of God, in the sense that God actually *uses* it, or *acts through* it. “There are indeed instruments by which God acts efficaciously when he pleases, yet so that the whole work of our salvation must be ascribed to him alone.”<sup>444</sup> Rorem notes that the original Latin *organum* in article 13 is be translated as “implement,” rather than as “instrument,” but, as Rorem

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<sup>439</sup> *Exposition of the Heads of Agreement*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:222.

<sup>440</sup> Timothy George, “John Calvin and the Agreement of Zurich,” in Timothy George, *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1990), 55.

<sup>441</sup> Gerrish describes the Consensus as not saying “all Calvin liked to say about the sacraments, only what he was not prepared to omit.” See George, “John Calvin and the Agreement of Zurich,” 55.

<sup>442</sup> Apart from that, according to Rorem, references to the actual presenting (‘exhibiting’) of what is signified are missing in this document. There even are several expressions which have the Zwinglian or Bullingerian cast. The Consensus, for example, teaches that the formal words of the Supper “are to be taken figuratively,” and that in the Supper Christ “must be sought nowhere else than in heaven, and not otherwise than with the mind and eye of faith (Article 21).” *Mutual Consent of the Church of Zurich and Geneva as to the Sacraments*, articles 22 and 21 respectively, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:218-9.

<sup>443</sup> Article 17, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:217.

<sup>444</sup> Article 13, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:216. The original Latin text for the article 13 text reads: <Deus organo utitur, sed ita ut omnis virtus sit Dei> Itaque, quemadmodum Paulus admonet, eum qui plantat aut rigat nihil esse, sed unum Deum qui dat incrementum: ita et de Sacramentis dicendum est, ea nihil esse, quia nihil profutura sint, nisi Deus in solidum omnia efficiat. Organa quidem sunt, quibus efficaciter, ubi visum est, agit Deus, sed ita, ut totum salutis nostrae opus, ipsi uni acceptum ferri debeat.

himself admits , the two words are explicitly synonyms.<sup>445</sup>

In passages that bring up the instrumentality of the Lord's Supper, the Consensus repeatedly emphasizes that it is "God alone" or "Christ alone" or "the Spirit alone" who acts in the sacrament using it as an instrument.<sup>446</sup> These phrases can be interpreted as reflecting the voice of Bullinger who ascribed all efficacy of the sacrament to God alone, rather than to the instrumentality of the sacrament itself. This understanding, however, does not conflict with Calvin's own position in which the concept that God alone works is compatible with the instrumentality of the sacrament. For Calvin's part, the effect of these passages could be not so much to reduce the instrumentality of the sacrament as to highlight the agent of that instrumentality.<sup>447</sup> Perhaps, these phrases can simply be understood as focusing more on the main agent of the instrument, rather than on the instrument itself. It seems that, if it can be meant that the sacrament ultimately functions as an instrument of God, for Calvin, the notion that the sacrament is an "instrument through which" what it signifies is truly offered could be abandoned. "They are indeed instruments by which God acts efficaciously when he pleases."<sup>448</sup>

According to the Consensus, as in Calvin's own position, this working of God by means of the Supper is an actual working. In the Supper, God truly works and "fulfils what the sacraments figure,"<sup>449</sup> which means that Christ truly "communicates himself to us,"<sup>450</sup> using the sacraments. And "the whole effect resides in his Spirit"<sup>451</sup> who "alone is properly...the beginner and finisher."<sup>452</sup> As long as they are used by God,

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<sup>445</sup> Rorem, "The Consensus Tigurinus (1549)," 86.

<sup>446</sup> Article 12, 13, and 14, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:216.

<sup>447</sup> Article 12, 13, and 14, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:216.

<sup>448</sup> Article, 13, *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:216. According to Brian Nicholson, Bullinger's position differs from Zwingli's, in that it lays stress on God's working in the Lord's Supper. "Whereas for Zwingli, the believing congregation is the active subject in the sacrament of the Supper, for Bullinger the active subject is Christ and the remembering congregation remains passive and receptive. Thus for Bullinger, the Lord's Supper is not only a commemoration and a thanksgiving performed by the congregation, it is truly a communion with Christ who gives Himself in the Supper to His people. It is the means whereby God testifies and seals the Spirit's work in the heart of the believer." Brian Nicholson, "From Real Presence to Virtual Presence: The Transformation of Eucharistic Theology between Theodore Beza and Francis Turretin" (unpublished paper, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2000), 10, quoted from Mathison, *Given for You*, 63. It was perhaps due to this feature of Bullinger's view that Calvin was able to compromise with Bullinger.

<sup>449</sup> Article 14, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:216.

<sup>450</sup> Article 19, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:218.

<sup>451</sup> Article 14, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:216.

<sup>452</sup> Article 16, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:217.

“the sacraments always retain their efficacy.”<sup>453</sup> Indeed, while repeatedly distinguishing between sign and reality, the Consensus also takes care not to reduce the Lord’s Supper into an empty event.

While having expressions which have Zwinglian or Bullingerian notes, the Consensus does not miss the essential, Trinitarian themes of Calvin’s eucharistic doctrine, which distinguish the latter from the doctrines of Zwingli and Luther, as seen in the earlier sections of this chapter. The Consensus begins with the Christological or Trinitarian declaration that “the object of the whole spiritual government of the church is to lead us to Christ, as it is by him alone we come to God.”<sup>454</sup> In order to “have access to God,” it is also declared, we should be “ingrafted by faith into the body of Christ...by the agency of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>455</sup> It is in order to lead us to God that Christ, who has “the same essence and glory with the Father,” also “assumed our flesh,” and communicates to us what he possessed by nature, that is, the sonship of God.<sup>456</sup> In other words, according to the Consensus, the aim of the Lord’s Supper is to fulfill the object of our faith, being led to God, by communicating with the whole person of Christ. The Consensus also affirms that the whole person of Christ is now to be sought only in heaven, a notion which denotes distance from the place where we are,<sup>457</sup> and thus in the Lord’s Supper Christ “raises us to himself...and to the Father.”<sup>458</sup> According to the Consensus, in other words, the communion with the body of Christ in the Supper is a heavenly communion, which should not be pursued in an earthly manner.

Some expressions make it difficult for us to deduce from the Consensus the practical implications for the actual and bodily dimension of our communion. For example, while it says that God truly works on our receiving of Christ and communion with God, it also labels this communion as “spiritual communion,”<sup>459</sup> and says that God performs this “inwardly by his Spirit”<sup>460</sup> so that we can “receive Christ spiritually.”<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> Article 18, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:217.

<sup>454</sup> Article 1, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:212.

<sup>455</sup> Article 4, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:213.

<sup>456</sup> Article 3, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:213.

<sup>457</sup> Article 25, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:220.

<sup>458</sup> Article 4, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:213.

<sup>459</sup> Article 6, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:214.

<sup>460</sup> Article 8, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:214.

<sup>461</sup> Article 9, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:215.

In Calvin's own thinking, however, spiritual communion does not necessarily mean the communion in purely mental or non-corporeal sense; it means that the Holy Spirit serves as the bond or channel between Christ and the believers, and thus that the communion is *through* the Spirit. Otherwise put, as long as the end of the sacrament is our communion with the whole person of Christ, the Supper cannot be conceived of as a purely non-corporeal event. It seems that, as long as the whole of the Consensus is predicated upon Trinitarian tenets, Calvin was able to accept some Zwinglian or Bullingerian expressions.

While the sacrament is described as "spiritual communion,"<sup>462</sup> this communion is soon qualified as that which is enabled by Christ's dwelling in us by his Spirit.<sup>463</sup> While it is said that the sacrament is to "testify" the communion, this cannot be said to mean that the sacrament is merely a sign of past grace, because the Consensus affirms that in the sacrament God "truly performs inwardly by his Spirit that which the sacraments figure to our eyes and other senses."<sup>464</sup> Even though there are expressions which denote the inwardness of our communion, the Consensus says that the reality signified is actually brought forth and even experienced bodily.

The liturgical or ritual implications of the Lord's Supper, which are based upon our communion with the whole person of Christ, are not worked out in the Consensus. It is apparent, however, that the One into whom we should be ingrafted, or with whom we should have communion, is this whole person of Christ and by this is meant that in the Supper we have real communion with His true humanity.<sup>465</sup> The Consensus says that the reason why the sacrament is more than a mere announcement of the word is because it appeals to our bodily senses by bringing the "object" and "the living image of it" in manner directly before us.<sup>466</sup> It also says that since salvation is only from the true person of Christ alone, and thus is not attached to the elements, it is meaningless to stand merely gazing on the elements, implying that this communion requires our ritual *act* of communion, since the reality is distinguished from the sign itself.<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> This is a description that must have been pleasing to Bullinger.

<sup>463</sup> Article 6, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:214.

<sup>464</sup> Article 8, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:214-5.

<sup>465</sup> It is since Christ's humanity is true humanity that the body of Christ should be contained in heaven. Put differently, the fact that Christ is in heaven means that He bears the true "nature and mode of a human body." Article 25, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:220.

<sup>466</sup> Article 7, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:214.

<sup>467</sup> Article 11, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:215.

While it is an agreement with Swiss delegations, Calvin believed that the Consensus is a kind of “middle course” between those who separate the reality and the signs (Zwingli), and those who tie the two too closely (Lutheran).<sup>468</sup> Given this, what is implied in the Consensus is that while the signs are distinguished from the things signified, they are by no means disjoined from the latter, but rather *in a way* conjoined to it. In other words, according to the Consensus, the reality or the thing signified is enigmatically tied up with the signs.<sup>469</sup> By emphasizing that the sign and reality signified are neither identical nor separated from each other, the Consensus implies that the sign is an aid for our real, while enigmatic, communion with God.

In sum, while it is not a full explanation of Calvin’s eucharistic doctrine, the Consensus Tigurinus contains some crucial points that come from the Trinitarian conception of the Lord’s Supper. All in all, the contents of the Consensus do not necessarily contradict the Trinitarian qualities of Calvin’s eucharistic doctrine presented in the earlier sections. It is perhaps because they presume themes like eucharistic realism or instrumentalism as the essence of Calvin’s eucharistic doctrine that some dismiss the Consensus as a deviation from Calvin’s real position. Given that Trinitarian paradigm is the mark of Calvin’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, it can probably be said that the Consensus presents the bare essentials of his doctrine. To think inversely, it might be said that, for Calvin, what fits into the Trinitarian conception forms the indispensable knowledge of the sacrament.

To explore the historical implications of this argument is beyond the scope of this chapter. We cannot know whether or to what extent the Zurich side shared this Trinitarian doctrinal background of Calvin’s position at the time of their agreement. What we can assume is that on Calvin’s part, the Consensus was not a contrived document, which he pretended to agree for the sake of compromise. At least in Calvin’s eye, it can be assumed, what was declared in the Consensus was a faithful ground for the true celebration of the Lord’s Supper in the pan-reformed churches, which adopted the teachings of the document.

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<sup>468</sup> *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:223. “For if their dignity is too highly extolled, superstition easily creeps in; and, on the other hand, if we discourse frigidly, or in less elevated terms of their virtual and fruit, profane contempt immediately breaks forth. If a middle course has been observed by us, who will not call those obstinate enemies of the truth, who choose rather to carp maliciously at a holy consent, than either civilly embrace, or at least silently approve it.”

<sup>469</sup> Article 9, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:215. In the *Exposition of the Heads of Agreement*, Calvin makes it clear that the end reality of the Lord’s Supper is our communion with God, rather than the real presence of Christ. *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:225.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

The doctrine of the Trinity, which came to flow into Calvin's doctrine of the sacraments, makes Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper distinguished from the conventional eucharistic positions of the time. The doctrine distinguishes Calvin's position from the conventional Thomism and Scotism, by rendering the sacrament primarily as God's instrument of drawing worshippers to Himself, and by giving prominence to the personal and dynamic character of the Lord's Supper. This means that the conventional themes of Calvin's eucharistic theology, e.g. instrumentality and Christ's presence, should be understood in light of this understanding of the Supper as Trinitarian communion of God and humanity. Calvin's distinctive understanding of the Holy Spirit and of our communion with Christ through the Spirit prevents Calvin's position degenerating into Zwinglian spiritualization, by safeguarding the bodily dimension of the sacrament and the meaning of the physical elements. At the same time, by supposing that the communion is fundamentally a heavenly event in which we are drawn to Christ in heaven by means of the earthly signs, this understanding marks out Calvin's doctrine from Lutheran substantialism, which ties Christ's body and blood to the earthly elements. The survey of the Consensus Tigurinus allows us to assume that this Trinitarian quality forms the essence of Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

## Chapter 4

### The Trinitarian Communion in the Liturgical Plan

In this chapter we shall examine Calvin's understanding of worship as a whole, with an emphasis on the role of the Lord's Supper in worship. For Calvin, as mentioned previously, the doctrine of the Trinity is a practical doctrine, which is relevant for our worshipping life and piety. While the coherence between his doctrine and liturgical texts has often been questioned,<sup>470</sup> we shall see that Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity affected his liturgical thinking, which has an immediate relevance for the practice of worship.

As is well known, Calvin's lifelong desire was that the Lord's Supper ought to be celebrated every Sunday,<sup>471</sup> although he was able to tolerate the practice of quarterly communion. While this desire has been assumed to be simply the result of Calvin's preference for the ancient practice of worship which preserved the union of Word and sacrament,<sup>472</sup> we should consider Calvin's understanding of worship as a whole, in order to do justice to his appreciation for the significance of the communion service. For Calvin, the whole worship service, just as the Lord's Supper proper, is the place for communion of the divine and the human, that is, Trinitarian communion. In this whole picture, however, the sense of communion culminates in the service for the Lord's Supper, which embodies the ascending spirit of our response. In other words, the Supper is the place where the aim of worship is more fully attained.

Since Calvin does not deal with worship as a separate doctrinal theme in his *Institutes*, this chapter first draws upon Calvin's concept of prayer, which he regards as the prototype of worship, and his understanding of each section of the worship service, in order to grasp his idea of worship.

#### 4.1. Prayer: The Epitome of Worship

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<sup>470</sup> For example, it has been observed that Calvin's form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper lacks the mention of the Holy Spirit, except in the post-communion prayer, which is conspicuous given his robustly pneumatological doctrine of the Lord's Supper. See Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body* (Adelaide: Lutheran Pub House, 1981), 264. We shall discuss this issue in the present chapter, but a fuller discussion will be given in chapter 5.

<sup>471</sup> While he believed that the Lord's Supper ought to be celebrated every Sunday, he compromised on a schedule of monthly communion. See Bard Thompson, ed., *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Augsburg Fortress, 1959), 188. Even the monthly schedule he proposed became overruled by the Genevan authorities, who preferred a quarterly observance, and finally ordained that it "be administered four times a year." In the pursuit of his lifelong desire for frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper, Calvin was continually rebuffed by the council of Geneva. Thompson, *Liturgies*, 190.

<sup>472</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 189.

While Calvin considers prayer as one of the essential components of public worship, along with the Word, the partaking of the Lord's Supper, and almsgiving, he also spoke of public worship simply as "prayer" or "common prayer" for what is to be called liturgy,<sup>473</sup> and called his published liturgy *The Form of Prayers*. Whilst Calvin does not deal with public worship as a separate theme in his *Institutes*, he deals with some questions concerned with public worship, under the headings of "kinds of prayer - private and public" and "the use of singing and of the spoken language."<sup>474</sup> Given this, we can say that worship is a type of prayer, for Calvin, and the two disciplines are the same in their nature. Accordingly, we will be able to grasp Calvin's understanding of worship by looking into his doctrine of prayer.<sup>475</sup>

Calvin deals with prayer in book three of the final edition of the *Institutes*, entitled "The Way We Receive the Grace of Christ," which also handles the essential role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the faithful. This structuring shows that for Calvin prayer is fundamentally the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>476</sup> While Calvin gives teaching on both public and private prayer, in his exposition of prayer, his primary concern is "defining public prayers, the liturgy, because he understood all personal and individual acts as an *extension* of corporate worship."<sup>477</sup>

Michael Parsons argues that Calvin's ideas regarding prayer were already formed in the initial *Institutes* of 1536.<sup>478</sup> However, just as his doctrine of the Trinity went through a kind of refinement during the late 1530's, as we have seen in chapter 2, so did his doctrine of prayer, which hints that there is direct connection between Calvin's doctrine of prayer, as well as that of the sacraments, and his Trinitarian thinking. For example, while in the 1536 edition of the *Institutes* he explains the power of prayer primarily with respect to the benefits we have from God, from the 1539

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<sup>473</sup> Elsie Anne McKee, "Context, Contours, Contents: Towards a Description of the Classical Reformed Teaching on Worship," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 16, no. 2 (1995): 183. For Calvin, as Elsie McKee put it, prayer is a "shorthand" or abbreviation of worship. McKee, "Context," 184.

<sup>474</sup> McKee, "Context," 183, n. 25.

<sup>475</sup> For Calvin there are two kinds of acts of worship: "planned, public, corporate ones which are commonly called liturgies," and "private or individual ones which may be designated more narrowly as devotional acts." McKee, "Context," 183. While the latter shares many things with the former, here we limit our discussion to the former.

<sup>476</sup> McKee, "Context," 183.

<sup>477</sup> McKee, "Context," 184.

<sup>478</sup> Michael Parsons, "John Calvin on the Strength of Our Weak Praying," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 36, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 54.

edition onward, Calvin came to highlight prayer more as a means for our personal conversation or communion with God,<sup>479</sup> a communion based upon a personal encounter. “It is by prayer that we call him to reveal himself as wholly present to us,”<sup>480</sup> and then God becomes near to us.<sup>481</sup>

From the 1539 *Institutes* onward, as in his exposition of the Trinity and of sacraments, Calvin came to highlight in his exposition of prayer that Christ is currently in heaven, maintaining a whole personality,<sup>482</sup> and thus that our prayer ought to be directed towards heaven.<sup>483</sup> Accordingly, prayer came to be described frequently in spatial language: through prayer, the soul ought to “be raised above itself” that “it may bring into God’s sight anything our blind and stupid reason is wont to devise.”<sup>484</sup> Since it is a conversation or communion, prayer should not stop at focusing inwardly on drawing out the affection or piety of our heart: prayer is the heart’s being “lifted and carried beyond itself...in so far as this is possible.”<sup>485</sup> Christ’s being in heaven also connotes His being with the Father, which is the ground for our being drawn to the Father.<sup>486</sup> When we pray to Christ in heaven, our sole mediator, we are also led to the presence of the Father, in order to be “heard in his person.”<sup>487</sup>

Prayer is not merely communication between God and us. It is more a personal communion, which hinges upon our familial identity. From the 1543 edition of the

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<sup>479</sup> Prayer is “a communion of men with God by which, having entered the heavenly sanctuary, they appeal to him in person concerning his promises in order to experience...that what they believed was not vain, although he had promised it in word alone.” *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.2. When we pray, Calvin says, we should “be disposed in mind and heart as befits those who enter conversation with God.” *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.4.

<sup>480</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.2.

<sup>481</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.3. Some other passages from the 1539 edition indicate that Calvin understands prayer as communication with God based upon our ontological encounter with Him. See *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.5 and 3.20.8.

<sup>482</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.20.

<sup>483</sup> Against those who argue that while Christ is the mediator of redemption, believers are mediators of intercession, Calvin also asserts that all our intercessions for neighbors are made only in Christ’s name. *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.19. Since Christ is the sole mediator of our relationship with God, according to Calvin, our only hope is in looking upon heaven, and finding Him there. *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.20.

<sup>484</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.4.

<sup>485</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.4.

<sup>486</sup> “But we do not imagine that he, kneeling before God, pleads as a suppliant for us; rather, with the apostle we understand he so appears before God’s presence that the power of his death avails as an everlasting intercession in our behalf...” *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.20.

<sup>487</sup> “Therefore, that foreshadowing ceremony of the law taught us that we are all barred from God’s presence, and consequently need a Mediator, who should appear in our name and bear us upon his shoulders and hold us bound upon his breast so that we are heard in his person.” *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.18.

*Institutes* onwards, Calvin began to relate prayer to the concept of adoption,<sup>488</sup> and in the final edition, his exposition was given a more explicitly Trinitarian shape. “[B]ecause the narrowness of our hearts cannot comprehend God’s boundless favor,” Calvin says, Christ became not only “the pledge and guarantee of our adoption,” but also “gives the Spirit as witness to us of the same adoption, through whom with free and full voice we may cry, ‘Abba, Father.’” Whenever any hesitation shall hinder us, God sets the Spirit of adoption before us so that He “may guide us to pray boldly.”<sup>489</sup> All this shows that, for Calvin, prayer is our communication with God on the ground of our ontological identity as his adopted sons. While it is initiated and empowered by the God’s economy of adoption, in this scheme, humans can be also the subjects of the communion.

We can notice, especially when focusing on the logical flow of Calvin’s exposition, that his doctrine of prayer is not merely an extrapolation of Trinitarian language, but a reflection of his Trinitarian understanding of the divine-human communion, explored in chapter 1. For Calvin, prayer begins with our recognition of the radical difference between God and us.<sup>490</sup> Calvin underscores that even believers are still sinners who should be deemed as “miserably burdened with sins”<sup>491</sup> and “oppressed by our evil deeds.”<sup>492</sup> Due to this sinfulness, Calvin continues, we are surrounded by resultant misery, that is, “dangers at every moment threaten,” “the weight of our present ills,” and “the troubles, discomforts, fears and trials,”<sup>493</sup> and the anxiety conjoined with those tribulations.<sup>494</sup> Therefore, if one seeks resources to succour him in his need, he “must go outside himself and get them in Christ,” because whatever we need and whatever we lack is in Him.<sup>495</sup> Here Calvin does not posit a simple linear

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<sup>488</sup> “[T]he Spirit of adoption, who seals the witness of the gospel in our hearts, raises up our spirits to dare show forth to God their desires, to stir up unspeakable groaning, and confidently cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” 3.20.1.

<sup>489</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.37.

<sup>490</sup> Humans are, according to Calvin, “destitute and devoid of all good things,” and only what is corrupt comes forth from them. *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.1.

<sup>491</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.2; 3.20.7; 3.20.11.

<sup>492</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.11. I am indebted to Michael Parsons for this exposition of Calvin’s doctrine of prayer. See Parsons, “John Calvin on the Strength of Our Weak Praying,” 54-60.

<sup>493</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.11 and 3.20.7. See Parsons, “John Calvin on the Strength of Our Weak Praying,” 56.

<sup>494</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.11 and 3.20.28. See Parsons, “John Calvin on the Strength of Our Weak Praying,” 56.

<sup>495</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.1. See Parsons, “John Calvin on the Strength of Our Weak Praying,” 57.

model, such as that we are wicked, miserable, and weak, and thus we need God to strengthen us.<sup>496</sup> Calvin's model is more complex, or more Trinitarian: when we acknowledge our sinfulness and weakness, and thus pray to God, we find His strength *in* Christ. In other words, for Calvin, the strength of our praying is not so much God's strengthening us, but it is in God Himself, or God in Christ.<sup>497</sup> Mentioning "use and experience" as means through which we learn about prayer, Calvin highlights the experiential aspect of prayer.<sup>498</sup>

This strengthening in prayer is never static. Calvin begins the chapter on prayer with statements reminiscent of the manner in which he deals with his doctrine of the wonderful exchange presented in his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. "For in Christ [God] offers all happiness in place of our misery, all wealth in place of our neediness; in him he opens to us the heavenly treasures."<sup>499</sup> Given that this wonderful exchange is a fruit of our union with Christ, as seen in chapter 2, we can say that the benefits of prayer are the same as what our union with Christ brings about. Although we are in a wretched state, God also continually renews and strengthens us by uniting us to the Son. Still, for Calvin, prayer is mutual, existential communion between God and man.<sup>500</sup>

While God commands us to pray, in a sense, it is fundamentally God Himself who works in our act of prayer. Calvin stresses that God's commandment to pray is preceded by His promise that if we call upon Him, He will deliver us and we shall glorify Him.<sup>501</sup> This means that God "precedes those who worship him, and would have them follow Him,"<sup>502</sup> and that God leads us in our prayers, and this is for the sake of manifesting His goodness.<sup>503</sup> In sum, the dynamic and reason of prayer is in God

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<sup>496</sup> Parsons, "John Calvin on the Strength of Our Weak Praying," 58.

<sup>497</sup> Parsons, "John Calvin on the Strength of Our Weak Praying," 58. Not only are the riches which we need found in Christ, but also they are not denied to us since the Son is not denied by the Father. "For he warns and urges us to seek him in our every need, as children are wont to take refuge in the protection of the parents whenever they are troubled with any anxiety...what had been lacking to our capacity he himself supplied and made sufficient from his own." *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.34.

<sup>498</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.13.

<sup>499</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.1.

<sup>500</sup> "[P]recisely in this connection [of prayer] the bipolarity of God and man will assume a vivid form. Prayer is the mutual orientation of God and man in practical experience. Existential communion between God and man finds its expression in prayer...It is a back-forth movement...of the mutuality of God and man." M. De Kroon, *The Honour of God and Human Salvation. Calvin's Theology According to his Institutes* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2001), 122-3, quoted from Parsons, Parsons, "John Calvin on the Strength of Our Weak Praying," 57.

<sup>501</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.13.

<sup>502</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.13.

<sup>503</sup> "Indeed, we may note this in The Psalms, if the thread of prayer were broken, transition is sometimes

Himself. “By this [‘for thy name’s sake’] the saints not only express the end of their prayers but confess themselves unworthy to obtain it unless God seeks the reason from himself, and that their confidence of being heard stems solely from God’s nature.”<sup>504</sup>

From Calvin's understanding of prayer, we can assume that worship is also fundamentally our communion with God, that is, Trinitarian communion. Like prayer, Calvin says, worship is not our present act of response to what God did in the past, but primarily a work of God, who accommodates himself to “our weaker and unripe apprehensions”<sup>505</sup> and comes down to us<sup>506</sup> through the rudiments of worship. Just as our prayer is based on the present mediatorship of Christ, our worship is based on God’s work of making us partakers of the living Christ. Through partaking of Christ, in worship, we are drawn to the living communion with the heavenly God in the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Like prayer, in sum, worship is a thoroughly Trinitarian event, in which there is a sort of bidirectional movement between God in His greatness and humans in their weakness,<sup>507</sup> and in which the latter are drawn into the sphere of God’s presence, as well as of His economy.<sup>508</sup> Though not in explicitly Trinitarian terms, this understanding of worship as Trinitarian communion is reflected in Calvin’s liturgical text and his understanding of each section of the liturgy.

#### **4.2. The Purpose of Worship: Communion with God**

In the remaining sections we will examine Calvin's liturgical understanding of worship, following the rubric of his liturgical text. While his liturgical thoughts are found throughout his oeuvre, those thoughts are barely explicated in robustly doctrinal or theological terms, perhaps because worship is practice which *stands upon* doctrine, rather than doctrine itself. Not surprisingly, Calvin’s liturgy, *The Form of Prayer*, is not a doctrinal rendering of Calvin’s thought, which sets forth the theological tenets in

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made to God’s power, sometimes to his goodness, sometimes to the faithfulness of his promises.” *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.13.

<sup>504</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.47.

<sup>505</sup> *Comm.* Psalm 50:14.

<sup>506</sup> *Comm.* Acts 17:24.

<sup>507</sup> John D. Witvliet, *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows into Christian Practice* (Baker Academic, 2003), 134. “For God, who fills the heavens and earth, is yet said to descend to us, though he changes not his place, whenever he gives us any token of his presence.” *Comm.* Genesis 35:13.

<sup>508</sup> Donald K McKim, *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998), 291.

robustly theological terms. Nevertheless, we can find traces of Calvin’s understanding of worship as Trinitarian communion in his liturgy and liturgical teachings.

All of Calvin’s extant liturgies were created around 1540, soon after Calvin set forth his refined doctrine of the Trinity and sacraments. Calvin’s first liturgy was prepared when he ministered at Strasbourg, but is no longer extant. The first extant texts of Calvin’s liturgy were published in 1542: one was printed in Geneva, with no mention of Calvin as the author, the other in Strasbourg by his successor, Pierre Brully. The final edition was published also in Strasbourg in 1545, with slight alterations which combine elements of the two 1542 editions.<sup>509</sup> It is often assumed that the Strasbourg liturgy more closely reflects Calvin’s preferences, rather than the Genevan liturgy, on the ground that Calvin had been obliged to modify his Genevan text for the Genevan situation.<sup>510</sup> For our own purpose, we shall take into consideration both 1542 and 1545 liturgies, which can be schematized in the following manner:

| <b>Geneva 1542</b>  | <b>Strasbourg 1545</b>   |
|---|--|
| Opening Sentence (Psalm 124:8)  | Opening Sentence (Psalm 124:8)   |
| Confession of Sin   | Confession of Sin (with Words of Comfort and Words of Absolution)                        |
| Collect for Illumination, ending with the Lord’s Prayer   | Collect for Illumination, ending with the Lord’s Prayer                                  |
| Lesson (reading of scripture)   | Lesson (reading of scripture)  |
| Sermon  | Sermon   |
| Intercession, including a paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer and concluding with the <b>Communion Prayer</b> | Intercession, including a paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer                                |
| Confession of Faith (Reciting of the Creed, during which the bread and wine are prepared)                 | Confession of Faith (Singing of the Creed, during which the bread and wine are prepared) |

<sup>509</sup> Robert E Webber, *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. v 2, 20 Centuries of Christian Worship* (Nashville: StarSong Pub Group, n.d.), 196. For the history of Calvin’s liturgical texts, see Alasdair I C. Heron, “Shaping the Worship of the Reformed Church in Geneva: Calvin on Prayer and Praise,” *HTS*, January 1, 2012.

<sup>510</sup> For example, Calvin, following Bucer, believed that there should be confession of faith in the opening part of the service, and it should be followed by Absolution. In Strasbourg, therefore, he supplied and used an Absolution “no less forthright than that of Bucer.” However, when he returned to Geneva, the people objected to this practice, regarding it as a novelty, and illustrated their hostility by jumping up before the end of Confession to forestall it. Thompson, *Liturgies*, 191.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <b>Communion Prayer</b> (Invocation), ending with the Lord's Prayer |
| Words of Institution  | Words of Institution  |
| Excommunication Exhortation   | Excommunication Exhortation   |
| Distribution (during which time Psalms are sung or scripture is read) | Distribution (during which Psalm 138 is sung)                       |
| Prayer of Thanksgiving  | Prayer of Thanksgiving  |
| Canticle of Simeon  | Canticle of Simeon  |
| Benediction (with Numbers 6:24-26)                                    | Benediction (with Numbers 6:24-26)                                  |

The texts are almost identical, with only a few exceptions. Unlike the Genevan one, the Strasbourg text has ‘the words of comfort and absolution’ after ‘the confession of sin,’ and has ‘the communal singing of the Decalogue’ after the absolution. The most evident difference between the two texts is the placement of the communion prayer: while in the Genevan text it is attached seamlessly to the prayer of intercession after the sermon, in Strasbourg it is placed after the confession of faith (singing of the Creed), which belongs to the eucharistic service, entailing a recitation (not paraphrase) of the Lord’s Prayer. For our purpose, we will consider the whole liturgy in three parts: 1) the opening liturgy (from the opening invocation to the singing of the Decalogue<sup>511</sup>), 2) the service of the word, 3) the service of the Lord’s Supper.<sup>512</sup>

#### 4.2.1. The Opening of Worship

Calvin’s liturgy begins with the words of Psalm 124:8: “*Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Amen.*” Given that Bucer’s liturgy, by which Calvin’s was otherwise greatly influenced, starts right away with a Confiteor, a confession of sin, we can say that this opening declaration is characteristic of Calvin’s liturgy.<sup>513</sup> In his commentary on the same verse, Calvin holds that “the name of God is

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<sup>511</sup> As noted, the Genevan version omits this portion.

<sup>512</sup> The Sunday service was “constructed so that on those days when the Supper was not celebrated, the eucharistic portion could be omitted, leaving the liturgy an Ante-Communion.” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 189.

<sup>513</sup> The liturgies by both Reformers are so alike that scholars have even said Calvin “did no more than alter Bucer’s work here and there, reducing the number of variants, adding the Decalogue, and such.” (Bard Thompson, ed., *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Augsburg Fortress, 1959), 189. However, it was not merely a

nothing else than God Himself,” and that, due to the already-given grace by Him, “we have ready access to him.”<sup>514</sup> The true help we can get from God is not simply receiving a benefit from God, the commentary also says, but is also being protected by the presence of God. Given Calvin’s commentary, it can be said that, by beginning the service with Psalm 124:8, he makes it clear that worship is a personal communion with God.

There follows the minister’s leading of the people into the Confession of sin, which entails, in the Strasbourg edition, scriptural words of pardon to comfort the conscience, with the absolution, the words of forgiveness.<sup>515</sup> Noting that, for the Calvinist churches, worship was a chief occasion for instruction and reprimand, James White says that this confession of sin, which is placed at the very beginning of the service, was intended to remind worshippers of “the moral demands for righteousness.”<sup>516</sup> While Calvin stresses our depravity and unworthiness in this confession,<sup>517</sup> his ultimate intention in this confession, however, is not to chasten people but to direct them into the threshold of communion with the holy God, given his own explanation of the meaning of confession and forgiveness of sin. Calvin writes: “Our first entrance into the Church and the kingdom of God is by forgiveness of sins, without which we have no covenant or union with God...wherefore, our initiation into

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slavish imitation of the former. Although Calvin’s liturgy admittedly did not change any essential character of Bucer’s liturgy, it should not be overlooked that there are parts which Calvin does not owe to Bucer. For example, the long eucharistic exhortation towards the congregation, including the exhortation of the *Sursum Corda*, does not even exist in Bucer’s liturgy. For the difference between the liturgies of Bucer and Calvin, see Karel Deddens, “Missing Link in Reformed Liturgy,” from *Clarion* Vol. 37 (1988), 15-9, from [<http://spindleworks.com/library/deddens/missing.htm>].

<sup>514</sup> *Comm.* Psalm 124:8.

<sup>515</sup> The text reads: “Let each of you confess that he is really a sinner who has to humble himself before God. He must believe that the heavenly Father will be gracious to him in Jesus Christ. To all who have repentance and who seek Jesus Christ for their salvation, I pronounce forgiveness in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.” Another of the elements that was quite controversial in Geneva was that of Absolution. The form he used began with reciting 1 Tim 1:15 (“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus is come into the world to save sinners”), then states: “Let each make confession in his heart with St. Paul in truth [“that I am the chief” in some editions], and believe in Christ. So in His Name do I pronounce forgiveness unto you of all your sins, and I declare you to be loosed of them in earth so that ye may be loosed of them also in heaven and in all eternity. Amen.” William D. Maxwell, *An Outline of Christian Worship: Its Development and Forms* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 103. He speaks of this practice in the *Institutes*: “For when the whole church stands, as it were, before God’s judgment seat, confesses itself guilty, and has its sole refuge in God’s mercy, it is no common or light solace to have present there the ambassador of Christ, armed with the mandate of reconciliation, by whom it hears proclaimed its absolution [cf. 2 Cor 5:20].” *Institutes* (1559), 3.4.14. Though he had pronounced this absolution clearly as part of the Strasbourg liturgy, when he came to Geneva this practice was met with hostility, the people “jumping up before the end of Confession to forestall Absolution. Thus he yielded to their scruples.” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 191.

<sup>516</sup> James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 64.

<sup>517</sup> “We confess and acknowledge unfeignedly before thy holy majesty that we are poor sinners, conceived and born in iniquity and corruption, prone to do evil, incapable of any good, and that in our depravity we transgress thy holy commandments without end or ceasing.” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 197.

the fellowship of the Church is by the symbol of ablution, to teach us that we have no admission into the family of God, unless by His goodness our impurities are previously washed away.”<sup>518</sup> In Zwingli’s liturgy, the confession of sin is given as a response to the preaching of the Word. Since Zwingli disconnected the Eucharist from the normal service of the Lord’s Day, this means that the confession of sin is the end of the whole service, and that the service concludes abruptly on the note of penitence.<sup>519</sup> We can say that in Calvin’s liturgy, on the contrary, the confession and forgiveness functions, by clarifying the bipolarity between God and man, as the stepping stones to our communion with God.

This point can be underpinned by Calvin’s understanding of the Decalogue, the law, the singing of which follows the words of forgiveness in the Strasbourg liturgy. In the time of the reformation, the law was understood as having three uses: “(1) to convict of sin and to lead to repentance, (2) to maintain public order and (3) to guide and encourage the Christian in righteousness.”<sup>520</sup> While in the Lutheran liturgies the law precedes the confession of sin in worship,<sup>521</sup> probably owing to Luther who understood the first use as the principal usage, all Reformed churches placed the Decalogue after confession and assurance of forgiveness, employing it according to its “third and principal use.” The Decalogue in Reformed worship was aimed at educating the penitents in the will of God and exhorting them to obey Him, thankful for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>522</sup> It should be noted that Calvin believes that “the principal end and use of the Law” is to “invite men to God”,<sup>523</sup> or to “unite us to our God.”<sup>524</sup> This means that the Decalogue in worship was designated to lead those who confessed their sinfulness further to personal union or communion with God. Given Calvin’s understanding that our “true happiness lies in being united to God,”<sup>525</sup> the singing of

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<sup>518</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.1.20.

<sup>519</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 143.

<sup>520</sup> John H. Leith, *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition* (Knox, 1977), 184.

<sup>521</sup> Leith, *An Introduction*, 184. Also in Farel’s liturgy, the confession comes after the sermon and the law on the ground that one must first hear the word of God to know what to confess. Leith, *An Introduction*, 184.

<sup>522</sup> The rhymed version of the Ten Commandments came from Calvin himself. The opening words of it (“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”) were the promise of God in the covenant with His people. See Karel Deddens, “A Missing Link in Reformed Liturgy.”

<sup>523</sup> *Comm.* Isaiah 45:19.

<sup>524</sup> *John Calvin’s Sermons on the Ten Commandments*, trans. Benjamin Wirt Farley (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 39.

<sup>525</sup> *Comm.* Isaiah 45:19. Calvin also says that our union with God “constitutes our happiness and glory.”

the Decalogue, for Calvin, could be an expression of the expectation for this union of happiness and glory.

In light of Calvin's understanding of the elements of the opening service, in sum, we can see that the aim and end of the whole worship is the same as that of prayer: It is not our receiving of the pardoning grace of God, but communion with Him, upon which we are made able to make active response to His grace. Even though the text itself does not use explicitly Trinitarian language, this communion must be Trinitarian communion, in Calvin's thought, which is initiated and accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit in the pattern of the Son. The ensuing sections of the service are the arena for such communion.

#### 4.2.2. The Service of the Word

While there is neither any guideline nor sample texts for the Sermon, we may get insights into the role of this service from Calvin's theology of preaching proper.<sup>526</sup> For Calvin, the word of God cannot simply be identified with scripture, although he often uses "scripture says" and "the Holy Spirit says" synonymously.<sup>527</sup> For Calvin scripture is not merely a compendium of metaphysically communicated provisions but rather a kind of medium, *within* which the fundamental word of God should be sought. "Where are we to look for this word? In the Holy scriptures, in which it is contained."<sup>528</sup> This word is not presented by the utterance of scripture, but by the power of the Holy Spirit,<sup>529</sup> especially in the setting of public worship.<sup>530</sup> Calvin believes that the teaching of the whole scripture can be summarized in one single word, often referred to as Faith or Gospel,<sup>531</sup> which should be declared in every sermon. The goal of the whole

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John Calvin's Sermons on the Ten Commandments, 39.

<sup>526</sup> As mentioned, there is no separate chapter on preaching in the *Institutes*.

<sup>527</sup> B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 77.

<sup>528</sup> Catechism, Q. 300, quoted from Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 77.

<sup>529</sup> "The work of the Spirit, then, is joined to the Word of God. But a distinction is made, that we may know that the external word is of no avail by itself, unless animated by the power of the Spirit...All power of action, then, resides in the Spirit Himself, and thus all power ought to be entirely referred to God alone." *Comm. Ezekel 2:2*.

<sup>530</sup> Catechism of 1545, Q 300-305, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:82-3. According to Calvin, since it is not enough for each of us to read scripture privately at home, we should gather together in the assembly of the faithful to hear the word of God whenever we can.

<sup>531</sup> It is also called doctrine. T H L. Parker, *Calvin's Preaching* (Edinburgh; Louisville, Ky: T & T Clark; Westminster/John Knox Pr, 1992), 93.

service of the word is not the exposition and understanding of a specific scriptural text, but the presentation and reception of the fundamental word of God, as can be seen in the texts for the prayer of illumination.<sup>532</sup>

Simply put, the nature of this fundamental Word, which should be presented beyond the text itself, is Jesus Christ.<sup>533</sup> Calvin expresses that in the Gospel, which should be preached in every sermon, is contained Christ.<sup>534</sup> He had argued that all scriptures should be read “with the intention of finding Christ in them.”<sup>535</sup> Likewise, in all sermons, the gospel should be preached so that Christ in it can be presented. “When the gospel is preached,” Calvin believes, “Jesus Christ shows Himself openly to those who have the eyes of faith to look upon Him.”<sup>536</sup>

In this sense, for Calvin, preaching can be said to be a sacramental event, as well as baptism and the Lord’s Supper, whereby Christ is actually presented and comes near to us.<sup>537</sup> While the Word is preached by human ministers, according to Calvin, it is Christ Himself who “should be heard speaking by them,”<sup>538</sup> and this speaking of Christ is a “token of His presence.”<sup>539</sup> This Christ, who is brought forth in the preaching, is actually the same Christ who is present in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. It is a

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<sup>532</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 209.

<sup>533</sup> According to Martha Moore-Keish, a helpful lens for interpreting Calvin’s use of “Word” comes from Karl Barth, according to whom “the Word is first and foremost Jesus Christ the Word revealed, secondarily the Word written in the words of scripture, and thirdly, the Word preached in human words.” See Martha L. Moore-Keish, *Do This in Remembrance of Me: A Ritual Approach to Reformed Eucharistic Theology* (William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2008), 23, n.21. Although Calvin himself referred to the Word in this threefold manner, Moore-Keish suggests, Barth’s discussion of “Word” here generally reflects Calvin’s use of the terms, since he uses the term “Word” sometimes to refer to scripture, sometimes to preaching or proclamation, and other times more directly to Jesus Christ, the Word revealed.

<sup>534</sup> “This is the true knowledge of Christ: if we take him as he is offered by the father, namely, clothed with his gospel. For as he himself has been designated the goal of our faith, so we shall not run straight to him unless the gospel leads the way.” *Institutes* (1559), 3.2.6.

<sup>535</sup> “We learn from this passage that knowledge of Christ should be sought from the scriptures. For those who imagine whatever they please about Christ will have nothing but a shadowy apparition instead of him. First, then, we must grasp that Christ cannot be rightly known from anywhere else but the scriptures. If this is so, it follows that the scriptures are to be read with the intention of finding Christ in them. Any who shall turn aside from this goal will never arrive at knowledge of the truth, however much they wear themselves out with learning their whole life long” *Comm.* John 5:39, quoted from Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 79.

<sup>536</sup> Calvin, *Mystery of Godliness and Other Selected Sermons* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950), 48, quoted from Davis, *This is My Body*, 110. “So then, may we so esteem the spiritual grace which is given us in our Lord Jesus Christ, and which is offered in our Lord Jesus Christ, and which is offered us every day by the preaching of the gospel.” *Comm.* Matthew 27:27-44.

<sup>537</sup> “The Lord is said to come when He gives any token of His presence. He approaches by the preaching of the Word.” *Comm.* Isaiah 50:2.

<sup>538</sup> *Comm.* John 10:4. “Though he speaks here of ministers, yet instead of wishing that they should be heard, he wishes that God should be heard speaking by them.”

<sup>539</sup> *Comm.* Isaiah 50:2.

“settled principle,” Calvin says that “the sacraments have the same office as the Words of God: to offer and set forth Christ to us, and in him the treasures of heavenly grace.”<sup>540</sup> In this sense, for Calvin, the words are also “signs,”<sup>541</sup> which not only point to but also present the reality of Christ’s presence.

To inquire further into the mode of this presence of Christ in preaching is beyond our present concern.<sup>542</sup> To be sure it is not a straightforwardly physical presentation of Christ’s body, which Calvin denies even with regard to the sacraments. Calvin’s logic is simply this: preaching is God’s Word, and this Word is a pledge of His presence. “As men are made known by countenance and speech,” according to Calvin, “so God utters His voice to us by the voice of the prophets, and in the sacraments takes, as it were, a visible form, from which He may be known by us according to our feeble capacity.”<sup>543</sup> Preaching and the sacraments are symbols which signify the same Christ. Just as the sacraments are the symbol and seal of Christ’s presence, preaching guarantees the same presence in an auditory way.

Now we can see that for Calvin preaching is not merely an occasion for teaching and learning of the scriptural message, but also for our communion with the whole person of Christ. As in the sacraments, the “matter” of preaching is Christ Himself, and the presence of Christ and our receiving of His words are achieved by the Holy Spirit, in whom all power of preaching resides.<sup>544</sup> In sum, preaching is itself a Trinitarian event, in which the Holy Spirit brings forth the personal communion between Christ and us.<sup>545</sup>

Calvin goes on to say that this presentation of Christ in preaching is for us to be drawn into the union with Christ. “[B]y the preaching of the Word and the sacraments, we may be united to God...”<sup>546</sup> Through this union, as in the sacraments, Christ bestows

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<sup>540</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.14.17.

<sup>541</sup> “Words are nothing else but signs.” *Institutes* (1559), 4.14.26.

<sup>542</sup> This is a point to which we shall return in chapter 6.

<sup>543</sup> *Comm.* John 5:37.

<sup>544</sup> *Comm.* Ezekel 2:2.

<sup>545</sup> As mentioned, it has been observed that Calvin’s eucharistic liturgy almost lacks the mention of the Holy Spirit. When considering the whole liturgy, however, the Holy Spirit has been already mentioned in the confession of sin, the words of absolution (Strasbourg), and a short prayer by the minister after the confession of sin (Geneva). And particularly in the prayer for illumination which precedes the sermon, the Spirit is first broached as the agent of our receiving the Word, the Word who is the same Christ as the One in the Lord’s Supper. According to Old, this prayer for illumination is a good example of how Word is related to Spirit in Calvin’s thought. Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*, Zürcher Beiträge Zur Reformationsgeschichte, Bd. 5 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975), 212.

<sup>546</sup> *Comm.* Psalm 24:7. For the relationship between preaching and our union with Christ, see Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude*, 83. When the Gospel is preached, according to Calvin, we receive Christ “clothed with his

various benefits in Him. “God has ordained His Word as the instrument by which Jesus Christ, with all his graces, is dispensed to us.”<sup>547</sup> Although union with Christ is a theme which Calvin mentions more often with respect to the Lord’s Supper than to preaching, it is certain that in preaching Christ is presented and we are united to Him, receiving all the benefits in Him. As long as Christ is present with His words and we communicate with His whole person, we can say that the aim of worship, that is expressed in the opening ceremony, is already attained to some extent in the service of the Word, and perhaps this is why Calvin, while advocating the frequent celebration of the Lord’s Supper, could still tolerate worship without it.

### **4.3. Bi-Directional Communion: The Service of the Table**

It should be remembered that prayer includes our response to God in the communion with Him. While the sermon is also an order for our communion with Him, it is the service of the Lord’s Supper that Calvin understands is the main place for our grateful answer to God’s presence and grace. In other words, only with the service of the sacrament, the prayer pattern of communion can be wholly brought forth.

In Calvin’s liturgy, the sermon is followed by a long prayer of intercession, which is made in response to the Word. At the end of the intercession is included the paraphrase of the Lord’s Prayer. In the Genevan version, the prayer for the communion follows this prayer of intercession, while in the Strasbourg liturgy, as noted earlier, the communion prayer is separated from the intercession and is placed further back, along with a recitation of the Lord’s Prayer, after the singing of the creed, which starts the service of the communion.

The reason why Calvin changed the position of the communion prayer in the Strasbourg liturgy is not clear. The contents of the communion prayer in both liturgies are almost identical. There are two possible answers. First, by placing the communion prayer after the singing of the Creed, Calvin might have intended to make the Creed the start of the Lord’s Supper service. Calvin understands the Creed, like the Decalogue, as a symbol of the covenantal relationship between God and the worshippers: While a covenant is a relationship of mutual faith and faithfulness between two parties, the creed is the pledge by which one confirms the covenantal relationship with God and the vow

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Gospel.” *Institutes* (1559), 3.2.6.

<sup>547</sup> *Short Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*, in *Theological Treatises*, 143.

to live and die in the faith of Christ.<sup>548</sup> By positioning the Creed in the beginning of the eucharistic service, Calvin makes it clear that the Supper is a covenantal fellowship between God and believers.<sup>549</sup>

Second, by binding the communion prayer with the Lord's Prayer proper, that is, the full recitation of it, Calvin could have intended to declare that the celebration of the communion is tied up with the reality which the Lord's Prayer invokes. While going into details about Calvin's teaching on the Lord's Prayer is beyond the scope of this chapter, it should be noted that Calvin considered the Lord's Prayer as the paragon of all prayers, which captures the nature and pattern of prayer. In his commentary on the Lord's Prayer, Calvin declares that the purpose of this prayer is to make the faithful "rise up" to our Father in heaven,<sup>550</sup> through believing in the name of the only-begotten Son, and through being adopted into the children of the Father.<sup>551</sup> This adoption is enabled by the Holy Spirit, only through whom we may cry, "Abba, Father." Here Christ's being in heaven is the ground for our communion with the heavenly Father. Perhaps the fact that Calvin aligned the communion prayer with the full version of the Lord's Prayer implies that the nature of the sacrament is the same as that of prayer and of Trinitarian communion,<sup>552</sup> in Calvin's thought, while it is only implicit in his liturgy. In Calvin's thought, in any case, the communion service has the same purpose of that of the whole worship service.

#### **4.3.1. The Communion Prayer and Exhortation**

The text for the communion prayer reflects Calvin's doctrine of the Supper, which, as we have seen, suggests Trinitarian communion with God as the aim of the administration. In order to proclaim the Father "our Father," the prayer states, we should

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<sup>548</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 204.

<sup>549</sup> For recent discussions on the covenant aspect of the Lord's Supper, see Witvliet, *Worship Seeking Understanding*, 67-89.

<sup>550</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.40.

<sup>551</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.36. In his liturgy, Calvin used the recitation of the Lord's Prayer in two places: to end the prayer for illumination before the reading and preaching of the Word; and in the table prayer during the meal. Given the preaching is also the occasion for the presentation of Christ and our participation in Him, my argument that the recitation of the Lord's Prayer is a kind of invocation for Christ's presence and our union with Him corresponds to this scheme.

<sup>552</sup> Given the case of Geneva, we can assume that people in Calvin's ministry were required to learn the meaning of the Lord's Prayer before they would be (re)admitted to the Lord's Supper. Thus, when they recite the Lord's Prayer, they could have been reminded of the meaning of the Prayer and its allusion for the celebration of the sacrament.

receive “Christ Himself entire,” so that He may “live in us,” and we may “truly become partakers” of Him.<sup>553</sup> Since this participation is based upon our adopted sonship, the relationship between God and believers is consistently expressed in terms of Father and children: whenever God the Father is addressed, it is always as father, and the worshippers are referred to as the children of God. The Word of Institution, which follows the communion prayer, includes a long exhortation to repentance and love,<sup>554</sup> and to exclude all sinfulness from the Lord’s Table,<sup>555</sup> which is dominated with a didactic tone. It should be noted, however, that the reason Calvin requires this moral purity for the Lord’s Supper is that it is a participation in the body of Christ. In his *Institutes*, Calvin had described the purpose of excommunication of unworthy men as to protect “the body of Christ” from pollution, which should particularly be observed in the administration of the Lord’s Supper, where there is the mystery of our partaking of Christ’s body.<sup>556</sup> In the liturgical text also, Calvin relates the exhortation for repentance and moral purity to the theme of participation, reiterating the latter in the Words of Institution, after the exhortation for repentance and love: God is “truly willing to make us partakers” of Christ’s body and blood, in order that we “may possess Him wholly,” in such a way that “He may live in us and we in Him.”<sup>557</sup> It is hinted here that for Calvin the natural or eucharistic body of Christ in which we participate is somehow linked to the social or ecclesial body of Christ, the church.

The text for the Exhortation expresses the actual dimension of this eucharistic communion. Since it is participation in Christ, according to the text, the Supper is not only a sanctuary which requires our holiness, but also a “medicine” which improves it.<sup>558</sup> We do not come to the Table, the text says, to testify that “we are perfect or

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<sup>553</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 202 and 204.

<sup>554</sup> “[I]n accordance with the exhortation of St. Paul, let every man examine and prove his own conscience to see whether he truly repents of his faults and grieves over his sins, desiring to live henceforth a holy life according to God. Above all, let him see whether he has his trust in the mercy of God and seeks his salvation wholly in Jesus Christ and, renouncing all hatred and rancor, has high resolve and courage to live in peace and brotherly love with his neighbors.” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 206.

<sup>555</sup> “In the name and by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, I excommunicate all idolaters, blasphemers and despisers of God, all heretics and those who create private sects in order to break the unity of the Christ...I warn them to abstain from the Holy Table, lest they defile and contaminate the holy food which our Lord Jesus Christ gives to none except they belong to His household of faith.” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 206.

<sup>556</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.12.5.

<sup>557</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 207. Note that here God is described as the main subject or agent of this participation.

<sup>558</sup> “Let us be assured that the sins and imperfections which remain in us will not prevent Him from receiving us and making us worthy partakers of this spiritual Table...this Sacrament is a medicine for the poor sick souls, and that the only worthiness which our Lord requires of us is to know ourselves sufficiently to deplore our sins,

righteous in ourselves,” but to find all our worthiness “only in Jesus Christ.” Through this, we even find all our pleasure, joy, and satisfaction “in Him[Christ] alone.”<sup>559</sup> Calvin’s eucharistic liturgy is distinguished in this sense from that of other Reformers, e.g. Zwingli, in which the duty for true repentance and holiness, and the subsequent words of excommunication, are a response to the memorial of Christ’s passion and death.<sup>560</sup> Unlike Zwingli’s eucharistic liturgy, Calvin’s text stresses that the virtue of Christ’s death and passion “is imputed to us” in our union with Him for our righteousness.<sup>561</sup> While Zwingli’s text is dominated by the theme of Christ’s death, Calvin’s exhortation revolves around the theme of Christ’s living in us.

#### 4.3.2. Distribution

Then follow the distribution and eating of the bread and wine. Given Calvin’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, this is the very moment when the reality of Christ’s whole presence and our communion with Him is truly unfolded. Calvin does not provide any guidelines by which we can assume the mood of this ceremony. Both texts say that the congregation should come forward to the table and eat in reverence and order. They both stipulate that psalms should be sung during the distribution.

In the Strasbourg version, Calvin designated Psalm 138, the opening words of which is “*Louang’ et Grâce*” (Praise and Thanks), to be sung during the communion. In his commentary on this psalm, Calvin consistently explains that this is David’s song of gratitude to God, which was sung on his way to the sanctuary. This gratitude is for God’s merciful action and help that He vouchsafed us in our days of suffering: God not only answered and gave strength to us, “the poor and lowly” ones, but also drew us near to Himself and lifted us up to “heaven in the enjoyment of fellowship with angels.”<sup>562</sup> Throughout the whole commentary Calvin emphasizes that this psalm is our grateful response to what God did and does for us. This means that Calvin intended that the communion is observed in the mode of our grateful response to God.

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and to find all our pleasures, joy and satisfaction in Him alone.” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 207.

<sup>559</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 207.

<sup>560</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 150.

<sup>561</sup> Calvin also says that we gain all God’s “riches and blessings on this Table,” since “in giving Himself to us,” God gives “all that He has” to us. Thompson, *Liturgies*, 207. Apparently, this is the reflection of his doctrine of “wonderful exchange.”

<sup>562</sup> *Comm.* Psalm 138:1.

It should be noted that the commentary on this psalm features the theme of *Sursum Corda* or eucharistic ascent, which is so prominent in his eucharistic doctrine. The “highly exalted” God, according to the commentary, invites His people to “draw near to him by condescending to address them in a familiar manner.”<sup>563</sup> In order to worship God spiritually, David would lift his eyes to outward symbols, the sanctuary, which were “the means...appointed for drawing the minds of God’s people upwards.”<sup>564</sup> Here we can recognize that, in Calvin’s thought, praise and thanksgiving is a due response to God’s act of lifting us up to Himself, and thus is the mode of the eucharistic communion.<sup>565</sup>

It should be said that Calvin’s basic understanding of psalm-singing is shaped by the Trinitarian concept.<sup>566</sup> In his preface to the Genevan liturgy, the reformer spells out the meaning of Psalm singing, quoting from Augustine, and in a manner he adopted for the exposition of Trinitarian participation.

What St. Augustine says is true, that no one can sing things worthy of God unless he has received them from him. For when we have searched here and there, we will not find better songs nor ones more appropriate for this purpose than the Psalms of David, which the Holy Spirit has spoken to him and made. Therefore, when we sing them, we are certain that *God has put the words in our mouth as if they themselves sang in us to exalt his glory.*<sup>567</sup>

In a sense, for Calvin, our praise to God is Christ’s own praise. Our psalm singing during the communion, therefore, is not our own work, but is more like participation in Christ’s own act of praise in the power of the Holy Spirit. As Old says, Augustine’s passage Calvin refers to here is his commentary on Psalm 35:2, which says that in the singing of psalm “we recognize Him[Christ],” through whom “we are able to sing in this way...by his Spirit.”<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>563</sup> *Comm.* Psalm 138:2.

<sup>564</sup> *Comm.* Psalm 138:2.

<sup>565</sup> As that of the Lord’s Supper, according to Calvin, the purpose of the psalm singing is to “incite us to lift up our hearts to God.” *Articles concerning the Organization of the Church and of Worship at Geneva*, in *Theological Treatises*, 53.

<sup>566</sup> The Strasbourg text designates that during the distribution the psalm is to be sung, while it is optional in Geneva.

<sup>567</sup> Ford Lewis Battles, “John Calvin: The Form of Prayers and Songs of the Church,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 15 (1980):164. My Emphasis.

<sup>568</sup> “The psalm belongs to Him: Our heart is His, let our tongues sing appropriate things to Him...No one sings to Him except he who would receive from Him what he should be able to sing.” See Old, *Patristic Roots*, 262-3.

In sum, here we can notice that, in Calvin's thought and liturgy, the psalm singing during the communion completes the bidirectional nature of worship as a prayer, by leading the congregation in the proper, Trinitarian manner of responding and communicating with God. Calvin believes that the psalm-singing "can incite us to lift up our hearts to God,"<sup>569</sup> which means that the psalm-singing is not merely praise but also a means for our being drawn to or our communing with God. In the psalm-singing, then, Calvin tries to realize the personal, Trinitarian communion with God in the Lord's Supper.

### 4.3.3. Post-Communion

The communion service - and the whole worship service - ends with the post-communion thanksgiving, which entails the singing of the Canticum of Simeon. While the Spirit's work is generally only implicit throughout the whole eucharistic service, the text for this post-communion thanksgiving refers to the Holy Spirit, thus making this ending comment of the whole worship service take on an explicitly Trinitarian shape:

Heavenly Father, we offer thee eternal praise and thanks that thou hast granted so great a benefit to us poor sinners, *having drawn us into the Communion of thy Son*, Jesus Christ our Lord, whom thou hast delivered to death for us, and whom thou givest us as the meat and drink of life eternal...[M]ay we order and pursue all our life to the exaltation of thy glory and the edification of our neighbor; through the same Jesus Christ, thy Son, who *in the unity of the Holy Spirit* liveth and reigneth with thee, O God, forever, Amen.<sup>570</sup>

Our act of grateful response culminates in the Post-Communion Thanksgiving. In his *Institutes*, when commenting on the prayer of thanksgiving offered by Jesus at the Last Supper, Calvin defined our thanksgiving as our "entering into" this "true gratitude" by Christ.<sup>571</sup> Concerning the Post-Communion Thanksgiving, Calvin writes:

[T]he Lord here not only recalls to our memory, as we have already explained, the abundance of his bounty, but, so to speak, gives it into our hand and arouses us to recognize it. At the same time he admonishes us not to be ungrateful for such lavish beneficence, but rather to proclaim it with fitting praises and to celebrate it with thanksgiving.<sup>572</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> *Articles concerning the Organization of the Church and of Worship at Geneva*, in *Theological Treatises*, 53.

<sup>570</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 208. My emphasis.

<sup>571</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.20.28.

<sup>572</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.37.

Calvin's point here is that as long as God really gives a gift of communion in the Lord's Supper, since the Supper is not only a remembrance of the past grace of God, we should offer thankful response to this act of God as a result of the communion. As in the case of psalm singing, we can say that this thanksgiving is not our response to a past work by God, but is the present work by God Himself, which makes us partakers of Christ's own act of thanksgiving.

In sum, the service of the Lord's Supper, including its Post Communion service, realizes the communion paradigm of worship, in which there is a bidirectional movement between God and the worshippers. In worship, there is God's act of self-giving to us, and our response to Him, which is enabled by our partaking of the Son. While God presents Christ throughout the whole service, our communion with God is most definitively achieved in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, especially through our act of praise and thanksgiving. In other words, it is only in this celebration of the Lord's Supper that the Trinitarian shape of the liturgy is wholly achieved.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter we have seen how Calvin's Trinitarian doctrine of communion filters into his theology and liturgy of worship. For Calvin, the nature and pattern of worship is identical with that of prayer. In prayer we communicate with God in the Trinitarian scheme and manner. This means that we pray to God on the basis of our ontological identity as the adopted sons, which is attained by God's initiating Trinitarian economy. In this scheme, we respond to God's preceding presence and actions, being made the active subject of this communion.

Calvin's liturgical texts and his theology behind it show that for him worship is what reflects the prayer pattern of the Trinitarian communion. The opening ceremony shows that the aim of whole worship is not to gain pardon and mercy from God but to have a communion with Him based upon that mercy. Calvin's understanding of preaching shows that this aim is attained even in preaching where we commune with the person of Christ who, along with His words, is wholly present there. However, the prayer pattern of communion is more fully completed in the communion service, in which God enables our active response of praise to Himself, by making us partake of Christ's own response to the Father.

Seeing its parallel with prayer, we can say that worship service as a whole, for Calvin, is the Trinitarian event, patterned by his doctrine of the Trinity, even when the

liturgy itself does not literally brings up the Trinitarian formulation.

## Chapter 5

### The Trinity as a Mark of Calvin's Eucharistic Liturgy

In the previous chapter we observed that Calvin's liturgy of the Lord's Supper is what fully sets forth the communion paradigm of worship in his liturgical thought. For our purpose, we should also take a closer look into the liturgical text for the Supper, in order to examine how it was affected by Calvin's own doctrine of the Trinity.

As Hughes Oliphant Old points out, Calvin's liturgy is not the product of an individual reformer, since "its development passed from one generation to another and its history was made in many cities" which "all left their mark on the liturgy."<sup>573</sup> Even so, however, Calvin's eucharistic liturgy was by no means a slavish imitation of any preceding liturgies, particularly because of the presence of the Trinitarian notions in it, which were presumably an assimilation of his own doctrine of the Trinity. Furthermore, Trinitarian ideas like those in Calvin's liturgy are found in the eucharistic liturgies of those who set themselves up as successors of Calvin. From this, we can say that the Trinitarian quality and concepts are an essence or mark of the Calvinist liturgy of the Lord's Supper.

In this chapter we shall first summarize how the Trinitarian themes, e.g. union, participation, and heavenly communion, show up in Calvin's liturgical texts of the Lord's Supper, and then look into the eucharistic liturgies of other reformers, in comparison with Calvin's, to consider whether these liturgies show Trinitarian concepts like those in Calvin's.

#### 5.1. Summary of the Trinitarian Indications in Calvin's Eucharistic Liturgy

As was observed, the pattern of the whole of worship reflects the Trinitarian pattern of prayer and communion. It can be said, however, that this pattern is reiterated in the eucharistic liturgy proper. As we have seen, the liturgy begins with the Communion prayer which sets forth the bipolarity between the heavenly God and "entirely corrupt and vicious" humanity, and asks God to act so that we may "live no longer in ourselves" but in God.<sup>574</sup> In the lengthy exhortation for self-examination and

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<sup>573</sup> Hughes Oliphant Old, *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*, Zürcher Beiträge Zur Reformationsgeschichte, Bd. 5 (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975), 338.

<sup>574</sup> Bard Thompson, ed., *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Augsburg Fortress, 1959), 204.

love of neighbors after the Communion Prayer, it is declared that through this Supper Christ “make us partakers of His body and blood, in order that we may possess Him wholly and in such wise that He may live in us and we in Him.”<sup>575</sup> While the exhortation is often regarded as spoiling “the eucharistic spirit and social character of the meal,”<sup>576</sup> it should be noted that according to the text this exhortation aims to make the participants sure of their identity as God’s children and to proclaim that the Supper is the Table communion of God’s family.<sup>577</sup> In other words, the exhortation for repentance and love is a kind of expectation for God’s action for our communion with Himself by making us participants in Christ. Indeed, while it begins with the exhortation towards people, it rather delineates on the divine economy of making us participants in Christ in the Supper.

Though there is no mention of the Holy Spirit as the bond between God and the faithful, Calvin’s expression harks back to the office of the Spirit in his doctrinal exposition, by specifying that the Christ of whom we partake is the whole *person* of Christ, who is “being true God and true man,”<sup>578</sup> thus implying that our partaking of Christ in the Supper is not something like a substantial mingling but a pneumatological union. Also, when the text underscores the actuality of the efficacy of the Supper, we are reminded that the sacrament is the work of the Holy Spirit, who is the real efficacy of all divine-human communion.

The whole exhortation ends with the exhortation of *Sursum Corda*, by which it is implied that this communion in the Supper is a *heavenly* communion, which requires our souls’ “attaining even to heaven,” and “entering the Kingdom of God where He dwells.”<sup>579</sup> Here we can see that the Trinitarian themes are inserted in the liturgy in such a way that it can express the dynamic of Trinitarian communion, in which our participation in Christ leads to our ascent and heavenly communion.

It has often been observed that “in the liturgy of Geneva there is no trace of an invocation of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>580</sup> While this is certainly so, it is not so surprising, given

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<sup>575</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 207.

<sup>576</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 193.

<sup>577</sup> “We have this witness in our hearts before God, never doubt that He claims us as His children, and that the Lord Jesus addresses His Word to us, to invite us to His Table and to give us this holy Sacrament which He imparted to His disciples.” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 206.

<sup>578</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 204.

<sup>579</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 207

the tendency of general western liturgies which lack the invocation of the Holy Spirit. However, Sue Rozeboom further points out that in Calvin's eucharistic liturgy there is not even "mention of Holy Spirit otherwise, except in one doxological formula concluding the post-communion prayer of thanksgiving."<sup>581</sup> Given the significance Calvin laid on the role of the Holy Spirit in his doctrinal exposition of the Lord Supper, this is curious.

According to Rozeboom, one possibility for this omission is that Calvin was keen to distinguish himself from the extreme spiritualists who were dwelling in and around Strasbourg and Geneva, and such desire inclined him to refrain from mentioning the Spirit in the form for celebrating the Lord's Supper.<sup>582</sup> A stronger possibility is that Calvin intentionally refrained from broaching the name of the Holy Spirit in the overall text, knowing that the prayer of consecration of the elements, to which he objected strenuously, is traditionally an invocation to send *the Holy Spirit* over the bread and wine to change them into the body and blood of Christ.<sup>583</sup> In fact, even in the Consecration invocation in the Roman mass, which consists of the recitation of the words of *Institution*, *Qui pridie*, and *Quam oblationem*,<sup>584</sup> there is no explicit mention of the Holy Spirit. However, Calvin, who was familiar with the patristic liturgies attributed to Chrysostom and Basil, etc.,<sup>585</sup> must have been well aware of the underlying concept of the Consecration prayer.

We should call to mind the difference between doctrine and liturgy. In all Christian traditions, there is a tendency to understand the Holy Spirit as One who works *in secret*, or who does not always obviously show Himself in His works.<sup>586</sup> In scripture

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<sup>580</sup> Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body* (Adelaide: Lutheran Pub House, 1981), 264, quoted from Sue Rozeboom, "The Provenance of John Calvin's Emphasis on the Role of the Holy Spirit regarding the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," (Ph.D Dissertation, submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Notre Dame), 2010, 342.

<sup>581</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 342.

<sup>582</sup> Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 367.

<sup>583</sup> J. G. Davies, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, 1st American Ed edition (Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox Press, U.S., 1986), 18.

<sup>584</sup> "Vouchsafe, we beseech you, O God, to make this offering wholly blessed, approved, ratified, reasonable, and acceptable; that it may become to us the body and blood of your dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ our Lord." R. C. D., Cuming, G. J. Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed 3rd*, 3 edition (Liturgical Press, 100AD), 164-5.

<sup>585</sup> That Calvin's theology and liturgy of worship is rooted in his knowledge of the ancient Fathers is what Hughes Oliphant Old argues in *The Patristic Roots of Reformed Worship*.

<sup>586</sup> Eugene F Rogers, "The Mystery of the Spirit in Three Traditions: Calvin, Rahner, Florensky Or, You Keep Wondering Where the Spirit Went," *Modern Theology* 19, no. 2 (Ap 2003): 244.

it is observed that when the Pharisees asked to discern the Spirit of God, they were told that “the only sign will be a christological one.”<sup>587</sup> Likewise it is often understood by Christian tradition that the Holy Spirit characteristically speaks in a “still, small voice”[1 Kings 19:12] and that the work of the Spirit is to initiate the believers secretly into Christ’s own experiences.<sup>588</sup> Noticeably, liturgy is understood as one of the loci, where, while one might expect a robust mention of the Spirit, the Spirit is anonymous and the mention of Him is absent.<sup>589</sup>

In Calvin’s theology also, as Rogers observes, the Holy Spirit is One who works in secret. The title of chapter 1 of Book 3 in the *Institutes* speaks for this claim: “The Things Spoken Concerning Christ Profit Us by the Secret Working of the Spirit.”<sup>590</sup> This is true especially in the Spirit’s effectuating role for our relationship with God. “[O]ur ingrafting signifies not only our conformity to the example of Christ, but also the secret union by which we grow together with Him, in such a way that He revives us by His Spirit...”<sup>591</sup> According to Calvin, it is “by the secret impulse of His Spirit” that God gains “admission to our souls.”<sup>592</sup>

Note that liturgy is a *practice* of theology of worship, which means that it is an arena where we experience what has been enacted in theology. Even though in his doctrinal works Calvin highlights the role of the Spirit, given his understanding of the secret nature of the work of the Spirit, Calvin might have felt free to forgo the mention of the Holy Spirit in the practice of worship. As mentioned, Calvin’s text not only brings up the Trinitarian notions of participation and union, but also makes them lead to the idea of our ascent and heavenly communion, by placing those notions in due flow. Even though the Spirit is barely verbally mentioned in the text, accordingly, it can be said that Calvin’s understanding of the Lord’s Supper as Trinitarian communion is recognized in effect and substance in his liturgical text. And as shall be seen, this Trinitarian quality and features of Calvin’s eucharistic liturgy stand out in comparison with other liturgies of the reformation.

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<sup>587</sup> Rogers, “The Mystery of the Spirit in Three Traditions,” 244.

<sup>588</sup> Rogers, “The Mystery of the Spirit in Three Traditions,” 244.

<sup>589</sup> Rogers, “The Mystery of the Spirit in Three Traditions,” 244.

<sup>590</sup> Rogers, “The Mystery of the Spirit in Three Traditions,” 245.

<sup>591</sup> *Comm.* Romans 6:5.

<sup>592</sup> *Comm.* Romans 8:26.

Considering that the main agent of our participation in God and subsequent communion with Him is God Himself, in Calvin's thought, it is also curious that in the liturgy he brings up the concept of participation mainly in the form of admonishment towards the congregation, rather than of prayer towards God.<sup>593</sup> However, we should note that in the Reformation, the liturgical projects of the Reformers "either reduced considerably or eliminated altogether any prayers which implied consecration of the elements or eucharistic sacrifice."<sup>594</sup> In other words, in the process of eliminating the Roman Catholic Canon, which contains the prayer of Consecration and Oblation, Calvin came to be extremely cautious about using the form of prayer in his eucharistic liturgy, and consequently dealt with the concept of participation in the form of exhortation, rather than prayer. Obviously we cannot say that talk of the Trinitarian concepts, whether in prayer or in exhortation, risked reviving unacceptable Catholic ideas. However, the notion of our eucharistic communion in Calvin's thought contains the idea of the ascent of our hearts into heaven and to God. Calvin might have judged that talk of our ascent in the form of prayer risks smacking of an offering, which he, along with other reformers, vehemently opposed.

In sum, Calvin's eucharistic liturgy is a reflection of his own Trinitarian doctrine of the Lord's Supper, which is articulated in his theological works, and which, as shall be seen below, became the marks of eucharistic liturgies of the pan-Calvinist tradition.

## **5.2. Survey of Preceding Reformation Liturgies**

### **5.2.1. Early Reformation-era Liturgies: Luther, Zwingli, and Roman Mass**

#### **5.2.1.1. Luther**

Against the Roman Catholic understanding of worship as *sacrificium*, a sacrifice offered by men to God, Luther deemed all of worship, the Mass in particular, as a *beneficium*, a gracious gift of God, who gives it freely out of pure mercy.<sup>595</sup> Here Luther is in line with Calvin, for the latter also understood the Lord's Supper as a gift of God, rather than work by men. While Calvin viewed the ultimate gift of the Lord's

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<sup>593</sup> Some criticize Calvin for making the liturgy of the Lord's Supper an exhortation towards the congregation, rather a Eucharista, a thanksgiving, towards God. See Bryan D. Spinks, *From the Lord and "the Best Reformed Churches": Eucharistic Liturgy in English Puritan and Separatist Traditions 1550-1633, V 1*, Ephemerides Liturgicae Subsidia (CLV Liturgiche, 1984), 62.

<sup>594</sup> Davies, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, 230.

<sup>595</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 99.

Supper as the communion with God, however, Luther understood it above all as the pardoning of sins of the worshippers.<sup>596</sup>

This can be easily observed in both of Luther's two liturgical works, the *Formula Missae* of 1523 and the *Deutsche Messe* of 1526. As is well known, the *Formula Missae* was not a wholesale reform of the Roman Catholic Mass, while having some drastic surgery in it, e.g. removing most of the Canon. Therefore, its eucharistic liturgy has something in common with the Roman Mass. For instance, it ends with the Pax ("The peace of the Lord be with you always"), which Luther interpreted to mean the Gospel voice announcing the remission of sins. This implies that for Luther the gift of the Mass is above all the forgiveness of sins.<sup>597</sup> Things were not much different in his *Deutsche Messe*. Almost at the end of the eucharistic service, Luther declares the bread and wine as the "guarantee and pledge" that God had redeemed the recipient "from God's wrath, sin, death, and hell."<sup>598</sup> Again, the gift of the Supper is above all the forgiveness of sins.

Perhaps because the forgiveness of sin is the end, the concept of communion with God through participation in Christ is by no means pushed open with regard to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in neither the *Deutsche Messe* nor the *Formula Missae*. The eucharistic liturgy of the *Deutsche Messe* begins with the admonition, "lift up your hearts to God," but it was no more than the customary adaptation of the introductory dialogue of *Sursum Corda* in the Canon of the Roman Catholic Mass,<sup>599</sup> being irrelevant to the idea of our communion with the Father. From the survey of the eucharistic liturgy of Luther, we can assume that having the participatory quality and the Trinitarian concept of communion, as that which is in Calvin's liturgy, was by no means a habitual practice in the Reformation.

#### 5.2.1.2. Zwingli

Zwingli's first liturgical work, *An Attack on the Canon of the Mass of 1523*, was

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<sup>596</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 101.

<sup>597</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 101.

<sup>598</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 133.

<sup>599</sup> The Roman Catholic Canon was a combination of short prayers lacking any real cohesion. Its elements were as follows: Introductory dialogue – *Sursum Corda*; Preface, culminating in Sanctus and Benedictus; A plea for the acceptance of the offerings; Prayer for the living and departed; Prayer of offering; Narrative of the Institution; Anamnesis(oblation); Prayer for acceptance and fruitful reception; Prayer for the living and departed; Two doxologies. See Davies, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, 139.

primarily an attack on the sacrificial emphasis of the Roman Catholic Canon. Accordingly, his doctrinal position of Christ's real presence, so-called symbolic memorialism, is plainly incorporated into the liturgical text. In the second of the four eucharistic prayers which replace the Roman Catholic Canon, for example, it is emphasized that "the flesh profits nothing, but it is the Spirit which gives life."<sup>600</sup>

Given Zwingli's doctrinal position, it is natural that the text does not even show a trace of the Trinitarian idea of our participation in the living Christ. When the phrase "through Christ" is occasionally brought up, it is so in relation to our realization of the truth which set "the human mind free," and does not lead to the concept of the presence of Christ, and our participation in and communion with Him.<sup>601</sup> In the third eucharistic prayer, there is a petition that "all we who partake of the body and blood of Christ may have one hope and purpose, and be ourselves in him[Christ], as he is one with you." Contextually understood, this is a petition for our living in the likeness of Christ in our daily life, rather than for our participation in Christ and the resulting communion with God in the place of worship.<sup>602</sup> The *Sursum Corda* exists, but, as in Luther's liturgy, it is no more than a cursory adjustment of the introductory dialogue of *Sursum Corda* in the Roman Canon.<sup>603</sup>

In *Action or Use of the Lord's Supper* of 1525, it is again declared that "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."<sup>604</sup> This is the incorporation of Zwingli's doctrinal position on humanity, according to which the notion of our participation in Christ in His whole nature can be downplayed. From the opening admonishment, the text is generally dominated by the theme of our sin and Christ's death, and is almost reticent about His living and our living in Him. The Lord's Supper is primarily a "memorial of Christ's passion and thanksgiving for His death."<sup>605</sup> The Holy Spirit is often mentioned in the literally Trinitarian formulation, but is irrelevant to

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<sup>600</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 185.

<sup>601</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 185.

<sup>602</sup> "Grant us, therefore, merciful Father, through Christ your Son our Lord, through whom you give life to all things, and through whom you renew and sustain all things, that we may show him forth in our lives; so that the likeness which we lost in Adam may be restored, And in order that this may take place in us the more effectively and surely, grant that all we who partake of the body and blood of your Son may have one hope and purpose, and be ourselves one in him, as he is one with you." Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 185.

<sup>603</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 183.

<sup>604</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 152.

<sup>605</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 150.

the Trinitarian concept of participation or communion.<sup>606</sup> To sum up, Zwingli's liturgy, like Luther's, lacks the Trinitarian, participatory quality that is found in Calvin's.

### 5.2.1.3. Roman mass

To grasp the early reformation rites fairly, we shall also consider the liturgy of the Holy Communion in the Roman Catholic Mass, from which the reformers broke away.<sup>607</sup>

Among the four parts of the whole Mass, that is, the Mass of the Catechumen, the Offertory, the Canon, and the Communion, the last three parts fall under the Communion liturgy. Throughout, a strong sacrificial and penitential piety shapes the eucharistic piety whereby the priest, on behalf of the congregation, makes entreaties that the eucharistic bread and wine would deliver them from all evil and bring about the pardon of their sins. The prayer for Communion, the last part, intimates that the aim of the whole mass is that "we may be ever free from sin and...no stain of sin may be left in me, now that I am renewed by the pure and holy sacrament."<sup>608</sup>

The idea of our participation in Christ as a way for communion with the heavenly One is almost lacking throughout the whole of the Roman Communion service. In the Canon it is only sometimes asked that God would "admit us" into the "company" or "fellowship with" the saints.<sup>609</sup> Again, the purpose of this petition for being admitted into the company of the saints has nothing to do with our having communion with God Himself.<sup>610</sup>

Remarkably, there is an expression in the Offertory prayers prior to the Canon, which is evocative of the notion of the Trinitarian communion in Calvin's, though it does not directly bring up the idea of participation in or union with Christ. The prayer

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<sup>606</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 151-4.

<sup>607</sup> Here we shall use the Roman Mass of 1570 as our source, the product of the liturgical standardization initiated by the Council of the Trent. Although this version of the Roman Mass is technically a post-Reformation document, it is not an innovation but rather the summation of the medieval development of western Catholic worship. Robert E Webber, *The Complete Library of Christian Worship. v 2, 20 Centuries of Christian Worship* (Nashville: Starsong Pub Group, n.d.), 171. Hereafter it is referred to as Webber, *20 Centuries of Christian worship*.

<sup>608</sup> Webber, *20 Centuries of Christian worship*, 184. It is evident in a prayer in the Canon which reads: "we thy servants...make this peace offering, which we entreat thee to accept...command that we be rescued from eternal damnation...through Christ our Lord."

<sup>609</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 164 and 166.

<sup>610</sup> "By their[saints'] merits and prayers grant us to be defended in all things by the help of your protection." Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 164.

asks “God, by whom the dignity of human nature was wondrously established and yet more wondrously restored” that “through the sacramental use of this water and wine we may have fellowship in the Godhead of him who deigned to share our manhood, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord, who is God, living and reigning with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>611</sup> Given that there is almost no glimpse of the concept of participation or communion in the liturgies of Luther and Zwingli, the existence of these phrases in the Roman mass is noticeable. It can be assumed that this was the prototype of the language of participatory communion in the reformed liturgies of Bucer and Calvin, which shall be seen below.

This language in the Mass, however, does not wholly fit into the concept of communion in Calvin’s liturgy. First, as mentioned, it does not explicitly bring up the idea of participation in or union with Christ. Second, it is irrelevant to the concept of *Sursum Corda*, the ascent of our hearts,<sup>612</sup> for heavenly communion. When there are hints of the notion of ascent, the subjects of ascension are not the hearts of the worshipping community, but offerings, the bread and chalice, which are “carried by the hands of thy holy angel up to thy altar on high.”<sup>613</sup>

In sum, while it features some communion language, the Roman Mass does not contain the Trinitarian concept of participation or communion found in Calvin’s liturgy. By lacking the participatory quality, the mass assumes a form of transaction, rather than of communion, in which the worshippers make the offerings and sacrifice to God, and God gives them forgiveness and protection as compensation.

## **5.2.2. Liturgies on which Calvin's is based: Farel, Oecolampadius, and Bucer**

### **5.2.2.1. Farel**

Calvin’s liturgy was mainly built upon the liturgy of Strasbourg, and is also assumed to have been affected by the liturgies of Basel and Geneva, cities where Calvin stayed for some period of time.<sup>614</sup> The progenitors of these three liturgies are Bucer, Farel, and Oecolampadius, respectively.

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<sup>611</sup> Webber, *20 centuries of Christian worship*, 178.

<sup>612</sup> As mentioned, there is the formal introductory dialogue of *Sursum Corda*.

<sup>613</sup> Webber, *20 centuries of Christian worship*, 181. It also says: “we offer thee, Lord, the chalice of salvation, entreating thy mercy that our offering may ascend with a sweet fragrance in the presence of thy divine majesty.” Webber, *20 centuries of Christian worship*, 178.

<sup>614</sup> Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 352.

Perhaps because it is a sincere reflection of the Zwinglian understanding of the Lord's Supper,<sup>615</sup> the eucharistic order in Farel's liturgy, *Maniere et Fasson*,<sup>616</sup> is heavy on sin, like the liturgies that were under Zwinglian influence, and does not have a hint of participatory quality. The text consistently emphasizes that God "willed that His Son should die to give us life...washing and purging us by His blood," and exhorts that we all should give thanks to God, who loved us by offering and giving His love for our sake, and should imitate and follow this example of God, by loving one another with a perfect love. These emphases on our sin, Christ's sacrifice for us, and our imitation of Christ's love, are reminiscent of the liturgy of Zwingli.

While it mentions God's will of making us His children, this idea does not draw upon the notion of our participation in Christ's sonship. The ground that we can and should be the children of God is that He revealed His goodness and mercy to us even so far as to give the life of His Son to us so that we can be washed and purged by His blood.<sup>617</sup> It is since Christ "gave His body for us on the Cross and spent His blood for the remission of our sins" that we should partake of the bread and cup.<sup>618</sup> Without the participatory quality in it, as a result, what the text denotes is a linear scheme of salvation: God gave His Son to die, and we respond to this with love to Him and to one another. Since the confession of sin and assurance of pardon are placed after self-examination and excommunication, it gives an impression that the pardoning of sin is the aim of the Communion.

While Farel brings up the exhortation of the *Sursum Corda* after the Words of Institution, just like Calvin, the text for the exhortation shows that Farel's understanding of the *Sursum Corda* is significantly different of that of Calvin.

Therefore, lift up your hearts on high, seeking the heavenly things in heaven, where Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father; and do not fix your eyes on the visible signs which are corrupted through usage. In joy of heart, in brotherly union, come, everyone, to partake of our Lord's Table, giving thanks unto Him for the very great love which He has shown us. Have the death of this

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<sup>615</sup> According to Thompson, Farel conceived of the eucharist as "a testimony of our faith, by which we are 'grafted' into Christ as members of Jesus Christ" and as "a realization of the fellowship and love that shall exist among those who belong to Christ and hence to one another." Thompson, *Liturgies*, 187.

<sup>616</sup> It was produced during his tenure in Neuchâtelin 1533. While Farel produced another version of the liturgy in 1538, it was the 1533 version that most likely best approximate to that which Calvin encountered and employed upon his arrival in Geneva in 1536. Rozeboom, "The Provenance," 356.

<sup>617</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 219.

<sup>618</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 219.

good Savior graven on your hearts in eternal remembrance, so that you are set afire, so also that you incite others to love God and follow His holy Word.

Functioning as an antidote to material adoration, the exhortation “lift up our hearts on high” immediately proceeds to the admonishment to love our neighbors. We have noted Calvin’s Sursum Corda text, which states not only that Christ is in heaven and not enclosed in the earthly things, but that we shall enter heaven where He dwells, in order to be “nourished and vivified by his substance.”<sup>619</sup> In Calvin’s text, the Sursum Corda not only functions to guard against people’s adoration of the elements, but also sets forth Calvin’s typical concept of the Triune economy of God. Compared to this, Farel’s text of the Sursum Corda, as well as his whole liturgy, reveals a dualistic and moralistic, rather than participatory, or Trinitarian, understanding of the sacrament. While it is usually assumed that Calvin derived the Sursum Corda in his liturgy from Farel’s,<sup>620</sup> we can see here that Calvin also altered it to fit more into the Trinitarian scheme.

#### 5.2.2.2. Oecolampadius

In 1525, Oecolampadius produced his liturgy, *Form und Gestalt*, which, according to Thompson, is fashioned on Zwinglian principles. “By the meditative use of Scripture,” Thompson says, Oecolampadius “made provision for the profound contemplation of Christ’s passion, which was the crux of the Zwinglian Eucharist.”<sup>621</sup> By a parallel emphasis on self-examination and excommunication, Thompson also argues, Oecolampadius “expressed a grave concern” that “those who would celebrate their redemption at the Lord’s table must be distinguished, as members of his Body, by sincerity of faith and holiness of life, else the church is not the church, the sacrament is profaned, and the offenders are liable for the Lord’s body and blood,” which found its way into the Calvinist rite.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>619</sup> “Let us lift our spirits and hearts on high where Jesus Christ is in the glory of his Father, whence we expect him at our redemption. Let us not be fascinated by these earthly and corruptible elements which we see with our eyes and touch with our hands, seeking him there as though he were enclosed in the bread and wine. Then only shall our souls be disposed to be nourished and vivified by his substance when they are lifted up above all earthly things, attaining even to heaven, and entering the Kingdom of God where he dwells. Therefore let us be content to have the bread and wine as signs and witnesses, seeking the truth spiritually where the Word of God promises that we shall find it.” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 207.

<sup>620</sup> Spinks, *From the Lord*, 60.

<sup>621</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 186.

<sup>622</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 186.

Granted that the penitential note is pervasive in the liturgy, it also brings up, although very occasionally, the notion of “our union with God the Father.” Even in underscoring the sacrificial act of Christ, who gave Himself as a burnt offering on our behalf, the text describes it as aiming to secure and seal our union with God, whereby “no longer do we desire to be our own, but the Lord’s.”<sup>623</sup> While the text expresses this union as union with the Father, rather than with Christ, this union is also a union with the Son, through which “we wish to live and aspire unto Christ, and not to ourselves, thus to be incorporated with Him as members, redeemed and purified by His blood.”<sup>624</sup> Perhaps in the thought of Oecolampadius the penitence is not an end itself, but a preparation for this union.

According to Sue Rozeboom, Oecolampadius is “the apparent progenitor” of the exegetical connection and theological employment of the *Sursum Corda*, in doctrinal expositions on the sacrament.<sup>625</sup> Remarkably, however, the notion of the *Sursum Corda* is absent in Oecolampadius’ rite. In the lengthy words of confession of sin, it rather declares that “we are not worthy...to lift our eyes up to heaven.”<sup>626</sup> This can be interpreted that in Oecolampadius’ liturgical thinking, the idea of our union with Christ is not related to the notion of our hearts’ ascent for heavenly communion with God.

### 5.2.2.3. Bucer

The similarity in the Trinitarian thinking between Bucer and Calvin’s theology was mentioned in chapter 3. According to Willem van’t Spijker the central point of their theology is that “spiritual life is communicated to us through Christ. By his spirit, he makes us share in the power of his life-giving flesh in heaven. This is how ‘*communio*’ which unites us with him originates. The Spirit is the bond of that fellowship which is determinative for the church.”<sup>627</sup> As Spijker argues, it was the influence of Bucer that enabled Calvin to insist that “Christ does not live outside of us, but within us through

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<sup>623</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 214.

<sup>624</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 214.

<sup>625</sup> Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 355.

<sup>626</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 213.

<sup>627</sup> W van ’t Spijker, “Bucer’s Influence on Calvin: Church and Community,” in *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community* (Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1994), 33.

his Spirit, and we in him.”<sup>628</sup> Bucer’s eucharistic doctrine also displays an affinity to Calvin’s. While being reluctant to integrate the sign and the reality signified, according to Ian Hazlett, Bucer was concerned to “safeguard some form of actual encounter with the reality signified,”<sup>629</sup> just as Calvin was. This affinity between the two reformers leads to the affinity between their liturgies.

In 1539, Bucer published his service book *The psalter with Complete Church Practice*, the eucharistic liturgy of which is explicitly an extrapolation of his view that while the communicants only receive bread and wine, when doing so, they are uplifted by their faith to a real participation of the body and blood of Christ in heaven.<sup>630</sup>

Four headings of the Exhortation for the Communion, appended to the sermon, reflect the Trinitarian scheme of participation we found in Calvin’s theology and liturgy. While our body and blood, our “whole nature,” which is corrupted to eternal death, may nevermore share in the Kingdom of God, the eternal word of God became flesh so that we could be restored and sanctified, which happens as we eat and drink of His body and blood. The reason why the Lord imparts to us this communion in the holy sacrament, according to the third heading, is that “He may ever more live in us, and that we may be one body in Him our head, even as we all partake here of one bread.”<sup>631</sup> The exhortation concludes with the point that this communion is a communion with Christ “Himself entire,” both divine and human, “through whom alone we obtain true and blessed life and live both here and in eternity.”<sup>632</sup>

After the sermon and exhortation comes the Apostle’s Creed in a German metrical version, and then follows a choice of three eucharistic prayers, all of which are laden with the elements of intercession, participation in Christ, and hope for a heavenly communion with a specific reference in the first and third prayers to lifting up the hearts to God.<sup>633</sup> Especially in the first, original form or the prayers,<sup>634</sup> the concept of participation is conjoined to the exhortation of *Sursum Corda*, as in Calvin’s liturgy.<sup>635</sup>

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<sup>628</sup> Spijker, “Bucer’s Influence on Calvin,” 35.

<sup>629</sup> Quoted from Rozeboom, “The Provenance,” 269.

<sup>630</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 205.

<sup>631</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 171-2.

<sup>632</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 172.

<sup>633</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 173 and 175.

<sup>634</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 205

<sup>635</sup> “And grant us, O Lord and Father, that with true faith we may keep this Supper of thy dear Son, our

While the Holy Spirit is often mentioned through all three versions, unlike Calvin's eucharistic liturgy, we cannot say that Bucer's liturgy is more explicitly Trinitarian than Calvin's, since the passages that contain the references to the Holy Spirit are irrelevant to the Trinitarian concept of participation. It is at least obvious that the overall shape of Bucer's liturgy corresponds to the Trinitarian scheme of Calvin's eucharistic theology and liturgy.

Given the verbal similarity, we might assume that the participatory expressions in Bucer's liturgy were derived directly from the Roman Mass. Unlike the Mass, however, such expressions are not for the bread and wine, but for the communicants. In his *Censura*,<sup>636</sup> which was later written as a critical review of the 1549 English Book of Common Prayer, Bucer said that the Words of Institution, the recitation of which was regarded as having the power of consecrating the materials in the West, i.e. in the Roman Mass,<sup>637</sup> "were not addressed to the bread and wine, as if to change them, but to the men present."<sup>638</sup> Accordingly, Bucer proposed to remove the words "Blesse and sanctifie these thy gifts..." in the Prayer for Consecration, supplying a new phrase which now reads: "Bless *us* and sanctify *us* by the Holy Spirit and word."<sup>639</sup> In other words, as Jasper and Cuming put it, what the prayers were concerned with in Bucer's eucharistic liturgy "was not a consecration of the bread and wine but of the communicants themselves."<sup>640</sup> It can be assumed that in Bucer's liturgy, the communicants' communion with God is based upon this consecration of themselves.

On the whole, Bucer's eucharistic liturgy is compatible with Calvin's understanding of the Lord's Supper, in that it highlights the personal dimension of the Lord's Supper by understanding it as an event for divine-human communion. Moreover,

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Lord Jesus, as he hath ordained it, so that we may verily receive and enjoy the true communion of his body and blood, of our Savior himself, who is the only saving bread of heaven. In this holy sacrament, he wishes to offer and give himself so that he may live in us, and we in him, being members of his body and serving thee faithfully in every way to the common edification of thy Church, being set free from every passion of our evil, corrupted flesh, from all anger, vexation, envy, hatred, selfishness, lewdness, unchastity, and what more there may be of the damned work of the flesh: To the end that, by all means, we as thine own obedient children may ever lift our hearts and souls unto thee in true childlike trust, and always call upon thee, saying as our only Master and Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, hath taught us: Our Father..." Thompson, *Liturgies*, 173.

<sup>636</sup> There is no doubt that Bucer's criticism here played a substantial role in the liturgical and doctrinal development of the 1552 Prayer Book.

<sup>637</sup> J. G. Davies, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, 1st American Ed edition (Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox Press, U.S., 1986), 19.

<sup>638</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 240.

<sup>639</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 240. My emphasis.

<sup>640</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 205.

since Bucer's liturgy brings up the concept of our participation in God in the form of prayer to God, rather exhortation to people, it can even better express the God-leading character of our participation in God presented in Calvin's theology. That the consecration falls on human believers can imply that there is an offering of themselves for heavenly communion with God. Probably Bucer's notion of consecration of the communicants would be sanctioned by Calvin, given that Calvin also believed that the Lord's Supper is primarily an interaction between God and the communicants; for Calvin, as well as for Bucer, what partakes of God is not the bread and wine, but *people* who eat and drink them. It might be that what made Calvin embrace and model Bucer's liturgy and practice of worship was this Trinitarian theme.

Indeed, there are also some statements of Bucer which indicate that his liturgical understanding of the Lord's Supper does not fit into the thoroughly Trinitarian scheme of the sacrament, delineated in the preceding chapters of this thesis. In the *Censura*, Bucer says that: "the bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Christ, by which He offers Himself to us. But outside this use, they are what other bread and wine are. *For nothing of their nature is changed, and Christ the Lord is not present in them, but in the minds of the faithful.*"<sup>641</sup> This statement gives an impression that in denying the consecration of the elements, Bucer goes on to reduce Christ's presence and our subsequent participation in Him into merely a cerebral event. In the same context, Bucer also expresses that the consecration of people is in order that "we may *perceive* in these mysteries the body and blood of thy Son."<sup>642</sup> This view of Bucer has been accused of being *virtualism* or *receptionism*, which advocates purely spiritual presence of Christ in the minds of the faithful, however realistic the language used to describe Christ's presence is, rather than a personal and objective presence.<sup>643</sup>

However, this kind of ambiguity is found also in Calvin. In principle, Calvin holds fast to the fact that our whole being, both our body and soul, is involved in the

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<sup>641</sup> Quotation from <http://www.catholictradition.org/Eucharist/protestantism2.htm>. My Emphasis.

<sup>642</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 240. My emphasis.

<sup>643</sup> See <http://www.catholictradition.org/Eucharist/protestantism2.htm#14>. Perhaps this is why Bucer's eucharistic position is often characterized as so-called parallelism. For Bucer, according to Ian Hazlett, there is a double eating in communion: "just as the mouth eats the bread, so the mouth of faith feeds off the body of Christ; in the Lord's Supper, there are 'duae res' (two realities), one earthly and one heavenly or spiritual." See Ian Hazlett, "Eucharistic Communion: Impulses and Directions in Martin Bucer's Thought," in *Martin Bucer: Reforming Church and Community*, ed. David F. Wright (Cambridge, Eng: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1994), 1994, 74. In other words, for Bucer, the Supper is "a happening that occurs simultaneously in the present" through the work of God alongside the sign itself. This concept is distinguished from instrumentalism represented by Calvin, which stresses the sacrament as "a present happening that is actually brought about through the signs." See Melvin Tinker, "Language, Symbols and Sacraments: Was Calvin's View of the Lord's Supper Right?," *Churchman*, January 1, 1998, 131.

sacrament of the Lord's Supper, just as it is the union with the whole person of Christ.<sup>644</sup> Our communion with God in the Supper, according to Calvin, is a holistic communion, which involves our body and blood,<sup>645</sup> in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this vein, there is no reason for the substantial or physical aspect of our celebration of sacrament, which is by means of our consuming of the bread and wine, to be disaffirmed or denigrated. Nevertheless, Calvin often says as if it is only "our minds" that are to be involved in the communion of the Supper.<sup>646</sup>

In sum, Bucer's liturgical text for the Lord's Supper is almost identical to that of Calvin, in that they have similar Trinitarian themes and quality. While Bucer's influence on Calvin's liturgy is evident, we cannot also exclude the possibility that in preparing his liturgy, Bucer in his part was influenced by Calvin.<sup>647</sup> At any rate, they have substantial things in common, while neither of them thoughtlessly followed the other.

### **5.3. Early Reformation Liturgies after Calvin's: Von Wied, Cranmer, and Knox**

In this section, we shall look into some succeeding liturgies which were, either supposedly or actually, influenced by Bucer and Calvin.

#### **5.3.1. Hermann von Wied**

While having substantial influence on later Reformed liturgies, especially those of Calvin and Scotland, Bucer's liturgical thought also affected the Anglican rite in various ways, including the rite of Archbishop Hermann von Wied, who, carrying on a reformation in Cologne, produced in 1543 his liturgy, *Einfaltigs bedencken*, with the assistance of Bucer and Melancthon. A Latin edition, *Simplex as pla deliberation*,

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<sup>644</sup> Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Pr, 1995), 151.

<sup>645</sup> "It is that we are quickened by the true partaking of Him; and He has therefore designated this partaking by the words "eat" and "drink," in order that no one should think that the life that we receive from Him is received by mere knowledge. As it is not the seeing but the eating of bread that suffices to feed the body, so the soul must truly and deeply become partaker of Christ that it may be quickened to spiritual life by His power." *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.5.

<sup>646</sup> "What then is the sum of our doctrine? It is this, that when we discern here on earth the bread and wine, our minds must be raised to heaven in order to enjoy Christ, and that Christ is present there with us while we seek him above the elements of this world." *Comm. Philippians* 3:20.

<sup>647</sup> Calvin settled in Strasbourg in 1538, prior to when Bucer published his liturgy of 1539. Even before they worked closely together in Strasbourg, they had been in correspondence as early as 1532.

appeared in 1545 and is known to have been used by Cranmer,<sup>648</sup> while two English editions followed in 1547 and 1548 as *A Simple and Religious consultation*.<sup>649</sup>

The influence of Bucer can be found easily in von Wied's liturgy. As in Bucer's rite, the whole liturgy begins with the confession of sin and the words of comfort and absolution, denoting that the whole service anticipates something higher: being "partakers of the body and blood of the Lord,"<sup>650</sup> which is brought up in the liturgy of the Lord's Supper. In the eucharistic liturgy, as in Calvin and Bucer's, Christ is referred to as "very God and very man."<sup>651</sup> Here the wholeness of this Christ (being both God and man) and His current role in the divine-human relationship is intimated. These are closely akin to the phrases in Bucer and Calvin's rites.

While there is participatory language in the eucharistic rite, however, it is by no means prominent. It appears only once, even in a rubric for the priest who is in preparation for the communion, rather than in the form of exhortation or prayer. Moreover it does not lead to the concept of eucharistic ascent. The exhortation of *Sursum Corda* is proffered in the form of the conventional, introductory dialogue, as in the Roman Canon, at the very beginning of the eucharistic liturgy, and has no virtual connection with the idea of participation. Thus, all that the priest asks God to grant is that "as we have received this divine sacrament with our mouths," we may "also receive and ever hold fast with true faith thy grace, remission of sins, and communion with Christ thy Son."<sup>652</sup> In sum, while von Wied's eucharistic rite contains participatory language, that language seems neither prominent nor thoroughly Trinitarian. Here we can realize that a liturgy which was influenced by Bucer's did not necessarily have the Trinitarian concept of participation, which Calvin's had.

### 5.3.2. The Book of Common Prayer 1552

It is generally agreed that Bucer was one of the main sources for the Book of the Common Prayer of 1552.<sup>653</sup> As Thompson points out, at the same time, Calvin's liturgy

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<sup>648</sup> Cranmer made extensive use of these sources in *The Order of the Communion* 1548 and in the 1549 Prayer Book. Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 219.

<sup>649</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 230

<sup>650</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 223.

<sup>651</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 224.

<sup>652</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 224.

<sup>653</sup> According to Spinks, Cranmer's main sources were highly selective. While the Sarum rite, the most

“would contribute to the revision of the Common Prayer.”<sup>654</sup> Valerand Pullain, who had been the successor of Calvin in the French congregation at Strasbourg, translated Calvin’s Strasbourg liturgy into Latin as *Liturgica sacra* (1551), dedicating it to Edward VI. An English edition of Calvin’s Genevan liturgy had been published the previous year by William Huyke, so that it could be in circulation prior to the publication of the second Prayer Book.<sup>655</sup> In any case, there are some elements which denote Calvin’s influence in the 1552 Prayer Book.<sup>656</sup>

Whilst the whole rite is penitential in tone,<sup>657</sup> the aim of the whole of worship, or of the eucharistic celebration, according to the BCP, is not merely pardoning of our sin. From the exhortation to self-examination for the Communion, it is intimated that the reason for this self-examination, which requires the “truly penitent heart,” is our being “one with Christ,” or participation in Him, in the sacrament.<sup>658</sup> We should examine ourselves, the text continues, in order not to “be giltye of the body and bloud of Christ, in which we participate.”<sup>659</sup> The text also highlights that the reason why Christ “did humble hymselfe, euen to the death upon the Crosse” is to “make us the children of God, and exalte us to euerlastinge lyfe”<sup>660</sup>

As in Bucer’s liturgy, the text explains that this participation in the Table affects “both ... bodye and soule,”<sup>661</sup> in a manner reminiscent of Calvin’s idea of communion of the whole being of Christ and us. By eating the “the fleshe of thy dere sonne Jesus

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widely used rite in England prior to the Reformation, was a major source, Cranmer also drew on “the reformed Breviary of Cardinal Quignon, and on the Consultation drawn up by Melanchthon and Bucer for Archbishop Hermann von Wied of Cologne, as well as some Lutheran sources, particularly that of the more conservative Nuremberg.” Bryan Spinks, “Calvin and the Worship of the Church of England in the Sixteenth Century,” *The Church Service Society Record*, volume 45 (2009-10), 22. Bucer’s *Censura*, as noted, also affected the revision of the 1549 prayer book.

<sup>654</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 237. Circumstantially, an English edition of Calvin’s Genevan liturgy had been published the previous year by William Huyke and was in circulation prior to the publication of the second Prayer Book. Thompson, *Liturgies*, 237.

<sup>655</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 237.

<sup>656</sup> For the circumstances that Cranmer knew Calvin, see Herman J. Selderhuis, ed., *The Calvin Handbook*, trans. Henry J. Baron, Judith J. Guder, and Randi H. Lundell, First Edition (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 118-123.

<sup>657</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 244.

<sup>658</sup> “[S. Paul] exhortheth all persons diligentlye to trye and examine themselues, before they presume to eate of that bread, and drynke of that cup: for as the benefite is great if with a truly penitent heart and liuely faith, we receiue that holy Sacrament, (for then we spirituallye eate the fleshe of Christ, and drynke his bloude, then we dwel in Christ and Christ in us, we be one with Christ, & Christ with us.)” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 276-7.

<sup>659</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 277.

<sup>660</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 277.

<sup>661</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 277.

Christe” and drinking “his blood,” the text indicates, “our synfull bodyes maye be made cleane by his body, and our soules washed through his most precious blood,” and “we may euermore dwel in him, and he in us.”<sup>662</sup>

While the General Confession, Absolution, and Comfortable Words are placed after the exhortation for the Communion, unlike Bucer and Calvin’s rites in which those elements are placed at the beginning, they are still before the prayer of Humble Access and the Words of Institution, where the concept of participation is reiterated as the purpose of the Communion. “[G]rant us therefore (gracious lord)...that we may euermore dwel in him, and he in us.”<sup>663</sup> While the *Sursum Corda* is proffered in the form of dialogue, unlike in Calvin’s liturgy, it is placed at the end of the communion exhortation, just before the prayer of Humble Access and the Words of Institution. This implies that in the BCP, as in Calvin’s liturgy, our communion with God is tied up with, or is based upon, the ascent of our hearts.

In the post-communion prayer, the concept of “sacrifice of prayse and thankes geuing” to the “heauenly father” is broached. This sacrifice is also an offering and presenting of “our selves, our soules & bodies,” by being “partakers” of this Communion.<sup>664</sup> We can say that this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, as in Calvin’s, makes the whole of worship more of a bidirectional event between God and human beings. While these are the concepts that exist in Calvin’s theology and liturgy, the BCP delineates this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving in a more plainly Trinitarian way, as that which is possible only “through Jesus Christe..in the unity of the holy ghost, al honour and glory unto thee O father almightie.”<sup>665</sup>

The post-communion prayer even calls forth the idea of participation in the *social body* of Christ. The prayer beseeches that by feeding on the body and blood of Christ, “we bee very members incorporate in thy mystical body, whiche is the blessed companie of al faithful people.” Here participation in Christ includes our being one with Christ’s social body, the Church. Since the Church is a body of Christ, we should do all “good workes” to other believers and continue in that “holy fellowship.”<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>662</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 280.

<sup>663</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 280.

<sup>664</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 281.

<sup>665</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 281.

<sup>666</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 282.

While it was created under the advice of Bucer, the eucharistic liturgy in the 1552 Prayer Book was not a slavish reflection of him. In the eucharistic prayer, which had been the Prayer of Consecration in the 1549 BCP,<sup>667</sup> there is a phrase which reads: “Graunte that wee receyuing these thy creatures of bread and wyne...in remembraunce of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body & bloud.”<sup>668</sup> Here we can notice that, according to Bucer’s advice, the petition to bless and sanctify the bread and wine is omitted. At the same time, however, it does not explicitly contain Bucer’s idea of consecration and sanctification of *people*. If we call this prayer a consecration prayer, as Thompson does, it would be the “consecration with respect to use” of the bread and wine, which can be sanctioned by Calvin, given Calvin’s own statements of the elements as God’s instruments.<sup>669</sup> Even though this phrase in the eucharistic prayer is supposed to betray the receptionist doctrine,<sup>670</sup> it is obvious that it, like Calvin’s eucharistic prayer, brings about the theme of participation, without mentioning the consecration of the elements.

In sum, the eucharistic liturgy in the 1552 BCP is dominated by the idea of our participation in Christ and communion with God, which is almost in tune with Calvin’s liturgy. It appears that Thomas Cranmer, the main author of the BCP, had a greater reserve than Bucer or Calvin in speaking about the sacrament as an instrument of divine grace, which actually conveys and delivers, not merely represents, Christ’s body and blood.<sup>671</sup> Nevertheless, the 1552 Prayer Book brings about the theme of participation

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<sup>667</sup> In the 1549 BCP, Cranmer fashioned a eucharistic prayer which contained an epiclesis evocative of the Eastern eucharistic liturgy: “Heare us (o merciful father) we besech thee: and with thy holy spirite & worde, vouchsafe to bl+esse and sanc+itife these thy gyftes, and creatures of bread and wyne, that they maie be unto us the bodye and bloude of thy moste derely beloued sonne Jesus Christ.” Thompson, *Liturgies*, 257-8. As the 1552 BCP incorporated a much more definitely Reformed character, the mention of the Holy Spirit is omitted in the prayer of Consecration in the 1552 BCP. Here we can again witness that for the Reformers the mention of the Holy Spirit is interlinked with the consecration of the materials.

<sup>668</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 280.

<sup>669</sup> “For because they say that in consecration a secret conversion takes place, so there is now something other than bread and wine, as I have just observed, they do not mean by this that the elements have been annihilated, but rather that they now have to be considered of a different class from common foods intended solely to feed the stomach, since in them is set forth the spiritual food and drink of the soul.” *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.14. According to Rozeboom, this understanding of consecration with respect to use as opposed to consecration with respect to change is definitely prominent in the Reformed tradition. See Rozeboom, *The Provenance*, 368. The assumption that this is a consecration with respect to use, not with respect to change, can be supported by a rubric commanding the use of ordinary bread and wine, and allowing the curate to take any remaining elements to his own use. “And to take awaye the supersticion, whiche any person hath, or myghte have in the bread and wyne, it shall suffyse that the bread bee suche, as is usuall to bee eaten at the Table, wyth other meates, but the beste and pureste wheate bread, that conveniently maye be gotten. And yf any of the bread or wine remayne, the Curate shal have it to hys owne use.” Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church*, 283.

<sup>670</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 242.

<sup>671</sup> Howard Dellar, “The Influence of Martin Bucer on the English Reformation,” *Churchman* 106, no. 4 (1992): 353.

seemingly following the Trinitarian pattern in Calvin's service. Given their similarity, it can be assumed that Calvin's liturgy was a source of the participatory quality and communion themes in Cranmer's liturgy.

### 5.3.3. Knox

It is widely known that John Knox's liturgy, the *Forme of Prayers*, belonged to the liturgical tradition of Strasbourg and Geneva. When he took refuge in Geneva, Knox revised the original version of the *Forme*, which had first appeared at Frankfurt-on-Main, and completed it by incorporating a translation of Calvin's catechism and a collection of metrical psalms.<sup>672</sup> Accordingly it owed a great deal to Calvin's liturgy, both in spirit and in form. Apart from Calvin's influence, it also owed a debt to the 1552 Book of Common Prayer. As a result, the first half of the Communion Exhortation was the BCP, and the second half Calvin's.<sup>673</sup>

In the exhortation for Communion, as in Calvin's, it is indicated that "the end of our coming" to the Table is to participate in Christ, or, "to seek our life and perfection in Jesus Christ."<sup>674</sup> The self-examination is not making "protestation that we are upright or just in our lives" but acknowledging, as a condition for partaking of Christ, that "we of ourselves be the children of wrath and damnation."<sup>675</sup> The theme of our participation in Christ is conjoined to the exhortation of *Sursum Corda*, which enshrines the concept of our subsequent communion with the heavenly Father. While it exhorts people not to "wander about the consideration of these earthly and corruptible things," as in Farel's *La Maniere et Fasson*, it further admonishes them to lift up their hearts above all things worldly and sensible, and thereby enter into heaven, that they may find and receive Christ, where he "dwelleth undoubtedly very God and very man, in the incomprehensible glory of his Father."<sup>676</sup> This is, by structure and character, closely akin to that of the *Sursum Corda* in Calvin's liturgy.

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<sup>672</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 288.

<sup>673</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 289. As in Bucer's rite and in the BCP of 1552, the *Forme of Prayers* made no provision for a consecration of the elements: the Word was not addressed to the bread and wine but to the people so that "Christe might witness vnto ovr faith, as it were, with his own mowthe," promising us the communion of his body and blood. Thompson, *Liturgies*, 292.

<sup>674</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 254.

<sup>675</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 254. Since this sacrament is real participation in Christ, it is intimated in the exhortation, as in Calvin's, it can be a real medicine for those who unfeignedly acknowledge their naughtiness and imperfection. Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 255.

<sup>676</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 255.

In the Communion prayer, the theme of participation in Christ and communion with the heavenly Father is reiterated. By saying that “we present ourselves to this table,” the prayer intimates that the participation in God in the Lord’s Supper is an ontological participation. In the prayer it is accentuated that “by him[Christ] alone,” we have been acknowledged God’s “children and heirs,” have “entrance to the throne” of God’s grace, and are possessed in “the spiritual kingdom, to eat and drink at his table.” This eating and drinking is also to “have our conversation” with Christ “in heaven,” being “raised up from the dust.”<sup>677</sup>

Even though this is a prayer, it is not so much a petition to God, to make us partakers of Him, as a proclamation of God’s grace. Nevertheless, the fact that the theme of participation is brought up in the Communion prayer just before the communion proper, not only in the exhortation before the prayer, would have the effect of connecting the idea of participation to the actual practice of the Communion, making the latter a matrix for the former. Then follows the post-Communion prayer of thanksgiving. It is spelled out in the prayer that the Communion, which is our receiving of Christ who is a “necessarie foode and nourishment vnto evelastinge life,” is also our “fellowship and company” of Him.<sup>678</sup>

Throughout the whole of the eucharistic liturgy, as in Calvin, invocation of the Holy Spirit is very rare.<sup>679</sup> Knox was evidently no more keen to incorporate pneumatological language in his liturgy than Calvin. On the whole, Knox’s eucharistic liturgy is parallel to Calvin’s, particularly with respect to the parts that have the Trinitarian quality and connotation. Again, we may assume that in availing himself of Calvin’s liturgy, Knox took such parts to be the essence of the latter.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

In sum, Calvin’s eucharistic liturgy is a reflection of his own Trinitarian doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, even though it lacks the significant reference to the role of the Holy Spirit. This can be reinforced by a survey of other reformation liturgies. First, the Trinitarian concepts of participation and communion, which are presented in Calvin’s eucharistic liturgy, do not appear in the protestant liturgies of Luther and Zwingli. It is

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<sup>677</sup> Jasper, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 256.

<sup>678</sup> Thompson, *Liturgies*, 304.

<sup>679</sup> As in Calvin’s liturgy, the mention of the Holy Spirit appears only in the post-Communion thanksgiving.

rather the Roman Mass that contains similar participatory language, though its contents are different from those of Calvin's. Second, while the concepts appear in the liturgies upon which Calvin's is based, it not was proffered in the same flow as Calvin's liturgy. It can be assumed that, when drawing upon his predecessors' liturgies, Calvin modified the concept so that it could fit into his own Trinitarian scheme of communion. In the meantime, Bucer's liturgy has many of the same Trinitarian themes as those in Calvin's theology and liturgy. In the liturgies which were influenced by Calvin's rite, third, the Trinitarian concepts of participation and communion are brought up and sometimes articulated in a more robustly Trinitarian fashion than in Calvin's liturgy. Given all this, we can say that the Trinitarian themes and quality were a mark of Calvin's and the Calvinist liturgy of the Lord's Supper.

## Chapter 6

### The Ecclesiastical Embodiment of the Living Christ

For Calvin, as seen in previous chapters, the communion we have with Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not merely a communion with His divinity, but with His whole person, which embraces His whole humanity. While Calvin sometimes simply says that we participate in Christ in the Lord's Supper, he far more often states, as Nicholas Wolterstorff points out, that this is a participation in *the body and blood* of Christ.<sup>680</sup> But how can the ascended person of Christ be involved with the earthly practice of worship?

Since Calvin's theology affirms that until the parousia the ascended body of Christ exists in its own place, which is somewhere other than ours, it is often accused of "dislocating the humanity of Christ, effectively detaching our humanity from his."<sup>681</sup> According to his theology, it is said, "all that is left to us, as genuinely present here and now, is the divinity of Christ."<sup>682</sup> In this scheme, Douglas Farrow writes, "the body of the worshipper, unlike his or her soul, appears to be uninvolved in the secret union and communion with Christ in the heavenlies" and "Christ himself, in Luther's sarcastic phrase, is made like 'a stork in a nest in a treetop,' detached from any genuine human existence."<sup>683</sup> In this scheme, indeed, it might be asked, what can finally be left except the divinity of Christ or His message?<sup>684</sup>

This question particularly applies to Calvin's theology of worship. In his critique of the practice of Protestant worship, James F. White argues that Calvinist worship "has become an experience of the intellect rather than an event involving one's whole being."<sup>685</sup> In a similar vein, Calvinist worship has been marked for its "word-

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<sup>680</sup> Lee Palmer Wandel, ed., *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation* (Boston: Brill Academic Pub, 2013), 102.

<sup>681</sup> Douglas Farrow, "Between the Rock and a Hard Place: In Support of (Something Like) a Reformed View of the Eucharist," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3, no. 2 (JI 2001): 170.

<sup>682</sup> Farrow, "Between the Rock and a Hard Place, 170.

<sup>683</sup> Farrow, "Between the Rock and a Hard Place, 170.

<sup>684</sup> According to Farrow this is a reflection of a tendency to "regard the whole Christ as constituted by the divinity of the Word and the humanity of the church, rather than by the God-man and those who are liberated by him to become children of God with him." Farrow argues that "only a clear focus on the authentic humanity of the Word as the eucharistic *a priori* can defeat the temptation to imagine that in the sacrament it is not so much Christ who makes possible our humanity as we who make possible his." See Farrow, "Between the Rock and a Hard Place," 175.

<sup>685</sup> James F White, "Where the Reformation Was Wrong on Worship," *Christian Century*, 1982, 1077.

centered” character, which is often assumed to be opposed to the “sacrament-centered” character of the medieval church.<sup>686</sup> How can our communion with Christ in worship be more than a cerebral affair with the absent Being? Is it by any means possible for the person of Christ, in His humanity as well as in divinity, to be involved with the earthly practice of worship?

This chapter aims to explore in what manner and mode we communicate with the living Christ in worship, according to Calvin.<sup>687</sup> Calvin labels our communion with the body of Christ as a “mystery,” which is to be experienced rather than explained, and it might be impossible to understand thoroughly what is described as such.<sup>688</sup> For Calvin, however, the fact that something is a mystery does not exclude the possibility of our understanding it.<sup>689</sup>

In this chapter it will be argued that Calvin tries to embody the idea of our communion with the humanity of Christ through ministerial acts of the earthly church, rather than leaving it as a mere speculation. A core implication of Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity is that even after His ascension into heaven the role of Christ is not simply replaced by that of the Holy Spirit, and it is still Christ Himself who encounters the godly and works in them through the bond of the Holy Spirit. But due to the fact that He remains only in heaven, this encounter is accomplished only pneumatologically, rather than in an earthly way, and the ministry of the church is the means for this pneumatological embodiment of the communion of Christ and the godly. It is by his Trinitarian conception of our communion with Christ, in other words, that the place for the earthly church is safeguarded in Calvin’s theology.

### **6.1. Christ’s Ascension and the Ministry of the Church**

It is true that, for Calvin, Christ is now “absent from us in respect of his body.”<sup>690</sup> The true body of Christ, after his ascension, remains only in heaven. Calvin

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<sup>686</sup> For a popular example, Carolyn Nystrom, “John Calvin: Sovereign Hope,” *Christian Classics Bible Studies* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 9-10.

<sup>687</sup> This point is tied with the questions that have long been in the Western church such as “What is Christ’s relation to the church at worship and to the symbols which structure that worship? Can one who is in heaven also be on earth? How does he impart to us his immortality or life-giving virtue?” See Farrow, “Between the Rock and a Hard Place,” 169.

<sup>688</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.32.

<sup>689</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.1.

<sup>690</sup> *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:240, quoted from Christopher B. Kaiser, “Climbing Jacob’s Ladder: John Calvin and the Early Church on Our Eucharistic Ascent to Heaven,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56, no. 3 (2003):

believes that when it is said that Christ is taken into heaven, spatial distance is indicated. Therefore, for the reformer, that Christ resides in heaven means that He is in a place other than ours.<sup>691</sup>

While Calvin says the spatial distance is indicated by the word “heaven,” however, Calvin simultaneously argues that by this is “not meant a separation from this world.”<sup>692</sup> For Calvin, heaven, into which Christ was received, is not simply a place above the spheres, but somewhere which “is set over against the fabric of this world.”<sup>693</sup> Here we can probably embrace Thomas Davis’ expression that heaven, for Calvin, is “a different order of reality.”<sup>694</sup>

It is remarkable that while insisting on Christ’s absence after ascension, Calvin adds that this ascension of Christ is in order “to fill all things,” and to let “the church have Him present.”<sup>695</sup> A little later Calvin indicates that while Christ cannot be sought bodily in this world, we can be truly made partakers of His body and blood, when we are invited to heaven, especially through the Word and the sacraments.<sup>696</sup> Perhaps, by not simply indicating heaven as a separated place, Calvin opens the possibility that the true body of Christ can be sought and encountered by us, though not in an earthly way.

Given that heaven is a different order of reality, rather than a place in space, it can be said that when Calvin teaches that we are lifted up to heaven to seek Christ there, this means that we enter into a different reality where Christ resides so that we can seek the body of Christ and have communion with it. While Calvin gives up the attempt to explain the manner of our communion with the human body of Christ, he is nevertheless

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<sup>691</sup> Based on this point Calvin refutes the Papist doctrine of Christ’s corporeal presence under the symbol of bread and wine. See *Comm. Act 1:11*.

<sup>692</sup> “I grant that the word ‘heaven’ is taken in various ways: sometimes for the air, sometimes for the whole system of the spheres, sometimes for the glorious Kingdom of God where the majesty of God has His proper abode, however much He fills the world. Wherefore Paul places Christ above all heavens [Eph. 1:21] because He is above the whole world and holds the highest station in that habitation of blessed immortality...*But this is no reason why He may not be absent from us, and that by this word ‘heaven’ there may not be meant a separation from the world.* However much they may protest, it is evident that ‘heaven’ into which Christ was received is set over against the fabric of the world. His being in heaven therefore means that He is outwith [outside of] the world.” *Comm. Act 1:11*. My emphasis.

<sup>693</sup> *Comm. Acts 1:11*.

<sup>694</sup> Davis, *This is My Body*, 133.

<sup>695</sup> “By his ascension Christ took away from us his visible presence; yet he ascended to fill all things. Now, therefore, the church still has, and always will have, him present. When Paul wishes to show the way in which he manifests himself, he calls us back to the ministries which he uses” See *Institutes* (1559), 4.6.10.

<sup>696</sup> *Comm. Acts 1:11*.

confident about the reality of that communion.<sup>697</sup> For Calvin, as previously noted, Christ's ascension is the notion which safeguards the whole humanity of Christ. Thus, when entering into this reality, while we do not move to another place in our worship, we can enjoy communion with the full humanity of Christ.

While it is a mystery, what we can say with fair certainty about Calvin's understanding of communion with the body of Christ is that it is tied up with the earthly ministry of the church. In his *Summary of Doctrine concerning the Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments* of 1541, Calvin states that "the end of the whole Gospel ministry" is our communication with Christ Himself,<sup>698</sup> who is "in heaven until the time of the restitution of all things."<sup>699</sup> In the *Summary*, it is first affirmed that Christ is currently absent from the earth according to humanity. At the same time, the *Summary* says, Christ is "yet present with" and "communicates Himself to us" through the work of the Holy Spirit, who "effects this union."<sup>700</sup> Since Christ is not present in the earthly manner now, this communication we have with Him is not the same as the communion people had during His earthly ministry. However, Christ Himself still communicates with the godly in the more "appropriate and particular way,"<sup>701</sup> that is, the pneumatological way. Since it enables this pneumatological communion, Christ's ascension and being in heaven is said to be "the sole ground" of our communion with Christ.<sup>702</sup>

According to the *Summary*, the ministry of preaching and of the sacraments is a "double instrument" of the Holy Spirit,<sup>703</sup> which effects this pneumatological union between Christ and us. Just after the basic, pneumatological principle of our communication with the heavenly Christ, and just before elaborating on the role of the ministry of the church for this communion, Calvin quotes some biblical passages on the

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<sup>697</sup> "But if we are lifted up to heaven with our eyes and minds, to seek Christ there in the glory of his kingdom, as the symbols invite us to him in his wholeness, so under the symbol of bread we shall be fed by his body, under the symbol of wine we shall separately drink his blood, to enjoy him at last in his wholeness." *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.18.

<sup>698</sup> *Calvin's Theological Treatises*, The Library of Christian Classics, v. 22 (London: SCM Press, 1954), 171.

<sup>699</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 171.

<sup>700</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 175.

<sup>701</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 176.

<sup>702</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 175.

<sup>703</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 172.

Spirit's indwelling in and empowering of the mortal body of the faithful,<sup>704</sup> implying that the bodily works of the godly have a role for our communion with the heavenly Christ. Calvin then juxtaposes the external work of ministry with the internal work of the Holy Spirit. That is, when the external minister administers the vocal word and the sacramental signs, which are "earthly and fallible," the internal minister, the Holy Spirit, effects our union with Christ, which is "heavenly and indestructible."<sup>705</sup> While it is maintained that the Holy Spirit, who uses this external ministry, is the main agent of this process, Calvin in this way grants a significant role to the external ministry of the church as means for our communication with the body and blood of Christ.

For Calvin, the fact that Christ is basically out of this world prevents us from simply equating the earthly church with the body of Christ, while Calvin himself often conventionally describes the church as the body of Christ.<sup>706</sup> It is certain, however, that the earthly church is a context in which believers are led into the heavenly presence and reality of Christ, especially through her ministerial acts. In his exposition on the unity of the church, Calvin writes: "By his ascension Christ took away from us his visible presence; yet he ascended to fill all things...Christ (he says) is present with us. How? By the ministry of men, whom he has set over the governing of the church."<sup>707</sup> For Calvin, what makes the true church is not belonging under an earthly ministerial head, the Pope, but taking as its head the ascended Christ, who becomes present through its ministry.<sup>708</sup> Since the ministerial acts of the church are a recurrent event, it can also be said that Christ's presence and the church's participation in Him, viz. being His body, are dynamic concepts, which occur again and again. "We are daily gathered by the gospel into the fold of Christ."<sup>709</sup>

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<sup>704</sup> The passages Calvin quotes here are Romans 8:9 ("But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his"), Romans 8:11 ("If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you"), and 1 Corinthians 6:19 ("Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?"), etc. See *Theological Treatises*, 172.

<sup>705</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 175.

<sup>706</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.1.2.

<sup>707</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.6.10. "Why not, rather, through the ministerial head, to whom he has entrusted his functions? Paul mentions unity, but in God and in faith in Christ. To men he assigns nothing but the common ministry, and a particular mode to each. Why did he, in that commendation of unity, after he had mentioned 'one body, one Spirit...one hope of calling, one God, one faith, one baptism' not immediately also add, one supreme pontiff, to keep the church in unity?"

<sup>708</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.6.10.

<sup>709</sup> *Comm. John* 11:51.

That the true body of Christ is present in the ministry of the church implies that He is *somehow* visible to human eyes. For Calvin, a feature of Christ is his visibility, simply because He is the “visible image” of God: the invisible Father discloses Himself to humans by sending to earth the Son who can be perceived by human eyes.<sup>710</sup> Calvin portrays the ministry of the Word and sacraments as a “mirror,” which God, “who is otherwise invisible, has appointed...as means for revealing himself to us.”<sup>711</sup> According to Calvin, Paul’s expression that we see “as in a mirror” means that we see enigmatically something that belongs to heaven. All considered, when Calvin says Christ is present in the ministry of the church, this means that Christ is also somewhat visible, or mysteriously sensible, through the ministry of the church.<sup>712</sup>

Because of his understanding of the role of the ecclesiastical ministry as embodying the communion of the faithful and the body of Christ, as shall be seen below in more detail, Calvin noticeably sometimes describes the person of minister, like the sacraments, as “an instrument” of God.<sup>713</sup> In sections below, we shall dwell upon how the personal communion with Christ is embodied in each ministerial order.

## 6.2. Calvin’s Doctrine of the Word and Preaching

It is true that in the Calvinist tradition preaching is regarded as the chief event of worship, the primary aim of which is to instruct and edify the congregation based on the scriptural message.<sup>714</sup> In order to know the place of the person of Christ in

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<sup>710</sup> According to Calvin, Christ is the supreme form of God’s accommodation to our human capacity. “It is evident from this that we cannot believe in God except through Christ, in whom God in a manner makes himself little, in order to accommodate himself to our comprehension, and it is Christ alone who can make our conscience at peace, so that we may dare come in confidence to God.” *Comm.* 1 Peter 1:20.

<sup>711</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 13:12.

<sup>712</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 13:12.

<sup>713</sup> “[Paul] is accustomed to speak in two different ways of ministers, as well as of sacraments. For in some cases he considers a minister as one who has been ordained by the Lord for...regenerating souls, for remitting sins...Viewed in that aspect, he...endows him...with the power of the Spirit...In other cases, he considers a minister as one who is a servant, not a minister, an instrument, not the hand; and, in short, as man, not God.” *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 3:7. See also *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 3:9. In this sense, Calvin has been said to have “a sacramental view of the ministry.” Benjamin Charles Milner Jr, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Church* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1970), 137.

<sup>714</sup> White, James F. White, *Protestant Worship: Traditions in Transition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 65. According to Zachman, “Calvin’s practice of worship may have reinforced the understanding of the church as a school, as the center of worship became the line-by-line exposition and application of Scripture in the sermon.” Randall C Zachman, *John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian: The Shape of His Writings and Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 205. Because the aim of the sermon is the faithful explication of scripture, the verse-by-verse, or word-by-word exposition was considered as the most efficient way of preaching, in that it helps not to lose the meaning of the texts by boundless ornamentation, diversions, and amplification. In Calvin’s Geneva, preachers were taught Hebrew and Greek, and for an efficient delivery, received a good general education of grammar, rhetoric, and what we call philosophy. T H L. Parker, *Calvin’s Preaching* (Edinburgh; Louisville, Ky: T & T Clark; Westminster/John Knox Pr, 1992), 38.

preaching, Calvin's understanding of the word of God, as well as of preaching itself, should be explored.

Calvin tried to base his whole theological system upon the word of God, which, for him, is basically conceptual and understandable. He argued that all believers should "learn to exercise themselves daily in the study of the word of God."<sup>715</sup> He also said that when Adam and Eve overruled the word of God, sin entered through their *ears*, and now the "door of salvation is opened to us when we receive the gospel with our *ears*."<sup>716</sup> This means that the word of God, for Calvin, is something to be studied, learned, and delivered, through verbal discourse. The source of this word of God is scripture. According to Calvin, God willed, for the sake of the church, that His word was committed to writing so that the faithful could derive from it whatever they would communicate to the people.<sup>717</sup> As the word of God, scripture is understandable and teachable, and therefore the faithful should always take trouble to learn whatsoever is in scripture<sup>718</sup> and to submit to and obey the message of it.<sup>719</sup>

For Calvin, however, scripture is not simply equated with the word of God. Recall our observation in chapter 4 that, according to Calvin, scripture is not a compendium of the words of God, but a medium "in which it [the word of God] is contained"<sup>720</sup> and thus should be looked for. In a fundamental sense, for Calvin, this word of God is Christ himself, the eternal Word, who is the "goal or target" of the whole scripture.<sup>721</sup> Since Christ "cannot be rightly known from anywhere else but the scriptures," Calvin says, "the scriptures are to be read with the intention of finding Christ in them."<sup>722</sup> Here "Christ", the target or goal of scripture, means more than

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<sup>715</sup> *Comm.* Psalm 18:22.

<sup>716</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 2.1.4. My Emphasis.

<sup>717</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.8.6. While God sets forth His presence portrayed in his creatures, it is needful that scripture be added to "direct us aright to the very Creator of the universe." *Institutes* (1559), 1.6.1. Scriptures are "the only records in which God has been pleased to consign His truth to perpetual remembrance," and since they "come from heaven," they possess the full authority with the faithful as the word of God. *Institutes* (1559), 1.7.1.

<sup>718</sup> *Comm.* Romans 15:4. "Whatsoever, then, is set down in scripture, let us labour to learn it; for it were contumely against the Holy Spirit if we should think that He hath taught anything which were not material for us to know."

<sup>719</sup> "The reading of the scripture profits few at this day, because we can scarcely find one among a hundred who submits himself willingly to learn...this is the true reverence of the scripture when we acknowledge that there is wisdom laid up there which surpasses all our senses..." *Comm.* Acts 8:31.

<sup>720</sup> Catechism of 1545, Q. 300, in *Tracts and Treatises* 2:85.

<sup>721</sup> B. A. Gerrish, *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin* (Augsburg Fortress, 1993), 78.

<sup>722</sup> "...we must grasp that Christ cannot be rightly known from anywhere else but the scriptures. If this is

information about Christ. It is the person of Christ, who cannot simply be conceptualized. Just as the person of Christ is “the end” of all prophecy,<sup>723</sup> He is the end of all the written Word. Therefore, while the word of God is conceptual and explicable, we should not dismiss it as merely conceptual or abstract. The word of God is a personal entity, whom we should not only understand but also believe in, encounter, and depend on. This word of God, that is, the person of Christ, cannot be known only through learning and reasoning, and can be known only through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, which is superior to all reason.<sup>724</sup>

This understanding of the Word applies to the understanding of preaching. There can be no doubt that, for Calvin, preaching is essentially an exposition and teaching of scripture to the congregation. Thus preachers should know scripture well and are expected to hand on the biblical message efficiently. As far as it delivers the scriptural message faithfully, the sermon is the message or word of God.<sup>725</sup> Preaching, at the same time, is a way of presenting Christ,<sup>726</sup> who is pointed to by scripture. “When the gospel is proclaimed to us, it is a manifestation of Jesus Christ.”<sup>727</sup> Like the Lord’s Supper, preaching is a “token” of Christ’s presence, through which He “approaches” us with “the benefits which He bestows upon us.”<sup>728</sup> Thus, when Calvin says that true preaching requires the inner working of the Holy Spirit, this means not only that the Spirit enables one to understand scriptural message given, but also that without the Holy Spirit, one fails to recognize the presence of Christ.<sup>729</sup> This Christ in preaching is the

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so, it follows that the scriptures are to be read with the intention of finding Christ in them.” *Comm.* John 5:39.

<sup>723</sup> *Comm.* Isaiah 29:12.

<sup>724</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.7.4.

<sup>725</sup> Parker, *Calvin’s Preaching*, 23.

<sup>726</sup> There is no pure scriptural knowledge that recites only the bible passage. For Calvin, therefore, in order for the correct preaching of God’s Word to be delivered, there should be a correlation between the bible and the Holy Spirit, and the person of the preacher. See John Calvin, Jacopo Sadoletto, and Lester DeKoster, *A Reformation Debate*, ed. John C. Olin (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2000), 60-1.

<sup>727</sup> Calvin, *Sermons on the Saving Work of Christ*, selected and trans. Leroy Nixon (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950; rep., Hertfordshire, UK: Evangelical Press, 1980), 14.

<sup>728</sup> *Comm.* Isaiah 50:2.

<sup>729</sup> Without the inner working of the Spirit, according to Calvin, a sermon degenerates into the “external sound of the voice,” to which God’s office of saving cannot be ascribed. *Comm.* James 1:21. Calvin also says that we can understand what we hear and read only when there is the inner working of the Holy Spirit. “The scripture, carrying its own evidence along with it, deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes the full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit.” *Institutes* (1559), 1.7.5. “When we come to hear the sermon or take up the bible, we must not have the foolish arrogance of thinking that we shall easily understand everything we hear or read. But we must come with reverence, we must wait entirely upon God, knowing that we need to be taught by His Holy Spirit, and that without Him we cannot understand anything that is shown to us in His Word.” Sermon on 1 Timothy 3:8-10, quoted from Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin’s Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*

same Christ presented in the Lord's Supper.

It is true that Calvin frequently states that the aim of preaching is edification. However, given that all preaching aims to lead the faithful to the encounter of the personal word of God, to whom we should pray, call upon, and have recourse,<sup>730</sup> edification for Calvin, as Parker notes, is more than teaching "in the sense of instruction" or "sentiments of virtue and of piety that one inspires by good examples or wise discourses."<sup>731</sup> In that it is something of a divine epiphany, preaching for Calvin is a sacramental event, in which, as John Leith put it, "the actual words of the sermon are comparable to the elements in the sacraments."<sup>732</sup> What underlies this doctrine of preaching, as in his doctrine of the sacraments, is the Trinitarian conception: "See then how we hear the heavenly Father: that is to say, when he speaketh secretly unto us by his Holy Spirit, and then we come unto our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>733</sup> Preaching, as well as the sacraments, is a personal event, rather than just a teaching occasion, which leads to our communion with the person of Christ. In this sense Calvin defines preaching, as well as the sacraments, as an "instrument" of God.<sup>734</sup>

Calvin does not portray Christ merely as a passive object being presented in preaching. Christ is not only present in preaching; it is Christ himself who speaks in it.<sup>735</sup> Preaching is "a sure and infallible sign" that "he is near us at hand to us," procuring our salvation," and that "he calls us to himself as though he spoke with open mouth" and "we see him personally before us."<sup>736</sup> God presides in the place of preaching, and He Himself speaks to the congregation.<sup>737</sup> While Calvin here qualifies

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(Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Pr, 1995), 103.

<sup>730</sup> When it is said "one edifies him," this means "he is founded...so that he is confirmed in patience to bear afflictions steadfastly, and then he sets his mind on praying and calling upon God, of having recourse to him." Sermon on Job 16:3, quoted from Parker, *Calvin's Preaching*, 47.

<sup>731</sup> Parker, *Calvin's Preaching*, 47.

<sup>732</sup> John H. Leith, "Doctrine of the Proclamation of the Word, in Timothy George, *John Calvin and the Church: A Prism of Reform* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 1990), 211.

<sup>733</sup> The Third Sermon on Jacob and Esau, Genesis 25:21-22, quoted from John Calvin, *Sermons on Election and Reprobation*, Reprint edition (Audubon, N.J.: Reformation Heritage Books, 1996), 63-64.

<sup>734</sup> Calvin says that preaching "ought to be united with the author of the action." *Comm.* Ezekiel 2:2.

<sup>735</sup> "For just as in men speech is called the expression of the thoughts, so it is not inappropriate to apply this to God and say that he expresses himself to us by his Speech or Word." *Comm.* John 1:1.

<sup>736</sup> *Sermons on Ephesians* 4:11-12, p. 368.

<sup>737</sup> Calvin believes that "recognizing Christ made the disciples achieve a lively insight into the secret and hidden grace of the Spirit which He had formerly gifted them." *Comm.* Luke 24:31. That is, when Christ is present, the faithful can better understand the meaning of His message.

his argument with “as if” language, according to T.H.L. Parker, “what is being tacitly denied by the qualification is not the presence or the activity of God but only any sort of visible or audible perception of that presence or activity. Just as Christ is present at the Supper spiritually, that is, by the working of the Spirit, so he is present in the preaching spiritually – by the working of the Spirit.”<sup>738</sup> While Parker is right with regard to the interpretation of the “as if” phrase, his explanation that Christ’s presence is spiritual presence which excludes any sensible perception is misleading. For Calvin, as seen in previous chapters, by the notion “spiritual presence” is meant the pneumatological presence, by which is meant that there is a true presence of the whole person of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, we have no reason to think that Christ’s presence and our communion with Him in preaching excludes a personal or sacramental dimension.

It is remarkable that Calvin relates the role of the human minister to that of Christ Himself. He says: “When the prophet says ‘by the breath of His lips,’ this must not be limited to the person of Christ, for it refers to the Word which is preached by His ministers. Christ acts by them in such a manner that He wishes their mouth to be reckoned as His mouth, and their lips as His lips.”<sup>739</sup> Here Calvin wants the lips of the minister, while they are distinguished from the very lips of Christ, to be perceived as the lips of Christ in preaching. This means that in preaching, Calvin believes, the voice of the minister is to be heard as that of Christ.

The significance of the minister is beyond that of the vessel of God’s message. According to Calvin, it is because “he[Christ] does not dwell among us by a visible presence,” that “he uses the ministry of men, as a sort of delegated work, not to transfer his right and honor to them, but only that he may do his work by their lips.”<sup>740</sup> Calvin believes that since Christ is not present physically among us, though He is truly present, God instead established human ministry, so that ministers can replace the bodily work of Christ.<sup>741</sup> It is due to the existence of minister that Calvin can boldly say that

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<sup>738</sup> Parker, *Calvin’s Preaching*, 42.

<sup>739</sup> *Comm.* Isaiah 11:4.

<sup>740</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.3.1.

<sup>741</sup> Calvin says that preachers are “earthen vessels” through whom “God himself appears in our midst, and as Author of this order, would have us recognize him as present in his institution (the preaching of the gospel).” *Institutes* (1559), 4.1.5. Calvin also says that God “deigns to consecrate to himself the mouths and tongues of human beings in order that his voice might resound in them.” *Institutes* (1559), 4.1.5. “When a man has climbed up into the pulpit, is it so that he may be seen from afar, and that he may be pre-eminent? Not at all. It is that God may speak to us by the mouth of men. And he does us that favour of presenting himself here...” Sermon on 1 Timothy 3:2, quoted from Parker, *Calvin’s Preaching*, 24-5.

preaching sets forth Christ to the church in a pictorial manner. “To show how forceful his preaching had been, Paul first compares it with a picture which showed them the portrait of Christ to the life...Therefore we will keep to this meaning, that Paul’s doctrine had taught them about Christ in such a manner that it was as if He had been shown to them in a picture, even crucified among them.”<sup>742</sup> The teaching of preachers, according to Calvin, is “so clear” that it is “not so much mere teaching as the living and express image of God.”<sup>743</sup> We can see here that Calvin explains the being and role of the minister as an instrument which embodies Christ’s whole presence and work.

Just as Christ is a form of God’s accommodation to human capacity, as noted, preaching is also a form of “God’s applying himself...to our weakness.”<sup>744</sup> But this is so because in preaching God speaks to us “by mortal men like ourselves”<sup>745</sup> in order to “draw us to Himself.” For Calvin, the reason why God sent a Prophet to Israel is in order to show that the people “did not need to seek him [God] far” and to “find a way to commune familiarly with the people.”<sup>746</sup> Likewise, the preacher is a mirror of God not only by his function but also by his whole person and life.<sup>747</sup> Just as Christ, because of His humanity, is a form of God’s accommodation to human beings, the preaching can also be a form of God’s accommodation to worshippers, since it is done by a human preacher, whose whole being can be seen, heard, and touched.

This role of the minister in preaching calls up the image the Roman Catholic priest, whose actions and gestures in the mass invoke the person of Christ, and place the priest in the place of Christ.<sup>748</sup> While there is truly an identification of Christ and the priest in the Roman Catholic mass,<sup>749</sup> however, the difference between Christ and the

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<sup>742</sup> *Comm. Galatians 3:1*. Calvin even dubs the pulpit into which preacher climbs is a “throne of God.” Sermon on 1 Timothy 5:20, quoted from Parker, *Calvin’s Preaching*, 42.

<sup>743</sup> *Comm. Galatians 3:1*.

<sup>744</sup> *Sermons on Ephesians 4:11-14*, p. 376.

<sup>745</sup> *Sermons on Ephesians 4:11-14*, p. 376.

<sup>746</sup> *Sermons on Ephesians 4:11-14*, p. 376.

<sup>747</sup> “God appointed him to be as a mirror to all prophets and to all those who have the charge of teaching in the church of God.” Sermon on Deuteronomy 5, quoted from Davis, *This is My Body*, 123. It should be noted that for Calvin it is not only the pastors who teaches the congregation. Teachers, as well as pastors, take a role of teaching the “truth of the gospel” and “maintain the puresness of the doctrine.” *Sermons on Ephesians 4:11-12*, p. 367. With regard to the pastors, Calvin highlights their role as a “mirror” of Christ, who, beyond teaching of the doctrine, proclaims and embodies the gospel, the target of doctrine, in his personal presence and action, through preaching and the sacraments.

<sup>748</sup> Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 25.

<sup>749</sup> Rev Joseph A. Jungmann, *THE MASS OF THE ROMAN RITE: ITS ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT*

minister is consistently underscored in Calvin's exposition. Calvin says: "When God thus speaks highly of his ministers, the power of his Spirit is not excluded...God sometimes connects himself with his servants, and sometimes separates himself from them: when he connects himself with them, he transfers to them what never ceases to reside in him; for he never resigns his office, but communicates it only."<sup>750</sup> As a work of man, Calvin teaches, the preaching voice of the minister can be "nothing but a sound that vanishes in the air."<sup>751</sup> However, when God adjoins "the inward grace of His Holy Spirit" to "the mouth of men," it then brings forth fruit, and leads us to Christ. "See then how we hear the heavenly Father...when he speaketh secretly unto us by his Holy Spirit, and then we come unto our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>752</sup> For Calvin, otherwise put, the preaching office of men is thoroughly based on God's pneumatological office of binding them to Christ Himself.

While ministers work in place of Christ, it is basically Christ Himself who works in preaching, and the ministers do their ministry by being connected to Christ. The Holy Spirit makes them participate in Christ's own ministry, and uses them for the sake of Christ's communicating with the believers. In this sense, the authority and efficacy of ministers is by no means in themselves, but is dependent only on the accompanying work of the Holy Spirit, who uses them, by uniting their work with the work of God "without separation, without change, and without confusion."<sup>753</sup> In preaching, in other words, the Holy Spirit is not merely One who lead us to understand the meaning of scriptural texts but One who effectuates the whole process of our communion with Christ.

In sum, Calvin tries not only to advocate Christ's presence and activity in preaching, but also to embody it, both visibly and audibly, in the person of the minister. The minister is not merely a messenger who delivers the message of God, but a mirror in whose office the presence and action of Christ is embodied.<sup>754</sup> Given his

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(*MISSARUM SOLLEMNIA*): VOL. II. (Benziger, 1955), 203.

<sup>750</sup> *Comm.* Joshua 19:1.

<sup>751</sup> The Third Sermon on Jacob and Esau, Genesis 25:21-22, in *Sermons on Election and Reprobation*, 63-64.

<sup>752</sup> The Third Sermon on Jacob and Esau, Genesis 25:21-22, in *Sermons on Election and Reprobation*, 63-64.

<sup>753</sup> John H. Leith, "Doctrine of the Proclamation of the Word and Its Significance for Today," in George, *John Calvin and the Church*, 212. Just as the body and blood of Christ is never identified with the bread and wine in his exposition of the Lord's Supper, in Calvin's thought, the minister can never be identified with Christ Himself.

<sup>754</sup> Calvin often labels earthly kings of the Old Testament times as "figures and images," while at the same

understanding of the Word and the role of the Holy Spirit, it can be said that what Calvin intends is to embody the personal aspect of the Word, through the person of the minister.<sup>755</sup> We can find the Trinitarian conception in Calvin's understanding of the preaching office of the church.

### 6.3. The Ministry of the Lord's Supper

In Calvin's liturgy of the Lord's Supper, the words of self-examination and excommunication form a vital part, to such an extent as to invite the judgment<sup>756</sup> that in the Calvinist tradition, the celebration of the Supper becomes a "condensed course in theology and ethics," full of verbal discourse. To be sure, Calvin lays stress on the role which the words and proper interpretation of them play in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.<sup>757</sup> It is of the essence that the Lord's Supper be celebrated with true understanding and intelligence, since the essential part of the sacrament lies in the doctrine.<sup>758</sup> More than in preaching, however, this word proclaimed and explained in the Lord's Supper looks ahead to the true person of Christ and our communion with Him. The verbal message aims to declare the reality of our communion with the body and blood of Christ, and to awaken participants to this reality.<sup>759</sup>

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time emphatically maintaining the difference between the two. "We now then understand the design of what I said, that we ought to mark the transcendency of Christ over earthly kings, and also the analogy; for there is some likeness and some difference; the difference between Christ and other kings is very great, and yet there is a likeness in some things; and earthly kings are set forth to us as figures and images of him." *Comm.* Jeremiah 23:5-6.

<sup>755</sup> Recent study of Randall Zachman on the relationship between the God's words and image is instructive for our study. Here Zachman makes a comparison between Luther and Calvin. For Luther what we hear and believe is contrasted with what we see and feel, and the truth is always hidden under a bearing that contradicts it. Luther interprets Jesus' statement "This is my body" by means of his appeal to the truth of the Word of God over against all that we can see and feel, for the appearance of the bread and wine conceals from our view the presence of the body and blood of Christ hidden therein. While Luther advocates the freedom to use images in worship, he makes a decisive shift away from images to the word of God, which we are to hear in contrast to what we see and feel. "I must not see, feel, know, or recognize anything. I must only listen and cling to the Word, basing everything on the Word of God alone." See *Zachman, John Calvin*, 179.

<sup>756</sup> For example, see White, *Protestant Worship*, 65.

<sup>757</sup> In Calvin's works, the significance of knowing the meaning of worship is often highlighted. "The legitimate worship of God...must be preceded by true knowledge of Him." *Comm.* Galatians 4:8. "With Christians," Calvin asserts, "there is no faith where there is no knowledge." *Comm.* Galatians 1:8.

<sup>758</sup> *Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper*, in *Theological Treatises*, 161. "You see the bread, and nothing else, but you hear that it is a sign of the body of Christ. Be sure that he Lord will carry out what you understand the words to mean: that his body, which you do not see at all, is spiritual food for you." *Comm.* Corinthians 11:24.

<sup>759</sup> Davis, *This is my body*, 69. Calvin writes: "Therefore, when we hear mention made of the sacramental word, let us understand the promise, which, preached with a clear voice by the minister, leads the people by the hand where the sign aims and directs us." *Institutes* (1559), 4.14.4. Calvin compares the verbal words in the celebration of the Lord's Supper to the words Christ used in the Last Supper to arouse his disciple "from their inertia, that they should be attentive to such a sublime mystery." See *Comm.* Matthew 26:26.

In the *Summary of Doctrine concerning the Ministry of the Word and the Sacrament*, as noted in the first section, Calvin declares that “the end of the whole Gospel ministry is that God, the fountain of all felicity, communicate Christ to us,” and that “all heavenly treasures” in Him “be so applied to us that they be no less ours than Christ’s himself.”<sup>760</sup> This communication is not “an imaginary” one, but a most powerful and true one through which “we become flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone.”<sup>761</sup> However, Christ does not communicate himself to us in a straightforward way, since he is only in heaven now; the communication occurs in a “mystical” way through the power of the Holy Spirit. And the church is the Spirit’s vessel which embodies this pneumatological communication between Christ and us. Since she sets forth the mystical communication with the body of Christ, the church is to be called “a mystery.”<sup>762</sup> While the church in the past had Christ in carnal presence for a few days, the church in the present time has the same Christ in a different way, that is, in the pneumatological, but more powerful, way.<sup>763</sup>

Calvin shows how the internal work of God is related to the external ministry of men in the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Calling the Holy Spirit “the internal minister” of the church, he says that in baptism, this internal minister endows one who is baptized “with the whole Christ, true God and true man,” by means of the external minister, who “baptizes with an external element, that is water, which is received bodily.”<sup>764</sup> Here the correlation of the Holy Spirit and the external ministry is highlighted as a means for our communication with the whole person of Christ. Likewise, in the Lord’s Supper, the Holy Spirit, the internal minister, feeds the souls of the faithful “with the body and the blood” of Christ, by the medium of the external minister, who “holds forth the external symbols,” the bread and wine, “which are perceived by the organs of our body, consumed and swallowed.”<sup>765</sup> It can be seen here that for Calvin the purpose of the external ministry of the church is to substantiate our communication with the body of Christ. In this sense, while the whole authority of our

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<sup>760</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 171.

<sup>761</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 171.

<sup>762</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 171. This is Ephesians 5:32.

<sup>763</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 176.

<sup>764</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 174.

<sup>765</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 174.

union and communion with Christ is in the Holy Spirit, the external administration of the sacraments, along with the preaching, can be spoken of as the Spirit's "instrument" for effecting this communion.<sup>766</sup> While all this sounds like the Bullingerian parallelism that "outwardly we eat the bread, while inwardly at the same time we also feed upon Christ's body,"<sup>767</sup> we can also see that Calvin's position is distinguished from the parallelism in its stress on the *instrumentality* of the externals.

For Calvin, the fact that the body of Christ is absent even in the place of the Lord's Supper, which leads to the role of the Holy Spirit, is instructive for our understanding of the actions in the sacraments. In the conclusion of the *Summary*, just after explaining how the work of the Spirit is correlated with the external ministry of preaching and the sacraments, Calvin reiterates the concept of Christ's being in heaven, with a significant implication of it for the practice of the sacraments:

This doctrine, that there is no descent of the body of Christ, or any downward passage visible or invisible, is grounded on the clearest testimony of Scripture. For just as Christ is man, so Scripture testifies that he parted from them, went away, left this world, was carried upwards into the holy places...until the time of the restitution of all things. *Nor do the words of Christ conflict with this doctrine: This is my body which is broken, and so on. For Christ's own best interpreter is Paul, who interprets: The bread which we break, in this way; and who interprets the words of Christ: is my body, as meaning: is the communion of the body of Christ.*<sup>768</sup>

That Christ remains in heaven implies that the bread and wine itself cannot be equated with the body and blood of Christ. However, Christ is truly present and we have communion with Him in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, when we take, break, and eat the bread and wine in the way designated. The Holy Spirit's using of the earthly elements for our communication with the body of Christ does not entail that the Spirit changes the substance of the elements into the body and blood of Christ, since that would imply dragging Christ down to earth.<sup>769</sup> Christ cannot be confined to the outward symbols of His presence. But the bread and wine is still an instrument for the communication with the body of Christ, since, through our breaking and eating of them,

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<sup>766</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 172. "To effect this union, the Holy Spirit uses a double instrument, the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments."

<sup>767</sup> Brian A. Gerrish, "Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," *Theology Today*, July 1, 1966, 20.

<sup>768</sup> *Theological Treatises*, 175. My emphasis.

<sup>769</sup> As Davis put it, for Calvin, "the sign must retain its own nature rather than having its reality collapsed into the divine nature. Otherwise...Christ is brought down rather than the soul being elevated." Davis, *This is My Body*, 75, n. 41.

the Holy Spirit accomplishes our communion with Christ.<sup>770</sup> In other words, the body and blood of Christ is not the substance of eucharistic bread and wine, but is to be experienced “by the medium of” the elements. In this sense, the instrument that the Holy Spirit uses for our communion with the body of Christ is not just the bread and wine itself, but our action which is performed by the medium of the materials. In that it is based upon our action, it can be said that our communication with the body of Christ is thoroughly a dynamic and experiential event.

As in preaching, the person of the minister who presides over the Lord’s Supper acts as a vessel for delivering the person of Christ. Relating our perceiving and feeling of the eucharistic bread with the minister’s action of putting it into our hands, Calvin asserts that “[b]y the hand of the minister, he [Christ] presents to us his body, that it may be actually enjoyed by the godly, who rise by faith to fellowship with Him”<sup>771</sup> In the celebration of the medieval mass, as noted earlier, there was an identification of Christ with the priest whose acts of taking up, blessing, breaking, and offering consciously invoked the person of Christ in the Last Supper. Since the performance of the priest focused upon these actions, however, the mass could hardly represent Christ’s fraternal relationship with His disciples, either in the person of the priest or in the way in which communion is offered.<sup>772</sup> According to Calvin’s conception of the eucharistic action, on the contrary, it is the communion between Christ and His disciples that is embodied through the interaction of the minister and the participants.

It has been questioned whether the Lord’s Supper is really necessary in Calvin’s theological system. Noting that the benefits of the Supper, that is, Christ’s presence and our union and communion with Him, can be attained by other means, such as preaching, Francis Wendel questioned: “...what exactly does the Supper give us that we cannot obtain otherwise? Under these conditions, is there still good reason for the existence of the Supper alongside the preaching of the Word?”<sup>773</sup> For Calvin, to be sure, Christ is presented even in preaching, as we have seen so far, and we have the communion with Him. It might be suggested, however, that there is a difference in degree between the

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<sup>770</sup> “[T]his (ascension) cannot take place without the help of a figure or sign...” See *Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:373.

<sup>771</sup> *Comm.* Isaiah 6:7.

<sup>772</sup> Wendel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation*, 25.

<sup>773</sup> Francois Wendel, *CALVIN: THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIS RELIGIOUS THOUGHT*. (Michigan: Collins, 1972), 353. Here Wendel assumes that Calvin, along with other the reformers, “did not manage to integrate the sacrament organically into their theological system.”

two events regarding how the person of Christ, especially with respect to his humanity, is perceived and experienced by human worshippers. “Now there cannot be a spur which can pierce us more to the quick than when he makes us, so to speak, see with the eye, touch with the hand, and distinctly perceive this inestimable blessing of feeding on his own substance.”<sup>774</sup> While our perception of Christ engages our ears and eyes in preaching, in the Lord’s Supper, it engages even our touch and taste. In the Supper, in other words, there is an enhanced perception of our communion with the person of Christ.

#### **6.4. Assumption: Other Rites of Public Worship**

It should be noted that Calvin often places some other “rites and other pious ceremonies” in line with preaching and the sacraments, recognizing their value as means for experiencing Christ. As he increasingly gave emphasis to the usefulness of public rites,<sup>775</sup> Calvin came to speak of some public acts of worship as being as essential as the preaching and the sacraments. “We know what the church ought to meet together to do; to hear teaching; to pour out prayers and sing hymns to God; to celebrate the mysteries; to make confession of our faith; to take part in religious rites and other godly exercises.”<sup>776</sup> Here Calvin adds to what he originally had believed to be the key elements of worship, that is, the preaching, prayers, and the sacraments, some other public acts: hymns, confession of faith, and pious rites and other exercises. According to Zachman, the rites included in this category are speech, act of thanksgiving, votive offering, and some pious gestures, such as kneeling, lifting up of the hands, lifting up of the eyes to heaven, etc.<sup>777</sup>

In the mature stage of his theological career, Calvin highly appreciated the importance of these rites and encouraged the faithful to use them. By 1546, Calvin is convinced that the godly can both give expression to their piety and incite the hearts of other to do the same through the rite of singing. Insisting that “there ought to be a

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<sup>774</sup> *Short Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*, in *Theological Treatises*, 148.

<sup>775</sup> While Calvin was interested in the liturgical structure of public worship from the first, 1536 edition of the *Institutes*, he did not elaborate on the positive meaning of public worship and ceremonies in the beginning of his theological pursuit, since at that time his primary concern was “avoiding errors of the Roman mass, with its view of consecrated spaces of worship and holy days of obligation.” Zachman, *Image and Word*, 344.

<sup>776</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 11:22.

<sup>777</sup> Zachman, *Image and Word*, 343-64.

consent between the heart and the tongue,” Calvin also teaches that the inward faith of worshipers should be manifested through external confession.<sup>778</sup> While not from the beginning, he also recognized the significance of bodily gestures in worship<sup>779</sup>: “outward exercise of the body helps the weakness of the mind.”<sup>780</sup> He even speaks of bending the knee in prayer, both private and public, as a useful rite, even though not necessary, which better prepares our minds for standing before God, and thus is pleasing to God.<sup>781</sup> Towards his latter years, Calvin also increasingly recommended the lifting up of hands in worship as the “right way of praying,” though not altogether necessary, when “the inward feeling corresponds with the external gesture.”<sup>782</sup> All in all Calvin moved towards recognizing the importance of the sensibility and dynamicity in worship, insisting that when one participates in public worship, “every part of his body,” as well as his mind, should be involved in the ceremony.<sup>783</sup>

As Zachman notes, a role of these rites for Calvin is to manifest our piety to God and the church, by giving expression to our inward faith, and to encourage the piety of the whole worshipping community, by exciting the same devotion in those who witness the rites and gestures.<sup>784</sup> At the same time, however, Calvin often expresses that “the whole ministry of the church,” including the Word and the sacraments, is appointed by God as “means for revealing Himself to us.”<sup>785</sup> Like the Word and the sacraments, the other rites and ceremonies of the church in public worship are a “mirror” which makes God, who is otherwise invisible, somewhat visible and sensible.<sup>786</sup> “By means of

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<sup>778</sup> *Comm.* Jeremiah 10:11. Just as God also expresses himself to men by his speech and Word, as mentioned above, Calvin believes that faith in the heart of men should be manifested by both words and actions. *Comm.* Isaiah 44:5. In so doing, Calvin had in mind the evangelicals in France, “who were tempted to keep their faith in their hearts given the dangers to which an open confession would expose them.” Zachman, *Image and Word*, 352.

<sup>779</sup> Zachman, *Image and Word*, 356.

<sup>780</sup> *Comm.* Acts 9:40.

<sup>781</sup> *Comm.* Daniel 6:10.

<sup>782</sup> *Comm.* Lamentations 3: 41.

<sup>783</sup> *On Shunning the Unlawful Rites of the Ungodly and Preserving the Purity of the Christian Religion*, in *Tracts and Treatises* 3:377. Calvin often says that our body, as well as our mind, should be employed in the service of God. See *Comm.* Exodus 4:31.

<sup>784</sup> See Zachman, *Image and Word*, 345, 349, 351, and 361. Calvin expresses this as “the mutual edification of the worshipping community.” *Comm.* Acts 20:36.

<sup>785</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 13:12.

<sup>786</sup> Zachman, *Image and Word*, 345. “The Word, the sacraments, public prayers, and other helps of the same kind, cannot be neglected, without a wicked contempt of God, who represents himself to us in these ordinances, as in a mirror or image.” *Comm.* Psalm 27:4. “We...look upon the image of God in the Word, in the sacraments, and in short, in the whole ministry of the church.” *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 13:12.

the Word, sacraments, public prayers, and other helps of this kind,” God “manifests himself to us in these ordinances, as in a mirror or image.”<sup>787</sup> And this God who is seen in these ceremonies of worship is God the Son, the image of God.<sup>788</sup>

This increasing appreciation of the role of these external rites and ceremonies began after Calvin’s doctrine of our communion with God took up the mature Trinitarian forms and schemes. Based upon his mature doctrine of the Trinity, as seen in chapter 2, Calvin increasingly boldly insisted that we communicate with the true body and blood of Christ in His whole humanity. We cannot simply claim that these rites, for Calvin, are a means for our communion with Christ, just as preaching and the sacraments are. Assuming that the same Trinitarian understanding underlies Calvin’s appreciation of the rites, however, it would be possible to think that Calvin now came to understand those rites of piety as a kind of means for embodying the humanity of Christ, through which the body of Christ is somewhat sensibly experienced. As long as it is held that Christ is not confined to the earthly image, Calvin could have said that the Christ is made somewhat visible in these ceremonies, as in the sacraments, by the Holy Spirit who uses them. In that case, the provenance of this appreciation of the external rites and ceremonies, we can say, was his doctrine of the Trinity.

For Calvin, when God makes us behold the image of God, or, the humanity of Christ, His intention is to draw us to Christ’s divinity and to the Father, the source of that divinity. “Therefore there is but one way by which to have good and infallible access to God, and that is by beholding him in his living image, for his majesty is too high, too much hidden, and too deep for us. But Jesus Christ has communicated himself to us, and applied himself to our weakness, and taught us whatever it was requisite to know, that we might come to God his Father.”<sup>789</sup> That is, the aim of all external rituals that are designed to embody the visibility of Christ, including preaching, the sacraments, and other ceremonies, is to draw the church to the Heavenly Father.

## 6.5. Conclusion

For Calvin, the earthly ministry of the church is God’s way of embodying our

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<sup>787</sup> *Comm.* Psalm 27:4.

<sup>788</sup> “Therefore, God has given us a few ceremonies, not at all irksome, to show Christ present.” *Institutes* (1559), 4.10.14. “Now ceremonies, to be exercises of piety, ought to lead us straight to Christ.” *Institutes* (1559), 4.10.29. Both of these passages are from the 1543 edition of the *Institutes*.

<sup>789</sup> *Sermons on Ephesians* 1:1-3, p. 19. See also Zachman, *Image and Word*, 267; *John Calvin*, 223.

communion with the body and blood of Christ, which are absent from the earth. While the body of Christ is absent, we can experience our communication with Him in a somewhat visible and tangible manner through our acts of preaching and the sacraments.<sup>790</sup> In preaching, there is a sort of audible embodiment of Christ's presence and activity, and the person and action of the human minister play a pivotal role for this embodiment. In the Lord's Supper, the actions of the congregation, as well as of the minister, particularly by means of the eucharistic elements of the bread and wine, become a means of our experiencing the body and blood of Christ. All this implies that neither preaching nor the Lord's Supper degenerate into cerebral events. The whole concept of this human ministry is founded on the Trinitarian doctrine for the divine-human communion presented in previous chapters.

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<sup>790</sup> Since it is related to the embodiment of the person of Christ and our communion with Him, Calvin appreciates the visible and audible dimension of public worship. "When I ponder the intended use of churches, somehow or other it seems to me unworthy of their holiness for them to take on images other than those living and symbolical ones which the Lord has consecrated by his Word. I mean baptism and the Lord's Supper, together with other ceremonies by which our eyes must be too gripped and too sharply affected to seek other images forged by human ingenuity." *Institutes* (1559), 1.11.13.

## Chapter 7

### The Nature of the Heavenly Reality of Communion

We have observed how the earthly ministry of the church can be an instrument for our communion with the body of the ascended Christ in Calvin's eucharistic teaching. What we should bear in mind, however, is that Calvin emphasized that this communion of the Lord's Supper is a *heavenly* event. As seen in previous chapters, Calvin holds fast to his belief that until the parousia Christ does not descend from heaven into which He once ascended, though He ceases not to offer Himself to be enjoyed by the earthly,<sup>791</sup> and thus in the Lord's Supper the believers should be lifted up into heaven for this communion with Christ. Otherwise put, what the Holy Spirit does as the agent of the eucharistic communion is to take us to a heavenly domain, which differs from the earthly one.

Calvin's notion of Christ's heavenly residence and the resulting doctrine of our heavenly communion invite the charge that it waters down the meaning of the communion. We have previously noted the Lutheran and Roman Catholic critique that Calvin's eucharistic doctrine, even if it advocates the real presence of Christ at the eucharist, makes the presence only a virtual presence, since for him Christ actually remains only in heaven and thus is absent from the place of the sacrament.<sup>792</sup> In a similar vein, some suspect that Calvin's eucharistic notion of our ascent into heaven and heavenly communion is prone to render the eucharistic celebration of the visible church only a Platonic or cognitive event, in which only our minds, rather than our whole beings, are involved.

While the previous chapter was about engagement with the body of Christ in the Supper, this chapter explores Calvin's idea of the Lord's Supper as a *heavenly* reality. It maintains that the eucharistic heaven to which we are lifted up can be understood as the eschatological reality, which is an embodied new creation of humans and this world. This is an idea which opens up a possibility that our whole being can legitimately be involved in the events of our ascent and communion in the Lord's

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<sup>791</sup> *Second Defence of the Faith concerning the Sacraments in answer to Joachim Westphal*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:275. In many other places, Calvin expresses that Christ descends in the place of the Lord's Supper. As Ronald Wallace notes, however, it is only after he has made it clear that Christ remains entire in heaven that he admits Christ's descending, denoting that "Christ descends *by His Spirit*." Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Pr, 1995), 209.

<sup>792</sup> Henri de Lubac, *CORPUS MYSTICUM THE EUCHARIST AND THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES* By Lubac, Henri de (SCM Press, 2006), 252.

Supper. This chapter also suggests that Calvin's his doctrine of the Trinity, especially his distinctive notion of the Holy Spirit as the bond between Christ and believers, provides a key for understanding the sacrament as the temporal accomplishment of the Last Day or eschaton.

For this, we will first look into Calvin's notion of the Lord's Supper as a heavenly reality, and then examine how the sacrament and the eschaton can be linked based upon Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity. In the latter part, what more Calvin could have said on the nature of the Lord's Supper, when it is a rendering of the eschatological Kingdom, will be examined.

### **7.1. Eucharistic Ascent and Spiritual Reality**

In Calvin's theological system, as has been seen, the divine-human relationship and communion hinge upon Christ's ascension into heaven. Christ, after being raised into heaven, is consistently interceding for us at the side of the Father that we may obtain favor with God.<sup>793</sup> And by the power of the Holy Spirit, which binds us to Christ in heaven, we are given access to the Father, the origin and fountain of all things, and to communion with Him. Christ's being in heaven is thus a ground for our relationship and communion with God. Given this, it is not surprising that Calvin declares Christ's own ascension as "one of the chiefest points of our faith."<sup>794</sup>

In his full-scale discourse of the Lord's Supper, Calvin declares that Christ's ascension provides the bedrock or "limitation" for the discussion.<sup>795</sup> He affirms that Christ, who sits at the right hand of the Father,<sup>796</sup> "descend[s] not to earth," while not ceasing "to offer Himself to be enjoyed by the faithful"<sup>797</sup> and thus in any case should not be thought as being brought under earthly creatures, since it is to drag Him from the heavenly glory.<sup>798</sup> Christ "wishes to be sought there [heaven] alone."<sup>799</sup> In order for us

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<sup>793</sup> *Comm.* Hebrew 7:35.

<sup>794</sup> *Comm.* Acts 1:9.

<sup>795</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.19.

<sup>796</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.18.

<sup>797</sup> *Second Defence of the Faith concerning the Sacraments in answer to Joachim Westphal*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:275.

<sup>798</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.19.

<sup>799</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.29.

to attain our true and real communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper, accordingly, we should be lifted up into heaven, for which the descent of Christ is not required.<sup>800</sup> This means that, as Ronald Wallace put it, Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, a notion which Calvin adamantly tried to affirm, is actually "a celestial mode of presence."<sup>801</sup>

For Calvin, as seen in preceding chapters, heaven is a different reality from our own, though not a physical place. Calvin at times speaks of heaven as "the Kingdom of God," denoting its spatial dimension.<sup>802</sup> This implies that for him our ascent at the Lord's Supper is not merely being drawn to the person of Christ but also to a *reality* or *realm* in which Christ "is set at the right hand of God his Father"<sup>803</sup> and rules over all things. Calvin describes Christ as One "who connects heaven and earth," through whom "all celestial blessings flown down to us" and "we in turn ascend to God."<sup>804</sup> Accordingly that we are drawn to Christ means that we enter the realm of heaven in which all celestial blessings are.

From this we can say that our entering into heavenly spheres in the Supper is based upon the Trinitarian economy: by following the pattern of the ascended Christ, we are also led to the Father and to His Kingdom of heaven, in the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>805</sup> The Holy Spirit is the agent not only of our communion with Christ, but of our being given "access to the kingdom of heaven."<sup>806</sup> And the Lord's Supper is not only a participation in the person of Christ but also is an experience of a new "reality" or "realm" of heaven, which is created by the Holy Spirit on the ground of that participation.<sup>807</sup> By this special working of the Spirit, God makes the faithful "capable

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<sup>800</sup> *Second Defence of the Faith concerning the Sacraments in answer to Joachim Westphal*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, 2:281.

<sup>801</sup> Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*, 208. According to Calvin, we "equally gain His presence when He raises us to Himself." *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.31.

<sup>802</sup> *Comm.* Ephesians 4:10.

<sup>803</sup> *Sermon on Ephesians*, 1:19-23, p. 111.

<sup>804</sup> *Comm.* Genesis 28:12.

<sup>805</sup> *Sermon on Ephesians*, 1:17-18, p. 105. There are two dimensions in a believer's life: heavenly and earthly. See *Sermons on Ephesians* 1:19-23, p. 119.

<sup>806</sup> *Sermons on Ephesians* 1:17-18, p. 100.

<sup>807</sup> While Calvin believes that the Holy Spirit works in cooperation with Christ and the Word, he does not mean that the work of the Spirit is by any sense constrained to the example or pattern of Christ. As Hesselink notes, Calvin allows for freedom of the action of the Holy Spirit and submits that the Spirit can work quite beyond any explicit pattern or instruction. I John Hesselink, "Governed and Guided by the Spirit: A Key Issue in Calvin's Doctrine of the Holy Spirit," in *Reformiertes Erbe* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1993), 163.

of this new experience” of the reality.<sup>808</sup> Here Calvin’s doctrine of the Trinity, which is filtered into the theology of the Lord’s Supper, makes the sacrament the place for our experience of the heavenly reality.

For Calvin, the Kingdom of heaven is not only a reality that is set after death or at the end of time, but a reality which every earthly believer is now called to partake of, though the full participation should be waited for. “He has called us to be partakers of his kingdom, and has so put forth his power already in us that we ought, as it were, to lift ourselves above all earthly things, and to look down at them as at our feet.”<sup>809</sup> After investigating Calvin’s statements that specifically refer to the eucharistic ascent, Christopher Kaiser concludes that while Calvin’s gloss on the ascent of the believer to heaven looks forward either to the ascent of their soul at death or to the ascent of their body at the final resurrection, Calvin truly believes that the ascent to heaven is also what occurs “already in this life.”<sup>810</sup> Kaiser also claims that given that none of the texts he has been considering use ‘as if’ language to describe the eucharistic ascent, Calvin’s references to the ascent of our heart or soul should be taken at face value.<sup>811</sup> We can assume that the eucharistic ascent, in Calvin’s thought, is a present time reality of participation in this heavenly Kingdom.

Perhaps we can say that this notion of heaven and our ascent to it imparts temporality to the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. For Calvin, as seen in chapter 1, our receiving of the Holy Spirit is “not a permanent possession,”<sup>812</sup> and, while the Holy Spirit is given to all Christians by Christ, “there are degrees of empowering...the intensity or nature of the Spirit’s guidance may vary according to the specific needs of a given situation.”<sup>813</sup> Perhaps the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, where the Holy Spirit leads us to Christ, is an occasion when the Spirit specifically empowers us to enter and experience the sphere of heaven. Calvin understands the role of the Holy Spirit as to

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<sup>808</sup> *Comm. Acts 14:9*, quoted from Hesselink, “Governed and Guided by the Spirit,” 168.

<sup>809</sup> *Sermon on Ephesians*, 1:17-18, p. 106 and 105. Calvin says that “faith serves to give us access to the kingdom of heaven.” (p. 100)

<sup>810</sup> Christopher B. Kaiser, “Climbing Jacob’s Ladder: John Calvin and the Early Church on Our Eucharistic Ascent to Heaven,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56, no. 3 (2003): 253.

<sup>811</sup> Kaiser, “Climbing Jacob’s Ladder.” 253.

<sup>812</sup> Hesselink, “Governed and Guided by the Spirit,” 166.

<sup>813</sup> Hesselink, “Governed and Guided by the Spirit,” 166. For Calvin, according to Hesselink, this is why we constantly need to look to the Lord for the guidance of the Spirit.

“make us capable of new experience,”<sup>814</sup> which especially takes place in “the Spirit’s continually drawing us to Christ and thus simultaneously to the Father.”<sup>815</sup> Accordingly, that the Spirit draws us to Christ in the Supper means that we, through being drawn to Christ, are to experience a different dimension of life.

Since Calvin describes heaven as the otherworldly reality which is contrasted to this earthly world, it is generally assumed that Calvin’s idea of heaven came from the Augustinian or Platonic (particularly Neo-platonic) dualism, which contrasts “the outward vs. the inward ... visible vs. invisible, perceptible to the senses vs. perceptible to the mind, physical vs. spiritual, mouth vs. heart,”<sup>816</sup> and that Calvin’s heaven is the inward, invisible, and only spiritual, reality. Kilian McDonnell argues that “Calvin’s use of the theme of the two worlds is so extensive that it amounts to a borrowing of a structure,” and that such a dualism is to be seen with even greater clarity in Calvin’s doctrine of the sacraments, because, for Calvin, “the sacraments are outward signs of that invisible good will which God has toward us” and are “invisible truths to man under a visible sign.”<sup>817</sup> Some have attempted to defend Calvin by noting that Calvin’s eucharistic doctrine is an affirmation of the importance of the true body of Christ,<sup>818</sup> and we have indeed already observed in the preceding chapters that Calvin believes that our earthly and human ministry is a means for bringing forth our communion with this whole person of Christ. As has been seen so far, however, Calvin’s eucharistic doctrine of the *Sursum Corda* entails the notion that there is our entering into a celestial reality in the Supper, and given that there is no physical movement of worshippers, it is admittedly true that this notion can easily be understood as a process only of our inward mind, e.g. a process of our inner, spiritual enlightenment.

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<sup>814</sup> *Comm. Acts 14:9*, quoted from Hesselink, “Governed and Guided by the Spirit,” 168.

<sup>815</sup> Willem Balke, “Revelation and Experience in Calvin’s Theology,” in *Toward the Future of Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 359. The Platonic dualistic worldview contrasts this created world to the “non-spatial and eternal” world, which transcends this world. See John Bowden and Alan Richardson, eds., *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, New edition edition (London: SCM Press, 1984), 448.

<sup>816</sup> Wim Janse, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper,” *Perichoresis* [Volume 10. Issue (2012) ], 156.

<sup>817</sup> Kilian McDonnell, *John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist* (London: Oxford Univ Pr, 1967), 34-5.

<sup>818</sup> John McClean, “Calvin on the Supper: Puzzling and Provocative,” in Mark D. Thompson, *Engaging with Calvin: Aspects of the Reformer’s Legacy for Today* (Nottingham: IVP, 2009), 223. For example, in his account of Calvin’s notion of eucharistic ascent, John Witvliet notes that Calvin’s argument that when we ascend to heaven, we find there Christ who is in his real humanity, hardly squares with a celestial, otherworldly vision of eternal repose associated with Neoplatonism. John D. Witvliet, “Image and Themes in John Calvin’s Theology of Liturgy,” in *Worship Seeking Understanding: Windows into Christian Practice* (Baker Academic, 2003), 137.

## 7.2. The Meaning of Heaven

This dualistic scheme of the Lord's Supper, especially the notion that the sacrament hinges upon our ascent into heaven, a different and transcendent reality, has been questioned. According to Julie Canlis, there are "eucharistic temptations" which result from Calvin's notion of ascent, or imagery of the ladder, which assumes our being led to another reality. The first temptation is that in this scheme, as it assumes heavenly or spiritual reality as the aim of the visible sacrament, "the visible church and its sacraments can be rendered superfluous when compared to their 'higher spiritual meaning.'"<sup>819</sup> She doubts whether in this scheme "the physical truly participates in the spiritual, or whether the physical leads one away from itself and up to the spiritual." Just as Christ's bodily absence suggests "a flight from the physical realm altogether,"<sup>820</sup> Canlis suspects, Calvin's emphasis on our ascent to the absent Christ seemingly shows his "mistrust of the physical realm."<sup>821</sup> The second temptation is that, since our ascent is by no means a spatial movement, our union and communion with God can be rendered little more than a cognitive or psychological process.<sup>822</sup> As Douglas Farrow put it, according to Canlis, this is "why the marks of inwardness are everywhere present in Calvin's sacramental writings," and "why some find it easy to reduce his eucharistic teaching to the *Sursum Corda*, that is, to the invitation to 'feed on Him in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.'"<sup>823</sup> Calvin should have said, Canlis concludes, that "the Spirit does not lead us 'up and away' to God but creates in material things God's divine reality."<sup>824</sup> What all these critiques suggest is that even if he emphasizes the necessity of human participation in Christ, Calvin was unable to reflect on the fittingness of this worldly realm for just such a relation, resulting in a suspicion of this created, material world "as unable to bear the weight of spiritual reality."<sup>825</sup>

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<sup>819</sup> Julie Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder: A Spiritual Theology of Ascent and Ascension* (William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2010), 167.

<sup>820</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 169.

<sup>821</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 168.

<sup>822</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 168.

<sup>823</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 168.

<sup>824</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 170.

<sup>825</sup> Canlis, *Calvin's Ladder*, 170.

It is true that when Calvin sets forth the concept of our ascent, he suggests the spiritual, other-worldly reality as the aim of the earthly celebration, in which case the accent falls on the former rather than on the latter. Also, when he sometimes describes heaven as somewhere we dwell “in mind and affection,”<sup>826</sup> Calvin truly appears to conceive of our ascent and heavenly communion as a cognitive or psychological process.

If we call the emphasis of heaven as our aim and destination otherworldly, however, it should be remembered that the teaching of scripture itself is profoundly otherworldly, as Paul remarks: “[T]heir mind is on earthly things...our citizenship is in heaven.”<sup>827</sup> It is scripture itself that suggests heaven as the “origin and aim” of earthly believers.<sup>828</sup> That we should look to heaven as the aim of our earthly life is because “Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”<sup>829</sup> From this we can assume that when Calvin refers to heaven or heavenly reality as the destination of earthly event, Calvin’s intention would be not so much to be pessimistic about the earthly world as to be scriptural or Pauline.<sup>830</sup>

Furthermore, as Boersma notes, “otherworldliness does not stand in absolute opposition to every this-worldly orientation” in scripture,<sup>831</sup> because heaven is a reality which can be already present on earth and in which earthly believers can already be at home today.<sup>832</sup> Earthly believers who have been raised up with Christ (Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1) and made alive with Christ (Eph. 2:5) can participate in heavenly realities, and can be currently seated with Christ “in the heavenly realms.”(Eph. 2:6; Eph. 1:3) In this sense, it is reasonable to say that, according to Paul, “life on earth takes on a heavenly dimension.”<sup>833</sup> Hence, for Calvin, heavenly reality can overlap with the earth, especially through the work of the earthly church.<sup>834</sup> In this sense, Paul’s urge to look

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<sup>826</sup> *Comm. Philipians* 3:20.

<sup>827</sup> Philipians 3:19-20. See Hans Boersma, *Heavenly Participation: The Weaving of a Sacramental Tapestry* (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2011).

<sup>828</sup> Boersma, *Heavenly Participation*, 5.

<sup>829</sup> Colossians 3:1-2.

<sup>830</sup> According to Boersma, one of the reasons the Neo-Platonism has been so attractive to theologians throughout the centuries is that the Neo-Platonic view of the cosmos ‘going out’ from God and ‘returning’ to him...was broadly compatible with Pauline Christianity. Boersma, *Heavenly Participation*, 5.

<sup>831</sup> Boersma, *Heavenly Participation*, 5.

<sup>832</sup> Boersma, *Heavenly Participation*, 5.

<sup>833</sup> Boersma, *Heavenly Participation*, 5.

<sup>834</sup> “His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities of the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 3:10.

to heaven as destination can be understood to encourage us not only to look to the final day, but also to pursue heaven in such a way that it is brought forth in the present life.

While contrasting heaven with earth, and pointing to the former as the goal of the earthly life, Calvin does not entirely separate the two, believing that the heavenly life can be accomplished in this earthly life. Rebuking those who “only fly about above the earth and do not aspire towards heaven,” Calvin says that believers ought to “lead a heavenly life in this world.”<sup>835</sup> For Calvin, the place where the heavenly realm should be brought forth is this world, where we are exposed to the common troubles of this earthly life and “are intermingled...with unbelievers and hypocrites.”<sup>836</sup> Still, in a statement reminiscent of the Lord’s Supper, Calvin says that our heavenly citizenship is proved from “the union we have with Christ,” who is only in heaven, and thus “we should in mind dwell outside this world if we are to cleave to Him.”<sup>837</sup> While it is evident that heaven where Christ remains is different from earth, for Calvin, it is not a physically faraway place, but what ought to be brought forth in our existential life situation.

In sum, the heaven-orientedness in Calvin’s doctrine is not objectionable in itself from the biblical standpoint, and while heaven is otherworldly, for Calvin, it is not *merely* otherworldly, since it is not separated from this world and it can and should be brought forth in the context of our earthly life. In Calvin’s thought, as well as in scripture, heaven is a reality in which the earthly find both their origin and destination. And this created world, the visible church, and its sacraments are places in which the heavenly reality can be set forth. This is to say, the meaning and role of this created, material world is not dismissed in our entering into the heavenly, otherworldly reality, in Calvin’s thought.

Though it is not Calvin’s own terminology, we may possibly say that in the Lord’s Supper, in Calvin’s thought, there is a kind of overlapping or inter-penetration between earthly and heavenly realities. For Calvin, the eucharistic reality is a heavenly reality, and, as we have seen in previous chapters, it is also a reality which is brought forth in a place not different from the earth, even through the earthly act of ministry. While the sacrament is a sign which refers to an otherworldly reality, and is by no

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<sup>835</sup> *Comm.* Philippians 3:20.

<sup>836</sup> *Comm.* Philippians 3:20.

<sup>837</sup> *Comm.* Philippians 3:20.

means equated with the reality itself,<sup>838</sup> the sacrament not only points to or represents the reality but also presents it. “[U]nless a man means to call God a deceiver, he would never dare assert that an empty symbol is set forth by him...if the Lord truly represents the participation in his body through the breaking of bread, there ought not to be the least doubt that he truly presents and shows his body.”<sup>839</sup> For Calvin, the sacraments of the earthly church are not empty signs but have a reality and efficacy joined with them.<sup>840</sup> Since what effectuates by participation in the power of the Spirit, which binds us to Christ in heaven, we can recognize that it is the doctrine of the Trinity that, at least in theory, safeguards the coexistence of heavenly and earthly dimensions in Calvin’s understanding of the Lord’s Supper.

### 7.3. The Second Temptation

However, Calvin’s argument is not merely that we enter into the heavenly reality, but that we are drawn *up* into such a reality in the Supper. How can this be more than a mental awakening or intellectual enlightenment, especially given that there is no physical movement? Is not the notion of our ascent into the heavenly reality still only too conceptual or abstract?<sup>841</sup>

Douglas Farrow pointed out that the reason why Calvin could not avoid putting his sacramental realism in doubt is that he “handled the dialectic of Christ’s presence and absence almost exclusively in spatial terms, and hence in a non-eschatological fashion.”<sup>842</sup> Adducing an example of Irenaeus, Farrow claims that the eucharist is an intermediate rendering of the Eternal Day, in which, in the freedom of the Spirit, there is the full restoration of the whole created world, and therefore our resurrected bodies will be wholly involved.<sup>843</sup> However, according to Farrow, Calvin failed to relate the Lord’s

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<sup>838</sup> “It is not, therefore, the chief function of the sacrament simply and without higher consideration to extend to us the body of Christ.” *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.4.

<sup>839</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.10.

<sup>840</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 4.17.10. For Calvin, according to Gerrish, “The signs ‘present’ what they ‘represent’; they are not bare or empty signs, but are joined with the reality they signify.” B. A. Gerrish, “Gospel and Eucharist: John Calvin on the Lord’s Supper,” in Gerrish, *Old Protestantism and the New* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 107.

<sup>841</sup> Calvin does not elaborate upon the foresaid meaning of heaven or heavenly reality in his eucharistic discourse, not to mention that he does not apply it to his doctrine of the eucharistic ascent.

<sup>842</sup> Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia: On the Significance of the Doctrine of the Ascension for Ecclesiology and Christian Cosmology* (Edinburgh; Grand Rapids: T & T Clark; Eerdmans, 1999), 178.

<sup>843</sup> Douglas Farrow, “Between the Rock and a Hard Place: In Support of (something Like) a Reformed View of the Eucharist,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3, no. 2 (Jl 2001): 183.

Supper with the eschatological reality of our resurrected body and the whole recreated world, by speaking of the eucharistic reality of our being drawn to Christ and heaven exclusively in *spatial* terms, and thereby made that the reality of our communion with Christ came to be confined to the hidden sphere of our mind.<sup>844</sup> In other words, according to Farrow, Calvin should have set forth the heavenly reality of the sacrament as the eschatological reality.

As Farrow rightly notes, Calvin himself understands that the Lord's Supper has an eschatological meaning, in that in it we are assured of eternal life, and are "now quickened by his immortal flesh, and in a sense partakers of his immortality."<sup>845</sup> In addition, Calvin quite often uses the term heaven or heavenly (celestial) to denote the first created world or the eschatological Kingdom.<sup>846</sup> Given this, it would be possible to assume that, in his mind, heaven or the heavenly reality into which Christ draws us up in the Lord's Supper is in a relationship with reality of the Last Day of resurrection and restoration. Indeed, however, Calvin does not give prominence to this relationship.

In fact, Calvin's theology is generally recognized as leaving "room for a more significant eschatology than would be possible on the assumptions of his opponents."<sup>847</sup> For the Lutherans, the ascension of Christ was merely a change of mortal state through which He became invisible and omnipresent, and thus Christ's second coming is also "merely the visible revelation of what has been present in this world all the time in a hidden way."<sup>848</sup> For Calvin, on the other hand, Christ's ascension implies His removal from this earth to another dimension beyond this world, and means his assumption of a Kingdom that far transcends the limits of this earth. Consequently, for Calvin, the second coming of Christ is, as Ronald Wallace expressed, "the breaking into this world of a Kingdom that is indeed from beyond."<sup>849</sup> Calvin highlights this understanding

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<sup>844</sup> Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 179. According to Farrow, Calvin's "vertical orientation made it difficult for him to factor time into question, that is, to subject temporal relations to the same pneumatological reinterpretation with which he experimented in spatial relations." Farrow, "Between the Rock and a Hard Place," 182.

<sup>845</sup> Farrow, "Between the Rock and a Hard Place," 182.

<sup>846</sup> While he understands that the kingdom of God has already begun in this world at the coming of Christ, he also holds fast to the belief that the accomplishment of the kingdom comes true only with the second coming of Christ. Calvin often expresses this eschatological kingdom as simply "heaven." In this case, that the Lord's Supper is a heavenly reality implies that the sacrament is in a close relationship with the final kingdom of God, while Calvin does not elaborate more on it. For Calvin's theology of the Kingdom and heaven, see David E. Holwerda, "Eschatology and History: A Look at Calvin's Eschatological Vision," *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin*, 1976.

<sup>847</sup> Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacraments*, 225.

<sup>848</sup> Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacraments*, 226.

<sup>849</sup> Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacraments*, 226.

especially in his doctrine of the Lord's Supper, where he strenuously criticizes the Lutheran doctrine of Christ's ubiquity:

When Scripture speaks of the ascension of Christ, it declares, at the same time, that he will come again. If he now occupies the whole world in respect of his body, what else was his ascension, and what will his descent be, but a fallacious and empty show?

That Christ comes only at the Last Day would imply that the Lord's Supper, where we are drawn to the whole person of Christ in heaven, has the eschatological character, even though it cannot be equated with from the Last Banquet itself. Otherwise put, even if our celebration of the sacrament can never be equated with the banquet at the Final Day when there is the second coming and full revelation of Christ, Calvin could have gone further to explain the Lord's Supper and our heavenly communion in the sacrament as an occasion that enshrines and unfolds the eschatological reality, or, as a temporal or partial realization of the eschaton. As shall be seen in the next section, his doctrine of the Trinity can function as a link between the two events, although Calvin himself did not thoroughly work this possibility out.

#### **7.4. The Lord's Supper and the Kingdom of God**

For Calvin, as mentioned, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has an eschatological meaning: it is an instrument of God, which "is intended to make us grow in faith and confirm therein until His second coming," when we will be fully sensible of the fruit of His death and passion and have full possession and enjoyment of it.<sup>850</sup> However, it is also true that Calvin stops short of probing more into the direct relationship between the Lord's Supper and the eschatological Kingdom.

In Calvin's theology, the nature of our final resurrection and the final Kingdom is in many ways analogous to that of the Lord's Supper. Like the Lord's Supper, according to Calvin, the goal of Christ's coming again is our "union with God," which is the highest good of humanity.<sup>851</sup> While our redemption has already begun by Christ's first coming, Christ will complete the redemption by resurrecting His people, when He appears a second time. In this eschaton, the resurrected people of God will be fully

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<sup>850</sup> Sermon on 1 Corinthians 10:14, quoted from Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Eerdmans, 1959), 208.

<sup>851</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.2.

reckoned as the children of God, who fully recognize God as a “propitious Father,” being no longer uncertain about His goodness and benevolence towards them.<sup>852</sup>

As in his doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, Calvin does not reduce this union to a noetic union, but intimates that our human body is involved in it. The resurrection at the Last Day is by no means the neo-platonic enlightenment of minds or escape of souls from the imprisonment in the body. Since the resurrection of believers is patterned upon the resurrection of Christ, who is the “prototype” and “pledge of our resurrection,” the people of God are also resurrected in their true flesh.<sup>853</sup> This means that the resurrected people of God, in the eschaton, will be united to God and have communion with Him in their whole person. At that time, Calvin explains, the godly will be made not only children of God, but also “companions” of Christ, which is the aim of Christ’s own resurrection,<sup>854</sup> because then they are reformed to the image of Christ. “By the inestimable power of his Spirit,” God will “make us “conform to himself.”<sup>855</sup> And this is the completion of the process of our sanctification. That is, this resurrection of the godly is also a restoration of God’s image in them, which they had lost in the fall.<sup>856</sup>

In the eschaton there is not only the resurrection of believers but also the renewal of the whole created world. For Calvin, the destiny of humanity is interwoven with that of creation, especially in the Fall and in the final resurrection. Just as the created order became corrupted in the Fall of Adam, it will be restored when there is renewal of humanity. “Now subject to corruption, the creatures cannot be renewed until the sons of God are wholly restored.”<sup>857</sup> The pattern of renewal of the created world is parallel to the resurrection and restoration of human beings. Just like the renewal of human beings, the primarily created nature of the cosmos does not change, when it is renewed in the eschaton, but it is transformed and reclaimed.<sup>858</sup> This renewal of everything in heaven and on earth makes “all creatures...as companions” to believers.<sup>859</sup>

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<sup>852</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.2.14-15 and 3.2.38.

<sup>853</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.3.

<sup>854</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.3.

<sup>855</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 1.15.5.

<sup>856</sup> Quistorp summarizes that, for Calvin, the Last Day is a completion of our “progressive sanctification and regeneration in the resurrection of the recreated body on the second coming of Christ.” Heinrich Quistorp, *Calvin’s Doctrine Of The Last Things. Translated By Harold Knight London : 1955. Hardback In Jacket* (Lutterworth Press, 1955), 90. Also see, Philip Walker Butin, *Revelation, Redemption, and Response: Calvin’s Trinitarian Understanding of the Divine-Human Relationship* (OUP USA, 1995), 68-9.

<sup>857</sup> *Comm.* Romans 8:20.

<sup>858</sup> Calvin writes that “the elements of the world...will be consumed in order to receive a new quality

Calvin often implies that the Resurrection and the Kingdom are brought forth in the Trinitarian manner. In a way reminiscent of the manner he handled the purpose of Christ's ascension, Calvin argues that the resurrection of believers is based upon Christ's own resurrection, which *ab initio* aims for the resurrection of His people. "It was not for himself alone...rather there was begun in the Head what must be completed in all the members."<sup>860</sup> This is possible not because we are equal to him in any sense, but because God applies to believers "the same working of the Spirit" by whose power Christ was raised.<sup>861</sup> We are raised by the Holy Spirit, "the Quickener of us in common with Him [Christ]."<sup>862</sup> And the Holy Spirit resurrects the faithful by making them conjoined to Christ, separation from whom "is not permissible and not even possible."<sup>863</sup> As mentioned, the resurrection of the faithful is also the completion of their restoration into the image of Christ, and the proper agent of this restoration of the Holy Spirit. Since the origin of our resurrection is the Father, Calvin also states that the resurrection of Christ and the resulting resurrection of the church is by the Father.<sup>864</sup>

Given the affinity, we can assume that Calvin could have done better to relate the eucharist to the Last Day, or to suggest the former as a partial achievement of the eschatological banquet. Indeed, Calvin often portrays the day of restoration of humans and the world as "the manifestation of the heavenly Kingdom,"<sup>865</sup> and Christ the "originator and source" of this heavenly Kingdom.<sup>866</sup> Probably he could have spoken of the Holy Spirit as the bond which binds believers to Christ in the Kingdom, and thus to the reality of Kingdom. If he said that in the Lord's Supper the Holy Spirit draws us to Christ in the Last Day, he could have said that the Lord's Supper is a temporal

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while their substance remains the same..." *Comm.* 2 Peter 3:10.

<sup>859</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.2.

<sup>860</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.3. Regarding the resurrection of the body, Calvin says that while "it is difficult to believe that bodies, when consumed with rottenness, will at length be raised up in their season," scripture provides some helps by which faith may overcome this great obstacle, and one of them is "in the parallel to Christ's resurrection."

<sup>861</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.3.

<sup>862</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.3.

<sup>863</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.3.

<sup>864</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.3.

<sup>865</sup> *Comm.* Romans 8:20. This is because when He comes again, He will bring in the heavenly Kingdom.

<sup>866</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 15:47. Waiting upon heaven, the day of resurrection and restoration, is fixing our eyes fast on Christ in there. *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.1.

accomplishment of the Day. As noted, the completion of our restoration is a constant working of the Holy Spirit and Calvin speaks of this restoration as the Holy Spirit's work of implanting "heavenly life within us."<sup>867</sup> Given this, if he had applied the notion of the Holy Spirit as the bond chronologically, Calvin could have said that the heavenly reality in the Supper is the heavenly life of eternal day.

In his discussion of our final resurrection, Calvin briefly mentions the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper as "the seal of our future resurrection."<sup>868</sup> Noting that believers will be made "companions of Christ" in their resurrection of the body, Calvin says that the burial rites celebrated by the holy patriarchs under the law were helps to "make them know that a new life was prepared for the bodies laid away."<sup>869</sup> In a similar vein, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in which we receive by bodily mouth the symbols of spiritual grace, is an event which testifies that "the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" [Rom. 8:11] and that "He who raised Christ from the dead will give life also to your mortal bodies." [1 Cor. 6:15] For Calvin the true service of God is that which requires the devotion of our "feet, hand, eyes, and tongue," since through them we can realize and share in the fruit and reward of Christ's bodily resurrection.<sup>870</sup> Given Calvin's understanding that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not only a sign or seal of divine grace, but an actual instrument of it, which really brings forth the reality it signifies, Calvin might have also held that the sacrament not only testifies but really, though partially, accomplishes the life of resurrection.

In Calvin's thought, as mentioned, the Lord's Supper can by no means be equated with the Banquet of the real eschatological Kingdom, where there will be the coming of Christ and the full revelation of Him. However, just as our communion with the body of the heavenly Christ is pneumatologically embodied on earth and in the Lord's Supper, as seen in the previous chapter, the reality of the eschatological times could also be brought forth in a pneumatological way in the Lord's Supper so that it can be experienced by the earthly participants.

Farrow's critique of Calvin proceeded to his liturgy, which, in Farrow's view, is

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<sup>867</sup> *Comm.* Romans 8:11. A role of the Holy Spirit, Calvin also expresses, is to "give us access to the kingdom of heaven," or to make us "come near the heavenly life." *Sermons on Ephesians*, 1:17-18, p. 100.

<sup>868</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.8.

<sup>869</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.8.

<sup>870</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.25.8.

marked by “inwardness,” especially represented by the eucharistic teaching of the *Sursum Corda* and the invitation to “feed on Him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.”<sup>871</sup> If he could speak of the Lord’s Supper more thoroughly as the partial rendering of the Resurrection, when there is the embodied restoration of humans and the world, the teaching of “lift up your hearts” could be understood as an exaltation to open the hearts to see ourselves and the given place inside God’s story, that is, inside the resurrected, eschatological life.<sup>872</sup> In that case, the ascent of our souls in the Lord’s Supper, which is, the ascent into the eschatological heaven, would not be an ethereal or disembodied experience, since it involves our whole bodies, senses, and actions.

### 7.5. The Nature of the Heavenly Communion

That the Lord’s Supper is an eschatological event, an event which is in parallel with the Last Day or Final Kingdom, can help us fathom the nature of the eucharistic reality in Calvin’s thought. In what follows, we shall see the things Calvin could have said, or could have said more effectively, if the Lord’s Supper is a partial achievement of the Last Day. Since the essence of the Kingdom and of the creation, the model of the Kingdom, is union with God, our task here can be said to capture the nature of the reality the union with God brings forth.

For Calvin, the Last Day is first and foremost when our glorious identity as the children of God will be accomplished. While there has already been a renewal of God’s image in the godly, Calvin believes, the glorious reality of the children of God “has not yet been manifested in ourselves,”<sup>873</sup> and our earthly life is hidden under a reality which contradicts it.<sup>874</sup> It is only when Christ again appears in glory that the reality of the faithful will be fully revealed.<sup>875</sup> Likewise, while the Kingdom of Christ has already been brought about in principle, the perfection of it is deferred until the last day,<sup>876</sup>

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<sup>871</sup> Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia*, 179.

<sup>872</sup> Robert E. Webber and John Wilvliet, *Ancient-Future Worship: Proclaiming and Enacting God’s Narrative* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Books, 2008), 141.

<sup>873</sup> *Comm.* Ephesians 1:20. “It has not appeared what we shall be until we are transformed into his glory and see him as he is.” *Comm.* Matthew 22:30.

<sup>874</sup> “We are exposed to a thousand miseries and our souls innumerable evils, so that we always find a hell within us.” *Comm.* 1 John 3:2.

<sup>875</sup> *Comm.* Colossians 3:3. Calvin reserves the fullness of the glorious reality of the faithful, since it is to be “hid until he [Christ] appears” *Comm.* Colossians 3:4.

<sup>876</sup> *Comm.* Act 3:21. “For as the Kingdom of Christ is only begun, the perfection of it is deferred until the last day.”

when the appearance of Christ brings about the complete restoration of the Kingdom of God, and the renewal of all things. “He will appear to all with the ineffable majesty of his Kingdom, with the glow of immortality, with the boundless power of divinity, with a guard of angels.”<sup>877</sup> In this sense, the revelation of Christ and our seeing Him in face to face means that we will then encounter and witness the glorious reality of the restoration of all believers and all things.

This eschatological reality is a restoration of a reality of the first creation, and, as mentioned, of our condition of being fully united with God in the creation. Until they lost it due to sin, humans were in union with God. This union is not a result of any merits that were in man himself, but of the fact that man had been created in the image of God.<sup>878</sup> In other words, it was because man was created in the image of God that he was in perfect union in God. From this, we can assume that in the eschaton, humans will get a restoration of the image of God they had in creation. Calvin believes that “we must be renewed and made like God before it can be given to us to see him.”<sup>879</sup> The vision of God is connected to the renewal of God’s image within the godly, which they were granted in the first creation.

Under this condition man “ought to embrace the whole human race without exception” no matter whether they are “barbarian and Greek, worthy and unworthy, friend and enemy,” since as the image of God all men “should be contemplated in God, not in themselves.”<sup>880</sup> In other words, since humanity is in union with God, and thus is *imago Dei*, humans should contemplate all other humans in light of this divine image. “If we rightly direct our love, we must first turn our eyes not to man, the sight of whom would more often engender hate than love, but to God, who bids us extend to all men the love we bear to him, that this may be an unchanging principle: whatever the character of the man, we must yet love him because we love God.”<sup>881</sup> Again, the image of God we have in the eschaton is the completion of God’s image we currently own. While humans lost God’s image after the Fall, Christ began the renewal of it and transforms us more and more into His image until we see God face to face. “God begins

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<sup>877</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 2.16.17.

<sup>878</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 2.2.1. Being united with God is “true happiness” to them. *Comm.* Isaiah 45:19.

<sup>879</sup> *Comm.* 1 Timothy 6:6.

<sup>880</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 2.8.55.

<sup>881</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 2.8.55.

to restore his image in us: but in what small measure! Therefore, unless we are stripped of all the corruption of the flesh, we shall not behold God face to face.”<sup>882</sup>

These characteristics of the Last Day could be suggested as the characteristic of the Lord’s Supper, if Calvin spoke of the sacraments as a provisional realization of the eschaton. As we have seen in previous chapters, the essence of the sacrament is the presence of Christ and our union and communion with Him, for Calvin, and this union with Christ is also a union with other believers. “It is necessary for us to be incorporated into Christ *in order to be united to each other*.”<sup>883</sup> Here Calvin is suggesting union with other believers even as the purpose of our union with Christ in the Lord’s Supper. This union with others in the Supper is by no means an aerial or intangible unity, while celestial, since it entails loving other believers like loving “Him [Christ] in the brethren.”<sup>884</sup> Given its nature as an eschatological event, where our union with God leads to our being the image of God, that the Supper is the eschatological reality can mean that in the sacrament we should deal with other participants as the *image* of God.

While saying that we should first be renewed and made like God in order to see Him, as mentioned, Calvin also says that we *should see* the image of God, in order to be transformed into God’s image.<sup>885</sup> As we have seen in previous chapters, while we in this life cannot see Christ who is absent from our sight, we can have a vision of Him enigmatically, or in a mirror, especially “in the whole ministry of the church.”<sup>886</sup> If Calvin speaks of the Lord’s Supper as the eschatological reality, he could have highlighted more effectively that there is the vision of Christ in the sacrament. That is, while it is yet a seeing in a mirror, since we shall have the full vision of Christ only at His last appearing,<sup>887</sup> the Lord’s Supper is an occasion which provides us a fuller vision of Christ than we have in ordinary life, and through this enigmatic vision the worshippers are transformed and conformed little by little into the very image of Christ,

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<sup>882</sup> *Comm.* 1 John 3:2. Calvin almost identifies this ongoing process of being transformed into God’s image with sanctification. “He says that no one sees God without sanctification since we shall only see God with eyes which have been renewed according to his image.” *Comm.* Hebrew 12:12.

<sup>883</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 10:16. My emphasis.

<sup>884</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 10:16. “No part of our body is touched by any feeling of pain which is not spread among all the rest, so we ought not to allow a brother to be affected by any evil, without being touched with compassion for him.” *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 10:16.

<sup>885</sup> *Comm.* 2 Corinthians 3:18.

<sup>886</sup> *Comm.* Psalm 17:15.

<sup>887</sup> *Comm.* 1 Corinthians 3:18.

so that they can enjoy the complete vision of the Son and the Father in the Last day.<sup>888</sup> As previously noted, Calvin insisted on the frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper. If Calvin had emphasized that it is an actual event where we see and are transformed into God's image, he may have had more success in advocating the significance of the frequent administration of the sacrament.<sup>889</sup>

On the whole, Calvin could have suggested that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, transformation of the created world into a new quality is signified. For Calvin, as noted above, "man and the creation are in essence related to each other not only in origin but also in destiny."<sup>890</sup> That is, it is not only human beings but all things of the world that are restored and reclaimed in the Last Day. All elements of the world, according to Calvin "will be consumed in order to receive a new quality while their substance remains the same" in the day of resurrection.<sup>891</sup> Peter Leithart says that "if the kingdom is the creation pacified and transfigured...the eucharist should be understood as a sign of the renewed creation" or "our model of the eschatological order."<sup>892</sup> The same story could go for the Lord's Supper in Calvin's theology, if we conceive of the Lord's Supper as a temporal accomplishment of the eschatological Kingdom.<sup>893</sup>

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<sup>888</sup> *Comm.* John 16:16; Psalm 17:15. "By continual progress we increase...in conformity to His image." *Comm.* 2 Corinthians 3:18. This transformation goes on during our whole life, and is completed in the Last Day. *Comm.* 2 Corinthians 3:18.

<sup>889</sup> If this notion had got settled in the Calvinist tradition, it would have become a corrective to the Calvinist custom which observes the sacrament at times merely out of obedience.

<sup>890</sup> Holwerda, "Eschatology and History," 136.

<sup>891</sup> *Comm.* 2 Peter 3:10. Calvin believes that the recreated world, as well as the first created world, is also to be used not only for necessity but for our "delight and enjoyment" and this is because it has its own beauty and sweetness, which can be sensed through our body. Calvin writes: "[T]he natural qualities themselves demonstrate sufficiently to what end and extent we may enjoy them. Has the Lord clothed the flowers with the great beauty that greets our eyes, the sweetness of smell that is wafted upon our nostrils, and yet will it be unlawful for our eyes to be affected by that beauty, or our sense of smell by the sweetness of that odor? What? Did he not so distinguish colors as to make some more lovely than others? What? Did he not endow gold and silver, ivory and marble, with a loveliness that renders them more precious than other metals or stones? Did he not, in short, render many things attractive to us, apart from their necessary use?" *Institutes* (1559), 3.10.2. This implies that in the Last Day there will be the transformation and restoration of both our whole being and the whole created order.

<sup>892</sup> Peter J. Leithart, "The Way Things Really Ought to Be: Eucharist, Eschatology, and Culture," *Westminster Theological Journal*, September 1, 1997, 166.

<sup>893</sup> While there are debates concerning how it was realized in the practice of worship, Calvin intended that the eucharistic celebration be conjoined to alms for the poor, and this shows that the sacrament for Calvin should have a special care and love for the neighbor. Studying Calvin's understanding and practice of liturgical almsgiving, Elsie McKee introduces a passage in some editions of "*The Form of Prayers*," which speaks of Calvin's understanding of the offerings for the poor in the context of the Communion. "In order, then, that we may consider these things with greater diligence and that we may be made more ardent and desirous of receiving this holy food and drink of life eternal, we very appropriately add, with psalms and hymns of praise, the reading of the gospel, the confession of faith, and the holy oblations and offerings. These things proclaim what is given to us in Christ and how great are the good things which we receive by the communication of His body and blood. Or rather, they admonish us worthily to prize these things and to praise them with true praises and ardent thanksgiving, and also to render them

## 7.6. Conclusion

That we are drawn to Christ by the Spirit in the Lord's Supper implies that we are led to heaven or heavenly realm where Christ resides and reigns at the right hand of the Father. While this heaven is a transcendental and otherworldly reality, for Calvin, it is also what can be sought and experienced by the godly in their earthly life of faith. While Calvin recognizes the eschatological meaning of the Lord's Supper, stopped short of relating the eucharistic heaven to the eschatological reality of the restoration of the whole created order, exposing the Lord's Supper to the possibility of being understood a cognitive event. However, his doctrine of the Trinity, especially his concept of the Holy Spirit as the bond between Christ and believers, has the potential for the sacrament to be understood as a temporal rendering of the eschatological Kingdom. When we conceive of the Lord's Supper as the eschatological reality, we can more appropriately highlights the communal and embodied nature of the sacrament.

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praiseworthy and precious to others. And it is not without good reason that we have added the oblations to what we said before. For aroused and moved by the reading and explanation of the gospel and the confession of our faith, which is done just before, we ponder in memory that Jesus Christ is given to us of the infinite goodness of the heavenly Father. With him He has given all things: the remission of sins, the covenant of eternal salvation, the life and righteousness of God, and finally, all desirable things which are added unto the children of God, to those who seek His kingdom and His righteousness. Then with good and just cause, we offer and submit ourselves completely to God the Father and to our Lord Jesus Christ, in recognition of so many and so great benefits. And (as Christian love requires) we testify this by holy offerings and gifts which are administered to Jesus Christ in His least ones, to those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, strangers, sick, or held in prison. For all who live in Christ, and have Him dwelling them, do voluntarily what the law commands them. And the latter commands that one not appear before God without an offering." Quotation from Elsie Anne McKee, *John Calvin: On the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1984), 50. Perhaps this was in Calvin mind the example of how in the Last Day the created order should be dealt with by humans.

## Conclusion

It would be worth quoting again Calvin's own confession that he himself had experienced an ascent to heaven: "For truly, that abundant sweetness which God has stored up for those who fear him cannot be known without at the same time powerfully moving us. And once anyone has been moved by it, it utterly ravishes him and draws him to itself. Therefore, it is no wonder if a perverse and wicked heart never experiences that emotion by which, borne up to heaven itself, we are admitted to the most hidden treasures of God and to the most hallowed precincts of his Kingdom."<sup>894</sup> While the Lord's Supper is not brought up in this passage, it is plausible, given its language and expressions, that the ascent to heaven Calvin describes here is the *eucharistic* ascent, which we have considered throughout this thesis.<sup>895</sup> Though not a definitive study, this thesis was a small attempt to fathom the nature of this experience through the lens of the doctrine of the Trinity, which it has demonstrated underlies and shapes Calvin's theology and practice of the sacrament. There are six specific conclusions to this thesis.

First, this thesis has shown that in Calvin's theology the doctrine of the Trinity is a key paradigm for our communion with God. For Calvin, all our relationship with God has a Trinitarian ground and nature, in that we relate to God the Father, who is both the origin and object of this relationship, only through partaking of the sonship of Christ, the pattern and way, in the power of the Holy Spirit, the efficacy. The doctrine is also the ground for our active experience of this relationship with God, in the mode of communion. The heavenly Father lifts us up to Himself by making us partake of Christ's pattern of ascent and heavenly residence, in the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Spirit binds us to Christ in heaven and thereby leads us to the Father. In this experience we make a grateful response to God and His action, in the identity of His adopted children, while the main subject of this relationship is God Himself, in that all this is initiated, patterned, and empowered by God the Trinity.

Second, this thesis has shown that for Calvin our worship is a reflection of this plan of Trinitarian communion. Calvin conceives of prayer, which he believes is a model of worship, as a typical Trinitarian communion, in which we communicate and commune with God with our whole being, through partaking of the sonship of Christ, in

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<sup>894</sup> *Institutes* (1559), 3.2.41.

<sup>895</sup> Christopher B. Kaiser, "Climbing Jacob's Ladder: John Calvin and the Early Church on Our Eucharistic Ascent to Heaven," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 56, no. 3 (2003): 259.

the power of the Holy Spirit. And Calvin's liturgy and liturgical ideas show that for him the whole of public worship is a reflection of this prayer pattern of the divine-human communion. Calvin believes that even in the service of preaching we commune with the whole person of Christ in the power of the Spirit. However, it is in the service of the Lord's Supper, where our upward movement of response and praise to God is brought forth, that the prayer pattern of communion is most fully realized.

Third, this study has examined how Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity affects and characterizes his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In Calvin's thought, the two doctrines are in direct connection with each other, which is evident from a close look at the early development of the two. With the emergence of Calvin's Trinitarian notion of the Holy Spirit as the bond between Christ and humanity, Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper came to be thoroughly conceptualized upon his basic Trinitarian principle: the Father is the fountain and object, the Son the matter, the Spirit the efficacy. And this principle, once permeated through the eucharistic doctrine, makes the sacrament primarily a personal communion between God and humanity, distinguishing Calvin's view from that of other Reformers, whose focus was primarily on the real presence (or absence) of Christ in the eucharist. In Calvin's conception of the eucharistic communion, Christ transcends the earthly materials of the bread and wine, since He is only in heaven, but is still present with the human communicants. This implies that in the sacrament people are drawn to a heavenly realm where Christ and the Father reside, in order to commune with God. In sum, the doctrine of the Trinity makes the Lord's Supper a heavenly event. The *Consensus Tigurinus* indicates that this notion of heavenly, Trinitarian communion forms the bare essential of Calvin's eucharistic doctrine.

At the same time, fourth, this study has shown that this communion in the Lord's Supper is by no means an abstract event, for Calvin, though a heavenly one. In Calvin's scheme of our communion with God, the role of our humanity is significant. God enables our communion with Himself, not by infusing His divinity into us, but by making us engrafted to the person of Christ in the power of the Spirit, and the reason why we can be engrafted to Christ is that He and we share the same humanity in common. This implies that our communion with God has a sort of human or embodied dimension. In other words, the Holy Spirit who joins us to the whole person of Christ, is also someone who enables a sort of embodied communion between Christ and us. As the whole of worship is a typical of such a Trinitarian communion, we have such an embodied fellowship with God throughout the whole of the worship service. Since the

body of Christ is now only in heaven, in our earthly celebration of worship we experience Christ's humanity in a pneumatological or enigmatic way. In preaching, we enigmatically experience the presence and work of the human person of Christ through hearing and seeing the human preacher's voice and act of preaching. In the sacrament, we mysteriously experience the body and blood of Christ in our corporate action of receiving and eating the bread and wine. For Calvin, all other external ceremonies of the church could be a sort of means of embodying the human dimension of our relationship with Christ.

At the same time, fifth, this study has also reflected on Calvin's idea that the Lord's Supper is a heavenly or otherworldly event, which transcends the earthly realm. While the heaven we enter in the sacrament is not a physical place, it is true that it is a different reality from our own. While Calvin himself does not explain the nature of the heavenly reality, given Calvin's usage of heaven, we can say that there is a connection between the heavenly reality of the Lord's Supper and the eschatological heaven. In the sense that Christ is the sovereign of the eschatological heaven, Calvin's doctrine of the Trinity, which teaches the Spirit's binding us to Christ, has the potential for the Lord's Supper to be understood as the eschatological reality. When viewed as the eschatological banquet, the sacrament can be more fittingly conceived of as a place for brotherly love and unity; the Lord's Supper is the place where we *live* the heavenly life of communion with Christ and one another *in this world*. On the whole, the Trinitarian idea of our being drawn to Christ in heaven strengthens the ritual character of the Lord's Supper by underpinning the embodied, active, and corporate dimension of the sacrament.

This Trinitarian quality, finally, is reflected in Calvin's liturgical text of the Lord's Supper. Calvin inserted the Trinitarian pattern of our participation in Christ and ascent into heaven in his liturgical text. This means that for Calvin the public celebration of the Lord's Supper is the place for experience of our heavenly communion. Given that this quality was not common to all other reformation liturgies, this liturgy was a fruit of Calvin's own eucharistic thought.

Over the past few decades, there has been a growing understanding of the Trinitarian nature of worship in most denominational groups. The recognition and restoration of the Trinitarian quality in Calvin's theology of worship and the sacraments would be a corrective for the Reformed tradition which has been inattentive to the ritual meaning of worship and to the characteristic value of the eucharistic service. In addition,

the Trinitarian ground in Calvin's theology and practice of worship could be referred to as a resource and measure for ecumenical dialogue.

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